The Few and the Proud: Examining the Need for Belonging and the Need for Distinctiveness in Regards to Sport Choice

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BELONGING, DISTINCTIVENESS, AND SPORT CHOICE

TOMMY DEROSETT
BACKGROUND

• Personal Experience
  • As a fan of the St. Louis Cardinals, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Oklahoma City Thunder, and the University of Notre Dame

• Sport Choice
  • Although sport is deeply rooted in society, there is a lot of variance within sport choice
  • The “Big Four” sports in the United States are basketball (NBA or NCAA), football (NFL or NCAA), baseball (MLB), and hockey (NHL)
DISTINCTIVENESS

• People have a need to feel unique, special, and different (Lynn & Snyder, 2002)
  • It is an innate biological need (Eastwick & Hunt, 2014)
• Consumers wear clothing that differentiates them from others (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001)
BELONGING

• Feeling like part of a group is an important aspect of mood (Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002)

• Sport fans are more likely to consume sport if they feel like they belong (Theodorakis, Wann, Nassis, & Luellen, 2012)

• Team identification concerns an individual’s psychological connection to a team (Wann, Fahl, Erdmann, & Littleton, 1999; Wann, Melnick Russell, & Pease, 2001)
WHAT MATTERS MORE?
HYPOTHESES

• H1:
  • Individuals who report their favorite sport as a major sport would have higher levels of the need to belong than those who report a different sport

• H2:
  • Individuals who report a mainstream sport as their favorite would have lower levels of the need for distinctiveness than those who report different a sport
METHOD

• Section 1:
  • Demographics assessing age and gender

• Section 2:
  • Sport Fandom Questionnaire (Wann, 2002)
    • 5 Item Scale assessing level of fandom for chosen sport

• Section 3: A measure of need to belong and a measure of need for distinctiveness
  • Need to Belong: 10-item Need to Belong Scale (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2013)
  • Need for Distinction: 4-item Need for Uniqueness Scale (Lynn & Harris, 1997)
DEMOGRAPHICS

- The final sample consisted of 247 participants, 159 of which were female
  - Their average age was 19.87 years old with a standard deviation of 4.20 years
## RESULTS

Table 1  
Group Statistics found from $t$-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SFQ</td>
<td>22.72 (9.35)</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.05 (8.66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NtB</td>
<td>31.78 (5.88)</td>
<td>0.63</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.47 (7.01)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NfD</td>
<td>11.58 (2.88)</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.23 (2.86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RATIONALE

• Socialization Factors
• Geography
• Family
NEXT STEPS

• A study has been developed that attempts to eliminate the confounds from this study
• Individuals will be asked to read a scenario describing two different teams
  • ANCL (Australian National Cricket League)
    • Equal successes, equal talent, unequal fandom levels
QUESTIONS?