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Conceptualising and measuring fan identity using stakeholder theory

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ABSTRACT

Research question: Building on identity theory and stakeholder theory, this study explores the concept of fan identity based on self-perceived levels of power, urgency, internal and external legitimacy, and examines their effects on behavioural intentions.

Research methods: Data were collected from professional football fans ($n = 532$). A confirmatory factor analysis analysed the psychometric properties of the constructs, and a subsequent structural equation model examined the effects of fan identity on three behavioural intention measures.

Results and findings: The results indicate acceptable psychometric properties of the multidimensional construct of fan identity composed of power, urgency, internal legitimacy and external legitimacy. Power and internal legitimacy were significantly related to the intentions to attend more games and to purchase merchandise, with internal legitimacy also influencing intentions to recommend games to others.

Implications: This study provides the first exploration of fan identity as a multidimensional construct. The findings provide sport managers with useful insights on how to measure fan identity. This study serves as a catalyst for future research to understand the linkages between professional sport teams and their fans.

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Central to the success of any professional sport team is the development and maintenance of a passionate group of fans (Grant, Heere, & Dickson, 2011). While various definitions of fans exist in the sport literature, the term generically refers to individuals who have an interest in or follow a particular team (García & Welford, 2015). The problem sport managers frequently face is that 'all sport fans are not the same' (Ross, 2007, p. 22). Authors of previous studies have argued that the success of professional sport teams is bolstered by highly identified fans through increased attendance, word-of-mouth recommendations or merchandise sales (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012; McDonald, Karg, & Vocino, 2013). In this sense, professional sport teams can create a competitive advantage by developing highly identified fans.

In the sport management literature, team identification is recognised as a critical element for promoting successful relationships between a sport organisation and its fans

(e.g. Heere et al., 2011; Lock & Heere, 2017; Trail et al., 2012), operating as an attitudinal barometer and predictor of consumer behaviour (Lock, Taylor, Funk, & Darcy, 2012). Through the lens of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), a growing body of research has conceptualised team identification as a multidimensional construct related to an individual's identification with a social group or category (i.e. team) (e.g. Dimmock, Grove, & Eklund, 2005; Heere et al., 2011; Lock & Funk, 2016). Lock et al. (2012) indicated that sport teams represent social categories from which fans derive social identity benefits. Despite its utility to better understand how team identification develops and its broader importance for sport organisations, previous research has not yet explored a fan's role identity. That is, individuals have a personal identity in addition to their social identity (Lock & Heere, 2017). As highlighted by identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000), people have role identities representing the characteristics attributed to oneself within a social role (e.g. how a person perceives him/herself as a sport fan), which gives meaning to their past behaviour and directs future behaviours (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005).

Lock and Funk (2016) also suggest that sport offers a diverse range of identity-related benefits to individuals. In fact, sport fan identity can either be role-based or category-based (Trail, Anderson, & Lee, 2017) which suggests that fan identity (i.e. role) and team identity (i.e. category) are different and should not be used interchangeably. Although there is comprehensive coverage in the literature relating to the nature of team identification (i.e. group) (e.g. Heere et al., 2011; Lock & Funk, 2016; Lock et al., 2012), fan identity (i.e. role) and its importance for sport organisations requires deeper exploration.

Fans are undeniably one of the most important stakeholders of professional sport teams (Covell, 2005; García & Welford, 2015; Senaux, 2008). The framework proposed by Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) is a seminal contribution to the study of stakeholder identification. The authors categorise stakeholders based on their power, urgency, and legitimacy to the focal organisation, which are attributes that fans possess in sport settings (Xue & Mason, 2011; Zagnoli & Radicchi, 2010). Furthermore, a stakeholder's action expresses their identity (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011) suggesting that fan interactions with the team represent an expression of their role identity. In this sense, stakeholder theory may represent an important concept to explore fan identity because it focuses on important attributes for a fan (i.e. stakeholder) to fulfil their role identity. Problematically, there is no clearly articulated framework for incorporating stakeholder thinking into fan identities. To understand the relevance of fan identity to sport organisations, managers and researchers must holistically analyse the importance of being a fan to the individual (i.e. a fan as an identity role). In the current study, we link identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000) and stakeholder theory (Mitchell et al., 1997) to better understand and measure fan identity. The purpose of this study is to explore different attributes of fan identity, by merging domains from identity theory and stakeholder theory, and examine its effects on behavioural intentions towards the team.

Conceptual background

Identity and sport fans

Stryker and Burke (2000) note that the 'language of "identity" is ubiquitous in different fields of contemporary science' (p. 1). They identify three relatively distinct usages of

the term: (1) the culture of people, which often limits its theoretical purpose; (2) a common identification with a social category, thus creating a common culture among its elements (i.e. social identity theory); or (3) parts of a 'self' composed of the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in contemporary societies (i.e. identity theory).

Social identity theory underpins much of what we know about team identification (Lock & Heere, 2017; Lock et al., 2012). According to Tajfel (1981), a social identity is 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' (p. 255). Authors of early research on social identity theory examined team identification as a unidimensional construct (e.g. Wann & Branscombe, 1993). However, scholars then reconceptualised team identification as a multidimensional construct, bringing team identification into alignment with social identity theory (e.g. Dimmock et al., 2005; Heere et al., 2011; Theodorakis, Dimmock, Wann, & Barlas, 2010). As noted by Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004), a multidimensional conceptualisation of team identification fits well within the academic discourse on social identity theory and the process of identifying with a group (Katz & Heere, 2016). In addition, team identification is a key variable in explaining fans' enduring support for the team even during periods of poor performance (Doyle, Lock, Funk, Filo, & McDonald, 2017).

Identity theory is frequently used to explain the choices individuals make about who they are as an individual or within a group setting (Stryker, 2007). For example, an individual's identity can be conceptualised as internalised role expectations. People have many role identities, and each specific identity represents a set of beliefs about the importance of that role to the individual (Trail et al., 2017). Wood and Roberts (2006) suggest that role identities represent the characteristics attributed to oneself within a social role, such as how one sees oneself as a father or a sport fan. On the other hand, identity theory scholars assert that role choices are a function of one's identity at a particular moment in time, and identities within the 'self' are organised in a salience hierarchy (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The higher the salience of an identity relative to other 'self' identities, the greater the possibility of behavioural choices related to the expectations of such identity (i.e. the role as fan implies certain behaviours such as attending games, recommending games to others, purchasing merchandise, or following the team through media) (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identity theory significantly differs from social identity theory in that the latter emphasises the category-based identities to which people feel attached (e.g. team) (Reed II, 2002), while the former emphasises the meaning attached to social roles (e.g. fan) (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011). Ashmore et al. (2004) noted that 'whereas collective identity is explicitly connected to a group of people outside the "self," personal identity typically refers to characteristics of the "self" that one believes, in isolation or combination, to be unique to the "self"' (p. 82).

Despite a lack of clarity in recent team identification literature due to the adoption of different labels and conceptual approaches (Lock & Heere, 2017), fan identity and team identity are distinct concepts and should therefore be measured separately. That is, a role-based measure of fandom (i.e. fan identity) should capture perceptions on how important the role of being a fan is to the individual, while a category-based measure of fandom (i.e. team identity) should be more focused on the importance of belongingness and social interaction with other fans of the team (Trail et al., 2017). This means that

while social identity theory represents a solid background for understanding team identification, the conceptualisation of fan identification should also be grounded in identity theory. Following this reasoning, Trail and colleagues recently noted that ‘role identity’ increases fans’ intentions to support the team and attend future games. Despite their contribution to understanding fan identity, the authors used a unidimensional construct. A single conception of the ‘self’ can be misleading given that people tend to describe themselves in highly differentiated ways (Gergen, 1991). Thus, a multidimensional approach will enable a deeper understanding of the underlying components of fan identity and its impact on intentions and subsequent team-related behaviours.

As noted by Stryker (2007), an identity is linked to internalised meanings that an individual attributes to him/herself. Given that fans are vital stakeholders of professional sport teams (Senaux, 2008), and that the identity of stakeholders is often expressed through their actions (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011), understanding the different meanings fans associate with their role identity may represent progress towards a better management of the relationships between fans and sport organisations. Also, the development of a multidimensional fan identity scale helps clarify the concept of fan identity and its distinction from team identity. In the current research, identity theory is linked to stakeholder theory in order to conceptualise and measure fan identity.

Exploring the role of fans as stakeholders

Stakeholder research has a prominent place in organisational performance literature. Most researchers agree that stakeholders are people or groups that can either affect or be affected by an organisation’s actions (Freeman, 1984; Mainardes, Alves, & Raposo, 2012). Stakeholders are important because organisations need to advance the interests of various entities that have a relationship with or are connected to the organisation (Zagnoli & Radicchi, 2010). As the relationship between stakeholders and the organisation strengthens, stakeholders are more likely to contribute important resources, such as time, energy and money to the organisation (Mainardes et al., 2012). Consistent with this view, marketers often credit fans for making the sports industry prosperous by investing time, money, and energy towards their teams (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012), which is an indication of their stake in the continued success of the team. Over time, the success of an organisation depends to a large extent on its ability to identify and satisfy key stakeholders (Bryson, 2004).

While the literature offers many approaches for identifying stakeholders (e.g. Bryson, 2004; Clarkson, 1995; Fassin, 2009), the model proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997) is the most influential framework (Mattingly, 2007; Neville, Bell, & Whitwell, 2011). Their model incorporates the attributes of power, urgency and legitimacy and has been utilized in the context of professional team sports (e.g. Miragaia, Ferreira, & Carreira, 2014; Senaux, 2008; Zagnoli & Radicchi, 2010) to identify stakeholders and associated actions. Regardless of the sport, fans are consistently highlighted as prominent stakeholders. The rationale for this assumption is that fans are the final consumers of the sport spectacle either directly (i.e. live events) or indirectly (i.e. TV viewers and target of sponsors) (Senaux, 2008). Fans have an important role in the commercialization of sport (Anagnostopoulos, 2011) due to their ticket and merchandise purchases, TV viewership, recommendation of the games to others, and attraction of sponsors’ interest. In addition, fans have an important role when supporting the team on the field and co-creating the

stadium environment (Biscaia, 2015; Hedlund, 2014), and they also tend to influence organisational decision-making (Senaux, 2008). For example, fans' demand for on-field success often exerts pressure on management decisions to recruit or dismiss players and coaches (Anagnostopoulos, 2011). In line with this view, Zagnoli and Radicchi (2010) found that fans of football teams are prominent stakeholders, and the relationships between these fans and the team need to be managed carefully.

To this end, one may argue that the role of a fan can be best discussed as stakeholder. However, prior studies have asked managers to identify their organisational stakeholders (e.g. Parent & Deephouse, 2007). While pragmatic, a manager's perspective leads to only a partial understanding of stakeholders' role to the sport organisations because it is a subjective evaluation (Senaux, 2008). Even though stakeholders may influence an organisation in varying ways (Frooman & Murrell, 2005), no effort has been made to understand sport fans' own perspective of the meaning attached to their role and subsequent intentions towards the sport organisation. This may be problematic because professional sport teams have fans with varying degrees of influence and relational exchange behaviours (Biscaia et al., 2016) who may also believe they have a stake in the organisation (García & Welford, 2015). To aid their strategic thinking, it is important for sport managers to consider how important the role of being a fan of the team is to the individual. In addition, most applications of Mitchell et al.'s (1997) framework base their assessment on only the dichotomous presence or absence of power, urgency and legitimacy (e.g. Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999; Anagnostopoulos, 2011). This represents a limitation as stakeholders may have varying levels of power, urgency and legitimacy (Mainardes et al., 2012; Xue & Mason, 2011). In this study, the operationalization of the constructs reflects an increasing recognition that power, urgency and legitimacy are best measured as continuous variables rather than dichotomous variables (Currie, Seaton, & Wesley, 2009; Neville et al., 2011).

Proposed framework of fan identity

McDonald and Sherry (2010) call attention to the role of fans-as-stakeholder perspective when analysing sport organisations. Given that fans can influence their organisations (Senaux, 2008), sport managers must not only recognise the importance of the product to fans, but the importance of fans to the product as well (McDonald & Sherry, 2010). The role of a fan can be discussed as that of a stakeholder because fans feel they have a stake in the future of their teams (Covell, 2005; García & Welford, 2015; *The New York Times*, 2015). Zagnoli and Radicchi (2010) highlight that fans are of central importance to the production of the sporting event, and professional sport teams often have diverse groups of fans ranging from single-game attendees to season ticket holders. In many cases, the fan relationship is formalized through subscription of membership programmes (McDonald & Sherry, 2010). That is, fans pay a monthly or annual fee to receive benefits such as discounts on the team's goods and services, access to special members-only events, and even voting rights for the board elections (Biscaia et al., 2016; Yoshida & Gordon, 2012). To this end, understanding fan identity represents an important step towards the establishment of enduring relationships. Fan identity is defined in the current study as the meaning individuals attach to their role of being fans of their favourite team.

The theoretical foundations for the proposed model are based on stakeholder theory (Mitchell et al., 1997) and identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Mitchell et al.'s

model explains to whom and to what managers should primarily pay attention. Power, urgency and legitimacy are the three vital stakeholder attributes, which are conceptualised and measured as a dichotomy (i.e. stakeholders either have the attribute or not). In this study, we follow an outside-in as opposed to an inside-out (or organisation-centric) approach (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011), and rely on stakeholder theory to further explore fan identity as it helps with understanding the meaning individuals attach to their role as fans of a team. For an individual to fulfil the role of a fan, he/she needs to feel empowered (Katz & Heere, 2015), to have urgency towards the club and to be concerned about to what extent others (e.g. club) acknowledge his/her legitimacy (i.e. external legitimacy). In addition, it is important to consider that role identity implies a process of self-verification (Stryker & Burke, 2000). This suggests that the measurement of fan identity should also capture the individual's own perception of his/her legitimacy as a fan of the team (i.e. internal legitimacy). Understanding how to measure fan identity is important for professional sport teams because not all fans attribute the same value to the organisation, and bridging stakeholder theory with identity theory can help clarify the value of fans for sport organisations. In this study, we conceptualise fan identity with regards to perceived power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy, and then examine the effects of each proposed dimension on fans' subsequent behavioural intentions towards their teams.

Power

Mitchell et al. (1997) refers to power as the degree to which a stakeholder is capable of influencing the organisation. The power of fans within a sport organisation is immediately obvious. In membership-based organisations, some fans/members have voting rights for the board elections (Biscaia et al., 2016; McDonald & Sherry, 2010), but the power of sport fans manifests in other ways such as their influence on organisational decisions about building or renovating facilities (Walters, 2011), or even in hiring or firing players and/or coaches (Anagnostopoulos, 2011). For example, despite the poor performance of Chelsea Football Club during the 2015-16 English Premier League season, fans exerted strong pressure on the club owner to retain the coach (*Mirror*, 2015). Fans are critically important, because in their absence sport teams are unsustainable (Esteve, Di Lorenzo, Inglés, & Puig, 2011). Power is defined in the current study as the extent to which a fan perceives him/herself to be capable of influencing the club. As noted by Peachey, Zhou, Damon, and Burton (2015), fans' power may influence the performance of sport organisations. Rucker and Galinsky (2009) further noted that individuals' feelings of power shape their consumption behaviours. To this end, one may argue that a fan's perception of power influences subsequent behavioural intentions towards the team.

Urgency

The attribute of urgency reflects the extent to which a stakeholder has a claim for immediate attention by the organisation (Mainardes et al., 2012). Sport fans frequently have claims about ticket prices, merchandise products, service delivery at the stadium, among many other aspects related to the club's daily life, and most of them are very proactive at manifesting their claims through different available platforms (Xue & Mason,

2011). Senaux (2008) further states that ‘three or four bad games in a row and the situation becomes critical and a quick response is needed’ (p. 14). Fans’ urgency towards their teams is also evidenced by their regular engagement with team social media platforms as events unfold (*Telegraph*, 2015). In the current research, urgency refers to the extent to which a fan perceives that he/she has claims for immediate attention from the club, and is underpinned by a combination of time sensitivity and criticality of the claim (Senaux, 2008). Mitchell et al. (1997) suggest that a stakeholder’s urgency is a catalytic attribute that initiates action towards the organisation, while Eesley and Lenox (2006) argue that the urgency of a request tends to influence the likelihood of response. In consumption-related research, Zinn and Liu (2011) noted that an individual’s sense of urgency tends to affect product purchase behaviours. Taken together, the literature suggests that a fan’s urgency towards the club may influence his/her subsequent behavioural intentions.

External legitimacy

A legitimate stakeholder is one whose claims are considered appropriate according to social norms and values (Xue & Mason, 2011). The attribute of legitimacy is indisputably present among sport fans. Fans obtain legitimacy when their actions mirror accepted practices (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975) and align with the expectations of the organisation’s management. Fans generally have external legitimacy because their views are not typically dismissed as irrelevant by management. Sport managers expect fans to express their opinions about team and organisational performance, because they invest time and money to attend live games, watch games on TV, purchase merchandise and other team-related services, and most were committed and faithful to the team since they were very young (Senaux, 2008). To this end, fans’ perceptions of how people within the club community assess their claims should be included as a component of fan identity. External legitimacy is defined in this study as the extent to which a fan perceives that the club considers his/her actions to be appropriate. Tsotsou (2011) suggests that stakeholder theory can explain behaviours related to sport organisations, and Neville et al. (2011) mention that legitimacy is related to decision making. In the context of sport, one’s perception of legitimacy can influence behavioural intentions (Conroy, Silva, Newcomer, Walker, & Johnson, 2001; Ryan, Williams, & Wimer, 1990). Therefore, one may argue that a fan’s perception of external legitimacy will likely influence his/her behavioural intentions towards the team.

Internal legitimacy

An identity is a self-cognition tied to a role (Stryker, 2007), and the way an individual sees him/herself as being a fan of a particular team is pivotal to legitimise his role identity as a fan (Trail et al., 2017). A role identity accommodates the social nature of past experiences and is socially recognised through actions (Ervin & Stryker, 2001; Trail et al., 2005). Fans often express how important the team is for them via social media (Filo, Lock, & Karg, 2015) and by wearing team merchandise (Apostolopoulou, Papadimitriou, Synowka, & Clark, 2012; Fetchko, Roy, & Clow, 2013). For fans, exerting the right to vote in board elections, attending games and recommending them to others, or regularly participating in conversations about the team are other examples of actions demonstrating how

individuals try to legitimise their role identity as fans of a specific team. Trail et al. (2005) note that identification with the team (i.e. a construct reflecting the meaning of being a fan of the team to the individual) is an important aspect to increase fans' self-esteem, while Ashmore et al. (2004) refer that a personal identity reflects the characteristics an individual believes to have. To this end, we argue that fan identity should also incorporate how the individual sees him/herself as a devoted fan of the team. In the current study, internal legitimacy refers to the extent to which a fan sees him/herself as being a legitimate fan of the team. Considering that the way one sees oneself in a certain role (e.g. sport fan) tends to guide behaviour (Stryker & Burke, 2000), fans' internal legitimacy will likely influence behavioural intentions towards the team.

Method

Research setting

Data were collected from fans of teams participating in the *Liga Portugal* (LP), which has been recognized as one of the top 10 football leagues in the world (IFFHS, 2016). As in most European countries, football is very popular and is rooted in Portuguese culture. The LP consists of 18 teams from 16 different cities. The average attendance of the three top teams was over 31,000 spectators per game (Liga Portugal, 2016), and the reigning champion of the LP was one of the largest European clubs as measured by overall revenue in 2014 (Deloitte, 2015).

Measurement

The measures used to capture power (four items), urgency (four items) and external legitimacy (four items) were adopted from Mattingly (2007) and Miragaia et al. (2014) and adjusted to the sport fan context. Internal legitimacy was measured through four items, with three being derived from Trail et al. (2005), and one from Ross, Russell, and Bang (2008). Similar to Trail and James (2016), it is important to note that these items are representative of how a person legitimises him/herself as a fan of the team. All these items were measured on a 10-point scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (10). In addition, three items adapted from Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Marôco, and Ross (2012) captured fans' behavioural intentions towards the team (i.e. attend more games, purchase merchandise and recommend games to others). Given that composite measures of behavioural intentions often deal with different fan 'behaviours' (Hedlund, 2014), the three items were used as single measures to better understand the role of fan identity in each 'doing behaviour' and 'talking behaviour' (Söderlund, 2006). For example, a fan may be willing to recommend team games to others but have no plans to attend live games or to purchase team merchandise. The use of single items as outcome variables may also favour researchers and managers, and suffices when the items have good reliability (Kwon & Trail, 2005). Furthermore, Bergkvist and Rossiter (2007) demonstrated that single-item measures are as valid as multi-item measures when testing predictive validity. This procedure has been successfully implemented in prior marketing studies testing behavioural intentions (e.g. Arnold & Reynolds, 2009; Tsiros & Mittal, 2000). These items were also measured on a 10-point scale, but

ranging from 'Not Likely at All' (1) to 'Extremely Likely' (10). For descriptive purposes, demographic and consumption data were also collected.

Next, a panel of four sport management researchers from different universities and countries conducted a content analysis of the items. All of them received information about the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, a description of each construct and the list of proposed items. Through a discussion and reconciliation process, minor wording changes were proposed and agreed upon for four of the items. A translation and subsequent back translation process was undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the scale items (Banville, Desrosiers, & Genet-Volet, 2000). The survey instrument was first translated into Portuguese by one of the authors. To test the equivalence between the original and the Portuguese instrument, back translation into English was carried out by two other natives of Portugal who are academics and fluent in English. A scholar of English literature, with vast experience in translations in both academic and business environments, verified the accuracy of the translation. The comparison of the two versions led to the conclusion that the instruments were equivalent.

Pilot study

To establish the reliability of the scales, the proposed items for power, urgency, external legitimacy, internal legitimacy, and behavioural intentions were tested in a pilot study. Data were collected through an online survey that was promoted to users of Portugal's most popular sports website (A Bola, 2015). While this type of sampling may limit representativeness, the option for collecting data online was based on the advantages and logistical constraints highlighted in prior studies (e.g. Bech & Kristensen, 2009; Wright, 2005). These include higher response rates, reduced overall costs, and improved aesthetic and design capabilities. A banner was activated on the website inviting visitors to access the online survey. To avoid repeat participants, the IP address of each respondent was recorded and used to deny repeat access after the initial submission.

The survey was available for two days, allowing 349 people to participate. Participants were excluded if they were under 16 years old, submitted incomplete surveys or provided 10 or more consecutive answers ranked on the same scale number. After these data screening procedures, 200 surveys were deemed usable, providing an effective completion rate of 57.3%. The age of the respondents ranged from 16 to 70 years ($M = 24.9$ years), and about one-third (36.5%) were in the 20–29 age range. The majority of the respondents were males (92.7%), and about half had finished the high school degree (50.5%). Almost half of the participants (44.8%) were members of the team's 'official' fan club, where they paid a monthly or annual fee. The average length of their membership in the 'official' fan club was 12.2 years. About one-fifth of the respondents were season ticket holders (20.9%), and they had each been buying season tickets for about seven years.

The psychometric properties of the items were assessed through an examination of the skewness, kurtosis, and internal consistency using IBM SPSS 22.0. All skewness values were less than 3.0. However, the kurtosis value for one power item was above the threshold of 7.0 (Kline, 2005). That item was consequently removed from the analysis. The item-to-total correlations for all items capturing fan identity were greater than the recommended cut-off point of .50 (Zaichkowsky, 1985). In addition, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above .70, indicating that all constructs to measure fan identity were internally

consistent. Thus, the final version of the survey included a total of 18 items, with three items representing power, four items each for urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy, plus the three individual items capturing behavioural intentions.

Main study

For the main study, participants were again recruited from the A Bola website. Data were collected during a five-day period and a total of 908 individuals started the survey. The data screening procedures from the pilot test were again used. In addition, an examination of the IP addresses was also conducted to avoid repeat participants from the pilot test. As a result, 532 completed surveys were deemed usable for data analysis for an effective completion rate of 58.6%. Respondents were fans from 11 of the 18 teams from the LPFP. Ages ranged from 16 to 72 years ($M = 28.0$), with almost two-thirds being less than 30 years-old (60.1%). The sample was mainly male (95.4%). In terms of education level, 53.1% had a college or post-graduate degree. More than half of the participants were members of the 'official' fan club (58.5%), and of those, 53.6% voted in the last board elections. The average length of respondents' membership in the 'official' fan club was 13.4 years. Almost one-third of the participants were season ticket holders (32.5%) and like the pilot study, had been so for about seven years. On average, participants attended 12 live games (including home and away) and watched 23 games of their team on TV over the course of the season. Regarding team merchandise consumption, participants reported that during the current season, they spent an average €64.4 on themselves and €29.5 on others. In the previous season, they reported spending about €61.3 on themselves and €27.8 on others.

The data were submitted to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using IBM AMOS 22.0. The fit of the data to the model was examined using the ratio of chi-square (χ^2) to its degrees of freedom, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), comparative-of-fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA). Internal consistency of the constructs was measured through composite reliability (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009). Convergent validity was evaluated through the average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was assessed through the correlations coefficients and AVE tests of discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Kline, 2005; Marôco, 2010). Following the identification of reliable and valid items to measure power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy through CFA, a structural equation model examined the effects of the model on fans' behavioural intentions towards their teams. The significance of the structural weights was evaluated using the Z tests produced by AMOS and statistical significance was assumed at a .05 level.

Results

Assessment of fan identity

The fan identity construct is composed of the four primary dimensions of power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy. For the measurement model, fit indices, standardised loadings (Hair et al., 2009; Kline, 2005), the pattern of standardised residual correlation values, modification indices (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Kline, 2005), and item-

level theoretical rationale (Kline, 2005; Marôco, 2010; Thompson, 2004) were considered. All 15 items were subsequently retained. Construct validity was evaluated by comparing the first-order measurement model with a second-order measurement model.

The results of the CFA for the first-order measurement model indicated an acceptable fit to the data [$\chi^2(80) = 284.73$ ($p < .001$), $\chi^2/df = 3.56$, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, GFI = .93, RMSEA = .07 (CI = .061–.078)]. Although the χ^2 was significant and its ratio to the degrees of freedom was above the 3.0 criterion (Kline, 2005), the χ^2 is known to be sensitive to sample size (Hair et al., 2009) so considering other fit indices is important. The TLI, CFI and GFI were all greater than the recommended .90 criterion for good fit (Hair et al., 2009). In addition, the RMSEA was below the .08 criterion for acceptable fit (Byrne, 2000).

As shown in Table 1, all items had factor loadings ranging from .65 to .95, while the z -values ranged from 16.14 to 29.07. These results indicate that each item loaded significantly on its respective construct (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The composite reliability ranged from .85 to .91 indicating the constructs were internally consistent (Hair et al., 2009). Evidence of convergent validity was found because the AVE values ranged from .59 to .73, all greater than the .50 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The correlation matrix, AVE values and squared correlations are reported in Table 2. The squared correlations ranged from .10 to .70. With the exception of power and external legitimacy ($\phi = .70$) and urgency and external legitimacy ($\phi = .59$), the AVE values for the other constructs were greater than the squared correlations between these constructs and any other. Still, as displayed in Table 2, these two correlation coefficients were lower than the suggested criterion of .85 (Kline, 2005). Additional support for discriminant validity was established by comparing the χ^2 statistics when the correlation between the two constructs was free versus constrained to one (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). There was a

Table 1. Psychometric properties of the variables used in the study to measure fan identity.

| Constructs/items | Pilot study ($n = 200$) | | Main study ($n = 532$) | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|------------|-----|-----|
| | ITTC | α | Loading | z -Value | CR | AVE |
| Power | | .86 | | | .86 | .67 |
| I can exert power within the club | .63 | | .73 | 18.55 | | |
| I can influence the club ^a | – | | – | – | | |
| I can impose my will to the club | .70 | | .83 | 22.76 | | |
| I can impact the direction of the club | .75 | | .89 | 25.20 | | |
| Urgency | | .84 | | | .85 | .59 |
| I exhibit urgency in my relationships with the club | .55 | | .65 | 16.14 | | |
| I urgently communicate my concerns to the club | .66 | | .85 | 23.14 | | |
| I express my opinion to the club without delay | .74 | | .74 | 19.09 | | |
| I communicate my requests to the club promptly | .72 | | .81 | 21.75 | | |
| External Legitimacy | | .88 | | | .90 | .70 |
| My claims are viewed by the club as legitimate | .69 | | .77 | 20.48 | | |
| My club considers me a legitimate stakeholder | .71 | | .79 | 21.22 | | |
| My concerns are viewed by the club as appropriate | .80 | | .88 | 25.47 | | |
| The club listens to me when I express my opinion | .78 | | .91 | 26.61 | | |
| Internal Legitimacy | | .91 | | | .91 | .73 |
| I consider myself to be a real fan of my team | .78 | | .82 | 22.84 | | |
| I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of my team | .82 | | .89 | 25.74 | | |
| Being a fan of my team is very important to me | .89 | | .95 | 29.07 | | |
| I want others to know that I am a fan of my team | .71 | | .74 | 19.43 | | |

Note: ITTC = item-to-total correlation; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

^aItem eliminated after the scale purification procedures of the pilot test. Model fit (main study): $\chi^2(80) = 284.73$ ($p < .001$), $\chi^2/df = 3.56$, TLI = .96, CFI = .95, GFI = .93, RMSEA = .07 (CI = .061–.078).

Table 2. Correlation matrix, AVE values and squared correlations among constructs.

| | AVE | Power .67 | Urgency .59 | External Legitimacy .70 | Internal Legitimacy .73 |
|---------------------|-----|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Power | .67 | 1.00 | .57 | .70 | .10 |
| Urgency | .59 | .76** | 1.00 | .59 | .24 |
| External legitimacy | .70 | .84** | .77** | 1.00 | .14 |
| Internal legitimacy | .73 | .32** | .49** | .37** | 1.00 |

** $p < .01$. Correlations are reported in the lower triangle. Squared correlations are depicted in the upper triangle.

statistically significant decrease in the χ^2 value when the correlation was free between power and external legitimacy ($\Delta\chi^2 = 121.46$; $\Delta df = 1$; $p < .01$) and between urgency and external legitimacy ($\Delta\chi^2 = 229.57$; $\Delta df = 1$; $p < .01$). Thus, there was evidence supporting discriminant validity among the dimensions.

The fit indices for the second-order measurement model also indicated an acceptable fit to the data [$\chi^2(82) = 317.09$ ($p < .001$), $\chi^2/df = 3.86$, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, GFI = .92, RMSEA = .07 (CI = .065–.082)], but the values demonstrated a worse fit than for the first-order measurement model. In these circumstances, it is recommended to select the model with the lowest Akaike information criterion (AIC) and expected cross-validation index (ECVI) values when examining competing models for the same data (Fassnacht & Koese, 2006; Marôco, 2010). The inspection of AIC and ECVI for the first-order measurement model (AIC = 364.71; ECVI = .69) and the second-order measurement model (AIC = 393.09; ECVI = .74) indicates a better fit of the former. Based on this evidence, the first-order measurement model was deemed more appropriate for further analysis.

Fan identity and behavioural intentions

The higher the salience of an identity, the greater the probability of behavioural choices consistent with the expectations attached to the identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The importance of a role identity as a fan of a particular team tends to lead to behavioural intentions towards that team (Trail et al., 2005; Trail et al., 2017). As such, a structural equation model tested the extent to which the proposed fan identity attributes could explain the variance in the intentions to attend more team games, purchase merchandise and recommend team games to others. The goodness-of-fit indices computed to assess the measurement model [$\chi^2(113) = 367.55$ ($p < .001$), $\chi^2/df = 3.25$, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, GFI = .93, RMSEA = .07 (CI = .058–.073)] and the structural model [$\chi^2(116) = 570.15$ ($p < .001$), $\chi^2/df = 4.92$, TLI = .91, CFI = .93, GFI = .89, RMSEA = .09 (CI = .079–.093)] indicated an acceptable fit to the data. The skewness and kurtosis values for the three behavioural intentions measures were lower than 3.0 and 7.0, respectively. The correlations between these variables and the fan identity constructs were all significant and lower than the criterion of .85 (Kline, 2005), while the mean values for each behavioural intention were above 7.0 (see the appendix) suggesting the importance of these measures for participants.

The path coefficients for the structural model are illustrated in Figure 1. Power had a significant positive effect on both the intention to attend more games of the team ($\beta = .21$, $p < .05$) and to purchase team merchandise ($\beta = .21$, $p < .05$), but was not significant in explaining the variance in the intention to recommend team games to other people ($p > .05$). The path coefficients for urgency were not significant in explaining the variance

for any of the three behavioural intention measures ($p > .05$). Similarly, the relationships between external legitimacy and the three measures of behavioural intentions were not significant ($p > .05$). In turn, internal legitimacy had a significant positive relationship with the intention to attend more team games ($\beta = .56, p < .001$), to purchase team merchandise ($\beta = .46, p < .001$), as well as to recommend team games to other people ($\beta = .51, p < .001$). Altogether, the fan identity dimensions accounted for approximately 38% of the variance in the intentions to attend more team games ($R^2 = .38$), 40% of the intentions to purchase team merchandise ($R^2 = .40$), and 43% regarding the intentions to recommend team games to other people ($R^2 = .43$).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore different attributes of fan identity by linking domains derived from stakeholder theory (Mitchell et al., 1997) and identity theory (Trail et al., 2005). In doing so, this study also aimed to examine the role of fan identity attributes for explaining the variance in behavioural intentions towards the team. Considering that prior sport fan research has not provided a clear conceptualisation of fan identity, this study represents an important step in clarifying the fan identity concept and its importance in the development of enduring relationships between sport fans and their teams.

The current study embodies a first exploration of fan identity as a multidimensional construct, and a first attempt to tie stakeholder theory and fan identity theory together. Sport fans invest time, money and energy in supporting their teams through different channels (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012) and evidence suggest that more and more people

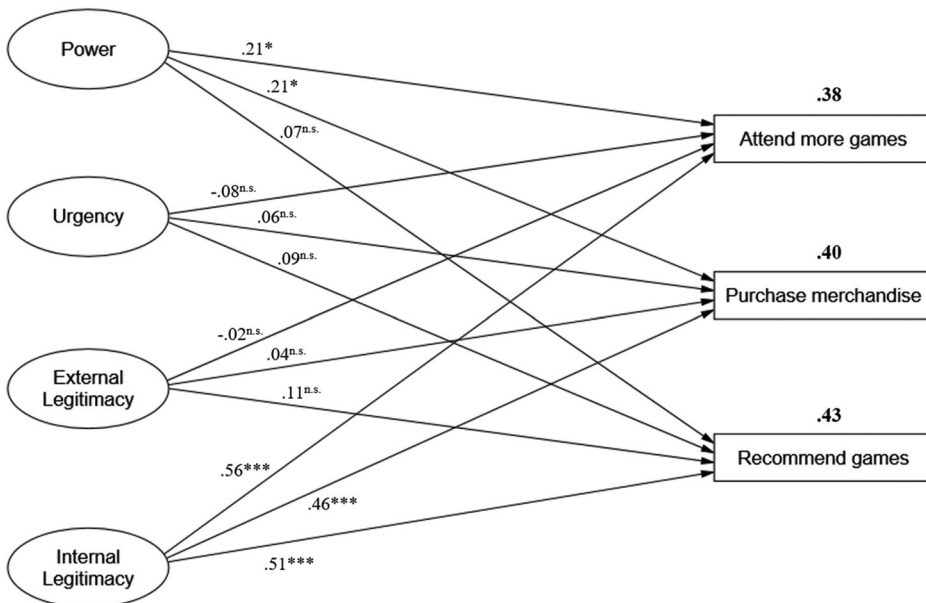


Figure 1. Standardised estimates of the structural model. Model fit: $\chi^2(75) = 399.90$ ($p < .001$), $\chi^2/df = 5.33$, TLI = .92, CFI = .94, GFI = .95, RMSEA = .09 (CI = .082–.092). * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

are becoming fans (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). For example, the aggregate annual revenue of the top 20 European football teams in the 2015/2016 season was estimated to surpass €7 billion, with €8 billion expected in 2016/2017 (Deloitte, 2016). Notwithstanding, while previous research highlights the pivotal role of fans as stakeholders of sport organisations (e.g. Senaux, 2008), little is known about how individuals perceive their role of being fans of a team. Evidence emerged in this study suggesting the appropriateness of the proposed multidimensional construct of fan identity, given the reasonable psychometric properties of the attributes of power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy. Neville et al. (2011) suggested that it is important to understand stakeholder attributes in more normative ways. Considering each attribute in binary terms (i.e. present or absent) is limiting as it fails to capture the complexity of fans' linkages with their teams. Thus, the continuous measures used in this study allow for a more nuanced understanding of how a person sees him/herself in the role of fan of the team.

Empirical evidence that power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy are distinct from one another has emerged, meeting an articulated need in the literature (Currie et al., 2009; Neville et al., 2011). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the correlations between power, urgency and external legitimacy were high (see Table 2). This is consistent with the idea that urgency is characterized by the willingness to exercise power (Easley & Lenox, 2006), and that potential to exercise power underpins the granting of pragmatic legitimacy (Neville et al., 2011). It is also important to note that it was the first time some of the items were tested with sport fans. For example, although the literature suggests that fans' urgency is underpinned by time sensitivity and criticality of claim (Senaux, 2008), one may argue that the items used in this study lack a clear indication of the second (i.e. criticality of the claim), suggesting its inclusion in future studies. Furthermore, because a role identity must be socially recognised (Ervin & Stryker, 2001), it is possible that perceived external legitimacy requires fans to feel that other community members (in this study referred to as 'the club') see them as legitimate fans.

Although the word 'club' is appropriate within the European football setting, items in future studies could directly refer to 'other members of the community' to better capture the meaning of external legitimacy, its relationships with the other three attributes and the impact on future behaviours. Increased competition and financial pressures behove sport managers to find new ways to develop and nurture sustainable relationships with fans to boost both financial and non-financial outcomes (Esteve et al., 2011). Through examining fans' perceived levels of power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy, this research provides academics and practitioners with a novel approach to better understand the meaning fans attach to their role identity, an outcome that may facilitate more customized approaches to strengthening linkages.

Even though previous studies have often referred to team identity and fan identity interchangeably (e.g. Agha & Tyler, 2017; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003), we follow Lock and Heere's (2017) suggestion and conceptually differentiate these concepts by assuming different theoretical backgrounds and associated meanings. As noted by Lock, Funk, Doyle, and McDonald (2014), team identification primarily refers to the psychological connection with a team and the emotional value a fan attaches to team support. It has its roots in social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) and focus on category-based identities (i.e. teams) (Dimmock et al., 2005). On the other hand, fan identity should be mainly grounded in identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000) as it is focused on a role-based identity (Trail et al., 2017). A role

identity represents the characteristics attributed to oneself within a social role (Wood & Roberts, 2006) such as being a fan of the team. We then argue that stakeholder theory (Mitchell et al., 1997) is important to complement the conceptualisation of fan identity due to its contribution for understanding the meaning fans attach to their role identity.

While the concept of team identification has been a cornerstone of the fandom literature for some time (e.g. Dimmock et al., 2005; Lock & Funk, 2016), agreement on how best to measure fan identity has been elusive. By bridging identity theory with stakeholder theory, this study represents a first attempt to conceptualise fan identity as a multidimensional construct. Understanding fans' perspectives of how they relate with their favourite team is paramount because fans are among the most influential stakeholders (McDonald & Sherry, 2010). In this sense, the current fan identity model focusing on self-perceptions of power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy represents a step forward for advancing the understanding of the importance of fans to sport organisations. This assumes particular importance given that one's identity is a key aspect to understand role related behaviours (Ervin & Stryker, 2001).

The results of the structural model suggest that a fan's role identity is important to increase behavioural intentions towards the team (Trail et al., 2017). The current study examined the effects of each unique attribute of fan identity. The results of the structural model revealed that the fan identity attributes accounted for 38%, 40% and 43% of the variance of intentions to attend more team games, purchase team merchandise and recommend team games respectively. Even though Mitchell et al. (1997) have suggested that all attributes of a stakeholder in relation to the focal organisation influence their actions, the attributes of urgency and external legitimacy did not significantly explain the variance in any of the three outcomes measured in this study. This may be related to the wording of the items which did not directly capture criticality of the claim and recognition by other community members, which may suggest the need for item rewording in future studies aiming to further understand fan identity and its importance for sport organisations. On the other hand, internal legitimacy was the strongest dimension explaining the variance in the three behavioural intention measures, while power was significantly related to the intentions to attend more games and purchase merchandise. These findings support the notion that sport can foster identification (Peachey & Bruening, 2011), and suggest that the more one perceives him/herself as being a legitimate fan of the team and capable of influencing the organisation, the higher his/her intentions to act favourably. In this sense, professional sport teams should consider investing in user-friendly social media platforms to promote two-way communication and increase fans' sense of empowerment (Ahn, Hong, & Pedersen, 2014). The creation of new licenced kits (e.g. main and alternative jerseys) in a yearly basis (Premier League, 2016), and the development of team brand extensions (Walsh & Ross, 2010) beyond traditional items may also increase behavioural intentions, given that wearing the logo and colours of the team may reflect the importance of being a fan of the team to an individual (Apostolopoulou et al., 2012). These results also seem to support previous studies highlighting the importance of membership programmes for professional sport teams (e.g. Biscaia et al., 2016). That is, more than 50% of the participants of this study were members of the 'official' fan club and voted for the last board elections, which may give them the perception of power over the club and legitimise their role as fans, and subsequently lead to increased behavioural intentions towards the team.

While it is difficult to ascertain whether these results will apply to different sport settings, the development of this multidimensional fan identity construct may serve to guide more customised marketing strategies based on the meaning individuals attach to their roles as fans. It is important to note that the importance of an identity orientation may be a product of its accessibility and fit with a particular situation (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011), and that a particular role identity may change substantially because of role-related experiences (Wood & Roberts, 2006). This suggests that fans' perceptions of their power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy may vary over time meaning that sport managers should monitor these variables and should not neglect any dimension as they may risk jeopardising sustainable connections with fans. Given that team losses are an unavoidable component of competitive sports that threaten the strength of fans' connections with teams, managers should both monitor and facilitate the maintenance of strong fan identities (Agha & Tyler, 2017). An understanding of how each attribute of fan identity may vary over time could provide sport managers with accurate perspectives on how to shape fan identity and subsequent reactions toward the team.

Taken together, findings from this study indicate that the proposed model of fan identity comprised of self-perceived levels of power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy represents a good starting point for understanding the concept of fan identity and strengthen the relationships between fans and professional sport teams. As noted by García and Welford (2015), it is important to go beyond mere patterns of consumption when studying fans. Fans' increased perceptions of power and internal legitimacy seem to be important for increasing behavioural intentions towards the team. For sport managers, understanding the meaning fans attach to their role identity is essential for successful management. In this sense, the results of the current study may represent a valuable contribution towards promoting a stronger link between professional sport teams and their fans.

Limitations and future research

As with any research, there are limitations in the current study that should be considered when interpreting results. There is also the potential for future empirical analysis in the context of sport fandom. First, this study only focuses on fans of one professional league and may lack generalizability to other sport leagues with different cultural and historical characteristics in which the relationship fan-team may be different. Thus, additional samples of fans from different sport leagues and athletic levels should be drawn to further investigate the appropriateness of the multidimensional fan identity construct. Second, data were collected online and this may have influenced sample composition and representativeness. Most participants were men less than 40 years old, which may not have led to a broad representation of the individuals who follow sport teams. Previous studies suggest that demographic characteristics such as gender are vital in understanding the relationship between fans and teams (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2002). It is therefore recommended to secure broader samples of sport fans using different data collection methods (e.g. both on-line surveys and paper surveys). Also, sport fandom may be shaped by social interactions with other fans (e.g. Heere, 2015; Katz & Heere, 2015) and other stakeholders (Covell, 2005); thus, the inclusion of related variables in future studies

may contribute to better understand how fan identity attributes and subsequent behaviours are shaped. Future research could also examine the role of fan identity on other outcomes such as participation in fantasy games and gambling (Drayer, Shapiro, Dwyer, Morse, & White, 2010; Mahan III, Drayer, & Sparvero, 2012) or processing of sport news (Potter & Keene, 2012) to provide better insight on the decision-making processes associated with fan identity.

Another limitation and research opportunity is related to the fact that fan identity was measured at a single moment in time (i.e. cross-sectional research) and perceptions of team performance were not controlled. A longitudinal research design would provide valuable insight into the enduring nature of fan identity. After all, identification is not stagnant (Katz & Heere, 2016) and may depend on one's experiences (Wood & Roberts, 2006). Also, as noted by Mitchell et al. (1997), the attributes of power, urgency and legitimacy are not fixed in time nor are related perceptions. A team's performance often has ups and downs over a season, and this may play a role on fan identity depending on when data is collected. To this end, additional research could assess fan identity at different points in time over the course of the season. Moreover, data could be collected from fans of both successful and unsuccessful teams to better understand how team performance may be related to the salience of fan identity to the *self*.

Further opportunities for future research may be focused on improving the dimensions of fan identity and examining its linkages with other constructs. This study represented a first attempt to explore fan identity as a multidimensional construct and therefore some attribute definitions and associated items may require refinements. For example, items measuring criticality of claim (urgency) and perceptions related to other community members (external legitimacy) should be reconsidered to reflect the dimensions more accurately. This is likely to both deepen our understanding of the fan identity construct and shed light on its role as an antecedent. Furthermore, testing fan identity in a higher order structural framework may yield further insights into its make-up and relationships with outcomes of interest.

In addition, it is important for professional sport teams to understand how fan perceptions of power, urgency external legitimacy and internal legitimacy are formed and how they might be influenced. Heere et al. (2011) note that individuals possess both a personal and a social identity. Lock and Funk (2016) argue that identifying with a superordinate group (i.e. team) that embodies values deemed central by a consumer (i.e. fan) contributes to extend his/her self-image. While a conceptual distinction between team identity and fan identity was provided in the current study, empirically examining the distinction between these concepts and how they relate to each other would be an important endeavour for future research. Furthermore, recent studies have suggested that sport spectatorship may improve sport fans' well-being (Inoue, Berg, & Chelladurai, 2015; Inoue, Sato, Du, & Funk, 2017). To this end, a detailed understanding of how team identification (i.e. category-based) relates with fan identity (i.e. role-based) and subsequent associated outcomes may be relevant not just for a better understanding of the complexities that shape identification, but also for expanding knowledge on how to increase fans' well-being.

In summary, this study represents an initial effort to understand how to measure fan identity, and how each attribute influences behavioural intentions towards the team. Grounded on identity theory and stakeholder theory, a multidimensional construct of fan identity including power, urgency, external legitimacy and external legitimacy was

empirically tested and revealed acceptable psychometric properties. The results also indicate that the fan identity construct contributes to understand fans' intentions to attend more team games, recommend them to others and purchase team merchandise. The proposed fan identity construct inherently serves as a catalyst for future research that will increase our knowledge of sport fans, while practitioners can use this multidimensional measure to develop better engagement tactics with an existing fan base.

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Appendix: Descriptive statistics, CFA item statistics and correlation matrix of the variables used in the structural model

| Variables | M (SD) | Loading | CR | | | | |
|---|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>Power</i> | 3.47 (2.50) | | .86 | | | | |
| I can exert power within the club | | .73 | | | | | |
| I can influence the club ^a | | – | | | | | |
| I can impose my will to the club | | .83 | | | | | |
| I can impact the direction of the club | | .89 | | | | | |
| <i>Urgency</i> | 4.76 (2.51) | | .85 | | | | |
| I exhibit urgency in my relationships with the club | | .65 | | | | | |
| I urgently communicate my concerns to the club | | .85 | | | | | |
| I express my opinion to the club without delay | | .74 | | | | | |
| I communicate my requests to the club promptly | | .81 | | | | | |
| <i>External Legitimacy</i> | 4.56 (2.50) | | .90 | | | | |
| My claims are viewed by the club as legitimate | | .77 | | | | | |
| My club considers me a legitimate stakeholder | | .79 | | | | | |
| My concerns are viewed by the club as appropriate | | .88 | | | | | |
| The club listens to me when I express my opinion | | .91 | | | | | |
| <i>Internal Legitimacy</i> | 8.95 (1.77) | | .91 | | | | |
| I consider myself to be a real fan of my team | | .82 | | | | | |
| I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of my team | | .89 | | | | | |
| Being a fan of my team is very important to me | | .95 | | | | | |
| I want others to know that I am a fan of my team | | .74 | | | | | |
| <i>Behavioural Intentions^b</i> | | | | | | | |
| The probability to attend more games of my team | 8.05 (2.69) | 1.00 | – | | | | |
| The likelihood to purchase merchandise of my team | 7.28 (2.87) | 1.00 | – | | | | |
| The likelihood to recommend my team games to other people | 8.30 (2.53) | 1.00 | – | | | | |
| Correlation matrix | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1. Power | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| 2. Urgency | .76** | 1.00 | | | | | |
| 3. External Legitimacy | .84** | .77** | 1.00 | | | | |
| 4. Internal Legitimacy | .32** | .50** | .38** | 1.00 | | | |
| 5. Attend more games | .32** | .36** | .33** | .57** | 1.00 | | |
| 6. Purchase merchandise | .43** | .48** | .44** | .54** | .64** | 1.00 | |
| 7. Recommend games | .36** | .48** | .42** | .59** | .58** | .59** | 1.00 |

^aItem eliminated after the scale purification procedures of the pilot test.

^bBehavioural Intentions were measured with three single items.

** $p < .01$.