Should Sports Team Redesign the Logo? The Effects of Logo Redesign in Determining Fans' Behavioral Consequences

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Logo is a powerful element that shapes teams’ symbolic image which could ultimately determines various types of fans’ behavioral consequences, such as attitude toward the team and intention to purchase team-logoed merchandise (Holt, 1998). Despite the significant role of logo in shaping fans’ behaviors, there is a limited understanding of how sports team can effectively make changes in their logo to rebrand themselves with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Ahn et al., 2012).

Logo is “a graphic representation or image that triggers memory associations of the target brand (Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, 2010). According to the brand association theory, each element of brand, such as logo and brand status, plays a major role in determining the success of rebranding (Roy & Sarkar, 2015). In this regard, the current study proposes that logo redesign can be used as an effective way to rebrand sports teams. Particularly, the status of the team, either a traditionally winning or losing team, would determine whether major or minor changes in logo redesign will determine the success of rebranding. Because a winning team would like create a strong connection with the previous winning status, minor changes in the logo would be more effective in redesigning the logo than major changes. Meanwhile, because a previously losing team would like to cut their image as a failure, major changes in the logo redesign would be more effective for them than minor changes. In this regard, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: For a traditionally winning team, minor changes in the logo will lead to more positive attitude toward the team and greater intention to purchase team-logoed merchandise from fans compared to major changes

H2: For a traditionally losing team, major changes in the logo will lead to more positive attitude toward the team and greater intention to purchase team-logoed merchandise from fans compared to minor changes

A 2 (different status of team: traditionally winning vs. losing team) × (degree of change in the logo: minor vs. major changes) between-subjects design will be used. A total of 200 participants will be recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk. In the first stage of the experiment, participants will be randomly assigned to either a winning or a losing team condition. In the second stage, participants will be randomly assigned to either a minor or a major logo change condition. In the minor (major) change condition, we will make a few small (several major) changes in the current logo. After reviewing the revised logo, participants will complete questionnaire that includes dependent variables and demographic information. A series of ANOVA will be used to examine the main and the interaction effects. Additionally, a simple effect test will be used to examine the group difference.

The results of our study would provide an effective guideline regarding how sports teams can effectively rebrand themselves by redesigning their logo.