Commercialism in public schools: A study of the perceptions of teachers and administrators on accepting corporate advertising

Gerard Jude Kowal

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COMMERCIALISM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS
OF
TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS ON ACCEPTING
CORPORATE ADVERTISING

By

Gerard Jude Kowal

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
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Under the Supervision of Dr. Jack McKay
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DISSERTATION TITLE

COMMERCIALISM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS ON ACCEPTING CORPORATE ADVERTISING

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Administrators and school boards are looking for ways to increase revenue without raising taxes. School districts have turned to commercial sources for help with funding of such things as gym floors, athletic fields, lighting for athletic fields, and sports equipment (Bell, 2002; Brunkow, 2001; Molnar, 2002). In exchange for advertising space, businesses are providing money, teaching materials, technology, and sports equipment. Since 1990, commercialism in schools has risen 473 percent (Molnar & Reaves, 2001).

There is opposition to the use of commercialism in schools from groups like the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU) at Arizona State University. School boards and building administrators must evaluate the opposition to advertising in the schools that would result from commercialism before deciding to use commercialism in their schools.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the acceptability or unacceptability of corporate advertising in
their schools, particularly about the acceptability or unacceptability of commercial advertising outside the school building, inside the school building, and inside the classroom.

The survey was presented to a sampling of administrators and a stratified sampling of teachers from a midwestern urban school district. Data were gathered through an online survey. One hundred and sixty-nine building administrators and two hundred teachers from a midwestern urban school district were initially asked to participate in this study. Two hundred and seventeen surveys were completed online (59%). Statistical tests utilized included descriptive statistics and Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

This study details the types of commercialism that were acceptable and unacceptable to the elementary and secondary teachers and administrators of a midwestern urban school district. This study also found significant differences between the means for teachers and administrators concerning the acceptability of commercialism and significant differences between elementary and secondary respondents. The instrument in this study could be modified and used to survey the taxpayers, parents, or students of a school district to discover if commercialism is acceptable or unacceptable.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature Page</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Statement</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Research</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Practice</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Policy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the Study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the Literature</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercialism in Schools</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for Commercialism in Schools</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Commercialism</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Sales</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive Agreements</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Advertising</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Marketing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naming Rights</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Advertising</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship of Activities and Programs</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive Programs</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship of Educational Materials</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and Foundations</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Research</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition to Commercialism in Schools</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about Corrupting the Youth</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns for Equity</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns for Students’ Health</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusions</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question 2</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Practice</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Future Research</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Cover Letter</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPS' Policy on Advertising in the Schools</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPS' Permission to Survey</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB Approval</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix G</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents' Comments</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Teachers and administrators, looking for ways to increase revenue without raising taxes, are turning to businesses for help with funding. School districts across the country are facing tight budgets and increased demands on their resources and, as a result, have turned to commercial sources for help with funding of such things as gym floors, athletic fields, lighting for athletic fields, and sports equipment (Adams, 1999; Bell, 2002; Brunkow, 2001; Molnar, 2002).

Brooklawn School District in New Jersey named their new gym after a grocery store, and a district in Lancaster, Pennsylvania allowed corporate banners to hang in their gymnasium in return for corporate sponsorship of their athletic teams (Consumers Union, 1990; Sielke, 2000). The National Football League’s Washington Redskins’ nonprofit foundation gave T.C. Williams High School in Washington D.C. a new scoreboard and refurbished the school’s football field. In return, the scoreboard has the Redskins’ logo displayed on it (Bell, 2002).

In exchange for advertising space, businesses are also providing money, teaching materials, and technology. Corporate aid has resulted in a growth of commercialism or corporate advertising in schools. Since 1990, commercialism in schools has risen 473 percent (Molnar & Reaves, 2001).

Corporate advertising or commercialism in schools would include such things as candy sales or other short-term fundraising. Commercialism would also consist of direct and indirect advertising in the school or on school buildings. Exclusive soda contracts,
school-business partnerships, and athletic scoreboards with company names are examples of direct and indirect advertising. Market research is another form of commercialism and this type would incorporate student questionnaires or taste tests (GAO Report, 2000).

Alabama, Colorado, and Oklahoma have limited a school district's ability to increase revenue by imposing revenue and spending lids which control the property tax rate (Kowalski & Schmielau, 2000). Twenty-seven state legislatures impose tax and/or spending limits on their state governments. Nebraska also imposes limits on local governments like school districts (Frederick, 1998). Revenue lids limit the percent increase in the millage that districts may levy when collecting taxes. Spending lids limit the amount a district's spending may increase from one year to the next (Sielke, 1998). A spending lid also limits a district's ability to spend revenue from commercial advertising. These revenue and spending lids have made it difficult for districts to increase taxes to pay for increased costs. As a result, school districts have turned to corporations to help finance such things as school facilities and other needs (Consumers Union, 1990; Sielke, 2000). Corporate financing has resulted in the proliferation of commercialism in schools.

There is opposition to commercialism in schools from groups like The Center for Commercial-Free Public Education in California and Arizona State University's Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU). The opposition to commercialism in schools is based in three areas. Groups like CERU are against exposing children to commercialism in schools or on school grounds (Molnar & Reeves, 2001; Scapp, 2001). The concern is that students are captive audiences and exposing them to advertising may corrupt them (Manning, 1999). The belief among the opposition is that school leaders are
compromising the health and welfare of the students by utilizing commercialism in the schools.

Schools are allowing corporations to market to students in an attempt by the corporations to mold or change the students' values (Bell, 2002; Larson, 2002). Another area of concern is equity. Districts with wealthy corporate donors may be able to raise more corporate advertising dollars than other districts (Hardy, 1997; Ritchey, 2000). Finally, Molnar (2002) claims that exclusive soft drink contracts are keeping healthy drinks out of the schools and thereby increasing the obesity of students (Molnar, 2002).

Proponents of commercialism claim that the students would be purchasing the soft drinks anyway since they are allowed to bring the drinks to school (NASBE, 2000). Supporters also claim that corporate involvement benefits all sides. In addition to money, corporations offer other valuable resources like teacher training at a time when funding for professional development is limited (NASBE, 1999). Finally, districts that have turned to corporate advertising dollars, say that students are exposed to advertising in their everyday life and have become immune to the effects of advertising (Domine, 2002; Kennedy, 2000).

Another area that commercialism has been used in schools is to fund facilities and their repairs. According to Honeyman (1998), school facilities have fallen into disrepair (Honeyman Jr., 1998; Sielke, 1998, 2000). Up to one-third of the schools in the United States need major repairs (Hardy, 1997; Sielke, 2000). Historically, many districts have funded school construction costs through property tax revenues (Kowalski & Schmielau, 2001). This, however, has sometimes led to inequities between districts. Property-
wealthy districts have been able to fund new construction and repairs while others with lower property valuations have struggled to raise adequate funding (Hardy, 1997; Kowalski & Schmielau, 2001). Sielke (1998, 2000) claims that these inequities have resulted in changes in the traditional methods many districts have used to finance facilities (Sielke, 1998, 2000). The concern of the opposition to commercialism is that the property-wealthy districts will be able to raise more money from commercial advertising than the less wealthy districts.

Statement of the Problem

School districts have turned to commercial sources for help with funding of such things as gym floors, athletic fields, lighting for athletic fields, and sports equipment (Bell, 2002; Brunkow, 2001; Molnar, 2002). For example, Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs, Iowa, offered space for advertising on their new gym floor for $120,000 and the Papillion-LaVista School District in Nebraska is looking for corporate donors to help finance their new football stadium (Brunkow, 2001). Opposition from groups like CERU has forced districts to limit or eliminate commercial advertising in the schools (Bell, 2002; Molnar, 2002). The question is whether teachers, administrators, or board members agree with the groups that oppose commercialism in schools.

Teachers and administrators of the public school district selected for this study must follow district policy (see Appendix D) to determine which types of commercialism are allowed in their schools. The building administrators with the approval of the board of education are also responsible for proposing the budget and determining how the money is spent in their building. Knowing how both teachers and administrators feel
about commercialism in schools could facilitate a district's decision to utilize corporate advertising. The results of this study would also help a school board and superintendent determine what type or types of commercialism are acceptable to the teachers and administrators of the district. The instrument in this study could then be modified to survey the students, the public or even school board members.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this research is to assess teacher and administrator perceptions on the acceptability or unacceptability of different types of commercialism in public elementary and secondary schools.

**Research Questions**

This study will address the following research questions:

1. Given that different types of commercialism may result in varying types of commercial advertising, what type or types of commercialism are acceptable or not acceptable to teachers and administrators?

2. Are there differences between a school district's teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the different types of commercialism in public elementary and secondary schools?

**Definition of Terms**

*Acceptable* is defined by Merriam-Webster as being capable or worthy of being accepted; to be received willingly; to be given approval; to be endured without protest (Merriam-Webster, 1998). In this study, a score of 3.00 represents a neutral stand on the acceptability of a particular subtype of commercialism, also, 1.00=never acceptable,
2.00=rarely acceptable, 3.00=neutral, 4.00=sometimes acceptable, and 5.00=always acceptable.

Administrators are defined as deans, assistant principals, and principals.

Certificated staff is all staff members with a valid administrative or teaching certificate.

CERU is defined as the Commercialism in Education Research Unit at Arizona State University formerly known as the Center for the Analysis of Commercialism in Education (CACE).

Commercialism is defined to include the sale of products, direct and indirect advertising, and market research (GAO Report, 2000).

Direct advertising would consist of billboards, advertising on athletic fields, gym floors, scoreboards, or book covers, and advertising in school newspapers, yearbooks, or newsletters. In-school news programs like Channel One would fall into this category (Bell, 2002; GAO Report, 2000).

Facilities are defined as all school buildings or fixed assets that are designed to last more than one year (Alexander & Solmon, 1995).

Indirect advertising is used by corporations to put their name on educational materials, contests, scholarships, grants, or other gifts (Bell, 2002; GAO Report, 2000).

The types of corporate advertising will be defined using information from the GAO Report, Consumers Union reports, and CERU publications. These types of corporate advertising are not based on the amount of money or the value of gifts from the corporations, but rather are based on the amount of intrusion into the classroom and to
what degree the commercialism impacts the learning process. The types would also take into account the amount of involvement by staff members, which could be perceived as an endorsement of certain brands or corporations. The types are defined as follows:

**Type I Commercialism** would be limited passive advertising restricted to areas outside the school building itself. For example, this would include soda machines outside the school building, football stadium scoreboard advertising, and advertising banners or other signs at the football stadium. This would also include naming rights to school buildings or facilities.

**Type II Commercialism** would include limited passive advertising inside the building but not inside the classroom. This would include such things as soft drink machines accessible in the building, corporate partnership banners in the halls, and candy sales outside the classroom.

**Type III Commercialism** would include all advertising inside the classroom. Educational posters, book covers, Channel One, and educational videos or materials that contain corporate advertising would be considered Type III Commercialism. Type III Commercialism would also include limited active advertising where the teacher or staff member would take an active role in advertising. For example, teachers may conduct a survey for market research, wear clothing with advertising, or actively promote certain products in return for financial support (Consumers Union, 1990; GAO Report, 2000; Molnar & Reaves, 2001).

**An example of market research** would be an in-school company survey that enables the corporation to track a student’s preferences (Bell, 2002; GAO Report, 2000).
Passive advertising is defined as non-active advertising where the teacher, administrator, or other staff member would not actively endorse a product. Examples of passive advertising would include posters, soda machines, banners, or advertising in an athletic program.

Product sales would include such things as soft drinks usually with an exclusive contract, short-term fundraising like the sale of candy, gift-wrap, or magazine subscriptions, and yearbook or class ring sales (Bell, 2002; GAO Report, 2000).

Sinking funds involve levying a certain millage over a period so funds can build up for future construction projects (Sielke, 1998).

Staff includes all district certificated and non-certificated or classified employees whose business e-mail addresses are included in the district's First Class Address Book (administrators, teachers, counselors, custodians, cafeteria staff, office staff, etc.)

Traditional facility finance includes bonds, which are sold for long periods. In addition, the district levies a tax to repay the principal and interest. Districts that cannot raise the money when needed instead raise the money over time using sinking funds.

Limitations

The study was limited to the "returned" responses and was not placed online and accessible until the teachers had left for the summer. This may have lead to decreased participation (59% return rate). Therefore, reflecting the true teaching and administrative population of the district was difficult. In addition, basing the questionnaire on self-reporting and limiting the study to teachers and administrators of a school district may
have resulted in bias. Finally, the survey was limited to multiple-choice answers and fill-in-the-blank type answers.

**Delimitations**

Because research in the specific area of acceptability of different types of commercialism was not found, research in the area of commercialism in schools was utilized.

**Assumptions**

Survey responses would retain and ensure randomness of the sample of teachers and administrators. Also, corporate financial aid would result in a part of the budget that would not have to come from taxes and in effect, freeing money that could be used to lower the levy (Pijanowski & Monk, 1996). It was assumed that more corporate financing would result in more commercialism. Finally, it was also assumed that the participants understood online survey methods administered via the Internet and that they would respond with honest and accurate answers.

**Significance of the Study**

**Contribution to research.** While there is research on commercialism in schools, no research was found in the area of acceptable types of commercialism in schools. This study would be in the forefront for determining the acceptability of different types of commercialism in schools.

**Contribution to practice.** A district could decide whether or not to use corporate advertising dollars to help with funding a variety of the district’s budget items. For
example, extra tutoring could be funded or facilities could be updated without using taxes. As a result, taxes may not be raised and may even be reduced.

**Improve policy.** While there are guides available to help a district that is seeking private funding or corporate financing, this study would enable the school board and superintendent to decide the support or opposition to different types of commercialism among elementary and secondary teachers and administrators. The results of the study may also be extended to the taxpayers and public of a district (Bell, 2002).

**Summary**

Administrators and school boards are looking for ways to increase revenue without raising taxes. School districts like Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Brooklawn in New Jersey, and Council Bluffs in Iowa, have turned to corporations for advertising dollars to help with funding. There is opposition to commercialism in schools from groups like Arizona State University’s Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU). The groups opposing commercialism in schools are concerned that the exposure to advertising is corrupting students. They are also concerned that wealthy districts may be able to raise more money through advertising than less wealthy districts and that soft drink contracts may be contributing to obesity in students. The school board and building administrators must evaluate the amount of opposition to the advertising in the schools that would result from commercialism before deciding whether or not to utilize commercialism to help raise money.

Knowing how teachers and administrators feel about different types of commercialism in schools could facilitate a school board’s decision to utilize corporate
advertising. It would also help a district decide what type or types of commercialism may be acceptable or unacceptable.

**Overview of the Study**

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature covering commercialism in schools and the opposition to commercialism in schools. Chapter 2 will also cover the financing needs of school facilities. Chapter 3 will describe the research design of the survey study and will describe the methodology and procedures that will be used to gather and analyze the data for the study. Chapter 4 will present the results of the research and the analyses of the research. Chapter 5 will contain the summary of the findings, the conclusions drawn from those findings, and the implications.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review is based in three areas of research. The first area of research deals with the different types of commercialism in schools. The second area of research notes the reasons for the opposition to commercialism. The third area of research details one area where commercialism has been used: funding school facilities. This includes the need for building repairs, updating, and replacement, and the use of commercialism to finance these needs.

Commercialism in Schools

A school in New Jersey sold the naming rights for its gym to a local grocery store chain for $100,000. They also designated a board member to be the director of corporate development. The position was created to solicit corporate financing in return for naming rights to almost everything in the district (Molnar, 2002). This type of direct advertising or appropriation of space in return for money is just one form of commercialism used by districts across the country (GAO Report, 2000). While commercialism has been evident in schools as early as the 1920s, it has increased during the 90’s. Since 1990, commercial activity in schools has risen 473 percent (Molnar & Reaves, 2001). School districts are using commercialism to help with funding because of tight budgets (Consumer’s Union, 1995; Molnar, 2001). While private schools have long looked to businesses to fund facilities and other projects, public schools are also soliciting corporate advertising dollars (Bower, 2001).
Reasons for Commercialism in Schools

Due to tax and spending limits passed by many states, a chronic need for funding arose and many school districts had to look to alternative sources for financing (Addonizio, 2000; Consumers Union, 1995). Alternative funding, like school-business partnerships would be a means by which a school district could provide needed services and updated facilities without affecting the balance sheet (Adams, 1999). These alternative sources include, but are not limited to, the following: naming rights, local foundations for fundraising and donations, user fees, leasing of facilities or services, cooperative agreements, and exclusive contracts for goods or services (Pijanowski & Monk, 1996). Many of these alternative sources resulted in an increase in commercial activities or commercialism within the schools.

Types of Commercialism

The U.S. Government has separated the types of commercialism into four groups: product sales, direct advertising, indirect advertising, and market research (GAO Report, 2000). Arizona State University’s Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU) has broken down the types of commercialism in schools even further into eight categories. The categories are: exclusive agreements, fundraising, electronic marketing, appropriation of space, sponsorship of programs and activities, incentive programs, sponsorship of education materials, and privatization (Molnar, 2002).
Product Sales

Product sales include exclusive contracts, short-term fundraising like the sale of candy, gift-wrap, or magazine subscriptions, and yearbook or class ring sales (Bell, 2002).

Exclusive agreements. One type of product sales is exclusive agreements. These agreements keep other competing products out of a particular school or district (Hornsey, 2001). An example of the value of an exclusive agreement would be the 10-year deal between Coca-Cola and School District 11 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, which is worth over 8.3 million dollars to the district (Robelen, 1998). Soft drink companies are now allowing healthy drinks despite their exclusive agreements because of concerns from health groups. Soft drink machines in the schools are being blamed for the increase in obesity in school-age children (Bell, 2002; Molnar, 2002). The number of exclusive agreements increased from 1996 to 2001. There was a decrease from 2001 to 2002 and this decrease may have been due in part, to the growing opposition to exclusive agreements.

Fundraising. Another type of product sales is fundraising. Selling candy bars or magazine subscriptions are only two examples of fundraising. Other varieties of fundraising include certain retailers giving credit to a school for receipts turned in or a cereal company giving credit for box tops returned (Molnar, 2002).
Direct Advertising

Direct advertising consists of billboards, advertising on athletic fields, gym floors, scoreboards, or book covers, and advertising in school newspapers, yearbooks, or newsletters.

Electronic marketing. Electronic marketing like the in-school news program, Channel One, or banner ads on computers, would fall into the direct advertising category. A school would receive televisions from Primedia’s Channel One for their classrooms in exchange for agreeing to have their students watch news programs with commercial advertising (Bell, 2002; GAO Report, 2000).

Naming rights. Naming rights or appropriation of space may be the most obvious form of direct advertising. School districts are selling space on their gym floors or walls in return for corporate money (Molnar, 2002). In Fremont, Nebraska, corporate logos on the gym floor paid the $100,000 cost (Brunknow, 2001). Another example, at Ravenna High School in Ohio, officials sold personal seat licenses at a cost of $1000 to $1500 for two seats to help finance a new football and soccer stadium (Addonizio, 2000).

Indirect Advertising

Indirect advertising consists of corporations putting their name on educational materials, contests, scholarships, grants, or other gifts (Bell, 2002; GAO Report, 2000).

Sponsorship of activities and programs. Examples of indirect advertising are the Raytheon Corporation and Lucent Technologies sponsored programs that promote professions in science, technology, and engineering. Also, corporations are sponsoring athletic conferences and competitions (Bell, 2002). Over the last several years, corporate
sponsorship of athletics has increased. This increase has made sponsorship of activities and programs the most common form of commercialism in the school buildings (Molnar, 2002).

**Incentive programs.** Incentive programs, which reward students or schools for reaching certain goals, are another example of indirect advertising. For example, a pizza company may give free pizzas to students with perfect attendance, or an amusement park may give free admission to students who read a certain number of books or reach a particular grade point average (Molnar, 2002; PR Newswire, 2001).

**Sponsorship of educational materials.** Sponsorship of educational materials is also indirect advertising. This sponsorship may come in the form of a wireless phone company trying to educate new drivers about driving responsibly, or a bank providing materials about personal finance (Molnar, 2002).

**Grants and foundations.** Grants and foundations are still one more form of indirect advertising. As an example, in 2000, Microsoft founder Bill Gates and his wife established a foundation and announced a $350 million education initiative. Their foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation, awarded a grant of $25.9 million to the Seattle School District to upgrade their technology and training for that technology (Kennedy, 2000).

**Market Research**

An example of market research would be an in-school company survey that enables the corporation to track a student’s preferences. Since a student’s personal information would be used for this type of commercialism, school privacy laws would
prohibit the school from giving personal information to the company. However, loopholes in the laws allow for the students themselves to give the personal information to the companies. Congress is addressing these discrepancies (Torres & Butler, 2000). This type of commercialism is the least utilized (Bell, 2002; GAO Report, 2000).

**Opposition to Commercialism in Schools**

Opposition to commercialism in schools is based on three areas of concern. The first area is the idea that commercialism corrupts students by placing advertising in the schools (Robelen, 1998). The second concern about commercialism in the schools is the equity issue. Wealthy schools or districts may be able to raise more funding than other schools or districts (Ritchey, 2000). The third area that concerns the opponents of commercialism is the exclusive contracts. Opponents of exclusive contracts are concerned with the poor nutritional value of the products being sold (NASBE, 2000).

**Concerns about Corrupting the Youth**

Since school attendance is mandatory, corporations realize that schools provide a captive audience of consumers. Corporations are willing to spend money to make their particular products familiar to young consumers who have years of purchasing power (Molnar, 1999). There is the perception that exposing youths to advertising may influence them (Domine, 2002; Robelen, 1998). This raised concerns among groups like CERU who wish to provide a commercial-free learning environment. They are concerned that students might be influenced by the belief that the district is endorsing specific products or name-brands (Boyles, 1999; Consumers Union 1995). In a recent study by Vanessa Domine (2002), it was suggested that students are unaware of the
biases of corporate advertising and are accepting of commercialism as the status quo (Domine, 2002).

Concerns for Equity

Equity between schools or districts is another concern. Wealthy schools or districts may be able to raise more money through alternative means like advertising than other less wealthy schools or districts (Ritchey, 2000). This difference in fundraising may lead to inequities between schools or districts. As a result, the schools or districts would not be able to offer equitable educational services to students. If one district or school raises more money than another district or school, and inequities result, the legislature or courts may step in to ensure equity for all students (Fege & Hagelshaw, 2000). As a result of the potential inequalities, groups like Consumers Union, the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), and the Center for Commercial-Free Public Education have pushed for limiting or eliminating commercial activities in the schools (Consumers Union, 1990; Fege & Hagelshaw, 2000; Molnar, 2000; Molar & Reaves, 2001).

Concerns for Students’ Health

Opponents of exclusive contracts are concerned with the poor nutritional value and easy access of the products being sold (Molnar, 2002). Rates of childhood obesity have doubled in the past thirty years. Between the 1970’s and the 1990’s, children’s consumption of milk has dropped by one-third, while at the same time their consumption of soft drinks has increased by fifty percent (NASBE, 2000). Easy access to these products with poor nutritional value undermines the classroom lessons on good nutrition.
and is in direct competition with a school’s food service program. States like California
and West Virginia have put restrictions on the sale of certain types of non-nutritional
food items (NASBE, 2000).

Using Commercialism for Financing Facility Needs

Schools like Fremont High School in Nebraska have turned to corporations to
help fund facilities. Fremont High School sold advertising space on its gym floor to help
finance the new floor (Brunkow, 2001). Commercialism has also been used to fund such
things as athletic scoreboards and lighting for athletic fields (Bell, 2002). Financing
facilities is one way commercialism has been used in schools.

School Facility Needs

School facility needs include the following: new buildings, additions, renovations,
and the infrastructure necessary to support new technology (Honeyman, 1998; Sielke,
1998). Many schools have been neglected through the years. Up to one-third of all
school facilities need extensive repairs (Hardy, 1997). Many schools were built in the
1950's and 1960's with a life expectancy of 30 years (Sielke, 1998). In 1995, it was
estimated that these repairs could cost approximately $112 billion (GAO, 1995).

School Facility Financing Needs

Historical Funding of Facilities

While there is a large amount of necessary maintenance, updating, and repair,
there is a shortage of capital funding. Funding of school facilities, or capital outlay, has
historically been viewed as the local district's responsibility (Hardy, 1997; Kowalski &
Schmielau, 2000). Districts rely heavily on property tax revenues to fund their capital

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outlay. This has led to inequities because property-wealthy districts are able to raise more revenue with lower tax rates than poorer districts. The poorer districts would need higher tax rates to generate the same amount of revenue. Tax revenue is determined by multiplying the tax rate or millage by the valuation of the property in the district. Therefore, a district with a lower property valuation would require a higher tax rate to result in the same amount of tax revenue as a school district with a higher property valuation (Ritchey, 2000).

In 1994, the Arizona Supreme Court focused on school facilities in *Roosevelt Elementary School v. Bishop*. This is the first time that a court ruled specifically on school facilities. The court stated that Arizona's funding formula violated the state constitution by causing disparities between wealthy and poor districts. More specifically, this ruling made it necessary for other states to look at their methods of funding facilities (Hardy, 1997; Sielke, 1998). School districts have since looked to alternate methods like commercialism for financing facilities.

**Other Methods for Financing Facilities**

Many states now provide funding for school facilities. Funding ranges from full-state funding, like in Alaska or Hawaii, to equalization grants, which are used in other states (Gold, Smith, & Lawton, 1995). Equalization grants provide funding inverse to the ability of the district to raise funds (Sielke, 1998). Also, tax increment financing is used to finance school improvements. Tax increment financing (TIF) refers to tax revenues from certain projects that are earmarked for specific improvements, rather than distributed to the usual taxing entities. School districts usually oppose TIF because they
would lose the revenue. However, the TIF could be specifically designated for school improvements (Kennedy, 2000).

Summary

Commercialism in schools has grown in popularity due to funding shortages. The United States Government has separated the types of commercialism into four groups: product sales, direct advertising, indirect advertising, and market research (GAO Report, 2000). Arizona State University's Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU) has divided the types of commercialism in schools even further into exclusive agreements, fundraising, electronic marketing, appropriation of space, sponsorship of programs and activities, incentive programs, sponsorship of education materials, and privatization (Molnar, 2002). For the purpose of this study, commercialism was divided into three types. Type I Commercialism included commercialism outside the school building. Type II Commercialism involved commercialism inside the school building but not inside the classroom and Type III Commercialism included all commercial activity inside the classroom.

Opposition to commercialism in schools from groups like CERU and newspaper editorials came about as a result of a concern for the students and a desire to provide a commercial-free learning environment. There is also a concern for providing equitable services to the students and the fear that inequities in commercial support may result in inequitable educational opportunities for students. Opponents of commercialism in schools are also concerned that exclusive contracts will lead to the availability of poor
nutritional products (NASBE, 2000). The easy access of poor nutritional products in schools could be one reason for the increase in the obesity of students (Molnar, 2002).

Finally, CERU says that the businesses should be paying this money anyway. The businesses are being granted tax exemptions and then are offering money in return for advertising in the schools. CERU suggests that if the businesses were paying their fair share of taxes, then the schools may not need the funding from commercial advertising (Molnar, 2002).

With billions of dollars needed to update, maintain, and repair school facilities, along with revenue shortages and lids, districts are looking for alternative means to finance these needs and others. Commercialism in the schools could help provide the necessary revenue. While there is research on the presence of commercialism in schools, no research in the area of acceptability of commercialism was found. This study will help determine which type or types of commercialism, if any, is acceptable or unacceptable to the elementary and secondary teachers and administrators in a midwestern urban school district. The results could then be applied to other groups such as students, taxpayers, parents, or board members.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Participants

A midwestern urban school district was chosen for this study. For the 2002-2003 school year, the school district utilized for this study had 3,591 full time teachers and 169 building administrators. The district also had 46,171 students included in seven high schools, nine middle schools, and sixty-one elementary schools.

The sample was composed of all 169 building administrators and 200 teachers selected from the district's personnel directory. The teachers were selected using stratified sampling techniques. The stratified sampling technique ensured that at least one teacher from every school was solicited for the study and that equal groups of teachers from elementary and secondary schools were asked to participate in the study.

Survey Instrument

Survey development. Due to a deficiency of available survey models in the area of acceptability of commercialism in schools, the questionnaire was developed by combining information from the GAO Report, Consumers Union reports, and Alex Molnar's (2001, 2002) CERU publications (Consumers Union, 1990, 1995; GAO Report, 2000; Molnar, 2001, 2002). The questionnaire was developed and created in a web-based survey format for use via the Internet. Utilizing the Internet enabled the data to be collected and summarized from the group of elementary and secondary teachers and administrators in a rapid and efficient manner.
As noted in Chapter Two, the GAO Report (2000) separated the types of commercialism into four groups: product sales, direct advertising, indirect advertising, and market research. Also as noted in Chapter Two, Molnar’s (2001, 2002) Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU) had broken down the types of commercialism in schools even further into eight categories: exclusive agreements, fundraising, electronic marketing, naming rights, sponsorship of activities and programs, incentive programs, sponsorship of educational materials, and grants and foundations. The questions in the survey were written to include the examples provided by Molnar (2002) and Consumer’s Union (1995) for each type of commercialism (Consumers Union, 1990, 1995; GAO Report, 2000; Molnar, 2001, 2002).

Using information from the GAO Report, Consumers Union reports, and Alex Molnar’s (2001, 2002) CERU publications, the researcher looked at the reasons for opposition to commercialism in schools including commercialism’s impact on curriculum, learning, and the students. The researcher then separated the commercialism into three types according to their direct impact on learning (Consumers Union, 1990, 1995; GAO Report, 2000; Molnar, 2001, 2002).

The three types of commercialism: outside the school building (Type I), inside the building but not inside the classroom (Type II), and inside the classroom (Type III), are not based on the amount of money or the value of the gifts from the corporations or businesses, but rather they are based on the amount of intrusion into the classroom and to what degree the commercialism impacts the learning process.
**Final survey.** The survey contained a total of forty questions (see Appendix C). The first section of the survey, questions #1-6, contained general demographic questions. These questions asked about the teacher and administrator's work setting including the size and grade level of the school. Personal demographic data about the respondent's tenure in teaching and administration were collected, as well as the type of administrative or teaching position he or she serves in, and data about the respondent's gender.

The next section of the survey contained questions relating to the acceptability of different types of commercialism. These questions were separated into the different defined types of commercialism. Questions, #7-13, asked about Type I Commercialism or commercialism outside the school building; #14-23 dealt with Type II Commercialism or commercialism inside the building but not inside the classroom; and #24-37 were questions pertaining to Type III Commercialism or commercialism inside the classroom (see Appendix C).

The final section of the survey, questions #38-40, asked the respondent why they think there is opposition to commercialism in schools and also allowed the respondent to comment on commercialism in schools.

The online version of the survey was developed using FileMaker Pro, a database program, and was delivered via the Internet through an html interface. It was tested for access with Netscape and Internet Explorer web browsers. The survey contained three types of answering mechanisms: multiple-choice questions using a Likert-type scale with radio buttons; a question that allowed respondents to select from a pre-set range of options; and, questions that allowed respondents to fill in their answers. The Likert scale
ranged from one to five, with one equaling never acceptable and five equaling always acceptable.

**Procedure**

Permission was granted by a midwestern urban school district to request participation (see Appendix E). The research project was also exempt by the Institutional Review Board under 45 CFR 46:101b, category 2 (see Appendix F).

The survey was first field-tested with the assistance of twelve teachers and school leaders to check for content validity. The teachers and school leaders were able to take the survey and make comments about the survey questions as they pertained to the research questions. As a result of comments provided by this group, the survey was modified. For example, “corporations” was changed to “corporations/businesses” to include smaller businesses. Also, hyphens were removed and extra sentences were added to make the questions easier to read and understand.

The survey was then piloted with twenty-five teachers and administrators. Reliability of the survey questions was estimated with Cronbach’s alpha. As a result of the pilot, the survey was found to be reliable (Cronbach’s Alpha greater than 0.70) with respect to the three defined types of commercialism. Alpha for Type I Commercialism, which included commercial advertising outside of the school building, was 0.8182. Alpha for Type II Commercialism, which included advertising inside the school building but not inside the classroom, was 0.8018. Alpha for Type III Commercialism, which included advertising inside the classroom, was 0.8889.
Finally, the study was voluntary and the sample consented to participate in the study by completing the online survey. Those volunteering to participate were given directions on how to locate the survey on the Internet. Participants were also given directions on how to submit their survey upon completion. After the survey had been sent out to 369 teachers and administrators, three follow-up e-mails were sent to remind the participants to submit the survey, if they had not already done so.

Two hundred and seventeen teachers and administrators responded for a 59% overall return rate. One hundred and twelve teachers completed the online survey. This represented 56% of the 200 teachers solicited for the study and 52% of the 217 elementary and secondary teachers and administrators that responded to the survey. One hundred and five administrators also filled out the survey. This corresponded to 62% of the 169 administrators asked to fill out the survey and 48% of the 217 respondents.

There were ninety-five elementary respondents. This was 50% of the 190 elementary teachers and administrators who were asked to fill out the survey and 44% of the 217 respondents that submitted a survey online. There were 122 secondary respondents. This corresponded to 68% of the 179 secondary teachers and administrators that were solicited for the study and 56% of the 217 elementary and secondary teachers and administrators who submitted surveys. Females represented 66% of the respondents, while males made up the remaining 34%.
**Research Questions**

1. Given that different types of commercialism may result in varying types of commercial advertising, what type or types of commercialism are acceptable or not acceptable to teachers and administrators?

2. Are there differences between a school district's teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the different types of commercialism in public elementary and secondary schools?

**Data Analysis**

Data were collected and analyzed using the SPSS 10.0 statistics software. Responses to the survey items were compiled and analyzed with respect to the research questions. Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the perceptions of teachers and administrators for Research Question 1.

Research Question 2 was analyzed using Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs) tests. Mean scores for each participant were computed for the items that measured each Type of Commercialism. The Two-way ANOVA test was used to determine if perceptions of each Type of Commercialism differed among elementary and secondary teachers and administrators. There were three different Two-way ANOVAs, one for each defined Type of Commercialism. A .05 alpha level was employed.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to assess teacher and administrator support for, or opposition to, different types of commercialism in public elementary and secondary
schools. The data gathered and analyzed in this study will provide school leaders with current, factual, data-driven research to utilize in their decision-making process.

In order to identify the answers to these questions, elementary and secondary teachers and administrators in a midwestern urban school district were asked to participate in this study. They were asked to complete an online survey. The data collected from this survey were then analyzed using descriptive statistics and statistical tests. The findings from these data analyses are reported in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this research was to assess teacher and administrator perceptions on the acceptability or unacceptability of different types of commercialism in public elementary and secondary schools. All 169 building administrators and a stratified sampling of 200 randomly selected elementary and secondary school teachers were solicited to participate in this study. The online survey was completed by 112 teachers (56%) and 105 administrators (62%) for an overall return rate of 59%. Females represented 66% of the respondents, while males made up the remaining 34%. There were ninety-five elementary respondents (44%) and one hundred and twenty-two secondary respondents (56%). The data gathered and analyzed in this study will provide school boards and administrators with the current, factual data driven research to utilize in their decision making process.

Research Questions

The specific research questions for this study were:

1. Given that different types of commercialism may result in varying types of commercial advertising, what type or types of commercialism are acceptable or not acceptable to teachers and administrators?

2. Are there differences between a school district's teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the different types of commercialism in public elementary and secondary schools?
The majority of the survey questions were constructed on a five-point Likert scale where a score of one stood for “never acceptable” and a five for “always acceptable.” A score of three was considered “neutral.” None of the questions were worded in a negative fashion that asked respondents to mark high scores for a negative response. As a result, recoding was not necessary to ensure that each of the scores was coded in a manner that would make them easy to compare. Recoding, however, was used to combine the deans of students, assistant principals, and principals into a group called “Administrators.” Recoding was also used to combine the middle and high school respondents into a group named “Secondary.”

When performing statistical analyses of the data collected for each subscale, means were computed from the usable responses. The mean substitution process was not necessary to use a particular respondent’s scores if he/she left any of the items blank.

In order to clarify the results of the responses to the online survey, the data were analyzed and displayed with respect to the two research questions.

**Findings of the Study**

**Research Question 1**

Given that different types of commercialism may result in varying types of commercial advertising, what type or types of commercialism are acceptable or not acceptable to teachers and administrators?

**Introduction of Table 1: Teachers and Administrators—Elementary and Secondary.** The mean score for all respondents on the 31-item subscale dealing with acceptability of commercialism was 3.3985 (standard deviation=0.6892). Mean scores
for each subtype of commercialism ranged from a low of 2.0804 on corporate/business advertising in the classroom to 4.5631 on collecting box tops or labels for fundraising (outside of the classroom).

The following table, Table 1, presents the means and standard deviations of each subtype of commercialism for all respondents (see Table 1). With 1.00=never acceptable, 2.00=rarely acceptable, 3.00=neutral, 4.00=sometimes acceptable, and 5.00=always acceptable, a score of 3.00 represents a neutral stand on the acceptability of a particular subtype of commercialism. Scores less than 3.00 show opposition for a particular subtype of commercialism, while a score greater than 3.00 says that a particular subtype is sometimes or always acceptable to the group of teachers and administrators that responded. The table is presented in order from the lowest mean score to the highest mean score.
Table 1: Teachers and Administrators—Elementary and Secondary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtype of Commercialism</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business advertising in the classroom (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>2.0804</td>
<td>1.2075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers or other staff actively promoting a product in the classroom</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>2.1608</td>
<td>1.2036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff conducting market research on students in the classroom</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>2.4573</td>
<td>1.1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sales (inside the classroom) like candles, gift wrap, novelties, etc. for fundraising</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>2.4623</td>
<td>1.3917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos broadcast on TV monitors in the classrooms</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.5550</td>
<td>1.3401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy sales (inside the classroom) for fundraising</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>2.6359</td>
<td>1.4487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in shows/videos shown in the classroom</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.7000</td>
<td>1.3033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business (non adopt-a-school partner) advertising in the hallways (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>2.7330</td>
<td>1.4319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business advertising on the gym floor with the gym being used for games, classes, and/or as a cafeteria (e.g. corporate/business logos)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.8750</td>
<td>1.3743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on the school’s website</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>2.9369</td>
<td>1.3218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on billboards/electronic signs outside the building</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>3.2222</td>
<td>1.3031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business advertising on the gym walls with the gym being used for games, classes, and/or as a cafeteria (e.g. banners, posters, scoreboard, etc.)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.2400</td>
<td>1.2611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business sponsorship of a sports team</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>3.2476</td>
<td>1.2848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast food franchise(s) in the building (with a percentage of the profits going to the school)</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>3.2829</td>
<td>1.3677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on calendars displayed in the classroom (e.g. Union Pacific, etc.)</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3.3216</td>
<td>1.3284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtype of Commercialism</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School buildings or other facilities named for donors or corporations/businesses</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>3.3237</td>
<td>1.3641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive soft drink contracts</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>3.4010</td>
<td>1.2469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on book covers, mouse pads, or student planners (e.g. milk, music, etc.)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.4850</td>
<td>1.2600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in the school newspaper—distributed to students in the classroom</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3.5025</td>
<td>1.3138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in the school newsletter</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>3.5388</td>
<td>1.2672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business sponsored presentations in class (e.g. banking, business, culinary arts, etc.)</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>3.6465</td>
<td>1.1066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business (adopt-a-school partner) advertising in the hallways (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>3.7524</td>
<td>1.2501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic or other book sales--promoted by teachers in the classroom</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3.8945</td>
<td>1.0843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on football stadium scoreboards</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>3.9806</td>
<td>0.9726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in printed programs for sports contests, activities, etc</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>4.1932</td>
<td>0.8426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sales (outside the classroom) like candles, gift-wrap, novelties, etc. for fundraising</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>4.2330</td>
<td>0.9698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vending machines (e.g. snack) in the building</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>4.2718</td>
<td>1.0564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy sales (outside the classroom) for fundraising</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>4.2718</td>
<td>0.9391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft drink machines in the building</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>4.2767</td>
<td>1.0893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting local store receipts (outside the classroom) for money or goods</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>4.4293</td>
<td>0.8051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting (outside the classroom) box tops or labels for fundraising</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>4.5631</td>
<td>0.7146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Discussion of Table 1: Teachers and Administrators—Elementary and Secondary.

Of the thirty-one subtypes of commercialism, ten were in the rarely or never acceptable range (less than 3.0) and twenty-one subtypes had mean scores in the sometimes or always acceptable range (greater than 3.0). With scores just above two, corporate banners in the classroom (mean=2.0804, standard deviation=1.2075) and teachers actively promoting a product in the classroom (mean=2.1608, standard deviation=1.2036) were the least acceptable types of commercialism. With scores above 4.4, the most acceptable types of commercialism were collecting local store receipts (mean=4.4293, standard deviation=0.8051) and collecting box tops or labels (mean=4.5631, standard deviation=0.7146).

Types of commercialism with standard deviations of less than 1.0 show that there is more agreement than types of commercialism with standard deviations greater than 1.0. Types of commercialism with standard deviations less than 1.0 included collecting box tops or labels (mean=4.5631, standard deviation=0.7146), collecting store receipts (mean=4.4293, standard deviation=0.8051), corporate ads in programs (mean=4.1932, standard deviation=0.8426), other sales outside the classroom (mean=4.2330, standard deviation=0.9698), and ads on stadium scoreboards (mean=3.9806, standard deviation=0.9726). Types of commercialism with less agreement among respondents were other sales inside the classroom (mean=2.4623, standard deviation=1.3917), non-adopt a school partner advertising in the halls (mean=2.7300, standard deviation=1.4319), and candy sales inside the classroom (mean=2.6359, standard deviation=1.4487). These three types of commercialism with the largest standard
deviations and therefore the least agreement among the respondents also had mean scores less than 3.0, which showed less agreement on the less acceptable types of commercialism.

Introduction of Table 2: Teachers only—Elementary and Secondary. The mean score for the teacher respondents on the 31-item subscale dealing with acceptability of commercialism was 3.4769 (standard deviation=0.6730). Mean scores for each subtype of commercialism ranged from a low of 2.0971 on corporate/business advertising in the classroom to 4.6389 on collecting box tops or labels for fundraising (outside of the classroom).

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of each subtype of commercialism for the teacher respondents in order from lowest mean score to highest mean score (see Table 2). With 1.00=never acceptable, 2.00=rarely acceptable, 3.00=neutral, 4.00=sometimes acceptable, and 5.00=always acceptable, a score of 3.00 represents a neutral stand on the acceptability of a particular subtype of commercialism. Scores less than 3.00 show opposition for a particular subtype of commercialism, while a score greater than 3.00 says that a particular subtype is sometimes or always acceptable to the group of teachers that responded. Of the thirty-one subtypes of commercialism, nine were in the rarely or never acceptable range and twenty-two subtypes had mean scores in the sometimes or always acceptable range (see Table 2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtype of Commercialism</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business advertising in the classroom (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2.0971</td>
<td>1.1506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers or other staff actively promoting a product in the classroom</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.3462</td>
<td>1.2601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff conducting market research on students in the classroom</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2.6408</td>
<td>1.2276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos broadcast on TV monitors in the classrooms</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.7019</td>
<td>1.3063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sales (inside the classroom) like candles, gift wrap, novelties, etc. for fundraising</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2.7767</td>
<td>1.4412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business (non adopt-a-school partner) advertising in the hallways (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>2.8148</td>
<td>1.4283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy sales (inside the classroom) for fundraising</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2.9109</td>
<td>1.4973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in shows/videos shown in the classroom</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.9423</td>
<td>1.2834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business advertising on the gym floor with the gym being used for games, classes, and/or as a cafeteria (e.g. corporate/business logos)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.9519</td>
<td>1.3537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on the school’s website</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.0741</td>
<td>1.2730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on billboards/electronic signs outside the building</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.2778</td>
<td>1.3243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive soft drink contracts</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.2857</td>
<td>1.1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business advertising on the gym walls with the gym being used for games, classes, and/or as a cafeteria (e.g. banners, posters, scoreboard, etc.)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.3846</td>
<td>1.2795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on calendars displayed in the classroom (e.g. Union Pacific, etc.)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.4423</td>
<td>1.3133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School buildings or other facilities named for donors or corporations/businesses</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.4537</td>
<td>1.2780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Teachers only—Elementary and Secondary (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtype of Commercialism</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast food franchise(s) in the building (with a percentage of the profits going to the school)</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3.4953</td>
<td>1.2986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business sponsorship of a sports team</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.5000</td>
<td>1.1721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in the school newsletter</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.5185</td>
<td>1.2787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on book covers, mouse pads, or student planners (e.g. milk, music, etc.)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.6250</td>
<td>1.2242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in the school newspaper—distributed to students in the classroom</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.6442</td>
<td>1.2221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business (adopt-a-school partner) advertising in the hallways (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.7037</td>
<td>1.2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business sponsored presentations in class (e.g. banking, business, culinary arts, etc.)</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.7451</td>
<td>1.0595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic or other book sales—promoted by teachers in the classroom</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.9903</td>
<td>1.1332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft drink machines in the building</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4.0463</td>
<td>1.2707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vending machines (e.g. snack) in the building</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4.0926</td>
<td>1.1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on football stadium scoreboards</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4.1028</td>
<td>0.9208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sales (outside the classroom) like candles, gift-wrap, novelties, etc. for fundraising</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4.2037</td>
<td>0.9740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy sales (outside the classroom) for fundraising</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4.2500</td>
<td>0.9776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in printed programs for sports contests, activities, etc</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4.2778</td>
<td>0.7467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting local store receipts (outside the classroom) for money or goods</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4.5140</td>
<td>0.7934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting (outside the classroom) box tops or labels for fundraising</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4.6389</td>
<td>0.7032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion of Table 2: Teachers only—Elementary and Secondary. With a score just above two, corporate banners in the classroom (mean=2.0971, standard deviation=1.1506) was the least acceptable type of commercialism to the teachers that responded. With scores above 4.5, the most acceptable types of commercialism were collecting local store receipts (mean=4.5140, standard deviation=0.7934) and collecting box tops or labels (mean=4.6389, standard deviation=0.7032). These means were greater and standard deviations were lower than for all respondents together. This shows that the teachers who responded were more accepting of these types of commercialism and more agreeable than all respondents together.

Types of commercialism with standard deviations of less than 1.0 show that there is more agreement than types of commercialism with standard deviations greater than 1.0. Types of commercialism with standard deviations less than 1.0 included collecting box tops or labels (mean=4.6389, standard deviation=0.7032), corporate ads in programs (mean=4.2778, standard deviation=0.7467), collecting store receipts (mean=4.5140, standard deviation=0.7934), ads on stadium scoreboards (mean=4.1028, standard deviation=0.9208), other sales outside the classroom (mean=4.2037, standard deviation=0.9740), and candy sales outside the classroom (mean=4.2500, standard deviation=0.9776). These six types of commercialism with the most agreement among teacher respondents also had the six highest means, which meant that they were also the most acceptable among teacher respondents.

Types of commercialism with less agreement among teacher respondents were non-adopt a school partner advertising in the halls (mean=2.8148, standard deviation=0.7100).
deviation=1.4283), other sales inside the classroom (mean=2.7767, standard deviation=1.4412), and candy sales inside the classroom (mean=2.9103, standard deviation=1.4973). These three types of commercialism with the largest standard deviations and therefore the least agreement among the teacher respondents were the same three types of commercialism that all respondents had the least agreement on.

Introduction of Table 3: Administrators only—Elementary and Secondary. The mean score for administrator respondents on the 31-item subscale dealing with acceptability of commercialism was 3.3130 (standard deviation=0.6999). Mean scores for each subtype of commercialism ranged from a low of 1.9579 on teachers or other staff actively promoting a product in the classroom to 4.5306 on soft drink machines in the building.

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of each subtype of commercialism for administrator respondents only in order from least acceptable to most acceptable (see Table 3). With 1.00=never acceptable, 2.00=rarely acceptable, 3.00=neutral, 4.00=sometimes acceptable, and 5.00=always acceptable, a score of 3.00 represents a neutral stand on the acceptability of a particular subtype of commercialism. A score less than 3.00 shows opposition for a particular subtype of commercialism, while a score greater than 3.00 says that a particular subtype is acceptable to the group of administrators that responded. Of the thirty-one subtypes of commercialism, eleven were in the rarely or never acceptable range and twenty subtypes had mean scores in the sometimes or always acceptable range (see Table 3).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtype of Commercialism</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers or other staff actively promoting a product in the classroom</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1.9579</td>
<td>1.1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business advertising in the classroom (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.0625</td>
<td>1.2717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sales (inside the classroom) like candles, gift wrap, novelties, etc. for fundraising</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.1250</td>
<td>1.2587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff conducting market research on students in the classroom</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.2604</td>
<td>1.1355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy sales (inside the classroom) for fundraising</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>2.3404</td>
<td>1.3405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos broadcast on TV monitors in the classrooms</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.3958</td>
<td>1.3648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in shows/videos shown in the classroom</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.4375</td>
<td>1.2799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business (non adopt-a-school partner) advertising in the hallways (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2.6429</td>
<td>1.4377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on the school’s website</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2.7857</td>
<td>1.3641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business advertising on the gym floor with the gym being used for games, classes, and/or as a cafeteria (e.g. corporate/business logos)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.7917</td>
<td>1.3986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business sponsorship of a sports team</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2.9694</td>
<td>1.3505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast food franchise(s) in the building (with a percentage of the profits going to the school)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.0510</td>
<td>1.4096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business advertising on the gym walls with the gym being used for games, classes, and/or as a cafeteria (e.g. banners, posters, scoreboard, etc.)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.0833</td>
<td>1.2283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on billboards/electronic signs outside the building</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>3.1616</td>
<td>1.2834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School buildings or other facilities named for donors or corporations/businesses</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>3.1818</td>
<td>1.4454</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Administrators only—Elementary and Secondary (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtype of Commercialism</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on calendars displayed in the classroom (e.g. Union Pacific, etc.)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.1895</td>
<td>1.3392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on book covers, mouse pads, or student planners (e.g. milk, music, etc.)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.3333</td>
<td>1.2869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in the school newspaper—distributed to students in the classroom</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.3474</td>
<td>1.3973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive soft drink contracts</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3.5258</td>
<td>1.2998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business sponsored presentations in class (e.g. banking, business, culinary arts, etc.)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.5417</td>
<td>1.1509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in the school newsletter</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.5612</td>
<td>1.2606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic or other book sales—promoted by teachers in the classroom</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.7917</td>
<td>1.0251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business (adopt-a-school partner) advertising in the hallways (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.8061</td>
<td>1.2654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos on football stadium scoreboards</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>3.8485</td>
<td>1.0138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate/business ads or logos in printed programs for sports contests, activities, etc.</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>4.1010</td>
<td>0.9313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sales (outside the classroom) like candles, gift-wrap, novelties, etc. for fundraising</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.2653</td>
<td>0.9691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy sales (outside the classroom) for fundraising</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.2959</td>
<td>0.8991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting local store receipts (outside the classroom) for money or goods</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.3367</td>
<td>0.8116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vending machines (e.g. snack) in the building</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.4694</td>
<td>0.8520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting (outside the classroom) box tops or labels for fundraising</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.4796</td>
<td>0.7212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft drink machines in the building</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.5306</td>
<td>0.7760</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion of Table 3: Administrators only—Elementary and Secondary. With a score less than two, the least acceptable type of commercialism for administrators was a teacher actively promoting a product in the classroom (mean=1.9579, standard deviation=1.1101). Interestingly, this type of commercialism was less acceptable to administrators (mean=1.9579) than to teachers (mean=2.3462).

With scores above 4.4, the most acceptable types of commercialism were snack machines in the building (mean=4.4694, standard deviation=0.8520), collecting box tops or labels (mean=4.4796, standard deviation=0.7212), and soft drink machines in the building (mean=4.5306, standard deviation=0.7760). The highest mean or most acceptable type of commercialism for administrators was soft drink machines in the building (mean=4.5306). Administrators in the selected midwestern urban school district use the income from soft drink machines as a common means of raising extra cash (see Appendix G—Comments).

Types of commercialism with standard deviations of less than 1.0 show that there is more agreement than types of commercialism with standard deviations greater than 1.0. Types of commercialism with standard deviations less than 1.0 included collecting box tops or labels (mean=4.4796, standard deviation=0.7212), soft drink machines in the building (mean=4.5306, standard deviation=0.7760), collecting store receipts (mean=4.3367, standard deviation=0.8116), snack machines in the building (mean=4.4694, standard deviation=0.8520), candy sales outside the classroom (mean=4.2959, standard deviation=0.8991), corporate ads in programs (mean=4.1010, standard deviation=0.9313), and other sales outside the classroom (mean=4.2653,
standard deviation=0.9691). These seven types of commercialism with the most agreement among administrator respondents also had the seven highest means, which meant that they were also the most acceptable among administrator respondents. There were more mean scores with standard deviations less than 1.0 for administrators than for teachers. This shows more agreement among administrators than teachers on commercialism in schools.

Types of commercialism with less agreement among administrator respondents were fast-food franchises in the building (mean=3.0510, standard deviation=1.4096), non-adopt a school partner advertising in the halls (mean=2.6429, standard deviation=1.4377), and school buildings named for donors (mean=3.1818, standard deviation=1.4454). These three types of commercialism had the largest standard deviations and therefore the least agreement among the administrator respondents. Two of the three (fast-food franchises and school buildings named for donors) were different from the types of commercialism that the teacher respondents had the least agreement on.

**Research Question 2**

Are there differences between a school district's teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the different types of commercialism in public elementary and secondary schools?

Means were calculated for every respondent for each Type of Commercialism: Type I, Type II, and Type III. Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs) tests were used to determine if perceptions of each type of commercialism differed among elementary and secondary teachers and administrators. There were three different Two-
way ANOVAs, one for each defined type of commercialism. A .05 alpha level was employed.

**Type I Commercialism.** Only the respondent’s school level affected the scores on acceptability of Type I Commercialism ($F(1,203)=4.453, p=0.036$). Secondary teachers’ and administrators’ mean score (mean=3.6017, standard deviation=0.8245) was significantly greater than the elementary teachers’ and administrators’ mean score (mean=3.3486, standard deviation=0.8353) on the acceptability of Type I Commercialism or commercialism outside the school building (see Appendix A—Table 4).

The main effect for position was not significant ($F(1,203)=3.697, p=0.056$). The elementary and secondary teachers’ mean score (mean=3.6005, standard deviation=0.7971) was not significantly greater than the elementary and secondary administrators’ mean score (mean=3.3754, standard deviation=0.8665) (see Appendix A—Table 4). Interaction between level and position was not significant ($F(1,203)=0.362, p=0.548$) for Type I Commercialism.

**Type II Commercialism.** There were no significant differences between the mean scores for Type II Commercialism or commercialism inside the building but not inside the classroom. School level did not affect the scores on acceptability of Type II Commercialism ($F(1,202)=1.961, p=.163$). Secondary teachers’ and administrators’ mean score (mean=3.9758, standard deviation=0.6525) was not significantly greater than the elementary teachers’ and administrators’ mean score (mean=3.8487, standard deviation=0.6525) (see Appendix A—Table 4).
deviation=0.6717) on the acceptability of commercialism that is in the school building but not inside the classroom (see Appendix A—Table 5).

The main effect for position was not significant (F(1,202)=0.123, p=0.726). The elementary and secondary administrators’ mean score (mean=3.9404, standard deviation=0.6047) was not significantly greater than the elementary and secondary teachers’ mean score (mean=3.9044, standard deviation=0.7127) for Type II Commercialism (see Appendix A—Table 5). Interaction between level and position was not significant (F(1,202)=0.406, p=0.525) for Type II Commercialism.

Type III Commercialism. There were significant differences between the mean scores for Type III Commercialism or commercialism inside the classroom. School level did affect the scores on acceptability of Type III Commercialism (F(1,196)=21.120, p<0.001). Secondary teachers’ and administrators’ mean score (mean=3.1475, standard deviation=0.8456) was significantly greater than the elementary teachers’ and administrators’ mean score (mean=2.6270, standard deviation=0.6797) on the acceptability of commercialism inside the classroom (see Appendix A—Table 6).

The main effect for position was also significant (F(1,196)=7.944, p=0.005). The elementary and secondary teachers’ mean score (mean=3.0830, standard deviation=0.7895) was significantly greater than the elementary and secondary administrators’ mean score (mean=2.7619, standard deviation=0.8236) for Type III Commercialism (see Appendix A—Table 6). Interaction between level and position was not significant (F(1,202)=0.406, p=0.525) for Type III Commercialism.
Other Findings

Looking at other ANOVAs, several statistically significant mean differences were discovered. For Type III Commercialism or commercialism inside the classroom, the elementary teachers' mean score (mean=2.8409, standard deviation=0.6666) was significantly greater than the elementary administrators' mean score (mean=2.4230, standard deviation=0.6344), (F(1,82)=8.668, p=0.004).

There was also a statistically significant difference between the elementary teachers' mean score (mean=2.8409, standard deviation=0.6666) and the secondary teachers' mean score (mean=3.2406, standard deviation=0.8274), (F (1,102)=6.719, p=0.011). Secondary teachers were more accepting of commercialism inside the classroom than elementary teachers.

The elementary administrators (mean=2.4230, standard deviation=0.6344) were significantly less accepting of commercialism in the classroom than the secondary administrators (mean=3.0369, standard deviation=0.8615), (F (1,94)=15.155, p=0.000). Also, there was not a statistically significant difference between the mean scores for secondary teachers (mean=3.2406, standard deviation=0.8274) and secondary administrators (mean=3.0369, standard deviation=0.8615), (F (1,114)=1.680, p=0.198).

Finally, for Types I and II Commercialism, there were no statistically significant differences between the means for elementary teachers and administrators, nor for secondary teachers and administrators, nor for elementary and secondary teachers, nor for elementary and secondary administrators.
Summary

Teachers and administrators at the elementary and secondary levels responded that commercialism in the classroom was acceptable under certain circumstances. That is, ten of the thirty-one subtypes of commercialism were rarely or never acceptable to the teachers and administrators that responded, while the means of the remaining twenty-one subtypes were in the sometimes or always acceptable range.

There were significant differences in the acceptability of Type III Commercialism, or advertising in the classroom. The mean score for the group of administrators was significantly lower than the group of teachers that responded. This means that the group of administrators was less accepting of commercialism than the group of teachers that responded to the survey. The elementary administrators' mean score (2.430) was low enough that when combined with the secondary administrators' mean score (3.0369), their overall administrator mean score (2.7619) for Type III Commercialism was less than the overall teachers' mean score (3.0830). Elementary teachers (mean=2.8409) were less accepting of commercialism in the classroom than secondary teachers (mean=3.2406).

There was also a significant difference between the mean scores for the group of elementary respondents (mean=2.6270) and the group of secondary level respondents (mean=3.1475). Elementary teachers and administrators as a group were more opposed to commercialism in the classroom, while secondary teachers and administrators together were more accepting.
This study’s statistical results and revelations will be of interest to those interested in the perceptions of secondary and elementary teachers and administrators toward the use of commercialism in schools. Chapter 5 will discuss and interpret these findings.
Chapter 5
Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Discussion

School districts have turned to commercial sources for help with funding of such things as gym floors, athletic fields, lighting for athletic fields, and sports equipment (Bell, 2002; Brunkow, 2001; Molnar, 2002). Opposition from groups like the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU) at Arizona State University has forced districts to limit or eliminate commercial advertising in the schools (Bell, 2002; Molnar, 2002). Knowing how teachers and administrators feel about commercialism in schools could facilitate a district's decision to utilize corporate advertising.

The survey presented to a sampling of teachers and administrators examined the perceptions of elementary and secondary teachers and administrators on commercialism in the schools and particularly about the acceptability of commercial advertising outside the school building, inside the school building but not inside the classroom, and inside the classroom. Data were gathered through an online survey. One hundred and sixty-nine building administrators and two hundred teachers from a midwestern urban school district were initially asked to participate in this study. Two hundred and seventeen surveys were submitted online (59%).

This chapter interprets the findings from the data collection, which were presented in Chapter 4. The results from that chapter will be used as a basis for discussion. Conclusions drawn from this study will also be used to make recommendations for actions and for further research.
Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study. Conclusions are presented for each research question, with attention to the relevance and importance of the findings and implications for practice. Recommendations and summary follow this section.

Research Question 1. Given that different types of commercialism may result in varying types of commercial advertising, what type or types of commercialism are acceptable or not acceptable to teachers and administrators?

The overall mean score of the thirty-one commercialism subtypes for the elementary and secondary teachers and administrators who responded to the survey was 3.3984 (standard deviation=0.6892) on a scale of 1 to 5. With 1.00=never acceptable, 2.00=rarely acceptable, 3.00=neutral, 4.00=sometimes acceptable, and 5.00=always acceptable, the findings indicate that the participants, overall, have neutral to sometimes acceptable attitudes toward commercialism in schools.

Of the ten means of subtypes of commercialism that the respondents ranked less than neutral, seven related to teachers participating in commercial activities in the classroom. Corporate banners or posters in the classroom had the lowest mean (mean=2.0804, standard deviation=1.2075). On the five-point scale this meant that corporate banners in the classroom were rarely acceptable.

The subtypes with the highest means included snack vending machines (mean=4.2718, standard deviation=1.0564), candy sales outside the classroom (mean=4.2718, standard deviation=0.9391), and soft drink machines in the building.
(mean=4.2767, standard deviation=1.0893). Collecting box tops and labels for fundraising outside of the classroom had the highest mean score (mean=4.5631, standard deviation=0.7146).

**Research Question 2.** Are there differences between a school district's teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the different types of commercialism in public elementary and secondary schools?

The most significant differences were between the means within Type III Commercialism or commercial advertising inside the classroom. There was a significant difference between the mean scores for the group of elementary respondents and the group of secondary respondents. The group of elementary teachers and administrators who responded to the survey was less accepting of commercialism inside the classroom than the group of secondary teachers and administrators who responded.

There was also a statistically significant difference between the mean scores for the group of teachers and the group of administrators for Type III Commercialism. The elementary and secondary administrators grouped together were less accepting of commercialism inside the classroom than the elementary and secondary teachers were as a group.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Opposition to commercialism in schools from groups like Arizona State’s Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU) is based on three areas of concern. The first area is the idea that commercialism corrupts the students by placing advertising in the schools (Robelen, 1998). The second concern about commercialism in the schools
is the equity issue. Wealthy schools or districts may be able to raise more funding than other schools or districts (Ritchey, 2000). The third area that concerns CERU and other opponents of commercialism is the use of exclusive contracts. Opponents of exclusive contracts are concerned with the poor nutritional value of the products being sold (NASBE, 2000).

The most common reason given by the respondents for opposition to commercialism in the schools was that the commercialism might detract from student learning (see Table 7). Fifty-nine percent of the respondents were concerned that the commercial advertising might detract from student learning. They were also concerned that the commercialism may promote poor nutrition, influence the curriculum, help the wealthier schools get richer, or that commercialism may result in schools giving up control to the businesses (see Table 7). Only 16.1% of the teachers and administrators responded that they felt the opposition to commercialism was based on the fact that taxpayers should be paying the bill (see Table 7).

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposition Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May interfere with learning</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May influence the curriculum</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotes poor nutrition</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthier schools may get richer</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives up control of the school</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxpayers should pay for education</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Due to tax and spending limits passed by many states, there is a chronic need for funding and many school districts have had to look to alternative sources for financing (Addonizio, 2000; Consumers Union, 1995). Alternative sources like candy sales and exclusive soft drink contracts have resulted in an increase in commercial activities or commercialism within the schools.

School districts are looking at commercialism in their schools as a way to increase funding. If school boards had a way of measuring taxpayers' opposition to commercialism or the acceptance of commercialism in schools, those boards would be prepared to make decisions about whether or not to use commercialism. School boards would find it helpful to have an instrument that they could use to survey which types of commercialism are acceptable or not acceptable to their constituencies.

Research on commercialism in schools was found in the literature, but no instruments for measuring the acceptability of commercialism were found. The instrument created and used in this study provides district officials with a valid and reliable tool for measuring the acceptability of commercialism. The survey in this study also provides decision-makers with a means for determining which types of commercialism are acceptable and unacceptable.

This study gives the types of commercialism that were acceptable and unacceptable to the teachers and administrators of a midwestern urban school district. The instrument can be adapted and used to survey the taxpayers, parents, or students of a school district in order to discover if commercialism is acceptable or not with these groups.
Recommendations for Future Research

The study of teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions of commercialism in schools and the acceptability or unacceptability of commercialism is in its early stages of research. Important questions remain about the role of commercialism in schools. For example, does commercialism in the schools detract from student learning?

This study is a starting point from which to examine the types of commercialism that are acceptable or unacceptable in schools. The teachers and administrators who participated in this study had positive attitudes about several subtypes of commercialism in schools. However, they were concerned about commercialism that would interfere with learning. For example, they questioned whether teachers or other staff actively promoting a product in the classroom or corporate banners hanging in a classroom would interfere with student learning? The respondents ranked the types of commercialism that interfere with the teaching process in the classroom at or near the bottom of the acceptability scale.

In order to effect changes in the policy on the use of commercialism by school leaders, there must be further research to understand the long-term impact of commercial advertising in schools. Whether or not commercialism is acceptable to teachers, administrators, taxpayers, parents, or students, a study of the long-term effects of advertising in schools would enable districts to better judge commercialism’s impact on students and the learning process. These effects could then be weighed against the need for alternative funding sources.
Opportunities exist for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Qualitative studies might explore the perceptions of commercialism in schools across populations, seeking to confirm the findings of this quantitative study. This "perceptions of teachers and administrators on commercialism in schools study" could be replicated in other districts or with different subjects. A study that would look deeper into the actual reasons for opposition or acceptance of commercialism in schools could assist school leaders with their decision whether to use commercialism or not. A follow-up study could examine the reasons for opposition or acceptance of certain types of commercialism by administrators, teachers, taxpayers, parents, or students. In addition, a longitudinal study could look at the effects of commercialism on students' attitudes and learning.

Finally, additional research in this area could help inform district policies on the use of commercialism and assist school leaders in deciding whether or not to use commercialism, and if so, the types and degrees of acceptable commercialism. A policy to assist school leaders in these decisions must take into account the varied interest groups and the impact of the district's policy on those groups. The need to balance budgets without raising taxes along with the need to understand the reasons for opposition to commercialism in schools should encourage further research into the acceptance of, or opposition to, the use of different types of commercialism in schools. **Summary**

This study about the perceptions of teachers and administrators on the use of commercialism in the classroom began as an attempt to study alternative sources for
funding public schools. After finding literature on the types and amounts of commercial advertising in schools, and opposition to the use of commercialism, this study was designed to look at ways to determine which types of commercialism, if any, are acceptable or unacceptable. A midwestern urban school district allowed the researcher to survey 369 teachers and administrators of which 217 responded to an online survey about the acceptability or unacceptability of different types of commercialism in schools.

The overall perceptions of the teachers and administrators on the use of commercial advertising in schools were positive. However, the respondents’ level of acceptance was lower for commercialism inside the classroom. Respondents commented that commercialism was a “necessary evil” (see Appendix F).

Statistical analyses suggested that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the group of teachers and the group of administrators for commercialism inside the classroom. The teachers as a group were more accepting of commercialism in the classroom than the group of administrators that responded. It was unexpected by the researcher, however, to find teachers more accepting than administrators of commercialism inside the classroom.

There was also a statistically significant difference between the elementary teachers’ and administrators’ mean score as a group and the secondary teachers’ and administrators’ mean score as a group for the acceptance of commercialism inside the classroom. Elementary level teachers and administrators as a group were more opposed to commercialism in their classrooms than the group of secondary level teachers and administrators. The researcher expected this difference because the elementary level
student population is younger and more impressionable than the secondary student population.

Cronbach’s Alpha showed that separating the subtypes of commercialism into three “Types of Commercialism”: outside the school building, inside the building but not inside the classroom, and inside the classroom, was a statistically “reliable” method to group the subtypes.

Statistical analyses also revealed that twenty-one of the thirty-one subtypes of commercialism (67.7%) had means higher than neutral, showing a level of acceptability of commercialism in schools by all respondents. With an overall mean score of 3.3985 for all respondents, this study shows that commercialism is “sometimes” acceptable for the teachers and administrators.

Data is important in decision-making. This study provides school leaders with a study they can use to measure perceptions for, or against, commercialism in schools. School boards will be able to use accurate, up-to-date data in their policy-making decisions. This study also provides respondents’ comments on commercialism and the study can also be adapted for the specific needs of a particular district.

There are reasons for opposition to commercial advertising in schools, such as interfering with student learning by exposing them to advertising in schools, and promoting poor nutrition by selling soft drinks and candy. However, with the costs of education increasing, decision makers have been forced to look to commercialism as an alternative means of funding. This study suggests that commercialism is acceptable to the teachers and administrators of a midwestern urban school district. While the current
policy of the selected school district (see Appendix D) limits commercialism in their schools, the district administration will know that 67% of the thirty-one subtypes of commercialism are acceptable to their teachers and administrators, and the district may adjust their policy accordingly.
References


www.consumersunion.org/other/schooldc400.htm
Appendices
Appendix A

Tables 4, 5, and 6
### Table 4
Type I Commercialism—Outside the School Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Respondent’s Position</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3.4968</td>
<td>0.7822</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>3.2037</td>
<td>0.8683</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.3486</td>
<td>0.8353</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3.6719</td>
<td>0.8056</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>3.5185</td>
<td>0.8464</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.6017</td>
<td>0.8245</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3.6005</td>
<td>0.7971</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>3.3754</td>
<td>0.8665</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.4929</td>
<td>0.8366</td>
<td>207</td>
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</table>

### Table 5
Type II Commercialism—Inside the Building but Not Inside the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Respondent’s Position</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3.8621</td>
<td>0.7213</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>3.8354</td>
<td>0.6263</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.8487</td>
<td>0.6717</td>
<td>88</td>
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<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3.9335</td>
<td>0.7109</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>4.0259</td>
<td>0.5783</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.9758</td>
<td>0.6525</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3.9044</td>
<td>0.7127</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>3.9404</td>
<td>0.6047</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.9215</td>
<td>0.6621</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Level</td>
<td>Respondent's Position</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2.8409</td>
<td>0.6666</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>2.4230</td>
<td>0.6344</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.6270</td>
<td>0.6797</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3.2406</td>
<td>0.8274</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>3.0369</td>
<td>0.8615</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.1475</td>
<td>0.8456</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3.0830</td>
<td>0.7895</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>2.7619</td>
<td>0.8236</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.9289</td>
<td>0.8199</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6
Type III Commercialism—Inside the Classroom
Appendix B

Cover Letter
Dear Teacher or Administrator,

Advertising is becoming commonplace in schools today. Commercialism is one way that teachers, administrators, and other staff raise extra funds for their building. Schools may have soft drink machines, sell candy, or have businesses as adopt-a-school partners. There is also opposition to commercialism in schools. I am asking you to complete a survey that will help determine whether different types of commercialism in schools are acceptable or unacceptable.

The survey will take about ten minutes to complete and will be anonymous. This survey has been approved by OPS. Participation is voluntary and identifiers will not be maintained, thus ensuring confidentiality of all participants.

Please answer the questions according to how you feel about the particular type of commercialism. The results will be made available to all participants. If you would like a copy of the results, please email me at gerard.kowal@ops.org. Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey.

Thanks again,

Jerry Kowal
Dean of Students
South High School
557-3608
gerard.kowal@ops.org
Appendix C

Survey
Survey

Please answer the following questions as they best fit your current position.

1. What is your school type?
   a. Elementary School
   b. Middle School
   c. High School

2. What is your current job title?
   a. Teacher
   b. Principal
   c. Assistant Principal
   d. Dean of Students

3. What is your gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male

4. How many years have you been in your current position as a teacher or administrator?
   __________ years

5. If you are an administrator, how many years were you a teacher before becoming an administrator?
   __________ years

6. What is the size of the student population of your school building?
   __________ students
Regardless of OPS policy, please answer the following questions according to how you feel about the particular type of commercialism addressed, whether or not it is present in your school building. The commercialism would not include any controversial advertising.

The following group of questions deals with commercialism outside the school building.

7. Corporate/business ads or logos on football stadium scoreboards?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

8. Corporate/business ads or logos in printed programs for sports contests, activities, etc.?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

9. Corporate/business ads or logos on billboards/electronic signs outside the building?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

10. Corporate/business sponsorship of a sports team?
    a. Never acceptable
    b. Rarely acceptable
    c. Neutral
    d. Sometimes acceptable
    e. Always acceptable

11. Corporate/business ads or logos in the school newsletter?
    a. Never acceptable
    b. Rarely acceptable
    c. Neutral
    d. Sometimes acceptable
    e. Always acceptable
12. Corporate/business ads or logos on the school’s website?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

13. School buildings or other facilities named for donors or corporations/businesses?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

The following group of questions deals with commercialism inside the school building but not inside the classroom.

14. Soft drink machines in the building?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

15. Other vending machines (e.g. snack) in the building?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

16. Exclusive soft drink contracts?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

17. Collecting (outside the classroom) box tops or labels for fundraising?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable
18. Corporate/business (non adopt-a-school partner) advertising in the hallways (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

19. Corporate/business (adopt-a-school partner) advertising in the hallways (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

20. Collecting local store receipts (outside the classroom) for money or goods?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

21. Candy sales (outside the classroom) for fundraising?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

22. Other sales (outside the classroom) like candles, gift-wrap, novelties, etc. for fundraising?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable
23. Fast food franchise(s) in the building (with a percentage of the profits going to the school)?
   a. Never acceptable  
   b. Rarely acceptable  
   c. Neutral  
   d. Sometimes acceptable  
   e. Always acceptable

The following group of questions deals with commercialism inside the classroom.

24. Corporate/business advertising on the gym walls with the gym being used for games, classes, and/or as a cafeteria (e.g. banners, posters, scoreboard, etc.)?
   a. Never acceptable  
   b. Rarely acceptable  
   c. Neutral  
   d. Sometimes acceptable  
   e. Always acceptable

25. Corporate/business advertising on the gym floor with the gym being used for games, classes, and/or as a cafeteria (e.g. corporate/business logos)?
   a. Never acceptable  
   b. Rarely acceptable  
   c. Neutral  
   d. Sometimes acceptable  
   e. Always acceptable

26. Corporate/business advertising in the classroom (e.g. banners, posters, etc.)?
   a. Never acceptable  
   b. Rarely acceptable  
   c. Neutral  
   d. Sometimes acceptable  
   e. Always acceptable

27. Corporate/business ads or logos in the school newspaper--distributed to students in the classroom?
   a. Never acceptable  
   b. Rarely acceptable  
   c. Neutral  
   d. Sometimes acceptable  
   e. Always acceptable
28. Corporate/business ads or logos on calendars displayed in the classroom (e.g. Union Pacific, etc.)?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

29. Corporate/business ads or logos on book covers, mouse pads, or student planners (e.g. milk, music, etc.)?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

30. Corporate/business ads or logos in shows/videos shown in the classroom?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

31. Corporate/business ads or logos broadcast on TV monitors in the classrooms?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

32. Scholastic or other book sales—promoted by teachers in the classroom?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

33. Teachers or other staff actively promoting a product in the classroom?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable
34. Corporate/business sponsored presentations in class (e.g. banking, business, culinary arts, etc.)?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

35. Staff conducting market research on students in the classroom?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

36. Candy sales (inside the classroom) for fundraising?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

37. Other sales (inside the classroom) like candles, gift-wrap, novelties, etc. for fundraising?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable

38. Other type of commercialism not listed previously (please describe) ________________________?
   a. Never acceptable
   b. Rarely acceptable
   c. Neutral
   d. Sometimes acceptable
   e. Always acceptable
39. Why do you think there is opposition to commercialism in schools? Please check all that apply and fill in any other reasons that you feel may apply.
   a. Gives up control of the school
   b. May influence students
   c. May influence the curriculum
   d. Promotes poor nutrition
   e. Wealthier schools may get richer
   f. Taxpayers should pay for education
   g. Other(s), (please fill in) ____________________________

The following question deals with your personal views, opinions, and/or ideas of commercialism in the schools.

40. Please add your personal comments on commercialism in the schools.

   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
Appendix D

OPS’ Board of Education Policy on Advertising in the Schools
OPS' Board of Education Policy on Advertising in the Schools

6.15 Advertising in the Schools (Revised 9/22/97)

Students, staff members, or the facilities of the schools may not be used in any manner for advertising or promoting the interest of any community or nonschool agency or organization without the approval of the Board of Education. Exceptions to the above rule are:

a. The superintendent of schools may cooperate in furthering the work of any nonprofit, communitywide social service agency provided such cooperation does not infringe on or diminish the amount of time devoted to the school program.

b. Any person seeking to distribute fliers or announcements concerning nonschool events or organizations to a substantial number of students must abide by the general guidelines established for this purpose contained in the Practices and Procedures of the Omaha Public Schools, copies of which are available from the building principal and/or the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

c. The superintendent of schools may authorize the use of films and materials which simply bear the name of the producing company, but which do not in any way involve a program or the presence of any agent in the classrooms. Any appeal by a student from a determination by the Office of the Superintendent that the material the student submitted may not be distributed shall be heard and decided by the Board of Education within five school days of receipt by the director of a written request for a hearing before the board.
Appendix E

OPS' Permission to Survey Staff
April 28, 2003

Gerard Kowal
South High School

Dear Gerard:

The Research Review Committee has reviewed your research proposal that involves the collection of data from teachers and administrators through processes such as the examination and/or collection of information from files or records, direct observation, focus groups, or individual interviews.

We believe your study has merit and permission is granted for you to proceed under the following conditions:

➢ Participation is voluntary.
➢ In the reporting of the results, teachers and administrators will not be personally identifiable.
➢ You will be willing to share results of your study with OPS.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Peter Smith
Director of Research

PS/kt
Appendix F

IRB Approval
June 2, 2003

Gerard Kowal
South High School
4519 South 24 Street
Omaha NE 68107

IRB#: 210-03-EX

TITLE OF PROTOCOL: Commercialism in Public Schools: A Study of the Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators on Accepting Corporate Advertising

Dear Mr. Kowal:

The IRB has reviewed your Exemption Form for the above-titled research project. According to the information provided, this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46:101b, category 2. You are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines. It is also understood that the IRB will be immediately notified of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project.

Please be advised that the IRB has a maximum protocol approval period of three years from the original date of approval and release. If this study continues beyond the three year approval period, the project must be resubmitted in order to maintain an active approval status.

Sincerely,

Ernest D. Prentice, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, IRB

EDP/gdk
Respondents’ Comments

I believe firmly that schools need to embrace as many avenues as possible to create, generate and develop new ways of accumulating revenue. I believe commercialism is an inevitable segment of society that will pervade our halls through other means (i.e. music, movies, computers...). We ought to work diligently to harness the potential benefits. However, to patently except commercialism without careful review and consideration is irresponsible. I feel that by alternating contracts, products, and space for signs... would be a feasible solution to the potential hazards of favoritism....

I think the most difficult part is the possibility/reality that school with higher SES has more access and opportunities as a result of commercialism. Simple fact, look at some of the Millard Schools use and support of the business community, then look at East Omaha. Dollar per dollar, more money goes to Millard.

If the commercialism interferes with the efforts to improve student achievement it should not take place. If it helps to provide our schools with resources to improve student achievement, then it should not be a problem. With state cuts in education, we may have to resort to relying on private funding for many of our programs.

I feel that many individuals lack the vision to see the advantages of commercialism when monitored by the school authorities. Public education is facing serious monetary challenges. Educators need to investigate a variety of avenues of funding.

At the elementary level, pop and/or candy machines should not be available to students. Often times, these machines are in a teachers’ lounge. Commercialism to support extracurricular activities may be warranted, but otherwise commercialism should be kept out of the schools especially during school hours (except for PTA initiated fundraisers).

I think to a certain degree it is ok. I'd hate to see schools lose their individual identity because of too much commercialism.

State constitutions mandate free and appropriate education for all students. The state/local property taxes and other aid formulas should cover expenses. Let the Pentagon sell wrapping paper.

Unless funding for education is increased, you will see more sales done by teachers for fundraising so that projects that the teachers' desire to supplement the curriculum may be achieved. There is NOTHING wrong with it unless it has pornographic, sexual, drugs or alcohol related messages. The advertising should comply with school rules.

The only true advertising or commercialism that should be allowed within a school should be that of the adopt-a-school partners. I don't see a place for other forms of advertising within the educational setting. It would not bother me to sees ads for
products produced by the adopt-a-school partners because they provide a great deal of support for the school. The only time when outside corporate sponsors should be allowed is if there is no alternative method to financially support an activity.

I think commercialism is necessary - but we need to highly regulate it. Just because someone donates $$$$ does not allow them to influence the curriculum or practices of a building.

We obviously need some commercialism in the schools due to budgetary constraints. However, there needs to be a limit to it so the schools values remain intact. An effort to keep commercialism out of the classroom and the curriculum should be the number one priority. Also, the promotion of healthy lifestyles at the middle years is necessary. Placing fast food into their nutrition at school is ludicrous. Students at the middle years eat enough junk as it is now.

Fundraising is a necessary evil. All fundraising should be conducted to enhance the educational opportunities and experiences for students. Education is expensive and many of the "extras" lie on the cutting room floor. Unfortunately fundraising has become necessary to provide quality education. The delicate balance lies in developing strong relationships (financial) with business and community without compromising the integrity of the decision-making process of what is best for the students.

Fund raising is a necessary evil today with the poor support taxpayers are giving public education.

Candy/pop sales are a constant source of distraction in the classroom; if there were restrictions placed upon until the end of the school day, things would go smoother. In tight budget situations, I have no trouble with corporate sponsorship, as there seems to be a good relationship with Adopt-a-School partners who may be able to provide some of the resources for that.

I feel that corporate sponsors or adopt a school partners can provide extra resources to schools without affecting the control or curriculum of a school. I think it should be limited and guidelines established for the resources that can be provided. Your question regarding individual teachers sponsoring or promoting a particular company can have two sides to it depending on the use of the profits (if any). For examples selling T-shirts to raise money for a science project would be considerably different than selling Amway to help an independent dealer. This is a very interesting topic.

I believe that there is a time and place for commercialism. A classroom is not the place. When students are in school, the time should be spent on teaching and learning. Incorporating sales detracts from our main purpose.
Sometimes it is a necessary evil. Schools are under funded but the amount of soda and candy consumed by today's student is appalling and the lack of nutritional value is evident. Students are bombarded with advertising and I think for the most part they don't even notice the signs in the gym with ads. They probably mostly are there for the adults.

I am neutral about this topic depending on the purpose and the usage of what is trying to be promoted.

In my opinion, commercialism in the school can be beneficial if properly maintained. Schools should monitor when, how and the type of product(s) that are being promoted so that they do not interfere with the learning environment of the building. Adopt-a-school partners and businesses can have a positive working relationship with the education community. Outside financial aid may be the "wave of the future" for schools to maintain their extracurricular offerings. Open communication between all concerned parties can help to alleviate some of the fears stated in question number 39.

School districts faced with loss of financial aid must look for alternative ways to fund their schools. Corporations willing to contribute to the school district through product endorsements should be able to do so as long as the educational goals are not compromised.

It is about impossible for schools to provide books and supplies without some sort of fund raising. Special acknowledgment should be given to adopt-a-school partners.

Objectivity is an important part of public education. In an elementary school it's especially important since young children are "sponges" for whatever they see and hear. Schools should be a place where they are allowed to THINK, not be PRESSURED to buy.

Eliminate food vending machines. Food & drinks cause trouble in the classroom. Eliminate fund raising in the classroom. It puts pressure on students & staff. Corporate sponsorships are OK, but don't let advertising take over the school.

I think that in this society with money for schools being cut all over the place, we need Adopt-a-school partners and other businesses to help with our rising costs. I think that it is shameful that this is what schools have to resort to [to] make it economic

While I may not like or even approve of many types of commercialism in my building, the reality is we DON'T have funding for much of what we do. As a teacher, I fundraise with my students and use the money to pay for supplies as well as field trips.

With the way that the state budget is set up in Nebraska, schools need to be looking outside the state an in their own communities to get the extra funding for their district.
Why not have a corporation that has worked hard be promoted in our school. It shows that through hard work and dedication, success can happen. We need all the positive role models and influences that our students can get. There are so many bad things out there that students are doing and maybe with a little corporate help we can stop some students from dropping out of school and making something of themselves.

Advertising has become a fact of life with regard to financing school programs, events, and teams. It is unfortunate, but in today's economic climate a reality.

Teachers' opinions and experience may bias their opinion thus not giving students a balanced viewpoint of products, companies, and/or perspectives. If I were an advertiser I would target the richer schools, those with clients who can purchase my product, leaving schools in low SES areas in greater despair and further behind.

Schools need partners but with the focus on the students achievement, not increasing the corporate profit margin.

Fund raising etc. is necessary because the money schools get from the government is insufficient to accommodate the expectations of the public. However, as soon as corporate money is involved, businesses start to gain control over the schools, which can be a dangerous situation.

I think that pop machines and vending machines promote poor nutrition and add to the obesity problem in the United States. Why don't we promote healthy snacks? And sell them and fruit in the vending machines? Or only allow bottled water? It is sad that schools have to rely on advertisement, but that is the predicament we are in due to budget shortfalls. If taxpayers are opposed to advertisement, they should be willing to spend more in taxes. I think advertisement is not ideal but tolerated in sports and extracurricular activities, but it should be forbidden in the classroom or textbooks, those are sacred to learning.

I think commercialism is fine within certain limits. I'm afraid when it comes to sports events etc. that only the best teams will get advertisement (i.e. money). Thus, the lower schools will continue to only fall further behind. I think there are benefits as long as it is in every school.

If commercialism addresses a deficiency of finances for a school to partake in certain activities, then it has some merit in being there. Many of our schools, such as mine, have little or no PTA or other financial means. Some of this commercialism such as fund raisers, pop machines, or corporate sponsors are the only means of money we have for field trips, equipment, or curriculum additions. We must not overlook any and all possibilities to help our students. With that in mind, we must set guidelines, as we don't
want our entire school to begin to look like a professional ballpark. We must remember, it is still an institution of education where the teaching of the youth must be paramount.

I believe if the company is a legitimate company and produces appropriate products then the advertising is acceptable. If the students benefit from the profits because of these ads and promotions, then the schools should definitely utilize the companies.

Businesses contributing to schools are an appropriate way for schools to raise money, and posting their logos seems appropriate. Perhaps the moment it becomes questionable is when oral promotion begins by staff.

I don't mind the commercialism in the schools if it benefits the schools. If it is distracting in the classroom, that's when I as a teacher have a problem with it.

Commercialism in schools and education takes away from the purpose of teaching the students. I do not think that it is fair to the teachers to have to compete with the ads. Also when you give to one you must give to all and that would make everything dealing with school political instead of intellectual. As far as the candy and fast food- that is promoting unhealthy eating habits and obesity in our children, which is completely unfair to them.

I think that commercialism should be kept out schools during the school day almost completely. Commercialism should almost be used at school functions. It should not be used during the school day. I think that commercialism brings about a certain amount of financial dependency for the school on commercialism and school disruption with education process. Schools have to decide whether they want to be commercial or educational.

I personally have no problem with businesses sponsoring events and contributing to school funding. I'm a little skeptical when it comes into the classroom though because it can cause disruption. There are already plenty of those!

Schools should be an environment that encourages learning not a testing ground for market strategies. To accept financial help from a reputable business and recognize that business in an appropriate manner is acceptable. To open a schoolhouse to advertisers for the sole purpose of financial profit is not. To have to view a cola sign on a scoreboard for a moment is not going to be as intrusive on the educational process as logos in books or presentations in the classroom. The pros and cons must be evaluated on individual basis to determine if the commercialism is appropriate.

I do not have a problem with monitored commercialism in the schools. With the budget crisis schools need all the help they can get.
If it helps provide for the students and allows you to have items that you normally wouldn't have, I say go for it. When it is persuasive or is biased then I say no.

Due to limited tax dollars for use in schools I see advertising as an extra source of income for the schools and feel that it is fine. I really see no problem with allowing an advertiser to pay to a scoreboard in exchange for the advertising. We need to use all our possible resources.

Commercialism inside the classroom when handled by the students can get a little crazy. Every time you turn around, someone is trying to sell you something that is not worth the dollar value. But there needs to be a way to supplement the money needs of those families that can't afford the "extras".

Some people may believe any sponsor for a school should give money for the right reason: improve education. Therefore, "advertising" the company name benefits the company unlike an anonymous donor. To me, it's not a bad situation because schools need money and if it means putting a logo here or there, then so be it. I'm not sure how much the kids really notice who sponsored what (or care).

Commercialism is a necessary evil as long as there are funding shortages.

With the shrinking state budgets I feel it is necessary for school districts to seek acceptable alternative ways to finance operations. Many schools have successfully sold space on gym floors (Fremont High School) and have had positive results. It is important to solicit the funds with no hidden agendas and that needs to be spelled out prior to accepting the money. Selling advertising in gyms and in programs created thousands of dollars of revenue, which helps fund, several activity budgets.

Due to the extreme budget cuts in the public school sector, I personally do not see any way to provide the quality of education that the students deserve without additional funding somewhere. Teachers can write grants to supplement their funding and provide special programs, but new playgrounds for elementary students, new uniforms for middle and high school band students, fieldtrips (including out of the country and band travel), and other "perks" that make school special simply aren't in our tax funds any more. If not commercially provided, where does one find these funds?

I think we have to allow a certain amount of commercialism, due to budgetary constraints, however, it is difficult to determine which products and to what extent the advertising can be allowed without interrupting the learning environment. (I know that we could not get the new playground for MARRS without additional funding), and if businesses are the ones that pay for it, a plaque or something thanking them for the donation seems appropriate (but a huge billboard does not seem right at the elementary level).
I do think that private corporations can and have done a much better job of creating teaching-learning environments when the public sector has failed in difficult venues, however we have to retain some sanctity of purpose in our family serving institutions: church, schools, and hospitals.

The necessity to solicit financial support in public schools is a reality, now. We cannot, however, give up control in the classroom and therefore unwittingly give students the impression that we think commercialism during instructional time is o.k. Otherwise we are clearly saying, instructional time is not sacred, and is therefore, not really necessary at all.

As long as it stays away from the curriculum, students probably don't even realize that they're targets of marketing with banners, etc.

When I said that businesses could come and give presentations in the classroom, I was imagining that the businesses would present in business classes. The culinary arts presentations would be done in the cooking classes etc.

We need to be vigilant about the manner in which we provide what could be construed as an endorsement of companies, products or services. Students are very impressionable.

In a small town, it would be less of a problem since there would only be one high school and all students would benefit equally. In a large city, there are a lot of variables controlling how much each school is assisted and by whom that is totally inequitable and unfair to the students.

I am not as opposed to commercialism in schools as some of my colleagues may be. The biggest fear appears to be the giving up of control. With boundaries and guidelines to protect for that, I think it is a route of funding we may need to explore further.

The Adopt a School program is good enough. Mentioning the name is good enough.

I don't think we should have a lengthy contract with any one company (pop). This limits other companies from attempting to deal with the school.

You need to be careful how much power you give to outsiders.

As long as all companies are given the opportunity to advertise and as long as it doesn't take away from instructional time, it is not only OK, but necessary in today's financially stretched world.

I think its fine as long as the advertising is done tastefully and the companies doing the advertising understand they have no say in how the school is run or the curriculum presented.
If done tactful[ly], commercialism in schools is fine. I believe if a school uses commercialism, it needs to educate the public because many people have a different understanding.

As someone who doesn’t believe in the capitalistic ideal, I would want all for-profit companies out of the building. As a teacher, I know that my school needs their money to educate our youth. I worry that the increasing amount of commercialism in the school is numbing the youth in such a way that they believe that the image in the advertisement is what they should strive to be and that being an individual that deviates from this image will brand them as “uncool” and/or unpopular. Children are easily influenced and they should not be molded by an advertising agency. Industry needs to take the high road and be philanthropic but not expect anything in return except for an education system that produces adults that will be a benefit to society.

Commercialism in schools is an avenue that needs to be considered seriously as a way to generate revenue for the classroom and athletic programs. It is important, however, that commercialism does not “get in the way” or have a negative influence on the student’s education.

Fundraising is a necessary evil that educators have to deal with. Until school districts and state legislators are able to cope with school financing issues, fundraising via the use of commercial partnerships will be necessary to meet the needs of educators/coaches.

If items are sold in good taste and the profits are used for school purposes.

In view of current financing challenges, increasing commercialism will certainly be necessary to maintain school programs. It will be a challenge to maintain appropriateness and to keep commercialism within limits that do not adversely affect students.

We need money wherever we can get it. However, companies should not control the schools—as in which books, calculators, etc[.] are used.

It has become a necessary evil. It is up to staff to present it in a tasteful, professional way. The dollars raised are for the students.

We need to sell our product to the best of our ability using the circumstances afforded us by our economic system and principles.

Due to lack of funding (state/fed) there are times when corporate support is the only alternative.

I believe that if they are advertising a company, it’s okay, but if they are hard “selling” a product, it’s not okay.
I think using some commercialism in school for basketball courts, football fields, scoreboards, planetariums, computer labs, etc. is fine as long as it doesn't disrupt the classroom environment.

If schools become dependent on outside sources for funding, what happens when the corporate sponsors decrease their donations or go away altogether? In addition, I feel that students should not be unwilling, captive audiences for corporate hucksters. It is a gross invasion that once started will be difficult if not impossible to reverse.