Consumer Engagement on Social Media in the Context of Sport

スポーツにおける
ソーシャルメディアでの消費者エンゲージメント

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早稲田大学大学院　スポーツ科学研究科

曹　媛媛

CAO，Yuanyuan

研究指導教員：　松岡　宏高　教授

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Abstract

In relationship marketing, maintaining consumer engagement is one of the main tasks of marketers since it is an important strategy for increasing sales, gaining a competitive edge, and achieving profitability. In the dynamic landscape of modern connectivity, the evolution of consumer engagement has found a profound channel in online communities on social media platforms. Online fan communities have been used as an efficient way to keep in touch with sport fans. Sport marketers can post team updates through online communities, where they can also get feedback from fans. This study aims to figure out the process from online fan community identification to sport fans' offline behavior and find out the role of consumer engagement on social media in this process.

Online fan communities on social media are an effective avenue for sport organizations to engage sport fans. Sport fans who identify with online fan communities would manifest consumer engagement on social media, which could further promote sport fans' favorable behavioral intentions. This study divided consumer engagement on social media into positive and negative valences, and survey research was conducted under the circumstances of the online fan community on Weibo in China. The data was collected from sports fans of the Chinese Super League, which is a professional football league in China.

Most researchers focus on the positive valence of consumer engagement. This study explores the mediating effect of both positive and negative valences of consumer engagement between online fan community identification and behavioral intention simultaneously. Additionally, the moderating effect of satisfaction with teams' performance is examined. The hypothesis model is tested by using Hayes' PROCESS macro model, and the results largely

support the research hypotheses. The findings show that positive consumer engagement could positively mediate the effect of online fan community identification on behavioral intention, and negative consumer engagement could negatively mediate the effect of online fan community identification on behavioral intention. The moderating model indicates that OFCI has a larger effect on positive consumer engagement in the high-satisfactory condition compared with the low-satisfactory condition, and OFCI had a larger effect on behavioral intention in the high-satisfactory condition than in the low-satisfactory condition.

This study contributes to the conceptualization of negative valence of the behavioral manifestations of consumer engagement on social media and extends the literature on the dual valence of consumer engagement in the sport context. Additionally, this study adds new insights into social identity theory by providing evidence for the negative social identity. Finally, this study provides useful perspectives to sport managers on relationship marketing on social media.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Background of the Study

Social Media and Sport

Social media has from the development of the internet and mobile technologies. The internet enables social media to be differentiated from other traditional media, and mobile technologies further boost the popularity of social media among users. The internet helps social media influence sport consumers' consumption customs from six aspects (Nicholson et al., 2015).

First, like other types of media, the internet helps social media provide immediate content. The game has been completely transformed by social media, as it provides consumers with updates and analysis in real-time, which are readily accessible through their fingertips. If consumers would like to search for the score of the game, they could get the result immediately on social media. Moreover, sport fans can also follow their favorite teams and players on social media so that they can get instant updates, such as players' performance, injuries, and all the latest news (Gallistl & Nimrod, 2020). The marketing model for sport organizations has undergone a transformation due to the rapid dissemination of news and analysis through social media. This has not only heightened the excitement of the fan experience but also contributed to the change. Even traditional media are leveraging social media to share content and keep in touch with sport fans.

Second, compared with other traditional media, social media connects consumers with a variety of sports. Online sport coverage remains unparalleled in terms of its extensive range and depth despite advancements in technology that improve the viewing experience for

televised sport. Sport spectators from the tropics can sit at home and watch the various winter sports. Platforms such as YouTube and Amazon Prime are being utilized by sport teams to facilitate live streaming. The team's usage of multiple platforms enhances accessibility for fans to watch games and matches. As a result, the team and athletes receive greater visibility due to the increased loyalty and passion of fans. It is reported that 30% of young sport fans subscribe to 3 or more sport streaming services, allowing for real-time engagement during games (Statista, n.d.).

Third, social media enables sport to globalize. Any sport enthusiast with internet access can obtain information about sport events and watch live events from all over the world. Sport organizations have created websites to cater to the global audience that the internet enables. This is similar to how radio allows people from different geographic locations to consume sports together and has resulted in an increase in satellite fans for many teams. Social media is a medium that truly transcends borders, enabling users to follow sports from different parts of the world. There are billions of active users on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (X), which means there is a large audience awaiting engagement. Sport organizations regularly tap into this huge user base to expand their visibility, enhance their brand awareness, and attract new fans. Sport organizations with large scale spread their accessibility around the world by offering multiple language options for their websites. Many sport clubs established social media accounts on other countries' social media platforms in order to have a wider marketing field. For example, the official account of Liverpool FC on the Chinese social media platform Weibo has more than 380 million followers.

Fourth, social media has a personal touch, which may seem to contradict its global nature. Consumers can customize their sport preferences and experiences on social media. With the application of modern big data technology, some social media platforms can even evaluate consumer preferences based on the content they frequently view, thereby customizing and providing personalized content recommendations that align with the interests of each user. Therefore, sport consumers could have a personalized experience on social media by following their preferred sports. Social media also provides consumers the ability to join sport communities that transcend cultural and geographical boundaries. It has given sport fans the opportunity to communicate and share their experiences through virtual online communities and participate in fantasy leagues (Zanini et al., 2019). This has resulted in many famous teams, like Liverpool FC, having virtual communities where sport fans can connect with each other and share their consumption experiences (Kerr & Emery, 2011). For example, Liverpool FC boasts more than 44 million followers on Instagram. Sharing their daily lives on social media allows players to bring their fans behind the scenes and foster a stronger connection between themselves and their team. This connection benefits not only the fans but also the athletes and team, as it increases loyalty and engagement, leading to heightened ticket sales, merchandise purchases, and sponsorships.

In addition, one-way-dominated traditional web communication (e.g., newspapers, TV reports) transfers into dynamic two-way and multiple-channel forms of communication through social media (Achen, 2017). In the past, marketing practices viewed customers as external to the organization, simply receiving the value created by the organization without actively participating (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Consumers are not merely passive

receivers but active value co-creators through voluntary participation and interaction on

social media (Harmeling et al., 2017). By creating and sharing their own sport content, such

as fan tweets, fans can actively participate in the action and express their opinions and

reactions, ensuring that their voices are heard. A notable instance of this occurred when

numerous supporters of the Chelsea football club united to initiate a petition against a referee.

This collaborative process adds value to the relationship between the focal object and

consumers (Popp et al., 2016). By connecting with sport consumers and listening to their

feedback, sport marketers can provide satisfactory service that meets their needs and

expectations.

Fifth, sport organizations, advertisers, and sponsors can directly reach consumers

through social media. Although television, radio, and newspapers can offer advertising

opportunities, it is uncommon for viewers to engage with sponsors or make purchases while

consuming sport media through these outlets. On the other hand, those who consume sport

media on social media can access sponsor or advertiser websites and products through a click.

It is common to see an advertisement when opening a new page on social media. Users can

simply tap on any part of the advertisement image to enter a new product page. In addition,

some sport organizations also add their peripheral products to the consuming function on

social media. For example, FC Barcelona sport apparel is available for purchase on their

official Instagram account. Furthermore, social media has become a central platform for

endorsements, sponsorships, and collaborations in the world of sport. This enables teams and

players to rival well-established brands with a substantial fan base. Businesses like Citibank,

Reebok, Allstate, and StubHub offer sponsorship to teams and athletes, while also sponsoring

entire stadiums. This tactic helps to expand their audience and appeal to more fans who have

a shared interest in a team and the related product.

Sixth, the internet is a converged media, which includes all the elements that are

available in traditional media like newspapers, radio, and television. Consumers can not only

get access to text-based information, but also more vivid ones, such as photographs, radio,

and video. The content is more attractive to consumers on social media, which provides a

platform for consumers to engage. Social media platforms also offer an ideal platform for

athletes and teams to connect with consumers through their rich functions. Sport

organizations can stream live events, hold Q&A sessions, share exclusive content, and

establish open forums for discussions. These interactions foster a sense of community

between fans and players, resulting in increased loyalty towards the team and individual

players.

The development of mobile technologies, such as smartphones and other mobile

devices, has driven the growth of social media in the context of sport. After third-party

developers were given access to the iPhone, there was a significant increase in the number of

sport-related applications available. Within a year, nearly 2,000 applications were launched.

A set of digital tools encourages sport organizations to communicate with their consumers all

over the world and makes it easy for consumers to update their information about the team

and get involved with it (Abeza et al., 2013).

A collection of internet-based applications that enable users to create and share

content they generate is known as social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media

provide a great platform for sport fans to find, connect, inform, engage with, and develop a

community. With the convenience of using social media on mobile devices in daily life, social media has become more and more popular worldwide. An investigation on the use of technology and sport fan activity discovered that 79% of the participants checked Twitter (X) multiple times during the day. The respondents also mentioned using other social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn (Gibbs & Haynes, 2013). The number of social media users reached 4.59 billion worldwide in 2022, equating to about 57% of the total global population (Statista, n.d.).

Sport-related subjects are currently popular on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Furthermore, some of the most widely followed accounts on social media are related to sport. Real Madrid has 5.28 million followers on Instagram. The NBA has 83 million followers. Cristiano Ronaldo, the most-followed person, has 600 million followers. In China, according to the Sport Stars Weibo Annual Report (2021) released by Weibo, the cumulative incremental followers of countable sports athletes on the platform reached 231 million in 2021. Athlete-related topics have appeared 5,865 times on Trending Topics, and the total interaction of related blog posts was 210 million times. The rapid development and the large number of followers of the sport on social media in China indicate that social media in China is a worthwhile realm to conduct research.

Consequently, social media has become an essential tool in sports marketing, completely changing how fans interact with their favorite players and teams. It is now a must-have for any sport organization looking to engage with its audience. The heightened level of engagement on social media fosters a robust feeling of community and devotion among fans. Additionally, it broadens the scope and visibility of sport by reaching a large

audience and facilitating connections between teams, players, and enthusiastic collaborations. Furthermore, social media provides up-to-date news and analysis, keeping fans informed and engaged and making sport news more immersive and thrilling.

Social media holds the key to the future of sports marketing, as it facilitates significant connections and brings the sports industry even closer to its enthusiastic fans. Therefore, it is worthwhile to figure out how sport consumers' psychological and behavioral manifestations on social media could affect their offline behavior, which is directly related to the profit of the sport entity.

Online Fan Community on Social Media

Social media creates online fan communities, allowing users to join various groups or pages and participate in conversations. These communities attract individuals of varying ages, nationalities, backgrounds, and ethnicities, united by a shared interest. The discussions within these groups focus solely on their common interest and nothing else. For sport fans, their interest is their favorite teams or players, which enables them to get together and interact with each other. Individuals want to participate in broader conversations about topics they care about, where their opinions are analyzed, contemplated, and questioned, rather than just starting a personal blog without much feedback. Sport teams' social media accounts can act as the central hub of an online fan community, and fans who participate and show devotion are given exclusive, interactive, and enjoyable content that is not available anywhere else. This fosters a feeling of togetherness and camaraderie among fans, ultimately leading to more extensive discussions and increased awareness.

The sense of togetherness and camaraderie among fans are the main factors that attract sport fans to the online fan community and the vital factor for the survival of the online fan community. The sense of togetherness is also called having an attachment, a sense of belongingness, and a sense of identification (Hagborg, 1998). Identification with the online fan community means that individuals describe themselves as belonging to the community and consider themselves a member of the group (Kaur et al., 2020). Consumers' identification with the online fan community could influence their behavior form word of mouth communication to purchase intention (Demiray & Burnaz, 2019). Therefore, it is important for sport organizations to utilize online fan communities to attract sport fans and develop effective communication strategies to establish long-term relationships with them.

When sport fans identify with the online community, they are more likely to manifest behaviors that could help them display their identities on social media (Laroche, 2012). For example, in the event that a rumor is spread about a sport player in the media, and it is proven to be untrue, loyal fans will react strongly and publicly denounce the entire piece on social media. One fan's tweet stating that the article lacked factual basis and was fabricated could create a snowball effect where hundreds of other fans also tweeted and retweeted the same sentiment. This illustrates the strong dedication that online fan communities inspire and the power of sport fans' online behavior. Similar to a physical community, a group can unite on social media to express sorrow or fascination over some actions. Social Media is no longer just a platform for exchanging ideas without any significant impact. The interactions on these platforms hold weight and influence.

Consumer engagement occurs in the interactions between the focal object (e.g., sport organizations) and/or other actors (e.g., sport consumers) (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014), and it has been seen as the catalyst for consumers to format meaningful relationships with the focal object (Filo et al., 2015). Online behavior, such as liking, sharing, and commenting on social media, could be seen as the behavioral manifestation of consumer engagement on social media (Lima et al., 2019).

Consumer Engagement on Social Media

In the dynamic landscape of modern connectivity, the evolution of consumer engagement has found a profound channel in online communities on social media platforms (Zaglia, 2013). The traditional boundaries between fans and the subjects of their adoration have blurred, giving rise to a virtual realm where enthusiasts can seamlessly connect, interact, and collectively celebrate their shared passions (Schau et al., 2009). This paradigm shift, accelerated by the ubiquity of social media, has not only transformed the way fans engage with their favorite subjects but has also become a pivotal force in shaping the broader context of brand loyalty, particularly in the context of sport.

There has also been significant academic interest in the concept of consumer engagement, which has been shaped by modern, highly active, and interactive business environments (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). The construct of consumer engagement is defined as "the level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in brand interactions" (Hollebeek, 2011, p. 790). It has been considered an important strategy for increasing sales, gaining a competitive edge, and achieving profitability (Bijmolt et al.,

2010). Engaged consumers tend to exhibit greater loyalty and satisfaction with the brand (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014).

Consumer engagement is a mid-range theory derived from relationship marketing and service-dominant logic (Jaakkola et al., 2019). Consumer engagement could help producers achieve profit in two ways: first, foster a closer relationship between consumers and producers; second, promote the value-cocreation of consumers to producers (Vargo & Lusch, 2017). The main goal of relationship marketing is to retain consumers by establishing long-term mutual satisfaction between organizations and consumers (Möller & Halinen, 2000). Like any other business, sport organizations prioritize maintaining communication with their consumers and building strong relationships with them to ensure a consistent fan base. Consumers invest time and effort when they interact with focal objects (e.g., sport organizations), which is a value-creating process that benefits not only the focal objects but also the consumers themselves and other consumers. Compared with the traditional view of consumers as passive recipients of brand-related information, consumers nowadays become one of the multiple actors in the value-cocreation process through consumer engagement. For example, consumers provide product experience evaluation to others, which could not only help producers improve their products but also serve as a reference for other consumers.

Moreover, what ultimately matters is the customer's perception of the interaction, something that the focal objects or its representatives cannot fully control. By understanding consumer engagement, marketers can indirectly gain insights into the perception of consumers, allowing the focal objects to grow and continue to provide great products and services. Sport, which is also a service, offers its spectators aesthetics, entertainment, escape,

and socialization (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000). Sport organizations could improve their service quality to attract sport consumers and increase sales, such as game attendance, by tracing consumer engagement and understanding consumers' desires.

Sport, more so than other product categories, offers consumers a unique opportunity to engage with multiple aspects of a sport entity, creating various attachment points (Kwon et al., 2005). Sport consumers could engage with sport leagues, teams, athletes, coaches, events, sponsors, communities, and even other sport consumers on social media (Chmait et al., 2020; Lee Ludvigsen & Petersen-Wagner, 2023; McDonald et al., 2022; Santos et al., 2019; Vale & Fernandes, 2018). For example, they could follow their favorite teams or players on social media to stay updated with news (Gallistl & Nimrod, 2020). They could also join the online community of their interested sport clubs to track the live updates, the arena, the ticket prices, and so on (Zanini et al., 2019), as well as interact with other community members (Yoshida et al., 2018). The importance of social media is notable in the context of sport, not only for consumers but also for organizations (Abeza et al., 2013). Most sports are seasonal, sport consumers cannot engage with the team on the field during the off-season period, which may lead to customer churn. Sports organizations devote considerable time and resources to stay connected with their followers and maintain their engagement and relationships on social media platforms (Filo et al., 2015). This includes sharing updates on players' training routines, conducting online voting events, disclosing players' transfer information, and more.

Therefore, understanding consumer engagement in online communities on social media in the context of sport is essential for both researchers and sport marketers. Moreover,

even though numerous studies have paid attention to this area, there are still some uncovered

questions that need to be figured out, which could provide new avenues for future research.

Statement of the Problem

In the online community on social media, consumers who identify with the brand

community tend to have higher commitment and loyalty to the focal object (Laroche et al.,

2012), to purchase the products and to generate more positive word of mouth (Romero &

Ruiz-Equihua, 2020). Different pathways have been investigated for the transition from

identifying with an online community to exhibiting offline behavior, which occurs from a

psychological level to a behavioral level (Marzocchi et al., 2013; Yoshida et al., 2018).

Consumer engagement is one of the most essential constructs between online community

identification and consumers' offline behavior (Kaur et al., 2020). It is widely acknowledged

that online community identification has a positive effect on the positive valence of consumer

engagement (Kaur et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2019; Yoshida et al., 2018). The positive valence of

consumer engagement is beneficial to the value co-creation of brands (Brodie et al., 2011).

Sport fans who are actively involved in social media are more likely to have favorable offline

behavior, such as game attendance and team recommendations (Santos et al., 2021). This

study would like to find out:

RQ1: Does the positive valence of consumer engagement positively mediate the effect

of online fan community identification (OFCI) on offline behavioral intention?

At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, China lost to Japan in the mixed doubles table tennis

game. There was an outcry on Chinese social media because the Chinese people could not

accept their table tennis team's defeat. Although there were positive posts and comments on

social media supporting the losing team, some sport fans posted negative comments. They questioned the professionalism of the coaches and players, posting comments such as shame on the Chinese team for not winning the gold medal, which was shared and disseminated. These types of behavior on social media are referred to as consumer engagement behavior (Schivinski et al., 2016; van Doorn et al., 2010), which is one dimension of consumer engagement.

The presence of both positive and negative consumer engagement of sport fans on social media is evident based on the phenomenon described (Dolan et al., 2016). Negative value co-creation (i.e., co-destruction) can occur (Heidenreich et al., 2015; Roggeveen et al., 2012). Unlike mainstream consumers who may abandon the brand because of the poor impression or poor consumption experiences, sport fans support the team in both good and bad times (Abosag et al., 2012). Some sport fans support the team but are simultaneously negatively engaged on social media, such as complaining and negatively blogging about their favorite team. Consumers who identify with the online brand community have a deeper relationship with the brand; they are strongly attached to the brand. Therefore, when they experience an undesirable service, they forgive the brand initially. However, as the harm increases, consumers become progressively dissatisfied; they feel betrayed and react more strongly than other consumers who do not identify with the online brand community (Juric et al., 2015).

Negative consumer engagement can have significant negative impacts on brand equity (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; Djelassi & Decoopman, 2013). These impacts may include consumers seeking financial compensation, withdrawing from the brand, and

attempting to negatively influence other potential or existing consumers through word-of-mouth. Ultimately, firms may suffer losses to their reputational, relational, and financial resources as a result of negative consumer engagement (Smith, 2013). In the context of sport, sport fans may increase distrust of the sport entity, which may manifest as behavioral, such as switching to another team or loss of consumer-team connection. Although negative consumer engagement has been mentioned frequently, most of the research focuses only on the positive valence of consumer engagement (Lima et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2019). Recent reviews of consumer engagement (Rosado-Pinto & Loureiro, 2020; Santos et al., 2022) demonstrated that the negative valence of consumer engagement is an emerging theme and needs further and deeper research. Considering the importance of consumer engagement to brands' value and the limitations of extant literature, this study proposes the following research questions:

RQ2: Do fans with a higher degree of identification with online fan communities generate not only more positive valence of consumer engagement but more negative valence?

RQ3: Does the negative valence of consumer engagement have a negative mediating effect on the relationship between OFCI and fans' offline behavioral intention, which contrasts with the effect of the positive valence of consumer engagement?

Moreover, the extant literature on the antecedents of consumer engagement suggested that different antecedents have an interactive effect on consumer engagement (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Satisfaction is an antecedent of consumer engagement, and consumers engage on social media differently in varying satisfactory conditions (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). It is known that a satisfying experience leads to more positive consumer engagement (Van Doorn

et al., 2010) and higher behavioral intention (Matsuoka et al., 2003); however, it has rarely

been found whether satisfaction leads to a decrease in negative consumer engagement.

Therefore, two research questions are proposed:

RQ4: Does dissatisfaction with the team's performance necessarily lead to more

negative consumer engagement?

RQ5: When the team is underperforming, should the sport marketers still use the same

social media marketing strategies as when the team is performing well?

Purpose of the Study

Online fan communities on social media are an effective avenue for sport

organizations to engage sport fans. Sport fans who identify with online fan communities

express positive and negative consumer engagement on social media. Since consumer

engagement derives from the theory of service-dominant logic, which mainly focuses on the

value co-creation of consumer engagement, the definition and measurement scale of

consumer engagement starts from the positive valence. Thus, most researchers focus on the

positive valence of consumer engagement. However, later research gradually found the value

co-destruction of consumer engagement (Juric et al., 2015) and the negative valence of

consumer engagement obtaining more and more attention from researchers (Azer &

Alexander, 2020; Naumann et al., 2020). This study aims to explore the effect of OFCI on

both positive and negative valences of consumer engagement simultaneously, as well as the

effect of OFCI on offline behavioral intention. The research model (Figure 1.1) is based on

the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which suggests that sport fans who identify

with online fan communities feel a sense of belonging to teams and are willing to distinguish

themselves from others outside of the group through online and offline behaviors (Kim &

Manoli, 2023). The mediating effects of both positive and negative valences of consumer

engagement between OFCI and behavioral intention are also tested. The other goal is to find

out the moderating effect of satisfaction with teams' performance on the relationship between

OFCI and positive consumer engagement, OFCI and negative consumer engagement, and

OFCI and behavioral intention. Consequently, this study aims to provide different practical

suggestions for social media strategies for high-performing and underperforming teams.

Figure 1.1

Research Model
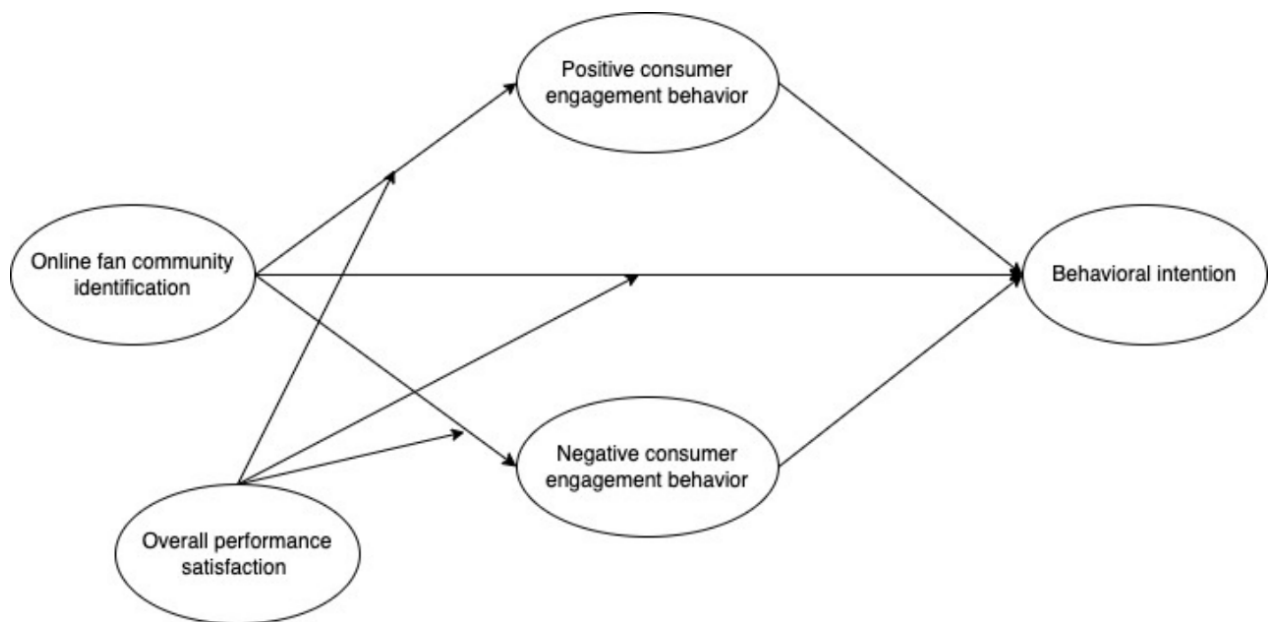
Significance of the Study

This study contributes to sport marketing literature from two aspects. First, this study

distinguishes the online brand community and online fan community. The concept of an

online brand community is initially developed in the general business field. Even though

literature has paid attention to the online community in the context of sport (Katz et al., 2020;

Yoshida et al., 2018), most of them adopt the online brand community directly without

figuring out the uniqueness of the online fan community. Moreover, this study also proposes

the concept of online fan community identification, which has not been defined clearly in

previous research. Second, this study develops the conceptualization to apply the negative

valence of consumer engagement in the context of sport. Previous literature on the negative

valence of consumer engagement focuses on the general business field (Hollebeek & Chen,

2014). There is a lack of clear definition of it in the context of sport.

In addition, this study contributes to the consumer behavior literature by finding out

the relationship among OFCI, consumer engagement on social media, and offline behavioral

intention. The findings of this study add empirical evidence in terms of the negative valence

of consumer engagement in the literature. First, the study concurrently examines the

mediating role of both the positive and negative valence of consumer engagement behavior

between OFCI and offline behavioral intention. Second, the present study confirms that sport

fans' positive consumer engagement behavior has a strong and positive impact on offline

behavioral intention (Santos et al., 2019) and provides significant empirical evidence for the

negative relation of negative consumer engagement behavior on offline behavioral intention.

Third, this study uses social identity theory to explain the relationship between online

identification to online and offline behavior, which provides a new perspective on social

identity theory. Moreover, this study contributes to the consumer behavior literature in the

sport context by examining the interaction effect of OFCI and satisfaction with team

performance on positive consumer engagement behavior, negative consumer engagement behavior, as well as behavioral intention, which received limited attention in previous research. This also adds new insights into the negative side of social identity.

In regard to the practical significance, sport fans' behavioral intention is important to sport managers to understand the relationship between sport fans and the club, which is relevant to the club's revenue (Shapiro et al., 2013). Therefore, it is worthwhile identifying the antecedents of behavioral intention and their relationship with it. This study enhances the managerial understanding of the effect of sport fans' online identification and online behavior on offline behavior by providing the direct and indirect effects of OFCI on sport fans' offline behavior via positive and negative valences of consumer engagement. Additionally, this study provides practical implications for sport marketers on how to promote the sport team on social media in different performance situations.

Overview of the study

This study is presented in seven chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and overview of the study. Chapter 2 is the literature review of the study. The first part is the review of the conceptualization of consumer engagement and the negative valence of consumer engagement is emphasized. Additionally, the role of consumer engagement on social media in the sport marketing literature is summarized. Finally, the review of brand community, behavioral intention, satisfaction, and social identification theory is presented in this chapter. Chapter 3 is the hypothesis development of this study. Chapter 4 is about the methods utilized in this study, including the research settings, research design, questionnaire

design, and data analysis. Chapter 5 is the results of this research, containing an assessment of the measurement model, and the statistical results of both meditating and moderating effects. Chapter 6 discusses the theoretical and managerial implications of the study. Chapter 7 includes the limitations and future research directions, and the conclusion is presented in this part.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Overview

This chapter starts by examining how consumer engagement is conceptualized in general marketing and then delves into this concept in the context of sport. Then, the antecedents and consequences of consumer engagement on social media in the context of sport are summarized. Additionally, a summary of existing literature on consumer engagement from the perspective of negative valence is provided. Moreover, the definition of brand community is reviewed, and the concept of online fan community is demonstrated. Then, the concept of behavioral intention is provided. Social identity theory is introduced to illustrate the construct of online fan community identification (OFCI) and explain the relationship between OFCI and consumer engagement behavior on social media, as well as the relationship between OFCI and behavioral intention. Finally, the concept of satisfaction is reviewed.

Conceptualization of Consumer Engagement

In the marketing field, two kinds of views of engagement are recognized: customer engagement and consumer engagement (Abdul-Ghani et al., 2012). According to McDonald's (2006), there is a distinction between consumers and customers. The term 'consumers' refers to a relationship where welfare is viewed as a product for the consumer. Conversely, 'customers' represent a marketization of social care where welfare is treated as a commodity for the customer. However, even though these two terms have separate meanings, they have frequently been used interchangeably, leading to some overlap (Mclaughlin, 2009).

This study adopts the concept of consumer engagement, but it is important for the readers to understand their distinct origins.

Consumer Engagement

In general marketing, the extant literature defines consumer engagement from both multi-dimensional and single-dimensional perspectives. In terms of the multi-dimensional definitions, some studies considered the notion of consumer engagement from a psychological perspective, which includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Brodie et al., 2013; Helme-Guizon & Magnoni, 2019; Hollebeek et al., 2014). For example, Hellebeek et al. (2014, p. 154) conceptualized consumer brand engagement as "A consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions." The cognitive dimension refers to consumers' thoughts and feelings about a brand as a result of their interaction with that brand. The emotional dimension refers to the level of positive affect felt by consumers in a particular interaction between consumers and the brand. Behavioral activity refers to the extent of the energy, effort, and time spent on a brand during the consumer and brand interaction. Some researchers also added a social dimension to consumer engagement, which demonstrates the interaction and sharing of one's experience and content (Gambetti et al., 2012).

The others conceptualized consumer engagement from a single-dimensional, namely behavioral perspective (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Yoshida et al., 2018). Research is divided on whether consumer engagement includes transactional behavior (e.g., purchase) (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Some researchers considered consumer engagement to contain transactional behavior, including customers' purchase behavior, customer referral, and influencing

behavior toward other customers (Kumar et al., 2010). While other researchers defined

consumer engagement as "customers make voluntary resource contributions that have a brand

or firm focus but go beyond what is fundamental to transactions, occurs in interactions

between the focal object and/or other actors, and result from motivational drivers," which

does not contain transactional behavior (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014, p. 248).

Consumer Engagement on Social Media

Social media is defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the

ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and

exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Since consumer

engagement is context-dependent, consumer engagement on social media can be seen as a

context-specific occurrence of consumer engagement (Brodie et al., 2013). Consumers

engage with brands through various resources and tools in the social media context.

Consumers transform from passive information-receiving to active content-generating

consumers through online conversations, interactions, and behavior (Malthouse et al., 2013).

Studies have adopted various definitions of consumer engagement in the context of

social media from different perspectives and employed different concepts for consumer

engagement. This study summarizes some of the most utilized concepts and definitions of

consumer engagement on social media in Table 2.1. As can be seen from the table, there are a

variety of concepts that were used to describe consumer engagement on social media. The

definitions of consumer engagement on social media could also be divided into two

categories.

Table 2.1

The Concept and Definition of Consumer Engagement in Social Media Context

Concept	Definition
online engagement (Mollen & Wilson, 2010)	A cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value.
digital engagement (Pletikosa Cvijik & Michahelles, 2013)	Manifestations in fan reactions in relation to the characteristics and contents of shared material on the web.
virtual brand community engagement practices (Hollebeek et al., 2017)	The repeated and routinized behaviors that allow shared meanings among members of a given community, providing consumer-related opportunities or co-creating value with/for other members.
consumer engagement in online brand communities (Dessart, 2017)	Consumers' positive individual dispositions towards the community and the focal brand as expressed through varying levels of affective, cognitive, and behavioral manifestations that go beyond exchange situations.
engagement on social media (Tsai & Men, 2017)	A behavioural construct with hierarchical activity levels, from passive message consumption to active content contributing which includes two-way conversation, participation, and online recommendation.
brand-related social media engagement (Yoshida et al., 2018)	An individual's voluntary contribution to the interaction between his or her favorite brand and other fellow brand users by sharing, activating, and co-creating information related to the brand.
e-engagement behavior (Dolan et al., 2019)	The behavior that reflects engagement with social media, including customers' creation of, contribution to, or consumption of brand-related content within a social network.
consumer engagement on social networks (Santos et al., 2019)	A consequence of the consumer's interaction with the brand, facilitated by the company's efforts to encourage value co-creation and foster relationships among the virtual community of brand, product, or service.

Similar to the definition of consumer engagement, researchers defined consumer engagement on social media from psychological and behavioral perspectives. In regard to the psychological perspective, social media engagement was defined from the affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects (Dessart, 2017). From the behavioral perspective, consumer engagement on social media was conceptualized as a range of consumer and brand-related online activities that vary in the extent to which consumers interact with social media and engage in consuming, contributing, and creating media content is considered consumer engagement on social media (Dolan et al., 2019).

When deciding on dimensionality, it is crucial to take into account the study's objective. The objective of this particular study was to find out the relationship between online behavior and offline behavior. In addition, it is challenging to define consumer engagement on social media as a multi-dimensional concept, as the first measurement model encountered considerable problems with discriminant validity (Schivinski et al., 2016). In terms of this study, the focus is mainly on the valence of consumer engagement. Therefore, this study employed the definition of the behavior perspective of consumer engagement on social media, and hereafter, this study uses consumer engagement behavior to represent the behavioral manifestations of consumer engagement.

Fan Engagement

Sport fans are not passive receptors but active participants who shape the experience of sport by following and supporting a particular sport, team, or athlete (Da Silva & Las Casas, 2017). Four characteristics of the fans' profile are found (Da Silva & Las Casas, 2017). First is emotion: the fans' involvement and identification with the teams, and their emotions

are often impacted by the result of the game. Second, intolerance: some fans are intolerant to others who are not who are not as committed to the team as they are. Third, supportive social contexts: sport fanatics show in the way they choose friends, consume media, and collect items. They tend to socialize with those who share the same interests as them. Fourth is memorabilia (McDonald, 1996): fans have the habit of collecting team-related objects, such as clothes, posters, photos, and so forth. Therefore, "fanatic" is always used to describe fans, encapsulating their passion for the team. Sport fans' engagement encompasses a sports fan's passion for their loved club, which in turn makes them invest time and resources in that club. Ultimately, this leads to the development and expansion of the club's interest.

In the sport marketing literature, the term "engagement" is used to explain the level of sport fandom and behavioral patterns in the spectator sport, although studies that conceptualize fan engagement are rare. Yoshida et al. (2014) identified four types of engagement behavior in spectator sport. They divided the engagement behavior into two axes: consumer activity (transactional or nontransactional) and consumer role (in-role or extra role). Fan engagement was considered as "a sport consumer's extra-role behavior in non-transactional exchanges to benefit their favorite sport team, the team's management, and other fans". Sport fans provide some extra-role help for the team or other fans except for money. In the social media context, fan engagement was also examined and framed as a non-transactional extra-role behavior, referring to the fan-to-team and fan-to-fan relationships and the value co-creation stimulated by the team within the online context (Santos et al., 2019). Some researchers also defined fan engagement directly related to a sport player as "the

total number of original and shared posts or comments mentioning that player on social media platforms" (Chmait et al., 2020).

Even though "fan engagement" has been demonstrated, "consumer engagement" is still the mainstream in the context of sport. Most of the studies employed consumer engagement on social media to represent fan engagement since sport fans are consumers in the sport context (Vale & Fernandes, 2018; Yoshida et al., 2018; Zanini et al., 2019). This study uses the construct of consumer engagement rather than fan engagement since consumer engagement is the basic theoretical framework.

The definitions of consumer engagement discussed above are all from the valence of a positive perspective. Consumer engagement is a dual-valence construct (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). The subsequent subsection demonstrates the two valences of consumer engagement, summarizes the existing definition of negatively valenced consumer engagement, and conceptualizes the negative valence of consumer engagement in sport.

Valence of Consumer Engagement

Van Doorn et al. (2010) demonstrated five dimensions of consumer engagement: valence, form, scope, nature of impact, and customer goals. They discovered that consumer engagement could be categorized into positive and negative valences. There are also some researchers explicated consumer engagement into three valences: positive, neutral, and negative (Dolan et al., 2016).

Previous studies explored the negative valence of consumer engagement mainly from three dimensions (Dessart et al., 2020; Juric et al., 2015; Lievonen et al., 2022): negative cognitive dimension (e.g., negative bias and racism) (Oshiro et al., 2021), negative emotional

dimension (e.g., hatred, fear, anger, disappointment, and insecurity), and negative behavioral

dimension (e.g., negative word of mouth and boycotting) (Azer & Alexander, 2020).

Individuals' negative emotions and behaviors tend to transpose into collective anti-brand

behavior (i.e., anti-brand community engagement) (Dessart et al., 2020). In the sport context,

Popp et al. (2016) noted that sport fans' engagement in anti-brand communities can damage

sport team brands and even their sponsors. Additionally, the negative valence of consumer

engagement differs from the passive state of engagement, such as disengagement, because

disengaged customers are not emotionally or physically involved in the service process

(Bowden et al., 2015).

The negative valence of engagement has been repeatedly acknowledged; however, a

few studies have thoroughly contextualized the negative valence of engagement. Hollebeek

and Chen (2014) considered a negative valence of brand engagement to be consumers'

unfavorable brand-related thoughts, feelings, and behavior during brand interactions. They

assumed that a negative valence of brand engagement poses a threat to brand health if the

company could not control brand-related communication among consumers. The behavioral

manifestation of negative consumer engagement was considered as collective complaints and

value co-destruction (Naumann et al., 2020). Negative consumer engagement is also

considered as "negative valence influencing behavior," which includes indirect (i.e.,

discrediting, deriding, and regretting) and direct behavior (dissuading, endorsing competitors,

and warning) (Azer & Alexander, 2020). Consumer engagement with a negative valence was

demonstrated as distinct from negative consumer engagement (Juric et al., 2015). Negative

consumer engagement represents behavior that is intended to destroy brands, whereas

consumer engagement with a negative valence refers to behavior that focuses on value co-creation but inadvertently causes damage to brands. Regarding this study focused on sport fans of the target team, rather than those of the opposing team, the negative valence of consumer engagement in this study is of the latter.

It has been shown that negative engagement may be context-specific (Naumann et al., 2020); thus, this study conceptualizes the negative valence of consumer engagement in the context of sport. Based on previous studies, this study defines the behavioral manifestations of negative consumer engagement on social media as sport consumers' inadvertent non-transactional behavior towards teams on social media, which may negatively affect other consumers' knowledge, expectations, and perceptions of the focal team.

After having a full understanding of the definitions of consumer engagement, the following subsection provides a summarization of the role that consumer engagement plays in the sport marketing literature.

The Role of Consumer Engagement on Social Media in Sport Context

Consumer engagement on social media was not given as much attention by researchers until 2015 in the context of sport. Lots of literature emerged in 2018, and the topic has consistently attracted researchers' attention in the sports marketing field from then on. Facebook, Twitter (X), and Instagram were the top three social media platforms used by researchers because of their popularity and the large fan base on these platforms. Most of the studies utilized consumer engagement as the consequence of their model since they aimed to find out how to improve consumer engagement on social media. Some researchers consider consumer engagement as the antecedent of their model in order to find out how to increase

profit by effectively using consumer engagement on social media. The following section

summarizes the antecedents and consequences of consumer engagement on social media.

Antecedents

The antecedents of consumer engagement on social media could be categorized into

six dimensions (Figure 2.2).

First, the most studied dimension was the content of the posts, which includes the

elements of the post, the objectives of the post, the design of the post, the hashtag types, the

promotional types, the brand attributes, and so on. Researchers have hypothesized that

various content of posts on social media platforms can lead to different levels of consumer

engagement on social media. For example, the combination of post elements (i.e., storytelling,

trigger, amusement, and attraction) was an important factor in the posts that affected sport

fans' engagement on social media (Tiago et al., 2016). Researchers found that national team

topics in the UEFA's Facebook posts engaged the most, and content types, such as

congratulations, mourning, tribute, match goal, team celebration after success, and special

event, positively affected consumer engagement on social media (Osokin, 2019). Compared

with the merchandise and charitable objectives, the sporting objective led to the highest

number of comments and likes, and posts with hashtags showed more likes than posts

without hashtags (Kim & Hull, 2017). Covert promotions were more effective in generating

fan engagement on social media than over promotions (Cazorla Milla et al., 2020). In regard

to the brand attribute of the posts created by sports teams/clubs, researchers revealed that

product-related attributes led to higher consumer engagement on social media than

non-product-related attributes (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2018; Maderer et al., 2018; Zanini et al., 2019).

Some studies (Annamalai et al., 2021; Cazorla Milla et al., 2020; Osokin, 2019; Wymer et al., 2021) examined the impact of types of posts/content vividness/post design (i.e., text, photos, videos, and links) on consumer engagement on social media. Annamalai et al. (2021) concluded that less vivid posts tended to get more likes, comments, and positive feedback, while highly vivid posts were more likely to be shared. Some researchers found that whether or not the posts are related to the sponsor could determine consumer engagement on social media. (Brison & Geurin, 2021; Doyle et al., 2022; Naraine et al., 2022). In general, they discovered that disclosing the endorsed brands' relationship with the athlete negatively affected consumer engagement on social media. Devlin and Sheehan (2018) focused on consumer engagement with CSR activity on Facebook. They coded the posts from two perspectives, including news frame (i.e., attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic, human interest, and morality) and charity support behavior (i.e., awareness, team donation, team volunteer, athlete volunteer, individual volunteer, call to get screened, e-commerce, game information, other). The results indicated that posts with human interest frames and posts with general awareness and game information could garner more social media engagement.

In addition, researchers also discussed the effects of the type of appeal used in commercial social media advertisements posted by sport teams (Aichner, 2019) along with the inclusion of athlete teammates in the post content (Doyle et al., 2022) on consumer

engagement on social media. They found that football-related appeals and containing the athletes' teammates could enhance engagement rate.

The second dimension was the features of the post (Kennedy et al., 2021). This included features such as the post's creation date (year and month) (e.g., Benito-Colio et al., 2022), the day of the week it was posted, and the time of day it was released. Besides the time feature, the page performance feature, such as the number of unique users who liked the Facebook page over its lifetime, was also considered. Moreover, both essential antecedents were whether the post was posted during or out of the season (Maderer et al., 2018; Piché & Naraine, 2022) and whether it was posted on an in-game day.

The third dimension was the features of the teams/players. The most discussed was the team/player's performance on the field, such as the result of games, the ranking of clubs (Benito-Colio et al., 2022) and players (Doyle et al., 2022; Pegoraro et al., 2021). Social media engagement tended to be higher for victories as compared to ties or losses (Devlin & Sheehan, 2018; Herrera et al., 2018). Furthermore, it has been found that whether a player was in the round or not, players' opponents (Chmait et al., 2020), gender, and age (Brison & Geurin, 2021) all had an impact on consumer engagement on social media. Players whose opponents are sport stars will also attract consumer engagement on social media, even if they are underperforming (Chmait et al., 2020). Besides, their post-engagement achieves a peak in the tournament round, especially the final round. Males received more engagement with their posts than females (Brison & Geurin, 2021).

The fourth dimension was the feature of sponsors. The attitude towards the sponsor and sponsors' congruence with the team influence consumer engagement with the team on

social media (Alonso-Dos-Santos et al., 2018). The perceived fit of the sponsor with the team's online community and the positive attitude towards the sponsors could improve the image transfer process, which finally leads to higher engagement in the virtual brand community of the team.

The fifth dimension was motivations. There were a lot of motivations that led to consumer engagement on social media, such as information, entertainment, personal/social identity, integration and social interaction, empowerment, remuneration, and brand love (Machado et al., 2020; Sreepada & Bagchi, 2020; Vale & Fernandes, 2018; Yoshida et al., 2018). Different motivations are more effective on specific social media platforms (Machado et al., 2020) and impact consumer engagement differently across consumption, contribution, and creation (Vale & Fernandes, 2018).

The sixth dimension was the identification with the teams/communities. Consumer engagement on social media is positively affected by identification with the club brand and club members on social networks (Marčinko Trkulja et al., 2022) and online brand community identification (Yoshida et al., 2018). Additionally, it was indicated that perceived knowledge and cognitive awareness of sport teams (Pandey & Hassan, 2021), as well as involvement, perceived relationship quality, and subjective norms with the team (Alonso-Dos-Santos et al., 2018), all significantly influenced consumer engagement on social media.

Consequences

Researchers found that consumer engagement on social media positively impacts their behavioral intention, such as referral intention and purchase intention (Achen, 2017; Steiner

et al., 2023), and the effect was verified both online and offline (Santos et al., 2019). Besides behavioral intention, social media engagement also significantly affects sport fans' real behavior, such as actual purchase frequency over time (Yoshida et al., 2018). In addition, consumer engagement on social media could affect social TV channel loyalty (Lim et al., 2015), and it also affects engagement with endorsed brands (Ferreira et al., 2022). Consequently, consumer engagement on social media is beneficial to improving consumers' attitudes and relationships with sport-related brands, such as sport teams, endorsed brands, and social TV channels.

Figure 2.1

The Antecedents and Consequences of Consumer Engagement on Social Media
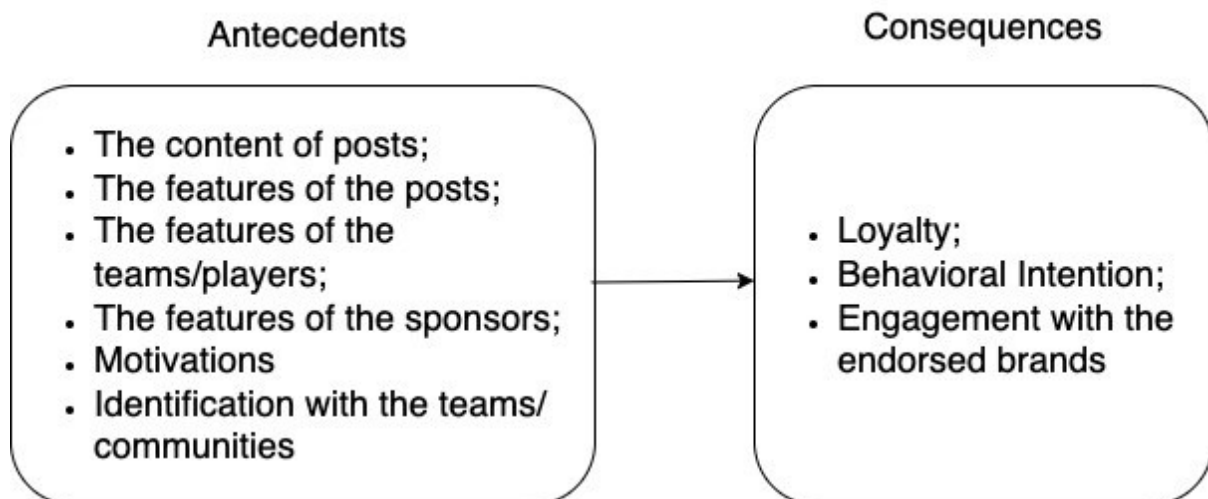
From the summarizing of the antecedents of consumer engagement on social media in the context of sport, online brand community identification has been found to be an important antecedent that has a positive effect on consumer engagement on social media, and

behavioral intention has been found to be an essential consequence of consumer engagement on social media. The following sections discuss each of these constructs in detail.

Community

A community is comprised of member entities and their relationships. Usually, communities are recognized based on the shared traits or interests among their members, such as residing in the same neighborhood, working in the same occupation, having the same hobby, or being devoted to a particular brand. With the community becoming marketable, the brand community exists. This section begins with an introduction to the brand community and then demonstrates the brand community on social media. Finally, the fan community is explained.

Brand Community

A brand community refers to a specialized, geography-unrestricted community among brand enthusiasts who share a structured set of social relationships（Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). There are three common markers of brand community. They are consciousness of kind, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility. The first marker of consciousness of kind is the perceived membership of participants, which intersects with social identity theory (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006). The community members have a sense of belonging to the brand community, and they feel connected with other people in the community. The second marker comprises rituals and traditions. Preserving and continuing a community's meaning, history, and culture is of utmost importance since it could solidify members' bonds. Community members create the meaning, history, and culture of the community by celebrating meaningful moments, inheriting brand-related stories, and inculcating behavioral

norms and values (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). The third marker is that community members feel a sense of responsibility not only to the community as a whole but also to individual members. This commitment is the primary reason for participating in brand use practices, where members assist each other in optimizing their brand use (Schau et al., 2009). Three context-dependent markers are also proposed to describe the brand community more precisely (McAlexander et al., 2002). They are brand communities that differ based on geographic concentration, social context, and temporality. In addition, they emphasized not only the relationships between consumers and consumers but also consumers' relationships with the brand, products, and marketers.

Brand communities are beneficial to the marketing field from two aspects. First, brand communities partly solved the difficulty of keeping in touch with consumers individually (Berry, 1995). It is important to develop a good relationship with consumers, but keeping a long-term personalized one-on-one relationship is expensive. Brand communities could help the brand socialize with the consumers efficiently since the consumers in the community have a shared identity and can share information with each other (Andersen, 2005). Second, brand communities are in response to the difficulty of observing and analyzing consumer behavior. Understanding how consumers spend their time and money through their lifestyle and interpersonal activities is better than conventional categories like age and gender used by marketers (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Brand community categorizes consumers into specific groups, which could benefit understanding consumer behavior.

Brand Community on Social Media

Brand community, as defined by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), exists both online and offline. The concept of online brand communities emerged due to technological advances on the internet, social media, and mobile devices (Wirtz et al., 2013). Online brand community was divided from the offline brand community. The most obvious difference is that online brand communities are virtual and geographically unconstrained. Compared with offline brand communities, online brand community members may have less consciousness of kind, less moral responsibility, and less hierarchical structures. In addition, the cost of joining and being part of online brand communities is lower than offline brand communities. The members of online brand communities are more likely to seek extrinsic benefits, such as information seeking, discounts, and loyalty points, instead of intrinsic benefits. Besides, they may have less involvement, loyalty, and emotion among other members.

Zaglia (2013) used the concept of network-based brand community to describe brand community within a social network. They believed there are no essential differences between social networks and brand communities, only differences in the degree of thematic orientation, the strength of the connections between members, and the degree of involvement with the community or social network. Besides, social networks and communities have one basic attribute in common: the interaction between members. They found that both Facebook and fan pages embed brand communities, further confirming brand communities evolve on social networks.

Social media has become an effective social network platform for building brand communities, as the social and networked nature of social media strongly supports the social

aspects of brand communities (Habibi et al., 2014a). The overlap between brand communities and social media is undeniable, as both of them require the creation and sharing of content and meanings (Habibi et al., 2014b). Consequently, the intersection of the two would be an ideal context to create, discuss, and share content and meanings for like-minded consumers.

Brand community on social media could be considered a special case of online brand community, which possesses five unique characteristics (Habibi et al., 2014a). The first one is the social context of the brand community on social media. Consumers on social media usually use their authentic identities in their profiles, along with some photos and personal experiences. The personality of consumers and their demographic information, such as age and gender, are easy to find when clicking on their profile link. Second, the structure of the brand community on social media is also unique. Unlike other virtual brand communities, brand communities on social media have flat structures. There are no ranking or hierarchy systems in place for distinguishing between highly engaged and novice members. The third dimension is the scale of the brand community on social media. Building a brand community on social media and expanding it to millions of consumers becomes easier. Fourth, the content and storytelling have changed. Social media provides a platform for storytelling, not just through texts but also through visual forms such as pictures and videos. A single picture is powerful enough to transfer numerous words. Moreover, storytelling becomes interactive since other members can respond immediately through likes and comments. The fifth is the emergence of myriads of affiliated brand communities. On social media, the cost of creating a community is almost zero. As a result, there are many subgroups and related groups within a given brand community.

These five aspects made the brand community on social media unique compared to previous brand communities. This study investigates brand community in the context of social media.

Fan Community

Sport fan communities are a specific form of brand community in the sport context (Yoshida et al., 2014). It was defined as a "specialized, non-geographically bound community based on sport fans' personal identity with the cultural milieu surrounding a specific sport team" (Yoshida et al., 2014, p. 91). There are two kinds of fan communities: fan-initiated communities and team-initiated communities (Jang et al., 2008). Fan-initiated communities are created and organized by sport fans themselves in order to provide team-related information and exchange individual experiences. In this kind of community, sport fans can achieve information, entertainment, and socialization purposes. Team-initiated communities provide sport teams with a higher degree of control over the content, messaging, and overall user experience. This control can be crucial for maintaining a consistent brand image and ensuring that the community aligns with the team's marketing objectives. Besides, team-initiated communities are intentionally built by the team's company in order to promote the team and strengthen the relationship with consumers. Since team-initiated communities are operated by the team itself, by choosing team-initiated communities, this study can offer targeted insights that are particularly relevant for sport marketers and teams seeking to optimize their official digital platforms. It allows for a focused exploration of how teams leverage these communities as part of their broader marketing and fan engagement strategies. Therefore, this study was conducted with the team-initiated community.

Fan community also exists on social media platforms, which provide virtual spaces for sport fans to interact and communicate directly with other fans and with clubs (Fenton et al., 2023). There is a distinction between online sport fan communities and other online brand communities because the members' self-esteem, positivity, collective unity, and social opportunities are stronger in the online sport fan community (Kim & Manoli, 2023). In addition, compared with other brands, sport is advantageous due to the frequent broadcasting, providing members with a diverse range of content, such as matches and news, on a daily basis, thereby enhancing their experiences. Therefore, this study adopts the concept of the online fan community instead of the online brand community.

Behavioral intention

Behavioral intention refers to "the degree to which a person has formulated conscious plans to perform or not to perform some specified future behavior" (Westerbeek & Shibury, 2003, p. 214). The favorable behavioral intention includes positive word of mouth, recommending the service or products, being willing to pay a premium, and expressing cognitive loyalty (Zeithaml et al., 1996). The unfavorable behavioral intention contains negative consumer responses, such as switching and complaint behavior (Lobo et al., 2007). Since the favorable behavioral intention is directly related to the revenue of the sport entity, this study adapts the favorable perspective of behavioral intention in the context of sport, which is defined as "the spectator's favorable intentions to attend future games, recommend them to others, and purchase teams' products and services" (Biscaia et al., 2012, p. 230).

In the marketing field, behavioral intention has been found to be a signal of actual behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). As a result, studying behavioral intention is important to

understand consumers' relationship with the brand and the brand's future revenues. There is a lot of research has been done on behavioral intention in the context of sport, and various antecedents of behavioral intention have been found. Kim et al. (2013) found that three kinds of commitments, including affective, continuance, and normative, have a positive relationship with sport fans' behavioral intentions. These three aspects represent sport consumers' emotional attachment to the team, their psychological connection to the team, and the social pressure received from peer groups. Some researchers considered behavioral intention to be the behavioral aspect of loyalty (Rather et al., 2019; Yoshida et al., 2015). Team identification, satisfaction, service quality, emotions, and team brand associations are found to be antecedents of behavioral intentions (Biscaia, 2016).

Social Identity Theory

The social identity theory is a social-psychological theory that attempts to account for cognition and behavior under group processes (Trepte, 2006). A social group is the integration of people who feel and perceive themselves as belonging to this group and who are considered members of this group by others (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). An online fan community for a specific team could be considered a social group because it is a subgroup under the superordinate group (i.e., a sport team) (Lock & Funk, 2016). The members of an online community have a sense of belonging to the community through interaction with other members online (Zaglia, 2013). Several studies have come to the same conclusion that a person's emotional and social attachment to a brand's community can be described as brand community identification (Kaur et al., 2020). Given this perspective, a person's relationship with an online fan community for a sport team can be seen as their identification (or sense of

belonging) with the online fan community. Online fan communities on social media enable

people to classify themselves in specific social categories for reasons such as "I am a Real

Madrid fan, so I will join Real Madrid's fan community on social media." This categorization

can enhance sport fans' social identity and self-esteem. This study adopted the construct of

OFCI to represent sport fans' identification with the sport team's fan community on social

media.

Social identity theory is a widely used theory to explain why people conduct a

specific behavior (Chung et al., 2012). According to the social identity theory (Tajfel &

Turner, 1979), sport fans tend to behave in a manner that corresponds with their own identity

and support a team that can crystallize their identity. Moreover, sport fans who identify

themselves as member of the team's online fan community tend to consider the success of the

team as their own. As a result, they are likely to cooperate with others in order to help the

team succeed and develop. Therefore, sport fans who identify themselves as part of online fan

communities will be more likely to participate in online and offline behavior, which can

enhance their self-identity.

Sport fans who identify with the fan community not only involve themselves in

activities that benefit themselves, such as attending, spectating, and purchasing, which

represent favorable behavioral intention. They also engage in actions that benefit their

favorite sport teams, such as showing their support for the team, spreading positive

word-of-mouth, and attending events together (Kim & Manoli, 2023; Yoshida et al., 2015).

Additionally, they exhibit behaviors that benefit other fans, such as sharing knowledge about

the team with other fans, communicating cooperatively in the stands, and helping each other

out in fan communities (Jibril et al., 2019). These actions that go beyond their expected role are referred to as extra-role behaviors (Yoshida et al., 2014).

Satisfaction

According to Oliver (1997), consumer satisfaction refers to the positive emotional response to the consumption experience of the product, service, benefit, or reward. This definition is expanded into sport contexts, and researchers conceptualized satisfaction in the context of sport from various perspectives. Yoshida and James (2010) defined consumer satisfaction as "a customer's pleasurable, fulfillment response to the entertainment of sport competition and/or ancillary services provided during a game." They divided consumer satisfaction into service satisfaction and game satisfaction. Service satisfaction refers to consumers' satisfaction with the service quality, such as stadium employees and service environment. Game satisfaction refers to consumers' satisfaction with core product quality, for example, the teams' characteristics and players' performance. Biscaia et al. (2013) considered overall satisfaction to be more suitable to reflect consumers' feelings, and they conceived it as a function of overall satisfaction with assorted experiences of the sport organization. Consumer satisfaction is defined as "the consumers' pleasurable fulfillment response resulting from the attendance at games during the season" in their study.

Satisfaction has been categorized into transaction-specific and cumulative satisfaction (Anderson et al., 1994). Transaction-specific satisfaction is a post-purchase evaluation of one purchase, whereas cumulative satisfaction is an evaluation of a purchase experience over a period of time. In the context of sport, Gray and Wert-Gray (2012) regarded sport fans' satisfaction as two different situations: The general satisfaction of sports fans with a team's

performance and the satisfaction with a specific sport game. This study applied the concept of overall performance satisfaction, which is cumulative satisfaction, to measure sport fans' general evaluations of teams' performance.

Consumers' satisfaction with the consumption experience can lead to a good relationship with the focal brand (Williams & Chinn, 2010). Those who are satisfied with the brand are likely to have positive behavioral intentions, such as positive word of mouth, repurchase, and a high level of brand loyalty (Biscaia et al., 2013). Zhu et al. (2016) found that in an online brand community, consumers who are satisfied with the brand are more likely to provide feedback to the brand, recommend the brand to others, and help other consumers in the online brand community. If consumers are not satisfied with their experience with the brand, they may be reluctant to continue their consumption (Biscaia et al., 2012). Similar findings have been found in the context of sport. Researchers found that satisfaction with sport products has a significant effect on the long-term benefits for sport organizations, such as attending games and repurchasing season tickets (Yoshida et al., 2015). Research results indicated that winning teams and positive game outcomes lead to customer satisfaction and increased intention to attend future games. In contrast, losing teams and negative game outcomes lead to dissatisfaction, resulting in decreased attendance intentions and actual attendance.

Previous research has established a correlation between consumer satisfaction and consumer engagement (Cheung et al., 2015). The higher the level of consumer satisfaction, the higher the level of consumer engagement. On social media platforms, it is found that satisfaction is one of the main drivers that create consumer engagement on social media (de

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Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). Majeed et al. (2022) found that consumer satisfaction has positive effects on consumption, contribution, and creation behavior on social media. Some of the satisfied consumers only consume content on social media (the lowest level of consumer engagement behavior), such as viewing brand-related videos, product ratings and reviews, and discussions in the forums (de Oliveira Santini et al., 2020). Some satisfied consumers may go beyond consumption (the medium level of consumer engagement behavior); they contribute to the brand by commenting on the posts on social media (Lee & Kim, 2018). A group of satisfied consumers also exhibit creative behavior (the highest level of consumer engagement behavior), like generating brand-related content, post-review, and uploading pictures or videos.

Chapter 3. Hypotheses Development

Online Fan Community Identification and Offline Behavior

Behavioral intention is widely used to represent offline behavior (Bauer et al., 2008). The relationship between brand community identification and consumers' behavioral outcomes has been explored in the business context (Coelho et al., 2018; Marzocchi et al., 2013). Their research results indicate that community identification translates into affection for and behavior toward brands. Some researchers found that individuals with similar interests and social identities are likely to show commitment to the community since they perceive that maintaining relationships with other community members is valuable (Demiray & Burnaz, 2019). By communicating with consumers through their community, brands can better showcase their products and increase brand knowledge among members. This knowledge reduces uncertainty when making purchases, which in turn increases customer loyalty. As a result, customers are more likely to make purchases and exhibit other favorable behaviors towards the brand. This process occurs not only in the offline communities but also in the online communities. Identification with online brand communities is positively related to consumers' offline behavior, such as merchandise purchases and word of mouth (Laroche et al., 2012).

A similar effect exists in the sport context. Kim and Manoli (2023) discovered that OFCI positively impacts sport fans' offline behavior (e.g., attendance and word of mouth). Sport fans who identify with online fan communities obtain belongingness to teams and online fan communities, which provides different types of favorable behavior to the team (Carlson et al., 2008).

Therefore, the first hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H1: OFCI will positively affect sport fans' behavioral intention

Online Fan Community Identification and Online Behavior

Consumer engagement behavior on social media could be considered as sport fans'

online behavior. Scholars have discussed the antecedents of consumer engagement and

agreed that online brand communities play a critical role in generating consumer engagement

(Kaur et al., 2020; Tsai & Men, 2013). Members on social media tend to provide their real

identities instead of pseudonyms on social media. Liu et al. (2019) suggested that the

consumer-perceived benefits from communities and consumers' psychological experiences,

including online community identification, positively influence social media engagement.

Consumers with a high community identification feel safe and comfortable in communities

(May et al., 2004), which makes them more concerned about the development of brands.

Moreover, online brand communities facilitate high-context communication, allowing

members to exchange significant resources like consumption experiences, narratives, and

interpretations, which leads consumers to be actively involved in community-based

discussions and share resources in the community (Tsai & Men, 2013). Therefore, sport fans

with high OFCI could exhibit more consumer engagement behavior, such as being concerned

about their team's information and participating in discussions about their team.

Besides the positive valence of consumer engagement behavior, sport fans are usually

upset or angry about unsatisfied experiences, such as team turnovers and defeat (Crisp et al.,

2007). Compared with those who are indifferent to teams' online fan communities, fans with

high OFCI are more susceptible to negative information from online fan communities

(Hancock et al., 2023). Besides, when they encounter negative experiences, they are more likely to share their negative reviews or comments about their experiences with others (i.e., negative consumer engagement behavior). Consequentially, sport fans with higher OFCI who encounter positive brand-related content will express more positive consumer engagement behavior on social media. Conversely, they will generate stronger negative consumer engagement behavior on social media when their brand-related experience is negative. Therefore, hypotheses 2a and 3a are proposed as follows:

H2a: OFCI will positively affect positive consumer engagement behavior on social media

H3a: OFCI will positively affect negative consumer engagement behavior on social media

Mediating Role of Consumer Engagement Behavior

Sport fans with high OFCI exhibit more positive and negative consumer engagement behavior. Positive consumer engagement behavior on social media has been found to be beneficial to consumers' attitudes and loyalty to the brand (Liu et al., 2019). In sport context, researchers also found that fan engagement on social networking sites enhances sport fans' offline behavioral intention, such as game attendance and team recommendations (Santos et al., 2019; Yoshida et al., 2018). Analysis suggested that engaging with other people in online brand communities is a crucial part of the purchase process, even for brands you already know (Wiertz & de Ruyter, 2007). The opinions and reviews of other customers are significant factors in the decision-making process. Such helpful content and support can be easily found in online brand communities. It has also been proven that engaging with

customers on social media not only maintains the loyalty of satisfied customers but also has the power to retain dissatisfied customers and prevent them from leaving the company (Dessart et al., 2015). Therefore, positive consumer engagement behavior could magnify the effect of OFCI on behavioral intention.

However, negative consumer engagement behavior leads to an adverse effect (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). Negative consumer engagement behavior has a wide range of negative impacts (Juric et al., 2015). Such impacts may include customers seeking financial compensation, withdrawing from the brand, and attempting to negatively influence other existing or potential customers through word of mouth. Ultimately, these negative customer behaviors may lead to the loss of a company's reputation, relationships, and financial resources (Smith, 2013). Moreover, long-term relational consequences may include increased distrust in the brand, which may result in behavioral changes, such as switching to a different brand or a loss of customer loyalty.

Bowden et al. (2017) identified the co-existence of the dual valences of consumer engagement in online brand communities in the context of luxury brands. They discovered that positive consumer engagement in online brand communities strengthens brand engagement, commitment, and loyalty. However, negative consumer engagement in online brand communities has a detraction effect on individuals' general engagement with brands. Huettermann et al. (2019) catheterized both positive and negative fan engagement outcomes in the sport context. They considered positive behavioral intention as the outcome of positive fan engagement, and negative fan engagement generated value destruction. Therefore, it is

reasonable to propose that negative consumer engagement behavior has a negative effect on sport fans' behavioral intentions.

When sport fans identify with the online fan community, they may first engage on social media to display their social identities, such as sharing the team's news and interacting with other fans. If they manifest positive consumer engagement behavior, their favorable behavioral intention tends to increase. Otherwise, if they manifest negative consumer engagement behavior, their favorable behavioral intention tends to decrease. The reasoning described above leads to the proposition of hypotheses 2b and 3b:

H2b: Positive consumer engagement behavior will positively mediate the effect of OFCI on sport fans' behavioral intention

H3b: Negative consumer engagement behavior will negatively mediate the effect of OFCI on sport fans' behavioral intention

Moderating Role of Satisfaction with Team Performance

Van Doorn et al. (2010) argued that different antecedents could moderate the effect of one another on consumer engagement. Satisfaction and identification are crucial antecedents of consumer engagement (Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Van Doorn et al., 2010) and behavioral intention (Kim & Manoli, 2023; Matsuoka et al., 2003).

Consumers who are satisfied with a product/service will repurchase it. Besides the transactional behavior, they will go beyond purchase and provide comments, recommendations, or feedback, which are components of consumer engagement (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Consumers with high OFCI would like to reveal their feelings and evaluations about their previous experiences and provide references to other consumers on social media

(i.e., consumer engagement behavior) (Demiray & Burnaz, 2019; Romero & Ruiz-Equihua, 2020). However, the situation can vary under different satisfactory conditions. If consumers are satisfied with brands' performance, they will be more likely to display positive consumer engagement and offline behavior (Gray & Wert-Gray, 2012). For example, they will encourage customers to return, post positive reviews, and recommend them to their friends (Tsai & Men, 2013). Conversely, consumers whose experience is unsatisfactory will display negative consumer engagement behavior, such as abusing, warning, and setting up anti-brand communities (Balaji et al., 2016). This applies to the sport context on social media. Therefore, this study explored the following research questions by testing the moderation effect of overall performance satisfaction: First, will sport fans with high OFCI express more positive consumer engagement behavior and higher behavioral intention under high-satisfactory conditions than under low-satisfactory conditions? Second, will sport fans with high OFCI express more negative consumer engagement behavior under low-satisfactory conditions than under high-satisfactory conditions? Based on this pursuit, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4a: Satisfaction with team performance will moderate the effect of OFCI on positive consumer engagement behavior on social media; specifically, the relationship is stronger in high-satisfactory conditions than in low-satisfactory conditions

H4b: Satisfaction with team performance will moderate the effect of OFCI on negative consumer engagement behavior on social media; specifically, the relationship is stronger in low-satisfactory conditions than in high-satisfactory conditions

H4c: Satisfaction with team performance will moderate the effect of OFCI on sport

fans' behavioral intention; specifically, the relationship is stronger in high-satisfactory

conditions than in low-satisfactory conditions

Figure 3.1

Research Hypothesis
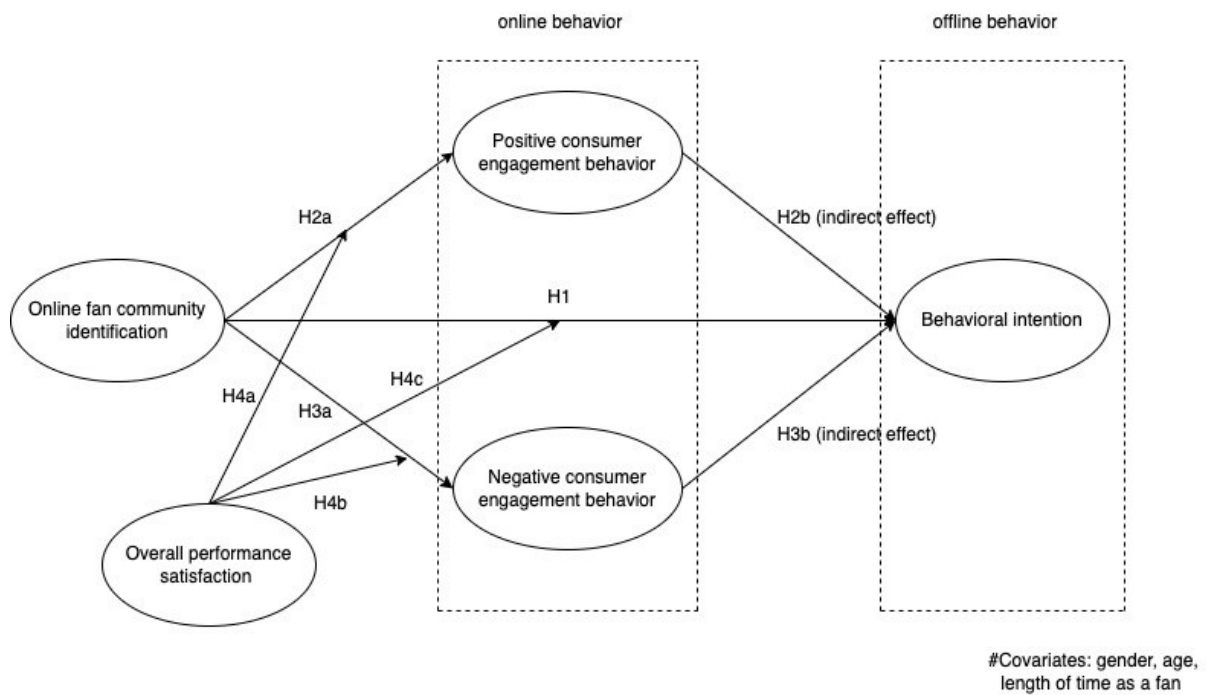
Chapter 4. Methodology

Research Settings

This study investigated consumer engagement in the Chinese professional sport context. Among professional leagues in China, the Chinese Football Association Super League (CSL) is highly discussed on social media. This study selected the CSL as the setting. The CSL is the highest level of professional football organized by the Chinese Football Association. The league was established in 2004 by the rebranding of the former top division, the Chinese Jia-A League. In China, the CSL is a highly popular professional sport league. During the 2018 season, the league matches had an average attendance of 24,107. This attendance figure was the twelfth highest among all domestic professional sport leagues globally and the sixth highest among professional association football leagues worldwide.

Sina Weibo, one of the top 10 widespread social applications in China (Diandian Data, n.d.), was selected as the social media platform. Sina Weibo was launched by Sina Corporation on 14 August 2009 to provide micro-blogging services. It is a social media platform that focuses on building relationships between users, enabling them to share, disseminate, and receive information. Users can upload pictures and videos on the website or mobile app, which can be shared instantly with others. Additionally, they can also comment on posts with text, pictures, or videos and also use a multimedia instant messaging service. It has been described as China's version of Twitter (X). As of the first quarter of 2022, this social media platform has 582 million monthly active users, including 252 million daily active users, making it one of the largest social media platforms in China.

Additionally, numerous researchers have used Weibo to study online brand communities and consumer engagement issues (e.g., Dessart et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2019). The integration of a brand's homepage on social media and the users who interact with it is referred to as an online brand community (Zanini et al., 2019). Therefore, this study considered the integration of a team's official Weibo account of a team and its followers as an online fan community.

Research Design

Research design refers to the planned procedures of inquiry that guide the examination of a research problem and enable the researcher to address the research questions (Creswell, 2013). This study makes the research design according to the research onion diagram (Saunders & Lewis, 2017), which includes six layers: research philosophy, research approach, research strategies, methodological choices, time horizon, and data collection and analysis.

Research Philosophy

The importance of figuring out philosophy has been identified from three aspects (Jackson et al., 2015). First, research philosophy helps in refining and specifying research methods, including interpreting evidence and answering research questions. Second, knowledge of research philosophy enables researchers to evaluate different methodologies and avoid inappropriate use. Third, research philosophy allows researchers to be creative and innovative in selecting or adapting methods that were previously outside their experience.

There are two main research philosophies in social science research: positivism and interpretivism (Bryman, 2016). Positivism proposes "An epistemological position that

advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond" (Bryman, 2016, p. 28). Positivists believe that complete knowledge of a social phenomenon is possible (Durkheim, 2023). Positivism assumes objectivity and that there is only one truth out there to be discovered (Jackson et al., 2015). Social facts are viewed as realities separate from their subjective meaning to humans (Durkheim, 2023). They can only be examined through external observations with indicators like statistics and measurements, which ensures independence from individuals' subjective opinions. Positivism believes in obtaining scientific laws through the deduction of phenomena. Researchers adopt theories to improve understanding by building hypotheses and testing them. Quantitative methods are used to collect and analyze numerical data for understanding human behavior (Saunders et al., 2012).

In response to the application of positivism, interpretivism emerged, which is critical of positivists when they apply law-like generalizations to human subjects (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Interpretivism refers to "A term that usually denotes an alternative to the positivist orthodoxy that has held sway for decades. It is predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action" (Bryman, 2016, p. 30). According to interpretivism, the truth of the world is subjective and based on human thoughts rather than being objective and universally applicable (Collins, 2019). Interpretivists view humans as more intricate than objects and believe that deeper insights can be obtained by moving away from rigid, law-like generalizations (Saunders et al., 2012). Interpretivism and positivists share a common understanding of an external reality that

exists independently of them. They both recognize the existence of social phenomena that exist beyond their individual perspectives. The distinction lies in how each approaches the explanation and analysis of this reality (Cupchik, 2001).

This study attempts to investigate the process from online psychological experience to offline behavior and the role of online behavior in this process. Based on the aims of this study, a positivist philosophy is adopted in this research. Positivism emphasizes the importance of causality explanations and fundamental laws that explain human behavior. The positivism philosophy is beneficial because this study proposed hypotheses based on social identity theory, and the causality among online fan community identification, consumer engagement behavior, and behavioral intention aims to be analyzed. All the concepts in this study could be operationalized into simple constructs, which are observable and measurable in controllable conditions. Thus, this study believes that through the summary of previous literature, hypotheses can be proposed and verified based on theory, and positivism is considered an appropriate philosophy.

Research Approach

A research approach is a systematic plan that involves various stages, ranging from general assumptions to specific data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods. The two primary approaches are the deductive and inductive approaches (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The primary distinction between deductive and inductive methods lies in the role of hypothesis and research. Deductive methods are commonly employed to test the accuracy of hypotheses, whereas inductive methods facilitate the development of new theories (Bryman, 2016).

The deductive research approach involves going from specific instances to broader

conclusions. If a particular theory or case example suggests the existence of a causal

relationship or connection, it may be applicable in multiple scenarios. A deductive approach

can be employed to verify if this relationship or connection holds true in more universal

contexts (Gulati, 2009). Typically, the deductive research method comprises four phases.

Initially, begin with a pre-existing theory and establish a problem statement (Collis & Hussey,

2009). Next, create a hypothesis that can be proven false based on the theory from the

preceding stage. Then, data will be collected to test the hypothesis (Mollen & Wilson, 2010).

Finally, examine the data and determine whether the null hypothesis can be rejected.

The inductive research approach, distinctive from the deductive research approach,

involves analyzing and generalizing general principles based on observed facts, experiments,

and investigations. This approach is a mode of thinking and a form of reasoning (Goddard &

Melville, 2004). In general, the inductive research approach consists of three stages. First,

describe a picture of the phenomenon through observation, then seek patterns of these kinds

of phenomenon. Finally, develop a theory or general conclusion based on the patterns.

This study examines the behavior of sport consumers on social media platforms. Due

to the strong theoretical foundation for their behaviors, this study adopts deductive reasoning

logic. This study proposed following the social identity theory and consumer engagement

theoretical framework. After conducting a comprehensive literature review of the previous

study on consumer engagement on social media, this study states four research questions and

demonstrates a research model that contains the causality among psychological experience,

online behavior, and offline behavior. By using fans of Chinese professional football leagues

as samples to test whether various causal hypotheses in the model are valid, the study proves a broad causal relationship in the context of sport, providing empirical evidence for sports marketers and researchers.

Research Strategy

Survey research has been widely used in social and psychological research to obtain information from individuals and groups (Singleton et al., 1998). Survey research refers to "the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions" (Check & Schutt, 2011, p. 160). This type of research strategy allows for diverse methods to employ participants, collect data, and apply various instruments.

Historically speaking, survey research focused on gathering data from a wide range of people. The main objective was to quickly gather information about the characteristics of a large group of people who were of interest. This type of survey research would typically involve collecting data on demographics, personal traits, and feedback on consumer products. Examples of such surveys include large-scale census surveys and consumer feedback surveys.

Recently, survey research has evolved into a systematic and rigorous strategy for conducting research. The process of conducting a survey involves the use of scientifically tested strategies to determine the appropriate individuals to include in the research, known as a representative sample. In addition, it also needs to select a method for distributing and collecting data, commonly referred to as the survey method. In order to ensure a high-quality research outcome, it is important to decide when to initiate and follow up with non-responders. Nowadays, the term "survey" has evolved to encompass a variety of research

goals, sampling and recruitment methods, data collection tools, and survey administration techniques (Ponto, 2015).

This study has chosen to conduct survey research due to its numerous advantages. First, survey research is capable of gathering data from a large scale of population. Second, survey research is versatile in terms of the variables they can study, requires minimal investment to develop and administer, and allows for generalizations to be made. Third, survey research has the advantage of eliciting personal attitudes or psychological experiences that cannot be observed directly.

Furthermore, there are two main types of surveys: questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire could be delivered by mail, online, or in person. This study opted for an online questionnaire survey as the target population is specific teams' sport fans, and they are spread across China. As these fans are likely to be active on social media platforms, conducting an online survey allows for direct engagement with the target audience. Besides, an online survey is more cost-effective than traditional methods, which eliminates the need for printing and distributing physical questionnaires. Participants can respond at their own pace and from any location with internet access, leading to faster turnaround times in gathering responses. Since the questionnaire items in this study include the items for negative consumer engagement behavior on social media, respondents may be reluctant to disclose their negative behavior and make responses that do not reflect themselves. An anonymous online survey allows respondents to feel more comfortable providing honest and candid feedback. Additionally, a structured questionnaire applied in this study allows each respondent to receive the same set of questions, promoting consistency in data collection.

Survey research can be conducted by using quantitative methods, such as using numerical values to rate items, qualitative methods, such as asking open-ended questions, or a combination of both, known as mixed methods. The following section demonstrates the method choice of this study.

Research Methods

There are two main research methods, qualitative and quantitative (Alasuutari et al., 2008). Quantitative research is described as "Entailing the collection of numerical data and exhibiting the view of the relationship between theory and research as deductive, a predilection for natural science approach, and as having an objectivist conception of social reality" (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 154). Quantitative research is a "top-down" research process, start form theory and hypothesis. Data is commonly used in quantitative research to describe social phenomena, followed by the collection of evidence to assess and confirm any previously proposed hypothesis, model, or theory (Anol, 2012). Quantitative research involves the use of statistical, mathematical, or computational methods to systematically study observable phenomena. Its focus is on the analysis of numerical measurement variables and their relationships using statistical techniques (Given, 2008).

Qualitative research is described as "a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live" (Holloway & Galvin, 2023, p. 3). The main focus of qualitative research is on the interpretation, definition, characteristics, figurative language, symbols, and portrayals of phenomena rather than the quantification or evaluation of them (Lune & Berg, 2017). The qualitative study investigates

why and how questions to find out the underlying causes and explanations for a phenomenon rather than measuring the frequency of the phenomenon (Berg et al., 2004).

This study utilizes the quantitative method instead of the qualitative method because the quantitative method is well-suited for examining the relationships between variables. In this study, relationships such as the impact of OFCI on both positive and negative consumer engagement behavior on social media, as well as the mediation and moderation effects, can be quantitatively assessed and analyzed. Besides, the large sample size and statistical techniques employed in quantitative research enhance the generalizability of the findings. By surveying a significant number of respondents, the study aims to draw conclusions that can be applied to a broader population of sport fans who engage with their favorite teams on social media. Moreover, the quantitative research enables the comparison of different groups or conditions in this study. The study explores the moderating role of satisfaction with team performance, comparing high-satisfactory conditions to low-satisfactory conditions. This comparative approach helps to uncover nuances in the relationships under different circumstances.

Time Horizon

Surveys can be used in both cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies. Cross-sectional research focuses on a specific phenomenon at a single point in time, whereas longitudinal studies gather data repeatedly over a period of time for the same subjects (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). This study took on a cross-sectional sampling approach, which meant that samples were only measured at a particular point in time, specifically during November 2021. The cross-sectional sampling approach is suitable for several reasons. First,

compared with longitudinal designs, cross-sectional research is more feasible when time and resources are constrained. This study aims to capture data at a specific time period, the COVID-19 period. During that time, the offline contact of sports fans was restricted, and they relied more on online interaction. This particular time period limited the ability to take longitudinal data. Second, cross-sectional designs are suitable when the primary focus is on understanding the relationships between variables at a specific moment in time. In this case, the study aims to explore the relationships between OFCI, positive and negative consumer engagement behavior, overall performance satisfaction to the team, and behavioral intention among Chinese Super League fans during a specific season. Third, this study collects data about sport fans' behavioral intentions, not their actual behavior later in time. Thus, it is reasonable to collect it with other constructs' items. Even though some researchers consider behavioral intention at the former time point cannot exactly represent the actual behavior in the later time point, behavioral intention still can give researchers and marketers some insights into sport fans' behavior in the future.

Data Collection and Sample

In China, as in countries worldwide, COVID-19 affected the cancellation or postponement of numerous events. Additionally, it prevented sport fans from going to the venues. Therefore, online interactions became more imperative because it was imprudent for sport fans to gather and communicate offline. During the 2021 season, the number of spectators in Chinese Super League matches was limited. The first phase of the 2021 season was held from April 20 to May 17 (rounds 1-5) and July 15 to August 15 (rounds 6-14), 2021; the second phase was held from December 12, 2021, to January 4, 2022, with a total of 22

61

rounds of matches in both phases. This study was conducted on November 10–11, 2021, after the end of the first phase of the 2021 season. The study better demonstrated the role of online fan communities and engagement on social media in sport this season.

This study used the online research panel, Tencent Questionnaire, one of the internet service companies in China, to collect the data. The fans of specific Chinese Super League teams (i.e., Guangzhou team, Beijing Guoan team, and Shandong Taishan team) who use Weibo and follow the teams' official Weibo accounts were selected as the population. These three teams were selected because the number of followers on their official Weibo accounts is the top three among the Chinese Super League's teams (Guangzhou team: 7.98 million, Beijing Guoan team: 5.52 million, Shandong Taishan team: 5.43 million).

Questionnaire Design

A structured, self-completed questionnaire was created, which includes three main parts (Appendix B). First, there is a cover at the beginning, containing a brief description of the study and a confidentiality declaration. Then, it comes to the first section of the questionnaire. This section includes demographic information and filter questions relating to sport fans' supportive time and social media use to determine respondent eligibility. The next part is the measurement items of all the variables included in this study, which aims to test the hypotheses developed.

Filter Questions

This study set several screening questions to select the target participants. First, the Internet research corporation Tencent Questionnaire randomly sent an invitation message titled "Chinese Super League XX Team Fan Survey" to panel members. Second, the

participants were asked whether they were fans of a specific sport team and whether they were following the team's official Weibo account. Information on how long respondents have supported the team and when they last followed the team-related news on Weibo was also collected. The subjects who failed the screening questions were eliminated to ensure they were fans of a specific team and were followers of the official Weibo account. Additionally, subjects who completed the questionnaires in less than two minutes were excluded to ensure they read the questions carefully. Furthermore, ages under 18 were excluded to ensure they were competent to answer the questions.

Demographic Information

In this part, the participants were asked to check a box with their gender, age, education, occupation, income, and so on to get a sample profile.

Measurement Scale

There are five constructs in this study, the measurement scale of which was adapted from previous studies. All the items (Table 5.1) were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

Online Fan Community Identification The items of the OFCI construct in the measurement scale were adopted from previous studies (Confente & Kucharska, 2021; Luo et al., 2016). The construct and measurement of community identification are derived from offline circumstances. These items were tested in the context of the online community by these two studies in the general business field, which confirms their applicability.

Consumer Engagement on Social Media Consumer engagement behavior on social media was developed by Dolan et al. (2016). They demonstrated the typologies of the

behavioral manifestations of consumer engagement and provided examples for all kinds of typologies. They divided consumer engagement not only from the valence perspective but also from an intensity perspective. The positive valence of consumer engagement was divided into consuming, positive contribution, and co-creation. The negative valence of consumer engagement was divided into detaching, negative contribution, and co-destruction. This study developed the measurement scale of both positive and negative consumer engagement behavior based on their study and modified it to fit the participants of this study (i.e., active sport fans on social media) in the context of sport.

Satisfaction The overall performance satisfaction construct was obtained from Suh et al. (2013) and modified to fit this study. Originally, there were three items contained in this construct; this study found that the item "the performance of (team name) is excellent" could not reflect the sport fans' satisfaction with the team's performance. Even though the performance is excellent enough, sport fans may feel dissatisfied. The satisfaction level depends on the team's performance and the expectations of sport fans. Therefore, this study eliminated this item; finally, the two items were contained in this construct.

Behavioral Intention The behavioral intention construct was measured using six items developed by Bauer et al. (2008). This study adopted this measurement scale because Bauer et al. (2008) tested the measurement scale of both past and future behaviors in the sport context. This scale describes sport fans' behaviors from stadium visits, media consumption, purchase of merchandise, and wearing club colors. The items about media consumption, "I will often follow reports about my favorite team's players, coaches, managers, etc., in the media," is similar to the measurement of the study's consumer engagement behavior on

social media. This study replaced the item with "I will recommend (team name) game to other people," which was used by other researchers (e.g., De Vries & Carlson, 2014) to make the measurement more comprehensive. Moreover, this item represents an important aspect of behavioral intention, namely word of mouth.

Back Translation

The back translation (Yoshida et al., 2018) was used to ensure the accuracy of the translation of the questionnaire between English and Chinese. First, the author translated the English version of the questionnaire into Chinese, and then two Ph.D. candidates who majored in sport marketing and were fluent in both Chinese and English translated the Chinese version back into English. By comparing their translation content with the original source, these two candidates discussed with the author and made some revisions to the translation of the questionnaire. Finally, the Chinese questionnaire was confirmed (Appendix C). Moreover, the translated Chinese questionnaire was sent to 10 Chinese soccer fans in advance to ensure that the questionnaire was easy to read and understand.

Data Analysis

Sample Profile

Through these procedures, 382 valid subjects (186 from the Guangzhou team, 100 from the Beijing Guoan team, and 96 from the Shandong Taishan team) were obtained. The demographic description can be seen in Table 4.1. Among the 382 respondents, 68.1% were males, and 31.9% were females. Respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 47, with an average age of 25.8. Those with a bachelor's degree or higher accounted for 65.7% of the respondents.

Table 4.1

Demographic Description

Item	Style	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	260	68.10
	Female	122	31.90
Age	18-29	297	0.78
	30-39	73	0.19
	40-49	12	0.03
Occupation	Students	121	31.70
	The government personnel	26	6.80
	Enterprise managers	62	16.20
	Office Staff	83	21.70
	Professionals	32	8.40
	An ordinary worker	13	3.40
	Business service workers	4	1.00
	Self-employed/contractor	10	2.60
	Freelancer	26	6.80
	Agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery workers	2	0.50
	retired	0	0.00
	Unemployed	3	0.80
Education	Junior high or below	3	0.80
	Senior high school or technical school	39	10.20
	Associate Degree	89	23.30
	Bachelor's degree	230	60.20
	Master's degree	19	5.00
	PhD or above	2	0.50
Income	2000 yuan or less	68	17.80
	2001-4000 yuan	73	19.10
	4001-6000 yuan	87	22.70
	6001-8000 yuan	60	15.70
	8001-10000yuan	46	12.00
	More than 10000	35	9.10
	It's not easy to reveal	13	3.40
	Total	382	100.00

Approximately 90% of the respondents used social media platforms (i.e., Weibo) to follow their favorite teams within two weeks (Table 4.2). Specifically, 36.1% of the respondents follow the information about their favorite team on Weibo within three days; 38.2% of the respondents follow their favorite teams' news on Weibo within a week. In regard to the time length of they support the sport team, most of the respondents (45.6%) support the time more than one year and less than three years. 34.3% of the respondents support the team more than three years and less than six years. Only 4 respondents support the team more than nine years.

Table 4.2

Sport Fans Consumer Behavior Description

Item	Style	Frequency	Percent
The last time following the teams' news on Weibo	Within three days	138	36.10
	Within a week	146	38.20
	Within two weeks	57	14.90
	More than two weeks	41	10.70
Support Time	$x \leq 1$ year	50	13.10
	1 year$<x \leq 3$ years	174	45.60
	3 years$<x \leq 6$ years	131	34.30
	6 years$<x \leq 9$ years	23	6.20
	$x > 9$years	4	1.10
	Total	382	100.00

Analysis of Measurement Model

A three-step procedure was undertaken to examine the measurement model and test the hypotheses. First, the descriptive analysis was conducted, and the means and standard

deviations of each item in every construct were computed by IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0. Next,

the CFA of the measurement model was tested by using both IBM SPSS Amos 28.0 and IBM

SPSS Statistics 26.0 in order to analyze the overall measurement model fit. The construct

reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were examined. Finally, Hayes'

PROCESS macro model (Hayes, 2018) in IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 was used to test the

mediating and moderating effects.

Chapter 5. Research Results

The findings of this study were mainly composed of three parts. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to ensure the item reliability and construct validity of the measurement model. Second, the mediating effect of both positive and negative consumer engagement behavior on the relationship between OFCI and behavioral intention was tested. Finally, the moderating effect of overall performance satisfaction in the model was examined.

Assessment of the Measurement Model

As revealed in Table 5.1, CFA was used to ensure the psychometric properties of the items. The overall goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi2/df$=3.25, RMSEA=0.08, SRMR=0.06, CFI=0.93, TLI=0.92) indicated that the measurement model had an acceptable structure validity (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The results indicated that the factor loadings of all 19 items varied from 0.64 to 0.91, possessing significant, standardized factor loadings ($\lambda > 0.6$). Additionally, construct reliability for all constructs above the value of 0.6 was accepted in the literature as indicative of internal consistency (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs was above 0.5 (Table 5.2), indicating good convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Almost all the squared correlations between variables were lower than the AVE (Table 5.3), except for the squared correlation between positive consumer engagement behavior and behavioral intention, which was slightly higher than the AVE. It demonstrated that the discriminant validity was acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5.1

Variables, Their Description, and Summary Statistic

Construct	Variables	Item	M	SD	λ
Online fan community identification	OFCI1	I see myself as a part of the (team name) online community	5.8	1.1	0.76
	OFCI2	If (team name) community members planned something, I'd think of it as something "we" would do rather than something "they" do	5.8	1.2	0.72
	OFCI3	When someone praises this (team name) community, it feels like a personal compliment	5.8	1.2	0.75
Positive consumer engagement behavior on social media	P_CEB1	I often 'like' content related to (team name) on Weibo	5.8	1.1	0.66
	P_CEB2	I often 'share' content related to (team name) on my own Weibo page or with my friends	5.3	1.5	0.79
	P_CEB3	I often initiate posts related to (team name) on my Weibo page	5.1	1.6	0.79
	P_CEB4	I often add hashtags, or Weibo's Chaohua (super topics) on my posts related to (team name) on Weibo	5.3	1.6	0.78
Negative consumer engagement behavior on social media	N_CEB1	I often comment negatively posts, videos, images related to (team name) on Weibo	3.6	2.4	0.78
	N_CEB2	I often publicly rate (team name) performance negatively on Weibo	3	2.4	0.92
	N_CEB3	I often post pictures or photos, GIFs, and videos of team turnovers on my Weibo account	3.4	2.4	0.79
	N_CEB4	I initiate adverse social media accounts (e.g., 'I hate (team name)') for fellow community members to join	2.7	2.3	0.91
Behavioral Intention	BI1	I will attend games of (team name) live in the stadium	5.8	1.3	0.78
	BI2	I will watch games of (team name) on TV	5.9	1.1	0.64
	BI3	I will purchase a lot of club-related merchandise	5.5	1.3	0.84
	BI4	I will wear the colors and/or the logo of (team name)	5.5	1.3	0.77
	BI5	I will participate in the discussions about (team name)	5.8	1.2	0.83
	BI6	I will recommend (team name) game to other people	5.7	1.2	0.79
Overall Performance Satisfaction	OPS1	Overall, I am satisfied with the performance of (team name)	5.9	1.1	0.83
	OPS2	The performance of (team name) met my expectations	5.7	1.1	0.81

Note. M = mean score; SD = standard deviation; λ = standardized factor loading.

Table 5.2

Convergent Validity

Construct	AVE	CR
Online fan community identification	0.55	0.79
Positive consumer engagement behavior on social media	0.58	0.84
Negative consumer engagement behavior on social media	0.72	0.91
Behavioral Intention	0.60	0.90
Overall Performance Satisfaction	0.67	0.80
Fit Indices: $\chi 2/df$=3.25, RMSEA=0.08, SRMR=0.06, CFI=0.93, TLI=0.92.		

Note. AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index.

Table 5.3

Discriminant Validity

Variables	OFCI	P-CEB	N-CEB	OPS	BI
OFCI	**.55**				
P-CEB	.51	**.58**			
N-CEB	.07	.16	**.72**		
OPS	.42	.36	.03	**.67**	
BI	.48	.61	.05	.40	**.60**

Note. The diagonal (in bold) shows the average variance extracted value for each variable. The squared correlations are under the diagonal. OFCI = online fan community identification; BI = behavioral intention; P-CEB = positive consumer engagement behavior on social media; N-CEB = negative consumer engagement behavior on social media; OPS = overall performance satisfaction.

Assessment of the Mediating Model

The first hypotheses (H1, H2a, H2b, H3a, and H3b) were tested using Hayes'

PROCESS macro model 4 (double mediation) (Hayes, 2018) in IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0.

OFCI and sport fans' behavioral intentions were measured as the independent and dependent variables, respectively. Positive and negative consumer engagement behavior were used as the mediators. Duration of being a fan, age, and gender were employed as the control variables. A bootstrap analysis using 5,000 samples with a 95% confidence interval was employed to run the mediating model. The results (Table 5.4) indicated that OFCI could predict sport fans' behavioral intention significantly ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < .001$). Moreover, after adding positive and negative consumer engagement behavior, OFCI had a significant effect on behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < .001$). H1 was supported. OFCI had a significant and positive effect on positive consumer engagement behavior ($\beta = 0.67$, $p < .001$); thus, H2a was supported. Positive consumer engagement behavior significantly and positively affected behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.59$, $p < .001$). Conversely, OFCI had a significant and positive effect on negative consumer engagement behavior ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < .05$); thus, H3a was supported. Negative consumer engagement behavior significantly and negatively affected behavioral intention ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < .001$). Generally, the results of the indirect effect demonstrated that positive consumer engagement behavior positively mediated the impact of OFCI on behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.40$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.32, 0.50]). The coefficient of the indirect effect via positive consumer engagement behavior was 0.4 ($SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.32, 0.50]), which was larger than the direct effect ($\beta = 0.29$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.21, 0.38]) of OFCI on behavioral intention (Table 5.4). Negative consumer engagement behavior played a negative mediating role between OFCI and behavioral intention ($\beta = -0.03$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.05, -0.01]). The coefficient of the indirect effect via negative consumer engagement behavior was -0.03 ($SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.05, -0.01]); the absolute value of the

coefficient was lower than the direct effect (β = 0.29, SE = 0.04, 95% CI [0.21, 0.38]) of

OFCI on behavioral intention (Table 5.4). Therefore, H2b and H3b were supported.

Table 5.4

Mediating Effect of P-CEB and N-CEB

Constructs	Dependent variables							
	BI		BI		P-CEB		N-CEB	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
OFCI	0.29	6.69***	0.65	17.58***	0.67	18.68***	0.21	4.34***
P-CEB	0.59	12.85***						
N-CEB	-0.14	-4.04***						
DBF	0.09	2.31*	0.16	3.65***	0.17	4.07***	0.21	3.63***
gender	-0.07	-2.11*	-0.09	-2.43*	-0.08	-2.25*	-0.18	-3.59***
age	-0.03	-0.86	-0.03	-0.59	0.01	0.19	-0.01	-0.16
R-sq	0.66		0.52		0.55		0.16	
F	123.37		99.98		116.08		18.35	

Direct and indirect effect	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Total effect	0.67	0.04	0.59	0.74
Indirect effect of P-CEB	0.40	0.05	0.32	0.50
Indirect effect of N-CEB	-0.03	0.01	-0.05	-0.01
Direct effect of OFCI	0.29	0.04	0.21	0.38

Note. ***$p < .001$，**$p < .01$，*$p < .05$; β = standardized coefficient; SE = standard error; LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval. OFCI = online fan community identification; BI = behavioral intention; P-CEB = positive consumer engagement on social media; N-CEB = negative consumer engagement on social media; DBF = duration of being a fan.

Assessment of the Moderated Mediating Model

Hayes' PROCESS macro model 8 (double mediation) (Hayes, 2018) was used to test

the moderated mediation effects. The analytic process was the same as that for the assessment

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of the mediation effects, except for including general performance satisfaction as the moderator. The results indicated that, in terms of positive consumer engagement behavior, the direct effect of OFCI was significant (B = 0.65, SE = 0.05, p < .001), as shown in Table 5.5. The interaction effect between OFCI and satisfaction was significant (B = 0.15, SE = 0.04, p < .001). Specifically, the conditional effects at the moderator values indicated that OFCI had a larger effect on positive consumer engagement behavior in the high-satisfactory condition, compared with the low-satisfactory condition (Figure 5.1). Thus, H4a was supported. The direct effect of OFCI on negative consumer engagement behavior was significant (B = 0.51, SE = 0.14, p < .001); however, the interaction effect between OFCI and satisfaction was not significant. Thus, satisfaction did not moderate the effect between OFCI and negative consumer engagement behavior. Thus, H4b was not supported. All three variables (i.e., OFCI, positive consumer engagement behavior, and negative consumer engagement behavior) had a significant direct effect on behavioral intention. Moreover, the interaction effect between OFCI and satisfaction was significant. The conditional effects at the moderator values indicated that OFCI had a larger effect on behavioral intention in the high-satisfactory condition than in the low-satisfactory condition (Figure 5.2). Therefore, H4c was supported.

Table 5.5

Effect of OFCI×OPS on BI via P-CEB and N-CEB

Constructs	P-CEB (mediator)			N-CEB (mediator)			BI		
	B	SE	*t*	*B*	SE	*t*	*B*	SE	*t*
Constant	5.06	0.25	20.47***	3.41	0.62	5.46***	3.70	0.27	13.90***
OFCI	0.65	0.05	12.06***	0.51	0.14	3.74***	0.23	0.05	4.81***
P-CEB							0.43	0.04	10.84***
N-CEB							-0.06	0.02	-3.86***
OPS	0.33	0.05	6.19***	0.01	0.13	0.06	0.22	0.04	5.21***
OFCI*OPS	0.15	0.04	4.15***	0.18	0.09	1.87	0.07	0.03	2.40*
DBF	0.09	0.02	3.71***	0.22	0.06	3.57***	0.04	0.02	2.25*
gender	-0.18	0.09	-2.03*	-0.74	0.23	-3.29**	-0.15	0.07	-2.22*
age	0.01	0.01	1.00	0.00	0.02	0.03	-0.00	0.01	-0.27
R-sq	0.60			0.17			0.69		
F	93.74			12.90			102.40		

Note. ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$; B = non-standardized coefficient; SE = standard error. OFCI = online fan community identification; BI = behavioral intention; P-CEB = positive consumer engagement behavior on social media; N-CEB = negative consumer engagement behavior on social media; OPS = overall performance satisfaction; DBF = duration of being a fan.

Figure 5.1

Interaction Effect of OFCI and OPS on Positive CEB
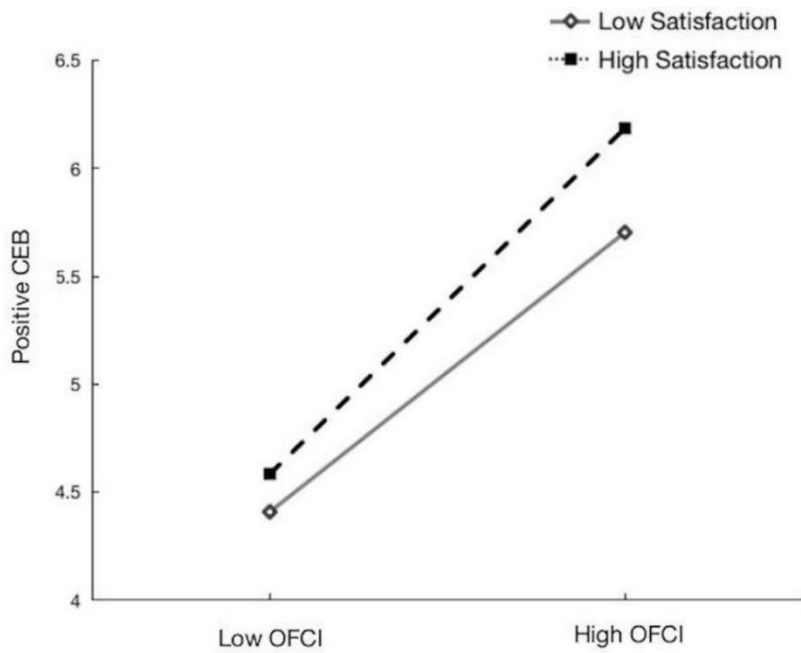
Figure 5.2

Interaction Effect of OFCI and OPS on Behavioral Intention
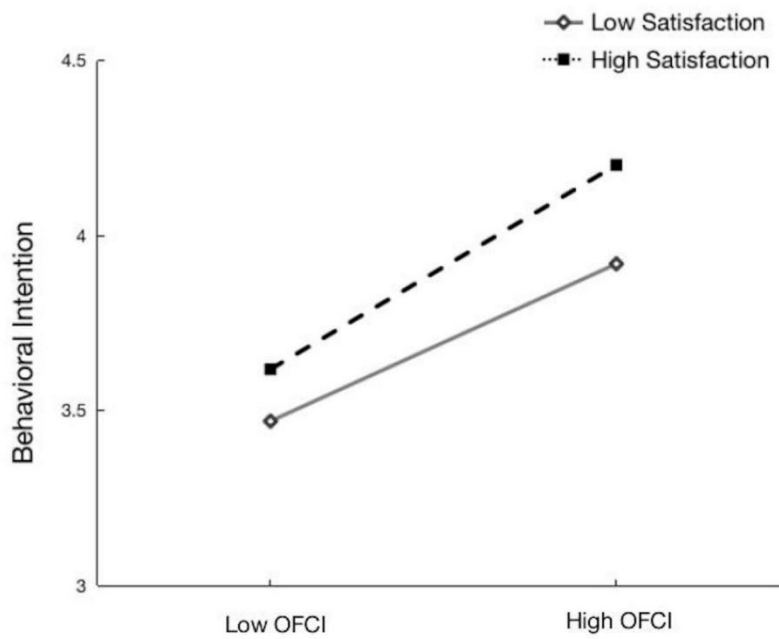
Chapter 6. Discussion

The findings of this study suggest the mediation role of both positive and negative consumer engagement behavior in the association between sport fans' OFCI and behavioral intention. Additionally, the study also explored the moderating role of overall performance satisfaction in the association between OFCI and consumer engagement behavior, as well as the relationship between OFCI and behavioral intention. In the subsequent subsection, several contributions to the body of literature and practice are illustrated.

Theoretical Implications

The present findings add empirical evidence in terms of the negative valence of consumer engagement behavior in the literature. It represents one of the first studies, to our knowledge, to provide a detailed explanation regarding both positive and negative valences of consumer engagement behavior and how they mediate the relationship between OFCI and offline behavior. Accordingly, the current study has some theoretical contributions in the context of sport fans' behavior.

First, this study develops the conceptualization to apply the negative valence of consumer engagement behavior to the context of sport. It focuses more on sport fans who are part of the online fan community. Previous studies investigating negative consumer engagement behavior (Dessart et al., 2020; Popp et al., 2016) paid more attention to fans of anti-brand communities, whose engagement behaviors are likely to be different from those of the fans in the present study. Anti-community fans are individuals who do not identify with the online fan community and may hold negative attitudes toward the sport organization or its fans. It is noteworthy that fans in the online fan community may engage in negative consumer

engagement behavior with different motivations relative to anti-community fans. Since these two groups of fans have different emotional connections to the sports organization, fans in the online fan community may be less motivated to promote negative content or activities, and they sometimes express negative consumer engagement behavior unconsciously.

Furthermore, the results provide evidence that OFCI plays a significant role in associating with both positive and negative consumer engagement behavior. Previous studies focused on the relationship of OFCI with the positive side of social media-related consumer engagement behavior (Yoshida et al., 2018) and consumer engagement (Liu et al., 2019), although the scholars did not examine the impact of OFCI on negative consumer engagement behavior. In contrast, the findings of this study suggest that fans with high OFCI are more likely to express their negative attitudes on social media. Differing from anti-community fans (Popp et al., 2016), these fans support the target team as well as manifest negative consumer engagement behavior simultaneously. These fans are essential because they are more knowledgeable about the team, and their negative consumer engagement behavior can provide hints to improve the team's service. The phenomenon corresponds to Rissanen and Luoma-Aho's (2016) study, which demonstrated that negative consumer engagement is displayed by highly identified and interested customers. According to the social identity theory, sport fans in online fan communities tend to distinguish themselves from others out of the group by generating online engagement behavior. Accordingly, the negative consumer engagement behavior can exhibit sport fans' deep concern and sense of belonging to their team. The findings contribute to the limited knowledge in the field, especially regarding the relationship between high social identification and negative consumer engagement behavior.

Moreover, the study examines the mediating role of both the positive and negative valence of consumer engagement behavior concurrently. This study contributes to the social identity theory by demonstrating the effect of OFCI on consumers' both online and offline behavior. Initially, social identity theory is used to explain the process of offline identification to online behavior. Consumers who identify with the team tend to create their own profiles on social media and manifest team-related behavior to support their personal identity (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). This study found that online identification could affect offline behavior. Moreover, this process could be mediated by online behavior, which indicates that online behavior could enhance or reduce the identification with the focal objects. The relationship between sport fans and the team can be reinforced through positive consumer engagement behavior on social media and deteriorated through negative consumer engagement behavior on social media. By positively engaging on social media, sport fans obtain self-esteem that discriminates against other similar teams. Self-esteem decreases when sport fans negatively engage on social media. These consumer engagement behaviors further affect sport fans' offline behavior.

In addition, the present study confirms that sport fans' positive consumer engagement behavior has a strong and positive impact on offline behavioral intention (Santos et al., 2019). Even though previous researchers concerned sport fans' negative consumer engagement behavior is detrimental behavior to the brand (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014), there is a lack of empirical studies to test the hypothesis or find out whether negative consumer engagement behavior has the same strength associated with behavioral intention as positive consumer engagement behavior. This study provides significant empirical evidence for the negative

relation between negative consumer engagement behavior and offline behavioral intention. Additionally, the parameter of the negative mediating effect of negative consumer engagement behavior is much less than the positive mediating effect of positive consumer engagement behavior on behavioral intention. These results suggest that either positive or negative consumer engagement on social media plays a key role in influencing offline behavioral intention, whereas positive consumer engagement behavior may be more influential than negative consumer engagement behavior. The process from online identification to online behavior and, finally, offline behavior is further identified by examining the mediation model, thus emphasizing the critical role of social media in relationship marketing.

Finally, this study contributes to the consumer behavior literature in the sport context by examining the interaction effect of OFCI and overall performance satisfaction on positive consumer engagement behavior, negative consumer engagement behavior, and behavioral intention, which received limited attention in previous research. Previous research has found that winning teams' posts have more "likes" and positive comments (i.e., positive consumer engagement behavior) than losing teams (Devlin & Sheehan, 2018). It is reasonable to believe that losing teams' posts could have more negative responses from consumers. However, the results demonstrate that overall performance satisfaction did not have an impact on the relationship between OFCI and negative consumer engagement behavior. These results indicate that sport fans are not as rational as other industries' consumers compared with mainstream consumers (Lupinek, 2019) because they may not behave based on historical experience (i.e., overall performance satisfaction with previous games). It is

common that when consumers perceive unsatisfied with products or services, such as disappointment and service failure, they have a high passion for expressing their negative consumer engagement behavior on social networking sites (Azer & Alexander, 2020). For example, they may warn other actors not to buy the product or express regret for choosing a service provider. However, because the game results of a match are uncertain, fans continue to support their team in the hope that their team will win next time. This suggests that marketing in sport is unique in its own right, even though most of the theoretical and literary basis is derived from mainstream business. Previous research demonstrated that satisfaction affects positive consumer engagement behavior (Van Doorn et al., 2010); this study provides new insights into that satisfaction with teams' performance is not always the antecedent of negative consumer engagement behavior.

The results of the moderating model also provide a deeper understanding of the negative side of social identity. The group consumers identify with is not always neutral. Based on one of the most important behaviors triggered by social identity, namely social comparison, there are both high-status groups and low-status groups (Trepte & Loy, 2017). For example, a good-performing team is considered to have a higher status than a low-performing team. According to social identity theory, individuals are driven to attain a favorable social identity. As a result, individuals who belong to less privileged groups will strive to enhance the social status of their group. When the social status of the group becomes worse, consumers have three main reactions: first, individual mobility; second, collective action; and third, socially creative (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019).

In this study's context, when the team is not performing well, the team's group could be seen as a low-status group. In the low satisfaction condition, sport fans also have three choices. First, they can seek entrance to other good-performing teams. Second, they can discover whether this team has the potential to increase its performance next season by understanding the team's training schedule and player adjustments. Third, they can change the comparison team or dimension of comparison, for example, comparing the team to another worse team. Therefore, when sport fans are not satisfied with the team's performance, they are less likely to manifest more negative consumer engagement behavior. Compared with manifesting negative consumer engagement behavior on social media, consumers are more likely to manifest positive consumer engagement behavior to help maintain the status of the team's group. Otherwise, they could also join other teams. Thus, dissatisfaction with the team's performance does not necessarily lead to more negative consumer engagement.

Managerial Implications

This study enhances the managerial understanding of the effect of sport fans' online identification and behavior on offline behavior by providing the direct and indirect effects of OFCI on sport fans' offline behavior via positive and negative valences of consumer engagement behavior.

Based on the results, both OFCI and positive consumer engagement behavior are antecedents of sport fans' behavioral intention, such as purchase intention, recommendation intention, and attendance intention. Therefore, it is expedient for sport clubs to prioritize building and maintaining a vibrant online fan community on social media. This includes giving fans some signs of fandom, managing the mission of the community (Martínez-López

et al., 2017), engaging with fans on social media, and tailoring content to meet their specific needs and interests (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2018). By implementing these strategies, sport clubs could increase the sense of belongingness and positive experiences of fans in the online fan community and ultimately improve their behavioral intention towards the sport (Yoshida et al., 2018). For example, consumers expect community organizers to provide information and share control over it with them, just like other members, but without taking advantage of their status. Therefore, it is wise to properly manage the mission of the community to win the fans' trust and have a positive experience in the community.

Additionally, the indirect effect of OFCI on behavioral intention via the positive valence of consumer engagement behavior is larger than the direct effect. These results further highlighted the prominence of positive consumer engagement behavior on the relationship between OFCI and behavioral intention. Consequently, while enhancing OFCI, sport marketers must be attentive to transforming sport fans' identification with online fan communities into positive online behavior (i.e., positive consumer engagement behavior). This can be achieved by hosting online contests or polls, conducting Q&A sessions with players or coaches, and regularly posting interactive content that encourages fans to share their opinions and engage with each other. Furthermore, sport organizations should recognize and reward fans who frequently engage with their content, as this will further incentivize fans to participate and contribute to the online fan community (Kaur et al., 2020). Ultimately, cultivating social media engagement behaviors among fans can lead to increased loyalty and positive behaviors toward the sport teams, which can translate into increased revenue and brand recognition for the organizations.

Conversely, negative consumer engagement behavior negatively mediates the effect of OFCI on behavioral intention. Concerning negative consumer engagement behavior, managers can improve it by understanding the specific causes and having a clear plan in place for responding to negative comments or feedback in a timely and professional manner. It is also worth noting that while negative consumer engagement behavior has a negative mediating impact on the relationship between OFCI and behavioral intention, the effect is not very large. In fact, encouraging fans to engage in online interaction may be a better choice compared to those consumers who do not engage at all. Managers can understand consumers more intuitively through social media, whether it is positive consumer engagement behavior or negative consumer engagement behavior, it will provide reference information for the manager's subsequent marketing strategies. In addition, positive consumer engagement behavior has been used to assess the return on investment of social media (Fisher, 2009); negative consumer engagement behavior should also be considered when assessing the effectiveness of a social media strategy.

The results of the moderated mediation model suggest that sport fans' negative online behavior would not be affected by their satisfactory conditions. Sport fans with high OFCI will not increase their negative engagement with teams on social media even if they are dissatisfied with the teams' historical performance, which appears to be the buffer against fair-weather fans (Norris et al., 2015). Therefore, a well-run online fan community can help turn some fair-weather fans into loyal fans.

Although the effect of OFCI on negative consumer engagement behavior is not significantly moderated by overall performance satisfaction, the effect of OFCI on positive

consumer engagement behavior is significantly moderated by it. For sport teams that are not performing well, positive consumer engagement behavior should be given greater priority over negative consumer engagement behavior, as negative consumer engagement behavior is almost identical to that for well-performing teams. Sport teams should focus more on promoting positive consumer engagement behavior by providing high-quality content, engaging with fans in a positive way, and offering exclusive promotions or rewards to fans in order to maintain a good relationship with them. Sport teams with good performance should exploit their relatively high level of positive consumer engagement behavior and consider managing negative comments or feedback on social media platforms to maintain positive relationships with fans. Consequentially, sport managers should devote more resources to relationship marketing on social media, specifically for poor-performing and unsatisfied teams.

Chapter 7. Limitations and Conclusion

In this chapter, the limitations and future research directions are pointed out first. Then, we conclude the whole dissertation at the end.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, data were collected only from fans of three Chinese Super League teams on Weibo, which constrained the application of the model in the context of other countries' cultures and other social media platforms. Studying the fans of Chinese Super League teams would be better because the three teams used in this study have relatively good team performance. Additionally, sport fans in other countries use social media, such as Twitter (X) and Facebook, rather than Weibo, and the differences in social media may influence the results of this study. Fans with different cultural backgrounds may express different online behaviors on social media, which requires consideration in future research. Besides, since the data were collected from sport fans who already followed the team's official Weibo account, their online fan community identification is relatively high. The results for those who do not have a high level of identification with the online community may be different. Second, this study only focused on the fans of the three teams' official accounts. The accounts of sport stars may have a greater influence (Ferreira et al., 2022). Sport fans engage with teams and players of the teams on social media. Some fans only identified with their favorite player and would switch teams if their favorite player transferred to the other club. Therefore, identification with sport players' accounts may be an essential factor in the study of online behavior on social media.

This study only discussed the two valences of consumer engagement on social media, whereas some researchers considered consumer engagement to include three valences: positive, neutral, and negative. Future studies could include the neutral valence of consumer engagement on social media in the survey when they focus on the valence perspective of consumer engagement. In addition, this study measured the social media engagement behavior exclusively from the valence perspective. Future studies could expand the research by splitting this construct from the perspective of intensity and exploring the antecedents and consequences of social media engagement behavior with different intensities. Furthermore, OFCI only explained 16% of the variance in negative consumer engagement behavior. Thus, other factors that affect negative consumer engagement behavior must be explored. Although this study tested the moderation effect of satisfaction, more moderators, such as fans' personal characteristics and content and type of teams' posts, must be examined. Furthermore, sport fans in China are an under-researched group, and there is a need for a study featuring probing research questions instead of the obvious hypotheses. In this manner, this dataset could offer more profound insights.

Conclusion

Despite several limitations, this dissertation contributed to sport marketing literature by finding out the process from online psychological experience to offline behavior via online consumer engagement behavior. Consumer engagement has been identified as an essential topic to help researchers understand consumer behavior in increasingly complex and collaborative environments. Nevertheless, there is not a thorough scoping review of consumer engagement on social media in the context of sport. Some of the researchers even

eliminated the context of sport when they reviewed the consumer engagement-related literature.

Due to the unique relationship between sport consumers and the focal objects they are engaged in (e.g., sport teams) (Vale & Ferandes, 2017), it is worthwhile to have a thorough review of the sport marketing literature investigating consumer engagement on social media. In the stage of the literature review, we examined the current literature on consumer engagement on social media in the context of sport in order to have a deep understanding of the research area and discover research gaps in the sport marketing field. A scoping review was conducted to reach these goals, which provided an integrated overview of the definition of consumer engagement on social media in the context of sport and summarized the antecedents and consequences of consumer engagement on social media.

According to the scoping review, in the sports marketing field, most research on consumer engagement on social media defined consumer engagement from the positive valence; only three articles in the scoping review mentioned the negative valence of consumer engagement on social media. This indicates that the negative valence of consumer engagement on social media still needs to be explored in future studies in the context of sport. Moreover, it has been found that identification with the community is one of the essential antecedents of consumer engagement on social media. Behavioral intentions are a common consequence of consumer engagement on social media.

Therefore, this study proposed a research model. In this model, OFCI is the independent variable, and behavioral intention is the dependent variable. Since it was unclear about the negative valence of consumer engagement in the process between OFCI and offline

behavioral intention. This research tested the mediating effect of both positive and negative consumer engagement behavior on social media between OFCI and behavioral intention. Rare research examined the effect of satisfaction with the team performance during this process. This study used the overall satisfaction of the team's performance as the moderator variable. The data was collected from 382 football fans of the Chinese Super League on Weibo to test the research model. The demographic information was collected first, and then their OFCI, consumer engagement behavior on Weibo, satisfaction, and behavior intentions were collected by self-report questionnaire. This study applied CFA to ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement model. After that, this study used PROCESS macro to analyze the mediating and moderating effects.

The results of this study suggested that positive consumer engagement behavior had a positive mediating effect between OFCI and behavioral intention, and negative engagement behavior had a negative mediating effect between these two constructs. This result expands the literature on two valences of consumer engagement, especially the negative side. Besides, it was found that overall performance satisfaction moderated the effect of OFCI on positive consumer engagement and the effect of OFCI on behavioral intention. The effects of OFCI were stronger under high satisfaction conditions than under low satisfaction conditions. However, overall performance satisfaction did not moderate the effect of OFCI on negative consumer engagement behavior. This result demonstrates that sport fans are unique in their own right, which provides new insights into sport marketing research.

In conclusion, this dissertation summarized the literature on consumer engagement on social media in depth. It also synthesizes the research in this area in the context of sport by

scoping review. Then, it found some research gaps in this field and filled in the gaps by

conducting survey research in China.

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Appendix A

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
S1 Lim J.S., Hwang Y., Kim S., Biocca F.A.	2015 United States	social media engagement	NM	social presence theory	2014 Sochi Winter Olympics	social TV in South Korea	quantitative research: survey
S2 Tiago T., Tiago F., Faria S.D., Couto J.P.	2016 Portugal	fan engagement	NM	NM	Six athletes	Twitter and Facebook	quantitative research: content analysis
S3 Achen R.M.	2016 United States	Facebook engagement	NM	relationship marketing theory	NBA	Facebook	quantitative research: survey
S4 Achen R.M.	2017 United States	social media engagement	NM	relationship marketing theory; service-dominant (S-D) logic	NM	NM	qualitative research: conceptual paper
S5 Kim J.K., Hull K.	2017 United States	fan engagement	"The intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with the organization's offerings and/or organizational activities, which	uses and gratification theory	MLB	Instagram	mixed method research: qualitative

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
			either the customer or organization initiate" (Vivek et al., 2012, p. 127).				content analysis; quantitative content analysis
S6 Vale L., Fernandes T.	2018 Portugal	engagement on social media	A behavioural construct with hierarchical activity levels, from passive message consumption (e.g., viewing videos and pictures, reading product reviews) to active content contributing which includes two-way conversation, participation and online recommendation (e.g., responding to comments and other SNS posts, posting one's own product reviews, uploading user-created videos and pictures) (Tsai & Men, 2017, p. 6).	COBRA ('Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities'); uses and gratification theory	Professional clubs of one of the top five European football leagues according to the latest 2011– 2016 UEFA rankings.	Facebook	quantitative research: survey
S7 Yoshida M., Gordon B.S., Nakazawa M. Shibuya S., Fujiwara N.	2018 Japan	brand related SocME	An individual's voluntary contribution to the interaction between his or her favorite brand and other fellow brand users by sharing, activating, and co-creating information related to the brand.	social identity theory; customer engagement; self-determinatio n theory; brand equity	Japanese professional sport：the Japan Professional Football League (J. League) and Nippon	Japanese professional sport teams' official social media sites	quantitative research: survey

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
S8 Alonso-Dos-Santos M., Rejón Guardia F., Pérez Campos C., Calabuig-Moreno F., Ko Y.J.	2018 Spain	engagement in the VBC	NM	social identity theory; theory of image transfer	Professional Baseball (NPB). A professional soccer team in Scotiabank National Opening Championship (Chile) during the 2016/2017 opening tournament.	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube	quantitative research: survey
S9 Devlin M., Sheehan K.	2018 United States	social media engagement	NM	appraisal theory	32 NFL teams	Facebook	mixed method research: qualitative content analysis; quantitative content analysis

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
S10 Anagnostopou los C., Parganas P., Chadwick S., Fenton A.	2018 Norway	fan engagement	In the social media space, engagement often refers to a consumer 'taking some action beyond viewing or reading' (Paine, 2011, p. 60).	NM	Two EPL teams, namely Liverpool FC (LFC) and Manchester United (MU).	Instagram	mixed method research: qualitative content analysis; quantitative content analysis
S11 Maderer D., Parganas P., Anagnostopou los C.	2018 Germany	fan engagement	NM	brand equity	The two most valuable football brands from the top-tier leagues of England, Spain, Germany, Italy, and France.	Facebook and Twitter	mixed method research: qualitative content analysis; quantitative content analysis
S12 Herrera D., Valerio G., Rodríguez-Ac eves L.	2018 Mexico	digital engagement	The intensity of the relationship between sports fans and sports, teams and athletes is defined by fan engagement, which is a specific form of brand engagement in the sports context (Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa, & Biscaia, 2014). Digital engagement is manifested in	social identity theory; BIRG (Basking in Reflected Glory) and CORF (Cutting off Reflected Failure)	20 teams participating in the Football Premier League during the 2013-2014 season	Facebook	quantitative research: content analysis; sentiment analysis; ANOVA

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
			fan reactions depending on the characteristics and contents of shared material on the web (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013).				
S13 Osokin, N	2019 Russia	online engagement	Online engagement may be characterized as "a cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value (Mollen & Wilson, 2010).	uses and gratification theory	49 teams of UEFA	Facebook	mixed method research: content analysis; regression
S14 Santos T.O., Correia A., Biscaia R., Pegoraro A.	2019 Brazil	fan engagement through SNS	Consumer engagement refers to "the intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiates" (Vivek et al., 2012, p. 133). Fan engagement is framed as an extra-role in non-transactional behaviours, and refers to the fan experiences with the team, the value co-creation	consumer engagement	Portuguese football professional teams	Facebook	quantitative research: survey

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
			stimulated by the team and the relationship shared with fans of the same team within the online context.				
S15 Aichner T.	2019 Saudi Arabia	user engagement	Customer engagement is a cognitive, affective, behavioural and social construct that managers view as a combination of behavioural responses, i.e., action, with an emotional context (Vivek et al., 2012).	social impact theory	Real Madrid CF, FC Bayern München, Manchester United, Juventus FC	Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter	mixed method research: content analysis; ANOVA
S16 Zanini M.T., Carbone de Moraes F., Lima V., Migueles C., Lourenco C., Reis Irigaray H.A.	2019 Brazil	consumer engagement	(1) Actor engagement (Brodie et al., 2019): "Engagement occurs among different types of versatile actors, not just customers, and consumers. Actors can be defined as humans or collections of humans, such as organizations, who are involved in the logic of human exchange systems – including economy and society – and who are typically categorized according to their discrete roles and functions";	NM	The São Paulo FC	Twitter	mixed method research: qualitative content analysis; quantitative content analysis

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
			(2) Consumer engagement in virtual brand communities (Brodie et al., 2013): "Specific interactive experiences between consumers, the brand, and other community members"; (3) Customer brand engagement (Hollebeek, 2011): "The client's level of motivation with the brand, being context dependent with regard to cognitive, emotional and behavioral impairment during interactions with the brand"; (4) Customer engagement behavior (Van Doorn et al., 2010): "Behavioral manifestation of a customer, going beyond the buying process and resulting in word-of-mouth, recommendations, help to other customers, blog posts and reviews"; (5) CE (Vivek, 2009): "The intensity of participation and connection of an individual with the offers of an organization and its activities initiated by the clients or				

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
			even organization."				
S17 M L. Naraine , Henry T. Wear, Damien J. Whitburn	2019 Australia	user engagement	NM	relationship marketing	Toronto Raptors, Toronto Blue Jays, Toronto Maple Leafs, and Toronto FC.	Twitter	quantitative research: content analysis
S18 Na S., Kunkel T., Doyle J.	2020 United States	social media engagement	NM	signalling theory	MLS	Twitter	quantitative research: experimental research

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
S19 Machado J.C., Martins C.C., Ferreira F.C., Silva S.C., Duarte P.A.	2020 Portugal	consumer engagement	Consumer-brand engagement involves "customers' behavioural manifestations that have a brand or a firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers" (vanDoorn et al., 2010, p. 254).	NM	Futebol Clube do Porto (FCP)	Facebook and Instagram	quantitative research: survey
S20 Chmait N., Westerbeek H., Eime R., Robertson S., Sellitto C., Reid M.	2020 Australia	social media engagement	We refer to social media engagement associated with a tennis player as "the total number of, original and shared, posts or comments mentioning that player on social media platforms".	theories of superstardom	84 professional (male and female) tennis players during the 2019 Australian Open grand slam.	Twitter, Facebook Instagram and YouTube	quantitative research: content analysis
S21 Cazorla Milla A., Mataruna-Dos -Santos L.J., Helú H.M.	2020 United Arab Emirates	consumer engagement	NM	NM	Paralympic Channels and Olympic Channels of PyeongChang Winter Olympics	Twitter, Facebook and YouTube	quantitative research: content analysis
S22 Sreepada V., Bagchi A.	2020 India	social media engagement	NM	NM	Football leagues	Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter	quantitative research: survey

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
S23 Pegoraro, A., Kennedy, H., Agha, N., Brown, N., Berri, D.	2021 Canada	social media engagement	NM	NM	Official WNBA team	Twitter	quantitative research: content analysis
S24 Kennedy, H., Kunkel, T., Funk, D.C.	2021 United States	fan enagement	NM	NM	A NCAA Division I football team	Facebook	quantitative research: content analysis
S25 Brison N.T., Geurin A.N.	2021 United States	engagement on social media	Social media engagement frequently is defined as the average number of interactions (likes/favorites, shares, and replies/ comments) a social media user receives per post divided by the number of followers (El-Qudsi, 2018).	social influence theory	US athletes who participated in the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games	Twitter	quantitative research: content analysis
S26 Wymer S., Naraine M.L., Thompson A.-J., Martin A.J.	2021 New Zealand	fan engagement	A construct of relationship marketing, fan engagement occurs when a sports organization builds an intense and deeply rooted connection with a fan base and considers consumers as part of interactive relationships with brands, organizations, and each	service-dominant logic (S-DL)	Queensland Maroons rugby league team	Facebook Live	mixed method research: content analysis; interview

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
			other (Vivek et al., 2012).				
S27 Pandey J., Hassan Y.	2021 India	e-engagement behaviour	E-engagement behaviour is defined as the behaviour "that reflects engagement with social media, including customers' creation of, contribution to, or consumption of brand-related content within a social network" (Dolan et al., 2019, p. 2216).	social identity theory; uses and gratifications theory	Cricket Indian Premier League	no limitation of platform	quantitative research: survey
S28 Annamalai B., Yoshida M., Varshney S., Pathak A.A., Venugopal P.	2021 India	fan engagement	In the context of sport, fan engagement is a form of customer engagement behaviour that focuses on the fan's non-transactional extra-role behaviour (Yoshida et al., 2014).	uses and gratifications theory; consumer engagement	Indian Premier League	Facebook	mixed method research: qualitative content analysis; sentiment analysis; ANOVA
S29 Naraine, M.L., Bakhsh, J.T., Wanless, L.	2022 Canada	fan engagement	NM	NM	The Toronto Blue Jays, Toronto Maple Leafs, Toronto Raptors, and	Instagram	quantitative research: quantitative content analysis;

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
					the Toronto Football Club (also known as Toronto FC)		multiple linear regression analysis
S30 Benito-Colio, B., Gonzalez-Fern andez, F.T., Martinez-Cant allops, C., Garcia-Marmo l, E.	2022 Spain	consumer engagement	Customer engagement can be defined as "the repeated interactions between consumers and brand that strengthen the emotional, psychological or physical investment a customer has in that brand" (Brodie et al., 2011; Jaakkola&Alexander, 2014; Sashi et al., 2010; van Doorn et al., 2010).	NM	Endesa ACB League (Spanish)	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube	quantitative research: quantitative content analysis; ANOVA
S31 Jakar G., Carr J.	2022 United States	social media engagement	NM	institutional theory	16 EPL clubs that consistently played in the EPL between 2019 and 2021 and 27 NBA teams	Twitter	quantitative research: quantitative content analysis; ANOVA; regression
S32 Ferreira A.G., Crespo C.F., Mendes C.	2022 Portugal	engagement on social media	Engagement on social media is conceptualized as "emotional, intuitive experiences or perceptions that people undergo when using a particular medium such as,	NM	33 different sports celebrities and 47 brands	no limitation of platform	quantitative research: survey

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
S33 Marčinko Trkulja Ž., Dlačić J., Primorac D.	2022 Croatia	consumer engagement	satisfying the need to find useful information, fill empty moments, and do or share something with others" (Voorveld et al., 2018, p. 40). Consumer engagement on social networks can be seen as a result of the consumer's experience with the brand, through the process of value co-creation encouraged by the company and the relationship between consumers of the virtual community of the brand, product or service (Santos et al., 2019).	social identity theory; customer engagement	Basketball, football and handball	no limitation of platform	quantitative research: survey
S34 Doyle J.P., Su Y., Kunkel T.	2022 United States	consumer engagement	Consumer engagement refers to an 'individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings and/ or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiate' (Vivek et al., 2012, p. 127).	relationship marketing; self-presentation theory; Model of Athlete Branding (MABI) via social media	Every MLS athlete who possessed a publicly available Instagram profile (N= 289) at the time of data collection	Instagram	mixed method research: qualitative content analysis; ANOVA; regression
S35 Piché M.C.,	2022 Canada	fan engaement	NM	relationship marketing theory	12 teams in the WNBA	Facebook, Instagram,	quantitative research:

Study number/ authors	Year/ country	Concept	Definition	Theory	Subjects/ Contexts	Social media	Method
Naraine M.L.						and Twitter	content analysis
S36 Pandita D., Vapiwala F.	2023 India	fan engagement	In sports marketing, the phrase "fan engagement" refers to the high degree of fandom, enthusiasm and emotional commitment that fans have for their sports club or team (Ioakimidis, 2010). A sports consumer's extra-role behaviours in non-transactional exchanges to benefit his or her favourite sports team, the team's management, and other fans (Yoshida et al., 2014, p. 403).	NM	Cricket; Football; Kabaddi (Indian).	no limitation of platform	qualitative research: interview
S37 Steiner, E., Pittman, M., Boatwright, B.	2023 United States	social media engagement behavior	Engagement is a multidimensional construct consisting of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (van Doorn et al., 2010).	NM	NM	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and Reddit	quantitative research: survey

Appendix B

English Version of the Questionnaire in Study 2 - Guangzhou Team as an Example

Investigation for sport fans of Guangzhou Team in the Chinese Super League

Dear interviewee, thank you very much for taking time out of your busy schedule to participate in this survey!

I am a graduate student majoring in sports management at Waseda University in Japan. The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the relevant feelings of Chinese Super League fans in Weibo community and the influence of consumer engagement behavior in Weibo community on fan loyalty. Your objective answer will provide great help for my research and thesis writing and is of great significance for the improvement of Chinese football consumer market. (This questionnaire will take about 3-5 minutes to complete. In order to ensure the quality of the answers, the answer time of less than 2 minutes may be invalid. Please participate in this survey when you have enough time.) All questions in this study will not involve your work secrets and personal privacy, you only need to answer according to your own actual situation. I promise that everything you fill in will be kept strictly confidential and used only for this study. Thank you again for your support and cooperation, I wish you a happy life! [Paragraph description]

Part I General information

1．Are you a fan of Chinese Super League Guangzhou Team?

Yes

No

2．How long have you been supporting this team?

_____year(s) and ____month(s). [Open-ended]

(Fill in the numbers in the blanks, e.g., 3 years and 5 months; 0 years and 6 months.)

3．Have you followed the official Weibo account of Guangzhou Team?

Yes

No

4．When was the last time you used Weibo to follow the news of Guangzhou Team?

Within three days

Within a week

Within two weeks

More than two weeks

5．Who is the No.10 player for Guangzhou Team? (This item will be different for different teams.)

Zheng Zhi

Liao Lisheng

Exxon

MeiFang

6．What's your gender? [Multiple choice]

male

female

7．What's your age?

_____years old. [Open-ended]

(Fill in the numbers in the blanks, e.g., 18 years old.)

8．What is your present occupation? [Multiple choice]

Students

The government personnel

Enterprise managers (including grass-roots and middle and senior managers)

General Staff (Office Staff)

Professionals (e.g., doctors/lawyers/writers/journalists/teachers, etc.)

An ordinary worker, (e.g., a factory worker, etc.)

Business service workers (e.g., salesmen/shop clerks/waiters, etc.)

Self-employed/contractor

Freelancer

Agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery workers

retired

Unemployed

The other...

9．What is your highest degree so far (including studying)? [Multiple choice]

Junior high or below

Senior high school or technical school

Associate degree

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ph.D. or above

10．What is your monthly income (total income from various sources, including pocket money)? [Multiple choice]

2000 yuan or less

2001-4000 yuan

4001-6000 yuan

6001-8000 yuan

8001-10000yuan

More than 10000

It's not easy to reveal

Part II

1. Here are items about online community on Weibo. Please make your choice based on your own judgment. From left to right, 1 represent "Strongly Disagree", 7 represent "Strongly Agree". Please select the corresponding column.

No.	items	score							Actual order
1	I have met wonderful people in the community of (team name)'s official Weibo sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	4
2	I have a feeling of kinship with the other fans who follow the (team name)'s official Weibo sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1
3	I have an interest in the community because of the other fans of (team name)'s official Weibo sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	12
4	I identify strongly with (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9
5	(Team name) on Weibo embodies what I believe in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	5
6	(Team name) on Weibo is part of me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	16
7	I feel a strong sense of belonging to (Team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2
8	(Team name) on Weibo has a great deal of personal meaning for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10
9	I identify strongly with (team name)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	15
10	(Team name) embodies what I believe in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	6

11	(Team name) is part of me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	14
12	I feel a strong sense of belonging to (Team name)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	3
13	(Team name) has a great deal of personal meaning for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
14	I see myself as a part of the (team name) online community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	11
15	If (team name) community members planned something, I'd think of it as something "we" would do rather than something "they" do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16	When someone praises (team name) community, it feels like a personal compliment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	13

2. Here are items about Social media engagement behavior on Weibo. Please make your choice based on your own judgment. From left to right, 1 represent "Strongly Disagree", 7 represent "Strongly Agree". Please select the corresponding column.

No.	items	score							Actual order
17	I often read posts related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	20
18	I often view pictures or photos related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	31
19	I often watch videos related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	17
20	I often read reviews related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	28
21	I often 'like' content related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	25
22	I often 'share' content related to (team name) on my own Weibo page or with my friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	36
23	I often comment positively on posts, pictures, videos related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	21
24	I often tag friends in team-related content	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	32
25	I often initiate posts related to (team name) on my Weibo page	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	18
26	I often post pictures, videos or personal images related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	29
27	I often add hashtags, or Weibo's chaohua (super topics) on my posts related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	26

No.	items	score							Actual order
28	I often write reviews, and personal opinions related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	22
29	I don't like the official Weibo account of (team name)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	33
30	I follow the official Weibo account, but I rarely browse it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	19
31	I converse negatively on team-related content on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	30
32	I often comment negatively posts, videos, images related to (team name) on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	23
33	I often publicly rating (team name) performance negatively on Weibo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	34
34	I often post complaints related to (team name) on my Weibo page	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	27
35	I often post pictures or photos, GIFs, and videos of team turnovers on my Weibo account	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	24
36	I initiate adverse social media account (e.g., 'I hate (team name)') for fellow community members to join	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	35

3. Here are items about brand loyalty. Please make your choice based on your own judgment. From left to right, 1 represent "Strongly Disagree", 7 represent "Strongly Agree". Please select the corresponding column.

No.	items	score							Actual order
37	I will attend games of (team name) live in the stadium	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	37
38	I will watch games of (team name) on TV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	38
39	I will purchase a lot of club related merchandise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	39
40	I will wear the colors and/or the logo of (team name)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	40
41	I will participate in the discussions about (team name)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	41
42	I will recommend (team name) game to other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	42

4. Here are items about overall satisfaction. Please make your choice based on your own judgment. From left to right, 1 represent "Strongly Disagree", 7 represent "Strongly Agree". Please select the corresponding column.

No.	items	score							Actual order
43	The performance of (team name) is excellent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	43
44	The performance of (team name) met my expectations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	44
45	Overall, I am satisfied with the performance of (team name)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	45

Appendix C

Chinese Version of the Questionnaire in Study 2 - Guangzhou Team as an Example

中超广州队球迷微博社区参与行为调查

尊敬的受访者您好，非常感谢您百忙之中参与此次问卷调查！

我是日本早稻田大学体育管理专业的一名研究生，本问卷是为了调查中超联赛球迷消费者在微博社区中的相关感受及在微博社区中的参与行为对于粉丝忠诚度的影响。您的客观回答将为我的课题研究和论文写作提供很大的帮助，并且对于中国足球消费者市场的完善具有非常重要的意义。（本问卷大概需要 3-5 分钟时间作答。为保证答题质量，回答时间小于 2 分钟，可能被判为无效，请在时间充裕的情况下参加本次调查）本研究中的所有问题将不涉及您的工作机密及个人隐私，您只需要按照您自身的实际情况作答即可。本人承诺，对您填写的一切内容将严格保密，并仅供本研究使用。再次感谢您的支持与合作，祝您生活愉快！［段落说明］

===分页===

1. 您是否为中超联赛广州队球迷［单选题］

是

否

2. 您支持广州队多久了？_____年_____个月［填空题］（点击横线，填写数字即可，如：5 年 3 个月；0 年 6 个月；如您不是广州队球迷退出即可。）

3. 您是否关注了广州队的官方微博［单选题］

是

否

4. 您最近一次使用微博关注广州队消息是什么时候［单选题］

三天内

一周内

两周内

大于两周

5. 广州队的十号球员是以下哪位［单选题］

郑智

廖力生

艾克森

梅方

===分页===

6．您的性别是？［单选题］

男

女

7．您的年龄是_____？［填空题］（点击横线，填写数字即可）

8．您目前的职业是？［单选题］

在校学生

政府/机关干部/公务员

企业管理者（包括基层及中高层管理者）

普通职员（办公室/写字楼工作人员）

专业人员（如医生/律师/文体/记者/老师等）

普通工人（如工厂工人/体力劳动者等）

商业服务业职工（如销售人员/商店职员/服务员等）

个体经营者/承包商

自由职业者

农林牧渔劳动者

退休

暂无职业

其他_____

9．到目前为止，您的最高学历(包括在读)是？［单选题］

初中及以下

高中/中专/技校

大专

本科

硕士

博士及以上

10．您的个人月收入（从各种途径得到的全部收入总和，包括零花钱）为？［单选题］

2000 元及以下

2001-4000 元

4001-6000 元

6001-8000 元

8001-10000 元

大于 10000 元

不方便透露

===分页===

以下是微博社区的相关问题，请阅读以下描述，并选择您的认同程度，1 代表非常不认同，7 代表非常认同。[段落说明]

1. 我和其他关注广州队官方微博的球迷有一种亲近感[量表题]1~7

2. 我对广州队的官方微博有一种强烈的归属感[量表题]1~7

3. 我对广州队有一种强烈的归属感[量表题]1~7

4. 我在广州队微博社区里遇到了很棒的人[量表题]1~7

5. 广州队官方微博体现了我的信念[量表题] 1~7

6. 广州队体现了我的信念[量表题]1~7

7. 广州队对我来说有很大的个人意义[量表题]1~7

8. 如果广州队微博社区成员计划了某件事，我会把它看作是"我们"会做的事，而不是"他们"会做的事[量表题]1~7

9. 我对广州队官方微博有强烈认同感[量表题]1~7

10. 广州队的官方微博对我来说有很大的个人意义[量表题]1~7

11. 我认为自己是广州队微博社区的一份子[量表题]1~7

12. 我对这个社区感兴趣是因为关注广州队官方微博的其他球迷[量表题]1~7

13. 当有人赞美广州队微博社区时，感觉就像是对我个人的赞美[量表题]1~7

14. 广州队是我日常生活的一部分[量表题]1~7

15. 我对广州队有强烈的认同感[量表题]1~7

16. 广州队官方微博是我日常生活的一部分[量表题]1~7

===分页===

以下是微博上社交媒体参与行为的相关问题，请阅读以下描述，并选择与您的符合程度，1 代表非常不符合，7 代表非常符合。[段落说明]

17. 我经常在微博上查看关于广州队的视频[量表题]1~7

18. 我经常在微博上发布与广州队相关的帖子[量表题]1~7

19. 我关注了广州队的官方微博，但是我很少浏览相关内容。[量表题]1~7

20. 我经常在微博上查看关于广州队的帖子[量表题]1~7

21. 我经常在微博上对与广州队相关的文字、视频、图片进行正面评论[量表题]1~7

22. 我经常在微博上发布与广州队相关的点评和个人意见[量表题]1~7

23. 我经常在微博上对与广州队相关的文字、视频、图片进行负面评论[量表题]1~7

24. 我经常在微博上发布广州队失误的照片、动图或视频[量表题]1~7

25. 我经常在微博上'点赞'与广州队相关的内容[量表题]1~7

26. 我经常在发微博的时候添加与广州队相关的话题，或者微博超级话题[量表题]1~7

27. 我经常在微博发布与广州队相关的抱怨[量表题]1~7

28. 我经常在微博上查看关于广州队的点评[量表题]1~7

29. 我在微博上发布与广州队相关的图片、视频或个人图片[量表题]1~7

30. 我对微博上与广州队相关的内容持消极态度[量表题]1~7

31. 我经常在微博上查看关于广州队的图片或照片[量表题]1~7

32. 我经常在与广州队相关的内容中@我的朋友[量表题]1~7

33. 我不喜欢广州队的官方微博[量表题]1~7

34. 我经常在微博上公开对广州队的表现进行负面评价[量表题]1~7

35. 我创建了一个负面的微博账户(如：'我讨厌广州队')，让其他社区成员加入。[量表题]1~7

36. 我经常将广州队相关的内容分享在自己的微博上或分享给我的朋友[量表题]1~7

===分页===

以下是品牌忠诚度的相关问题，请阅读以下描述，并选择您的意愿程度，1 代表非常不愿意，7 代表非常愿意。[段落说明]

37. 我以后会在球赛现场观看广州队的比赛[量表题]1~7

38. 我以后会在电视上看广州队比赛[量表题]1~7

39. 我以后会购买广州队相关的商品[量表题]1~7

40. 我以后会穿广州队的颜色和/或有广州队标志的服装[量表题]1~7

41. 我以后会参加关于广州队的讨论[量表题]1~7

42. 我以后会向其他人推荐广州队的比赛[量表题]1~7

以下是总体满意度的相关问题，请阅读以下描述，并选择您的认同程度，1 代表非常不认同，7 代表非常认同。[段落说明]

43. 广州队的表现很出色[量表题]1~7

44. 广州队的表现符合我的预期[量表题]1~7

45. 总的来说，我对广州队的表现很满意[量表题]1~7