MEDIA CONSUMPTION INTENTION OF THE SPORT FANS: THE FOUNDATIONAL ROLE OF LEGITIMACY

TESIS PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE DOCTOR EN ADMINISTRACION DE NEGOCIOS

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Resumen

La mayoría de las empresas, independientemente de su industria, trabajan duro para lograr exposición, ya que la publicidad, la promoción y las relaciones públicas suelen ser costosas e intensas en el uso de recursos. Sin embargo, muchas ligas, clubes e instituciones deportivas, disfrutan de una alta exposición mediática a través de diferentes medios como internet, radio, prensa y televisión. En este contexto, las organizaciones deportivas trabajan junto, y a la vez en contra de sus pares, para atraer la intención de consumo multimedia de los aficionados. Esta variable ha demostrado ser relevante en la industria del deporte, ya que ayuda a sus miembros a alcanzar mayores niveles de ingresos a través de patrocinios, derechos de transmisión y mercancía oficial, entre otros. Por lo tanto, el objetivo principal de esta tesis es avanzar en el conocimiento de cómo los fans toman decisiones de consumo multimedia, qué papel juega la legitimidad en esta relación, que variables adicionales se deben considerar como factores predictivos clave, y como interactúan en distintas circunstancias.

Con este objetivo en mente, se realizó una revisión profunda de la literatura, identificando la relevancia de la legitimidad, al mismo tiempo que se evaluaron otras posibles variables de interés, así como brechas que podrían cerrarse con investigaciones adicionales. Se desarrollaron tres artículos, uno tras otro, para probar aquellas variables relevantes en diferentes escenarios y circunstancias. El primer artículo evalúa el impacto que tiene cuan aficionado es un individuo hacia los comportamientos de intención de consumo de los fans, y cómo esta relación está mediada por la percepción de legitimidad organizacional.

El segundo artículo contribuye a la comprensión de cómo los fanáticos evalúan las decisiones tomadas en un período de crisis, como la pandemia del covid-19, y el impacto que esas evaluaciones tienen en la intención de consumo de los fanáticos de transmisiones deportivas. En este caso, la percepción de legitimidad probó ser un antecedente clave y una variable relevante que guía las valoraciones de los aficionados.

Posteriormente, se elaboró un tercer artículo para brindar una mayor comprensión de la toma de decisiones de los aficionados, específicamente en la relación que tiene la legitimidad hacia los comportamientos de consumo. También agrega una comprensión sobre la existencia de una identidad supraordinada, y cómo esta identidad se ve amenazada tanto cuando el club focal está bajo amenaza como cuando el rival lo está. Este agregado de resultados sugiere que la legitimidad es una variable fundamental utilizada por los fanáticos para evaluar su contenido deportivo disponible, y que, durante esta evaluación, las personas pueden cambiar sus decisiones dependiendo de su nivel de afición, las acciones tomadas por la institución bajo análisis, y la posible amenaza que pueden experimentar.

Introducción

Las ciencias del deporte (Wang et al., 2015) y en concreto la economía del deporte (Santos-Sanchez & García-Castellanos, 2011) están experimentando una tendencia creciente en la historia reciente de la literatura. Como industria, el deporte ha crecido a un ritmo acelerado durante décadas (Koenigstorfer et al., 2010), con un mayor interés en los deportes por parte de la sociedad (Loranca-Valle, et al., 2021) y agrupando la mayor audiencia de todos los programas de entretenimiento (Knobloch, Abdallah & Billings, 2020). Específicamente, el fútbol reúne una base de 3.500 millones de fanáticos en todo el mundo (Das, 2021), mientras que contabiliza a 6 de las 13 marcas de equipos deportivos más valiosas (Ozanian, 2021).

La industria del deporte, a diferencia de la mayoría, disfruta de una alta exposición mediática (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2021) siendo constantemente elegida como la opción de contenido multimedia número uno (Knobloch, Abdallah & Billings, 2020). Los deportes se consumen principalmente en vivo (Foster, et al, 2014), de ahí la relevancia de entregarlo a los fanáticos en tantas plataformas como sea posible (Yim & Byon, 2019). Hoy en día, los fans gozan del acceso a casi cualquier liga de primer nivel a través de múltiples plataformas tecnológicas (Haynes, 2021). Grandes audiencias ahora pueden consumir y experimentar eventos deportivos en vivo sin importar dónde se encuentren y dónde se celebre el evento (Cobbs & Hilton, 2012), generando enormes ingresos para las ligas y clubes involucrados a través de derechos de transmisión (Tamir, 2019), que pueden representar hasta el 66% del presupuesto de una liga (Horky, 2021).

En consecuencia, la intención de consumo multimedia surge como una variable considerada relevante dentro de la industria del deporte (Chiu & Won, 2021). Los autores la han evaluado como una variable de desempaño en una gran variedad de temas, entre ellos la calidad de la relación (Paek, et al., 202), comunicación de marketing (Behrens & Uhrich, 2021), lealtad (Yoshida, et al., 2015), pasión (Wakefield, 2016), redes sociales (Tassawa, 2019) y la entitatividad (Dickenson & Souchon, 2018). Comprender los antecedentes de la intención de consumo multimedia podría representar la diferencia entre crecer dentro del negocio o estancarse frente a otros competidores en la industria del entretenimiento.

En esta línea, se ha argumentado que una integración multicanal puede contribuir a la satisfacción comunicativa de los fans (Whitburn, et al., 2020), mientras que generar una relación afectiva puede potenciar su intención de consumo (Magnusen, et al., 2012). Un buen sitio web (Chiu & Won, 2016), redes sociales actualizadas y relevantes (Naraine, et al., 2019) que brinden accesibilidad a través de dispositivos portátiles (Ha, et al., 2017) pueden impulsar el compromiso y la participación de los fanáticos en comunidades en línea (Trivedi, et al., 2020). Por tanto, la intención de consumo multimedia podría asemejarse a rasgos tradicionales del marketing como la lealtad de los fans (Loranca-Valle, et al., 2021) y la pasión (Wakefield, 2016), a la vez que funciona como una herramienta para medir audiencias (Foster, et al., 2014; Yim & Byon, 2019).

Tabla 1. Análisis de la intención de consumo multimedia en la reciente literatura científica del deporte.

Enfoque de estudio	Sujeto analizado	Principales Conclusiones	Estudios
El marketing relacional en el deporte profesional	Calidad de la relación	Los motivos de los fanáticos del deporte afectan significativamente la calidad de la relación y el comportamiento con respecto a la intención de consumo deportivo.	Paek, et al., 2021; Magnusen, et al., 2012.
	Satisfacción con la comunicación de marketing	La satisfacción en la comunicación integrada de marketing, tiene un impacto positivo en las intenciones de consumo a través de la calidad de la relación, mientras que las imágenes de ambiente social aumentan los procesos cognitivos y afectivos.	Whitburn, et al., 2020; Behrens y Uhrich, 2021.
La adhesión del fanático del deporte	El papel del etnocentrismo deportivo en los comportamientos de consumo de los fans	El etnocentrismo de los fanáticos del deporte tiene una influencia indirecta en el consumo de medios a través de la identificación con el jugador.	Chiu y Won, 2020;
	Lealtad de los aficionados al deporte	El apego a la comunidad de fans es un predictor a largo plazo de la intención de consumo, mientras que la lealtad en sí misma requiere satisfacción, compromiso, confianza y calidad de servicio.	Yoshida, et al., 2015; Loranca-Valle, et al., 2021.
	La pasión de los fanáticos del deporte	La pasión tiene un impacto positivo en los comportamientos de consumo de las redes sociales y tradicionales.	Wakefield, 2016
	Impacto del atleta en las intenciones de consumo	El poder y el rendimiento de las estrellas (atletas) impactan positivamente en la intención de consumo de medios, así como el consumo de productos anunciados.	McCormick, 2017; Doyle, et al., 2020.
Medios digitales	Calidad del sitio web deportivo	La calidad del sitio web deportivo impacta positivamente en la intención de volver a visitar y consumir los medios.	Chiu y Won, 2016;
	Compromiso con las redes sociales	Las comunidades de redes sociales se involucran durante los períodos que no hay juego y muestran interés en los equipos rivales o competidores, al tiempo que prefieren la información promocional proveniente de los atletas y la información del equipo directamente del club.	Naraine, et al., 2019; Tassawa, 2019.
		Las comunicaciones en las redes sociales juegan un papel influyente al impulsar la participación de los fanáticos dentro de la comunidad en línea.	Trivedi, et al., 2020
	Uso de teléfonos inteligentes en los deportes	El uso de teléfonos inteligentes para seguir deportes se ve afectado positivamente por la percepción hacia los teléfonos inteligentes, los factores específicos del lugar y los factores específicos de los teléfonos inteligentes.	Ja, et al., 2017
Consumo de contenido deportivo en vivo	Audiencia de las transmisiones deportivas	Los clubes, jugadores y la ubicación son factores relevantes para determinar el consumo multimedia de deportes en vivo.	Foster et al., 2014;
		El comportamiento dirigido a objetivos puede predecir la audiencia del juego en vivo, además de la participación en la actividad en línea y la participación en la actividad de las redes sociales.	Yim y Byon, 2019
		La confianza en el equipo y la mentalidad de crecimiento tienen un impacto positivo en el apoyo, incluso después de una pérdida importante.	Puente-Díaz y Cavazos-Arroyo, 2020
	Relación entre consumo de contenido deportivo y la intención de asistir	El consumo de medios deportivos influye en la experiencia de flujo de los fanáticos, lo que luego afecta la intención futura de asistir, incluidos los eventos en el extranjero.	Kim, et al., 2018; Cho, et al., 2020.
	Experiencia retrospectiva del consumo multimedia	El resultado del juego tiene un impacto positivo en la evaluación del consumo de medios.	Wonseok, et al., 2017.
Identidad del aficionado deportivo	Entitatividad	Experimentar la colectividad se relaciona positivamente con la intención de ver y la intención de compra.	Dickenson & Souchon, 2018.

En este punto, es relevante definir la legitimidad y alinear esta definición con la posterior investigación empírica realizada en nuestra tesis, en la que aparece como una variable de relevancia y fundacional. La legitimidad ha sido evaluada bajo el lente de diferentes teorías como la Teoría de la Identidad Social (Bradford, et al., 2015), la Teoría del Discurso (Haikio, 2012), la Teoría de la Democracia Deliberativa (Meinard, 2017), la Teoría del Yo Cognitivo Experiencial (Kearns, et al. al., 2020), la Teoría de las Partes Interesadas (Turcotte, et al., 2008), la Teoría Institucional (Moura & Miller, 2019; MacDonald, 2018) y la Teoría de los Procedimientos (Mueller, 2001), por nombrar algunas. Bajo este escenario, nuestra primera tarea fue adoptar el mejor ajuste posible de definición.

Según Bradford, Hohl, Jackson y MacQueen (2015), la legitimidad debe entenderse como un valor moral superior, tanto para visualizar como para aceptar autoridades. No obstante, el reconocimiento y la aceptación requieren de un proceso de legitimación basado en recursos culturales y sociales que han sobrevivido o experimentado modificaciones a través de diferentes disputas de poder a lo largo del tiempo (Haikio, 2012), apoyándose constantemente en la justificación de su existencia (Meinard, 2017).

Bjola (2008) argumenta que la legitimidad se evalúa permanentemente en un segundo paso, donde el individuo realiza un análisis y luego procede con una comprensión normativa de ese análisis. En otras palabras, un objeto primero debe poder comunicarse con los jueces, y luego estos jueces evaluarán si el mensaje se ajusta a lo que normativamente debería considerarse legítimo. Por comunicación y mensaje debemos entender las modificaciones estructurales, procedimentales o de conceptualización realizadas por el objeto, las acciones realizadas por el objeto, o incluso la mera existencia de este.

Turcotte, Clegg y Marin (2008) asumen una subdivisión de la legitimidad previamente sugerida por Driscoll (2006), donde la legitimidad se divide en legitimidad moral y pragmática. La legitimidad moral representa la evaluación que se le hace a un objeto de si *"es correcto hacerlo"* y se subdivide a su vez en cuatro evaluaciones básicas: legitimidad estructural, consecuente, procesal y personal. La legitimidad estructural se refiere a la composición general de las organizaciones u objetos, la legitimidad consecuente se enfoca en los logros y su efectividad, mientras que la legitimidad procesal encapsula el análisis sobre el proceso, y la legitimidad personal recae en las características del líder (Turcotte, et al., 2008).

Otros académicos adoptan la definición de legitimidad establecida por Suchman (1995): *"una percepción o suposición generalizada de que las acciones de una entidad son deseables, correctas o apropiadas dentro de un sistema social que se construye alrededor de normas, valores, creencias y definiciones"* debido a su facilidad de comprensión y una amplia aplicabilidad. Moura y Miller (2019) argumentan que, al adoptar esta definición, también queda claro que la ilegitimidad es el resultado de evaluaciones negativas realizadas por alguna audiencia social, incluso si otras audiencias encuentran aceptable el objeto. En la misma línea,

Pardo (2013) argumenta que la legitimidad es una aceptación emocional y racional de un determinado valor, legalidad y orden.

De manera más simplista, MacDonald (2018) argumenta que, para definir la legitimidad, el objeto bajo escrutinio debe evaluarse a través de una simple pregunta justificativa: ¿se debe tomar esta acción? O al menos, ¿podríamos decir que no se da el caso de que no se deba tomar? Por lo tanto, y en línea con la mayoría de las definiciones anteriores, argumentamos que la legitimidad es de hecho un juicio que se realiza sobre un objeto o una acción, donde la audiencia evalúa si el mismo es correcto, mientras alinea este juicio con una aceptación social más amplia. En consecuencia, la legitimidad debería ser un atributo muy deseable para cualquier individuo u organización.

Por ejemplo, la percepción de legitimidad organizacional se considera una base necesaria para la supervivencia institucional (Hutchins, Sinhe & Nandan, 2019) y un requisito previo antes de cualquier ascenso de categorización (Bitektine, 2011). Por otro lado, se ha sugerido que los individuos asignan objetos a lo largo de una línea de categorización de normalidad (Kahneman & Miller, 1986), donde las evaluaciones anormales evocan regularmente sentimientos de arrepentimiento (Feldman et al., 2020), favoreciendo aquellos objetos o eventos que disfrutan de legitimidad. Otras líneas de investigación argumentan que los individuos alinean sus comportamientos de consumo a las normas sociales (Wang, 2017) en una continua búsqueda de reducción de la incertidumbre (Agha & Tyler, 2017) y pertenencia (Delia, 2019). Por lo tanto, la percepción de legitimidad del grupo al que pertenezco (Ellemers, et al., 2002) ayuda a los individuos a confiar en la existencia de este (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) y a no cuestionar la relación de estatus con otros grupos (Caricati & Sollami, 2018).

Hay tres enfoques principales en los estudios de legitimidad recientes: gestión de la identidad grupal, estructuras sociales volátiles y disparidades duraderas. Con respecto al primero de estos objetivos, los científicos han documentado que niveles más altos de legitimidad favorecen los efectos de compensación (Berjot & Gillet, 2011), al tiempo que mejoran los procesos de superación (Lambiase & English, 2021) y moderan las diferencias de estatus intergrupales (Kilngeren, 2021). En cuanto al segundo objetivo, se ha sugerido que los niveles más bajos de legitimidad permiten que los grupos de bajo estatus compitan contra los grupos de mayor estatus (Carvalho, et al., 2021) de manera colectiva (Hewstone, et al., 2016), mientras imaginan cambios en el statu quo (Whright & Schmitt, 2020). Finalmente, con relación al último objetivo, Koning & Bajwa (2017) argumenta que la legitimidad es un fuerte predictor de una estrategia internacional, mientras que tiene efectos positivos en el bienestar de los miembros del grupo (Kus, et al., 2014). La Tabla 2 resume estos hallazgos.

Tabla 2. Análisis de legitimidad dentro de la literatura científica reciente y el uso de las escalas empleadas en la presente tesis.

Enfoque de estudio	Sujeto analizado	Principales Conclusiones	Estudios	Escala utilizada
Gestión de la identidad de grupo	Respuesta cognitiva, afectiva y conductual al juicio del propio grupo o a cambios contextuales	Las emociones a nivel de grupo afectan la evaluación del estado y las estrategias de afrontamiento. Las características socio estructurales predicen estrategias de consenso y competencia social, mientras que la legitimidad modera las diferencias de estatus entre grupos. Las características socio estructurales intergrupales influyen en las emociones grupales en diferentes intensidades según el país en el que se midió. Consecuencias de los mensajes mediáticos negativos y positivos. El efecto de compensación (valorar positivamente varios rasgos y negativos otros de diferentes grupos) es más probable con mayor impermeabilidad y legitimidad. La protección de la identidad individual y social se potencia en función de los motivos de la situación amenazante. Durante los períodos de crisis, la legitimidad potencia el proceso de superación.	Parque, et al., 2017; Plante, et al., 2014; Geurts y van Kilngeren, 2021; Scheifele, et al., 2019; Dang, et al., 2017; Berjot y Gillet, 2011; Reysen, et al., 2014; Lambiase e inglés, 2021	Mummendey, et al., 1999; Fidan y Balci, 2018
Estructuras sociales volátiles	Tendencias de acción colectiva	La orientación al dominio social aumenta las acciones que favorecen a los miembros del grupo de bajo estatus, con una mayor motivación para competir contra grupos de mayor estatus. La relación entre el contacto intergrupal y el cambio de motivación está mediada por la legitimidad percibida de la diferencia de estatus. Alta permeabilidad, en combinación con baja legitimidad y estabilidad es la ruta inminente hacia acciones colectivas en busca del cambio. Las acciones colectivas proambientales requieren que los individuos imaginen alternativas cognitivas del statu quo ambiental actual.	Carvalho, et al., 2021; DiBernanrdo, et al., 2021; Hewstone, et al., 2016; Reysen, et al., 2016; Wright y Schmitt, 2020	Mummendey, et al., 1999
Disparidades duraderas	Reconocimiento o cierre de la brecha de identidad social	La percepción de legitimidad de las diferencias de estatus de los diferentes grupos es un fuerte predictor de la estrategia de publicación internacional. Los niveles más altos de legitimidad percibida en la historia del grupo tienen un efecto positivo en el bienestar de sus miembros.	Koning y Bajwa, 2017; Kus, et al., 2014	Mummendey, et al., 1999

Aunque la literatura científica ha explorado la legitimidad en profundidad, poco se sabe sobre el efecto que la percepción de legitimidad organizacional tiene sobre la intención de consumo multimedia y sobre variables como la confiabilidad, la justificabilidad y la confianza, y cómo estas relaciones impactan en los comportamientos de consumo dentro de un contexto deportivo. Además, esta disertación busca examinar los eventuales cambios que estas relaciones pueden experimentar debido a la susceptibilidad de influencia de los individuos, durante un contexto de crisis o bajo un escenario de amenaza a la identidad.

Las intenciones de consumo de los aficionados hacia los productos y servicios de sus equipos favoritos son variables de desempeño esenciales para los clubes y organizaciones deportivas. Sin embargo, no se trata de una relación simple y directa, sino de un modelo complejo y multivariable. En el presente documento, argumentamos que esta intención de consumo está parcialmente mediada por variables como la percepción de legitimidad organizacional, la justificabilidad, la confiabilidad y la existencia de una identidad supraordinada. Al mismo tiempo, sugerimos que estas relaciones podrían estar moderadas por características individuales como la influencia interpersonal normativa o circunstancias contextuales como el período de crisis sanitaria o una percepción de amenaza a la identidad.

Teniendo esto en cuenta, basamos nuestro análisis en tres teorías principales: la teoría del juicio social (SJT), la teoría de la norma (NT) y la teoría de la identidad social (SIT). SJT argumenta que los individuos se involucran en un procedimiento de categorización cuando evalúan un objeto (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004), asignándolo a una latitud de aceptación o rechazo (Rhine & Severance, 1970) con respecto a su propio ancla actitudinal y proceso de ponderación (Hoffmann, von Helversen & Rieskamp, 2019). Kyle, Graefe, Manning y Bacon (2004) sugieren que esta ancla se vuelve flexible dependiendo del ego-involucramiento que el individuo pueda tener hacia el objeto bajo evaluación.

Una suposición hecha por SJT es que los individuos regularmente carecen de información completa y/o real (Zacharadis & Meyer, 1998). Por tanto, variables como la credibilidad de la fuente (Rhine & Severance, 1970), estándares sociales (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004), opiniones del grupo mayoritario (van Swol, Braun, Acosta, Carlson & Dimperio, 2018), la experiencia del individuo (Brehmer & Brehmer, 1988), y sobre todo la legitimidad (Bitektine, 2011) juegan un papel fundamental en la valoración y clasificación. Si bien este proceso se realiza cada vez que surge el objeto, los resultados de la evaluación deben considerarse estables y duraderos (Mao, Zhang, & Ma, 2018).

La NT por otro lado, argumenta que los individuos tienen la necesidad de asignar el objeto bajo juicio en una categorización de normalidad a través de un proceso centrado en el estímulo (Kahneman & Miller, 1986). La acumulación de juicios de normalidad deriva en expectativas sociales comunes (Blay, Gooden, Mellon & Stevens, 2018), guiando a los individuos hacia la asimilación de las normas sociales.

La normalidad conductual, aunque con ligeras variaciones en diferentes contextos, debe considerarse una guía universal para el comportamiento humano a través de grupos sociales, nacionalidades y culturas (Blay, Gooden, Mellon & Stevens, 2018). Al mismo tiempo, para que una norma se active formalmente, los individuos o las sociedades involucradas primero deben reconocer que la norma es aplicable, apropiada y que debe ser asimilada por otros (Bicchieri, 2006), lo que se asemeja a la definición de legitimidad dada por Suchman (1995). Blay, Gooden, Mellon y Stevens (2018) argumentan que las normas se mueven a lo largo de una línea de aceptación que tiene en un extremo el castigo a quienes no respetan la norma, mientras que el otro extremo se basa en un fuerte razonamiento y apoyo.

Finalmente, SIT se ha utilizado ampliamente para analizar las intenciones de consumo (Sardana et al., 2020), especialmente en la literatura deportiva (Knobloch et al., 2020). Los teóricos de SIT sugieren que las personas encuentran en las instituciones deportivas una herramienta importante para experimentar el sentido de pertenencia (Heere & James, 2007) y para mejorar su identidad social (Yousaf et al., 2020). La facilidad de los espacios de socialización (Hill & Green, 2000) y la irrelevancia del rendimiento (Branscombe & Wann, 1991) son factores clave que atraen a cantidades masivas de personas a seguir una liga o club deportivo. Al mismo tiempo, las personas buscan constantemente reducir su incertidumbre (Agha & Tyler, 2017), interactuando con organizaciones que gozan de mayores niveles de legitimidad (Hutchins, et al., 2019), mientras alinean sus compras con normas sociales específicas (Wang, 2017),

En nuestra primera investigación, desarrollamos una indagación que incluyó una revisión sistemática de la literatura, la aplicación de una encuesta a 405 encuestados y el posterior análisis de ecuaciones estructurales. La Selección Nacional de Fútbol de Costa Rica fue el objeto focal, mientras que el nivel de afición del individuo (FLI) se evaluó como antecedente hacia la intención de consumo multimedia y la intención de consumo de mercancía oficial. Curiosamente, esta relación estuvo parcialmente mediada por la percepción de legitimidad organizacional que los fanáticos tenían en su Federación. Este hallazgo sugiere que los individuos, independientemente de su nivel de afición, evalúan la legitimidad de su equipo antes de involucrarse en comportamientos de consumo. Más aún, después de realizar un análisis multigrupo, hubo una diferencia significativa entre los individuos con niveles más altos o bajos de influencia interpersonal normativa. Estos hallazgos sugieren que los individuos con niveles más altos de influencia interpersonal normativa tendrían una mayor propensión a consumir contenido mediático del equipo deportivo focal, lo que no fue el caso de la mercancía oficial.

Posteriormente, se procedió con una investigación que nuevamente incluyó una revisión sistemática de la literatura, la aplicación de una encuesta, en este caso a 503 encuestados y posterior análisis de ecuaciones estructurales. Dos fueron los objetos focales de este estudio, por lo que era pertinente compararlos: la Bundesliga alemana, que rápidamente tomó acciones administrativas durante el inicio de la pandemia, y la

Premier League inglesa, que parecía indiferente a las circunstancias del momento. Era importante ampliar nuestro conocimiento sobre el papel que juega la legitimidad en estas circunstancias, y si los fanáticos hacen una distinción entre aquellas ligas que se involucran en cambios rápidos de adaptación y aquellas que no hicieron nada. Se encontró una correlación positiva entre legitimidad y confiabilidad, y entre legitimidad y justificabilidad, lo que finalmente impactó positivamente en las intenciones de consumo multimedia de los fans. Por lo tanto, estos hallazgos sugieren que la legitimidad también podría jugar un papel más preponderante en el camino hacia las intenciones de consumo multimedia de los fanáticos. Aún más, después de realizar un análisis multigrupo, hubo una diferencia significativa entre los juicios hechos a una liga y la otra. Estos hallazgos sugieren que a las personas les resulta más fácil justificar y requieren menos confianza para participar en comportamientos de consumo multimedia cuando la liga focal actuó en una respuesta rápida, incluso si esa reacción hubiera parecido anormal en circunstancias normales.

Finalmente, se desarrolló una última investigación, en la que profundizamos aún más en la literatura existente, se aplicó una encuesta a 390 participantes y se procedió con un análisis de ecuaciones estructurales. En este caso, el objeto focal fueron los hinchas de los dos clubes de fútbol que aglomeran la mayoría de los aficionados de la Primera División de Costa Rica, mientras que la legitimidad, la permeabilidad y la estabilidad se evaluaron como antecedentes de lo que llamamos la identidad supraordinada del clásico. No sorprende que la relación entre la legitimidad y la identidad supraordinada resulte significativa y positiva, mientras que la permeabilidad tiene un impacto negativo sobre dicha identidad, mientras que la estabilidad no mostró ningún impacto significativo. Estos hallazgos argumentan que la legitimidad tiene un papel fundamental en las complejas relaciones involucradas cuando se analiza la intención de consumo multimedia de los fans. Aún más, después de realizar un análisis multigrupo, encontramos una diferencia significativa entre los individuos en situación de amenaza de identidad y los del grupo de control. Estos resultados sugieren que las personas experimentan una amenaza de identidad independientemente de si su club está amenazado o es su rival quien lo está, y al mismo tiempo, bajo esta situación amenazante, reforzarán su identidad supraordinada y requerirán menos justificación para consumir contenido multimedia relacionado al clásico.

Si bien los juicios individuales sobre lo que es legítimo, justificable y confiable se han revisado en el pasado, poco se sabía sobre cómo estos juicios se relacionan con la innovación, cómo se modifican durante los períodos de crisis o durante una situación de amenaza a la identidad, y cómo interactúan con identidades supraordinadas hacia las conductas de consumo. Estas variables pueden potencialmente ejercer impactos positivos en las evaluaciones de los consumidores y se consideran relevantes para los comportamientos de intención de consumo (p. ej., Dabbous y Tarhini, 2019; Ismagilova, Slade, Rana y Dwivedi, 2020; Niemi y Kantola, 2018; Sen y Morwitz, 1996).

Específicamente, este conjunto de estudios hace varias contribuciones importantes a la literatura de gestión deportiva y al campo del comportamiento del consumidor. Primero, nos permite entender cómo la percepción de legitimidad detrás de las decisiones de una organización puede afectar el consumo de mercancía oficial y contenido multimedia por parte de los fanáticos. En segundo lugar, cómo las regulaciones interpersonales influyen en la relación entre el FLI y la legitimidad para innovar, y entre FLI y dos variables de consumo, como son mercancía oficial y el contenido multimedia. En tercer lugar, nos ayuda a entender cómo varían las valoraciones que hacen los fans en periodos de crisis, favoreciendo a través de la intención de consumo multimedia a aquellas organizaciones que muestran proactividad y adaptación a las circunstancias. En cuarto lugar, muestra cómo la percepción de legitimidad mejora la confiabilidad, la identificación, y la justificación de las decisiones. En quinto lugar, descubre la existencia de una identidad supraordinada detrás del partido llamado el clásico que se juega entre las organizaciones deportivas más populares, y cómo los fanáticos actúan de manera contraintuitiva al experimentar una amenaza a la identidad tanto cuando su club focal está amenazado como cuando es su rival quien lo está. Finalmente, se contribuye a la comprensión de cómo la Teoría de la Identidad Social, la Teoría del Juicio Social y la Teoría de la Norma se entrelazan en el análisis del juicio que hacen los aficionados hacia una organización deportiva, y cómo esta evaluación podría modificar o predecir sus intenciones de consumo.

El resto del manuscrito está organizado de la siguiente manera. En la siguiente sección, se presenta el artículo titulado: *¿Cómo se ven afectados los comportamientos de consumo de los aficionados por la percepción de legitimidad organizacional por la innovación de sus federaciones?*, que se publicó en la revista Sport and Society en 2021. Luego, en el capítulo dos, encontrarán el artículo denominado: *Estrategias de los clubes de la Bundesliga alemana y la Premier League inglesa para la crisis del COVID-19: el caso de los fanáticos de las transmisiones internacionales*, aceptado en diciembre de 2021 por la revista Review of Managerial Science. El apartado siguiente corresponde a un manuscrito denominado: *La existencia de una identidad supraordinada y su impacto en la intención de consumo: el clásico y la amenaza a la identidad en el deporte*. Finalmente, la disertación presenta el capítulo de conclusiones, que incluye sugerencias para investigaciones futuras y algunas importantes implicaciones de gestión.

Summary

Most companies, indifferently of their industry, struggle for exposure, as advertising, promotion and public relations are usually expensive and intense in resource usage. However, many sport leagues, clubs and institutions enjoy of high media exposure through the internet, radio, press and television to name a few. Under this scenario, sport organizations work along and at the same time against their peers to claim fans´ multimedia consumption intentions. This variable has proven to be deem relevant in the sport industry as it helps their members to achieve higher levels of income through sponsorship, broadcasting rights and merchandising among others. Therefore, the main goal of this dissertation is to advance in the knowledge of how fans take multimedia consumption decisions, what role does legitimacy play in this relationship, which additional variables should be considered as key factors and predictors, and how they interact through different scenarios.

With this objective in mind, a deep literature review was performed, identifying the relevance of legitimacy, while evaluating other possible variables of interest and main gaps that could be bridged with additional research. Three articles were developed, one after the other, to test those relevant variables in different scenarios and circumstances. The first article evaluates the impact of the fandom level of the individual towards consumption intention behaviors of the fans, and how this relationship is mediated by the perceived organizational legitimacy.

The second article contributes to the understanding of how fans evaluate decisions taken under a crisis period, such as the covid-19 pandemic, and the impact that those evaluations have on the consumption intention behavior of broadcasting fans. In this case, perceived legitimacy proof to be a key antecedent and a relevant variable that guides fans assessments.

Afterwards, a third article was developed to provide further understanding in the relationship that legitimacy has on fan decision making towards consumption behaviors. It also adds a comprehension on the existence of a supraordinate identity, and how this identity is threatened both when my focal club is under menace and when my rival is. These aggregated results suggest that legitimacy is a foundational variable used by fans to evaluate their available sport content, and that during this evaluation, individuals may shift their decisions depending on their fandom level, the actions taken by the focal institution, and the possible threat they may experience.

1. Introduction

Sport sciences (Wang et al., 2015) and specifically sport economics (Santos-Sanchez & García-Castellanos, 2011) are experiencing a growing trend in recent literature history. As an industry, sports have continuously grown in a fast-paced manner for decades (Koenigstorfer et al., 2010), with higher interest in sports by the society (Loranca-Valle, et al., 2021) and accruing the largest audience of all entertainment shows (Knobloch, Abdallah & Billings, 2020). Football specifically, gathers a 3.5 billion fanbase worldwide (Das, 2021), while having 6 out of the 13 most valuable sport team brands (Ozanian, 2021).

The sport industry, unlike most others, enjoy of very high media exposure (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2021) and is constantly allocated as the number one media content choice by consumers (Knobloch, Abdallah & Billings, 2020). Sports are primarily consumed live (Foster, et al, 2014), therefore the relevance of delivering it to fans in as many platforms as possible (Yim & Byon, 2019). Nowadays, fans enjoy accessibility through various multimedia technological platforms (Haynes, 2021) to almost any top tier sport league. Massive audiences can now consume and experience live sport events regardless of where they are and where the event is hold (Cobbs & Hilton, 2012), delivering huge revenues to the leagues and clubs involved through broadcasting rights (Tamir, 2019), sometimes representing up to 66% of a leagues budget (Horky, 2021).

Consequently, multimedia consumption intention arises as a deem relevant variable within the sports industry (Chiu & Won, 2021). Authors have evaluated it as an outcome variable in a vast variety of topics such as relationship quality (Paek, et al., 202), marketing communication (Behrens & Uhrich, 2021), loyalty (Yoshida, et al., 2015), passion (Wakefield, 2016), social media (Tassawa, 2019), and entitativity (Dickenson & Souchon, 2018) among others. Understanding the antecedents of multimedia consumption intention could represent the difference between growing within the business or stall against other competitors in the entertainment industry.

In this line, it has been argued that a multichannel integration may contribute to communication satisfaction of the fans (Whitburn, et al., 2020), while delivering an affective relationship can enhance their consumption intention (Magnusen, et al., 2012). A good website (Chiu & Won, 2016), up to date and relevant social media (Naraine, et al., 2019) that provides accessibility through portable devices (Ha, et al., 2017) can boost fans´ engagement and participation in online communities (Trivedi, et al., 2020). Therefore, multimedia consumption intention could resemble traditional marketing traits such as fans´ loyalty (Loranca-Valle, et al., 2021) and passion (Wakefield, 2016), while working as a tool to measure audiences (Foster, et al., 2014; Yim & Byon, 2019). Table 1 shows the most recent scientific literature that uses multimedia consumption intention as a relevant variable, evaluating the impact that marketing efforts, fans´ traits, different media channels or gameday circumstances could have on this pertinent outcome.

Table 1. Multimedia consumption intention analysis within recent sports scientific literature.

Focus of Study	Subject Analyzed	Main Conclusions	Studies
Relationship marketing in professional sport	Relationship quality	Sport fan motives significantly affect relationship quality and behavioral intention regarding sport consumption.	Paek, et al., 2021; Magnusen, et al., 2012.
	Marketing communication satisfaction	Satisfaction in the integrated marketing communication, has a positive impact on behavioral intentions through relationship quality, while social atmospheric pictures increase cognitive and affective processes.	Whitburn, et al., 2020; Behrens & Uhrich, 2021.
Sport fan attachment	Sport ethnocentrism role in fans´ consumption behaviors	Sports fan ethnocentrism has an indirect influence on media consumption through player identification.	Chiu & Won, 2020;
	Sport fan´s loyalty	Fan community attachment is a long-term predictor of consumption intention, while loyalty itself requires satisfaction, commitment, trust, and service quality.	Yoshida, et al., 2015; Loranca-Valle, et al., 2021.
	Sport fan´s passion	Passion positively impacts both traditional and social media consumption behaviors	Wakefield, 2016
	Athlete impact on consumption intentions	Athlete star power and performance impacts positively the media consumption intention and advertised product consumption.	McCormick, 2017; Doyle, et al., 2020.
Digital Media	Sport website quality	Sport website quality positively impacts revisiting and media consumption intention.	Chiu & Won, 2016;
	Social media engagement	Social network communities engage during non-game time periods and show interest in rival or competing teams, while preferring promotional information coming from athletes and team information directly from the club.	Naraine, et al., 2019; Tassawa, 2019.
		Social media communications play an influential role in boosting fans´ online community engagement.	Trivedi, et al., 2020
	Smartphone usage within sports	Usage of smartphones to follow sports is positively impacted by perception toward smartphones, spot-specific factors and smartphone-specific factors.	Ha, et al., 2017
Live sports consumption	Sport network viewership and ratings	Clubs, players, and location are relevant factor to determine multimedia live sports consumption.	Foster et al., 2014;
		Goal-directed behavior can predict live game viewership, plus online activity participation and social media activity participation.	Yim & Byon, 2019
		Team trust and growth mindset positively impact support, even after a major loss.	Puente-Diaz & Cavazos-Arroyo, 2020
	Relationship between sport media consumption and attendance intention	Sport media consumption influence fans´ flow experience, which then impacts future attendance intention, including abroad events.	Kim, et a., 2018; Cho, et al., 2020.
	Retrospective media consumption experience	Game outcome has a positive impact on media consumption evaluation.	Wonseok, et al., 2017.
Sport fan identity	Entitativity	Experiencing collectiveness is positively related towards viewing intention and purchase intention.	Dickenson & Souchon, 2018.

At this point, it is relevant to define legitimacy and align this definition with the subsequent empirical research done in our dissertation, in which it appears as a deem relevant and foundational variable. Legitimacy has been evaluated under the lens of different theories such as Social Identity Theory (Bradford, et al., 2015), Discourse Theory (Haikio, 2012), Deliberative Democracy Theory (Meinard, 2017), Cognitive Experiential Self Theory (Kearns, et al., 2020), Stakeholder Theory (Turcotte, et al., 2008), Institutional Theory (Moura & Miller, 2019; MacDonald, 2018), and Procedural Theory (Mueller, 2001) to name a few. Under this scenario, our first task was to adopt the best definition fit.

According to Bradford, Hohl, Jackson and MacQueen (2015), legitimacy should be understood as a superordinate moral value both to visualize and accept authorities. Nonetheless, recognition and acceptance require a legitimation process based on cultural and social resources that have survived or experience modifications through different power contestations over time (Haikio, 2012), while constantly relying in the justification of its existence (Meinard, 2017).

Bjola (2008) argues that legitimacy is permanently evaluated in a two-step latter, where an analysis is done by the individual and then proceed with a normative understanding of that analysis. In other words, an object should first be able to communicate with the judges, and then these judges will evaluate if the message fits what should normatively be considered as legitimate. By communication and message, we should understand structural, procedural or conceptualization modifications made by the object, any actions taken by the object, or even the mere existence of the object.

Turcotte, Clegg and Marin (2008) assume a subdivision of legitimacy previously suggested by Driscoll (2006), where legitimacy is divided into moral legitimacy and pragmatic. Moral legitimacy stands for the evaluation made to an object of whether "*it is the right thing to do*" and is at the same time subdivided into four basic evaluations: structural, consequential, procedural, and personal legitimacy. Structural legitimacy stands for the organizations´ or objects´ general composition, consequential legitimacy focuses on the achievements and their effectiveness, while procedural legitimacy encapsules the analysis on the process, and personal legitimacy relies in the leaders' appeal (Turcotte, et el., 2008).

Other scholars adopt the legitimacy definition stated by Suchman (1995): "*a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions*" due to its ease of understanding and a broad applicability. Moura and Miller (2019) argue that, by adopting this definition, it is also clear that illegitimacy is the result of negative evaluations made by some social audience, even if other audiences find the object acceptable. In the same line, Pardo (2013) argues that legitimacy is an emotional and rational acceptance of a specific value, legality, and order.

In a more simplistic fashion, MacDonald (2018) argues that to define legitimacy, the object under scrutiny should be evaluated through a simple justifying question: is this action ought to be taken? Or at least, could we say that it is not the case that it ought not to be taken? Therefore, and in line with most definitions above, we argue that legitimacy is indeed a judgement made on an object or an action, where the audience evaluates the correctness of it, while aligning this judgement to a broader social acceptance. Consequently, legitimacy should be a highly desirable attribute by any individual or organization.

For instance, perceived organizational legitimacy is considered a needed baseline for institutional survivor (Hutchins, Sinhe & Nandan, 2019) and a requisite prior any categorization upgrade (Bitektine, 2011). On the other hand, it has been suggested that individuals allocate objects along a normality categorization (Kahneman & Miller, 1986), where abnormal evaluations regularly evoke sentiments of regret (Feldman et al., 2020), favoring those objects or events who enjoy of legitimacy. Other research streams argue that individuals align their consumption behaviors to social norms (Wang, 2017) in a continuous search of uncertainty reduction (Agha & Tyler, 2017) and belongingness (Delia, 2019). Therefore, legitimacy of the in-group (Ellemers, et al., 2002) and legitimacy perceptions on the group´s status help individuals to rely in the existence of the group itself (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the unquestionable status relationship with other groups (Caricati & Sollami, 2018).

There are three main focuses in the recent legitimacy studies: group identity management, volatile social structures, and long-lasting disparities. Regarding the first of these aims, scientists have documented that higher levels of legitimacy favor compensation effects (Berjot & Gillet, 2011), while enhancing overcoming processes (Lambiase & English, 2021), and moderating intergroup status differences (Kilngeren, 2021). Concerning the second aim, it has been suggested that lower levels of legitimacy allow low status groups to compete against higher status groups (Carvalho, et al., 2021) in a collective action manner (Hewstone, et al., 2016), while imagining changes in the status quo (Whright & Schmitt, 2020). Finally, in the subject of the last aim, Koning & Bajwa (2017) argue that legitimacy is a strong predictor of an international strategy, while having positive effects on the group members well-being (Kus, et al., 2014). Table 2 summarizes these findings.

Although scientific literature has explored legitimacy in depth, little is known regarding the effect that perceived organizational legitimacy has on media consumption intention, and to variables such as trustworthiness, justifiability and reliance, and how these relationships impact consumption behaviors in a sport context. In addition, this dissertation seeks to examine the eventual shifts that these relationships may experience due to individuals' influence susceptibility, during a crisis period context, or under an identity threat scenario.

Table 2. Legitimacy analysis within recent scientific literature and the usage of the scales employed in the current dissertation.

Focus of Study	Subject Analyzed	Main Conclusions	Studies	Scale used
Group identity management	Cognitive, affective and behavioral response to ingroup judgement or contextual changes	Group-level emotions impact the status appraisal and coping strategies. Socio-structural characteristics predict concealment strategies and social competition, while legitimacy moderates intergroup status differences. Socio-structural intergroup characteristics influence group-based emotions in different intensities depending on the country it was measured. Consequences of negative and positive media messages. Compensation effect (evaluate positively several traits and negative others from different groups) is more likely with higher impermeability and legitimacy. Individual and social identity protection is enhanced based on the motives of the threatening situation. During crisis periods, legitimacy enhances the overcoming process.	Park, et al., 2017; Plante, et al., 2014; Geurts & van Kilngeren, 2021; Scheifele, et al., 2019; Dang, et al., 2017; Berjot & Gillet, 2011; Reysen, et al., 2014; Lambiase & English, 2021	Mummendey, et al., 1999; Fidan & Balci, 2018
Volatile social structures	Collective action tendencies	Social dominance orientation increased actions favoring ingroup of low-status members, with higher motivation to compete against higher status groups. The relationship between intergroup contact and motivation change is mediated by perceived legitimacy of status difference. High permeability, in combination with low legitimacy and stability is the imminent route towards collective actions in search for change. Pro-environmental collective actions require the individuals to imagine cognitive alternatives of the current environmental status quo.	Carvalho, et al., 2021; DiBernanrdo, et al., 2021; Hewstone, et al., 2016; Reysen, et al., 2016; Whright & Schmitt, 2020	Mummendey, et al., 1999
Long lasting disparities	Social identity gap closing or acknowledgement	Legitimacy perception of group status difference is a strong predictor of the international publication strategy. Higher levels of perceived legitimacy on the in-group history has a positive effect on members well-being.	Koning & Bajwa, 2017; Kus, et al., 2014	Mummendey, et al., 1999

Fans' consumption intentions towards their favorite teams' products and services are essential outcome variables for sport clubs and organizations. Nonetheless, this is not a simple, straight relationship, but a complex and multi-variable model. We argue that this consumption intention is partially mediated by variables such as perceived organizational legitimacy, justifiability, trustworthiness and the existence of a supraordinate identity. At the same time, we suggest that these relations could be moderated by individual characteristics like normative interpersonal influence or contextual circumstances such as the sanitary crisis period or a perceived identity threat.

Having this in mind, we based our analysis using three main theories: Social Judgement Theory (SJT), Norm Theory (NT) and Social Identity Theory (SIT). SJT argues that individuals engage in a categorization procedure when evaluating an object (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon,2004), allocating it into a latitude of acceptance or rejection (Rhine & Severance, 1970) regarding their own attitudinal anchor and weighting process (Hoffmann, von Helversen & Rieskamp, 2019). Kyle, Graefe, Manning and Bacon (2004) suggest that this anchor becomes flexible depending on the ego-involvement the individual could have towards the object under evaluation.

An assumption made by SJT is that individuals regularly lack of complete and/or real information (Zacharadis & Meyer, 1998). Therefore, variables such as credibility of the source (Rhine & Severance, 1970), social standards (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004), majority group opinions (van Swol, Braun, Acosta, Carlson & Dimperio, 2018), individuals´ experience (Brehmer & Brehmer, 1988), and above them all legitimacy (Bitektine, 2011) play a key role in the assessment and classification. Even though this process is made every time the object arises, the evaluation results should be considered as stable and long-lasting (Mao, Zhang, & Ma, 2018).

Norm Theory (NT) on the other hand argues that individuals have the need to allocate the object under judgement into a normality categorization through a stimulus centered process (Kahneman & Miller, 1986). The accumulation of normality judgements derives into common social expectations (Blay, Gooden, Mellon & Stevens, 2018), guiding individuals into the assimilation of social norms.

Behavioral normality, although with slight variations in different contexts, should be considered a universal guidance for human behavior through social groups, nationalities, and cultures (Blay, Gooden, Mellon & Stevens, 2018). At the same time, for a norm to formally be activated, involved individuals or societies should first recognize that the norm is applicable, appropriate, and should be assimilated by others (Bicchieri, 2006), which resembles the definition of legitimacy given by Suchman (1995). Blay, Gooden, Mellon and Stevens (2018) argue that norms move along an acceptance line that has in one extreme punishment to those who disrespect the norm, while the other end relies in strong reasoning and support.

Finally, SIT has been broadly used to analyze consumption intentions (Sardana et al., 2020), especially in the sport literature (Knobloch et al., 2020). SIT theorists suggest that individuals find sport institutions as an important tool to experience sense of belonging (Heere & James, 2007) and to enhance their social identity (Yousaf et al., 2020). The ease of socialization spaces (Hill & Green, 2000) and irrelevance of performance (Branscombe & Wann, 1991) are key factors that attract massive amounts of people to follow a sport league or club. At the same time, individuals are constantly searching to reduce their uncertainty (Agha & Tyler, 2017), engaging with organizations who enjoy of higher levels of legitimacy (Hutchins, et al., 2019), while aligning their purchases with specific social norms (Wang, 2017), especially those individuals who experience higher levels of identification (Hsieh, 2014).

In our first research, we developed an investigation that included a systematic literature review, the application of a survey to 405 respondents and subsequent structural equation analysis. Costa Rica´s National Football Team was the focal object, while fandom level of the individual (FLI) was tested as an antecedent towards multimedia consumption intention and official merchandise consumption intention. Interestingly, this relationship was partially mediated by the perceived organizational legitimacy that fans had on their Federation. This finding suggests that individuals, regardless of their fandom level, evaluate their team´s legitimacy prior to engage in consumption behaviors. Even further, after performing a multi-group analysis, there was a significant difference between individuals with higher or lower levels of normative interpersonal influence. These findings suggest that individuals with higher levels of normative interpersonal influence would have a greater propensity to consume media content of the focal sport team, which was not the case of official merchandise.

Afterwards, we proceeded with an investigation that again included a systematic literature review, the application of a survey, in this case to 503 respondents and subsequent structural equation analysis. There were two focal objects in this study, as it was pertinent to compare them: the German Bundesliga, which rapidly took administrative actions during the beginning of the pandemic, and the English Premier League, which seemed to be indifferent to the circumstances at that moment. It was important to expand our knowledge on the role that legitimacy play under these circumstances, and if fans make a distinction between those leagues who engage in rapid adaptive changes and those who did nothing. A positive correlation was found between legitimacy and trustworthiness, and between legitimacy and justifiability, which at the end impacted positively the fans media consumption intentions. Therefore, these findings suggest that legitimacy could also play a more preponderant role in route towards fans´ media consumption intentions. Even further, after performing a multi-group analysis, there was a significant difference between the judgements made to one league and the other. These findings suggest that individuals find it easier to

justify and require less reliance to engage in media consumption behaviors when the focal league acted in a rapid response, even if that reaction would have seemed abnormal in regular circumstances.

Finally, a last investigation was developed, in which we went even deeper into the existent literature, applied a survey to 390 respondents and proceeded with an structural equation analysis. In this case, the focal object were the fans of the two major football clubs in the Costa Rican First Division League, while legitimacy, along with permeability and stability, were tested as antecedents of what we called the supraordinate identity of *the classic.* Not surprising, the relationship between legitimacy and the supraordinate identity prove to be significant and positive, while permeability has a negative impact on supraordinate identity, and stability showed no significant impact at all. These findings argue that legitimacy has a foundational role in the complex relationships involved when analyzing fans media consumption intention. Even further, after performing a multi-group analysis, we found a significant difference between individuals under an identity threat situation and those in the control group. These results suggest that individuals experience an identity threat regardless of if their club is under menace or their rival is, and at the same time, under this threatening situation, they will enhance their supraordinate identity while requiring less justifiability to demand related media content.

Although individual judgements on what is legitimate, justifiable, and dependable has been overviewed in the past, little was known on how these judgements relate with innovativeness, how they modify during crisis periods or during an identity threat situation, and how they interact with supraordinate identities towards consumption behaviors. These variables can potentially exert positive impacts on consumer evaluations and are deemed relevant for consumption intention behaviors (e.g., Dabbous & Tarhini, 2019; Ismagilova, Slade, Rana & Dwivedi, 2020; Niemi & Kantola, 2018; Sen & Morwitz, 1996).

Specifically, this set of studies make several important contributions to the sport management literature and the consumer behavior field. First, it allows us to understand how the legitimacy perception behind an organizations' decisions can affect the fans consumption of official merchandise and multimedia content. Second, how interpersonal regulations influence the relationship between the fandom level of the individual (FLI) and legitimacy to innovate, and between FLI and two consumption variables, such as official merchandise and multimedia. Third, it helps us understand how evaluations made by fans vary during crisis periods, favoring through multimedia consumption intention those organizations who proactively show and adaptation to the circumstances. Fourth, it shows how legitimacy perception enhance trustworthiness, identification, and justifiability of decisions. Fifth, it uncovers the existence of a supraordinate identity behind *The Classic* match that is played between the most popular sport organizations, and how fans act counterintuitively by experiencing an identity threat both when their focal club is under menace, or their rival is. Finally, they contribute to the understanding of how Social Identity Theory, Social Judgment

Theory and Norm Theory are intertwined in the analysis of the judgment made by fans towards a sports organization, and how this evaluation could modify or predict their consumption intentions.

The remainder of the manuscript is organized as follows. In the next section, the manuscript entitled: *How are fans teams' consumption behaviors impacted by their federations' innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy*, which was published in Sport and Society in 2021 is presented. Then, in chapter two you will find the paper named: *Strategies of German Bundesliga and English Premier League Clubs for the COVID-19 Crisis: The Case of International Broadcasting Fans,* accepted in December 2021 by the journal Review of Managerial Science. The subsequent section corresponds to a manuscript called: *The existence of a Supraordinate Identity and its Impact on the Consumption Intention: The Classic and Identity Threat Within Sports*. Finally, the dissertation presents conclusions chapter, with suggestions for future investigations and some significant managerial implications.

2. How are fans teams' consumption behaviors impacted by their federations' innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy (published in Sport & Society, 2021)

2.1. Abstract

It seems clear through academic literature that fans' consumption intentions towards their favourite teams' products and services increases along with their fandom. We analyse how these classic relationships towards a sports team are impacted by the judgement made towards the administrative/regulatory institution that oversees the team, through the perceived legitimacy of its innovative initiatives. Using SEM, a partial mediation model suggests that multimedia consumption intention and official merchandise consumption intention are partially mediated by the innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy. Additionally, the multimedia consumption intention string is moderated by normative interpersonal influence. Findings contribute to both Social Identity Theory and Social Judgement Theory by showing how they are intertwined in a sports context. Fans use the National Football team as a tool for their self-identity while judgements made towards the National Football Federation's capacity for innovation to open new markets, regulate their consumption intentions.

Keywords: innovativeness; legitimacy; multimedia consumption; official merchandise consumption; sports fan; normative interpersonal influence

2.2. Introduction

Sports broadcasting generates massive spectator audience (Knobloch-Westerwick, Abdallah, and Billings 2020). Viewers, are mostly fans that try to keep on track with their favourite teams, and it does not matter if they follow the sport events through TV, radio, online streaming or at the stands (Coates, Humphreys, and Zhou 2014). Additionally, fan shows their fandom through official merchandise usage, which is important from the income point of view of the sports institution (Fisher and Wakefield 1998), and the identification and acceptance within the in-group for the individual (Heere and James 2007).

In this relationship between the fan and the consumption of multimedia and official merchandise, sports marketing literature has given relevant attention (e.g. Kim, Trail, and Ko 2011; Alonso-Dos Santos, Velasco-Vizcaíno, and Pérez-Campos 2020). However, no attention has been paid to how this consumption on the part of the fans could depend on whether (or not) they perceive the actions carried out by the Federation (entity that organizes, regulate and oversees the sports team) as appropriate.

It is common for Federations to make innovative management decisions that go beyond the sports field (for example, selling official merchandise in new markets) that could indirectly affect the consumption of official merchandise and multimedia by fans. This effect could not necessarily be based on the innovative decisions made by the Federation, but rather, on the degree of legitimacy perceived in it to make such

decisions. In fact, many of the actions carried out by the organizations could be perceived as not legitimate to the extent that they do not agree with a set of beliefs (in this case from the fans) regarding the fulfillment of expectations, knowledge, and the structure to perform properly and thus ensure the goals' accomplishment (Fidan and Balci 2018). That is how, the role that legitimacy plays on fans' consumption intention behaviors should be relevant (Reimann et al. 2012), because it can impact the judgements made by individuals (Bitektine 2011) as to whether the federation is legitimate, in this case, to innovate opening new markets.

Considering that in literature there is little study background that addresses this role of legitimacy in the innovative context, the present study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the mediating role played by the National Football Federation's perceived organizational legitimacy to innovate (POL), in the relationship between the fandom level of the individual (FLI) and multimedia consumption intention (MMCI), and FLI and official merchandise consumption intention (OMCI). Additionally, the moderating role of normative interpersonal influence (NII) in the relationship between FLI and a) POL, b) MMCI, and c) OMCI is examined.

Specifically, this study makes three important contributions to the sport management literature and specifically in the innovative management practices. First, this study allows us to understand how the legitimacy behind the innovative decisions made by the federations can affect the consumption of official merchandise and multimedia by fans. Second, how interpersonal regulations influence the relationship between FLI and legitimacy to innovate, and between FLI and two consumption variables, such as official merchandise and multimedia. Finally, this study contributes to the understanding of how both Social Identity Theory and Social Judgment Theory play an important role in the judgment made towards the federation by the fans, modifying in this way, their consumption intention towards the sports team under their regulation.

2.3. Conceptual development

2.3.1. Social Judgement Theory (SJT) and Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Theorists argue that social judgement involve a categorization process in reference to an attitudinal anchor that guides the evaluation process (Kyle et al. 2004). This anchor works as an acceptance latitude, and therefore, it also imposes the conditions for a latitude of rejection (Rhine and Severance 1970). In many cases, the decision could be as easy as assimilating information that supports the a-priori individuals' opinion or rejecting those which are antagonistic to their preconceptions (Amos et al. 2019), nonetheless, many incoming information falls somewhere in between these two extremes, forcing individuals to a weighting process (Hoffmann, von Helversen, and Rieskamp 2019)

Disregarding contextual and individual differences, there is a common framework for individuals to proceed with their judgements, which includes legitimacy, status, and reputation (Bitektine 2011). Bitektine (2011) argues that legitimacy is the allocation of the evaluated object to a known organizational form, status is the allocation to a rank group, and reputation involves the evaluation of the organizations future conduct/performing. Although the 3 variables are conjunctly analyzed, legitimacy should be considered as the first step in the latter, and from this point forward the focus of attention of this study.

SIT is widely used within the sports literature (Knobloch-Westerwick, Abdallah, and Billings 2020), arguing that individuals create through sport institutions a social identity that transcend personal and private identity (Yousaf, Bashir, and Mishra 2020). In this regard, sports and sport institutions offer a valuable tool of identity for individuals, as the association with a club creates a sense of attachment with a larger social structure (Heere and James 2007), enabling a socialization space (Hill and Green 2000) irrespective the competition or even the clubs performance (Branscombe and Wann 1991).

The individual in his pursuit of achieving a social identity (SIT) could be influenced by the legitimacy perception (SJT) of the institution who organizes and regulates the appropriate development of the sport competitions or teams. In other words, through the judgement made towards the innovative decisions of the organizing institution, individuals could modify their consumption intention towards the sports team under their regulation.

2.3.2. *Fandom level of the individual, a major role for the individual's identity*

Fan, as a concept, has been ordinarily linked to sports (Gantz et al. 2006) and is widely accepted as an antecedent of relationship equity within the sports industry (Cadwallader, Boyd, and Thomas 2012).

Becoming a fan, and moreover a big fan is not a magical event, although in many cases it represents a prescribe affiliation due to, for example, nationality (Knobloch-Westerwick, Abdallah, and Billings 2020), you don't open your eyes and realize you are now a supporter (Funk and James 2001). Individuals could first become fan of a sport, then a team and afterwards to a specific athlete (Hunt and Bashaw 1999). They could actually start with the national team through patriotism itself (Gerke 2019), or simply get associated initially to a sport institution to sense the feeling of being part of the community (Heere and James 2007) and therefore diminishing isolation (Kim and Kim 2020).

Watching sport events is not only exciting, but also an affective experience (Kim and Kim 2020), that provokes high emotional activation (Unanue et al. 2020). Sport events open spaces for socialization, interaction, and sense of community (Gantz et al. 2006). In these matters, it is easier for a fan to watch a game through the media (Kim, Trail, and Ko 2011) rather than assuming the costs and risks of attending to

the stadium (Coates, Humphreys, and Zhou 2014), and therefore creating a sense of comradery among them when watching games live (Tamir 2019), augmenting the multimedia consumption intention.

On the other hand, official merchandise consumption intention is usually associated to highly identified fans (Cadwallader, Boyd, and Thomas 2012), with higher engagement with the sports club (Cordina, Gannon, and Croall 2019). The team logo on a jersey, is perceived as a brand itself by 59% of consumers (Kwon and Armstrong 2006), whilst individuals experience both reflective and impulsive motives to purchase official sports team merchandise (Chen et al. 2019).

In this matters, innovation has proven to be a key for sports institutions (Yoshida, James, and Cronin 2013), suggesting that innovativeness enhances consumption intention (Wang, Cheng, and Hsiao 2020) and that through it, the classic on-field performance constraint could be weakened (Richelieu and Webb 2017). Therefore, a higher level of perceived legitimacy on the sports institution innovativeness could be reflected on the viewership and official merchandise usage by fans, while this perceived legitimacy could in fact be enhanced by the fandom level of the individual.

Becoming a big fan demands an emotional commitment (Hwang 2017) and while the attachment increases, individuals integrate the team into their self-identity (Prayag et al. 2020), making of the sport/team a central element of their lives (Tamir 2019), to the extent of seen themselves as members of the sport institution instead of mere consumers (Heere and James 2007). This is how, in this sense of belonging scenario, fans tend to increase their consumption to strengthen their bond with the team through multimedia and merchandising products (Kim, Trail, and Ko 2011), guiding us to our first three hypothesis:

H1: Higher levels of fandom increase the multimedia consumption intention.

H2: Higher levels of fandom increase the official merchandise consumption intention.

H3: Higher levels of fandom increase the innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy.

2.3.3. *The role of legitimacy in the fans' judgement evaluation*

Drawing on SJT, legitimacy perception is considered a baseline needed in order to succeed (Hutchins, Sinha, and Nandan 2019) and a required characteristic in order to access additional judgement upgrades (Bitektine 2011). Legitimacy 'is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions' (Suchman 1995, 574).

All institutions regardless their nature or industry, seek for legitimacy perception, as it has considered in different research contexts (Aurenhammer 2020; Greenwood and Roederer-Rynning 2020; Munta 2020;

Adhikari, Pell, and Cheah 2020). The majority of this studies suggest that legitimacy could be achieved through collective justification (McKeown et al. 2020).

Currently people in large cities tend to experience less intimate relationships (Heere and James 2007), therefore sport events and sports institutions help individuals in their socialization (Gantz et al. 2006) and interpersonal relationships (Hunt and Bashaw 1999) through the creation of innovative gathering spaces (e.g. live streaming communities; fan-zones) during sport events. Official team apparel is an easy way for individuals to look-alike and become a social member instantly.

It has been suggested that general settings are not transferable to sport settings (Nalbantis, Fahrner, and Pawlowski 2017), and that sports transmissions gather the biggest audience of all TV shows (Knobloch-Westerwick, Abdallah, and Billings 2020), continuously leading the battle for entertainment dollars (Hill and Green 2000). This massification process itself could enhance the legitimacy of the activity by supporting a latitude of acceptance widely accepted by a specific population (Rhine and Severance 1970).

Within sports, legitimacy has been suggested to have a direct impact on sponsorship sales (Navarro-Picado 2019), the public acceptance of sport-educational systems (Thomsen and Nørgaard 2020), and how the creation of an interlocutor could help diminish violent events between the police and fans, or within rival fans (Stott et al. 2020). Fans deal with an internal legitimacy; individual perception that he/she is member of that group, and an external legitimacy; which stands to the perception that third parties (e.g. recognition from the National Football Federation) consider the individual as an appropriate fan (Biscaia et al. 2018). Nonetheless, little is known regarding the impact of the innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy (POL) on fan consumption intention, guiding us to the next hypothesis:

H4a: Innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy mediates the relationship between the fandom level of the individual and the individuals' multimedia consumption intention.

H4b: Innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy has a direct impact on the individuals' multimedia consumption intention.

H5a: Innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy mediates the relationship between being the fandom level of the individual and the individuals' official merchandise consumption intention.

H5b: Innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy has a direct impact on the individuals' official merchandise consumption intention.

2.3.4. *Normative influence of relevant others; doing things just because you are expected to*

Interpersonal influence is a 2-dimension construct that captures the individuals' need to self-categorize into a relevant group by buying, using or behaving in a manner that complies with the expectations of members from that focused group (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989). This could be done by seeking information or through normative actions.

While one of the dimensions is more informational, in the sense of observing and gathering information (Simpson, Siguaw, and Cadogan 2008; Koh and Leng 2017), the normative dimension refers to the tendency of individuals to conform to social norms (Zhan and He 2012). It has been suggested that susceptibility to third party influence creates a sense of interdependence (Wallace, Buil, and de Chernatony 2020), guiding negative opinions (Sarkar et al. 2020), positive opinions (Khurana, Kumar, and Sidhpuria 2020), or the purchase of aspirational (Kastanakis and Balabanis 2012) or luxurious brands (Kiatkawsin and Han 2019; Ngo et al. 2020).

Up to some extreme, people perceive the necessity to fit in and be accepted by others who are members of an *important* social group (Scheinbaum et al. 2020). Individuals with higher levels of interpersonal influence search both the need of approval and the avoidance of disapproval (Sharma and Klein 2020). This trait is commonplace for all human beings as individuals learn to rely on third party judgements as sources of evidence (Teo, Leng, and Phua 2019). It has been argued that in conditions of less experience (first time buying a product) vs higher experience (subsequent purchases), people tend to be more susceptible to interpersonal influence (Simpson, Siguaw, and Cadogan 2008).

Individuals build social connections through brands (Escalas and Bettman 2005), for example, localness of a brand (Batra et al. 2000). The National Football Team (Gerke 2019), could serve as a normative platform for fandom since early ages in childhood, due to a learned acceptable social behavior (Friestad and Wright 1994) or a collective legitimation conduct (McKeown et al. 2020). As time passes and the individual gets older, he/she could just behave in a consistent manner according to the focused social group (Childers and Rao 1992) which enhance the legitimacy of the groups' trends.

Going forward in this dissertation, we will focus on the normative dimension of interpersonal influence, as our dependent variables are all behaviors and demand visible actions, not necessarily information seeking. In this regard, is important to notice that according to normative interpersonal influence (NII), individuals tend to avoid sanctions or receive rewards through their compliance (Kim and Kim 2015), pushing people to behave in a specific matter in order to be accepted within a target social group (Wang, Yu, and Wei 2012). This effect is suggested to be stronger during public visible situations (Zhan and He 2012), due to the opportunity that highly noticeable incidents gives them a better chance to gain positive impressions

(Sharma, Sivakumaran, and Marshall 2010) in contrast of doing so in private. Nonetheless, innovation in the sports context depend on the proactiveness evaluation (Ratten 2011) and consumer characteristics (Mahan 2011) when assessing the legitimacy of the innovative action. Therefore, friends, family, co-workers and other relevant others, could impact decisions (Ebren 2009) on whether to buy or not official apparel or where and with whom to watch a game, guiding us to the last hypothesis.

H6a: Higher levels of Normative Interpersonal Influence moderates positively the relationship between Fandom Level of the Individual and Multimedia Consumption Intention.

H6b: Higher levels of Normative Interpersonal Influence moderates positively the relationship between Fandom Level of the Individual and Official Merchandise Consumption Intention.

H6c: Higher levels of Normative Interpersonal Influence moderates positively the relationship between Fandom Level of the Individual and innovativeness Perceived Organizational Legitimacy.

Figure 1. Research model.
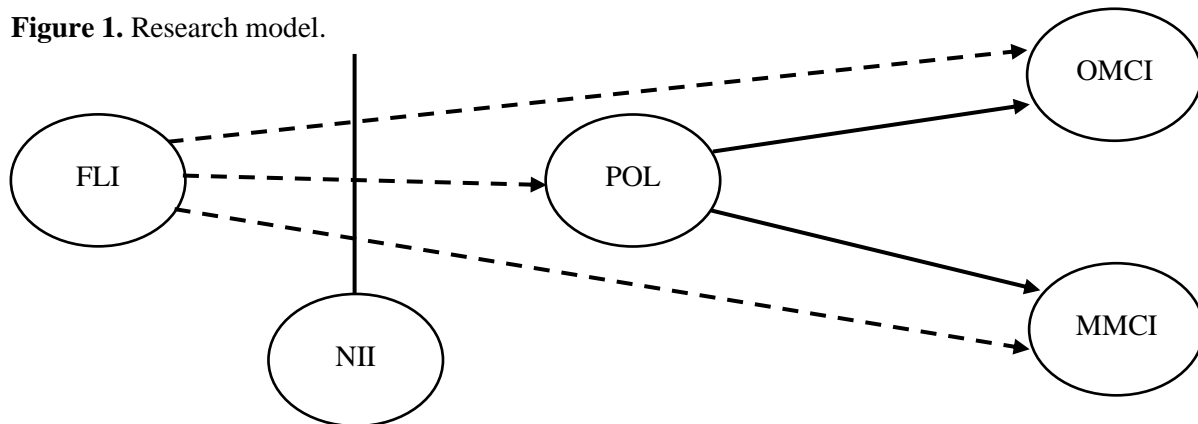
Note: ‑ ‑ ‑► indicates that hypothesis is affected by moderation.

2.4. Methods

2.4.1. Data Collection system and sample

All responses were obtained between November 2019 and February 2020. After eliminating incomplete questionnaires and/or invalid answers, a total of 405 valid responses were officially collected. Subjects are students from different programs (degree and continual education) in the School of Business at Universidad de Costa Rica. All respondents were 18 years or older with a mean of 25.83; 208 women, 195 men and 2 undetermined.

2.4.2. Measures

Scales used in the current dissertation are based on previously employed measurements. Back-translation was needed because scales were originally in English and the final questionnaire was applied in Spanish

(Chapman and Carter 1979). Content validity was obtained through an expert-judgement made preceding the application of the final Spanish version (Crocker and Algina 2006).

To assess official merchandise consumption intention (OMCI), a three-item scale was used (Kim, Trail, and Ko 2011), with items such as *'I am likely to purchase National Football Team's licensed merchandise in the future'.* Multimedia consumption intention (MMCI) is also a three-item scale based on Kim, Trail and Ko (2011), which includes items such as *'I will watch or listen to the National Football Team's games through the media (e.g. TV, Internet, Radio, etc.)'.*

NII measurement is based on the normative dimension of the susceptibility to interpersonal influence scale (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989). This scale has 8 items which includes questions like *'I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products and brands that others purchase'.*

On the other hand, respondents were asked to respond to a series of assertions regarding the innovativeness degree of legitimacy of the National Football Federation when opening new markets for its current products (for example, selling in other countries and/or selling its products aimed at companies). This is how POL was captured through an eight-item scale based on (Fidan and Balci 2018). One example of the items included in this scale is *'The structure of the National Football Federation is designed to meet the standards required by the sports industry when innovating'.*

All these measurements used a 7-point Lickert type ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, or definitely no to definitely yes accordingly (see appendix).

To capture FLI, the Big-Fan Index (O'Roark, Wood, and DeGaris 2010) was employed. This measurement allows respondents to evaluate their fandom as a continuum, moving from (0) no-fan up to (3) big-fan. It has been argued that when the concept is clear and singular, a single-item approach is better due to its ease to answer by the respondent (Bergkvist and Rossiter 2007), helping the questionnaire in its parsimony and ease of administration (Fuchs and Diamantopoulos 2009). This was supported by Van Driel, Gantz and Lewis (2019) and used in different studies (Billings and Ruihley 2013; Schallhorn, Knoll, and Schramm 2017).

2.5. Results

2.5.1. Factor analysis

Once data was ready, an EFA using SPSS was employed to address reliability and dimensionality of measures (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Cronbach's alpha threshold was set to a minimum value of .7 (Nunnally 1994). Afterwards, unidimensionality of the scales was tested through a factor extraction based

on the existence of eigenvalues higher than 1. Additionally, factor loadings were set to a threshold of .5 points or higher with a significant total explained variance.

Then, a CFA was performed through AMOS, which contributes with more security in samples that could not accomplish multivariate normality (Casaló, Flavián, and Guinalíu 2011). Model fit was accomplished with an RMSEA 0.052, CFI 0.973, IFI 0.973, TLI 0.967 and a normed X^2 of 2.08. According to the results obtained (see table 3), no items were eliminated as high levels of convergence, R^2, and model fit were achieved. A composite reliability test was performed (Jöreskog 1971), with a threshold of 0.65 (Steenkamp and Geyskens 2006) in order to avoid the suggested underestimation made by Cronbach's alpha (Smith 1974). Additionally, convergent validity was tested through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), using a 0.5 threshold (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis, composite reliability, and convergent validity.

Item	Standardized Solution	t-Value	Item R²	Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
MMCI_01	.777	30.840***	.604	Multimedia Consumption Intention	.894	.77	.53
MMCI_02	.925	34.793***	.855				
MMCI_03	.888	34.442***	.789				
OMCI_01	.903	30.353***	.816	Official Merchandise Consumption Intention	.938	.79	.56
OMCI_02	.891	30.131***	.794				
OMCI_03	.947	30.233***	.898				
POL_01	.627	57.870***	.392	Perceived Organizational Legitimacy	.846	.93	.63
POL_02	.610	51.142***	.374				
POL_03	.552	53.623***	.305				
POL_04	.694	59.803***	.482				
POL_05	.687	55.935***	.472				
POL_06	.588	56.643***	.345				
POL_07	.617	56.346***	.379				
POL_08	.745	55.690***	.555				

Note: *** stands for significance at p<.01 level.

Finally, discriminant validity was tested by determining that the square root of the AVE for each latent variable is bigger than the correlations among any pair of constructs (Yadav, Balaji, and Jebarajakirthy 2019). All these results suggest adequate psychometric properties of the measurement scales.

Table 4. Correlation analysis and discriminant reliability.

Constructs	1	2	3	4
1. Multimedia Consumption Intention	**.73**			
2. Official Merchandise Consumption Intention	.676	**.75**		
3. Perceived Organizational Legitimacy	.223	.257	**.79**	
4. Fandom Level of the Individual	.701	.589	.125	n.a.
Mean	3.622	2.643	3.819	1.18
Standard deviation	1.984	1.659	0.955	0.939

Note: all correlations significant at p<.01 level. Values in diagonal are square root of average variance extracted (AVE) of the latent variables.

2.5.2. *Evaluation of the structural model*

Using AMOS for SPSS, a structural equation model was developed to test hypothesis 1 through 5b, results appear in figure 3. The model fit achieves satisfactory values with an RMSEA=0.071, a CFI=0.950, the IFI=0.950, the TLI=0.939 and a normed X^2=3.49. Results suggest that OMCI is positively affected by being a fan (.578, p<.01) and the perceived organizational legitimacy (.216, p<.01), while MMCI is positively affected by being a fan (.703, p<01) and the perceived organizational legitimacy (.173, p<01). This results support hypothesis 1, 4b, 2 and 5b respectively. In the other hand, being a fan has a direct effect on POL (.140, p<.05) giving support to hypothesis 3. Finally, the positive relationship between being a fan and OMCI (p<.01) and MMCI (p<.01) appears as partially mediated by POL supporting hypothesis 4a and 5a respectively.

Figure 2. Structural equation model.
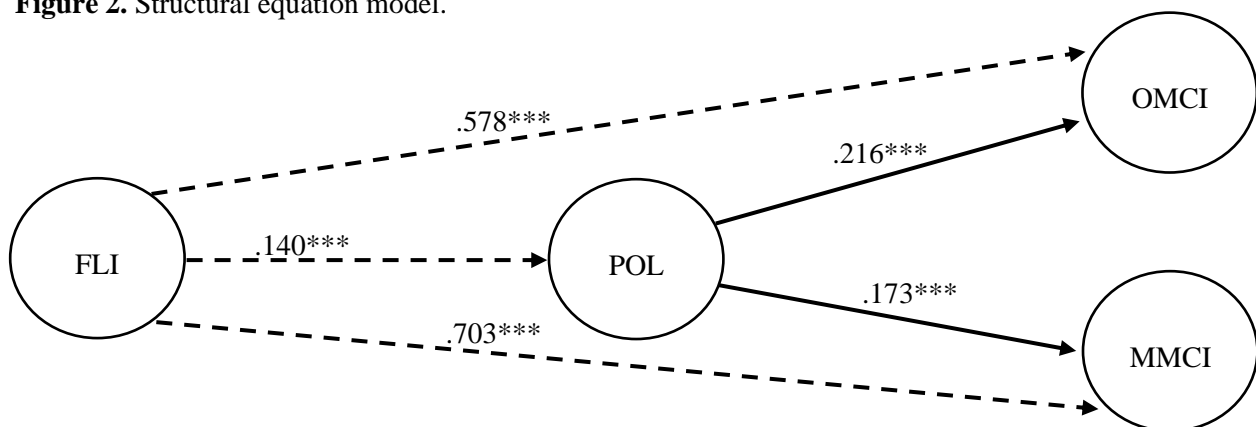
Note: **p<.05 ***p<.01. Model also tested through PROCESS with satisfactory results (confidence intervals of partial mediation for OMCI=0.0061 : 0.0448 and MMCI=0.0042 : 0.0351).

The partial mediation effect was tested through the Bootstrap methodology proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2004) using PROCESS for SPSS, with satisfactory results. Confidence intervals for these partial mediations are, in the case of FLI → POL → OMCI 0.0061:0.0448 while for FLI → POL → MMCI are 0.0042:0.0351. This methodology has been used recently in a variety of contexts such as job burnout (Wang & Chen, 2022), physical exercise satisfaction (Wang, et al., 2022), and co-branding (Shan, et al., 2022) among others.

The model was contrasted against alternative models which prove to have lower fit, and therefore justifying the selection of the original partial mediation model shown in figure 3. Figure 4 shows the contrasting models, with model B (direct effects) having an RMSEA=0.071, a CFI=0.948, the IFI=0.948, the TLI=0.937 and a normed X^2=3.06, and model C (full mediation) accounted for an RMSEA=0.129, a CFI=0.830, the IFI=0.831, the TLI=0.797 and a normed X^2=7.69.

Figure 3. Rival models.

Model B

Model C
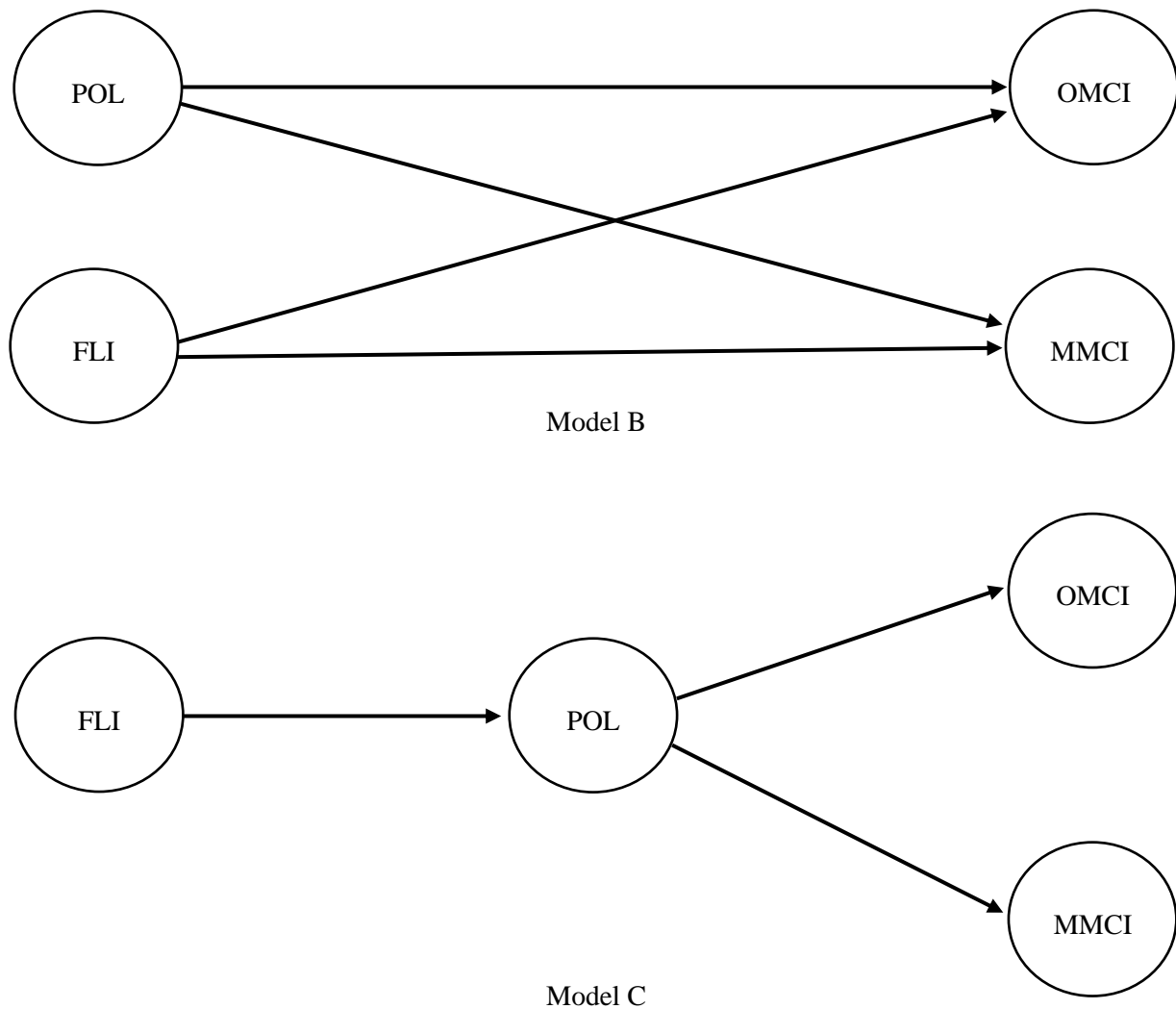
A multi-sample analysis was performed to test the moderating effect of NII, which correspond to hypothesis 6a through 6c. The sample was divided into two groups corresponding to the arithmetic mean of the moderating variable, eliminating those cases half standard deviation up and down. One group accounted for 127 individuals with high NII, while the other for 152 with low NII. This same methodology has been used in previous research (Casaló, Flavián, and Guinalíu 2011).

Prior to analyze the results, a CFA invariance test between the 2 different groups (high and low NII) was performed (Silva, Monteiro, and Sobreiro 2019). Three tests are recommended; 1) control for configural invariance; good model fit when running the model with 2 groups. 2) Check for metric invariance through a CFI difference between unconstrained and measurement weights below .01, and finally 3) structural invariance; insignificance of the chi-square differences between the unconstrained and the constrained model (Cheung and Rensvold 2009). Configural invariance is supported with RMSEA = 0.049, CFI=0.951, IFI=.952, TLI=.939 and normed X^2= 1.66, while metric invariance is also satisfactory with a CFI difference of .004 (.951-.947). Chi-square difference test ($X^2 = 364.32 \; dF = 22 \; vs \; X^2 = 281.86 \; dF = 170$) was not accomplished, nonetheless we assume invariance as 2 out of 3 tests were satisfactory, and the suggestion made by Cheung and Rensvold (2002) regarding restrictiveness and lack of practicality of the chi-square difference test, backed more recently by other researchers (French and Finch 2006).

By generating an individual structural solution for each group, multi-sample analysis allows to distinguish the differences between the coefficients of the two models. Table 5 show the results of this test, arguing that there is no difference between high and low NII individuals when analyzing the relationship between being a fan and OMCI, and being a fan and POL. Nonetheless, there is a significant difference between high and low NII individuals when the relationship corresponds to being a fan and MMCI. This suggests that high NII has a positive effect on fans when they confront the idea of watching a game through the media but is indifferent when deciding whether to buy official merchandise or setting a legitimacy judgement of the sports institution.

Table 5. Multi-sample analysis – High NII vs Low NII.

Constraint	Estimated Coefficient (Low)	Estimated Coefficient (High)	(d.f) X^2 differences	Probability
FLI→OMCI	.544***	.586***	(1) .595	.441
FLI→MMCI	.699***	.753***	(1) .354	.060*
FLI→POL	.080***	.084***	(1) .009	.925

Note: *<.10 **p<.05 ***p<.01

2.6. Discussion and conclusions

The main objective of this paper is to test how the innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy of a Federation (organizing institution) could impact the consumption intention behaviors of the fans towards the National Football Team (sports team). We develop a model based on SIT and SJT to address the enquiry of whether perceived organizational legitimacy regarding its innovativeness opening new markets, mediates or not the fans' multimedia and official merchandise consumption intention relationships.

As expected by SIT, findings suggest that higher fandom has a positive effect on multimedia and official merchandise consumption intention. Nonetheless, the most important finding is that, in line with SJT, these relationships are partially mediated by the innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy when opening new markets. To know, the higher the perceived organizational legitimacy on the Federation (regulatory/administrative institution), the higher the consumption intention on the sports team.

These findings suggest that sport institutions should care not only for what happens in the field, or with the athletes, but also on how the community perceives the innovativeness legitimacy of the upper-level institutions that regulate, organize and represent the teams, when trying to open new markets. A poor performance on the pitch could benefit from a high legitimacy perception of the organizing institution, while a poor legitimacy perception of this institution could ruin a good sporting result.

Secondly, NII positively moderates the relationship between fandom and watching/listening the games, which aligns with SIT and the constantly increasing figures of sports broadcasting viewers. Surprisingly, NII showed no effect on the consumption of official merchandise and on the innovativeness perceived organizational legitimacy. There is a chance that additional ingredients are analyzed by individuals such as price; is much cheaper to watch a game than to purchase a new jersey. Maybe individuals separate the sport events into product (entertainment – socialization spaces) and brand (actually wearing official merchandise) (Torres-Moraga, Vásquez-Parraga, and Zamora-González 2008; Kwon and Armstrong 2006) therefore making them interested only in satisfying the first one.

On the other hand, that NII has no moderation effect on POL suggests that fans do not care on the opinions of others regarding the legitimacy of their sports institution. POL judgement could be a more individual assessment, that could, up to some extremes be blurred by the amount of fandom that the individual has. Therefore, innovating in the search of new markets is irrelevant for a stablished fan, as he is already part of the group.

Finally, the study helps in the understanding of how SJT and SIT are intertwined in a sports context, where individuals deal with a double evaluation process, one towards the team and another towards the institution

that administers/regulate this team. It is also interesting to notice that through SIT fans are motivated to engage in consumption behaviors, while through SJT the same individuals regulate their consumption intention.

From a managerial perspective, seems relevant for local sports federations to have clear values within their stablished mission and vision. That these values must be connected to their fans, and that any actions taken by them should be communicated with transparency. Fans should find that local federations act in a consistent manner within the principles that characterize them, and that what has been said and done by the federation matches with those values.

This paper has the limitation that we only focus in one specific national team from one specific sport. This should be considered when interpreting the findings from the current study.

Further research is needed to account for the varying judgements made by individuals on their favorite teams/clubs, as national teams could enjoy a more widely sympathy, while different clubs within the same country boundaries could evoke different responses. Replication of this research is recommended for different sport scenarios and nationalities, which could help, among other variables, to control for cultural differences.

3. Strategies of German Bundesliga and English Premier League Clubs for the COVID-19 Crisis: The Case of International Broadcasting Fans (published in Review of Managerial Science, 2022)

3.1. Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic that paused sports worldwide, the German Bundesliga League (GBL) and English Premier League (EPL) took two different strategic approaches to agree with their players on returning to play. To become better informed and prepared for future crisis management, this study examines consumer responses to these opposing strategies. We also identify how perceived organizational legitimacy, trustworthiness, reliance, and justifiability have an impact on consumer multimedia consumption of the games. A sample of 503 participants responded to an online questionnaire regarding the contrasting decisions taken by the GBL and the EPL during the global health crisis. SEM with multi-group analysis was conducted to test the research hypotheses. When comparing the two selected sport leagues, the league that reached an agreement with their players experienced higher levels of perceived legitimacy while needing fewer perceptions of trustworthiness, reliance, and justifiability to obtain higher multimedia consumption intention from consumers.

Statements and Declarations

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Classification codes

M39 marketing and advertising – other

M59 personnel economics - other

3.2. Introduction

March 2020 will always be remembered as the month when sporting events, along with many other organized activities and public gatherings, were restricted or canceled worldwide to counteract the spread of COVID-19 (Majumdar and Naha 2020). Although health measures such as the shutdown of stadiums or postponing of games were to protect fans and athletes from contracting the virus (Corsini et al. 2020) and related risks (Mann et al. 2020), the sport industry has faced immense economic pressure to return to normal operations as soon as possible (Mastromartino et al. 2020; Drewes et al. 2021). During crisis periods, such as the COVID-19 era, judging what is normal and what is not is a challenge for society in general (Clark et al. 2020), especially in sport organizations (Hammerschmidt et al. 2021). Among these uncertainties, reliance is an important tool for consumers to maintain an interest in institutions (Doney and Cannon 1997).

Individuals tend to be tolerant of certain changes but simultaneously expect to see an alignment of the new happenings to their relevant institutions (Ödlund 2010). For example, during the COVID-19 crisis, fans expected that sport leagues could reach salary agreements with their players in a way that to allow the team to adjust to the financial issues of the clubs while keeping the players and staff employed (Sheptak and Menaker 2020). In this context, consumers' evaluations of the legitimacy, justifiability, and trustworthiness of a league's decisions come into play. Although individual judgments on what is legitimate, justifiable, and dependable have been overlooked in the past, little is known about how these judgments adapt during crisis periods and how they interact with consumption behaviors. As these variables can potentially positively impact consumer evaluation in different contexts, they are deemed relevant for consumption intention behavior (e.g. Sen and Morwitz 1996; Niemi and Kantola 2018; Dabbous and Tarhini 2019; Ismagilova et al. 2020).

It is highly possible that during periods of crisis, perceived organizational legitimacy, trustworthiness, reliance, and the justifiability of the decisions taken by the relevant institutions would show different intensities in individuals' intentions to consume multimedia. Specifically, this study was based on the social judgment theory (SJT) (Bitektine 2011) and norm theory (NT) (Feldman et al. 2020) and in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis. It was designed to investigate whether institutions that took certain consumer-expected concrete actions would experience higher levels of organizational legitimacy while relying less on the trustworthiness, reliance, and justifiability of a decision to adopt their pathway toward multimedia consumption intention (MMCI). MMCI is deemed to be a relevant variable for professional sport organizations, especially during the current sanitary crisis. Owing to the impossibility of teams and leagues to receive fans in their properties, it is the major and, momentarily, the only exposure channel on matchdays.

Sport broadcasts accrue the largest audience of all television shows (Knobloch et al. 2019). With recent innovations in communications and technology (Haynes 2021; Wendt et al. 2021), sport fans worldwide can experience live events through different paid platforms (Cobbs and Hilton 2012). This has led top-tier sport leagues to receive increased revenue through broadcasting rights (Tamir 2019). Tamir (2019) further suggests that through a personalized experience of simultaneous game-related content, watching games in the arena has become indispensable for fans to a lesser extent. Domestic broadcasting rights are experiencing a slight drop, while international telecasting deals continue to grow (Geey and Harvey 2019).

Football is the most popular sport globally, accounting for over 3.5 billion fans worldwide, while the next sport (cricket) drops to 2.5 billion fans (Das 2021). Specifically, in Latin America, football is unquestionable as the most popular sport (Sotomayor 2020), suggesting that fans in the region are considerably knowledgeable about top-tier leagues and related topics (Ridge 2017). As one of the most-watched leagues worldwide, EPL games are broadcast in every country in Latin America except Cuba

(Premier League 2019). The GBL also has full coverage through free-to-air (FC Bayern 2020) or paid platforms (Bertran 2020).

Previous studies have seldom considered these variables when analyzing how the decisions made by sport leagues in a crisis can impact multimedia consumption, and no fans could access the stadiums or arenas at the time of the study (Corsini et al. 2020; Majumdar and Naha 2020). Therefore, this study focused on identifying the differential roles that perceived organizational legitimacy, trustworthiness, reliance, and the justifiability of decisions by sport leagues play to reach an agreement with players and lead to the MMCI of those leagues. Noticeably, this study considered the situational differences between the GBL and the EPL, in which the GBL could reach a salary agreement between the league and players' union, while the EPL could not.

Regarding the EPL's salary agreement, it was reported that there was a lack of interest in making any change (Roan 2020). Simultaneously, it has been argued that although the EPL did not reach an agreement, many other industries did not reach labor agreements. However, unlike other industries (Hammerschmidt et al. 2021), due to media exposure and well-known wealth, the EPL received extensive media attention during this period (Kennedy and Kennedy 2021).

The only information that fans had readily available was through the media, especially for fans outside the UK, such as those in Latin America. Therefore, to the fan's best knowledge, the actual difference between what was done by the EPL and the GBL was that the first one did not reach a salary agreement while the second one did. Specifically, and according to the news, the EPL showed no further interest in reaching an agreement, which was indicated in multiple media sources such as in the following excerpt:

"In a joint statement, the Premier League, EFL, PFA, and League Managers' Association said they had a 'constructive meeting' on Wednesday regarding the challenges facing the game...No decisions were taken with discussions set to continue in the next 48 hours with a focus on several high-profile matters, including player wages and the resumption of the 2019-20 season." **BBC Sports, April 2020**

"...footballers and clubs are on the receiving end of flak for the delays when it comes to voluntary salary reductions to help their fellow non-playing colleagues..." **Goal, April 2020**

"The British Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, singled out Premier League footballers in a press conference on Thursday, calling on them to take pay cuts to help the economy during the coronavirus crisis...However, there are clubs like Tottenham Hotspur, who have put non-playing staff on furlough without reducing the wages of their players." **Marca, April 2020**

3.3. Theoretical background

SJT suggests that individuals use a weighting process when evaluating an object (Hoffmann et al. 2019), employing an attitudinal anchor to guide their categorization (Kyle et al. 2004), and allocating the object toward a latitude of acceptance or rejection (Rhine and Severance 1970). Accordingly, individuals use legitimacy as a relevant classification variable when judging an object (Bitektine 2011). Thus, the credibility of the source (Rhine and Severance 1970), individuals' experience (Brehmer and Brehmer 1988), and social standards (Kyle et al. 2004) play a key role in the assessment made. Within this framework, an assumption made is that individuals have a lack of access to "real" information (Zacharakis and Meyer 1998), are influenced by "majority group" opinions (Van Swol et al. 2018) and have more inflexible positions depending on their ego involvement toward the focal object (Kyle et al. 2004).

Although the evaluation is performed through the SJT lens every time the object arises, the evaluation process is lasting and stable over time (Mao et al. 2018). Regardless of the circumstances, individuals expect established organizations to behave according to their legitimacy as a base element for any decisions. This is especially the case under difficult circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Kraus and Clauss 2020). However, NT is a stimulus-centered judgment, where an individual faces a situation; regardless of past events, they need to allocate the object into a normality categorization (Kahneman and Miller 1986). When evaluating what is normal and what is not, individuals are more affected by abnormal decisions, arising sentiments of regret (Feldman et al. 2020), and contextual situations (Emani et al. 2021) have a relevant impact on the evaluation of whether action or inaction should be considered a more normal decision (Temerak and El-Manstrly 2019). According to Kahneman and Miller (1986), exceptional or out-of-the-routine events are those that seem to have highly available alternatives. Conversely, regular or routine events are sometimes easy representations that evoke little surprise in the judge's mind. It has been suggested that these situational cues produce common social expectations (Blay et al. 2018), thus guiding public opinion. Blay et al. (2018) argue that individuals cannot separate themselves from their social contexts, creating pressure toward accepting certain social norms and guiding individuals to justify any decision taken to align with these circumstances.

Football fandom, local leagues and clubs, and top-tier football leagues are part of Latin American culture (Sotomayor 2020). People across the continent have access to live or delayed broadcasting of the entire GBL and EPL season games among other premium football leagues (Premier League 2019; Bertran 2020; FC Bayern 2020), fostering a massive, knowledgeable fan base who regularly gather with friends and family to watch games (Ridge 2017).

Noticeably, top-tier professional football leagues, including GBL and EPL, enjoy a loyal base globally and specifically in the Latin American region (Das 2021). Consumers constantly place football media content

on top of their broadcasting program`s choice list (Knobloch et al. 2019). Certainly, the high media attention can make the top leagues vulnerable to positive, negative, or unwanted media exposures (Kennedy and Kennedy 2021).

During crisis conditions, organizations regularly show poor efficiency, cooperation (Ödlund, 2010), and coopetition behaviors (Hammerschmidt et al. 2020) while experiencing difficulties in their communication processes (Palttala and Vos 2011). This is why individuals tend to better evaluate institutions that change their normality and proceed with action toward adaptation (Feldman 2020). For example, during the health crises caused by COVID-19, individuals expected organizations to behave according to what was needed in that specific environment and time, such as financial agreements to preserve jobs and protect employees. Within the specific sports context in which we conducted the study, GBL clarified that their top priority was job retention and employee protection (Drewers et al. 2021), indirectly avoiding clubs from entering into higher financial risks (Horky 2021). Simultaneously, EPL was unclear on any action or intention at the moment (Kennedy and Kennedy 2021). The SJT and NT theories help us understand the evaluations made by individuals toward the decisions taken by organizations.

3.3.1. Perceived Organizational Legitimacy

Drawing on SJT, legitimacy perception is considered as a baseline foundation that would affect any other upgraded categorization (Bitektine 2011) and is important for institutional survival and eventual thriving (Hutchins et al. 2019). Regarding NT, theorists suggest that moral virtues such as benevolence (trustworthiness) and reliance help facilitate the creation and development of social norms (Blay et al. 2018). As few studies have specifically examined this topic area, little is known about how perceived organizational legitimacy can help or benefit an organization's subsequent trustworthiness and reliance. Individuals tend to evade regret by adopting more justifiable options (Inman and Zeelenberg 2002), thereby avoiding dubious decisions (van de Calseyde et al. 2018). Simultaneously, people feel a higher need for stability (i.e., sticking to what they have) when the decision-maker is themselves. However, people tend to recommend switching behavior when the object of analysis is someone else (Saine et al. 2018).

When evaluating an institution, the higher the perceived organizational legitimacy of the organization, the higher its trustworthiness, and the easier it is to justify any decision taken by the same organization (Fan and Wu 2019). Within sports, perceived organizational legitimacy can be expected to impact both sponsorship garnering (Navarro-Picado 2019) and fans' consumption intentions (Navarro-Picado et al. 2020). This relationship needs further understanding, as perceived organizational legitimacy could act through trustworthiness and the justifiability of a specific decision taken. These illustrations and discussions lead to the following two hypotheses:

H$_1$: Higher levels of perceived organizational legitimacy would increase the leagues' trustworthiness.

H$_2$: Higher levels of perceived organizational legitimacy would increase the justifiability of decisions.

3.3.2. *Trustworthiness during a Crisis*

Despite being an essential variable for decision-making (Pena-Marin and Wu 2019), trustworthiness has rarely been studied in the context of sport management. Trustworthiness is a multidimensional construct composed of ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer and Davis 1999). Ability is considered the most tangible dimension (Jacobsen and Andersen 2015), representing the intellect and interpersonal skills needed for successful performance (Maxwell and Lévesque 2014). Benevolence accounts for the perception that the supplier would place the consumer's benefit before its own interests (Caldwell and Hayes 2007), becoming the most emotional dimension of the construct (Moloney 2005). The last dimension is integrity, which is more related to ethical requirements (Caldwell and Hayes 2007) and the perceived expectancy of organizations keeping their words and fair treatments (Hosmer 1995).

Reliance is an important variable that can strengthen an organization's relationships with stakeholders (Bejou et al. 1998; Crane 2020). It is built from a cognitive process (Morrow et al. 2004; Ozdemir et al. 2020) that involves the experience of individuals with the organization (Lovell 2009) and the reputation of the organization as to whether it is honorable (Flores and Solomon 1998; Bellucci and Park 2020). Trustworthiness captures the tendency or propensity to believe in something (Sekhon et al. 2014) and is considered a common antecedent of reliance itself (Caldwell and Clapham 2003). Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H$_3$: Higher levels of trustworthiness would increase the reliance on a sport league.

3.3.3. *Level of Reliance in Sport Leagues*

Reliance is a relevant construct to consider during difficult time periods (Rousseau et al. 1998). People tend to believe that the organizations they rely on would solve problems in the best way for their customers (Martínez et al. 2020). Specifically, within a sports context, reliance serves as an enhancer of fans' consumption behaviors (Kim et al. 2011). To better understand the relevance of reliance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is valuable to follow Rousseau et al.'s (1998) definition. It suggests that reliance is a "psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (p. 395). Apparently, this explanation would imply accepting vulnerability in a moment in which people are already vulnerable due to the pandemic. The main difference between these terms is that trustworthiness is related to the reputation managed by the trustee

(Sekhon et al. 2014), while reliance is based on subjective perception, which acts as an individual lens for each person (Caldwell and Clapham 2003).

The GBL and the EPL are visible due to historical successes and attract high consumption levels through multimedia (Ajadi et al. 2020). As with any other sport institution, they are expected to rely on fans (Garbarino and Johnson 1999) and thus benefit from higher levels of fan consumption intentions (Cho et al. 2020) under the assumption that any related decision can be justified and would not substantially hamper the existent level of reliance (Alonso 2016). These discussions lead to the following hypotheses:

H_4: Higher levels of reliance would positively impact the multimedia consumption intention.

H_5: Higher levels of reliance would positively impact the justifiability of the decision.

3.3.4. *Justifying Unconventional Decisions*

According to NT, individuals tend to establish an anchor toward what is considered normal to themselves, making it easier to justify sticking to some actions instead of switching to alternatives (Kahneman and Miller 1986). NT originally suggested that the status quo is generally considered "more normal" than an alternative situation. However, recent research findings indicate that this could be reversed in cases where past behavior, situational expectations, and social norms advise a switching decision as more normal than a staying decision (Feldman 2020). When evaluating what is normal and what is not, individuals are more affected by abnormal decisions, arising sentiments of regret (Feldman et al. 2020). Nonetheless, contextual situations have a relevant impact on the evaluation of whether action or inaction should be considered a comparatively more normal decision (Temerak and El-Manstrly 2019). If individuals tend to favor highly justifiable alternatives, it can be argued that individuals would consume the multimedia of sport organizations perceived to have made justifiable decisions. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was developed:

H_6: Higher levels of the justifiability of the decision would increase the intention to consume multimedia.

Globalization has impacted almost every person on the planet, which is especially highlighted in times of crisis (Palttala and Vos 2011). Individuals and societies struggle during these scenarios, while different public and private organizations compete for limited resources in an environment that demands rapid learning and actions (Ödlund 2010). During crisis conditions, organizations regularly show poor efficiency and cooperation behaviors (Ödlund 2010) and difficulties in communication (Palttala and Vos 2011). This is why individuals tend to better evaluate institutions that, in these circumstances, show determination toward adaptation (Feldman 2020). Reasonably, in a situation such as the public health crisis derived from the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals would tend to justify some decisions that would normally be

considered abnormal and consequently allocate higher value to those organizations that attempt to change rather than remain still. With the justifiability of the decision to be a comparison variable (van de Calseyde et al. 2018), a contrast between the status quo and an adaptation decision arises as a logical test.

In the context of a pandemic, it can be expected that adaptable sport leagues are likely to make some arrangements to prevail during the crisis period. Even if the organization's stability has not been jeopardized, social evaluation could positively or negatively impact a sport league depending on the decisions taken (Verbruggen and Van Emmerik 2020). Under these conditions, it can be argued that professional sport leagues who reach a salary agreement during the crisis period would experience an increase in their perceived organizational legitimacy, which would positively impact both the level of perceived trustworthiness and the justifiability of the decision (Fan and Wu 2019). Assuming a domino effect, we expect that, in the same context, lower levels of trustworthiness will be needed to rely on organizations that reach a salary agreement. Similarly, individuals would need lower levels of reliance to justify the decision taken and show higher levels of multimedia consumption intention (Sen and Morwitz 1996) while needing less justifiability to increase their multimedia consumption intention. The following hypotheses were formulated (Figure 4):

H_{7a}: Sport leagues that reached a salary agreement would experience a stronger relationship between perceived organizational legitimacy and trustworthiness.

H_{7b}: Those sport leagues that reached a salary agreement would experience a stronger relationship between perceived organizational legitimacy and justifiability of decision.

H_{7c}: Those sport leagues that reached a salary agreement would experience a weaker relationship between perceived trustworthiness and reliance.

H_{7d}: Those sport leagues that reached a salary agreement would experience a weaker relationship between reliance and justifiability of decision.

H_{7e}: Those sport leagues that reached a salary agreement would experience a weaker relationship between reliance and MMCI.

H_{7f}: Those sport leagues that reached a salary agreement would experience a weaker relationship between justifiability of decision and MMCI.

Figure 4. Hypothetical Research Model Depicting the Relationships among Perceived Organizational Legitimacy, Trustworthiness, Reliance, Justifiability of Decision and Multimedia Consumption Intention, moderated by a (no) salary agreement during the COVID-19 crisis.
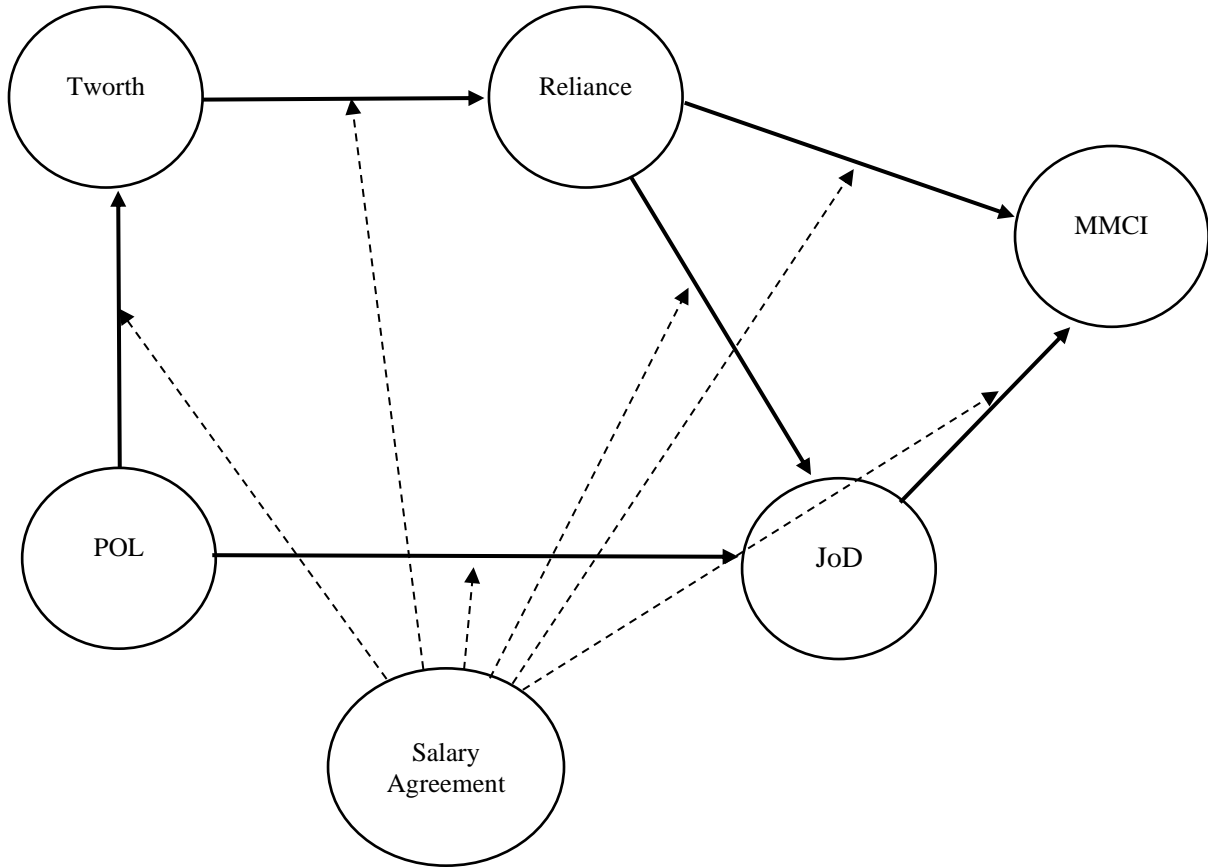
Note: dashed line (- - -) crosses hypothesis affected by moderation. Tworth =Trustworthiness, POL=Perceived Organizational Legitimacy, JoD=Justifiability of Decision, MMCI=Multimedia Consumption Intention.

3.4. Method

3.4.1. Participants

Respondents were recruited through either a Qualtrics mailing list or MTurk for Latin American football consumers between April and May 2020. All research participants were over 18 years old and were confirmed to have a fundamental knowledge of football and familiarity with top-tier professional football leagues. After eliminating incomplete or potentially biased questionnaires, 503 valid responses (13 Qualtrics, 490 MTurk) were formally collected. The response ratio was 3.2% in the case of the Qualtrics mailing list (13/407), while MTurk was 58.7% (490/835), with an average age of 30.34 (SD=10.83). Of the participants, 329 were men, and 174 were women. Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics of the respondents.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the sample.

Gender / Age	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-older
Women	73	55	31	15
Men	134	115	49	31

To guarantee the validity of responses, an instructional manipulation check (IMC) was employed (Oppenheimer, et al., 2009). According to Oppenheimer and colleagues (2009), these instrument increases statistical power of responses while providing researchers with a tool to eliminate biased or non-diligent answers. In our specific case, the IMC proved that respondents understood the difference in actions taken by the EPL and GBL, and that they will respond to the core questionnaire regarding one and only one of these leagues. This procedure has been recently used in a variety of research fields including but not limited to environmental psychology (Lalot, et al., 2022), investment performance (Borsboom, et al., 2022), and consumer services (Nicolau, et al., 2022) among others.

For top-tier professional football leagues, broadcasting and media income represent up to 66% of their income, whereas live event spectator revenue (e.g., ticketing and concessions) is lower. This is the case for both GBL (Horky 2021) and EPL (Kennedy and Kennedy 2021). According to Horky (2021) and Kennedy and Kennedy (2021), income share due to matchday spectators barely represents 13% for football, while other sports within Germany, such as ice hockey (32%), are more dependent on spectator attendance at the game events. Therefore, we chose to conduct the study in a Latin American setting based on the following three considerations: (a) high exposure to and involvement of Latin American sport fans in football; (b) their general high-level knowledge of football and familiarity with top-tier professional football leagues in the world (Giulianotti and Robertson 2012); (c) strong intention of investigators of this study to mitigate any localness effects associated with the EPL and GBL (Mandler et al. 2020).

3.4.2. *Measurement*

A questionnaire was developed that contained the following sections: (a) an informed consent, which requested participants to confirm their voluntary participation and that they were above 16 years old and had some knowledge of top-tier football; (b) a little contextualization on COVID-19; its impact on sports and approach differences between the EPL and GBL in these circumstances; (c) the core questionnaire. All measures in this study were adopted or adapted from those developed in previous studies. MMCI was assessed through a three-item scale based on the research of Kim et al. (2011), which includes questions such as *"I will watch or listen to the (Bundesliga/Premier League) games through the media (e.g., TV, Internet, Radio, etc.)."* Justifiability of Decision (JoD) is also a three-item scale, based on Inman and

Zeelenberg's (2002) scale, with items such as *"How justifiable is the decision to (not) reach a salary agreement?"* The scale for assessing reliance is based on the research of Kim et al. (2020) and includes items such as *"I would be comfortable giving the (Bundesliga/PremierLeague) total responsibility of the activities."* Trustworthiness was assessed through a 17-item scale based on the research of Mayer and Davis (1999), including items such as *"The (Bundesliga/Premier League) is capable of performing its job."* Perceived organizational legitimacy was assessed based on Fidan and Balci's (2018) scale, which included items such as *"The (Bundesliga/Premier League) is compatible with the values of the general public."* For sample description purposes, a section on sociodemographic background variables was included in the survey form, asking for the age and sex of the participants.

As the aforementioned scales adapted for this study were originally published in English language scholarly journals, items of each scale were translated into Spanish. Double translations were made to ensure linguistic validity (Chapman and Carter 1979). A panel of five experts with a specialized background in professional sport league management theories and practices were invited to evaluate content validity (Crocker and Algina 2006). The panel members were asked to examine each item's relevance, representativeness, and clarity for a specific concept. Adopting a standard of 80% agreement among the panel members, all items were retained after revisions and modifications were made to improve linguistic expressions for a few items. All the items were phrased on a Likert 7-point scale, ranging from 1 = strong disagreement to 7 = strong agreement. The items were arranged in a random order within each of the sections, and Table 7 shows the means and standard deviations for all items.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Predictive and Criterion Variables.

Construct	Variable	Item	Mean	SD
Perceived Organizational Legitimacy	ConLeg_01	The (Bundesliga/Premier League) is compatible with the values of the general public.	4.73	1.62
	ConLeg_02	The general public believes that the (Bundesliga/Premier League) are well trained.	5.09	1.38
	ConLeg_03	The (Bundesliga/Premier League) is well-equipped to meet the general public's expectations.	5.02	1.40
	ProLeg_01	The (Bundesliga/Premier League) meets the standards set by legal regulations (laws, curricular, directives, etc.) in its operating procedures (rules, practices, methods, etc.).	5.14	1.40
	ProLeg_02	The (Bundesliga/Premier League) rigorously follow legal regulations.	5.01	1.39

	StrLeg_01	*The structure of the (Bundesliga/Premier League) is designed to meet the standards required by the sports industry.*	*5.18*	*1.40*
	StrLeg_02	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) has appropriate units (administration, marketing, etc.) to accomplish its goals.*	*5.39*	*1.26*
	StrLeg_03	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) is structured to ensure accomplishing organizational goals.*	*5.29*	*1.27*
	AbiDe_01	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) is very capable of performing its job.*	*5.40*	*1.33*
	AbiDe_02	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) is known to be successful at the things it tries to do.*	*5.27*	*1.28*
	AbiDe_03	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done.*	*5.16*	*1.34*
	AbiDe_04	*I feel very confident about the (Bundesliga/Premier League) skills.*	*5.02*	*1.35*
	AbiDe_05	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) has specialized capabilities that boosts its performance.*	*5.10*	*1.26*
	AbiDe_06	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) is well qualified.*	*5.24*	*1.30*
	BenDe_01	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) is very concerned about its members welfare.*	*4.95*	*1.57*
	BenDe_02	*Members' needs and desires are very important to the (Bundesliga/Premier League).*	*4.96*	*1.50*
Trustworthiness	*BenDe_03*	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) would not knowingly do anything to hurt its members.*	*4.84*	*1.55*
	BenDe_04	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) really looks out for what is important to its members.*	*5.03*	*1.41*
	BenDe_05	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) will go out of its way to help its members.*	*4.95*	*1.47*
	IntDe_01	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) has a strong sense of justice.*	*4.82*	*1.51*
	IntDe_02	*I never have to wonder whether the (Bundesliga/Premier League) will stick to its word.*	*4.39*	*1.52*
	IntDe_03	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) tries hard to be fair in dealings with others.*	*4.91*	*1.32*
	IntDe_04	*The (Bundesliga/Premier League) actions and behaviors are consistent.*	*5.01*	*1.34*
	IntDe_05	*I like the (Bundesliga/Premier League) values.*	*4.89*	*1.55*

	IntDe_06	*Sound principles seem to guide the (Bundesliga/Premier League) behavior.*	*4.85*	*1.43*
Reliance	*Relia_01*	*I would rely on the (Bundesliga/Premier League) without hesitation.*	*4.25*	*1.73*
	Relia_02	*I think following the (Bundesliga/Premier League will lead to positive outcomes.*	*4.45*	*1.56*
	Relia_03	*I would feel comfortable relying on the (Bundesliga/Premier League) in the future.*	*4.55*	*1.49*
	Relia_04	*When the task was hard, I feel like I could depend on the (Bundesliga/Premier League).*	*4.14*	*1.66*
	Relia_05	*If I were facing a very hard task in the future, I would want to have the (Bundesliga/Premier League) with me.*	*4.27*	*1.66*
	Relia_06	*I would be comfortable allowing the (Bundesliga/Premier League) to make all decisions.*	*3.89*	*1.79*
	Relia_07	*If I could not make a decision, I would allow the (Bundesliga/Premier League) to make it for me.*	*3.54*	*1.91*
	Relia_08	*I would be comfortable giving the (Bundesliga/Premier League) total responsibility of the activities.*	*3.73*	*1.87*
	Relia_09	*I really believe there is no need to monitor the route decisions of the (Bundesliga/Premier League).*	*4.12*	*1.79*
	Relia_10	*I would be comfortable allowing the (Bundesliga/Premier League) to take a decision, even if I could not monitor it.*	*3.66*	*1.89*
Justifiability of Decision	*JoD_01*	*How justifiable is the decision to (not) reach a salary agreement?*	*4.61*	*1.67*
	JoD_02	*How easy to defend is the decision to (not) reach a salary agreement?*	*4.33*	*1.62*
	JoD_03	*How logical is the decision to (not) reach a salary agreement?*	*4.69*	*1.47*
Multimedia Consumption Intention	*MMCI_01*	*I will track the news on the (Bundesliga/Premier League) through the media (e.g. TV, Internet, Radio, etc.)*	*4.69*	*1.70*
	MMCI_02	*I will watch or listen to the (Bundesliga/Premier League) games through the media (e.g. TV, Internet, Radio, etc.)*	*4.79*	*1.77*
	MMCI_03	*I will support the (Bundesliga/Premier League) by watching or listening to the games through the media (e.g. TV, Internet, Radio, etc.)*	*4.58*	*1.71*

3.4.3. Procedures

We aimed to assess the moderating effect of the perceived differences between what was done by the Bundesliga and the Premier League during the health crisis. A little contextualization was articulated and presented to all participants at the beginning of the survey. This was aligned with the strong speculations by major media outlets regarding the lack of interest in making a change on the part of the EPL (Roan 2020) and was also consistent with the scientific literature with reference to the undeserving efforts made by this league (Kennedy and Kennedy 2020). Textually, this introduction said, "*Given the current global contingency, some sports leagues, unlike others, have taken important measures to face these difficult times. For example, the German Bundesliga has actively collaborated so that all its clubs reach salary agreements and maintain the jobs of the players and the entire staff. Nevertheless, little effort has been made to achieve these goals in the EPLeague.*"

Responses to the questionnaire were obtained electronically through Qualtrics mailing distribution; individuals received an email invitation to participate and a link to the survey or MTurk for Latin America through Amazon´s MTurk platform. After individuals agreed to participate in the study, they were randomly assigned to respond to the questionnaire regarding only one league, Bundesliga (261 respondents) or Premier League (242 respondents). As the study was conducted in a different sociocultural, linguistic, and sports setting than the original scales in the questionnaire, it was deemed necessary to reexamine the validity and reliability of the measures in the questionnaire. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed using the SPSS program, followed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) by executing the AMOS program (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Structural equation model (SEM) analyses were conducted to examine the research hypotheses.

3.5. Results

When conducting EFA, a factor loading threshold was set to .50 or higher without double-loading, while a criterion of .70 was set for a Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Nunnally 1994). All measures satisfied these criteria; subsequently, it was deemed appropriate to proceed with conducting a CFA. The model fit indexes included RMSEA = .064, CFI = .908, IFI = .909, TLI = .899, and normed chi-square of 3.05, indicating that the data fit the measurement model well. All items were preserved because of their high levels of convergence and R^2. To avoid any possible underestimation from the Cronbach's alpha (Smith 1974), a composite reliability test was conducted (Jöreskog 1971), setting the threshold to the recommended .65 (Steenkamp and Geyskens 2006). Adopting the threshold of .50, convergent validity was confirmed by calculating average variance extracted (AVE) coefficients (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Finally, discriminant validity was tested by verifying that number 1 was not included in the confidence interval of any correlation

pair (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). All these findings suggest adequate psychometric properties of the measurement scales, and their respective figures are shown in Table 8 regarding the CFA, composite reliability, and convergent validity. Table 9 refers to the correlational analysis and discriminant validity.

Table 8. Confirmatory Factor analysis, Composite Reliability, and Convergent Validity.

Item	Standardize Solution	t-Value	Item R²	Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
ConLeg_01	0.756	65.522	0.547				
ConLeg_02	0.830	82.675	0.711	Consequential Legitimacy	0.832	0.841	0.638
ConLeg_03	0.809	80.571	0.661				
ProLeg_01	0.841	82.063	0.715	Procedural Legitimacy	0.844	0.844	0.729
ProLeg_02	0.867	80.894	0.744				
StrLeg_01	0.830	82.887	0.689				
StrLeg_02	0.770	95.994	0.593	Structural Legitimacy	0.849	0.849	0.653
StrLeg_03	0.823	93.186	0.679				
AbiDe_01	0.800	91.350	0.641				
AbiDe_02	0.728	92.528	0.527				
AbiDe_03	0.711	86.545	0.504	Ability	0.891	0.890	0.574
AbiDe_04	0.797	83.163	0.635				
AbiDe_05	0.726	90.519	0.529				
AbiDe_06	0.780	90.317	0.608				
BenDe_01	0.872	70.534	0.758				
BenDe_02	0.878	74.108	0.772				
BenDe_03	0.708	70.176	0.502	Benevolence	0.919	0.922	0.703
BenDe_04	0.864	79.972	0.745				
BenDe_05	0.857	75.693	0.736				
IntDe_01	0.848	71.629	0.721				
IntDe_02	0.577	64.967	0.334				
IntDe_03	0.698	83.442	0.491	Integrity	0.890	0.894	0.588
IntDe_04	0.785	83.978	0.616				
IntDe_05	0.820	70.686	0.669				
IntDe_06	0.836	76.273	0.697				

Relia_01	0.782	55.144	0.611				
Relia_02	0.570	64.104	0.324				
Relia_03	0.706	68.404	0.498				
Relia_04	0.812	55.823	0.657				
Relia_05	0.761	57.128	0.579	Reliance	0.935	0.936	0.599
Relia_06	0.844	48.800	0.713				
Relia_07	0.872	41.510	0.762				
Relia_08	0.888	44.700	0.790				
Relia_09	0.651	51.536	0.425				
Relia_10	0.797	43.418	0.635				
JoD_01	0.911	62.089	0.831				
JoD_02	0.767	59.880	0.588	Justifiability of Decision	0.879	0.879	0.709
JoD_03	0.842	71.459	0.710				
MMCI_01	0.816	62.017	0.665				
MMCI_02	0.895	60.705	0.800	Multimedia Consumption Intention	0.897	0.898	0.746
MMCI_03	0.878	60.176	0.772				

Note: All t-Values significant at .01 level.

ConLeg=Consequential Legitimacy, ProLeg=Procedural Legitimacy, StruLeg=Structural Legitimacy, AbiDe=Ability (Trustworthiness), BenDe=Benevolence (Trustworthiness), IntDe=Integrity (Trustworthiness), Relia=Reliance, JoD=Justifiability of Decision, MMCI=Multimedia Consumption Intention.

Table 9. Correlational Analysis and Discriminant Validity.

Pair of constructs	Correlation	SEE	Confidence interval	
Consequential Leg.◄► Procedural Leg.	0.772	0.038	0.701	0.828
Consequential Leg.◄► Structural Leg.	0.797	0.040	0.716	0.856
Consequential Leg.◄► Ability	0.854	0.027	0.800	0.887
Consequential Leg.◄► Benevolence	0.724	0.037	0.652	0.783
Consequential Leg.◄► Integrity	0.762	0.033	0.706	0.817
Consequential Leg.◄► Reliance	0.462	0.046	0.378	0.528
Consequential Leg.◄► Justifiability of Dec.	0.712	0.038	0.636	0.770
Consequential Leg.◄► MMCI	0.457	0.050	0.370	0.538
Procedural Leg.◄► Structural Leg.	0.782	0.043	0.699	0.842
Procedural Leg.◄► Ability	0.757	0.041	0.689	0.821

Procedural Leg. ◄► Benevolence	0.712	0.036	0.659	0.777
Procedural Leg. ◄► Integrity	0.740	0.033	0.682	0.794
Procedural Leg. ◄► Reliance	0.390	0.044	0.309	0.457
Procedural Leg. ◄► Justifiability of Dec.	0.661	0.038	0.599	0.724
Procedural Leg. ◄► MMCI	0.334	0.047	0.255	0.416
Structural Leg. ◄► Ability	0.931	0.021	0.894	0.963
Structural Leg. ◄► Benevolence	0.694	0.042	0.627	0.756
Structural Leg. ◄► Integrity	0.698	0.036	0.635	0.749
Structural Leg. ◄► Reliance	0.310	0.046	0.229	0.383
Structural Leg. ◄► Justifiability of Dec.	0.529	0.045	0.447	0.599
Structural Leg. ◄► MMCI	0.406	0.046	0.334	0.486
Ability ◄► Benevolence	0.748	0.037	0.677	0.806
Ability ◄► Integrity	0.787	0.034	0.728	0.835
Ability ◄► Reliance	0.451	0.042	0.374	0.514
Ability ◄► Justifiability of Dec.	0.587	0.043	0.505	0.651
Ability ◄► MMCI	0.543	0.039	0.478	0.609
Benevolence ◄► Integrity	0.930	0.014	0.902	0.949
Benevolence ◄► Reliance	0.556	0.040	0.490	0.621
Benevolence ◄► Justifiability of Dec.	0.744	0.031	0.691	0.793
Benevolence ◄► MMCI	0.390	0.052	0.301	0.472
Integrity ◄► Reliance	0.671	0.038	0.603	0.728
Integrity ◄► Justifiability of Dec.	0.780	0.029	0.728	0.821
Integrity ◄► MMCI	0.495	0.047	0.418	0.570
Reliance ◄► Justifiability of Dec.	0.520	0.045	0.438	0.587
Reliance ◄► MMCI	0.630	0.035	0.571	0.681
Justifiability of Dec. ◄► MMCI	0.328	0.052	0.240	0.415

Note: Leg.=Legitimacy, Dec.=Decision, MMCI=Multimedia Consumption Intention

The SEM analyses revealed that satisfactory values support model fit to the data, as the model achieves an RMSEA of 0.071, CFI of 0.883, IFI of 0.883, TLI of 0.874, and normed chi-square of 3.54. The findings indicate that perceived organizational legitimacy had a positive effect on trustworthiness (.911 $p < .01$) and justifiability of decision (.683, $p < .01$), supporting H_1 and H_2. Trustworthiness positively impacted reliance (.620 $p < .01$), while reliance had a positive effect on justifiability of decision (.170, $p < .01$) and MMCI

(.624, $p < .01$), supporting H₃, H₄, and H₅. At this step of the study, the relationship between the justifiability of decision and MMCI was not found to be statistically significant ($p > .51$) (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Structural Equation Model Examining the Relationships among Perceived Organizational Legitimacy, Trustworthiness, Reliance, Justifiability of Decision and Multimedia Consumption Intention.
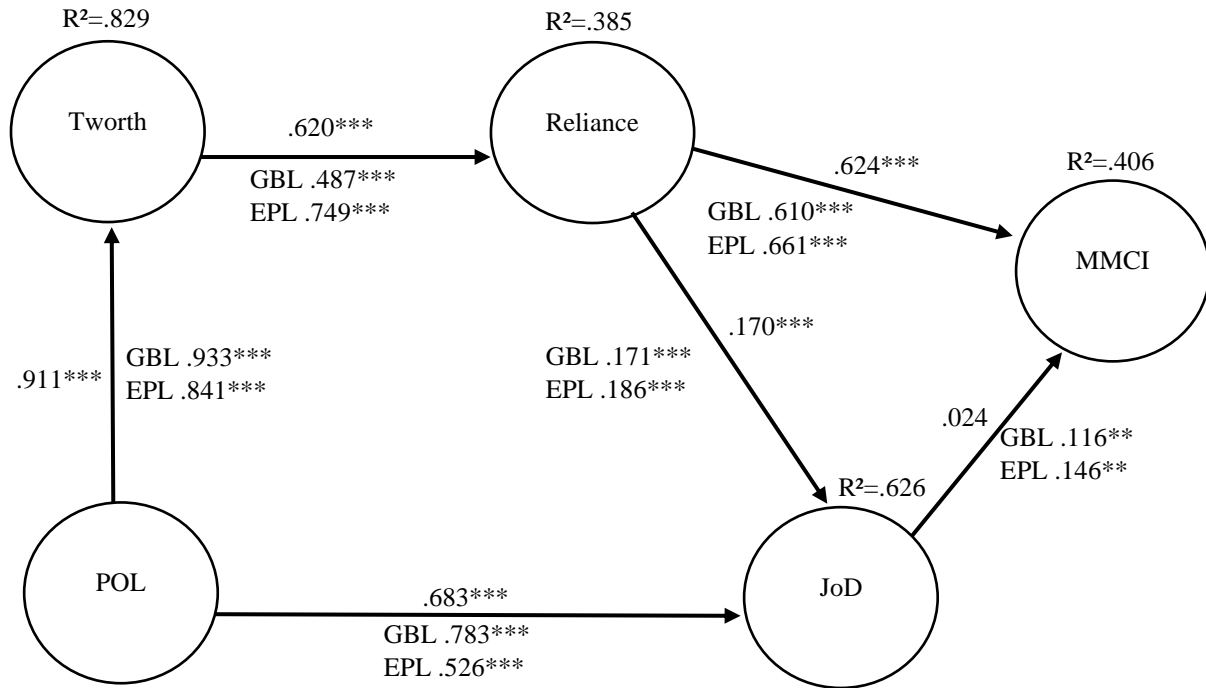
Note: *p<.10 **p<.05 ***p<.01. Tworth=Trustworthiness, POL=Perceived Organizational Legitimacy, JoD=Justifiability of Decision, MMCI=Multimedia Consumption Intention. Moderation probability: POL→ Tworth .268, POL→JoD .000***, Tworth→Reliance .001***, Reliance→Jod .000***, Reliance→MMCI .202, JoD→MMCI .095*

During the data collection process, participants were randomly assigned to evaluate the decision of either the Bundesliga (reaching an agreement) or the Premier League (no agreement). Therefore, and in line with NT, the Bundesliga took action while the Premier League stayed in its status quo. A multi-sample analysis was performed to test the moderation effect, which corresponded to H₇ₐ through H₇f. A total of 261 individuals were assigned to Bundesliga, while 242 were allocated to the Premier League. A CFA invariance test was performed prior to the multi-sample analysis (Silva et al. 2019). It has been recommended that three test levels should be assessed: (a) configural invariance (good model fit in the multi-group sample); (b) metric invariance (unconstrained vs. structural weights CFI difference test below .01); (c) structural invariance (unconstrained vs. structural weight chi-square insignificance differences) (Cheung and Rensvold 2009). Configural invariance was supported with coefficients of RMSEA=0.049, CFI=0.887, IFI=0.888, TLI=0.875, and normed chi-square=2.20. Metric invariance was satisfactory, with a CFI difference of 0.000 (unconstrained 0.887 – 0.887 measurement). The chi-square difference test was

unsatisfactory. Nonetheless, we assumed the invariance as two out of three tests were accomplished and sticking to the suggestion made by Cheung and Rensvold (2002) regarding the lack of practicality and restrictiveness of the chi-square difference test, which was also recently backed by other researchers (French and Finch 2006). A multi-sample analysis allowed us to recognize the disparities between the coefficients of the two models by generating a single solution for each of them (Table 10).

Table 10. Multi-Sample Analysis – Action (Bundesliga) vs Inaction (Premier League).

Constraint	Estimated Coefficient (Bundesliga)	Estimated Coefficient (Premier League)	(d.f) X^2 differences	Probability
POL→ Tworth	.933***	.841***	(1) 1.227	.268
POL→JoD	.783***	.526***	(1) 23.584	.000***
Tworth →Reliance	.487***	.749***	(1) 10.540	.001***
Reliance→JoD	.171***	.186***	(1) 36.546	.000***
Reliance→MMCI	.610***	.661***	(1) 1.624	.202
JoD→MMCI	.116**	.146**	(1) 2.795	.095*

Note: *p<.10 **p<.05 ***p<.01

POL=Perceived Organizational Legitimacy, Tworth=Trustworthiness, JoD=Justifiability of Decision, MMCI=Multimedia Consumption Intention

As shown in Table 10, there were no significant differences between perceived organizational legitimacy and trustworthiness. However, there was a strong significance in the differences between perceived organizational legitimacy and justifiability of decision, with a higher coefficient in the agreement (Bundesliga) case. There was also strong significance when analyzing the differences between trustworthiness and reliance, and from reliance to the justifiability of decision, showing higher coefficients for the no-agreement (Premier League) group. The reliance on the MMCI string appears to be insignificant, whereas the string of justifiability of decision to MMCI showed a trend of significance, with a higher coefficient for the no-agreement (Premier League) group. These findings revealed that in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, higher levels of perceived organizational legitimacy were allocated to leagues that reached an agreement and therefore increased the justifiability of this decision.

Additionally, for cases in which an agreement was reached, lower levels of trustworthiness were needed to rely on that league. Simultaneously, lower levels of reliance were required to manifest a multimedia consumption intention. Finally, less justifiability was needed from decisions taken by sport leagues who reached an agreement to have fans consuming multimedia.

3.6. Discussion

Drawing on the social judgment theory and norm theory, this study developed a model to investigate whether fans' judgment toward decisions made by sport leagues is aligned with theoretical expectations. Our main goal was to distinguish the evaluation differences made by fans concerning the efforts made by the sport leagues to reach an agreement versus maintaining the status quo. This was done during the global health crisis of COVID-19 and examined how this could impact the multimedia consumption intention of those leagues.

Multimedia consumption is deemed a relevant variable for top-tier leagues as broadcasting represents up to 66% of the leagues' budget (Horky 2021), especially during the lockdown period when fans are not allowed to access the arenas physically (Corsini et al. 2020, Majumdar and Naha 2020). However, fans who were directly impacted by the shutdown may experience a localness bias during that period (Mandler et al. 2020). Overall, the Latin American region has a considerably knowledgeable (Ridge 2017) and loyal fan base (Sotomayor 2020) that consumes excessive multimedia football content, particularly because of local lockdown policies caused by the pandemic crisis.

Aligned with the social judgment theory, our findings suggest that higher levels of perceived organizational legitimacy derive higher levels of trustworthiness and justifications of decisions. Therefore, legitimacy once again appears as a relevant input for organizational success, as our findings suggest that it is easier for individuals to depend (rely) on and justify decisions taken by organizations that enjoy higher levels of perceived legitimacy.

However, and aligned with recent findings of the norm theory, individuals seem to appreciate that GBL reached a downgrade salary agreement—what should normally be considered normal (status quo) is poorly evaluated during a crisis period. This paper advances the knowledge on norm theory, as it argues that in a sports context and during a crisis period, evaluations made by individuals are reversed to those expected during "normal" periods. Specifically, the fact that EPL did not intervene in salary agreements (downward) was perceived as acting the wrong way by doing nothing. Conversely, the GBL that actively worked on salary reductions (not normal) was perceived as positive actors, ultimately enjoying higher levels of consumption intention.

Decisions taken by trusted institutions appear as easier to justify; simultaneously, both reliance and justifiability derive into higher intentions to consume multimedia products from the sport leagues. This may be the case if fans evaluate a lack of action by the league as jeopardizing the continuity (Rousseau et al., 1998) of the sports activity, representing higher risk of losing this entertainment source in a vulnerable time. These findings suggest that fans' judgments and evaluations would stick to a legitimacy baseline but

simultaneously demand rapid adaptation to circumstances. Specifically, the fact that perceived organizational legitimacy toward trustworthiness shows no significant difference between the evaluated leagues argues that legitimacy is a baseline evaluation tool for fans regardless of the circumstances. However, after the confirmation of the invariance test, our findings suggest that Perceived Organizational Legitimacy→Justifiability of Decision, Trustworthiness→ Reliance, Reliance →Justifiability of Decision, and Justifiability of Decision→Multimedia Consumption Intention strings are indeed significant. These findings indicate that specific contextual decisions are impacted by a more dynamic evaluation process made by the fans, which in turn would mean that, in a "new normality" context, international broadcasting audiences could tend to favor sport leagues who make quick adjustments and show an adaptation interest.

From a strategic management perspective, these findings argue that fans are sensible to actions taken during crisis periods, and attention toward fans' evaluation demands may be crucial. This is a relevant finding when clubs are struggling with the lack of gate receipts, which represents a classic way to attract sponsors, sign broadcasting contracts, and deliver their exposure to fans. It also argues that regardless of the situation or context, legitimacy is a foundation block for fans' judgment and a powerful tool for sport institutions that could be used/encouraged through communication strategies.

This study has a limitation in that it only considers two top leagues of a specific sport. Although football is a globally recognized sport, the limitation of this single-sport analysis should be considered when interpreting the findings. Although practical and efficient for data collecting, the fact that most of our research responses were obtained through Amazon's MTurk should arise as a tentative limitation (Aguinis et al. 2021). Nevertheless, due to the health crisis of the pandemic, it represented an optimal data collection option for the current investigation. Finally, readers should consider that the sample consists of international fans, therefore not all results are transferable to domestic fans. Proximity to the source and localness bias could affect the impact on fans and therefore additional research should be done to this type of consumers. Future research should consider the analysis of different sports or less relevant leagues, where localness or a preconceived smaller resource availability could arouse different responses. Therefore, replication of this research is recommended for different sport scenarios and nationalities.

4. The existence of a Supraordinate Identity and its Impact on the Consumption Intention: The Classic and Identity Threat Within Sports

4.1. Abstract

Purpose – the purpose of this paper is to identify the existences of the supraordinate identity of *"The Classic"* and determine the effect it has on the consumption intentions of the fans of clubs within *The Classic*. Additionally, it evaluates the moderation effect that an identity threat has in this relationship.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey was applied to proceed with quantitative research through structural equation modeling to understand the relationship between permeability, stability and legitimacy towards the focal supraordinate identity (*The Classic)* and its impact towards multimedia consumption intention and official merchandise consumption intention. Costa Rica`s Liga Promerica (First Division Football League) is used to understand this phenomenon, given the advantage of being highly mediatic and universally known by Costa Rican population, and having the typical structure of two fanbase dominant clubs who are recognized as the teams who play the national classic match.

Findings – the analysis revealed the existence of the supraordinate *The Classic* identity, while fans from the focal clubs experience an identity threat both when their club is under menace and when their rival is. Additionally, findings suggest that legitimacy and permeability predict the existence of The Classic supraordinate identity, while stability lacks significance.

Originality/value – the current study gives a twofold advance to Social Identity Theory, A) by identifying the existence of a superordinate identity made by fans of *The Classic* clubs, which at the same time experience a supraordinate identity during (and along) the event commonly named the *Classic Match.* On the other hand, B) how this supraordinate identity could be made up by salient rivalries, which is counterintuitive in nature, and even further, individuals may experience an identity threat when their rivals are under menace.

4.2. Introduction

A major threat to social distinctiveness arises for group members when the clarity of conceptual group boundaries is diminished, making it difficult to distinguish where does a group ends and where does the next one begins (Elsbach, 2003). Team sports and their fans share many behaviors and traditions, therefore the need of a rivalry to mitigate the lack of uniqueness (Beredndt & Uhrich, 2016). At the same time, rivalry helps group members to communally uncover and characterize who they are not (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2012). In other words, in a context where everybody watches the same event, gather to do so, and most probably dress and behave in a similar manner, the only way to differ from the person beside you is given by who you are cheering to.

Berendt and Uhrich (2016) argue that rivalries are definitely necessary in the sports context, as they give both positive and negative effects in the relationship that accumulate into a complex satisfaction atmosphere. What makes it more interesting, is the way in which different rivalries could signify different intensities in the effects, specifically Berendt and Uhrich (2016) suggest that a major distinction should be made between rival and non-rival relationships. The main ingredient to distinguish whether the focal club is or is not a rival relies on reciprocity (Berendt & Uhrich, 2016). We argue that precisely reciprocity is what creates relationship differences among sport fans, where *The Classic* clubs believe the only real rivalry is between them, while other clubs must search or create rivalries over time.

In the past, franchise relocation has been analyzed as an important identity threat for the focal fans, nonetheless, it is a relocation and not a disappearance, while the focal club was never part of *The Classic* of its league (Wegner, Delia & Baker, 2019). Consequently, there is a lack of understanding on how would fans from clubs who play *The Classic* in any league will react to an eventual disappearance of their rival.

The disappearance of a *Classic* club could be like a natural disaster for the implicated fans. A natural disaster is always bunded with collateral effects such as splitting communities who are forced to evacuate, consequently migrating to other areas, causing disruptions to those hosting communities that, at the beginning, were not affected by the situation (Kobayashi, Yoshida, Takebayashi, Goto, Kumagai & Murakami, 2019). In a sport context, and considering that fans of *The Classic* are numerous, the extinction of one of this clubs will represent splitting the fan community, where near half (for the most cases) of the fanbase of a sports league should now evacuate their team and migrate into other clubs or sport leagues. This hypothetical situation will clearly signify an identity threat for fans of the disappeared club, nonetheless, we argue that fans from the prevailing *Classic* club will also experience an identity threat due to the disappearance of its rival.

The main objective of this research is to uncover the existence of a supraordinate identity behind the event called *The Classic* match. At the same time, through the lens of Social Identity Theory and Norm Theory, the study makes additional contributions to the scientific literature such as understanding the role that stability, permeability and legitimacy has in the supraordinate identity, while examining its impact on the justifiability of fans and their multimedia and official merchandise consumption intentions. Finally, through an multigroup analysis, we evaluate the moderation effect that an identity threat has in these relationships.

4.3. Theoretical background

Social Identity Theory (SIT) has been used as a framework to analyze consumer decision taking, especially focusing on the influence that societal norms have over consumption intentions (Sardana, Cavusgil & Gupta, 2020). For example, individuals tend to buy and use products that align with the norms of their

social group (Wang, 2017; Kleine, Kernan & Schultz, 1993), therefore reducing social uncertainty (Agha & Tyler, 2017). Individuals with higher identification towards an organization also show higher purchase intentions (Hsieh, 2014), while using the organization´s products or services helps them distinguish from other groups and enhance their self-expression (Marin, Ruiz &Rubio, 2009).

On the other hand, although not a broadly used theory within the consumer behavior literature, Norm Theory (NT) does give some insights. For example, NT tries to explain why individuals adopt third party behaviors or attitudes (Melnyk, van Herpen & Trijp, 2010), highlighting social norms as powerful influence sources (Albrecht, Walsh, Brach, Gremler & van Herpen, 2017). It is argued that both descriptive norms (assessment of what the majority of people do), and injunctive norms (beliefs about which behaviors are approved by relevant others) serve as predictors of shopping behaviors (Cialdini, Reno & Kallgren, 1990). Therefore, individual's consumption intention is impacted by social trends, especially when they are not sure how to behave (Wooten & Reed, 1998) or when confronting ambiguous circumstances (Albrecht, Walsh, Brach, Gremler & van Herpen, 2017). Therefore, being a member of a specific social group, could help in the normalization process of different type of behaviors, going from attitudinal all the way up to consumption.

The negotiation of intergroup boundaries is a central function of identity dynamics, where subgroups may interact under a superordinate identity (Ehala, 2009). A superordinate identity is one that contains other subordinate identities within it (Elsbach, 2003). Many superordinate identities are easily understood such as state/provincial then national identity (Havard, 2004), but others are harder to digest such as long-lasting rivalries suddenly embracing the same flag (McKeown, 2014). It is argued that by maintaining subgroup identities while placing them underneath a superordinate umbrella, a social harmony is achieved (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Hornsey and Hogg (2000) suggest that a superordinate identity should not contradict or set into conflict relevant characteristics of the subgroup identities within it.

When the salience of an existing social identity is increased, or a new shared identity is introduced, different groups could reach a superordinate classification (Gomez, Dovidio, Huici, Gaertner & Cuadrado, 2008). We argue that being *The Classic* a salient categorization, those clubs considered the rivals within it are a superordinate category under the umbrella of *The Classic*. Up to some extreme, *The Classic* idea could be compared to the "ethno-pluralism" described by Lubbers and Coenders (2016), where differences between cultures, in our case classic and non-classic clubs, are emphasized to preserve the unique features and non-mixing with other "lower level" clubs.

In line with the identity complexity mentioned by Roccas and Brewer (2002), Micevski, Halkias and Herz (2019) found that it is relatively easy for individuals to recognize affiliation in several steps (country, region,

world). For example, it has been suggested that in a sport context, fans recognize a latter-type affiliation, where the relationship club, league, federation arises (Havard, 2014), while in other cases the categorization is made by club, city, region (Heere, Walker, Yoshida, Ko, Jordan & James (2011).

4.3.1. *Stability, permeability, and legitimacy of a supraordinate identity*

Individuals' acknowledgement of a group existence requires the distinction of at least one other group, therefore creating a comparison context between the in-group vs the out-group (Delia, 2015). When an in-group identity is under attack or threaten, individuals will struggle to make the in-group seem more positive or else abandon the group (Mansfield, Delia & Katz, 2020). Whether you can move in or out a group, and who and how a threat should impact their members depend on three major characteristics: stability, permeability, and legitimacy (Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 2002).

Stability relies on group status and its granted continuity (Nadler, 1993). For those groups enjoying high status, stability represent power and resource accessibility, on the other hand, a loss in stability will represent an identity threat (Scheepers, 2009). At the same time, for low status groups, higher stability represents an identity threat (Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 2002), while low stability contexts will trigger a challenge sentiment (Scheepers, 2009). In other words, stability is a wish to have characteristic for high status groups, as this is a key to access power over lower status groups and will grant continuity over time, while low status groups will seek instability situations in their pursuit of resource accessibility and status improvement.

Permeability stands for the level of penetrability that a focal group boundary has, and therefore, how hard it is to move in or out from it (Armenta, Stroebe, Scheibe, van Yperen, Stegemen & Postmes, 2017). When analyzing multiple identity options, permeability is a key characteristic that individuals use to position themselves into one or more identities (Fleischmann, Leszczensky & Pink, 2019), and how does the identity dynamic works between those groups and others within a specific context (Ehala, 2009). Lower levels of permeability disincentivize social mobility in or out the group (Appiah, Ozuem, Howell & Lancaster, 2018), while higher levels of permeability are normally associated to lower status groups (Pettit & Lount, 2010) and suggested to incentivize members to leave (Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 1997).

Finally, legitimacy arises as the perception that both stability and permeability should be either accepted, creating a sense of justified status quo (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), rejected due to a perceived unfairness (Reicher & Haslam, 2006), or simply discredited (Costarelli & Gerlowska, 2014). In a social context, high legitimacy perceptions guide low-status groups to unquestioned their disadvantaged position (Caricati & Sollami, 2018), while illegitimacy appraisals are suggested to trigger anger (Livingstone, Spears, Manstead

& Bruder, 2009) and collective action attempts such as social negotiation (Lyons, Pek & Wessel, 2017) or attribution bias (Costarelli, 2012).

In combination, higher levels of stability and legitimacy, with lower levels permeability create a sense of powerful and positive evaluation of a focal group (Costarelli, 2012). Therefore, those groups who enjoy of these three characteristics are constantly motivated to preserve them (Shnabel & Ullrich, 2013). When an individual socially identifies with a group, a psychological separation between the self and others disappears (Jin & Phua, 2014), especially when group identity is more salient (Marin, Ruiz & Rubio, 2009), nonetheless, individuals tend to have multiple and simultaneous different identities (Micevski, Halkias & Herz, 2019). Consequently, the following hypothesis are formulated:

H_1 Higher levels of stability will decrease the probability of existence of a supraordinate identity.

H_2 Higher levels of permeability will increase the probability of existence of a supraordinate identity.

H_3 Higher levels of legitimacy will increase the probability of existence of a supraordinate identity.

4.3.2. *Supraordinate identity and its impact on justifiability and consumption behaviors*

In line with SIT, it doesn`t matter if it is a small-town club or one of the most recognizable sport team globally, there is a widely recognized psychological significance on the fan's attachment to his/her favorite sport club (Crisp, Heuston, Farr & Turner, 2007). Becoming a sport club fan by itself gives positive attributes to any individual, starting by a belongingness trait (Delia, 2019) and going into self-fulfillment (Grantz, Wang, Paul & Potter, 2006).

Although is widely known that rivalry threatens fans' identity, for example, by lowering public collective self-esteem in relation to supporters of the rival team, apparently rivalry also arises with key positive consequences, such as higher perceptions of public collective self-esteem in relation to fans of non-rival opponents, perceived ingroup uniqueness and cohesion (Berendt & Uhrich, 2016).

Berendt and Uhrich (2016) found that "these positive effects are mediated through increases in disidentification with the rival and perceived reciprocity of rivalry". Reciprocity should be understood as the perception made by fans, that their rivalry with another team is in fact mutual (Berendt & Uhrich, 2016). Therefore, sport fans seem to "need" rivals (Havard & Eddy, 2013) by enjoying mutual dislike and thrashings (Uhrich, 2014), while intensifying their relationship through higher levels of reciprocity (Berendt & Uhrich, 2016).

If the supraordinate identity of *The Classic* does exist, it should be treated and assigned with the typical characteristics that any identity has. For instance, their members, especially those highly identified, will

show propensity to higher levels of media and merchandise consumption intentions. At the same time, these individuals will find it easier to justify themselves embracing positive behaviors such as supporting *The Classic* and its members. These discussions guide us to the following hypotheses:

H₄ Higher levels of supraordinate identity will increase the justifiability of the fans.

H₅ Higher levels of supraordinate identity will increase the multimedia consumption intentions of the fans.

H₆ Higher levels of supraordinate identity will increase the official merchandise consumption intentions of the fans.

4.3.3.   *Justifying the media and merchandise consumption intentions*

Aligned with NT, individuals find it easier to justify decisions or circumstances that appear to be normal, for themselves and their group members (Kahneman & Miller, 1986), The status quo usually arises as normality (Feldman, 2020), while changes or out-of-the normal situations could derive into sentiments of regret (Feldman, et al., 2020). Under this evaluation circumstances, individuals experience social and contextual pressures to justify their decisions (Inman & Zeelenberg, 2002), allocating regularly more value to normality (Temerak & El-Manstrly, 2019). In a sport context, justifiability has been suggested as a relevant input towards the fans´ consumption behaviors (Navarro-Picado, et al., 2022), guiding us to the following hypothesis:

H₇ Higher levels of justifiability will increase the multimedia consumption intention of the fans.

H₈ Higher levels of justifiability will increase the official merchandise consumption intention of the fans.

4.3.4.   *Identity threat moderation effect on The Classic sport fans*

Different from an individual identity threat, people may experience social identity threats, which involves a broad idea that one`s group is degraded (Rios, 2021). Ingroup members tend to protect themselves when being threatened, making the group itself a defensive support (Veldman, Van Laar, Meeussen & Lo Bue, 2021). Individuals engage in social comparisons with proximal and salient outgroups to satisfy the need of a positive self-esteem (Piening, Salge, Antons & Kreiner, 2020) and sense of belonging (Micevski, Halkias & Herz, 2019). Nonetheless, incidents that diminish the clarity of conceptual group boundaries, may signify a major threat to members' assessments of social distinctiveness (Elsbach, 2003).

It is easier to link different social identities, either cognitively or physically when individuals are able to distinguish similarities between both identities (Amiot, Terry & McKimmie, 2012). At the same time, less social identity threats are experienced by large inclusive groups (high in assimilation) while this is detrimental to the differentiation needs that are granted by minority groups (Badea, Jetten, Czukor &

Askevis, 2010). It has been suggested that individuals can assimilate and at the same time differentiate within a group that is perceived by outgroup members as one single identity (Mitha, Adatia & Jaspal, 2017). At the same time, high status groups are conferred with an appraising superiority, in these cases neither high nor low identifiers within the group perceive a need of any kind of strategy to alter their ingroup context (Iacoviello, Lorenzi & Chipeaux, 2018). Therefore, we suggest that being fan of a "classic team" helps an individual in the balancing process, as they are part of the superordinate "classic" (the sum of both clubs) while being fan of just one of them.

Group members are likely to exert greater feelings of collective self-continuity when their group is under continuity threat, subsequently strengthening their demand to protect their group identity (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013). It is not surprising that an individual may act in a counter intuitive manner during a specific situation, as it has been suggested that group members are selective on norms to follow depending on individual motivations and contextual characteristics (Falomir, Gabarrot & Mugny, 2009). The road towards intergroup helping is better paved when a relevant social identity is under threat (Van Leeuwen, 2007). Therefore, we argue that it should not be surprising that a fan, who clearly identifies with a team of *The Classic,* and at the same time disidentify him/herself from the opposing team of *The Classic*, at some point would defend his rival through positive consumption behaviors, in a pursuit of survival. He/she might justify him/herself that is not for Real Madrid (in the case of Barcelona fans), but for the continuity of *The Classic.* Accordingly, the following hypotheses was developed:

H$_{9a}$ *The Classic* fans would experience a higher relationship between supraordinate identity and multimedia consumption intention when undergoing an identity threat.

H$_{9b}$ *The Classic* fans would experience a higher relationship between supraordinate identity and official merchandise consumption intention when undergoing an identity threat.

H$_{9c}$ *The Classic* fans would experience a higher relationship between justifiability and multimedia consumption intention when undergoing an identity threat.

H$_{9d}$ *The Classic* fans would experience a higher relationship between justifiability and official merchandise consumption intention when undergoing an identity threat.

4.4. Method

4.4.1. Participants

Respondents were recruited through either Qualtrics mailing list, or by interception in different locations in Costa Rica nationwide between November and December 2021. All research participants were over 18 years old and were confirmed to have at least a basic knowledge of Costa Rican football and familiarity

with top-tier clubs in the local league. After eliminating incomplete or potentially biased questionnaires, and responses from fans other than The Classic teams, 390 valid responses were formally collected. The participants average age was 32.73 (SD=13.56), from which 271 were men, and 118 were women.

To guarantee the validity of responses, an instructional manipulation check (IMC) was employed (Oppenheimer, et al., 2009). According to Oppenheimer and colleagues (2009), these mechanism increases validity of the data and provides scientists with a tool to exclude biased or non-diligent answers. In our specific case, the IMC proved that respondents understood that a *Classic* club was disappearing, and that this situation caused that *The Classic* -as an event-, will never be played anymore in the future. At the same time, for those in the control group, the IMC confirmed that respondents understood the questionnaire was regarding *The Classic,* and that going forward, their responses were specifically focused on these matchday event. This procedure has been recently used in a variety of research fields including but not limited to environmental psychology (Lalot, et al., 2022), investment performance (Borsboom, et al., 2022), sports media consumption behaviors (Navarro-Picado, et al., 2022), and consumer services (Nicolau, et al., 2022) among others.

4.4.2. Measurement

A questionnaire was developed that contained the following sections: (a) an informed consent, which requested participants to confirm their voluntary participation and that they were above 18 years old and had some knowledge of Costa Rican First Division League; (b) a little contextualization on the league itself; regarding that 2021 is precisely the 100th birthday of the local league; (c) participants will randomly move into the core questionnaire or shown a scenario intended to capture the identity threat; (d) the core questionnaire. All measures in this study were adopted or adapted from those developed in previous studies. MMCI was assessed through a three-item scale based on the research of Kim et al. (2011), which includes questions such as *"I will watch or listen to the The Classic games through the media."* OMCI is also a three-item scale based on Kim et al. (2011) including items such as *"I am likely to purchase The Classic's licensed merchandise in the future."* Justifiability of Decision (JoD) is a three-item scale, based on Inman and Zeelenberg's (2002) scale, with items like *"How justifiable is the decision to support the Classic?"* The scale for assessing Supraordinate Identity is an eleven-item scale based on the research of Bruner and Benson (2018) and includes items such as *"I feel strong ties to other members of The Classic."* Legitimacy was assessed through a three-item scale based on the research of Mummendey et al. (1999), including items such as *"The Classic can indeed be considered better than any other game in the First Division."* Stability was assessed based also on Mummendey et al. (1999), which included items such as *"The status relationship that exists between The Classic and the other First Division matches will be enduring."* Finally, permeability was assessed through a twelve-item scale based on Armenta et al. (2017) including items such

as *"The Classic is fundamentally the same as any other First Division match."* For sample description purposes, a section on sociodemographic background variables was included in the survey form, asking for the age, sex, educational level and province in which participants live.

Some of the aforementioned scales adapted for this study were never before used in Spanish language, therefore items of those scales were translated. Double translations were made to ensure linguistic validity (Chapman and Carter 1979). A panel of five experts with a specialized background in professional sport league management theories and practices were invited to evaluate content validity (Crocker and Algina 2006). The panel members were asked to examine each item's relevance, representativeness, and clarity for a specific concept. Adopting a standard of 80% agreement among the panel members, all items were retained after revisions and modifications were made to improve linguistic expressions for a few items. All the items were phrased on a Likert 7-point scale, ranging from 1 = strong disagreement to 7 = strong agreement. The items were arranged in a random order within each of the sections, and Table 11 shows the means and standard deviations for all items.

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics for Predictive and Criterion Variables

Construct	Variable	Item	Mean	SD
Permeability	Per_01	The Classic is fundamentally the same as any other First Division match.	2.74	2.14
	Per_02	There is no difference between any First Division match and The Classic.	2.61	2.04
	Per_03	The difference between The Classic and any other game in the First Division is imperceptible.	3.23	2.18
	Per_04	Any First Division match could pass as The Classic.	2.50	1.90
	Per_05	Easily any game in the First Division could be seen as The Classic.	2.44	1.84
	Per_06	Any match of the First Division can be considered as The Classic if it is proposed to do so.	3.13	2.08
	Per_07	Any match in the First Division can find it easy to be considered The Classic.	2.40	1.71
	Per_08	It is relatively simple for any game in the First Division to be able to carry out all the activities that are associated with The Classic.	3.23	1.98
	Per_09	Any match in the First Division has the same capabilities as The Classic.	2.95	2.02
	Per_10	Any match in the First Division receives the same opportunities as The Classic.	2.67	1.84
	Per_11	With relative ease, any game in the First Division can access the same resources as The Classic.	2.59	1.77
	Per_12	Honestly, it is easy for any game in the First Division to have the same status as The Classic.	2.43	1.80
Stability	Stab_01	I consider that the status of The Classic in relation to the other matches of the First Division will remain stable for the next few years.	4.84	1.90
	Stab_02	The status relationship that exists between The Classic and the other First Division matches will be enduring.	4.62	1.76

	Stab_03	The status relationship that currently exists between The Classic and the rest of the First Division matches hardly changes.	4.87	1.68
Legitimacy	Leg_01	The Classic can indeed be considered better than any other game in the First Division.	4.60	1.93
	Leg_02	The Classic is more demanding than any other game in the First Division.	5.07	1.80
	Leg_03	It is justifiable that The Classic does better than the other First Division games.	4.81	1.83
Supraordinate Identity	SupraIden_01	I have a lot in common with other members of The Clasicc	3.85	2.11
	SupraIden_02	I feel strong ties to other members of The Classic.	3.84	2.17
	SupraIden_03	I find it easy to form a bond with other members of The Classic.	3.98	2.11
	SupraIden_04	I feel a sense of being "connected" with other members of The Classic.	3.87	2.17
	SupraIden_05	In general, I'm glad to be a member of The Classic.	4.36	1.98
	SupraIden_06	I feel good about being a member of The Classic.	4.50	1.93
	SupraIden_07	Generally, I feel good when I think about myself as a member of The Classic.	3.97	2.03
	SupraIden_08	Overall, being a member of The Classic has a lot to do with how I feel about myself.	2.50	1.90
	SupraIden_09	In general, being a member of The Classic is an important part of myself-image.	2.29	1.84
	SupraIden_10	The fact that I am a member of The Classic often enters my mind.	3.03	2.05
	SupraIden_11	I often think about the fact that I am a member of The Classic.	2.91	2.08
Justifiability	Just_01	How justifiable is the decision to support The Classic?	4.45	1.58
	Just_02	How easy to defend is the decision to support The Classic?	4.16	1.64
	Just_03	How logical is the decision to support The Classic?	4.35	1.59
Multimedia Consumption Intention	MMCI_01	I will track the news on The Classic through the media.	4.06	2.09
	MMCI_02	I will watch or listen to The Classic through the media.	4.49	2.10
	MMCI_03	I will support The Classic by watching or listening to it through the media.	4.66	2.03
Official Merchandise Consumption Intention	OMCI_01	I am likely to purchase The Classic's licensed merchandise in the future.	3.22	2.04
	OMCI_02	In the future, purchasing The Classic licensed merchandise is something I plan to do.	3.21	2.01
	OMCI_03	In the future, I intend to purchase licensed merchandise representing The Classic.	3.22	2.03

4.4.3. Procedures

We aimed to assess the moderating effect of the eventual identity threat that fans could experience when realizing that either their team or their classic rival will disappear. A scenario was articulated and presented randomly to nearly half (193) the participants prior the core questionnaire. This was aligned with the identity complexity mentioned by Roccas and Brewer (2002) and the eventual social identity threat described by Rios (2021). Textually, this scenario said, "*Be aware of the following: Unexpectedly, multiple organizations, both national and international, have expressly requested before various authorities that*

Deportivo Saprissa should disappear. The disappearance of the club will leave an immediate and lasting void in Costa Rican First Division. With this decision, there will no longer be the important match named "The Classic" that always exists between Deportivo Saprissa and Liga Deportiva Alajuelense, something that will undoubtedly mark a before and after in the history of national sport. Without knowing it, the recent Classic played in 2021 was the last one, it will never be played again."

Responses to the questionnaire were obtained electronically through Qualtrics mailing distribution; individuals received an email invitation to participate and a link to the survey, or through interception in different locations of Costa Rica nationwide. After individuals agreed to participate in the study, they were given either a link or a QR code that gave them access to the electronic version of the survey. They were randomly assigned to respond to the questionnaire including the disappearance scenario (193 respondents) or no scenario (197 respondents). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed using the SPSS program, followed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) by executing the AMOS program (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Structural equation model (SEM) analyses were conducted to examine the research hypotheses.

4.5. Results

When conducting EFA, a factor loading threshold was set to .50 or higher without double-loading, while a criterion of .70 was set for a Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Nunnally 1994). All measures satisfied these criteria; subsequently, it was deemed appropriate to proceed with conducting a CFA. The model fit indexes included RMSEA = .082, CFI = .829, IFI = .830, TLI = .814, and normed chi-square of 3.61, indicating that the data fit the measurement model well. All items were preserved because of their high levels of convergence and R^2. To avoid any possible underestimation from the Cronbach's alpha (Smith 1974), a composite reliability test was conducted (Jöreskog 1971), setting the threshold to the recommended .65 (Steenkamp and Geyskens 2006). Adopting the threshold of .50, convergent validity was confirmed by calculating average variance extracted (AVE) coefficients (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Finally, discriminant validity was tested by verifying that number 1 was not included in the confidence interval of any correlation pair (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). All these findings suggest adequate psychometric properties of the measurement scales, and their respective figures are shown in Table 12 regarding the CFA, composite reliability, and convergent validity. Table 13 refers to the correlational analysis and discriminant validity.

Table 12. Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Composite Reliability, and Convergent Validity.

Item	Standardized Solution	t-Value	Item R²	Factor	Crombach's Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Per_01	0.533	25.272	0.284				
Per_02	0.665	25.196	0.442				
Per_03	0.415	29.225	0.172				
Per_04	0.801	25.984	0.642				
Per_05	0.883	26.208	0.779				
Per_06	0.736	29.713	0.542	Permeability	0.894	0.894	0.424
Per_07	0.798	27.616	0.637				
Per_08	0.611	32.161	0.374				
Per_09	0.608	28.849	0.370				
Per_10	0.471	28.784	0.222				
Per_11	0.505	28.882	0.255				
Per_12	0.610	26.587	0.372				
Stab_01	0.753	50.431	0.568				
Stab_02	0.853	51.759	0.727	Stability	0.821	0.817	0.600
Stab_03	0.710	57.276	0.504				
Leg_01	0.737	46.965	0.543				
Leg_02	0.684	55.776	0.468	Legitimacy	0.741	0.706	0.447
Leg_03	0.574	51.925	0.329				
SupraIden_01	0.754	35.999	0.569				
SupraIden_02	0.843	34.963	0.711				
SupraIden_03	0.812	37.298	0.659				
SupraIden_04	0.893	35.287	0.798				
SupraIden_05	0.809	43.431	0.655				
SupraIden_06	0.764	46.191	0.583	Supraordinate Identity	0.931	0.929	0.552
SupraIden_07	0.784	38.728	0.615				
SupraIden_08	0.499	26.019	0.249				
SupraIden_09	0.490	24.569	0.241				
SupraIden_10	0.742	29.205	0.550				
SupraIden_11	0.668	27.673	0.446				
Just_01	0.824	55.479	0.678				
Just_02	0.653	50.003	0.426	Justifiability	0.794	0.786	0.553
Just_03	0.744	54.060	0.553				
MMCI_01	0.781	38.326	0.610	Multimedia Consumption Intention	0.897	0.888	0.726
MMCI_02	0.905	42.174	0.818				
MMCI_03	0.866	45.231	0.751				
OMCI_01	0.925	31.233	0.856	Official Merchandise Consumption Intention	0.954	0.954	0.874
OMCI_02	0.943	31.529	0.889				
OMCI_03	0.936	31.330	0.876				

Table 13. Correlational Analysis and Discriminant Validity.

Pair of Constructs	Correlation	SEE	Confidence Interval	
Permeability<-->Stability	-.202	0.059	-0.311	-0.102
Permeability<-->Legitimacy	-.155	0.072	-0.287	-0.041
Permeability<-->Supraordinate Identity	-.219	0.062	-0.323	-0.116
Permeability<-->Justifiability	-.147	0.070	-0.264	-0.031
Permeability<-->MMCI	-.254	0.057	-0.341	-0.163
Permeability<-->OMCI	-.052	0.057	-0.153	-0.036
Stability<-->Legitimacy	0.485	0.075	0.331	0.588
Stability<-->Supraordinate Identity	0.342	0.064	0.220	0.439
Stability<-->Justifiability	0.394	0.069	0.268	0.510
Stability<-->MMCI	0.271	0.067	0.153	0.381
Stability<-->OMCI	0.160	0.061	0.035	0.243
Legitimacy<-->Supraordinate Identity	0.587	0.055	0.482	0.664
Legitimacy<-->Justifiability	0.581	0.055	0.477	0.665
Legitimacy<-->MMCI	0.480	0.058	0.380	0.572
Legitimacy<-->OMCI	0.424	0.052	0.333	0.504
Supraordinate Identity<-->Justifiability	0.636	0.041	0.556	0.702
Supraordinate Identity<-->MMCI	0.757	0.034	0.689	0.809
Supraordinate Identity<-->OMCI	0.619	0.043	0.537	0.681
Justifiability<-->MMCI	0.655	0.049	0.561	0.716
Justifiability<-->OMCI	0.541	0.049	0.442	0.608
MMCI<-->OMCI	0.613	0.042	0.540	0.676

The SEM analyses revealed that satisfactory values support model fit to the data, as the model achieves an RMSEA of 0.082, CFI of 0.825, IFI of 0.825, TLI of 0.811, and normed chi-square of 3.63. The findings indicate that permeability has a negative effect (-.126 $p < .05$) and legitimacy has a positive effect on supraordinate identity (.550, $p < .01$), while stability showed no significance, supporting H_2 and H_3. Supraordinate identity positively impacts on justifiability (.644 $p < .01$), while impacting positively on MMCI (.572, $p < .01$) and OMCI (.459, $p < .01$), supporting H_4, H_5, and H_6. Finally, Justifiability showed a positive impact on MMCI (.297, $p < .01$) and OMCI (.260, $p < .01$) as shown in Figure 6, supporting H_7 and H_8.

Figure 6. Structural Equation Model Examining the Relationships among Permeability, Stability, Legitimacy, Supraordinate Identity, Justifiability, Multimedia Consumption Intention and Official Merchandise Consumption Intention.
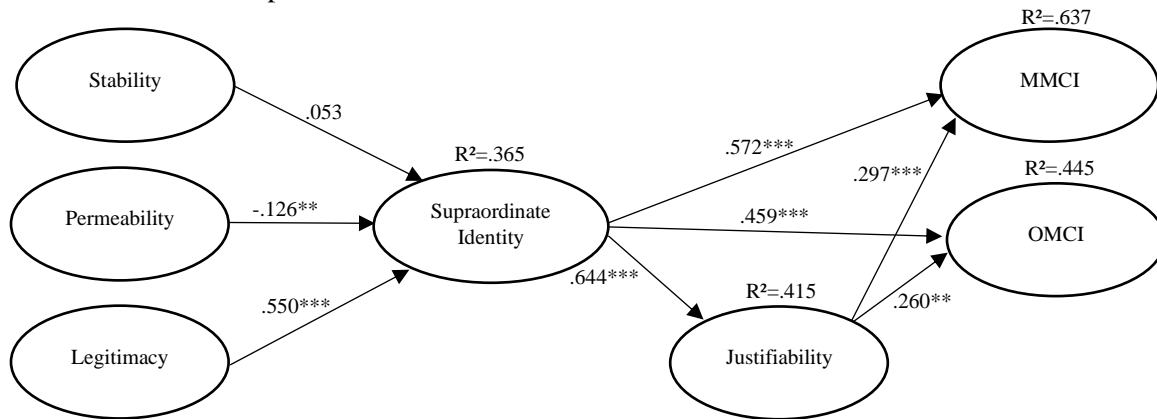
During the data collection process, participants were randomly assigned to evaluate the decision of either experiencing an eventual identity threat (disappearance of one of *The Classic* teams) or no threat. Therefore, and in line with SIT, we evaluate behavioral differences comparing individuals who experience an identity threat, and those who did not. A multi-sample analysis was performed to test the moderation effect, which corresponded to H_{9a} through H_{9d}. A total of 193 individuals were assigned to the identity threat scenario, while 197 were allocated to the no threat group. A CFA invariance test was performed prior to the multi-sample analysis (Silva et al. 2019). It has been recommended that three test levels should be assessed: (a) configural invariance (good model fit in the multi-group sample); (b) metric invariance (unconstrained vs. structural weights CFI difference test below .01); (c) structural invariance (unconstrained vs. structural weight chi-square insignificance differences) (Cheung and Rensvold 2009). Configural invariance was supported with coefficients of RMSEA=0.063, CFI=0.802, IFI=0.804, TLI=0.787, and normed chi-square=2.53. Metric invariance was satisfactory, with a CFI difference of -0.002 (unconstrained 0.802 – 0.804 measurement). The chi-square difference test was unsatisfactory. Nonetheless, we assumed the invariance as two out of three tests were accomplished and sticking to the suggestion made by Cheung and Rensvold (2002) regarding the lack of practicality and restrictiveness of the chi-square difference test, which was also recently backed by other researchers (French and Finch 2006). A multi-sample analysis allowed us to recognize the disparities between the coefficients of the two models by generating a single solution for each of them (Table 14).

As shown in Table 14, there were no significant differences between Supraordinate Identity and Justifiability towards OMCI. However, there was a strong significance in the differences between Supraordinate Identity towards MMCI and a significant difference between Justifiability and MMCI. These findings revealed that under an identity threat context, individuals experience higher levels of Supraordinate Identity and require lower levels of Justifiability in order to consume of *The Classic*

multimedia content. In other words, these findings suggest that under menace, both fans of the focal team and fans of the rival team experience an enhancement in their identity to consume multimedia content, while demanding less justifiability to do so.

Table 14. Multi-Sample Analysis – Identity Threat vs NO Threat.

Constraint	Estimated Coefficient (Identity Threat)	Estimated Coefficient (NO threat)	(d.f) X^2 differences	Probability
Supraordinate-->MMCI	.613***	.529***	(1) 4.018	.045**
Supraordinate-->OMCI	.445***	.450***	(1) .101	.750
Justifiability-->MMCI	.292***	.316***	(1) 3.447	.063*
Justifiability-->OMCI	.277***	.273***	(1) .000	0.996

4.6. Discussion

Drawing on the social identity theory and norm theory, this study developed a model to investigate whether fans identify in a supraordinate manner towards the event named *The Classic*. Our main goal was to reveal the existence of this supraordinate identity and distinguish the evaluation differences made by this fans under an identity threat context.

Multimedia consumption is deemed a relevant variable for sport leagues as broadcasting represents up to 66% of the leagues' budget (Horky 2021) in some cases. Aligned with the social identity theory, our findings suggest that higher levels of legitimacy derive higher levels of supraordinate identity, while higher levels of permeability have a negative effect on this identification. Therefore, legitimacy once again appears as a relevant input for identification, as our findings suggest that it is easier for individuals to identify and afterwards justify consumption intentions under higher levels of legitimacy.

At the same time, and aligned with recent findings of the norm theory, individuals seem to enhance their identification and require less justifiability to consume multimedia content, when facing an identity threat. This paper advances the knowledge on norm theory, as it argues that in a sports context and during a threatening circumstance, individuals' behaviors are reversed to those expected during "normal" periods. Specifically, the fact that *The Classic* could eventually disappear derive into higher levels of identification and lower needs of justification to consume multimedia content is counterintuitive. Conversely, during "normal" circumstances, individuals tend to experience lower levels of identification and require higher levels of justifiability to proceed with the same multimedia consumption intentions.

The fact that strigs related to OMCI did not experience significant differences, could resemble the log-term decision that this demand. For example, multimedia consumption could be done in a continuous and

relatively simple manner through the internet, television or radio with no cost associated. On the other hand, buying official merchandise is something that, not even the biggest fans do on a daily basis. It is regularly expensive, and it also demands time and effort, either searching for the products online and waiting for delivery, or moving to a shop to proceed with a physical purchase.

From a strategic management perspective, these findings argue that fans are sensible to identity threats, and that they perceive as a threat either a direct one towards their own club or one shooting towards their traditional rival. This is a relevant finding as it suggests that indifferently the situation, fans from both teams are willing to consume multimedia content regarding *The Classic*. It also argues that under threatening situations or context, this consumption intention will be enhanced. Additionally, legitimacy shows once more its important role for fans' judgment and suggests that it could work as a powerful tool for sport institutions in their communication strategies.

This study has a limitation in that it only considers one league of a specific sport. Although football is a globally recognized sport, the limitation of this single-sport analysis should be considered when interpreting the findings. Finally, readers should consider that the sample consists of fans from The Classic clubs only, therefore not all results are transferable to the whole fanbase. Future research should consider the analysis of different sports or less relevant clubs, where different perceptions or a preconceived smaller resource availability could arouse different responses. Therefore, replication of this research is recommended for different sport scenarios and fan bases.

4.6.1. *Practical contribution*

The most salient contribution for practitioners is precisely the acknowledgement of the existence of a supraordinate identity within *The Classic,* and the marketing implications that this could have, both for the involved clubs and their respective leagues. It is well known that, for example in Scotland, one major tourism event is the Glasgow Derbi between Rangers and Celtic (Grant, Dunlop & Swales, 2007), but this behavior could be emulated in many other latitudes all over the world. Individuals may easily recognize and understand what does *The Classic* mean for their own countries and leagues, and therefore it should be easy for them to understand what it could mean within other contexts. Therefore, as a marketing tool, *The Classic* could represent a relevant marketing tool for the attraction of tourists, sponsors, and broadcasting deals. On the other hand, this could easily justify the incipient creation (and creation attempts) of super leagues such as the European Super League (Miranda, 2021), the Concacaf Super League (Sanchez, 2021) and others to come. At the same time, without noticing it as *The Classic* phenomenon, this could explain the major economic and audience success of international leagues such as the UEFA Champions League (Plumley & Flint, 2015) or the Copa Libertadores de America (Pinochet, 2018).

5. Conclusions
5.1. Summary and discussion

The entertainment industry, and specifically the sports industry is a fast pace growing business (Koenigstorfer et al., 2010), in which multimedia consumption is one of its major income sources (Kim, et al., 2011). Multimedia content now comes in video, audio, written, or all three at the same time. Fans can access sports broadcasting live or on-demand through open-air tv, satellite or cable tv, pay-per-view events, and increasingly through streaming platforms (Loranca-Valle, et al., 2021; Yim & Byon, 2019). Top tier leagues and clubs, indistinctly of the sport, location, and timeframe, are now more available than ever before (Haynes, 2021; Cobbs & Hilton, 2012). Huge broadcasting contracts, combined with high quality audiovisual productions, create a scenario in which sport institutions battle intensively to capture at least a portion of the fans (and general audience) media consumption (Tamir, 2019).

Under these circumstances, multimedia consumption intention is a deem relevant variable to understand, both by researchers and practitioners (Chiu & Won, 2021). While broadcasting rights continue to rise (Horky, 2021), fans are now more demanding in many ways. They wish to have access through multiple devices (Ha, et al., 2017), each one of them delivering content that contributes to an overall communication satisfaction (Whitburn, et al., 2020), and that ultimately could promote higher levels of engagement (Trivedi, et al., 2020) and consumption intentions (Magnusen, et al., 2012). Therefore, uncovering the main antecedents of multimedia consumption intention would have a major impact on the industry (Kim, et al, 2011), and here is where legitimacy arises.

Legitimacy is a powerful input in the evaluation made towards an object (Bitektine, 2011). Individuals continuously evaluate if what is in front of their eyes is morally acceptable (MacQueen, 2015) and justifiable to exist (Meinard, 2017). Social norms, values, and beliefs (Suchman, 1995), along with emotional (Pardo, 2013) and contextual (Turcotte, et al., 2008) circumstances guide the judgement made towards an object by an individual. Legitimacy has been argued to reduce uncertainty (Agha & Tyler, 2017), enhance belongingness (Delia, 2019), and contribute to unquestioning the status differences between groups (Caricati & Sollami, 2018) while favoring the evaluation of the individuals´ own group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Consequently, understanding how audiences make decisions on to whom they are going to allocate their media consumption is deem relevant for the sport industry (Chiu & Won, 2021). Scientific literature has realized it and placed plenty of attention in recent years to this topic (Wang, et al., 2015; Santos-Sanchez & García Castellanos, 2011). Nonetheless, there are still many gaps to close and much knowledge to be uncovered. Our dissertation attempted to close some of the gaps by better understanding the impact that justifiability, trustworthiness, reliance, and specially legitimacy has on this type of consumption. Even

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further, how does these variables behave under different circumstances, such as innovative environments, the presence of a global crisis, or the appearance of a menace. Three individual manuscripts were developed and presented in these series, one after the other, complementing each other's findings and delivering a full package of aggregated knowledge to the literature.

It has been argued in the past that fan attachment (Yoshida, et al., 2015) and identification (Chiu & Won, 2020), both to the club (Paek, et al., 2021) or a specific athlete (Doyle, et al., 2020) have positive effects on multimedia consumption, therefore, we expected to confirm this trend in our analysis. What was still unclear in the literature, is the role that legitimacy perception may play in this relationship.

After a systematic literature review and the application of a survey to 405 respondents, findings from the first manuscript of the series suggest a mediating role from legitimacy in the relationship between fandom level and media consumption. At the same time, research results indicate that individuals who score higher in normative interpersonal influence show higher propensity to consume multimedia, in line with social acceptance (Scheinbaum, et al., 2020), learning (Teo, et al., 2019), and approval (Sharma & Klein, 2020). Considering these results, plus the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic, we moved into the next research.

At that point of history, many things changed dramatically, and immediately (Majumdar & Naha, 2020). Lockdowns, extreme sanitary measures, and prohibition for international flights were only some of the methods employed by almost every nation to alleviate the situation (Mann, et al., 2020). The sport industry and their fans struggle to find a way out (Mastromartino, et al., 2020; Drewers, et al., 2021). Some leagues restarted action with closed gates, which eventually demonstrated the relevance that media has. It was a period full of uncertainty, with millions of persons losing their jobs, and people demanding some actions to be taken (Clark, et al., 2020). Sport organizations were under scrutiny (Hammerschmidt, et al., 2021). Most players from top tier leagues earn high wages and are extremely mediatic, therefore some people believed they should help other less fortunate individuals (Press, 2020).

Under these conditions, we developed the second manuscript of the series, willing to deeply understand the role that legitimacy play in this relationship. At the same time, we wanted to test the possible impact that other relevant variables such as justifiability, trustworthiness and reliance could have on media consumption intention. It has been argued that justifiability allows individuals to avoid sentiments of regret in their decisions (Feldman, et al., 2020) by allocating themselves into a "normality" dimension (Temerak & El-Manstrly, 2019). On the other hand, trustworthiness has been suggested as an important variable for decision-making (Pena-Marin & Wu, 2019), by favoring an object under examination with credibility from the judges (Sekhon, et al., 2014). At the same time, reliance has been suggested as an important trait

specially during crisis periods (Rousseau, et al., 1998), helping individuals to reduce uncertainty when analyzing service providers (Martínez, et al., 2020).

We took advantage of the different postures that the German Bundesliga and the English Premier League had at that moment, were the first one reached an overall salary agreement so no one in the league lose their job, while the second one basically did nothing, sending some of their employees to furlough (Press, 2020). After a further literature review and the application of a survey to 503 respondents, results from the second manuscript of the series argue that legitimacy plays a relevant role along with trustworthiness and justifiability in route towards media consumption intention. Even further, it suggests that individuals shift their evaluation, favoring those sport institutions who rapidly adapt to the new circumstances by enhancing their justifiability and requiring less reliance to consume multimedia content from them.

From a mediation role to a major antecedent, we now suspected that legitimacy indeed has a more foundational role in the multimedia consumption decisions of sport fans. At the same time, we identified a gap in the literature regarding an eventual supraordinate identity in sports, created around the event called *The Classic.* Although in the past superordinate identities (Havard, 2014), and club disappearance (Wegner, et al., 2019) were object of analysis, it was never tested on the major sport rivalry and clubs of a focal league. This last article provides a deeper insight on the relationship that legitimacy has on fan decision making. Through additional literature review and the application of a survey instrument to 390 respondents, the manuscript uncovers the existence of a supraordinate identity, composed by the two "major" clubs of a league who play *The Classic* match, and how its members experience an identity threat both when their club is under menace or when their rival is, while confirming the foundational role that legitimacy plays in route towards media consumption intention.

These findings are aligned with the need of reciprocity in sport rivalries (Berendt & Uhrich, 2016) while counterintuitive under the lens of self-identification and the need to characterize oneself into who I am not (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2012). Regarding identity threat, our results make parallel with previous researchers who showed group members reactions on menace towards social distinctiveness (Elsbach, 2003), collective self-continuity (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013), and intergroup helping (Falomir, et al., 2009). Finally, legitimacy confirms its role consistent with status quo justification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), positive evaluation of the focal group (Costarelli, 2019), continuity preference of dominant groups (Shnabel & Ullrich, 2013), and social identification of the individual (Jin & Phua, 2014).

5.2. Theoretical and managerial implications

Three main theories were used as umbrella for our research, to know: Social Judgement Theory, Norm Theory, and Social Identity Theory. The first one suggests that individuals evaluate objects through a

categorization process (Kyle, et al., 2004), in which they have a personal anchor (Hoffmann, et al., 2019) with two extremes, at one end acceptance and in the other rejection (Rhine & Severance, 1970). Norm Theory on the other hand, argues that individuals evaluate objects through a stimulus centered process, allocating them into a normality categorization (Kahneman & Miller, 1986). As time passes and different objects fit into this normality judgement (Blay, et al., 2018), individuals and societies as a whole assimilate certain actions and norms as intrinsic (Bicchieri, 2006), guiding contextual circumstances (Emani, et al., 2021) and even consumption intentions (Temerak & El-Manstrly, 2019) and behaviors (Feldman, et al., 2020). Finally, Social Identity Theory, which is a generally used framework both in sport (Knobloch, et al., 2020) and consumption literature (Sardana, et al., 2020), argues that individuals use sport institutions to enhance their social identity (Yousaf, et al., 2020) through a strong sense of belongingness (Heere & James, 2007).

Under these lenses, our dissertation contributes to Social Judgement Theory in several different ways. First by testing how legitimacy judgements made over a sport institution could impact a more tangible action such as multimedia consumption. Therefore, the relevance of understanding how procedures (Kyle, et al., 2004), actions (Rhine & Severance, 1970), or even the mere existence (Van Swol, et al., 2018) could be evaluated as legitimate or not (Bitektine, 2011), though positively impacting a social justification process (Mao, et al., 2018). Our results align with the categorization process suggested by Social Judgement Theory theorists (Sherif & Hovland, 1961; Galang, et al., 2015), while confirming that individuals can still show an approval or rejection (Logan, et al., 2004; McDermott & Lachlan, 2020) evaluation towards sport organizations, which was an idea placed under huge doubts by several researchers in the past (Lee, et al., 2016; Fruchart & Rulence-Pâques, 2016). Additionally, we can argue with our results, that individuals show higher media consumption intentions towards those sport organizations that enjoy higher legitimacy levels, instead of arguing that individuals simply disengage from those who not (Proios, 2016; Murray, 2019). Even further, we can now argue that legitimacy is also a short-term decision-making tool, and not only a long-term evaluation process (Kellison & Mondello, 2012).

On the other hand, the study offers some important insights into Norm Theory. For instance, our findings suggest that individuals rapidly align themselves to *new norms* in society (Emani, et al., 2021), and therefore create circumstantial judgements (Feldman, et al., 2020) by specific actions taken by the focal sport institution. Therefore, in line with the normality categorization process suggested by Kahneman and Miller (1986) and the impact that social norms have on consumption intention argued by Temerak and El-Manstrly (2019), our findings suggest that individuals will allocate their media consumption to those sport leagues and clubs that enjoy higher levels of legitimacy perception.

This study also makes an important contribution to the Social Identity Theory field. First by confirming that sport leagues and clubs offer easy access to socialization spaces (Hill & Green, 2000), indistinctly of its location or performance (Branscombe & Wann, 1991). At the same time, research results support the idea that fans, as any other human being, are constantly in pursuit of reducing social uncertainty (Agha & Tyler, 2017), aligning themselves into social norms (Wang, 2017) which include purchases (Hsieh, 2014) and usage of highly salient identification products and services (Marin, et al., 2009). Then, our findings argue that individual's media consumption intentions are impacted by their fandom level (Cadwallader, et al., 2012; Funk & James, 2001; Heere & James, 2007), and that this consumption may be altered (Kim, et al., 2011; Escalas & Bettman, 2005) through the eventual identity threats (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013; Falomir, et al., 2009) they may experience, while using legitimacy as a foundational instrument for decision making (Bradford, et al., 2015). Overall, this manuscript extends our knowledge in that Social Identity Theory, Social Judgement Theory, and Norm Theory are intertwined in the fans' judgement analysis towards a focal sports organization, and how does their evaluation modify or predicts their consumption intentions.

In summary, the current dissertation contributes to the sports marketing literature by understanding the role that legitimacy has on the relationship between fandom level and media consumption, the importance of legitimacy during the evaluation process made by fans, and how it interacts with other variables such as trustworthiness and justifiability in route towards media consumption intention. Specifically, and in line with Social Judgement Theory, these research series argues that legitimacy is a foundational variable (Hutchins, et al., 2019) employed by fans in their evaluation process of focal sport organizations. Simultaneously, it suggests that under extreme contextual circumstances, individuals may shift their evaluations (Kahneman & Miller, 1986) depending on the focal organizations´ actions (Temerak & El-Manstrly, 2019), using legitimacy as guidance in their verdict (Bitektine, 2011). Even further, that legitimacy is an essential support for the existence (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) of an otherwise counterintuitive supraordinate identity.

From a managerial perspective, seems relevant for sport organizations to align their values, mission, and vision with their fans´ own values (Suchman, 1995; Pardo, 2003). At the same time, transparency in communication (Christiansen, 2002), along with consistency in norms (Jacob, 2021), or new norms (Subramaniam, et al., 2022) depending on circumstances, and values (Heres-van Rossum, et al., 2021) will help sport organizations to enjoy legitimacy judgement from their fans (Feldman, et al., 2020; Bjola, 2008), especially during crisis periods (Lambiase & English, 2021). Sport leagues and clubs should realize that legitimacy is a powerful tool to be used in their communication strategies (Scheifele, et al., 2019; Whitburn,

et al., 2020), and that by itself (Hutchins, et al., 2019), it will contribute to the media consumption intention of the available audiences (Chiu & Won, 2021; Kennedy & Kennedy, 2021; Inman & Zeelenberg, 2002).

Some suggestions that arise from our findings to enhance legitimacy (and therefore positively impact consumption intentions) in sport organizations are, to constantly communicate the level of expertise, training, and how well equipped their personnel is. This will help create a sense of suitability and approval by society in general, not only focal fans. Then, its relevant for this type of organizations to rigorously follow legal regulations and achieve high operational, procedural, and structural standards, in order to leave no doubts in their appropriateness and excellence. Additionally, setting goals (for example in infrastructure, or internationalization) and continuously achieving them will allow the organization to prove accountability and enjoy higher levels of support. In sum, the accomplishment of this suggestions will help fans (and society) to justify their loyalty through media consumption, as well as other type of patronage such as merchandise consumption and event attendance.

On the other hand, sport institutions should acknowledge that their fans experience identity threats (Sghs & Tyler, 2017; Berendt & Uhrich, 2016) derived from their fandom (Delia, 2019). That these threats have implications in their consumption intentions (Wang, 2017), and that the menace towards a club could signify a threat to its opponents as well (Berjot & Gillet, 2011; Hewstone, et al., 2016). Moreover, that the existence of a supraordinate identity (Crisp, et al., 2007) could signify an important marketing tool to attract major relevance (Grantz, et al., 2006; Havard & Eddy, 2013; Uhrich, 2014) to a specific event (Cobbs & Hilton, 2012; Cho, et al., 2020; Coates, et al., 2014; Kim & Kim, 2020).

In these matters, we will advice sport organizations to identify their fans´ emotional needs and align their communications accordingly. It is not the same to be a fan of a club from *The Classic* match than being one of a contender, or a smaller town club. Each of these fans experience different type of needs and threats, but they all could experience high levels of commitment with their favorite club and league. Both, leagues and clubs should work in developing healthy rivalries that may boost relevance to those match-day events (Demir & Rigioni, 2017, Doran & Jordan, 2018), and therefore guide fans to higher enjoyment and engagement. It is easy to understand the focus placed on *The Classic* match on each league (Parrish & Tyler, 2018; O´Brien, 2013), but leagues are made up by more than 2 clubs, and there is a higher chance of success for the league as whole when all its members enjoy of a minimum amount of wealth (Wooten, 2018; Heck, et al., 2012).

5.3. Limitations and future research

A number of important limitations need to be considered. First, two of the studies were focused in one specific national context (Gerke, 2019; McKeown, et al., 2020), while all the research regarded one specific

sport (football) (Sekhon, et al., 2016). Additionally, two of the samples included local fans only (Lock, et al., 2015), while the other included only international fans (Hognestad, 2012). At the same time, only fans from *The Classic* were considered for the final investigation (Kassing, 2020; Parrish & Tyler, 2018), keeping the opinion of other fans unknow as of today (Heck, et al., 2012; Schramm & Knoll, 2017). Finally, although scenarios were modeled according to what should be expected (Reisig & Bain, 2016), respondents could be influenced by their knowledge of real-life cases (Bruton, et al., 2018).

Further research is needed to evaluate if these results are consistent in different sport (Anderson & Raney, 2018) national scenarios (Doran & Jordan, 2018), or contexts such as whether season among other circumstances (Hallmann, et al., 2018). Likewise, it should be interesting to analyze both local and international fans (Robert, et al., 2009; Dmowski, 2013) under similar contexts (Karanfil, 2017). Moreover, understanding how fans other than *The Classic* (Kassing, 2020; O´Brien, 2013) evaluate the supraordinate identity (Wooten, 2018), where do they allocate themselves in that situation (Daniels, et al., 2020), and how do they deal with identity threat (Divišová, 2019), in case they feel any (Shuv-Ami, et al., 2020; Moradi, et al., 2017).

5.4. Acknowledgments

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