The Fan Attitude Network (FAN) Model: Exploring Attitude Formation and Change among Sport Consumers

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Attitude-related research in the existing sport literature has focused on measurement of the affect component to examine existing attitudes towards sport teams. Recent studies question sole reliance upon affective reactions to assess sport consumers' attitudes towards sport teams. Current thinking conceptualises attitudes as possessing distinct structural properties such as importance, extremity, accessibility, certainty, and so on, whose combined presence is believed to be a better measure of attitude formation towards a focal object. This paper presents a conceptual model to advance our understanding of attitude formation relative to sport and athletic teams. The Fan Attitude Network (FAN) Model proposes a process through which the fulfilment of dispositional needs serves as a catalyst for the internalisation of a sport team. The internalisation process culminates in a sport identity that mediates the formation of the structural property importance, which in turn influences the formation of additional structural properties that subsequently impact attitude consequences such as fan loyalty. Based upon the proposed FAN Model, two directions for future research are offered for the systematic study of attitude formation among sport consumers.

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Research with sport consumers has used Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) to illustrate how athletic teams can provide individuals with a sense of belonging that fosters an in-group identity (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000; Wann & Branscombe, 1990, 1993). Previous work suggests that group membership is an important component of an individual's self-concept (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Other investigators have observed that attraction to an athletic team may stem from projecting in-group status (Cialdini & de Nicholas, 1989; Cialdini, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976; Gladden & Funk, 2001; Hirt, Zillmann, Erickson, & Kennedy, 1992). The perceived psychological benefits derived by sport enthusiasts produce a psychological connection with a specific team and are thought to induce positive moods (Hirt et al., 1992) that in turn produce positive feelings, thoughts and preferences (Funk & Pastore, 2000). In contrast, some researchers have demonstrated that individuals will avoid projecting an association with an unsuccessful team when in-group status is perceived as having negative consequences (e.g., a threat to self-esteem or one's public image) (Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986; Wann, Hamlet, Wilson, & Hodges, 1995). Taken together, this evidence suggests that adoption and confirmation of an identity may guide attitudinal formation and change towards an athletic team.

The bulk of the previous research was originally drawn from Festinger's (1957) notion that individuals were influenced by similar others (e.g., in-group members) in forming judgments. For example, Deshpande, Hoyer, and Donthu (1986) surveyed Hispanic consumers and reported that those who were highly identified with the ethnic group were more likely to buy brands advertised by Hispanic spokespersons. Deshpande et al. suggested that consumer brand attitudes were influenced by the importance an individual placed in a Hispanic identity. Similiarly, Boninger, Krosnick, and Berent (1995) reported that an individual's identification with a group was a significant predictor of expressed political attitudes. Furthermore, Boninger et al. proposed that the importance of group membership was a likely determinant of attitude formation because reference groups often shape attitudes.

The preceding discussion illustrates the importance of group membership or the adoption of an identity based on group membership. In a sport context, Kolbe and James (2003) proposed that adopting a sport identity is an important component in developing loyalty to a sport team. Their work focused on how an individual is thought to adopt a sport identity through an internalisation process (derived from self-determination theory) (Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997), the integration of a sport team into one's self-concept, resulting in the emergence of a sport identity (James & Ross, 2002). Kolbe and James focused on the development of a sport identity through internalisation but did not address attitude formation within this process.

While previous efforts in sport consumer behaviour have examined a multitude of motives to explain the actions and thoughts of individuals with respect to athletic teams (e.g., Funk & James, 2001; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000), efforts towards understanding how individual motives contribute to attitude formation remain limited. Drawing upon previous theoretical and empirical evidence, a conceptual framework – the Fan Attitude Network (FAN) Model – is presented in an effort to advance our understanding of how the internalisation of a sport team into one's self-concept, the development and confirmation of a sport identity, influences attitude formation and change. The FAN model examines how individual characteristics and features of a sport identity contribute to stable and continuous evaluations of a specific sport team in today's constantly changing sport environment. A review of attitude research is presented, followed by a discussion of the FAN model.

Attitude Research

Previous investigators have acknowledged the need to utilise theoretical foundations from social psychology to understand attitude-related research in sport and leisure (e.g., Backman & Crompton, 1991; Bright, 1997; Funk, Haugtvedt, & Howard, 2000). The term "attitude" represents a hypothetical construct referring to a general and enduring positive or negative feeling towards or evaluative response to some person, object or issue (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Attitudes may also represent a learned predisposition with respect to a given object and express some important aspect of one's personality (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995). Attitudes are thought to possess three notable features: they are learned, are relatively enduring, and influence behaviour (O'Keefe, 1990). The study of attitudes has evolved from two major orientations: (a) tripartite and (b) unidimensional (Lutz, 1991).

The tripartite orientation suggests that an attitude consists of three main components or antecedents: affect, cognition and conation (Bagozzi, Tybout, Craig, & Sternthal, 1979; Lutz, 1977). The components have become the foci of three different explanations of attitude formation and change. The *affective process* involves pairing an attitude object with a stimulus that elicits an affective response; after repeated activation (i.e., pairing the object and affective response) an attitude is formed. The *cognitive learning process* stipulates that an attitude is formed based upon information derived from various sources, including direct and indirect experience, advertising, or a friend. Through a *behavioural process* (i.e., conation) attitudes are derived from past behaviour or perceived as consistent with behavioural intent (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995). The tripartite view came under criticism due to limited empirical support for the conceptual framework, measurement issues

related to the cognitive and conative components, and questions as to whether all three components were necessary for an attitude to form (Lutz, 1991). Furthermore, when inconsistencies occur among the attitude components (e.g., smoking causes cancer [cognition], individual continues to smoke [behaviour]), the tripartite theory appears to break down, creating a need for a new approach for understanding attitude formation.

The unidimensional orientation evolved from the tripartite orientation supporting the notion that an attitude consists of an affect component with cognition and conation separated out to represent antecedents and consequences of an attitude (Lutz, 1991). Cognition was relabelled "Beliefs" and conation became "Intentions" and "Behaviours". This orientation establishes a causal flow through the attitude components (Beliefs→Affect→Intentions→Behaviours) and has been used in hierarchy-of-effects models (Berry, 1987; Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). The unidimensional view of attitude formation allows researchers to specify causal links among the components that have both theoretical and practical merit. As a result, the unidimensional perspective has been the foundation for much of the current attitude research over the last three decades.

A number of theories have evolved from the tripartite and unidimensional orientations to advance our understanding of attitude formation, attitude change, or both. Notable theories dealing with both formation and change include Consistency theories (e.g., Heider, 1958; Festinger, 1957; Rosenberg, 1960), Learning theory (e.g., Fishbein, 1967) and Functional theory (e.g., Katz, 1960). Attitude formation theories suggest that conditioning and mere exposure create affective formation and change through associative learning (e.g., learning leads to liking or once an individual learns, he/she can be persuaded). Notable learning approaches are classical or respondent conditioning (Staats, 1983; Zanna, Kiesler, & Pilkoni, 1970), operant or instrumental conditioning (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Insko & Butzine, 1967), and mere exposure (Zajonc, Markus, & Wilson, 1974). Attitude change theories attempt to understand various motivational processes in attitude formation and change, how variables produce persuasion and the process by which these variables induce attitude change. Notable dual route models such as Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion (ELM), Eagly and Chaiken's (1984) Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM), and Fazio's (1990) Motivation and Opportunity act as DEterminants Model (MODE) account for the number of ways variables induce attitude change.

Although attitude formation and attitude change theories may differ in approach, both groups of theories prove beneficial when conceptualised as describing continuum distinctions and not categorical distinctions. For example, on an attitude continuum from "No opinion" to "Strong opinion", a measure of *No opinion* and *Weak opinion* are more similar than *No opinion* and *Strong opinion*. Hence, some theories were found to work better at the lower end while others work

better at the higher end of the continuum. Taken together, researchers typically assessed a person's position on a positive–negative continuum and then determined what theory (theories) was (were) most likely to account for attitude formation and change given the individual's position on the continuum.

Attitude-related research in the existing sport literature has focused on measurement of the affect component to examine existing attitudes towards sport and leisure activities (e.g., Mahony & Howard, 1998; Mahony & Moorman, 1999; McDaniel & Heald, 2000; Murrell & Dietz, 1992; Pope & Voges; 2000; Turco, 1996; Virnig & McLeod, 1996;). Positive–negative continuums have been employed in questionnaires to measure responses about a specific team (Mahony & Howard, 1998;), corporate sponsors (McDaniel & Heald, 2000), recreational interest (Park & Kim, 2000) and increasing tuition to finance construction of a sport stadium (Armstrong, 2000). Typically, these studies gauge an individual's feelings or affect towards a sport object by summarising respondents' scores on Likert scales and subsequently comparing this measure to reported behaviour or intent. Researchers have found, however, that there was variability in the extent to which measuring evaluative responses served as a useful predictor of psychological or behavioural variables (Funk & Pastore, 2000). Previous research in sport has used the positive–negative continuum approach in an effort to account for attitude change and formation, with the primary focus being attitude change.

While the traditional positive–negative continuum approach is a long-established tradition (e.g., Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955), recent studies question sole reliance upon affective reactions to assess respondents' attitudes (Watson & Clark, 1997; Zautra, Potter, & Reich; 1997). Within the last decade, social psychologists have moved away from both the tripartite structure and unidimensional perspective and conceptualised attitudes as possessing distinct structural properties such as extremity, accessibility, importance, intensity, certainty, knowledge, direct experience, affective–cognitive consistency, vested interest, and ambivalence (Krosnick & Abelson, 1992; Krosnick & Petty, 1995). A number of studies have demonstrated that a person's attitude is comprised of various structural "properties" that reflect the extent of attitude formation towards a focal object (e.g., Bassili, 1996; Bright, 1997; Funk & Pastore, 2000; Gladden & Funk, 2002; Krosnick, Boninger, Chuang, Berent, & Carnot, 1993). For example, Bassili (1996) examined the structure of an individual's attitude towards employment quotas for women and laws about pornography and discovered the presence of nine distinct but related attitude properties for individuals with extreme positions on both topics. Funk and Pastore (2000) similarly reported that highly formed attitudes towards a professional baseball team contained eight attitude properties beyond affect. In fact, measures of importance, intensity, personal relevance, direct experience and knowledge accounted for more variance in loyalty to the team than an affect measure. Gladden and Funk (2002) also reported that measures of attitude importance and knowledge

were more predictive of brand-based associations among professional team sport consumers than affect measurements.

Research on attitude properties suggests that assessment of the various properties may be a better measure of attitude formation towards a focal object, compared to traditional measures of the tripartite or unidimensional perspective. Of particular relevance to the FAN Model is the finding across recent studies that the attitude property *importance* consistently emerged as a good predictor of various dependent variables and may provide a useful starting point to initiate a discussion of attitude formation in a sport context. An attitude is characterised as important when it is salient (Kaplan & Fishbein, 1969), readily accessible from memory (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973), and the individual places a great deal of psychological significance and value on the attitude towards an object (Krosnick, 1988).

Although importance represents only one distinct property of an attitude's composition, it appears to be a potentially robust predictor of formation for many sport and non-sport-related behaviours and intentions. In their review of attitude studies, Krosnick and Abelson (1992) reported that 87 empirical studies were conducted on "attitude importance", noting that one should "make a theoretical and practical commitment to a particular strength measure, and work out its relationship to other variables in detail" (p. 194). Drawing upon this recommendation, Boninger, Krosnick, and Berent (1995) conducted a series of five correlation studies on why political attitudes were personally important. These authors noted that social identification was a significant predictor of attitude importance. Subsequently Boninger, Krosnick, Berent, and Fabrigar (1995) proposed that identification with a group helped shape important political attitudes by enhancing other properties such as accessibility, certainty, consistency, and the organisation of relevant knowledge.

Within sport, importance has been noted to help shape the actions and thoughts of sport spectators. Wann and Branscombe (1990, 1993) used importance as a component in their Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) to examine affective, cognitive and behavioural differences among students. Four items measured the level of importance individuals placed on their association with a university basketball team and differences were found among committed and non-committed individuals (p. 5). More recent work has defined attitude importance as representing the psychological significance and value an individual places on his or her favourite sport team (Funk & Pastore, 2000; Gladden & Funk, 2002).

Taken together, the emerging body of evidence presented illustrates the utility of examining attitude properties, particularly an attitude importance measure, in an effort to better understand how attitudes are formed and changed. Efforts should proceed with an understanding of the determinants of attitude importance, or why the attitude possesses such characteristics (i.e., the psychological significance and value of a favourite sport team). In light of the theoretical and empirical

information presented, the FAN model suggests that the internalisation of a sport identity represents one plausible determinant of attitude formation and change in sport fans due to its proximal relationship to attitude importance. The following discussion describes the FAN model and how identity and importance are related. A fuller discussion of the model and directions for future research follow.

Fan Attitude Network (FAN) Model

Figure 1: Fan Attitude Network Model (FAN) – Conceptualising attitude development in sport
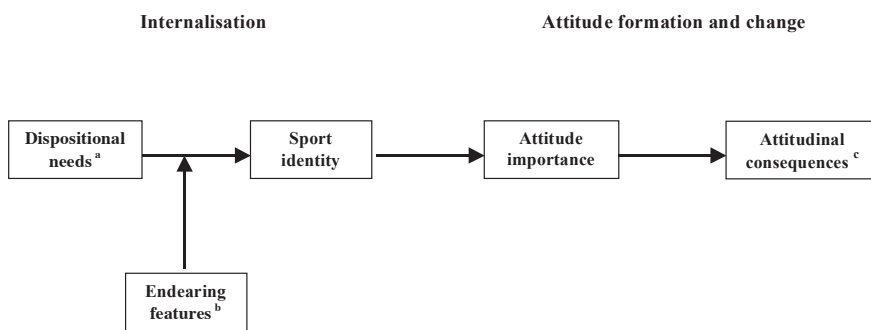
Note: [a] Dispositional needs represent psychological needs, personality traits and individual attributes that account for psychological motives of sport spectators and include, but are not limited to, vicarious achievement, self-esteem, diversion and entertainment.

[b] Endearing features refer to attractive characteristics found in sport settings that highlight the significance and value of a sport object for satisfying dispositional needs. The features include, but are not limited to, performance outcomes, wholesome environment, geographic proximity, experiential risk, and quality of service.

[c] Attitudinal consequences represent manifestations or outcomes of attitude importance. The outcomes include the persistence and resistance of the attitude in terms of its durability and the impact the attitude has on thinking and behaviour.

In Figure 1, Dispositional Needs represent various individual motives that directly influence the adoption of a particular Sport Identity. Dispositional needs represent social psychological factors that account for psychological motives of sport spectators such as vicarious achievement, self-esteem, drama, diversion, entertainment, aesthetics, or sensation-seeking. Sport identity refers to an individual's internalisation of a particular group or subculture (e.g., Dallas Cowboys / Melbourne Demons) and/or traits (e.g., competitive, athletic, lazy) into the self-concept. An individual can develop a sport identity based on a psychological connection with a particular sport, a sport personality, or a product used in a sport.

However, this internalisation process is moderated by the interaction between dispositional needs and the presence of Endearing Features that represent various sport characteristics within a given situation. Endearing features refer to attractive characteristics found in sport settings that highlight the significance and value of a sport object for satisfying dispositional needs. The features include, but are not limited to, performance outcomes, wholesome environment, geographic proximity and experiential risk.

Attitude formation and change occurs when the psychological significance and value derived from a sport identity become salient to an individual. In other words, the extent to which attitude formation and change takes place depends upon the perception that the sport identity satisfies dispositional needs. If the identity does fulfil a specific need, then the individual places importance on his/her evaluations or responses relative to the sport identity since it has become an integral part of the self-concept. Hence, Attitude Importance reflects the degree and valence of formation as well as the structural characteristics of that formation as they relate to subsequent attitude change or stability. The structural characteristics of attitude importance are thought to influence four potential outcomes related to attitude strength denoted in the box Consequences. The more importance an individual places on his/her sport identity, the more likely subsequent evaluations and responses elicited by the team will persist over time, resist counter information and preference for alternative teams, bias the types of thoughts generated about the team, and be more consistent with past behaviour and behavioural intent.

Internalisation

Dispositional Needs

In Figure 1, dispositional needs represent psychological needs, personality traits and individual attributes. They represent the catalysts that are thought to motivate people to develop psychological connections with sport objects (e.g., sport, team or athlete) that allow for the expression of their own characteristics, traits and self-concepts. In sport-related research these characteristics are generally termed "motivational factors", contributing to spectator and fan attendance. Sport scholars have identified various dispositional characteristics that reflect intrinsic motives or needs such as vicarious achievement, aesthetics, drama, need for social interaction, escape or diversion, entertainment, gambling, suspense, group affiliation, physical attraction, and self-esteem enhancement (e.g., Funk et al., 2002; Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Individuals may be motivated to form a psychological connection with a sport team and engage in particular behaviours in order to satisfy various dispositional needs. For example, becoming a team fan may satisfy an

individual's need for belonging and provide opportunities for social interaction (talking with others about the team when attending games or in other settings).

Individuals may also develop a sport identity based upon personality traits such as neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, or conscientiousness (e.g., McCrae & John, 1992) or a symbolic need for self-expression and belonging (Wann, Royalty, & Roberts, 2000). For example, Mahony, Madrigal, and Howard (1999) demonstrated that high self-monitors used public association with athletic teams to enhance self-representation. A strong desire to enhance public image in social situations motivated individuals to switch favourite teams more often. Individual attributes (self-definition of body and characteristics) such as gender, race and height can also influence formation of an identity (Birdwell, 1964). For example, a young African-American who is 1.83 metres (6'2") may develop an identity consistent with his/her height and race that projects an association with basketball and its players rather than horseracing and jockeys. While individuals may be encouraged to develop a sport identity to satisfy dispositional needs, the likelihood that forming a psychological connection with a sport team will allow for the expression of important characteristics or traits will be tempered by the endearing features within a sport setting (Graeff, 1996; Ross, 1971).

Endearing Features

Sport scholars have identified various attributes of the sport setting, including performance outcomes (Baade & Tiehan, 1990), prior success (Branscombe & Wann, 1991), competition level (Zhang, Pease, Smith, Lee, Lam & Jambor, 1997), style of play (Gladden & Funk, 2002), quality of service (Hill & Green, 2000), geographic proximity to team (Rooney, 1975), media influences (Zhang, Pease, & Smith, 1998), community solidarity (Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002), star players (Gladden & Funk, 2001), family entertainment (Wann, 1995), success (Gladden & Funk, 2002), and socialisation (Melnick, 1993). These features are viewed as essential attributes that influence decisions about whether a psychological connection with a sport team can satisfy dispositional needs in a particular context. Individuals seek out attractive features within a sport situation that fulfil relevant dispositional characteristics (e.g., image congruency, Sirgy, 1985). For example, an individual seeking to satisfy a need for belonging in a new community may desire to connect to a local team that promotes community solidarity. A person high in need for self-esteem enhancement may choose to form a sport identity with the New York Yankees, a team that has a history of success. Endearing features highlight the psychological significance and value of a sport team (or other sport object) as a means for satisfying dispositional needs. The desire to fulfil dispositional needs serves as a catalyst for internalisation of a sport team and the subsequent formation of a sport identity.

Sport Identity

Kolbe and James (2003) propose that the formation of a sport identity occurs through internalisation, a process by which individuals integrate a sport team into self, resulting in the team becoming an integral part of a person's self-identity. Writings on identity in the social psychology literature typically address different types of identity and the role of identity, but not the process by which an object becomes an integral part of one's self-identity. The internalisation process can be conceptualised as a continuum (Grolnick et al., 1997). The poles of this continuum are characterised at the lowest level by minimal involvement with a team (i.e., "Initial internalisation"), while the highest level entails complete internalisation of the targeted team (i.e., "Optimal internalisation"). Individuals in the middle range of the continuum have identified with the team, but have not fully internalised the team within self.

An individual at the initial stage has an inconsequential connection with a sport team. Experiences with the team occur as a result of fulfilling unmet needs such as escape and hedonic pleasure (i.e., entertainment). The catalysts at the initial stage may come from the individual, seeking entertainment, or from the influence of others as when parents take children to games, or when an individual is invited to attend a game with a friend. At the initial stage, liking for a team may occur, but feelings towards the team are minimal and subject to redirection. At this stage an individual has not developed a sport identity. At the initial stage an individual's connection with sport team is based on near-term needs and relationships with others, not on the psychological significance and value of a team to the individual (i.e., the team is not important to an individual).

Some individuals will continue movement along the internalisation continuum due to their willingness, desire, or need to identify with a team (e.g., "Manchester United is *my* team"). Catalysts for movement may be an individual's desire to belong or to fit in. Such a desire may come from moving to a new city and seeking to make friends. A need for belonging may be felt but not consciously recognised. Listening to friends or co-workers discuss a team may serve as a catalyst for an individual to learn more about a team in order to make a connection with others. A defining characteristic of the identification stage is the formation of a distinct and exclusive preference (i.e., positive affect) for a sport team. The distinct preference may satisfy a number of needs, including a need for affiliation and/or social interaction. This is the stage at which a sport identity first emerges.

The identification stage is consistent with the concept of group identity. Traditionally, identity is broken down in the social psychology literature into group and personal identities. Group identity refers to a categorisation of the self with members of an existing group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) (e.g., "I'm a Browns fan"). Group identity also reflects social categorisation into in-group and out-group categories based upon social similarities and differences between members of certain

social categories such as race, class, gender, and nationality (Brown & Turner, 1981; Turner & Oakes, 1989). In sport, team preference is often used to distinguish group membership. Cialdini and Richardson (1980) observed that individuals categorised themselves into groups based upon group affiliation and would "BLAST" or degrade opposing players, fans and coaches, to highlight differences between group and non-group members. Other researchers have witnessed individuals using the pronoun "we" to describe the actions of a sport team, thus projecting their membership as a fan of the team (Cialdini et al., 1976; Sloan, 1989).

Optimal internalisation occurs when an individual fully integrates the target team within self. The individual no longer merely prefers the team, but by making it a part of self, the team becomes an extension of the individual. At the optimal internalisation stage an individual is not just a fan of the team, not just a member of the fan group. The individual now thinks of him/herself as a *member of the team*. The team is included in an individual's definition of self ("I am a Dallas Cowboy" or "Being a Cowboys fan is a large part of who I am"). Catalysts for integration of a team into self may be a need for affiliation unfulfilled by fan group membership, or a need for self-esteem enhancement. The underlying needs may be present but not consciously recognised. An individual chooses to internalise a sport team because particular attributes of the team are compatible with other aspects of self, and the team is regarded as representative of an individual's values and beliefs.

Internalisation of a sport team is a type of personal identity, which is thought of as traits or individual differences that are wilfully incorporated into the self-concept. Personal identities include both the traits that a person already possesses and traits the person aspires to possess as part of their self-concept (Fleming & Petty, 1997). Adoption of a personal identity serves to define the person in terms of self-descriptions of personal attributes such as personality, physical and intellectual traits (Turner & Oakes, 1989). In North America, teams such as the Oakland Raiders and the Detroit Pistons provided some individuals with an aggressive, physical, "bad boy" image that was socially desirable and consistent with their own desired identities. These individuals sought out sport experiences that were consistent with their chosen identity. Flamboyant players such as Deion Sanders or hardworking athletes like Cal Ripkin Jr attracted individuals who desired similar traits in their own self-concept. Mahony et al. (1999) theorised that some fans would be attracted to the San Francisco Giants because of the "tough" fan image promoted by the team due to the gusty and often frigid conditions in the home stadium. Even the selection of a participatory sport (e.g., triathlon) can provide individuals with an identity that expresses important characteristics and traits (physically fit, disciplined, unique) that help shape attitudes towards leisure activities.

Although group and personal identities are traditionally examined separately, the internalisation process suggests that the adoption of a sport identity can include both group and personal identities, and they are combined in the FAN model as

a sport identity due to their proposed collective impact on self-concept. Prior theoretical and empirical work supports collapsing group and personal identities into a single identity since the content of the identity reflects similarities between desired personal traits and characteristics and perceived group traits, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour (Deaux, 1996; Fleming & Petty, 1997; Reid & Deaux, 1996).

An important point to note is that the formation of a sport identity differs for each individual. Most people are aware of sport teams, but not all people proceed to form a sport identity. Many people attend or watch games on television because they find a sport or team entertaining, or because sports offer an opportunity to escape from their daily routine. These people are at the initial stage, and may never move beyond this stage. One might argue that successive experiences with a team, for example attending multiple games over time, would lead to formation of a sport identity. This perspective is based in part on a unidimensional notion of attitudes, that behaviours influence attitudes. As noted by James, Kolbe, and Trail (2002), however, the formation of a psychological connection to a team, a sport identity, is based on unfulfilled dispositional needs. James et al. found that individuals had a strong connection with a team prior to any experiences with the team. These findings are consistent with the directions presented here that attitude formation and change may be more accurately understood through study of the structural properties of attitudes.

In the context of the FAN model, "sport identity" represents the internalisation of a sport object (e.g., sport, team, or player) into one's self-concept to fulfil dispositional needs. The endearing features relative to a specific sport team serve to highlight the psychological significance and value of the team to an individual for satisfying dispositional needs. In Figure 1, the relationship between sport identity and attitude importance stipulates that an individual has progressed at least to the identified stage, and that the identity has become important and salient as a result of the internalisation of the sport team into one's self-concept.

Attitude Formation and Change

The preceding discussion has provided a conceptual portrayal of the internalisation process suggested by the FAN model. However, attitude formation and change within the model can also be applicable to identity construction and confirmation within a larger sport and leisure context. An individual's attitude is learned or influenced during pre-socialisation when the individual becomes aware of a specific sport activity and its subculture from various socialisation agents and information sources such as family, direct contact, peers and media prior to participation (Donnelly & Young, 1988; Funk & James, 2001). Initial stage attitude formation at this point

(i.e., affect) can be positive or negative as preconceptions and misconceptions about the subculture are introduced. Subsequent formation (identification) occurs when the individual perceives whether the sport subculture offers certain benefits and core values that the individual seeks (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). As depicted in the FAN model, the interaction between dispositional needs and endearing features describes the belief or recognition that the sport subculture possesses particular attributes or consequences (e.g., Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984).

The desire to satisfy dispositional needs through sport consumption can be traced to the notion of hedonic consumption in which individuals seek out objects (e.g., following a sport team) that can provide physical and psychological experiences (e.g., Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). For example, Schouten and McAlexander (1995) observed that the Harley Davidson bike subculture provided core values of personal freedom, patriotism and machismo for its members. Other researchers have noted that spectator sport meets the need for belonging and group affiliation through the creation of social relationships while attending the event (Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Melnick, 1993). The selection of a favourite team or the intention to follow a sport team indicates initial attitude formation and change based upon opportunity, motivation, and interest and the evaluation or degree of positive affect towards potential outcomes (e.g., Donnelly & Young, 1988; Shoham, Rose, & Kahle, 1998). The decision not to participate indicates a negative evaluation of the potential outcomes. Affect denotes feelings towards a sport team, but as noted above, affect alone is not a complete indicator of attitude formation.

An individual's attitude continues to develop as the identity evolves through the process of socialisation requiring the individual to overtly display accepted norms through impression management techniques (Donnelly & Young, 1988; Holt, 1995; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). The individual also internalises a number of events, interprets and assigns value and meaning to actions, constructs value judgments regarding situations and people, integrates a variety of elements of the activity to learn roles (e.g., team, player, ball park), builds affiliation with in-group members and enhances distinction from non-members, adopts the core values of the subculture group, and interacts with fellow participants via mutual experience (Holt, 1995). The process of socialisation is further facilitated through role modelling, peer pressure, camaraderie, desire to increase status within group hierarchy, accumulation of side bets (i.e., possessions that demonstrate group membership) and consumer marketing efforts (Kahle et al., 1996; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). During this process, an individual is required to resolve uncertainty in correct behaviour and contradictions to expectancies encountered with the new identity, determine whether preconceptions and misconceptions of the activity are accurate or not, and interpret the authenticity of the perceived outcomes (e.g., Erber, Hodges, & Wilson, 1995). As the norms and values of the sport culture are interpreted and internalised,

the attitude towards the sport identity strengthens and becomes salient (e.g., Holt, 1995; Shoham et al., 1998).

The internalisation of the sport subculture's beliefs, customs and practices is reinforced through confirmation and mastery of the identity and crystallises the attitude importance characteristic. The individual demonstrates the appropriate roles (refines self-presentation) and is recognised by established members of the group (Donnelly & Young, 1988; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Identity confirmation and mastery are established when the values and behaviour of the individual conform to the subculture expectancies. The importance of the attitude towards the identity is observed as commitment and concomitant status are increased through acquiring side bets and the demonstration of values and forms (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Attitude importance results when the individual places a great deal of psychological significance on the confirmation and reconfirmation of the identity by existing members of the subculture.

Attitude Importance

Individuals who derive benefit from their sport identity, whether experiential or intangible are likely to invest more psychological significance and value in their relationship with the team (Funk et al., 2000; Wann et al., 1995). The attitude towards the sport team continues to form as the identity within the subculture becomes salient and accessible (Kaplan & Fishbein, 1969; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973) as the sport team is internalised. As the perceived value and benefits derived from the sport identity become salient, accessible and desirable, the individual's attitude crystallises and subsequently increases in importance (Funk et al., 2000). The construction and reconfirmation perspective suggests that the expression of an identity would fluctuate within a given situation. However, repeated activation of a particular identity to receive desired outcomes would lend stability, duration and permanence to its basic structure (Deaux, 1993). An individual's attitude towards expressing his/her sport identity may become important due to its link with other psychological elements within a network of associations in memory, relevant knowledge in memory, congruency with attitude preference expressed by important others, and commitment to publicly support the attitude (Funk & James, 2001; Krosnick, 1989).

Consequences of Attitude Importance

There are four consequences of attitude importance: (a) persistence, (b) resistance, (c) influence on cognition, and (d) guide to behaviour (Funk & James, 2001). Persistence reflects attitudinal stability and represents the degree to which an

individual's attitude towards a sport object (e.g., specific sport, player or team) remains unchanged over an extended period of time (e.g., Petty, Haugtvedt, & Smith, 1995). Attitude resistance refers to stability and represents the attitude's ability to withstand a counter persuasive attack when challenged (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The influence on cognition describes how attitudes may fluctuate over time depending upon the type of cognitive thoughts (e.g., biases) produced at a given moment (Erber, Hodges, & Wilson, 1995).

The extent of cognitive processing may depend upon dispositional, motivational, or situational cues that influence information retrieval and determine how certain judgments and decisions are rendered (Petty et al., 1995). For example, while surfing the Web, a Melbourne Demon fan observes the team's logo on CNN/SI and immediately clicks on the icon in search of information related to the Demons. These contextual determinants may influence an individual's thoughts on whether to go for a Sunday afternoon eight-kilometre run or visit the pub and watch a Demons match on TV. Attitude importance is also believed to provide a guide for behaviour.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that an attitude supported by highly formed attitudinal properties such as importance, certainty, knowledge, direct experience, or extremity are more predictive of behaviour than attitudes without this compositional makeup (c.f., Krosnick & Abelson, 1992). This approach suggests that the level or degree of attitude formation produces consequences that can be treated as causal indicators or determinants of loyalty (Funk et al., 2000). The consequence of persistence, resistance, influence on cognition and behaviour may individually influence loyalty or combine with one another additively or multiplicatively to yield an overall level of loyalty (Funk & James, 2001; Krosnick & Petty, 1995).

In the social science literature, the variability in attitudes has been attributed to the level of links among various attitude properties found within an individual's attitude (Bassili, 1996; Haddock, Rothman, Reber, & Schwarz, 1999; Krosnick et al., 1993). A great deal of empirical research has linked attitude properties such as importance, certainty, direct experience, extremity and knowledge in separate investigations to the four consequences (Krosnick & Petty, 1995). For example, Krosnick (1988) demonstrated that the importance placed in an attitude towards governmental policies during the 1980 and 1984 presidential election campaigns was more stable (i.e., persistent and resistant) than unimportant attitudes. This significance reflects an underlying psychological commitment or investment on the part of the individual to his or her attitude (Crosby & Taylor, 1983). In a team sports context, Funk and Pastore (2000) observed a strong positive correlation between attitude importance and two consequences: commitment (resistance) and behaviour towards a professional baseball team.

Although not depicted in the FAN model, the importance characteristic may serve as a catalyst for the formation of other attitude properties through a domino effect. Alternatively, importance may operate in a manner similar to a single key within a chord being struck on a piano by a novice. The individual finds one key of the chord first to orient himself/herself to the keyboard and then strikes a number of keys simultaneously, creating the chord. The perceived importance of the team would serve to bolster the cognitive links between various attitude properties (e.g., accessibility, Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). For example, an individual who perceives a team as fulfilling important dispositional needs is likely to possess an attitude towards the team that is supported by extensive knowledge, direct experience, is held with great certainty and is highly accessible. They are likely to show more extreme reactions and thoughts. In contrast, the individual who perceives little benefit from associating with a team is likely to possess an attitude that is moderate to low in extremity, is based upon little or no previous knowledge and direct experience, and the individual would infrequently think or speak about the team. The significance and value of the sport identity may serve to strengthen other attitude properties within this network contributing to an evaluative response that is persistent, resistant, impacts cognition and influences behaviour (e.g., Funk & James, 2001).

Previous studies in sport and leisure have generally examined attitudinal outcomes in terms of loyalty measured by the two strength-related consequences behaviour and resistance (i.e., generally operationalised as psychological commitment) (Backman & Crompton, 1991; Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Parks, 1996; Pritchard, Havitz, & Howard, 1999). However, recent theorising by Funk and James (2001) suggests that the attitudinal component of sport loyalty should be expanded to include three separate but related dimensions labelled persistence, resistance and cognition. For example, loyalty to a team, sport or player is likely to stem from an evaluation or response that remains stable over time, resists counter persuasive information or alternative forms of entertainment, and influences the type of thoughts and judgments rendered.

Conclusion

The theoretical and empirical evidence presented suggests efforts aimed at understanding attitude formation and change should begin with examining the internalisation of a sport identity. In the proposed FAN model, sport identity represents a determinant of attitude importance that is influenced by the interaction between dispositional needs and endearing features. The process through which an individual chooses to form a psychological connection with a sport team promotes expressions of desired traits, characteristics and self-concept. Utilising sport identity to examine attitude formation in team sport would further our understanding of how

individual motives and experiences combine with social norms and situations to influence self-definition and behaviour (e.g., repeat purchase behaviour, soccer riots, etc.). Based upon the proposed FAN model, two directions for future research are introduced and discussed to study attitude formation and change towards sport teams.

Directions for Research #1: Examine the Relationship Between Dispositional Needs and Endearing Features

The interaction between dispositional needs and endearing features must be considered in order to understand when, how, and why individuals choose to enter and spend time in a social situation that maintains or enhances an important identity (Snyder & Ickes, 1985). Individuals who identify with an in-group or subculture must consider whether need fulfilment is a potential outcome (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). In this situation, endearing features would serve as an indicator to the person which situation will provide congruency between the salient identity (real and ideal self) and fulfilment of dispositional needs. An individual who derives vicarious achievement needs from watching a sport event is likely to attend or watch that event if the outcome has relevance to his/her self-concept. Furthermore, situations may be selected based upon the belief that it poses no threat to identity. Attending a sport event may provide a diversion or escape from daily life or a chance to socialise among friends that possesses little threat to a person's identity. For example, a faculty member may attend a collegiate football game in order to relax, have fun and divert attention from the article he or she is preparing for a refereed journal. Research on psychological needs, personality traits and individual attributes may offer sport teams an understanding of dispositional needs. A team must then evaluate its product to ascertain which types of needs may be fulfilled through a psychological connection with a team. Endearing features that are present (or that may be developed) can then be used to highlight the value of a sport team as a means for satisfying dispositional needs.

A number of personality inventories exist that are designed to measure basic orientation, traits and states. A comprehensive guide to useful personality and consumer behaviour measures can be found in a number of sources such as the *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes series* (Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991), *Handbook of marketing scales: Multi-item measures for marketing and consumer behavior research* (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Mobley, 1993), and *Marketing scales handbook: A compilation of multi-item measures* (Bruner & Hensel, 1994). Once selected, the relationship between basic orientations, traits and states (i.e., dispositional needs) and endearing features of the sport event could be examined using the Sport Interest Inventory (SII) (Funk et al., 2002), Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (Trail & James, 2001), or Sportscape

(Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). The investigation should include both season ticket holders (repeat attendees) and single event attendees.

The final component of this investigation would be to incorporate Luhtanen & Crocker's (1992) Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES) to examine the relationship among various aspects of identity and dispositional and endearing measures. The CSES has four sub-scales: (a) Membership Esteem, self-evaluation of how good or worthy individuals are as a member of the their social group; (b) Public Collective Self-Esteem, judgments of how other people evaluate one's social group; (c) Private Collective Self-Esteem, self-evaluations of how good one's social group is; and (d) Importance to Identity, importance of one's social group membership to one's self-concept. An alternative approach would be to correlate Wann & Branscombe's (1993) Sport Spectator Identification Scale with SII and Sportscape measures. The use of personality inventories, motivation and interest scales, and identification measures across a number of sport contexts would provide an effective means to understand how, when and why identity evolves from dispositional needs and endearing features to influence observed behaviour among spectators.

The systematic mapping of the relationship between dispositional needs and endearing features also provides a means to examine how motivation driving a fan's sport identity with a given team may change over his/her lifetime. For example, a university student may develop an identity with the football team to satisfy a need for affiliation created by the move from a small high school to a large, impersonal, university. For some students, the need for affiliation may decline or be satisfied via other sources after graduation such that the sport identity fades, but for others nostalgia is likely to replace affiliation as the need driving the sport identity with the alma mater.

Directions for Research #2: Examine Whether Identity Mediates the Initial Formation of Attitude Importance

Prior research suggests that an individual's connection to a sport team or leisure activity is initially learned from external influences (e.g., parents, friends, media, special promotions, team success, and so on) (Donnelly & Young, 1988; James, 2001) During the initial stage of internalisation, an individual does not have a well-formed attitude towards a team, but may engage in modelling behaviour and self-expression management associated with the subculture (e.g., side bets, purchasing tickets, attending games, buying team merchandise) (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). One strategy for understanding how and why individuals initially form attitudes towards athletic teams would be to measure the level of internalisation.

Scales developed by Kolbe and James (2003) with new spectators and fans of an existing team (e.g., new season ticket holders) could be used to measure level of internalisation. This measure would assess (a) the importance of a team to the individual, (b) esteem needs related to personal identity, and (c) the importance of the collective identity such as being part of the team. In conjunction with the measure of internalisation, multiple attitudinal measures (e.g., Funk & Pastore, 2000) could be administered to examine differences in attitudinal properties such as importance and level of internalisation. Additional measures of awareness (James, 2001; Funk & James, 2001) could be used to ascertain how individuals at the initial stage of internalisation first came to learn about specific teams (e.g., through socialising agents such as parents, friends, media, and so on). Determining the influence of socialising agents on initial awareness of a sport team would also provide a better understanding of the impact of situational features on attitude formation and change.

A second strategy would be to examine change to CSES subscales and attitude importance measures over a period of time. Researchers could distribute surveys among season ticket holders at the beginning and end of the season for newly formed teams or leagues. Observed differences in identity (i.e., its subscales) could be correlated with changes in the attitude properties (e.g., importance) and attitude consequences (e.g., resistance, behaviour) to examine the level of attitude formation and change. Furthermore, identity's relationship to attitude importance could be examined in light of dispositional and situational factors. This process could be repeated each year with season ticket holders creating psychographic profiles. The perception that attending a game contributes to aspects of self-concept may serve to galvanise positive attitudes towards a team. In a similar vein, parents searching for affordable entertainment alternatives to spend time with children may influence the selection of opportunities for fulfilment of dispositional needs within competitive team situations.

Although recent theorising in social psychology supports the notion that a sport identity may operate as a determinant of attitude formation, more empirical evidence is needed to validate this assumption. The complexity of attitude formation requires a framework that allows for the systematic study of how, when and why individuals develop evaluative responses related to sport events as well as other leisure activities. The proposed FAN model and two directions for future research offered are intended to spark additional interest in attitude development research and serve to augment our understanding of the psychological process contributing to sport consumption behaviour.

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