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Facility naming-rights in professional sport: The case of Scotiabank Arena

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This project consisted of three interrelated studies investigating important facets of facility naming rights sponsorship agreements, using Scotiabank Arena in Toronto as the case under investigation. The specific aims of the three projects were: 1) to investigate whether differences exist between fan perceptions toward naming-rights sponsorship and jersey sponsorship in the NBA, 2) examine the perceived fit between Scotiabank and the arena, and 3) to explore potential fan resistance to the change in stadium name.

The findings for research aim 1 indicated that there were no significant differences between how fans felt toward the practices of naming-rights or jersey sponsorship, and there was also no significant differences between their attitudes and intentions toward the two sponsors. Participants who were more attached fans of the Toronto Raptors felt slightly more positively about the sponsor and naming-rights sponsorship (compared to jersey) than those who were less attached to the team.

The findings associated with research aim 2 indicated that fans who felt more positively about the fit between Scotiabank and the Maple Leafs, as well as the associated Leafs fan community, felt a greater degree of fit between the sponsor and the arena. Participants who were more attached to the city of Toronto also felt more positively about the fit between Scotiabank and the team.

Participants for research aim 3 were interviewed to explore their potential resistance to the recent name change of Scotiabank Arena. Although participants felt a degree of acceptance toward the Scotiabank name due to a positive brand image of the sponsor. However, participants indicated that they had not yet started regularly using the new name, due in large part to existing habits. The participants also believed that the previous stadium name was a better fit given the location of the facility and connections to a past Raptors star player.