Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has taken on an elevated profile amongst business initiatives aimed at influencing the publicly held image of organizations. While typically conceptualized to either improve some aspect of society or the relationships with communities and NGO’s (Waddock, 2004), CSR initiatives are as likely now to be utilized for persuasive communications to consumers (e.g., Battacharya & Sen, 2004; Brown & Dacin, 1997). Within the sport context, similar relationships are thought to exist (e.g., Breithbarth & Harris, 2008; Smith & Westerbeek, 2008), and initial evidence has surfaced positing that fans react to CSR messages not only with improved image perceptions, but also with positively altered behavioral (i.e., purchase) intentions (Walker & Kent, 2009; 2010). Qualitatively, CSR is regarded as a significant point of emphasis with some fans (Walker & Kent, 2010) however; the quantitatively demonstrated effects of CSR on consumer behaviors have been relatively weak. Such modest results illustrate that little is actually known about the mechanism(s) by which CSR messages translate into organizationally-relevant outcomes which are (seemingly) of great importance to managers and marketers.

Reliability testing revealed sufficient levels of internal consistency (Lance et al., 2006) for all variables, and validity testing of the model revealed an adequate fit of the data ($\chi^2/df=2.152$; RMSEA=0.052; GFI=.93; NFI=.94). All AVE scores were well above .50 cutoff, thereby denoting a discriminant factor structure (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). We tested the key pathways that constituted our hypothesized model using a series of three regression models based on Baron and Kenny’s (1986) criteria for mediation: (Model 1) financial sacrifice and advocacy predicted by CSR awareness; (Model 2) corporate credibility predicted by CSR awareness; and (Model 3) financial sacrifice and advocacy predicted by CSR awareness and corporate credibility. Following Baron and Kenny (1986) and Sobel (1982, 1988), we tested intermediary effects for the models in a step-wise fashion.

In the first two models, CSR awareness had a significant and positive effect on financial sacrifice ($\beta=.336$fin, $R^2=.11$, p.<.001), advocacy ($\beta=.501$adv, $R^2=.25$, p.<.001), and credibility ($\beta=.673$cred, $R^2=.45$, p.<.001). In the third model, we inserted CSR awareness and credibility simultaneously and found that the effect of CSR awareness on credibility had a significant and positive effect on both outcomes ($\beta=.440$fin, $R^2=.19$, p.<.001), $\beta=.615$adv, $R^2=.38$, p.<.001). Next, the overall mediation effect was tested which showed that both financial sacrifice and advocacy were reduced in strength but still significant, indicating that credibility partially mediated the relationship. Sobel’s (1982, 1988) test revealed significant t-values across the outcomes – indicating that credibility is an important (partial) mediator in the model. Per Aiken and West (1991), we mean-centered the variable and generated an interaction term, which was then added hierarchically to the regression models. The results indicated that the interaction term (SC × CSR awareness) significantly affected both financial sacrifice ($\beta=.410$fin, $R^2=.17$, p.<.001) and advocacy ($\beta=.572$adv, $R^2=.33$, p.<.001). Finally, again following Baron and Kenny’s (1986) approach, we found that financial sacrifice was...
reduced in strength ($\beta=.151$fin, $R^2=.023$, $p=.007$) indicating partial mediation, while advocacy was non-significant ($\beta=-.054$adv, $p=.297$), indicating full mediation of the credibility variable.

While mounting anecdotal evidence has suggested that consumers react positively to social programs, empirical data has been somewhat limited in exploring the extent to which actual CSR programs influence consumer behavior. Together, our findings illustrate that CSR awareness lead consumers to view the TOUR in a more credible light. This enhanced perception of the organization subsequently increased the likelihood of a specific consumer behavior and a specific attitude directed towards the TOUR. Perceived credibility was (at least in this context) identified as a route through which CSR awareness is related to these outcomes. Our results of the significant CSR awareness $\rightarrow$ credibility $\rightarrow$ financial sacrifice/advocacy causal chain suggest that a firm’s CSR could increase the perceived credibility of the firm and that resultant perception could mediate the monetary and attitudinal gains accrued through financial sacrifice and advocacy behaviors. Overall, the relationship from CSR awareness to credibility to the outcomes suggests that achieving a credible image represents one of the underlying pathways through which consumer’s attitudes and behaviors on the basis of CSR awareness are realized. Finally, by showing that corporate credibility plays a prominent role in the awareness-outcomes relationship, organizations may capitalize on multiplicative associations that consumers attribute to social initiatives.