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Components and Outcomes of Fan Engagement in Team Sports: The Perspective of Managers and Fans

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ABSTRACT

Fan engagement is a central construct for the customer relationship management of professional sports teams. The goal of this study is to develop a framework that categorizes positive and negative components and outcomes of fan engagement in team sports settings. Based on qualitative interviews with 13 team managers and 12 fans of European professional sports teams, we show that fan engagement components can be positive (fan resource integration, fan learning, and fan knowledge sharing) or negative (fan norm violation and fan resistance to the team). These components can have the following benefits: fan resource development and fan value co-creation. Or they can have the following detriments: fan value destruction and fan identity conflict development. Our comprehensive framework synthesizes the manifestations and consequences of fan engagement and thus contributes to our understanding of how fan engagement affects sports teams.

团体运动中粉丝参与的成分与效果：以经理人和粉丝为视角

粉丝参与是专业体育运动团队客户关系管理的核心结构。本研究旨在建立一个框架, 对团队体育运动项目设置中粉丝参与的积极成分和消极成分及结果进行分类。本文基于对13名团队经理和12名欧洲职业运动团队粉丝的定性访谈, 表明粉丝参与有积极成分（粉丝资源整合, 粉丝学习和粉丝知识共享）也有消极成分（粉丝违规和粉丝抵制球队）。这些组成成分可以带来以下益处：粉丝资源开发和粉丝价值共创, 亦可能有如下弊端：破坏粉丝价值和加剧粉丝身份认同冲突。本文的全面框架综合了粉丝参与的表现形式及其产生的结果, 从而有助于了解粉丝参与对体育运动团队的影响。

1. Introduction

In professional team sports settings, fans often support a team via different activities (e.g. cheer for the team, work as a volunteer), via different channels (e.g. online and offline), and at different occasions (e.g. in the stadium, when following games in the

media) (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001; Holt, 1995; Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999; Uhrich, 2014). The entirety of such interactions between fans and a team is subsumed under the concept of engagement, which can be tentatively defined as a person's (here: a fan's) investment of resources into interactions with an organization (here: a sports team) (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). While the investment of resources can have both positive and negative consequences, fans' high engagement with the sports team is generally considered to be beneficial for the team for several reasons. One reason is that engaged fans generate constant income from purchase transactions (e.g. season tickets, merchandise) despite potential ups and downs in the on-pitch performance (Yoshida et al., 2014; high BIRGing [basking in reflected glory] and low CORFing [cutting off reflected failure] tendencies among fans have been reported accordingly; Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman & Sloan, 1976; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). Another reason is the positive influence that engaged fans have on other consumers (e.g. word-of-mouth in social media; Kunkel, Doyle, & Berlin, 2017; Uhrich, 2014). Thus, engaged fans co-create value with teams in different ways (e.g. generation of stadium atmosphere; Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010; participation in open innovation practices; similar to what was shown for volunteers in sports clubs, Wemmer & Koenigstorfer, 2016), resulting in beneficial outcomes for the teams, such as higher revenues and cost savings (Harmeling et al., 2017; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). As a result of this positive view of engagement, the majority of previous research focuses on the beneficial manifestations (e.g. Hollebeek et al., 2019; Pansari & Kumar, 2016) or defines the construct as a purely positively valenced phenomenon (e.g. Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014; Yoshida et al., 2014).

However, engagement can also be unbeneficial toward an organization (Bowden et al., 2017; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). Sports teams are affected, for instance, by incidents of fans flinging objects onto the pitch (Fahey, 2017), setting off fireworks (Boulton, 2017) or even attacking the referee during a game (Critchley, 2016). Negative forms of fan engagement also occur beyond the stadium ground and the game day, including postings of disrespectful messages or unfavorable word-of-mouth on social media (Goodman & O'Neil, 2018) and brawls with opposing fans (Koukouris & Stavros, 2009). Insults from fans and fan violence have several undesirable social, managerial, and sport-related consequences, such as putting others' health at risk, increasing costs via payment of fines, and lowering team performance.

As the above examples show, fan engagement is a multifaceted phenomenon that aggregates the various ways in which fans create or destroy value for the sports team. With only one notable exception (Yoshida et al., 2014), extant literature fails to provide categorizations of the plethora of different fan engagement components. Yoshida et al. (2014) make an important contribution in identifying three components of the construct (i.e. management cooperation, prosocial behavior, performance tolerance) and find positive correlations between these dimensions and beneficial fan responses (i.e. purchase intention and referral intention). However, the study only considers positively valenced components and, hence, neglects dysfunctional forms of fan engagement. Another aspect that limits the study's comprehensiveness is the constrained scope of the measures of the three dimensions, which include only a small selection of the conceivable manifestations of fan engagement. Beside Yoshida et al.'s

(2014) research, a few other studies examine specific manifestations of fan engagement, although not all of the studies make an explicit reference to the term engagement. These manifestations include customer-to-customer interactions (Uhrich, 2014), dysfunctional forms of fan behavior at the stadium (Stieler, Weismann, & Germelmann, 2014) and user-generated content on the team's social media channels (Geurin & Burch, 2017). Oliveira Santos, Correira, Biscaia, and Pegoraro (2018) developed a domain-specific fan engagement scale through social networking sites. Since engagement, however, represents several concepts that manifest in both online and offline channels, such as co-creation, interaction, and service development (Kumar & Pansari, 2016), we can state that the conceptualization of fan engagement in extant sports management literature is largely fragmented. This has prevented the research from moving from a context-driven generation of findings to a comprehensive framework of fan engagement and the resulting benefits and detriments.

The purpose of this article is therefore to develop a framework that categorizes both components and outcomes of customer engagement in team sports settings, taking into account the valence (positive vs. negative) of the activities. For this work, we define components as the various facets or dimensions that compose the conceptual content of engagement, while outcomes refer to the consequences of engagement. Based on qualitative interviews with both team sports managers and fans, we extend previous conceptualizations by adding negatively valenced components and detrimental outcomes of fan engagement. In doing so, we take into account the valence duality of customer engagement that has recently been recognized (Bowden et al., 2017; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). As a result, we derive a comprehensive conceptualization of fan engagement that should be less prone to over- or undervaluation of customers compared to approaches that do not fully capture positive manifestations and/or neglect the negative manifestations of the construct's components and outcomes (Kumar et al., 2010).

Another important feature of the framework is its focus on the perspective of the sports team. It has been noted that the value outcomes of customer engagement (benefits or detriments) vary across situations and actors (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). Previous studies on fan engagement often use the theoretical lens of service-dominant logic and center on the outcomes as perceived by fans (e.g. Stieler et al., 2014; Uhrich, 2014). However, sports teams (and their managers) are the entities that are affected by the outcomes of fan engagement practices. Thus, it is important to complement the fan perspective by identifying value outcomes of fan engagement from the perspective of sport teams. From a theoretical point of view, this broader approach results in a comprehensive understanding of the value consequences of fan engagement because different actors are considered. From a managerial point of view, our work can help managers to focus marketing activities on those components of fan engagement that result in beneficial outcomes or that prevent detrimental consequences for their team. Thus, our framework partially fills a gap by identifying the value outcomes of fan engagement from the perspective of sports team managers beside fans.

In what follows next, we first present a literature review on customer and fan engagement. We then present the results of a qualitative study with team sports

managers and fans and focus on the exploration of positive and negative components and outcomes of fan engagement. We conclude by discussing the results, providing managerial implications, and giving future research directions based on the limitations of our study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Customer Engagement

Due to the sparse number of specific studies on customer engagement in team sports settings, we begin our review with relevant previous work in general marketing literature. Considering the goals of the present research, the review of this literature is structured into broad areas: (1) definitions and conceptualizations of customer engagement and (2) valence of customer engagement (positive vs. negative).

2.1.1. Definitions and Conceptualizations of Customer Engagement

The extant definitions of customer engagement vary considerably, which complicates the comparison of previous findings and impedes a systematic development of the domain (Harmeling et al., 2017). For example, authors construe customer engagement in terms of only behaviors (e.g. Harmeling et al., 2017; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014) or include both behavioral and psychological components (e.g. Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2019). Definitions also vary regarding the inclusion or exclusion of transactional components. Several authors view customer engagement as activities beyond the core transaction (e.g. word-of-mouth (WOM) activity, recommendations, helping other customers, blogging, writing reviews; van Doorn et al., 2010; Vivek et al., 2012), while others include the customers' direct financial contributions (i.e. purchases) (e.g. Kumar et al., 2010; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Also, there are differences with regard to the motivational aspects of engagement: while some authors highlight the affective dimensions (e.g. Chan & Li, 2010) others highlight the cognitive dimensions (e.g. Mollen & Wilson, 2010).

Based on the arguments provided by Hollebeek et al. (2019) and Pansari and Kumar (2017), a person's investment of resources into interactions with an organization is at the core of the definition of customer engagement. The various definitions share this perspective (even though there are sometimes slight differences in wording). As is detailed below, the diversity of viewpoints also relates to the construct's conceptualizations.

There are various conceptualizations of the components and outcomes of customer engagement. For example, Kumar and colleagues (Kumar et al., 2010, Kumar & Pansari, 2016; Pansari & Kumar, 2017) define purchase behavior as one component of engagement beside referrals, social influence, and knowledge sharing. Accordingly, the authors propose that the outcomes of customer engagement include benefits that are directly determined by the core transaction (i.e. revenues). Further benefits are the three intangible aspects permission marketing, privacy sharing, and opportunities for personalized marketing communications (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Hollebeek et al. (2019) develop a framework that comprises three antecedents (resource integration, knowledge sharing, learning) and three benefits (individual as well as

interpersonal resource development, co-creation) of customer engagement. The relationships between the framework's components are not entirely clear though because the authors suggest that both the antecedents and the benefits can coincide with engagement. Van Doorn et al. (2010) suggest five dimensions of customer engagement: valence, form, scope, nature of its impact, and customer goals. These dimensions are characteristics based on which specific manifestations of engagement can be described, rather than conceptual components of the construct. Importantly, a specific engagement behavior such as word-of-mouth can be described in terms of its valence (positive or negative). With regard to firm-related customer engagement outcomes, van Doorn et al. (2010) identify and briefly discuss several aspects, including financial, reputational, and competitive factors. In what follows, we describe the valence of customer engagement in more detail.

2.1.2. Valence of Customer Engagement

A common characteristic of the vast majority of research contributions is their focus on positively valenced components and outcomes of customer engagement (e.g. Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014). Despite this emphasis on the positive manifestations, the valence duality of the construct has been repeatedly acknowledged (e.g. Bowden et al., 2017; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Kumar et al., 2010). Dysfunctional manifestations of the construct have been noted from the earliest studies in this realm (e.g. van Doorn et al., 2010), however, only very few studies have addressed the negative components and outcomes in more depth. For example, Juric, Smith and Wilks (2016) distinguish between negative customer engagement and customer engagement with a negative valence. The former refers to behavior with the intent to cause harm to the firm, while the latter describes behaviors that focus on co-creating value but unintentionally result in detriments for the firm. Hollebeek and Chen (2014) explore negatively valenced engagement from the perspective of the customers. They conclude that negatively valenced engagement includes unfavorable thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Despite the study's focus on the value consequences for customers, the authors propose that these negative manifestations also lead to detrimental outcomes for the firm. Similarly, Bowden et al.'s (2017) examination of engagement finds both positive and negative manifestations, which are categorized into cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Since the study explores customer experiences, the benefits and detriments for the firm are not directly addressed in the research.

2.2. Fan Engagement in Team Sports

Based on a review of the sport consumer behavior literature, Yoshida et al.'s (2014) research is the only team sports-related study that focuses explicitly on the concept of fan engagement. Beside their work, Oliveira Santos et al. (2018) examine fan engagement in the specific domain of social networking sites. However, several other studies contribute to the general understanding of fan engagement and its value outcomes without making explicit reference to the construct. Thus, our review of sport-specific literature first introduces Yoshida et al.'s (2014) work and then summarizes additional

related work that addresses both positive and negative components and outcomes of fan engagement.

2.2.1. Yoshida et al.'s (2014) Understanding of Fan Engagement

Yoshida et al. (2014) define fan engagement as "a sports consumer's extra-role behaviors in non-transactional exchanges to benefit his or her favorite sports team, the team's management, and other fans" (p. 403). Within the boundaries of this definition, the authors suggest three dimensions of fan engagement: management cooperation (helping the management of the team), prosocial behavior (helping other fans), and performance tolerance (supporting the team regardless of the on-pitch performance). Their conceptualization of the construct includes three antecedents: positive affect, team identification, and BIRGing. Yoshida et al.'s empirical study indicates that these antecedents predict the three proposed dimensions of fan engagement and that these dimensions are positively associated with beneficial outcomes for the sports team. Specifically, except for the relationship between positive affect and prosocial behavior as well as BIRGing and performance tolerance, all antecedents are positively correlated with the three dimensions of engagement. Furthermore, the dimensions management cooperation and performance tolerance are positively correlated with purchase intentions and prosocial behavior shows a positive correlation with referral intentions. While Yoshida et al.'s work provides an important initial step towards a first team-sports-specific conceptualization of fan engagement, the rather narrow definition ignores some potentially relevant components, including various co-creation practices and activities related to the core transaction (see introductory examples) as well as, most important to our study, negative aspects of fan engagement. In what follows, we describe both positive and negative components and outcomes of fan engagement that have been identified in the literature.

2.2.2. Positive Components and Outcomes of Fan Engagement

Several studies contribute to the general understanding of fan engagement and its value outcomes without making explicit reference to the construct. Lachowetz, McDonald, Sutton, and Clark (2001) attempt to determine the value that the fans' transactional activities provide for teams. They use the National Basketball Association as a case to show sports team managers how to apply customer lifetime formulas and use them for managerial decision-making. However, the authors neglect fan activities beyond the core transaction and, therefore, these lifetime formulas only cover a small part of the conceptual scope of customer engagement. Milne and McDonald (1999) develop the so-called relative relationship strength measure and recommend the combination of transactional figures with non-transactional indicators, such as behavioral and psychological commitment. The combination of these two dimensions that jointly determine the value that fans have for teams represents a conceptual advancement. However, the study disregards several potentially relevant components that are crucial to today's understanding of fan engagement, such as content generation on social media channels and the influence that fans have on other customers (Uhrich, 2014).

Numerous studies have examined aspects that represent specific manifestations of fan engagement. For example, Hajli and Hajli (2013) find that social media activities of fans offer the team a source of social capital, which manifests in sharing information, knowledge, and experiences. In a case study of season ticket holders, Zagnoli and Radicchi (2010) reveal a system of relationships, where fans influence the internal dynamics of the social network that has developed around a football team. They outline different ways of how fans influence decision-making processes of the team's management. In another study, Brown and Billings (2013) take a reputation-repair perspective on social media activities. They surveyed highly identified college team fans and their Twitter followers. The authors argue that these fans can "become an unofficial arm" (p. 80) of their favorite team. As none of these and several other studies refer to the concept of fan engagement, the extant knowledge of the construct's positive components and outcomes is highly fragmented. One exception is Oliveira Santos et al.'s (2018) study, which develops a domain-specific scale for fan engagement through social networking sites. The scale covers the following components: fan-to-fan relationship, team-to-fan relationship, and fan co-creation. With regard to engagement outcomes, the study exclusively considers positive behavioral intentions (both online and offline).

2.2.3. Negative Components and Outcomes of Fan Engagement

The negative manifestations of the construct can only be indirectly derived from extant literature because no study makes explicit reference to the construct. In the sport management literature, there is widespread consensus that the value outcomes of interactions between teams and their fans are not always positive but can also be of negative valence (Woratschek et al., 2014). This finds support in a number of studies that highlight that fan engagement is not limited to activities with positive outcomes for the team. For example, Wann et al. examine the relationship between team identification and fan aggression and find that highly identified fans are more often involved in incidents of violence and aggressive behavior (Wann, Carlson, & Schrader, 1999; Wann, Haynes, McLean, & Pullen, 2003; Wann, Peterson, Cothran, & Dykes, 1999). Thus, while team identification is generally regarded as beneficial for the team, these studies highlight that it can also result in negative consequences. Harris and Ogbonna (2008) explore the complex relationships that fans can have with different focal objects in and around their favorite team. While fans may support the players, they often engage in activities with dysfunctional outcomes for the team as a whole. McDonald and Karg (2014) investigate ritual behaviors of sports fans and stress that while the majority of these behaviors creates value for the team, others have a negative impact (e.g. where rituals include vandalism or intimidation). Stieler et al. (2014) provide an in-depth examination of the negative manifestations of fan engagement through the lens of service-dominant (S-D) logic. They focus on fan engagement at the live venue that results in value co-destruction. Specific manifestations of such negatively valenced activities include derogating the team manager (e.g. by barracking him or her), displaying antisocial behavior (e.g. by lighting bengalo fires and causing physical harm to other fans), and being intolerant towards the poor on-pitch performance of the team (e.g. by remaining silent when the team is losing).

Anecdotal evidence provides support for the occurrence of negatively valenced fan engagement, such as punching other fans, pelting the field with various things, and peeing on the stands (and hence offending other fans) (Babb & Rich, 2016; Bonsignore, 2012; Wilson, 2016). Some of these activities have direct value consequences for the team, when the team gets fined for the misbehavior of their fans by governing bodies (USA Today, 2016).

2.2.4. Defining the Scope of Fan Engagement for the Present Study

Construing fan engagement as the fan's investment of resources into interactions with the team that result in benefits or detriments means that the construct contains a plethora of different activities. This points to the character of fan engagement as a highly abstract construct. Abstract constructs vary considerably in terms of their meaning across different contexts and raters (Rossiter, 2002). The abstractness generally increases as the number of dimensions of a construct increases (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2009).

Fan engagement is related to a number of other constructs. Due to the high abstractness of the construct, these constructs might also be considered as dimensions of fan engagement. For example, in Kumar and Pansari's (2016) study, engagement (employee engagement in their case) comprises of several other well-established constructs, including identification, satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty. Yoshida et al. (2014) operationalize fan engagement via three dimensions that are constructs on their own (management cooperation, prosocial behavior, performance tolerance). Thus, fan engagement can be viewed as an umbrella construct that is related to several other concepts. Despite its relatedness to other concepts, fan engagement is a unique construct that can and must be distinguished from similar constructs. Table 1 provides definitions of related constructs and briefly describes how these constructs are related to fan engagement in order to highlight distinctions of these constructs with fan engagement.

With only one notable exception (Yoshida et al., 2014), team sports literature provides no categorization of fan engagement components and outcomes. In view of Yoshida et al.'s (2014) study, we suggest that a broader conceptualization of the components and outcomes is necessary to cover the construct more comprehensively.

We propose extending Yoshida et al.'s (2014) conceptualization of fan engagement by considering both positively and negatively valenced components and outcomes (the latter are referred to as benefits and detriments). Furthermore, in line with Kumar et al. (2010), we propose that transactions should not be excluded from conceptualizations of customer (and hence fan) engagement (see also Pansari & Kumar, 2016). A valid evaluation of a fan's (or a group of fans') engagement value should include both transactional and non-transactional features (Kumar et al., 2010). Suggestive evidence from managerial decision-making in sports can be used to substantiate this claim. For example, sports team managers often have to trade off and make decisions based on both transactional and non-transactional components of fan engagement (e.g. a sports manager's decisions about ticket pricing according to the closeness of the seat to the pitch vs. fans' willingness to pay: fans who largely contribute to the stadium atmosphere may have a lower willingness to pay than fans who

Table 1. Constructs related to fan engagement.

Construct	Definition	Relationship to fan engagement	Operationalization (example taken from literature)	Origin of the construct outside the sport literature
Fan commitment	"A reflection of a desire to maintain a valued relationship with his or her favorite sports team" (Kim, James, & Kim, 2013, p. 173)	Fan engagement focuses on the investment of resources rather than the desire to maintain a relationship	Psychological commitment to team scale: fourteen-item, one-dimensional construct, validated in three studies with university students from the United States (Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000)	Sociology, psychology, and marketing; commitment directs individuals to a consistent line of action
Fan loyalty	"(…) attending a game; watching a game on television; purchasing licensed products; following a team via media, including radio, newspaper and internet; and so forth" (Matsuoka, Chelladurai, & Harada, 2003, p. 246) for behavioral loyalty (see also Gladden & Funk, 2001, p. 76). Attitudinal loyalty is the strength of fans' commitment to a particular sports team (Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000, p. 20)	Fan engagement refers to current activities, whereas behavioral loyalty is directed at future activities; attitudinal loyalty can be considered as an antecedent of fan engagement (see row below); yet, loyalty (be it attitudinal or behavioral) does not encompass the fans' investment of all the types of resources covered by fan engagement's conceptualization	Seven-item, two-dimensional construct (attitudinal and behavioral loyalty), validated in one study with subscribers of a sports magazine from the United States (Gladden & Funk, 2001)	Marketing; fan loyalty makes individuals want to re-purchase from the same company (and/or purchase the same products and services again) despite situational influences
Fan (or team) identification	"The extent to which individuals perceive themselves as fans of the team, are involved with the team, are concerned with the team's performance, and view the team as a representation of themselves" (Branscombe & Wann, 1992, p. 1017)	Yoshida et al. (2014) consider fan identification as an antecedent of fan engagement; conceptually, resources are likely to be invested into a relationship with a team when fans are both involved and concerned with the team	Seven-item, one-dimensional construct, validated in two studies with university students from the United States (Wann & Branscombe, 1993)	Psychology (Social Identity Theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1979); an individual derives a greater sense of self from belonging to a social group; this is partly why fans identify with a team
Fan Involvement (in reference to sport; can be adapted to teams)	"The level of interest or importance a fan ascribes to sports representing the level that a fan values or believes that sports are relevant and important to their life and lifestyle" (Stevens & Rosenberger, 2012, p. 230)	Fan involvement can be considered as an antecedent of fan engagement; conceptually, resources are likely to be invested into a relationship with a team when fans are involved with the sport (or the team)	Eight-item, two-dimensional construct (affective and cognitive), validated in one study with consumers from the United States (Shank & Beasley, 1998)	Marketing; fan involvement makes an object or an activity (here: sports or teams) meaningful, important, and engaging to an individual

Table 1. Continued.

Construct	Definition	Relationship to fan engagement	Operationalization (example taken from literature)	Origin of the construct outside the sport literature
Fan identity	"The meaning individuals attach to their role of being fans of their favourite team" (Biscaia, Hedlund, Dickson, Naylor, 2018, p. 463)	Conceptually, resources are likely to be invested into a relationship with a team when fans attach meaning to their role as fans of a team	Sixteen-item, four-dimensional construct (power, urgency, external and internal legitimacy), validated in two studies with sport website visitors from Portugal (Biscaia et al.,2018)	Psychology (Social Identity Theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1979); an individual derives a greater sense of self from belonging to a social group; this is partly why fans' identity is not independent from the team
Brand equity (customer-based)	"The differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (Keller, 1993, p. 1)	Sport team equity (fan-based) deals with how marketing outcomes are generated, considering team knowledge and behavioral responses; while knowledge can be a component of fan engagement, relationships are not considered in the conceptualization of fan engagement	Twenty-item, four-dimensional construct (two types of attributes, benefits, as well as attitudes) adapted to the sport context, validated in one study with soccer fans from Germany (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler,2008)	Marketing; brand equity allows brand managers to evaluate their own activities (i.e. a brand [vs. un unbranded control condition] has a positive brand equity when customers react more favorably to an element of the marketing mix)

Note. The definitions and operationalizations are examples. Others exist in the literature.

contribute little to the atmosphere [but who have a higher willingness to pay]). From a conceptual perspective, benefits and detriments result not only from purely transactional or non-transactional activities, but also from an interaction of the two. This is particularly true for the team sports context, as some non-transactional behaviors are only displayed when matched with certain transactional behaviors (e.g. a ticket must be bought in order for a fan to be able to contribute to an in-stadium choreography before or during the game). Our empirical exploration, which is presented in the following section, takes into account the aforementioned aspects.

3. Method

Our research into fan engagement (in accordance with S-D logic defined as a fan's investment of resources into interactions with the sports team) aims to explore positively and negatively valenced components as well as their outcomes – that is, benefits (positive in nature) and detriments (negative in nature) – from the perspective of managers and fans of professional sports teams. We consider both fans and managers, because the two perspectives can take a complementary view (or reveal differences) to better understand fan engagement holistically. The exploratory nature of our research goals indicates that a qualitative design serves the purpose of the study best.

3.1. Informants

Our informants included managers and fans of sports teams of the first or second division of the five most prominent team sports in Europe (football, team handball, basketball, volleyball, and ice hockey). A purposeful chain sampling strategy (Suri, 2011) was used for our study. Chain sampling "involves seeking information from key informants about details of other 'information-rich cases' in the field" (Suri, 2011, p. 6). Thirteen managers and twelve fans of professional sports teams were recruited and we conducted in-depth interviews with them. We did not conduct further interviews when saturation of knowledge was reached; this was the case when thirteen managers and twelve fans had been interviewed.

All but one manager (who was the CEO of the team) had the position of the marketing, media, ticketing, or sales manager. The managers worked for sports teams from seven countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland). The fans supported one of these teams. Tables 2 and 3 describe the informants and the teams that were included in the study.

The season games of the teams under consideration were broadcasted via the media. Television and internet broadcasts of the season games were available for all teams. Thus, fans from the team's country as well as from other countries could follow the games.

3.2. Procedure

In-depth interviews were conducted over a two-month period in summer 2016, a one-month period in spring 2017, and another one-month period in winter 2017/18. They were conducted face to face (seven interviews) or via telephone (eighteen interviews), as there were large distances between the interviewer and the participant at times (Marcus & Crane, 1986). At the beginning of each interview, authorization was sought to audiotape and transcribe the interview. We assured confidentiality to all participants. All participants gave their informed consent for participation in our study.

In agreement with Lincoln and Guba (1985), we applied the so-called emergent schedule, where the focus is on key themes as an appropriate structure for our interview-based exploratory research. This allowed us to keep the structure and the schedule of the interviews as flexible as possible, but still focused: they developed as the data collection progressed; in the interviews, we focused on key themes of fan engagement: the exploration of components and outcomes of fan engagement, the valence of the constructs, and the managers' versus fans' perspectives.

The interviews began with asking informants about their personal background and what their responsibilities are at work (managers). Before we asked the informants about fan engagement, the construct was defined. Then, we asked what fan engagement means to them and their team, what the positive and negative aspects of fan engagement are, what types of behaviors occur, which are indicative of high (vs. low) engagement, and what the consequences of these behaviors are.

Table 2. Study informants and their professional sports teams (managers).

Team	Sport	Country	League (level)	League rank at time of interview	Club members (n)	Fans on Facebook (n)	Spectators per season game (M)	Name of informant	Position of informant
1	Basketball	Greece	Greek Basket League (1st)	1st	No information	378,373	10,357	Anja	Marketing and PR Manager
2	Football	Denmark	Superliga (1st)	5th	No information	81,512	5,902	Patrick	Marketing Manager
3	Football	Germany	Bundesliga (1st)	4th	145,712	15,015,191	81,226	Frank	Head of New Media and CRM
4	Football	Germany	Bundesliga (1st)	1st	290,000	45,000,000	75,000	Klaus	CRM Manager
5	Football	Germany	Bundesliga (2nd)	12th	20,500	338,343	35,586	Rolf	Head of Marketing and Sales
6	Football	Germany	Bundesliga (2nd)	13th	22,500	573,864	29,328	Michael	Head of Marketing
7	Football	Sweden	Fotbollsallsvenskan (1st)	1st	5,500	181,379	17,545	Kerstin	Marketing and Sales Manager
8	Football	Switzerland	Raiffeisen Super League (1st)	9th	1,500	58,239	4,950	Brian	CEO
9	Handball	Germany	DKB Handball Bundesliga (1st)	14th	1,000	12,619	3,792	Rainer	Press and Public Relations Manager
10	Ice hockey	Czech Republic	Extraliga (1st)	4th	No information	22,848	4,546	Sandro	Marketing Manager
11	Ice hockey	Switzerland	NLA (1st)	1st	1,600	43,332	4,415	Roger	Sales and Consulting Manager
12	Ice hockey	Switzerland	NLA (1st)	2nd	No information	41,683	9,900	David	Head of Ticketing
13	Volleyball	Poland	PlusLiga (1st)	3rd	No information	27,317	4,557	Raffael	Marketing Director

Table 3. Study informants and their professional sports teams (fans).

Team	Sport	Country	League (Level)	Club member	Fan club member	Name of informant	Years of being a fan
14	Basketball	Germany	Bundesliga (1st)	No	No	Wolfgang	23
6	Football	Germany	Bundesliga (2nd)	Yes	Yes	Ina	10
15	Football	Germany	Bundesliga (1st)	Yes	Yes	Lalith	22
16	Football	Germany	Bundesliga (1st)	No	No	Fred	10
17	Football	Germany	Bundesliga (1st)	Yes	Yes	Andrea	15
18	Football	Germany	Bundesliga (1st)	Yes	Yes	Manuel	14
19	Football	Switzerland	Brack.ch Challenge League (2nd)	No	Yes	Dogan	8
20	Handball	Germany	DKB Handball Bundesliga (1st)	No	No	Diana	10
21	Ice hockey	Germany	Bundesliga (2nd)	No	No	Jan	21
12	Ice hockey	Switzerland	NLA (1st)	No	No	Lucien	20
22	Volleyball	Italy	SuperLega (1st)	No	No	Valerio	3
23	Volleyball	Italy	SuperLega (1st)	No	No	Giulia	4

The interviews lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. They were recorded and then transcribed verbatim for the analysis. Transcripts were returned to informants to check for accuracy and to allow them to make any additional comments.

3.3. Data Analysis

As our research goal was to enable the informants to provide relevant and meaningful data (but not to constrain their responses by an overly developed conceptual framework), the analysis of interview data followed a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006). This allowed us to identify the key themes that relate to fan engagement components and outcomes.

The qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA was used to help analyze the data. The content analysis followed the seven steps outlined by Creswell (2013). First, the data were organized and prepared for analysis through the transcription of all interview recordings. Second, all transcribed information was reviewed to gain a general sense of the data. This offered an opportunity to develop a sense of the underlying meaning (Tesch, 2013). Third, data were organized into categories, and categories were labeled with a term. Initial codes were generated in the general inductive analysis, which were then grouped under themes (Creswell, 2013; Thomas, 2006). The fourth step involved generating a description of the setting and people for analysis. It was essential to go beyond description and form thematic connections, resulting in how these themes collectively related to the informants' experience. In the fifth step, advancing how themes are represented, we determined that narrative passages accurately conveyed the findings of the analysis. The sixth and seventh steps in the data analysis involved identifying thematic interactions and interpretation of the findings, respectively. The final interpretation of the data was designed to explain how the findings not only address the research questions, but also the conceptual relevance of the findings.

4. Results

The following themes emerged repeatedly from the data: (1) in relation to components of fan engagement with positive valence, fan resource integration, fan learning as well as fan knowledge sharing take place; (2) in relation to components of fan engagement with negative valence, fan norm violation and fan resistance to the team occur; (3) in relation to benefits, there are fan resource development and fan value co-creation; and (4) in relation to detriments, there are fan value destruction and fan identity conflict development. In what follows, we describe these components and outcomes of fan engagement. Tables 4 and 5 provide definitions of all components and outcomes and present exemplary statements made by the informants.

4.1. Positively Valenced Components of Fan Engagement

4.1.1. Fan Resource Integration
According to Vargo and Lusch (2008), resource integration can be described as the involved actors' activities and interactions when resources are integrated and operated

Table 4. Components of fan engagement identified in the study.

Team	Definition	Examples from the data
Positively valenced components of fan engagement		
Fan resource integration	A fan's use and application of his or her own resources in interactions with the team and/or other fans	Operand resources: "Fans wear merchandise, decorate their cars when we have games … They use their cell phones to connect with the team" (Klaus). "The fan uses his creativity, develops pictures or stickers, and wears them." (Benjamin). Operant resources: "The fan uses his craftsmanship" (David). "If a fan sees that the club needs help, such as a repair inside the indoor hall, he joins and helps and provides some labor work" (Jens). Financial investments: "The non-monetary contribution comes first, then comes the monetary contribution" (Sandro). "Fans purchase tickets, or season tickets, and buy merchandise products from our official store" (Anja). "Being a fan means for me: Being in the stadium, standing in the fan curve and being convinced to help the team by cheering the team. On the other hand, the financial support: when I buy fan merchandise, tickets and food. The third is the perspective when I like the Facebook page and tell my colleagues about my club. Decent behavior is also part of it. The branding perspective that my behavior has influence on how the club is perceived by others. I think far too few fans think about what effect their behavior has on others and on the club itself. Inviting colleagues at home and sharing the passion and joy is also part of being a fan for me" (Lucien).
Fan learning	A fan's acquisition of new knowledge and skills that are related to the team and the consumption of team sports	"Fans register for the newsletter or follow us on Facebook … Fans spend their free time with the club, learn about the club's values, the latest information about the team and the players, learn new songs when listening to other fans, and engage with the club" (Rolf). "I learn from people who've been with longer with the team than me. I learn from them the organization of the fan club regarding away games or also the behavior in the stadium where I watch what others do (songs, claps, etc.)" (Manuel).
Fan knowledge sharing	A fan's provision of team- and/or consumption-related information within his or her network	"Fans who spread the news to everyone in their network via social media make sure that others receive up-to-date information without interference by the team's management" (Kerstin). "When a fan talks about the club, he's a multiplier, so to speak … I cannot bring as much enthusiasm into marketing and communications as the fans can do" (Rolf). "As a fan, I constantly talk about the club and explain everything around it to other people" (Ina).
Negatively valenced components of fan engagement		
Fan norm violation	A fan's violation of rules and regulations that does not intend to harm the team	"It's similar, when fans fight with or steal things from opposing fans. I cannot understand that at all, but it seems that the fans have fun with it. They are not concerned about harming the club with those behaviors" (David). "A few years ago I lit Bengal fires and was banned from the stadium for two years. When I came back, I got a lot of respect and since then I have a lot to say in the group. I did this because it was an adrenaline kick and it was part of the stadium choreography. But I don't think that I harmed my team in doing so" (Dogan).
Fan resistance to the team	A fan's purposeful opposition to the team that intends to harm the team	"If the fans boo their own team, they demotivate the team, which of course does not improve the situation, but deteriorates it" (Roger). "It is problematic when fans are in conflict with us. If they boycott games and leave the fan area empty, there is an atmosphere of resistance in the air … Insults on banners or transported via large choreographies lead to a heated atmosphere and, above all, to bad publicity due to media coverage … Fans sometimes disgrace the club when they show a defaming banner or sing a defaming song" (Rolf).

Table 5. Benefits and detriments of fan engagement identified in the study.

Team	Definition	Examples from the data
Benefits of fan engagement		
Fan resource development	A fan's improvement of his or her own resources in relation to other fans or the team	Operand resources: "Some fans produce their own merchandise; they develop the fabric they us, which is often more developed than the merchandise that we sell" (Klaus). Operant resources: "Now they organize themselves in online forums or in fan meetings … they divide the work and invite other fans to join … they proactively engage, involve, and guide others. This means that what they bring in has become much better" (David). "Fans have always new ideas of how to honor good players, players that made an outstanding contribution to win a game; they develop the idea further by themselves so that we are sometimes surprised by the result" (Klaus).
Fan value co-creation	A fan's active participation in value creation for the team	"Our fans are considered as the 6th player of the team supporting the players whenever they need it" (Anja). "Fans actively shape the design of the jersey" (Roger). "Every year, there is at least one more item that we create together with the fans. This has a positive effect on our sales revenue" (Brian). "By interacting with other fans, they influence how we work, such as when we designed the non-profit museum … Fans influence the team's values, such as to stand up against homophobia, against sexism, or against right-wing parties … A fan culture is anchored in the middle of the fans' lives and ensures that a unique fan culture emerges … Some fans represent the club's values in public and live them in their regular life" (Michael).
Detriments of fan engagement		
Fan value destruction	Consequences of engagement that represent a reduction in value for the team	"The game flow will be interrupted when fans throw pyrotechnics, coins or other things on the pitch … This will not only disturb the other team but both [teams; added by the authors]" (David). "When pyro and smoke are inside the stadium many fans have problems with breathing. We had a lot of injuries when this happened. And this isn't good. Fans come for the first time or the media covers this. Then, we can be sure that there will be fewer fans at the next game. We can say that pyro leads to bad PR image, and bad PR leads to a generally bad image" (Kerstin). "After brawls between fans inside the stadium, it has happened more often that season ticket holders and families say: ok, I'm not going there [to the games, added by the authors] anymore" (Rolf).
Fan identity conflict development	Different fan segments develop their own identities that are in conflict with each other and/or the team	"The worst [thing, added by the authors], which I am convinced was responsible for almost being relegated to the lower league, was the increase in fans' distance to the team. For three quarters of the season, the Ultras have distanced themselves from the team, there was no support, no atmosphere, no enthusiasm" (Rolf). "When the club offers memberships and existing fans comment on this negatively and advise against this for certain reasons, fewer fans will sign a membership or are hesitant to become a member" (Frank). "If both fans and team can no longer comprehend the actions of the other, there is no common identity for the whole team brand possible … Fanaticism of fans is also an issue. It does not support our team and does not provide any value" (David).

upon. The data reveal that fans contribute various kinds of resources, including oper-and (e.g. material goods such as fan equipment) and operant (e.g. intellectual property, skills) resources. Examples of the integration of operand resources include the following: fans wear purchased or self-made merchandise, bring fan paraphernalia such as flags and banners with them, drive decorated cars, and use their cell phones in order to participate in team-related digital activities (e.g. visit the team's online merchandising store) inside and outside the stadium.

Furthermore, the interviews revealed several intellectual property items and skills that fans integrate in interactions with the team. The intellectual property items consist of the application of specific knowledge across different team-sports-related platforms, such as the home stadium, the team's digital channels or the opponent's stadium during away games. Thus, the application of skills and knowledge occurs both at the live venue and on other platforms. For example, fans apply their knowledge about where to meet with other fans, how to unify to march to the stadium together, or how to get tickets for special events. The integration of knowledge and skills inside the stadium includes rhythmic clapping and jumping, singing (some fans and managers told us that many fans lose their voice during the visit) and handcraft skills. For example, Bruno (manager) stated that, "fans help the club: they handcraft choreographies." Dogan and Giulia (fans) stated that, "we create choreographies, produce flyers, and create our own merchandise." The interviews also show that resource integration is not limited to direct interactions with the team but also occurs when fans interact with other fans, travel to attend games, or watch games on TV (Table 4).

In line with our conception of fan engagement, the data indicate that financial investments made by the fans are a component of fan engagement from the perspective of sports team managers. For example, Anja mentioned that, "the fans that we consider as engaged with, and valuable to, our team are the ones who are active in all of the following areas: single ticket purchases, or season ticket purchases, or when they buy products from our official stores." The integration of financial resources also occurs when fans subscribe to a team-owned Internet television channel, for example. Also, fans devote their time, for instance, when they decorate the grandstands with banners several hours before the game starts. An example statement for time investment is the following: "fans spend their free time when they create stickers, banners, etc. or preparing the stadium for choreographies (Michael; manager)." Manuel (fan) stated further that, "the travel to games costs money, the ticket costs money, you buy yourself something to eat and drink and you buy a jersey or a scarf. For my team I've been on the road a few times. From a time perspective, my fandom takes 10-12 hours a week." For fans, not only finance matters, but time and overcoming large distances between their home and important events matter too.

4.1.2. Fan Learning

Fan learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge or skills that relate to team sports consumption. Specifically, fans acquire knowledge and skills that enable them to act, think, and feel as a team sports fan. For example, they learn how to act in the stadium, how to respond when they accidently meet fans of the opponent before a

game, or how to compose comments in online discussion boards. In terms of in-stadium behavior, fans learn, for instance, what clothes they are supposed to wear in the stands to be accepted by other fans, how to sing songs to support their own team or to disparage the opponent, and how to respond to decisions of the referee against their own team. As an exemplary statement, Roger (manager) stated: "Certain songs are only learned in the stands and then, of course, they sing them again and again in the following games." Our informant Michael (manager) mentioned that fans not only learn behavioral patterns they are expected to exhibit but also what type of behavior they are expected to avoid: "The fans … represent a kind of community of values, where certain behaviors are not tolerated." Such behaviors include whistling against their own team, throwing things on the pitch, the usage of bengalo fires and the shouting of fascist, racist and sexist paroles.

The data also show that fans learn from different actors (e.g. the club, other fans of their own team, fans of the opponent and other teams, fans from other sports, and the media). The transfer of knowledge and skills from these actors can occur across a variety of touchpoints. As for learning from the club, fans learn at the stadium, through reading club materials on the homepage, the social media channels and in mailings or by attending official fan club or member meetings. Ina (fan) stated that she "learned this (appropriate behavior; the authors) through the stadium rules and the behavior of other fans, such as respectful behavior towards women, equal rights, no insults towards players and the referee, etc." Fan learning from the club can take place online and offline. However, fans can also learn from other actors at the same online and offline touchpoints. Our informant Rolf (manager) pointed out that fans learn, generally, when they "talk about the club with friends and meet other fans on game day, for example." Frank (manager) mentioned that, "fans learn when they read the comments from others on social media." Thus, fans do not have to be physically connected to others to learn from each other. Interestingly, not only do fans learn from other actors, but these other actors can also learn from interactions with fans, observations of fans, and other practices. This brings us to another category that was identified: fan knowledge sharing.

4.1.3. Fan Knowledge Sharing

A third positively valenced component of fan engagement that emerged from the data is fan knowledge sharing. This component refers to the phenomenon that fans sometimes pass on their specific knowledge to the club or other actors. For example, fans communicate to the club "during fan meetings, which take place on a monthly basis during the season," David (manager) mentioned. Furthermore, he stated that, "there are representatives from different supporters of the club who meet on a regular basis to exchange needs and desires." Thus, the recipients of fans' knowledge sharing engagement practices can be both the team and other fans. According to our informant Sandro, fans also share their knowledge through the participation in regular surveys that the club distributes across different platforms (e.g. social media, mailings, and homepage) to collect fan insights. In another interview, Michael (manager) said that his team would ask the fans "whether the sponsor fits the club and its values or not" as a means to initiative fan knowledge sharing. In this case, fan knowledge

sharing serves as a precautionary measure to avoid reactance toward the sponsorship deal.

In addition to passing on knowledge to the club, fan knowledge sharing includes the communication of team-sports-specific information to other actors, particularly other fans. This facet of knowledge sharing helps other fans develop their competencies as team sport fans, as was described in the previous section. Thus, knowledge sharing can facilitate the occurrence of learning. The data reveal that knowledge sharing can also complement or substitute the club's own marketing communications. This is the case when fans pass on information about the club to people who are not involved in team sports. For example, fans can recruit new supporters through word-of-mouth in discussions with other people. A fan's enthusiastic report about the last game visit or an iconic victory in the past is a valuable instrument for creating awareness for the club. This is important to teams, as "the teams can reach out to people using a non-advertising path. Without these fans, they couldn't reach them," Rolf mentioned. Frank even considers every single fan as a knowledge sharer: "every fan becomes a valuable ambassador, not at least via digital media." The importance of knowledge sharing can also be seen in fan interviews. For example, Jan stated the following: "I always bring my team as a topic of conversation although some people may not even be interested in it at first. At work, or when I meet friends, I talk about my team and the great experiences I had." The data also highlight the role of fans' social media activities, such as the use of Twitter and Facebook in sharing knowledge with others. Fans share their experiences they had with the club by making comments or sharing pictures. Frank (manager) stated that, "it is valuable for the brand when fans share their live experience in the stadium through Twitter or Facebook. This is more credible than if we share those things." Also, Rolf mentioned that, "when fans share things we post, this is a good indicator for what fans are interested in and what not." Brian outlined that fans' intrinsic motivation to share knowledge produces a transparency "that ensures that any topic is discussed within the club, even topics that go beyond the match day," and that transparency leads to more informed and democratic decision-making inside his club.

4.2. Negatively Valenced Components of Fan Engagement

4.2.1. Fan norm Violation

The dimension called fan norm violation is a negatively valenced component of fan engagement that emerged from the data. This dimension embraces behavior that is unintentionally detrimental for the club. For example, when fans override the fireworks ban, they do not necessarily intend to cause harm to their club. They might simply set off fireworks because they enjoy it and consider it an important component of fan behavior, while the negative consequences (e.g. penalties for the club, putting others at health risk) are not desired. This is reflected in the responses of several informants. For example, they mentioned property damage caused by fans who put up team stickers in the city or spray graffiti. "Those behaviors are not tolerated by the government or the wide public, but our fan scene is strongly influenced by the urban graffiti culture. When they spray graffiti in our district, they don't do that to

harm the club," Michael stated. "It's similar when fans fight with or steal things from opposing fans," David mentioned. He stated further that, "it seems that the fans have fun with it. They don't aim to harm the club with those behaviors though." Dogan (fan) stated that he sticks self-made "stickers on public facilities (traffic lights, etc.) in my home town or when I am away from home to draw attention to the club." He continues: "A few years ago, I lit Bengal fires and was banned from the stadium for two years. When I came back, I got a lot of respect and since then I have a lot to say in the group. I did this because it was an adrenaline kick and because it was part of the stadium choreography. But I don't think that I harmed my team in doing so."

4.2.2. Fan Resistance
In contrast to fan norm violation, the dimension called fan resistance refers to negative behavior that is intended to harm the club. This type of engagement behavior occurs when fans openly oppose their own club because they are dissatisfied with something. Manifestations of fan resistance include displaying insulting banners directed at the team management and singing insulting songs. The use of pyrotechnic articles in the stadium can also be a kind of fan resistance when the use is motivated by the desire to do harm to the club. Our informants mentioned that fans sometimes set off fireworks in order to do something that is prohibited to signal their dissatisfaction with certain club activities or decisions. Thus, they engage in this behavior to penalize their club by causing game interruptions, fees that the club has to pay, or sometimes even an abandonment of the game. When fans have these intentions, their practices can be classified as fan resistance. Other examples of fan resistance include booing the team or boycotting the games. Roger stated that, "if the fans boo their own team, they demotivate the team, which of course does not improve the situation, but deteriorates it." Rolf mentioned that, "if our fans boycott games and leave the fan area empty, there is an atmosphere of resistance in the air." Lalith (fan) stated that, "there was a big fan group that booed and shouted 'fire the manager' because they wanted a change in the personnel." A severe form of fan resistance is when fans break ties with their club for a period of time or even permanently. Some of our informants mentioned that fans who strongly oppose commercialization in sport turned away from their club and then encourage others to do so too. Thus, fan resistance may sometimes even result in exit strategies (Table 5).

4.3. Benefits of Fan Engagement

4.3.1. Fan Resource Development
The dimension called fan resource development is a benefit of fan engagement. It refers to the improvement of the fans' operand and operant resources that they integrate in interactions with the team or other fans. Fan resource development results from the two components fan learning and fan knowledge sharing. For example, if a fan is willing to learn how to sing the team's anthem (learning) and another fan provides support by sharing knowledge about how songs or the club anthem are performed, the one fan develops his or her resources (intellectual property and skills) further. It is important to distinguish fan resource development from fan learning.

While the latter refers to the process of acquiring new knowledge, the former refers to the outcome of this process (i.e. improved resources that are available for integration).

Since many of the resources that fans integrate into interactions are based on very specific knowledge, there is some potential to enhance these resources even for experienced fans. Our informants reported that even those fans who have been associated with the team for many years continuously improve their specific resources. For example, our informant David explained how fans integrated a diverse range of resources in the organization of a fan event that was initiated by the team several years ago. Today these same fans do not only invest their time, skills, and knowledge in team-initiated events, but also independently suggest and organize such events: "Now they organize themselves in online forums or in fan meetings … they divide the work and invite other fans to join … they proactively engage, involve, and guide others. This means that what they bring in has become much better." Manuel (fan) stated the following: "I, as the executive director of the fan club, receive knowledge from the fan representative of the club, pass this on to the fan club and then, we organize ourselves to support the club in new, different ways."

4.3.2 Fan Value Co-Creation

The dimension fan value co-creation refers to another beneficial outcome of fan engagement, that is, fans' creation of value for the team or other fans. The managers mentioned several facets of value co-creation. First, fans can contribute to an additional-man atmosphere by integrating their resources during games in the stadium. Brian highlighted why this provides value for the club: "the team feels that the (home; added by the authors) crowd is on their side." He outlined further that, "fans give our team extra motivation for the game or for the next games when they generate an extraordinary atmosphere, when they sing and cheer, even at non-successful times." Value is co-created because not only the fans but also the clubs integrate resources (e.g. by playing music). The atmosphere co-created by fans can then become an element of a club's image. Brian said that, "in our first year in the 1st league, each guest coach or manager mentioned the fantastic atmosphere in the arena at the press conference after the match. That is very special and a value added by the fans." The fans provide the team an additional home advantage (e.g. Ponzo & Scoppa, 2016) and influence how others perceive the club.

Second, some informants reported that their team worked together with fans to create new products and services. Roger said that there are fans "actively shaping the design of the jersey." Also, Brian told us that, "fans have the possibility to create a retro-style jersey in cooperation with the club. However, there is not only the jersey. Every year, there is at least one more item that we create together with the fans." Sandro reported that, "creating new merchandising with the fans regularly through social media" is one of the activities that bring value to the team. Furthermore, the team can improve internal business processes (e.g. ticket sales, merchandising, and service desk) based on feedback that they receive from fans. David stated that they used the feedback from fans "to improve processes (…). This is really the key to me: find a consensus with the fans and find out where we can improve." Thus, product

and service development based upon the principle of open innovation is another way how fans co-create value with the club.

Third, fans can participate in some (or all three) stages of the customer relationship management process (recruit, retain, regain). Then, they co-create value and complement the club's marketing activities. David said that, "an engaged fan can be an important marketing tool for us." Roger, among others, outlined that many of their existing fans bring new fans to the sport venues (e.g. a father takes his children to the stadium) and that this is highly valuable to the team. Wolfgang (fan) stated the following: "I brought people to my club by telling them about the team, buying them tickets, and taking them with me to the games." Michael stated further that some fans, particularly what he calls very important people (VIP) fans, are not only ambassadors, but become co-creators when they contribute to the image that the team wants to stand for by their mere personality (theoretical arguments can be found in celebrity endorsement and sponsorship literature; e.g. Gwinner, 1997). He describes the situation in which a VIP fan "finds that we are a smart club and makes it public when he wears our shirts in public. They are our fans too and they bring new fans due to their behavior." We call this co-creation by transfer of meaning from the ambassador to the team.

Fourth, the interviews indicate that co-creation takes place to shape the fan culture that is specific to the club. For example, fans develop, change, and represent the values that the club wants to stand for: "Fans influence the team's values, such as to stand up against homophobia, against sexism, or against right-wing parties (Michael)." Michael stated further that, "the development of fan resources ensures that a fan culture arises. This culture is anchored in the middle of a fan's life and ensures that a unique fan culture emerges. The fans are a very important asset for us because they sharpen our whole brand. Our city is generally not very attractive to players but the fans are our greatest good in international competitions with other clubs to get the best players."

Lastly, we found that engagement as a volunteer often goes along with co-creation of value. According to some of our informants, fans often volunteer for activities that their team is in need of. Brian, among others, told us that his team has a pool of volunteers: "We can contact them and ask for certain activities and then some people come to help us." Raffael reported that, "during every game, the fans perform most of the activities where work is needed." Jan (fan) adds: "In the past there were events where the team needed volunteers and I helped regularly. That was a matter of course for me. I did this with friends, and it wasn't work for me." This, according to Raffael, is highly valuable to the team. David told us also that the club saves more than EUR 100,000 per year due the volunteer engagement of their fans.

4.4. Detriments of Fan Engagement

4.4.1. Fan Value Destruction

A detrimental consequence of fan engagement is labeled fan value destruction. This dimension refers to situations where fans' involvement in interactions with the team destroys value. Fan value destruction is often a direct consequence of the negative

engagement components of fan norm violation and fan resistance. One example of fan value destruction is when fan behavior leads to an interruption of the game, which may then relate to a sporting loss of the team or to some financial loss (or lower profit). For example, bengalo fires and other practices that interrupt the game (i.e. norm violations or resistance-to-the-team practices) can result in a lost game, monetary fines, the necessity to host a future game without spectators, or higher safety requirements. In the past, clubs have received a lost-game punishment (no matter what the actual score was), or they have been fined for their fans' misbehaviors (Gladwell, 2018; Holyman, 2017). The club may then face higher costs because additional private security services that monitor or exclude fans have to be paid. Or they face a loss of profit because they have to play in an empty stadium as a punishment. Also, ticket sales may go down, because certain spectator segments could feel that it is not safe to attend games any more.

A negative impact on the team's image is another manifestation of fan value destruction. The negative image may result from away fans who have developed a reputation for misconduct. For example, Brian stated that, "it affects our image as a club if fans travel to an away game and misbehave in the city by destroying the train interior, leaving waste in the train and on the streets, and so on (i.e. norm violations)." Frank stated that media reports about such misbehaviors would transmit the negative image of the fans onto the team's image. Michael stated further that, "the club is accused of not having its fans under control. The media then turns clubs and their fans into a socio-political problem that damages all actors."

Beside sporting, financial, and image effects, there may be negative health effects. For example, Kerstin said that, "when pyro and smoke are inside the stadium many fans have problems with breathing. We had a lot of injuries when this happened. And this isn't good. Fans come for the first time or the media covers this. Then, we can be sure that there will be fewer fans at the next game." The additional health risks of bad air (or any other form of fan violence, such as burned skin and other injuries from bengalo fires) may then have negative consequences on any of the three variables described before. Yet fans who lit bengalo fires in the past (e.g. Dogan) were not aware of these negative consequences.

4.4.2. Fan Identity Conflict Development

Another negative outcome of fan engagement is labeled fan identity conflict development and refers to discrepancies between the identity of certain fan segments and the identity of the team and other fan segments. A key antecedent of this outcome is the dimension fan resistance. Fan resistance reflects the dissatisfaction of fans with their team. It can result in the development of a fan identity that deviates from the identity of the team and other fan segments because the dissatisfied fans intentionally dissociate their identity from others. For example, our informant Frank reported that, "the tendencies of some fans to publicly show their opposition to the team and put some pressure on other fans to join them could make spectators leave the stadium and thus lower the atmosphere." Rolf stated that families and season ticket holders who were interested in a safe stadium visit did not purchase new tickets or renew their

season tickets if conflicts with other fan segments made the stadium visits appear dangerous.

The interviews showed that identity conflicts between fan segments are developed through fan resistance and non-conforming behavior. The fan base becomes increasingly diverse, which limits understanding for the actions of other groups. Frank mentioned that, "fan groups become more and more heterogeneous and often there is a lack of understanding between these different groups." Fans supported this view. Some informants expressed a lack of understanding for other fans regarding the acceptance of violence against other people, lighting bengalo fires in the stadium, whistling out their own team, excessive drug use, misbehaving during away matches, boycotting via lowering the stadium atmosphere, and stealing fan utensils from fans of other clubs. Detriments also include identity conflict development practices that are directed at the team. Rolf provides an example: "If both fans and the team can no longer comprehend the actions of each other, there is no common identity anymore." Beside the potential for violence, the increase in psychological distance from fans or the team for some fan groups makes it harder for the team's management to target those groups and take into account their needs and preferences. This was true for some so-called Ultra fans, fans who "felt themselves deeply tied to the colors of their team and were strongly connected to the popular supporter culture" (Brown, 1998, p. 92).

5. Discussion

The purpose of the study was to explore the components of fan engagement in team sports that are of positive or negative valence and to categorize the construct's benefits and detriments. The study takes the perspective of both fans and managers of professional sports teams in Europe and identified fan engagement categories using inductive coding. The results showed that fan engagement components can be positive, falling into fan resource integration, fan learning, and fan knowledge sharing, or negative, falling into fan norm violation and fan resistance to the team. There are two benefits: fan resource development and fan value co-creation. And there are two detriments: fan value destruction and fan identity conflict development. In what follows, we discuss the theoretical and managerial contributions of our work.

5.1. Theoretical Contribution

The results of this study extend our understanding of fan engagement in the following ways. First, in contrast to previous work (e.g. Stieler et al., 2014), we provide a holistic perspective on both the positive and negative facets of fan engagement (as called for by Bowden et al. [2017] and Hollebeek and Chen [2014] in general management literature). The positive components go beyond the components proposed by Yoshida et al. (2014), because fan resource integration includes more than cooperation with the management (the latter variable was measured in Yoshida et al.'s scale). In contrast to Yoshida et al., we consider resource development and value co-creation as fan engagement outcomes, which may subsume pro-social activities among fans and tolerance toward poor team performance with regard to wearing the

team's merchandise despite lack of success (the latter variables were measured via three items each in Yoshida et al.'s scale). Fan behaviors identified in our study are, for example, fans' contribution to stadium atmosphere and fans' open innovation activities, that is, co-creation facets that have not been considered by Yoshida et al. (2014). In contrast to Oliveira Santos et al. (2018), who considered co-creation as a component of their domain-specific fan engagement scale, co-creation emerged as an outcome in our study. Our work also extends Hollebeek et al.'s (2019) customer engagement framework. While there is some conceptual overlap with their antecedents and benefits, we add negative components and detriments of engagement and propose some team sport-specific sub-categories.

The negative components identified in our study are fan norm violation and fan resistance to the team. These components add to the literature on negative interpretations of fan engagement. For example, Martin and Goldman (2016) describe the process of fan detachment via three stages: dissolution (including the sub-stages of trigger, breakdown, and determinant incident), exit, and post-dissolution. We provide more detailed evidence on the determinants by describing fan behaviors that lead fans to engage with the team in a way so that managers perceive a negative valence of these activities. We also extend Stieler et al.'s (2014) work by offering two components of fan engagement and two outcomes. The variables identified in their study may be categorized along these dimensions. Such categorization of the negative facets of fan engagement is completely absent in Yoshida et al.'s (2014) framework of fan engagement. As a result, in our study, we derive a comprehensive conceptualization of fan engagement that should be less prone to over- or undervaluation of customers compared to approaches that neglect the negative manifestations of engagement (Kumar et al., 2010).

Second, our framework distinguishes between components and outcomes of fan engagement. The outcomes have been defined in non-sports-related fields according to a firm's customer-directed goals (e.g. increasing the likelihood of product and service purchases, increasing positive word of mouth; Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Villanueva, Yoo, and Hanssens, 2008). However, for professional sports teams, the consequences typically include various other activities, ranging from volunteering for the club to shaping the club's image via a unique fan culture. Also, facets such as boycotts of silence in the stadium to raise voice against authorities and the team's management have been identified as outcomes that have negative valence. The differentiation between components and outcomes should also help general management literature conceptualize the construct. For example, Hollebeek et al. (2019) distinguish between antecedents and foundational processes of engagement. They suggest that antecedents and the benefits can coincide with engagement, but they remain unclear about what the components and what the outcomes of fan engagement are. We contribute to sports management (and general management) literature by proposing various outcomes of fan engagement, such as value co-creation and value destruction as well as resource development and identity conflict development. Future research may find out whether they apply to both sports and non-sports contexts.

Third, we explored fan engagement from the perspective of both fans and managers of professional sports teams. The managers' perspective adds to existing literature,

because the value outcomes of customer engagement (benefits or detriments) vary across situations and actors (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). Previous studies on fan engagement often center on the outcomes as perceived by fans (e.g. Stieler et al., 2014; Uhrich, 2014). However, sports teams (and their managers) are also affected by the outcomes of fan engagement practices. Thus, our framework partially fills a gap by identifying the value outcomes of fan engagement from the perspective of sports team managers and complementing it to fans' perspective. Also, the identification of both components and outcomes may add to an extension of the conceptualization of facets, such as those found in Yoshida et al.'s (2014) scale.

Lastly, our study used a broad definition of fan engagement that refers to the transactional and non-transactional activities of fans (in contrast to Yoshida et al., 2014). While this is a conceptual issue with advantages and disadvantages for one or the other (e.g. Kumar et al., 2010; Pansari & Kumar, 2017; van Doorn et al., 2010; Vivek et al., 2012), we note that fans and managers were not explicitly informed about whether we considered transactional and non-transactional behaviors or only one type of these behaviors. The interviews, however, showed that both types contribute to the engagement levels of fans with their team. While conceptual arguments are needed to make arguments with regard to the definition of fan engagement, our work should help both researchers and practitioners take into account the opinions of both managers and fans about the construct when contrasting theory-driven conceptual arguments with field evidence.

5.2. Managerial Contribution

The management of fan engagement components and outcomes is central to any customer relationship management activities of professional sports teams. Our proposed fan engagement framework provides managers with a classification scheme for positive versus negative components and benefits versus detriments. As Michael noted, "[most clubs; added by the authors] would not exist without fans." Thus, they can be recommended to ensure that fans can integrate various resources into the team, learn from each other, and share knowledge. Any signs that fans violate norms or resist to the team should be used as a warning signal that negative consequences may arise if these activities continue. The managers can thus be recommended to gauge both positive and negative components of fan engagement and use tactics to influence them for the benefit of the team (e.g. hold discussion forums with fans, use social media to learn about needs and preferences and respond accordingly). The use of open innovation platforms has been particularly effective in this regard (Wemmer & Koenigstorfer, 2016).

The positive and negative outcomes of fan engagement practices relate to both the on-pitch performance of the team (e.g. win [loss] of a game as a result of a better stadium atmosphere [or an interruption of the game via violent behaviors]) and business performance (e.g. higher or lower turnover depending on sponsors' engagement in response to different fan engagement levels). Managers consistently referred to both aspects, thus, we can assume that both are relevant to evaluate fan engagement practices (beside social effects, such as health and well-being). The tools that managers can

use to profit from highly engaged fans are not limited to typical customer relationship management tools, but also include the recruitment of fans as volunteers for social activities (e.g. children's camps, refugee inclusion activities, maintenance work), open innovation activities (e.g. in relation to co-creating stadium atmosphere or co-creating designs for merchandise), and consultancy on managerial decision making (e.g. recruitment of players and sponsors).

When managers' and fans' perspectives differ (in the present study, this was the case when fans enjoy the use of bengalos or when they are violent and break the law, for example), managers should aim to communicate with fans to find solutions of how to prevent these activities and avoid the negative outcomes that go along with them. According to conflict management approaches, such as the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict MODE (Management-of-Differences Exercise; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977), managers have several options to solve such conflicts: (1) competing, (2) collaborating, (3) compromising, (4) avoiding, and (5) accommodating. Two separate dimensions describe these five options: assertiveness (i.e. an attempt to satisfy one's own concerns) and cooperation (i.e. an attempt to satisfy the other person's concerns). Competing is assertive and uncooperative, collaborating is assertive and cooperative, avoiding is unassertive and uncooperative, accommodating is unassertive and cooperative, and compromising is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. The most attractive (but effortful) solution that creates a win-win-situation and is appealing to both parties (here: fans and managers) is collaborating; temporary solutions may be found based on compromising. Depending on situational factors, other options may be viable too.

To manage these processes of conflict resolution, managers should be in a constant dialogue with fans. Mediators often help establish this dialogue (e.g. in roundtable meetings, online chat rooms, and on-site fan talks). Fan representatives are such mediators who act as contact persons for the fans of the team. Efforts are not only made towards solving conflicts, but also towards preventing conflicts via a proactive commitment to common goals, such as avoiding verbal and physical fights among fans (and with fans of other teams), avoiding riots, and banning fireworks that may harm people and break the law. Therefore, the mediators often take part in safety planning meetings.

To conclude, we encourage managers to consider fan engagement broadly and assess each fan's contribution to the value of the team in general based upon both transactional and non-transactional components. The contribution of fans to the mission and the value statements of a team add value to the team.

5.3. Limitations and Outlook

Despite its contributions, this research is subject to some limitations. First, the study is limited to two particular groups of stakeholders. This has important implications for the interpretation of fan engagement outcomes. For example, managers may consider bengalo fires and violence as value-destructive. Those fans who engage in such practices, however, may enjoy themselves, and these practices may create value for them, or for people that have similar interests. Politicians, public health

representatives, the media, sponsors, and other stakeholders may have different opinions, and these stakeholders have not been studied extensively until now.

Second, the study did not explore the antecedents of fan engagement. For example, Yoshida et al. (2014) conceptualize BIRGing as one antecedent of engagement – BIRGing may therefore drive several other components of fan engagement than those included in their model as our findings about the complex nature of fan resource integration reveal. Other potential factors may be explored too (e.g. low levels of CORFing and other psychological mechanisms that may lead fans to invest resources into the relationship with a team, such as motives and role meanings).

Third, while we explored categories that are of positive or negative nature (either components or outcomes), we did not study interactions between the two and the processes that make fans go into one direction or the other. Managers of sports teams may be interested in learning what situational and personal factors determine whether fans violate norms or become resistant to the team (vs. integrate their resources, learn, and share knowledge). Situational factors may include team-related aspects (e.g. a new investor that is disliked, relegation to a lower league) and other fan-related aspects (e.g. uninspiring or aggressive stadium atmosphere, violence of other fans). Personal factors may include trait variables (e.g. aggression, coping, and frustration tolerance) and fan identification levels (e.g. die-hard fans vs. fair-weather fans). This would then allow managers to design tools that produce most positive effects for the team depending on the needs and preferences of certain sub-groups within their fans.

Lastly, we defined fan engagement broadly and used an inductive coding that was informed by the S-D Logic, which has been criticized for its vagueness and high level of abstraction (Grönroos & Ravald, 2011). The criticism in relation to the S-D Logic also applies to our research. For example, we do not propose a measurement scale that would allow researchers and practitioners to measure fan engagement beyond what Yoshida et al. (2014) have proposed. Thus, it remains unclear whether the categories are discriminant from each other from a statistics-driven scale-development perspective. Future research may address this concern and propose a multidimensional scale that assesses the components and the outcomes of fan engagement. Such scale would also allow researchers and practitioners to make comparisons between different sports. Some engagement activities (e.g. use of bengalos) may depend on whether fans watch the game in roofed arenas or roofless stadiums. Thus, depending on the contextual setting that is provided by the sports, fan engagement activities might differ.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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