Just Win Baby: Examining Predictors of Belief in the Importance of Winning among Sport Fans

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Dalakas and Melancon (2002) examined the relationship between team identification and Schadenfreude (enjoyment at the misfortune of others). The authors expected that team identification would be positively correlated with Schadenfreude toward rivals. However, they also expected that this relationship would be mediated by a new construct, one they labeled “importance of winning”. Importance of winning concerns a fan’s tendency to place winning above everything else, and Dalakas and Melancon developed a measure assessing this construct (the Importance of Winning Index; IWIN). This scale included items such as “In sports, winning is everything” and “I do not mind having players with a bad reputation on my team, as long as they can help the team win games.” The researchers had fans complete a questionnaire assessing team identification, items measuring Schadenfreude (e.g., “I will feel great if the owner of a team I hate faces legal troubles”), and the IWIN. As expected, importance of winning was found to be an independent construct, team identification and Schadenfreude were positively related, and importance of winning fully mediated this relationship. The current study expanded on the work of Dalakas and Melancon by examining potential predictors of beliefs in the importance of winning. Participants (N = 324) completed assessments of several potential predictors of IWIN involving their favorite Major League Baseball team: team identification, length of time supporting the team, length of time since team’s last championship, dysfunctional fandom, Major League Baseball fandom, perceptions of team’s rivals, and belief in an old school mentality for fandom (e.g., modern day athletes are too materialistic). Regression analyses indicated that five predictors accounted for a unique proportion of variance in IWIN scores (all relationships were positive): time since last championship, team identification, fan dysfunction, satisfaction when defeating a rival, and beliefs that athletes are too materialistic. Future research should determine if these effects are found for other sports and other competition levels.
Assessment of Leadership Behaviors and Barriers for the Intercollegiate Athletic Director Position
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University of Georgia

The purpose of this study is (a) examine leadership behaviors of effective Athletic Directors at the NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA levels and (b) examine the alignment of desired leadership behaviors as perceived by University Presidents, Head Coaches, Senior Athletic Department Personnel, and Conference Commissioners required for the position of Director of intercollegiate Athletics. The instrument will test eight constructs: (a) communicating behavior, (b) sustained behavior, (c) interpersonal skills, (d) emotional consistency, (e) values oriented, (f) self-awareness, (g) technically competent, and (h) establishes vision.

Themes were drawn from the Assessment of Leadership Traits Required for the Intercollegiate Athletic Director Position (Paitson 2016) and Zhang et al.’s (1997) Revised Leadership Scale for Sports (RLSS), an instrument specifically designed to measure research on sports-specific leadership behavior. The previous research and a subsequent pilot study served as a guide in the development of the new instrument prototype intended to provide value to the various constituents touched by intercollegiate athletics.

Benefits and Barriers to Conducting Mixed-Methods Research in Competitive Marching Fandom
Tyler J. Robinson
Jordan M. Pearsall
Eastern Kentucky University
Advisor: Daniel L. Wann, Ph.D.

Data on competitive marching fandom is extraordinarily limited. Consequently, projects seeking to investigate competitive marching fandom would arguably benefit from following protocols purported by contemporary sport fandom research. Prevailing models posit legitimate connections between sport fandom and psychological health (Wann, 2006). Past research compliments this idea, revealing connections between sport fandom and various psychological needs (e.g., Wann & Robinson, 2022). The current study seeks to apply past procedures to a novel context, investigating the role of competitive marching fandom in meeting four basic psychological needs (i.e., the need to belong, the need for meaning, the need for structure, and the need for distinctiveness).

Analyses involved three separate repeated measures ANOVAs to test for differences in how individuals (N=134) use their general fandom to meet psychological needs, use their fandom for their favorite ensemble to meet psychological needs, and a repeated measures ANOVA to test for mean differences in how individuals meet their needs across general fandom and fandom of a favorite ensemble. Results from the first R-ANOVA revealed a significant difference in how individuals use their general fandom to
meet the psychological needs ($F(3,402)=29.78, p<.001$).

Nonetheless, important distinctions must be drawn between sport fandom research and competitive marching fandom research. This paper seeks to discuss some of the obstacles researchers encountered while conducting field research, hoping to bring these methodological concerns to the purview of aspiring fandom researchers.

**Psychosocial Factors and Exercise in VTE Survivors**

**Julie Partridge, Ph.D.**
Southern Illinois University

Diagnosis of venous thromboembolism (VTE) can be a significant life event that leads to changes in physical activity and exercise. Currently, little is known about the psychosocial experiences of survivors including perceived sources of social support exercise barriers, and instructions for exercise from medical providers. The purpose of this study was to explore psychosocial characteristics associated with VTE survivors’ post-diagnosis exercise. Specifically: 1) what are the main sources of social support utilized by VTE survivors for exercise, 2) what are the most significant exercise barriers (e.g., physical, social, psychological) faced by VTE survivors, and 3) what specific information relative to exercise is provided by medical professionals following diagnosis? VTE survivors ($n = 472$) were recruited through social media groups to participate in open-ended questions about psychosocial characteristics pertaining to post-diagnosis exercise and reported multiple forms of exercise social support, although almost 1 in 4 participants reported having no support for exercise. Several post-diagnosis exercise barriers were noted, and the data indicated a wide variety of information from their medical providers regarding engaging in exercise following their diagnosis, suggesting that the unique benefits and drawbacks to these instructions should be examined in more detail. Although VTE survivors identified numerous categories of social support, there also exist numerous barriers, including a lack of standardized instructions for exercise. Further exploration of these characteristics is needed to better serve this population to encourage post-diagnosis exercise.

**World’s Biggest Fan: An Examination of Team Identification and Positive Post-Event Rumination**

**Jordan Pearsall**
Murray State University
Advisor: Daniel L. Wann, Ph.D.

This study builds off of previous research in which negative post-event rumination was found to be positively correlated with dysfunctional sport fandom (Pearsall et al., 2022). Specifically, the more dysfunctional fans were, the more likely they were to negatively ruminate about events concerning their favorite sport player or team. The purpose of the current study is to determine the relationship between sport team identification and positive post-event rumination. Team identification regards the degree to which the fan feels a psychological connection to a target team. We examined sport fandom as a whole, dysfunctional sport fandom, and team identification, and their respective relationships with positive rumination. We predicted that team identification would be related to positive post-event rumination, which has been defined as a cognitive processing bias in
which an individual may dwell on memories of events and may tend to, over time, exaggerate the positive aspects, emotions, and/or details of the event. Specifically, we hypothesized that positive post-event rumination and team identification would be positively correlated, which was supported by our findings.

**Understanding the Effects of Long-Term Injury on Student-Athletes’ Body Image**

Amber Ruiz-Bueno  
Southern Illinois University  
Advisor: Julie Partridge, Ph.D.

Athletes have been found to have a strong connection with their body image (Cragg, 2011; De Bruin, 2010; Krane, Waldron, Michalenok & Stiles-Shipley, 2002). Furthermore, athletes have specific beliefs about what an athletic body “should” look like (Cragg, 2011; Greenleaf, 2002). When an athlete succumbs to an injury, they have been found to be at higher risk for body dysmorphia, eating disorders and overall negative feeling towards their body (Krane et al., 2002). However, there is a lack of understanding of the impact of long-term injury on collegiate student-athletes’ body image. Thus, the purpose of this study was to qualitatively investigate how long-term injury can affect a collegiate student-athlete’s body image. One-time, semi-structured interviews were completed with seven total participants from 20 to 28 years old. Participants included both current and former student athletes as well as both males and females. Interviews consisted of questions such as each participant’s history in sports, how they would define and describe body image, and if/how they felt being injured changed their experience in sports. Inductive and deductive content analysis was then completed, and two overarching themes emerged: perceptual body image (i.e., how participants understood body image, body image related to how the body functions, how it affected certain behaviors and the aesthetics of their body) and social support (i.e., the positive or negative influence on body image from coaches, athletic trainers, friends and family), each with multiple subthemes. The results suggested that long-term injury does impact body image and social relationships in collegiate student athletes. Further research in this area is necessary to more fully understand social, emotional, and behavioral impacts of long-term injury.

**Kelley’s Covariation Theory, Undesirable Coaching Behavior, and Athlete Satisfaction**

Rachel Koepp  
Murray State University

Kelley’s (1973) covariation theory is an attribution-based model that was developed under the assumption that more accurate attributions are established as more information is gained over time (Kelley & Michela, 1980). Research shows that people seek out informational cues to form attributions and that the relationship between attribution types and athletic coaching behaviors significantly impacts athlete satisfaction (Heider, 1958; Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008; Kao & Tsai, 2016; Nazarudin et al., 2009; Pilus & Saadan, 2009). Given these findings, it was hypothesized that the attributions formed by participants in each of the five scenarios found in Kelley’s (1973) covariation theory
will follow predictions from the model. Furthermore, it was expected that participants will experience dissatisfaction when they perceive the coach’s behavior as a result of the coach’s internal characteristics. Additionally, it was expected that these same undesirable coaching behaviors will not influence participant satisfaction when they are perceived to derive from external factors that are outside the coach’s control. Lastly, Scenarios 4 and 5 were examined via a pair of research questions targeting what levels of satisfaction result within each scenario. 158 participants college students were randomly assigned to 1 of 5 coaching behavior scenarios consistent with Kelley’s (1973) model and asked to report their perceived attribution as well as their satisfaction with the hypothetical Coach Jamie. The findings were consistent with Kelley’s (1973) model in Scenario 4 and Scenario 5, but not in the other 3 scenarios. The results also indicate that attributing the negative behavior to internal characteristics more likely leads to lower rates of satisfaction, while external attributions were more likely to coincide with higher reports of satisfaction.

Exploring the Self in Sport Fan Identification

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION
Tommy DeRossett, Ph.D.
Queens University

Social identification with a group is a consistent predictor of positive subjective wellbeing. Sport fandom is an internationally ubiquitous social identity which has been connected directly to a variety of collective (or social group) wellbeing outcomes. However, typical measures of fandom fail to find a consistent relationship between identification and subjective (or individual) wellbeing. The validity and reliability of these measures (i.e., the SFQ and SSIS-R) are consistent and acceptable, but they may lack in ability to predict individual levels of wellbeing due to their nomothetic nature. In the present study, an idiographic form of measurement called self-congruence was utilized which allowed individuals to provide their own definition of fandom via five stereotypical group traits. Alignment with these traits was positively associated with scores on the SFQ and SSIS, as well as levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction. These findings suggest that fandom is related to subjective wellbeing but may require more precise measurement to fully understand the association. Future research should seek to expand these results to determine if self-congruence measurements of fandom are associated with individual affect, behavior, and cognition toward one’s preferred, or rival, team.

Does Real-Life Location Matter in The Electronic World? How New Esports Fans Choose What Team to Support
Gavin Nolin
Ismail Karabas
Murray State University

While fan motivation in traditional sports has been researched for years, there is much less research in the competitive video game (eSports) industry. As eSports franchises have begun branding geographically, it is important to know what can motivate fans when choosing a team, and what may bring fans to choose in-state teams versus out-of-state teams. This study measures how likely
participants would be to support an eSports team as a function of power distance belief, pride in community, need for uniqueness, and their own personal power. This study showed that those with a low power distance belief, high pride in community, low need for uniqueness, and high state of power supported the less popular in-state teams. Those with a low state of power, high power distance belief, and need for uniqueness chose the more popular out-of-state teams. This study’s results will help eSports brands target communications to specific consumer groups.

Group Behavior among Fans and Consumers: Out-Group Negativity and Potential Paths Toward More Understanding

Cody T. Havard, Ph.D.
The University of Memphis

The study of rivalry and out-group derogation has expanded beyond the sport setting (Havard, 2023). The current talk discusses the use of the Group Behavior Composite (GBC) to compare group member negativity and out-group derogation among twelve different settings. Further, it presents the Hierarchy of Out-group Derogation (HOD) and Out-group Derogation Spectrum (ODS) to classify which settings are correlated with the greatest amount of derogation toward the out-group. In order of severity of derogation, religion, online gaming, politics, sport, athletic footwear, mobile phones (Apple/Samsung), direct-to-consumer streaming, theme parks, gaming console, Disney Parks (vs. Universal Parks), science fiction (Star Wars/Star Trek), comics (Marvel/DC) are discussed. Potential paths toward more positive out-group relationships along with future are discussed.

Are Dysfunctional Sport Fans Cheating for Their Team?

Brooke Kordys
Uber Freight
Murray State University
Advisor: Daniel L. Wann, Ph.D.

Highly identified sport fans are likely to attempt to influence the outcome of a sporting event (Wann et al., 1994), but how far are they willing to go? According to Wann et al. (2001), highly identified fans are willing to consider illegally assisting their team to positively influence the outcome for their team. The current study wanted to further understand which fans are more likely to engage in acts of cheating, specifically focusing on dysfunctional fans. Dysfunctional sport fans tend to be disruptive, confrontational, and aggressive (Wakefield & Wann, 2006). Focusing on fans of the University of Kentucky (UK) Men’s Basketball Team, it was hypothesized that higher levels of dysfunctional sport fandom will significantly predict higher levels of willingness to illegally assist their team. Results revealed that highly identified fans of UK would consider illegally assisting their team, along with highly identified dysfunctional fans of UK also considering illegally assisting their team. Interestingly, it was also found that dysfunctional fans who did not identify with UK would still consider cheating for the team. To further look into this, future research should examine if team identification plays a moderating role.
between dysfunctional fans and willingness to consider cheating.

**Striking Out or Hitting a Homer: Relationship between Sport Fandom and Dating**

Emily H. Kinsey  
Murray State University  
Advisor: Daniel L. Wann, Ph.D.

Sport fandom runs deeper than simply cheering for a favorite team. Rather, it assists in meeting powerful, innate human needs, such as sharing a connection that facilitates the need to belong (Wann & James, 2019). Previous research has suggested that men with a high interest in sport tend to view females who share this high level of interest more positively than females showing little interest in sport (Wann, Schinner, & Keenan, 2001). Given this, I was interested in extending this line of research to relationships between level of sport fandom and desired traits in a romantic partner (i.e., dating traits). The current investigation examined the relationship between sport fandom and traits desired in a romantic partner. It was predicted that there would be a positive relationship between sport fandom and sport fandom as a desired trait in romantic partners. The sample ($n = 54$) consisted of 18–24-year-old students attending Murray State University. Questionnaires were completed in university classrooms and respondents received class extra credit for participation. As predicted, sport fandom was significantly correlated with beliefs that sport fandom is an important trait when choosing dating partners ($r = .64$, $p < .001$). Sport fandom was also found to be the least important dating trait of the seven traits studied.

**Sidetracked by Suspicion to Stand Out? Sports Fans and Conspiracy Theory Beliefs**

Hillary Copeland  
Murray State University  
Advisor: Daniel L. Wann, Ph.D.

Dysfunctional sport fandom (i.e., the tendency, among some but not all sport fans, to complain and be confrontational within sport contexts; Wakefield & Wann, 2006) shares several characteristics similar to those who often endorsement conspiracy theories. For example, aggressive reactions toward undesired outcomes have been associated with both belief in conspiracy theories (Douglas et al., 2019) and dysfunctional sport fandom (Wann & James, 2019). Recent research targeting this association indicates that dysfunctional sport fans do tend to be more likely to endorse sport related conspiracy theories (Copeland & Wann, 2022). Additionally, previous research suggests that, for some, belief in conspiracy theories is partially motivated by a desire to stand out (Imhoff & Lamberty, 2017; Lantian, Muller, Nurra, & Douglas, 2017) and lessen feelings of boredom (Brotherton & Eser, 2015). Relatedly, sport fandom also offers individuals opportunities for distinctiveness and entertainment fulfillment (Wann & James, 2019). Extending and connecting these lines of research, the current investigation examined the relationships among sport fan variables (general sport fandom, team identification, and dysfunctional sport fandom), conspiracy theory beliefs (general and sport-specific), the need to be unique from others, and the tendency to experience feelings of boredom. We expected positive patterns to emerge among sport conspiracy theory beliefs, dysfunctional fandom, uniqueness needs, and boredom. As predicted, results revealed that increased belief in sport conspiracy theories
was positively correlated with dysfunctional sport fandom ($M = 18.85$, $SD = 11.14$), $r = .36$, $p < .001$, the need for uniqueness ($M = 12.52$, $SD = 3.33$), $r = .28$, $p = .003$, and boredom proneness ($M = 109.57$, $SD = 20.56$), $r = .32$, $p < .001$. These findings have important implications for sports organizations that seek to deter dysfunctional fans from expressing their socially disruptive tendencies, particularly concerning online social communication networks.

**What the Other Half Drinks:**

**Sport Fans’ Willingness to Support a New Product Endorsed by a Favorite and Rival Team**

Frederick G. Grieve, Ph.D.  
Ethan Puckett  
Madisyn Morris  
J. Tyler Stephens  
Trevor Lile  
Lincoln Ford  
Alisha Mullick  
Armaan Rai  
Grace Miller  
Ella Schleuning  
Western Kentucky University

Team Identification involves a psychological connection to a sport team that becomes important to people (Wann & James, 2019). Team identification has been linked to a number of psychological benefits (Wann, 2006) and behavioral intentions (Wann & James, 2019). Rivalry is an adversarial relationship between two groups that is influenced by on-field competition, historical context, proximity, and demographic make up (Havard et al., 2013). Both rivalry and team identification influence sport consumption (Havard, 2021; Wann & James, 2019).

Sport teams leverage their brands to influence fans to purchase items, usually team-related merchandise (REF) and companies use sport teams to influence fans to purchase their items (REF). Kwak, Kwan, and Lim (2015) found that adding a favored team logo to products increased the functional, emotional, and social value than the same products with a rival logo or no logo.

The current study was done to further examine how team identification and rivalry influence the perception of branded items. Hypotheses under study included:

H1: Fans who are highly identified with the UK Men’s Basketball Team will rate a product endorsed by the UK Men’s basketball team higher than a product endorsed by the UL Men’s Basketball team.

H2: There will be no differences in the ratings of fans with low levels of identification with the UK Men’s Basketball team.

H3: Fans who see the UL Men’s Basketball team as a big rival will rate a product endorsed by the UK Men’s basketball team higher than a product endorsed by the UL Men’s Basketball team.

H4: There will be no differences in the ratings of fans who do not see the UL Men’s Basketball team as a big rival.

Participants read a news release about a fictional energy drink (Zip! Energy) that was purported to have a branding relationship with either the University of Kentucky men’s basketball team or the University of Louisville men’s basketball team.
Participants provided responses for team identification (Sport Spectator Identification Scale, Revised; James et al., 2018), rivalry perceptions (Sport Rivalry Fan Perception Scale; Havard et al., 2013), and a scale created for this study that evaluated the participant’s perceptions of the energy drink and intentions to purchase. Preliminary results (only 14 participants completed the study to date) partially supported H1 and H2, but not H3 and H4. Thus, it appears that team identification could play a larger role in consumption than rivalry.
Findings in Sport, Hospitality, Entertainment, and Event Management, Vol. 3 [2023], Art. 1

**Agenda for the 19th Annual Sport Science Forum**

**Friday & Saturday, February 24-25, 2023**

**Gary Ransdell Hall, Main Auditorium**

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**Friday, February 24**

4:30-5:30  Reception Dinner

5:45-6:45  Sport Psychology Skills Workshop Focusing on Anxiety Management, Visualization, Goal Setting, and Mindfulness. Location TBD off campus.

7:15-9:00  Probability Seminar on Decision Making and Behavior

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**Saturday, February 25**

8:30-8:45  Welcome and Introductory Remarks, Rick Grieve, Western Kentucky University

8:45-9:00  Daniel L. Wann, Murray State University, Frederick G. Grieve, Western Kentucky University, Ted B. Peetz, Belmont University, & Ryan K. Zapalac, Sam Houston State University, “Just Win Baby: Examining Predictors of Belief in the Importance of Winning among Sport Fans”

9:00-9:15  David Paitson, University of Indianapolis, Ryan Zapalac, Sam Houston State, & James Zhang, University of Georgia. “Assessment of Leadership Behaviors Required for the Intercollegiate Athletic Director Position”

9:15-9:30  Tyler J. Robinson & Jordan M. Pearsall, Murray State University, “Benefits and Barriers to Conducting Mixed-Methods Research in Competitive Marching Fandom” (Advisor: Dan Wann)

9:30-9:45  Julie Partridge, Southern Illinois University, “Psychosocial Factors and Exercise in VTE Survivors.”

9:45-10:00  Jordan Pearsall, Murray State University, “World's Biggest Fan: An Examination of Team Identification and Positive Post-Event Rumination.” (Advisor: Dan Wann)

10:00-10:15  Scott York, Western Kentucky University, “TOPCARE: Providing Mental Health Services to Athletes”

10:15-10:30  Morning Break

10:30-10:45  Dzenita Softic, Western Kentucky University, “Does Your Sport Team Losing Make You A Conspiracy Theorist?” (Advisor: Rick Grieve)

10:45-11:00  Amber Ruiz-Bueno. Southern Illinois University, “Understanding the Effects of Long-Term Injury on Student-Athletes' Body Image.” (Advisor: Julie Partridge)

11:00-11:15  Mike Bass, Mike Bass Coaching, “Sports Fan Coaching: A Practical Application of Research and Techniques to Enhance the Fans’ Experience, Their Way.”

11:15-11:30  Rachel Koepp, Murray State University, “Kelley’s Covariation Theory, Undesirable Coaching Behavior, and Athlete Satisfaction”

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11:30-11:45 Ethan Puckett, Western Kentucky University, “‘Next Year Is Our Year’: An Examination of NFL Fandom and Team Success (Or Lack Thereof).” (Advisor: Rick Grieve)
11:45 Group Photos
12:00-1:30 Lunch
1:30-2:00 Tommy DeRossett, Queens University, KEYNOTE SPEAKER
2:00-2:15 Gavin Nolin, Murray State University, & Ismail Karabas, Murray State University, “Does Real-Life Location Matter in The Electronic World? How New Esports Fans Choose What Team to Support”
2:30-2:45 Brooke Kordys, Uber Freight, “Are Dysfunctional Sport Fans Cheating for Their Team?” (Advisor: Dan Wann)
2:45-3:00 Emily H. Kinsey, Murray State University, “Striking Out or Hitting a Homer: Relationship between Sport Fandom and Dating” (Advisor: Dan Wann)
3:00-3:15 Afternoon Break
3:15-3:30 Joseph Case, Mississippi State University, “Holistic Assessments and Interventions of Latent Symptomology That Adversely Threaten Engagement.”
3:30-3:45 Tyler Stephens, Western Kentucky University, “Sport Fans’ Belief in Superstitions and Conspiracy Theories” (Advisor: Rick Grieve)
3:45-4:00 Hillary M. Copeland, Murray State University, “Sidetracked by Suspicion to Stand Out? Sports Fans and Conspiracy Theory Beliefs.” (Advisor: Dan Wann)
4:00-4:15 Frederick G. Grieve, Ethan Puckett, Madisyn Morris, J. Tyler Stephens, Trevor Lile, Lincoln Ford, Alisha Mullick, Armaan Rai, Grace Miller, & Ella Schleuning, Western Kentucky University, “What the Other Half Drinks: Sport Fans’ Willingness to Support a New Product Endorsed by a Favorite and Rival Team.”
Key Note Speaker:

TOMMY DEROSSETT
Queens University

Exploring the Self in Sport Fan Identification

Tommy DeRossett is currently an Assistant Professor of psychology at Queens University of Charlotte in Charlotte, North Carolina. He received his PhD in Experimental Psychology from Saint Louis University in 2022 and a bachelor's in Psychology from Murray State University in 2018. His research centers on exploring the role of identification in decision making, preference, prejudice, and wellbeing. Most importantly, he is a proud winner of the Panda trophy due to his dominant inaugural putt-putt performance in blistery outdoor conditions.