

## FAN IDENTIFICATION AS A PRECURSOR OF LOYALTY TOWARDS A FOOTBALL TEAM. A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

### *La identificación de los aficionados como precursor de la lealtad hacia un equipo de fútbol. Una revisión sistemática*

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**ABSTRACT:** A great number of elements can be differentiated that could be the precursors of fan identification and loyalty towards a football team. In light of this, the objective of this review is to study and understand the elements that make football fans feel identified with their favorite teams in order to achieve their loyalty. For the development of the study, the Cochrane, EBSCO SPORTDiscus, PUBMED and Web of Science (WOS) databases were used. Of the 290 initial articles, 84 were selected. This systematic review was performed following the PRISMA criteria. The results obtained showed the existence of multiple strategies for achieving fan identification, such as: social interaction, the history of the club and the city, the style of play, the stadium or the loyalty. As a conclusion, football clubs will be able to use the different strategies described above to achieve the identification of their fans with the team. Through the development of fan identification, an increase in customer consumption can be achieved.

**Key words:** identity, loyalty, supporters, soccer.

**RESUMEN:** Se pueden diferenciar un gran número de elementos que podrían ser los precursores de la identificación y fidelidad del aficionado hacia un equipo de fútbol. Por ello, el objetivo de esta revisión es estudiar y comprender los elementos que hacen que los aficionados al fútbol se sientan identificados con sus equipos favoritos para conseguir su lealtad. Para el desarrollo de la investigación se utilizaron las bases de datos Cochrane, EBSCO SPORTDiscus, PUBMED y Web of Science (WOS). De los 290 artículos iniciales, se seleccionaron 84. Esta revisión sistemática se realizó siguiendo los criterios PRISMA. Los resultados obtenidos mostraron la existencia de múltiples estrategias para lograr la identificación del aficionado, como son: la interacción social, la historia del club y de la ciudad, el estilo de juego, el estadio o la lealtad. Como conclusión, los clubes de fútbol podrán utilizar las diferentes vías mencionadas anteriormente para lograr la identificación de sus aficionados con el equipo. A través del desarrollo de la identificación de los aficionados se puede lograr un aumento del consumo de los clientes.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Identidad, lealtad, aficionados, fútbol.

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## 1. Introduction

Presently, sports in general, and football in particular, attract the attention of a large number of fans. As fans connect with the sport through identification (Jones, 1997). Fan identification can be defined as the personal commitment, perception of connection, and emotional involvement of the spectator with a sports team, whose failures and achievements are experienced by the fans as their own (Hunt, Bristol, Bashaw, 1999; Madrigal & Chen, 2008; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Shawn & Rosergerg, 2012). This identification is, overall, the psychological connection of a fan with a team, and can be measured according to the range with which the fan considers the team as a type of extension of oneself (Wann, Waddill, Polk & Weaver, 2001). According to Yoshida, Heere & Gordon (2015), identification in sports can be summarized, above all, with the intrinsic connections that are established and felt the members of a community of fans with the sports team, as well as among the community created itself.

The Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) has been utilized within the context of sports to examine identification, arriving to the conclusion that role identities are shaped by past experiences related with the sport (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). Fan identification is preceded by different factors, such as the need to be part of a community, the impact of the agents of socialization, and one's similarity with the players of the team (Theodorakis, Dimmock, Wann & Barlas, 2010). For that reason, individuals make an effort to join social categories that mirror the positive concept that they have about themselves, that is, their self-concept (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Along this line, Heere & James (2007) suggest that in the identification with a team, the symbolic power possessed by the sport teams for representing other associated social identities, such as the city, state or nationality, plays a primordial role. Thus, authors such as Shapiro, Ridinger & Trail (2013), consider that aside from the team itself, other forms of identification that affect the fan should also be taken into consideration, such as the identification with the player, with the sport itself, or with the coach. It is more probable for individuals to identify themselves with an organization (or team), when it represents values that the individuals attribute to themselves, according to their own concept of self (Cohen, 2017). Similar ideas are found in a study by Harris & Ogbonna (2008), which asserts that the bond felt by some fans with their clubs is an essential part of their self-identity.

The identification with a team can also be shaped and developed the satisfaction of the customer, who has used or bought any of the team's products or services (Funk & James, 2001). This identification satisfies the need of the sports consumers to affiliate themselves to something that is successful or desired, and therefore, it can be considered as a type of association to a brand. The high levels of identification with the sports team correspond to positive levels of social well-being, i.e. a higher level of self-esteem, and more frequent positive emotions (Wann, 1994; Wann & Pierce, 2005). As Llopis-Goig (2019) states, the main clubs and national teams create spaces of collective identification, and they also have the ability to influence the population's interaction patterns and promote a broad

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repertoire of feelings, emotions, and participation and consumption patterns. One way to influence and modify this pattern of behavior is through social media. Sports fans generate a large amount of tweets which mirror their opinions and feelings about what is happening during various sporting events (Aloufi & El Saddik, 2018).

For this reason, high levels of team identification conduct to team loyalty (Özgen & Argan, 2017). Within the area of sports, loyalty is understood as the persistent and robust commitment of an individual with a team (Yoshida et al., 2015). These same authors affirm that loyal fans of a specific team become involved in tasks that are not only for their own benefit (for example, attending a competition, watching, reading, or buying), but also in tasks that benefit their favorite sports teams (for example, fan support events, promoting positive word-of-mouth marketing and attending collaboration events), and other fans (for example, sharing knowledge about the team with other fans, forming cooperative communities in the booths and other forms of support from consumer to consumer) (Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa & Biscaia, 2014). Therefore, it can be confirmed that an increase in identification results in the surge and consolidation of the follower's loyalty (Kang, 2015). As for what was previously mentioned, it is very important for the clubs to control everything that is associated with fan identification. In this sense, identification can act as an indirect conduit between the sport and the loyalty of the fans (Stevens & Rosenberg, 2012). The identification with a sports team is, as well, a powerful predictor of the consumption by the spectators, the fan's permanence and belonging to the congregation of followers of a team, and the attendance to a game or following the game through the television or radio (Bernache-Assollant, Bouchet, Auvergne & Lacassagne, 2011; Shapiro et al., 2013; Theodorakis, Wann, Nassi & Luellen, 2012; Trail, Fink & Anderson, 2003; Trail, Anderson & Fink, 2005). In a generalized view, the identification with the team is based on three variables such as place, past and present (Delia & James, 2018).

In light of the literature consulted, the main objective of this review is to study and understand the elements that make football fans feel identified with their favorite teams, in order to attain their loyalty.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Study design**

The studies included in this systematic review examined the different ways in which the identification of football fans was influenced. The search strategy, inclusion criteria and any additional information were previously recorded in the international prospective register for the PROSPERO systematic review (number 155105).

This systematic review adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff & Altman, 2009).

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## **2.2 Search strategies**

The literature search was carried out using the meta-search engines EBSCO (Medline, Cinahl Complete, SportDiscus, Academic Search Complete, PsycINFO, Education Source, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, Environment Complete, Professional Development Collection), PUBMED, Cochrane and Web of Science (WOS). The search was limited to articles published between 1990 and 2019 from the beginning of May to December 2019. The following keyword and category search terms were used: (1) "football fans" or "sport fans" or "sport fandom" or "sport spectating") (2) ("Loyalty" or "identification" or "consumer behavior"). As reflected in the keyword sequence for the search, the Boolean operator "and" was used to combine categories (1) and (2). In addition to the references found through this method, additional records of relevance were found while reviewing the reference list of the different articles.

## **2.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

The inclusion criteria were: (a) articles published in Peer Reviewed Journals, (b) original articles, (c) that the publication language was Spanish, English or Portuguese, (d) studies on identification as the general concept, and identification in football and (e) accessibility to the entire text.

The exclusion criteria were: (a) systematic review literature (SRL) and meta-analysis, (b) articles that did not deal with sport identification or loyalty, (c) articles excluded after selection according to the title, (d) articles whose main subjects were social networks, (e) articles about rivalry in sports, (f) studies focused on violence and the hooligans, (g) articles that did not deal with football, (h) research focused on university sports, (i) abstracts and citations from scientific conferences and (j) opinion articles, commentaries, editorials or letters.

## **2.4 Data compilation and synthesis**

All the articles found in this search were transferred to the Mendeley software to verify the presence of duplicated files. Afterwards, two reviewers (TAJ and GMGG) utilized the search terms independently to examine the literature within the selected databases. These same reviewers independently analyzed the titles and abstracts of the search results obtained, and reviewed the complete texts selected for their inclusion within the systematic review. In the case of discrepancies during the review process, a third reviewer reviewed the work (ECP). Cohen's Kappa was calculated to determine the reliability between the two reviewing authors and a strong degree of agreement was found (Kappa=0.928).

## **2.5 Selection of studies and characteristics**

After the first elimination round, based on article duplicity, the number of publications

was reduced from 290 to 227 selected articles. Of these 227 scientific papers, after reading the title and abstract, a total of 103 articles were excluded. In view of this, the number of complete articles to be evaluated in order to determine eligibility for inclusion or not in the systematic review work was 124. After review of these 124 articles, 40 were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion criteria. Thus, a total of 84 papers were considered for the development of the systematic review. Further details on the selected articles can be found in Figure 1.

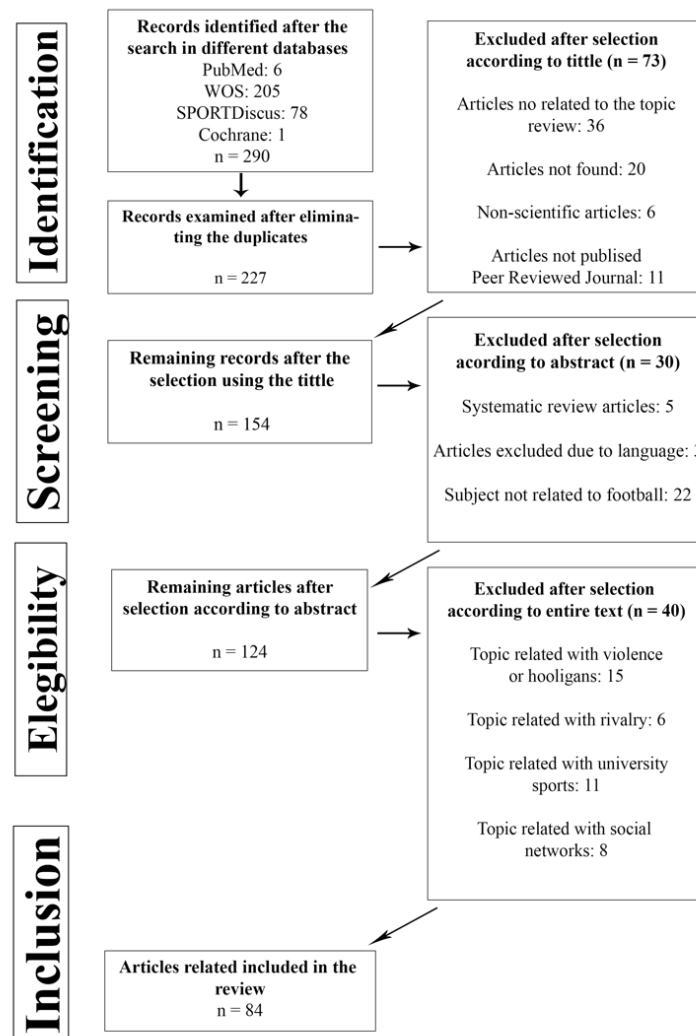


Figure 1. Flow diagram of the systematic review

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Determination of the thematic blocks related with the subject of identification

The great variability of variables can be grouped, as a function of the literature consulted, into four great thematic blocks (Rocha & Fleury, 2017), which can be summarized in the following manner: of the 84 articles found in the search, the first block was composed by

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21 articles related with the theme that dealt with fan identification and fan social interaction. The second group was composed by a total of 21 articles dealing with factors related to the team, stadium and city and fan identification. In the third block, we found a total of 27 articles that dealt with themes related to consumer behavior and fan identification. Finally, the fourth thematic group revolved around the variables of loyalty and fan identification, with a total of 15 articles. The separation according to thematic blocks was due to the study variables included in each of them.

For a more general perspective of the four groups of articles selected, they were grouped as follows: The first group consisted of articles focused on identification and social interaction, known as consumer to consumer (C2C), since it was the fans themselves who provided feedback on identification. It was made up of the 21 articles (Table 1).

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Table 1. Articles focused in C2C

Author and year	Sample	Type of questionnaire/instrument	Variables	Conclusions
<b>King, A. (2003)</b>		Self-created questionnaire. Interview.	Overcoming; nation; region; imagined communities; Manchester United.	This network of Manchester United fans can highlight a wider-reaching process in which the people all over Europe have been united more and more to their local city or region as the interests of that city or region are more often dissociated from the previous national context to integrate into a broader Europe. The cognitive-affective dimension of the identification of the team was the strongest predictor of the inter-group bias in both research studies.
<b>Dimmock, J.A. (2005)</b>	N=681 M=403 W=278 27 age	Team Identification Scale (Ellemers et al., 1999; Henry et al., 1999; Hinkle et al., 1989; Jackson, 2002; Karasawa, 1991; Kelly, 1988; Mael & Tetrick 1992). Survey.	Cognitive identification; affective identification; evaluative identification.	The people who surround an individual have the most influence for that person joining a sports team. In particular, the family plays a fundamental role in the stage of awareness and significantly determines the values, attitudes, personal interests and traditions of this individual towards the sports team. The greatest benefit of being a fan is the feeling of belonging. The fans love their club so much that they integrate it into their sense of self, and the club becomes ideal for this purpose. This love facilitates a particular manner of identification where
<b>De Groot, M. (2008)</b>	N=5 M=5	Self-created questionnaire (de Groot & Robinson, 2010). Interview.	Awareness; loyalty; attraction; trust.	
<b>Kligman, M. (2009)</b>	N=22 M=11 W=11	Sam (2007). Interview.	Friends; suffering; strange identifications	

<b>Walker, M. (2009)</b>	N=297 M=201 W=96 42 age	CSR (Mohr & Webb, 2005); Corporate reputation (Caruana, 1997); Pattern of intentions (James, 2006); Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Survey.	Team identification; corporate social responsibility; cognitive reputation; sponsorship intention.	the fans live the clubs' trials, tribulations and triumphs, as if they had been subjected to them. The fans clearly evaluate the socially-responsible efforts of their teams and especially use this information when they consider the selection of products and/or speak favorably about the organization.
<b>Gau, L. (2010)</b>	N=229 M=46 W=183 21.3 age	Social interaction (James & Ross, 2004); Entertainment (Gau et al., 2007); Psychological connection with the team scale (James & Ross, 2002). Survey.	Team identification; social identity; entertainment.	Some spectator sports motives could be conducive to fan identification
<b>Harkin, C. (2010)</b>	N=8 M=8	Self-created questionnaire (Harkin & Bainer, 2010). Interview.	Irish incarnate; support Manchester City; challenge Manchester United; blue and green sky.	The city and the community are key determinants for supporting Manchester City and a solid identification with the experiences embodied for being Irish are insufficient for persuading the fans that M. United should be their team. The fans do not find apparent difficulties to reconcile their Irishness with their support for Manchester City.
<b>Jones, I. (2010)</b>	N=531 42.1 age	In group favouritism (Tajfel, 1970); Out-group derogation (Lee & Otatti, 1993); Unrealistic optimistic (Lavine & Moreland, 1994); Voice (Wann & Dolan, 1994b). Survey.	In-group favoritism; out-group derogation; realistic optimism; continued participation.	Rewards obtained for being a fan: favoritism within the group, derogation outside of the group, non-realistic optimism and voice to continue with the group.
<b>Porat, A. B. (2010)</b>	N=143 M=111 W=32 30 age	Self-created questionnaire (Porat, 2010). Interview.	Match attendance; stadium behavior; soccer consumption in the media; relations with other fans; aggression; racism;	The "being a fan" is in fact a critical component of the identity profile of the fan. Therefore, the fans are at least partially "sure" in a volatile world of unstable identities.



			emotional aspects; cognitive aspects; symbolic aspects.	
<b>Wann, D. L. (2011)</b>	N=360 M=120 W=240 20.1 age	Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993); Self-created questionnaire (Wann, et al., 2011); Collective Self-Steem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1991); Social Isolation Scale (Dean, 1961); Satisfaction with Social Life Scale (Dienen et al., 1985; Wann & Pierce, 2005); Campus Connectedness Scale (Lee & Davis; 2000; Lee, Keough & Sexton, 2002). Survey.	Team identification; percentage of friends; number of friends; collective self-esteem; social isolation; satisfaction with social life.	Study 1. The results indicated that as expected, the identification with the team was positively related with the well-being and social connections. The posterior analyses did not find evidence that the social connections mediated or moderated the relationship between the identification with the team and the psychological social health. Study 2. The results of the initial study utilized a more general measurement of the social connections.
<b>Jones, M. V. (2012)</b>	N=91 M=66 W=25 29.4 age	Importance of the competition (Jones et al., 2012); Identification of the team of reference (Doosje, Ellemers & Spears, 1995); Identification with the team after the individual matches (Cialdini et al., 1976); Social interaction and expenses (Jones et al., 2012); POMS (McNair, Lorr & Droppleman, 1971); BRUMS (Terry, Lane & Fogarty, 2003; Terry, Lane, Lane & Keohane, 1999). Survey.	Pre-tournament; post-tournament; state of mind; percentage of money spent socializing.	Belonging to the group has an influence on the emotions and that the positive emotional experience associated to the success of the group persists for longer than the negative emotional experience associated with the failure of the group.
<b>Jones, I. (2012)</b>	N=9 M=5 W=4 29 age	Self-created questionnaire (Jones, Brown & Richards, 2013). Interview.	Temporary fans; pilgrims; escape; world cup; social identity; identification; experiences and perspectives of the foreigner who follows the tournament from afar.	The tournament offered escape from stress, and became the focal point of social interaction, brought the opportunity to re-create the home and re-enforce the feelings of national identity.
<b>Medcalf, R. (2014)</b>	N=5	Mining of lists (Till, 2006). Online survey.	Loyalty; nostalgia; support for	Increase of friendship through identification.

<b>Delia, E. B. (2014)</b>	N=14 M=6 W=8	Self-created questionnaire (Delia, 2014) References from McCracken (1988) and Inglis (1992). Interview.	women; paradoxical intertextuality. Group memberships and celebrations of team success; enjoyment of reflected glory; multiple group identity; university team identity; convergence of multiple group identities	The fans gloat and explode for a greater feeling of sensation of inclusion and distinction, and possess multiple group identities that converge into a structure of social identity that is highly exclusive before, during and after matches against rivals.
<b>Miller, P. K. (2015)</b>	N=26 M=18 W=8 27.3 age	Self-created questionnaire (Miller & Benkwith, 2015). Interview.	Fan identity construction; expression of fan sentiment; fan identity management.	The affiliations are where the action is. The analytical abstractions performed on the identity in the pursuit of “clarity” cannot guarantee the application to everyday social and psychological life of the sports fans themselves.
<b>Swanson, S. (2015)</b>	N=107 M=72 W=35 36 age	Prestige and identification with the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992); Measure of distinction (Griepentrog et al. 2012); Perceived adjustment (Cable & DeRue, 2002); Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993); Affective commitment (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993); Satisfaction with work (Cammann et al, 1983); Commitment with the work (Kanungo, 1982); Motivation with the work (Grant, 2008). Survey.	Team identification; prestige; measure of distinctiveness; perceived fit; organizational identification; affective commitment; job satisfaction; job involvement and motivation.	Identifying with the team results in more positive attitudes at the workplace. Although this may not be the case for employees in all situations or departments in professional sports, this study indicates that the highest levels of psychological connection with the team are generally associated with more committed, satisfied and motivated employees.
<b>Yoshida, M. (2015)</b>	N=233 M=162 W=71 45 age	Assessment of assistance of the selected fans; Team Identification (Trail & James, 2001; Trail et al., 2003); Sport Attachment (Trail et al., 2003); Player attachment (Trail et al., 2003); Local city attachment (Keller, 2003); Game Satisfaction (Yoshida & James, 2010); Service Satisfaction (Yoshida & James,	Team identification; commitment to: the sport, the players, the city, the community, the game; satisfaction with the service; behavioral intentions.	The attachment to the community of fans is the only construct that can predict the attendance frequency during a longer period of time, while the identification with the team, the satisfaction and the

		2010); Behavioral Intentions (Yoshida et al., 2013). Survey.		behavioral intentions are not significant predictors of attendance during the entire season. The marketing and communication strategies related with an existing rivalry should be utilized in a manner that maximizes the influence of rivalries in the mediating variables of de-identification and reciprocity, because these variables underlie the positive effects of rivalry.
<b>Berendt, J. (2016)</b>	N=571 M=489 W=82 36.1 age	Perception of the identity of the rivalry (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007); Identification with the favorite team (Mael & Ashforth, 1992); De-identification with the rival (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002); Perceived distinction and perceived group cohesion (Postmas et al., 2013); Collective and public self-esteem (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Survey.	Team identification, perception of rivalry; development of team identification; permissible reciprocity of rivalry; perceived distinctiveness; group cohesion; collective self-esteem. Inclusion; uses and gratifications; subjective norm; group normal; affective social identity; evacuative social identity; cognitive social identity; cognitive social identity.	Gratifications in football as maintenance of interconnectivity, creation of entertainment, social affective identity.
<b>Sayan, A. (2017)</b>	N=240 M=211 W=29 22 age	Cheung et al. Model (2010); Fanship Scale (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). Online survey.	Team identification; identity fusion; group struggle; right-wing economic values; right-wing social values; identification with family; identification with friends; identification with the club's fans; identification with Poland; identification with Europe.	The conservative fans will become the ideological force exploited by the authorities. It is important to highlight that the football fan is mainly composed by young individuals, and the younger generations in Poland, as indicated in public opinion surveys, are becoming more and more conservative.
<b>Kossakowski, R. (2018)</b>	N=309 M=270 W=39 26 age	Identity fusion with football supporters (Gómez et al. 2011); Identity fusion with various social groups (Swann, 2009); Right-wing economic and cultural beliefs (Kossowska & Hiel, 2003); Willingness to fight and die for one's own social group (Gómez et al. 2011). Online survey and Interview.	Local fan; foreign fan; trust.	The results indicate that the prototypical behavior (versus non-prototypical) of the foreign fans created more positive
<b>Behrens (2019)</b>	N=1036 M=662 W=374 35.9 age	Attitudes towards the fans (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006); Perceived entitativity (Blanchard et al. 2018); fear losing resources; prototypically, prejudices		

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(Akrams et al. 2000). Survey.

attitudes towards them among the local fans. This effect is mediated by arguments on the perceived entitativity of the fan groups as a whole. The results also highlight that the effects of prototypicality decrease as the locals' fans perceive that the internationalization of team sports is a process that deprives them of social and economic resources.

Notes: N=sample; M=men; W=women.

A second group, made up of the 27 articles that focused on identification and the consumer behavior (Table 2).

Table 2. Articles focused in C2B

Author and year	Sample	Type of questionnaire/instrument	Variables	Conclusions
<b>Jones, I. (1997)</b>	N=421 M=421	Exploratory test of the factors that have an influence on the origin, continuity and the cease of identification with the sports teams (Wann, Tucker & Schrader, 1996). Survey.	Favorite team; reasons for support; being from the city; born in the city; by family; nearest professional team; style of play.	The factors assessed have an influence on the identification as a function of the sport contexts.
<b>Wolfson, S. (2007)</b>	N=461 M=424 W=37 32.4 age	Self-created questionnaire (Wolfson, Wakelin & Lewis, 2015). Survey.	Home advantage of English soccer leagues; participants and teams supported; ratings of explanations for home advantage; fan-perceived accountability; specific mechanisms for home advantage; fan view on team accountability.	The fans believe that the support of the crowd is a vital component of the local advantage in football. Although they believe that this support should be useful at the start, it is less probable that the fans feel an individualized responsibility for the results of their teams.
<b>Charleston, S. (2009)</b>	N=461 M=410 W=51 35.1 age	Self-created questionnaire (Charleston, 2009). Survey and Online survey	Belonging; continuity of residence; escape; place of attachment; social interaction; ownership	The local football field of professional English football possesses many of the same meanings

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<b>Visek, A. J. (2009)</b>	N=986 M=445 W=530 20.7 age	Self-created questionnaire (Visek et al. 2009); Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Survey.	Team surveys and team identification.	than other places of origin, such as the house, the city and the neighborhood. It is not clear if this special affinity towards the football fields is only due to the terrain itself, or to the community it represents. The fans are not only highly identified with the teams they follow closely, but they also identify with additional teams, which is of great interest.
<b>Dhurup, M. (2010)</b>	N=331 M=197 W=134 25 age	Attachment and Identification Scale (AIS) (Trail et al., 2003). Survey	Commitment to: the team, the players, the coach, the sport, the sporting level, the university and the community.	The four manners of attachment can provide the football club sellers with the opportunity to develop marketing strategies that are specific, based on attachment to the teams, player (s)/coach, the level of sport and the football sport in general.
<b>Bernache-Assollant, I. (2011)</b>	N=40	Self-created questionnaire (Bernache-Assollant et al., 2011). Interview.	Social psychology; Psycholinguistic methodology; Identity; Brand; Fan; Football	There is no significant difference between “CU” and “SW” in terms of the manner in which they refer to “OM”, because they have invested well in supporting the team, and therefore. The difference is found in the type of relationship established with the team.
<b>Lock, D. (2011)</b>	N=490 M=397 W=97 40 age	Self-created questionnaire (Lock, Taylor & Darci, 2001). Online survey and Interview.	Friends; value for money; being part of Sydney F.C.; love of soccer-the sport-the players; support for Australian soccer; support for the city; desirability; social	The indirect achievement is less relevant in a new team, in a new context of the league. The identification of the new team was characterized by a

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		identity; group atmosphere.	strong desire to support the football sport in the Australian league. The relationship between the football fans and the clubs is characterized by the high degree of resistance, vitality and unpredictability: the opposition of the fans has a rebellious and subversive quality and has help force a great number of commitments on the other side. The identification of the team (level of fan team) is the main determining factor of the intention of repatronage of the fans, with the trust in the team as the key conductor. However, the identification of the player (fan-player level) has an indirect effect, which must go through the identification of the team to repatriate the intention. Sports identification was the strongest predictor followed by patriotism and sports knowledge when examining the intention of watching the World Cup. The results showed that patriotism was the most important predictor, followed by the identification with the sport and sports knowledge.
<b>Kennedy, P. (2012)</b>	Self-created questionnaire (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2012). Interview.	Identification of the fan; financial exuberance; debt	
<b>Wu, S. (2012)</b>	N=243 M=165 W=78 <30 age Trust in player (Doney & Cannon, 1997); Trust in team (Henning-Thuaran et al., 2002); Vicarious achievement motives (Trail et al., 2003; McDonald et al., 2000); Player Identification and Team Identification (Trail et al., 2003); Repatronage intention (Bauer et al., 2008). Survey and Online survey	Team identification; player confidence; team confidence; player vicarious achievement motive; team vicarious achievement motive; identification with player; repatriation intention.	
<b>Bravo, G. (2013)</b>	N=455 M=346 W=109 20.9 age Self-created questionnaire (Bravo, Won, Lee, 2013); Sport knowledge (Bennett et al., 2007); Sport identification (Funk et al., 2001, 2002); Patriotism (Bennett et al., 2007; Funk et al., 2001); Behaviors watching soccer games (Bennett et al., 2007; Funk et al., 2001). Survey.	Sport commitment; Sport identification; Attitudes Theory; Behaviors; EEUU; Fans audience.	

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<b>Llopis-Goig, R. (2013)</b>	N=2473	Self-created questionnaire (Llopis-Goig, 2013). Interview.	Identification with the team; consumer involvement; fans' links and feelings towards the clubs; reasons for identification.	The importance of football as a space for identification. Hegemonic position of Real Madrid and Barcelona. Diversity of the elements from which to construct the positioning perceived and the relative homogeneity of the club followers, as referring to the social guidelines and behaviors of consumption.
<b>Onwumechili, C. (2013)</b>	N=312 M=153 W=131 25.5 age	Self-created questionnaire (Onwumechili & Oloruntola, 2013). Survey.	Attitudes towards European soccer; soccer news sources; most watched soccer league last year; percentage of participants; identification with European soccer; identification with a specific club.	The Nigerian fans have a positive attitude towards foreign football and show a significant identification with European football teams and players. However, there was a low identification with European football artifacts that lead to the questioning if previous studies exaggerated the identification with these artifacts.
<b>Lock, D. (2014)</b>	N=602 M=391 W=211 47 age	Team Identification Scale (Heere & James, 2007). Online survey.	Affective dimension; behavioral involvement; cognitive awareness; private evaluation; public evaluation; public evaluation.	The fans positively assessed the group membership, despite the many losses in the field.
<b>Solberg, H. A. (2014)</b>	N=9074 M=7441 W=1633	Self-created questionnaire (Solberg & Mehus, 2014). Online survey.	Team identification, percentage of club attendance; season ticket capacity; social environment; matches attended; social dimension; start of the season; entertainment; importance of infrastructure/service; matches on TV better than in the stadium.	Too much televised football can reduce stadium attendance. The stronger the preference of those surveyed for televised football, the least they went to the stadium. Of all the league matches that were shown live on television during the season to which the data referred, 38% were shown for

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<b>Bergmann, A. (2015)</b>	N=4036	Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen (2005); Ashforth & Mael, (1989); Bowen and Riley (2005), Dukerich, Golden & Shortell (2002). Survey.	Age; Team identification	free, and 62% on paid TV. Age is important with respect to the identification with the team. It increases with age.
<b>Durieux, F. (2015)</b>	N=172 M=143 W=29 30 age	Gwinner & Swanson (2003). Survey.	Identity; Prestige; Participation; Sponsorship	The identification, participation and prestige of the club have an influence on the perception of the sponsorship of the club at the same time. The spectators who obtained a victory of their favorite team reported greater trust on themselves, as well as an increase of the estimations of their current economic situation and a greater satisfaction in the management, as compared with the measurements before the match.
<b>Schramm, H. (2015)</b>	N=180 M=76 W=104 30.5 age	Mood (Hirt et al., 1992; Schwarz & Clore, 2007); Self-esteem (Hulin, 2001); Economic situation and satisfaction of the participants (self-created questionnaire); Identification with the team (Schramm & Klimmt, 2003). Online survey.	Team identification; mood; confidence; gender and age	The brands will obtain greater benefits from the sponsorships that are considered congruent with the rival team. The most-identified fans tend to pay more attention to the sponsor of the rival team.
<b>Angell, R. J. (2016)</b>	N=300 M=196 W=104 25.5 age	Perceived fit between the sponsor and team (Speed & Thompson, 2000); Schadenfreude and fan identification (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012); Purchase intention toward the Survey.sponsor (Speed & Thompson, 2000); Prior attitudes to the sponsor (Mitchell & Olson, 1981).	Previous attitude; Perceived Fit; Fan identification; Schadenfreude; Interest; Favoritism	The identification with the team did not moderate the satisfaction with the football team's performance and the affective relationship. The findings illustrate the fundamental role of the reactions of football fans in the determination of their affection, attitudes and behaviors also in the area of work.
<b>Gkorezis, P. (2016)</b>	N=164 M=164	Football Team Identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992); Football Team Points; Satisfaction with Football Team Performance (Scarpello & Campbell, 1983); Daily positive and negative affectivity (Watson et al., 1988); Utrech Work Engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006); Daily Job Performance (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Survey.	Points of the team; team identification; satisfaction with the team performance; positive affect; negative affect; job commitment; job satisfaction; job performance	



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<b>Schlesinger, T. (2016)</b>	N=477 M=313 W=114 40.6 age	Index of volunteers' job satisfaction (Chelladurai, 2006, Doherty, 2005); Identification to VSCs (Cuskelly et al, 2006; Lamretch et al, 2012; Wicker et al., 2014); Solidarity and collective interests in VSCs (Braun, 2003; Nagel, 2006). Survey.	Team identification; continuous participation; TV matches; passion; satisfaction with social life; satisfaction with belonging and belongingness.	Volunteering seems to be more probable in the rural VSC and in clubs that value cohabiting. Surprisingly, the results revealed that the specific measures to promote volunteering did not have a significant effect on the volunteering commitment in the VSC.
<b>Blank, A. S. (2017)</b>	N=1190 M=907 W=283 30.6 age	Sport Team Personality Scale (STPS) (Blank, Koenigstorfer & Baumgartner, 2017). Survey	Success; talent; entertainment; dedication; admiration; care.	The teams map the factors of performance (meaning success and talent) and character (meaning admiration and care) and that the character factor is a more important source of identification of the team than the factor of performance.
<b>Guest, A. M. (2017)</b>	N=216 M=66 W=142 42 age	Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993); Levels of fans (James & Ridinger, 2012); Social connections between sports fans (Wann, et al. 2011); Sport Interest Inventory (Funk, Ridinger & Moorman, 2004). Survey	Atmosphere and culture of effort; soccer quality; quality players; team; support for women; community; admiration; players; expression of pride; intentions; management.	While Thorns Fandom is successful often in the negotiation of the complicated dynamics between gender and sexuality in professional sports, it seems to be less aware about race and class.
<b>Mutz M. (2017)</b>	N=141 M=59 W=82 23.3 age	Feeling of belonging, self-created questionnaire (Mutz & Gerke, 2017); Patriotism (Mutz, 2013; Weiss, Donat & Latcheva, 2009b; von Schave et al., 2014); Nationalism (Mutz, 2013; Weiss, Donat & Latcheva, 2009a); Emotional commitment, self-created questionnaire (Mutz & Gerke, 2017). Survey and Online survey.	Feeling of belonging to Germany; nationalism; patriotism; emotions associated with Germany; values associated with Germany.	From both studies, it is concluded that the emotional participation is a key mechanism through which greater levels of national identification are produced in the area of sports.
<b>Rocha, C. M. (2017)</b>	N=582 M=461 W=121 37.4 age	Self-created questionnaire (Rocha & Fleury, 2017). Survey.	Team identification; restrictions on attendance at sporting events; intentions of attendance.	Indirect effect of the identification of the team in the attendance through the perception through the

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<b>Rosca, V. (2017)</b>	N=20	Self-created questionnaire (Rosca, 2017). Survey.	Website; update; Facebook page.	barriers. Little relationship between the identification of the team and the limitations. Despite the new technologies in the market, minor league football is still fighting in obscurity, and the clubs lack the support of the fans and interested parties.
<b>Rosenberger III (2019)</b>	N=483 M=271 W=212 22.1 age	Scale from Funk, Ridinger & Moorman (2000) and Wang et al. (2011); Attitudinal loyalty (Wang et al. 2011); Behavioral loyalty (Gladden & Funk, 2001; Steven & Rosenberger, 2012). Survey.	Intentions; socialization; aesthetic; sports knowledge; interest; vicarious achievement motive.	The motivation of the fans of the sport explained a great range of variation in the attitudinal loyalty of the fans of the sport as well as for those who are not, the lesser effect on the behavioral loyalty, which suggests that other factors play a role.

Notes: N=sample; M=men; W=women.

The third group also focused on factors associated to the team, stadium and city and the 21 articles in this focused, above all, on the identification of the fan with the team, and can therefore be called consumer to business (C2B) (Table 3).

Table 3. Articles focused in C2B

Author and year	Sample	Type of questionnaire/instrument	Variables	Conclusions
<b>Decrop, A. (2004)</b>	N=12 38 age	The behavior of the fans and their material possessions related with football in a natural and regular environment (Geertz, 1973; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lutz, 1989; Horner & Swarbrooke, 1996). Interview.	Leisure behavior; Social environment; Long-term participation in football; Being a fan; External signs of a fan; Meaning of team-related elements; Circumstances of consumption; Attitudes towards other teams	Action and possession are strongly connected to consumption in football, and this merchandise complies with four symbolic functions: identification, integration, expression and enshrinement. Football fans express their identification with their team as a unified community during the sacred sports moments.

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<b>Derbaix, C. (2011)</b>	N=30 M=27 W=3 34.8 age	Gold (1958). Interview.	Preferred activities; Perception of football and level of satisfaction; Links to teams; Opinions and behavior towards other teams; Possession characteristics; Meaning of team-related elements; Circumstances of consumption	The consumption of contemporary football is based in great lengths to the paraphernalia of the devoted fans, and this paraphernalia helps them to create as well as to affirm their own identity.
<b>Kerr, A. K. (2011)</b>	N=1153 M=1107 W=46 36 age	Self-created questionnaire (Kerr & Emery, 2011). Survey and online interview.	Media coverage; Style of play; Presence of a particular player; Team success; Participation in the History of ethical behavior; Quality of match; broadcasting. top league; Social environment;	There is a brand community for Liverpool FC of the English League. A worldwide network of supporters showed a shared awareness, rituals and traditions and a sense of moral responsibility, and obtained psychological benefits from their fandom. The brand community of a team can promote their brand's value in the foreign markets. The highly identified fans who experience disappointment may not be discouraged and participate in CORFing.
<b>Rainey, D. W. (2011)</b>	N=40 M=25 W=15 29 age	Pre-season self-created questionnaire (Rainey, Yost & Larsen, 2011); Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993); End-of-season self-created questionnaire (Rainey, Yost & Larsen, 2011). Online survey.	Fan Identification; Expectations for the season; Years as a fan; Visits to the website per week; Talks about the team; Money spent.	Thus, they can maintain their investment on their team. In contrast, the fans with a weaker identification can experience disappointment and be discouraged. An important aspect of any study on market segmentation refers to the ability of identifying members of diverse derived segments.
<b>DeSarbo, W. (2012)</b>	N=307	Self-created questionnaire (DeSarbo & Madrigal, 2012). Survey.	Active participatory dimension; Passive monitoring dimension; Purchase dimension; Social dimension.	The Paranian fan is satisfied with the plans of the association and the prices charged, but it's not satisfied with the structure of the stadium, the local sales and the products available in the Paraná Clube.
<b>Carvalho, W. G. (2013)</b>	N=416 M=387 H=29 29.4 age	Location of stadium and satisfaction of members (Self-created questionnaires). Survey.	Location; Consumer satisfaction	

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<b>Biscaia, R. (2014)</b>	N=1834 M=1609 W=225 31.9 age	Brand Recall (Ko et al., 2008); Brand Recognition (Lardinoix & Derbaix, 2001). Online survey.	Correct brand recall; Incorrect brand recognition; Incorrect brand recall; Sponsorship; Supporters	A great number of fans recognized the team's sponsors when given a list of brands; and this was more effective for identifying the team's sponsors that the task of recall. The importance of studying different types of consumers and suggests the involvement of the management, such as the need for the clubs to establish reciprocal relationships with the fans to increase the degrees of internalization and to contribute to the increase of behavioral intentions. The nationalized identity by itself did not obtain a significant result when predicting the consumption of television of international sports. Some of the conclusions are related with deciphering the complex formulation of national identity and sports fandom.
<b>Biscaia, R. (2015)</b>	N=2287 M=2230 W=57 26.47	Brand equity & Brand associations (Biscaia et al., 2013); Behavioral intentions (Yoshida & James, 2010). Online survey.	Brand; Social identity; Commitment; History; Organizational attributions; Success; Management style; Internalization; Behavioral intentions	There were direct negative relationships between the attention of the consumers and their satisfaction with the marketing for the Chinese Super League (CSL), and between their participation and their satisfaction with the CSL operations. The sponsors do not benefit uniformly from the highly-identified fans who possess a favorable disposition towards the sponsors. An analysis of the fans with high versus low purchase intentions suggests that the purchase intentions informed do not translate into
<b>Devlin, M. B. (2015)</b>	N=490 M=244 W=246 44.5 age	Basking in reflected glory (Bizman & Yinyon, 2002; Cutting of Reflected Failure (Snyder, Lassegard & Ford, 1986). Online survey.	Patriotism; Nationalism; Internationalism; Fan identification; Prestige.	
<b>Gong, B. (2015)</b>	N=926 M=736 W=190	Self-created questionnaire (Gong et al. 2015). Survey.	Consumer care; Consumer participation; Consumer satisfaction	
<b>Hickman, T. M. (2015)</b>	N=419 M=245 W=17 34.5 age	Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann & Branscombe); Purchase Intentions (Mitchell, 1986; Smith et al., 2008); Simple List (Wakefield et al., 2007). Survey.	Product category; Overall sponsor; recognition rate; Purchase intentions; Sponsor awareness rate; Sponsor participation rate Sponsor identification; Fan identification;	

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				awareness of the sponsor companies.
<b>Martínez, R. J. (2015)</b>	N=130	Self-created questionnaire (Martínez & Janney, 2015). Survey.	F.A. Finals; Previous English Premier League; Relegated; Original F.A.; Subsidy; Sales Register; Order Register; Intentions; Team; Clothing; Alcohol; Tech	The fans can perceive different degrees of congruence than the investors. Likewise, our explanations for why the reactions of the market differ in strength were not shaped from the consumer survey data; It is possible that there are other factors aside from those we identified which could be more relevant.
<b>Meier, H. E. (2015)</b>	N=11052 33.77 age	Sport Spectator Identification Scale, German version (Strauss, 1995). Survey.	Market Share Tv Female; Market Share Tv Male; Year; Differences in the FIFA ranking; Previous records; European Championship; Team identification.	The feminization of football not only reflects authentic consumption, but also a greater identification with the team.
<b>Angell, R. J. (2016)</b>	N=300 M=196 W=104 25.5 age	Perceived fit between the sponsor and team (Speed & Thompson, 2000); Schadenfreude and fan identification (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012); Purchase intention toward the Survey.sponsor (Speed & Thompson, 2000); Prior attitudes to the sponsor (Mitchell & Olson, 1981).	Previous attitude; Perceived Fit; Fan identification; Schadenfreude; Interest; Favoritism	The brands will obtain greater benefits from the sponsorships that are considered congruent with the rival team. The most-identified fans tend to pay more attention to the sponsor of the rival team.
<b>Doyle, J. P. (2016)</b>	N=40 M=20 W=20 42 age	Subjective personal experiences (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2009). Interview.	Positive emotions; Commitment; Relationship; Meaning; Achievement.	Four PERMA domains that were activated in the context of the sports spectator by a number of experiences of the consumer. The English Premier League and the BBVA league are on the peak of this sport. There is a great divide with respect to the other main European national leagues.
<b>García, P. (2016)</b>	N=5000	Methodology for the Evaluation and Rating of Intangible Talent (MERIT). Survey	Ranking; Team; League; Average media exposure	

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<b>Kerr, A. K. (2016)</b>	N=986 M=966 W=20 35 age	Conceptual framework for assessing brand equity (Gladden et al. 1998) and Extending the understanding of professional team (Kerr & Gladden, 2008). Survey and online interview.	Sources of support for identification; Team loyalty; Supportive behavior.	In a global market, the satellite fans are critical for the future of many brands, becoming very valuable for the brands, monetizing them and building equity for the brand.
<b>Oman, B. (2016)</b>	N=80 M=73 W=7	<i>SPORTSERV</i> scale for measuring service quality (Theodorakis and Alexandris, 2008); Scales for measuring word-of-mouth communication (Zeithalm et al., 1996); Scales for measuring repurchase intentions (Theodorakis et al., 2009); Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Survey.	Quality of service; Word of mouth; Team Identification; Intention to repurchase; Spectators; Fans.	There is an indirect positive influence of the quality of service on the repurchase intentions through word-of-mouth communication, as well as a direct positive link between the identification of the team and the repurchase intentions. The emotions and the key role they play in the making of decisions related to pricing and the behavior of the consumer, especially with the identification of the fan.
<b>Ballouli, K. (2017)</b>	N=286 M=155 W=131 38.8 age	Degree of identification (Robinson & Trail, 2005); Emotional response to the article (Mascolo & Fischer, 1995); Price decisions (Becker et al., 1964). Online survey.	Emotional estate; Fan identification	The improving of the relationship of the fans with the team and sponsor, and the increase of their level of participation in the sport, can contribute to increasing the cost of change perceived by the fans with respect to the mobile telecommunications services.
<b>Parganas, P. (2017)</b>	N=261 M=171 W=90 26.5 age	TSF (Zdravkovic, Magnusson & Stanley, 2010; Speed & Thompson, 2000); Sports Involvement (Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2008); Perceived Switching Cost (Bansal et al., 2005); Fan Identification (Kwon & Trail, 2005). Survey.	Sponsor's attitude; Sponsor's fit with the team; Team attitude; Sports participation; Cost-change; Intentions to change.	Low levels of identity of each of the samples with the football team, because neither the English nor the Scottish individuals perceived the team as being representative of them. The results support that the representation was a valuable predictor of identification of the consumer.
<b>Hills, S. (2018)</b>	N=172 M=95 W=77	National Identity Scale (Huddy & Khatib, 2007); Team Identity (Kwon & Armstrong, 2002). Survey.	National identity; Team identification	

Notes: N=sample; M=men; W=women.

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And finally, the last group of articles, consisting of 15 articles, could be included in the group business to fan (B2C), where the actions that clubs conducted to obtain the loyalty of the fans, are described (Table 4).

Table 4. Articles focused in B2C

Author and year	Sample	Type of questionnaire/instrument	Variables	Conclusions
<b>Abosag, I. (2010)</b>	N=842	Emotional commitment in the sports industry (Bauer et al. 2005). Online survey and Interview.	Emotional engagement; brand emotion; brand strength.	The extension of the Brand should be designed to reflect the inheritance and tradition of the club. Also, the club's management should show, in the extension of the brand, an element of competitiveness, which improves the image of the brand, strengthens the belief of the club's followers and attracts new followers.
<b>Porat, A. B. (2010)</b>	N=143 M=111 W=32 30 age	Self-created questionnaire (Porat, 2010). Interview.	Match attendance; social environment; soccer consumption in the media; relations with other fans; aggressions; racism; emotional aspects; symbolic aspects. Inclusion; discussion on sport;	The "being a fan" is in fact a critical component of the identity profile of the fan. Therefore, the fans are at least partially "sure" in a volatile world of unstable identities.
<b>Wann, D. L. (2010)</b>	N=163 M=101 W=62 21.3 age	Sport Fandom Questionnaire (Wann, 2002) and Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Survey.	attendance at sporting events; TV sports coverage, radio sports coverage; sports coverage. Media coverage; style of play;	Impact on the fans still to be determined in Australian sports. The teams cannot yet determine the loyalty of their fans.
<b>Kerr, A. K. (2011)</b>	N=1153 M=1107 W=46 35 age	Self-created questionnaire (Kerr, 2011); Self-created questionnaire (Kerr et al. 2011). Survey and Online interview	presence of a particular player; team success; success story; participation in the top flight;	Satellite supporters expressed an intense loyalty and seemed to obtain psychological benefits of their support for the team that is headquartered abroad. Thus, the satellite fans represent

			stadium.	an opportunity for the clubs. The development of the identification of the people in transition from a relationship promoted externally to an internalized state where their belonging to a group had an influence on cognition, behavior and daily planning.
<b>Lock, D. (2012)</b>	N=21 M=17 W=4 45 age	Understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the participants (Bryman, 2004; Jonas, 1997). Interview.	Loyalty; development of team identification; commitment; awareness; attraction.	Fan identification, following the sport and participation positively influence the loyalty of the fan, while following the sport mediates the identification relationship between the fan and participation. The loyalty behavior has an influence on sponsorship awareness and has a different impact on attitude and purchase intentions towards each sponsor.
<b>Stevens, S. (2012)</b>	N=484 M=261 W=223 35 age	Attitudinal and behavioural aspects of fan loyalty (Gladden & Funk, 2001); Fan identification (Mael & Ashworth, 1992); involvement Shank & Beasley's (1998); variety of ongoing-search domains for general sports information (Shank & Beasley, 1998). Survey.	Fan identification; behavioral loyalty; next sport.	The sponsorship awareness significantly influences the attitude towards both sponsors, while the attitude towards the sponsor was a stronger predictor of purchase intentions.
<b>Biscaia, R. (2013)</b>	N=1834 M=1609 W=225 31.92 age	Team Loyalty (Kaynak et al., 2008; Biscaia et al., 2012; Neale & Funk, 2006) Sponsorship awareness (Walsh et al., 2008), Attitude Toward the Sponsor (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008); Purchase Intentions (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008). Online survey.	Attitudinal loyalty; behavioral loyalty; sponsorship awareness; attitude toward sponsors; behavioral intentions.	The strategic CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) was important in sports management. There is a strong link between the commercial potential, the return of investment, pride and emotional equity, strategic coincidence, the proper linkage and the combination of elements of the professional sports and fans.
<b>Cortsen, K. (2014)</b>	N=14 M=10 W=4 25.7 age	Shank (2009). Interview.	Brand awareness; brand image; brand equity; brand loyalty.	The dimension of information was positively associated with attitudinal loyalty, the identification of the
<b>Kang, S. (2015)</b>	N=665 M=275 W=390 24.54 age	Fans use of mobile-content (Kriemadis, Terzoudis, & Kartakoullis, 2010; Lee et al., 2012); Fan support (Heere & Dickson, 2008; Neale & Funk,	Attitudinal loyalty; team identification; mobile content; behavioral	



		2006; Bee & Havitz, 2010; Biscaia et al., 2013). Survey.	loyalty.	team and sports fandom. The dimension of service was positively linked with behavioral loyalty. The findings suggest that the selective use of mobile content for young fans of professional sports represents different types of support for the fans. Most of the women were interested in football at the European level, and many of them travelled to football matches abroad where they not only enjoyed the matches, but also the atmosphere of a live match. The individuals interviewed combined their loyalty to the clubs with an interest and an identification with foreign teams. The associations with the brands changed over time, which reflects the experiences of the consumers of the team. A crossed-lagged panel model highlighted that the brand associations had an influence on the loyalty of the consumer in the future. Being personally shaped by the club events (for example, crucial victories and losses), instead of the time invested in the club, results in a greater fusion of identity with one's club. At the same time, this fusion creates a sense of loyalty for the club that lasts a lifetime.
<b>Mintert, S. (2015)</b>	N=12 M=12 36.9 age	Self-created questionnaire (Minter & Pfister, 2015) References from Sandvoss (2003), Connell (2009), Lorber (1994). Interview.	Taxonomy of social identities in soccer; being a fan in Denmark; female fans and foreign teams; old Danish fans; women following Danish players abroad.	
<b>Kunkel, T. (2016)</b>	N=169 M=106 W=63 47 age	Team Association Scale (TAS) (Gladden & Funck, 2001); Loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrooc, 2001). Online survey.	Escape; star player; coach; management; pride of place; stadium; team achievement; prestige; acceptance by the group.	
<b>Newton, M. (2016)</b>	N=140 M=118 W=28 37.14 age	Fusion of identity (Gómez et al., 2011); Identification (Postmes et al. 2013); Group loyalty (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004) Duration of support (Self-created questionnaire). Online survey.	Loyalty; identification; identity fusion; self-setting events; past investment.	
<b>Özgen, C. (2017)</b>	N=261 M=193 W=68 22 age	Funk & Pastore (2000); Gladden & Funk (2002); Heere & Dickson (2008); Mahony, Madrigal & Howard (2000); Tsiotsou, (2013). Online survey and Interview.	Team identification; attitudinal loyalty; behavioral	All the constructions have a significantly high effect between themselves, and the identification of the

			loyalty.	team has a partial mediation effect between the attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty of the football fans. The loyalty of the fans has a crucial effect on the sustainability of the sports clubs, as it has the same effect as the loyalty of the clients in corporate sustainability.
<b>Yoshida, M. (2018)</b>	N=309 M=182 W=127 35 age	Sport Fan Survey. Items adapted from: Schreier et al., (2007); Chandon et al., (2000); Keller, (2003); Bolton et al. (2000); Seiders et al. (2005); Fisher & Wakefield, (1998); Yoshida et al., (2015a,b); Hollebeek et al., (2014); Schivinski et al., (2016); Dolan et al., (2016); Muntinga et al., (2011); Kumar et al., (2010); van Doorn et al., (2010); Tian et al., (2001); Trail & James (2001); Funk et al., (2002). Online survey.	Team identification; opinion seeking; entertainment value; online brand identification; brand relationship.	The importance of the participation in social networks related with the brand towards the attitudinal loyalty of the brand was demonstrated.
<b>Argan (2019)</b>	N=786 M=512 274 21.5 age	Team Identification levels (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003); The importance of winning (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012); Hatred/Schadenfreude; Behavioral loyalty (Heere & Dickson, 2008); Attitudinal loyalty (Tsiotsou (2013). Interview.	Team identification; attitudinal loyalty; behavioral loyalty; importance of winning	The loyalty of the team (brand) in the sports sector seems to be one of the more important variables in the attendance of fans to future matches, as well as the purchasing of team products, the following of the team through the media, and the participation in the team. The evidence in this study is that the identification of the team has an influence on the behavioral loyalty among the fans. Also, the relationship of the level of identification of the team of the football fans with hate towards the rival teams and with the importance of winning.

Notes: N=sample; M=men; W=women.

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To obtain a more precise view of the thematic blocks created for the analysis of the articles selected for this review, each of them defined below. The consumer behaviors block was defined as all those actions performed by the fan that provided benefits to the club, for example, the interactions and visits to the club's webpage, the television market share, the purchasing of merchandising items by the club fans, or match attendance (Ballouli, Reese & Brown, 2017; Bravo, Won & Lee, 2013; Decrop & Derbaix, 2002; Doyle, Filo, Lock, Frank & McDonald, 2016; García-del Barrio, 2016; Kerr & Emery, 2016; Meier, Strauss & Riedl, 2015).

The identity of the team is known as one of the most important variables utilized to express fan behavior (Argan & Özgen, 2019). In the block of factors associated to the team, stadium and city, these factors could be defined as the distinguishing features of the football club for their fans, with the stadium being very important as a place of worship and peregrination of the fans each match day, and also by how suitable it was for the event itself and the city as well, as an element of differentiation and the creator of loyalty and belonging. Also, the players and coaches, have a certain gravity that pulls diverse fans towards them, turning them into seasonal fans of the club (Carvalho, Molleta, Stringhen & Knaut 2013; Charleston, 2009; Dhurup, Dubihlela & Surujlal, 2010; Grieve, Zapalac, Visek, Wann, Parker, Partridge & Lanter, 2009; Guest & Luijten, 2017; Jones, 1997; Solberg & Mehus, 2014; Wu, Tsai & Hung, 2012). All of this is included in the C2B group.

The social interaction block was understood as all the connections and actions performed by people who had a common interest. It is through social groups that the fans begin to identify with their favorite football team. These groups include family, friends, work group, etc. Consequently, this provided the group with a common goal and aim, becoming recognized with a team that was associated to the values possessed by the fans (Harkin & Bairner, 2010; Jones, 2000; Llopis-Goig, 2013; Porat, 2014; Swanson & Kent, 2015; Yoshida et al., 2015; Wann, Melnick, Russel & Pease, 2001; Weaver, 2011). Heere & James (2007) discovered that the feeling of belonging to a team had an impact on the social identity of the individual. All of those articles were placed within the C2C group.

Lastly, the loyalty thematic block was understood as those actions or attitudes that the fans performed or had for their football team, and how these had an influence on the team itself. Loyalty is the best manner of obtaining a repeat consumer of all the products and services offered by the club (Abosag & Roper, 2012; Kang, 2015; Newson, Buhrmenster & Whitehouse 2016; Özgen & Argan, 2017; Stevens & Rosenberger, 2012; Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa, Shibuya & Fujiwaara, 2018). In the sports sector, loyalty to the brand can be identified as "loyalty to the team", which can be expressed as the loyalty and the commitment of the fans with their team, which is developed through time (Argan & Özgen, 2019). Loyalty to one's team is commonly associated with fans who have a high level of identification with their team (Hunt et al., 1999). Finally, all of these articles are included in the C2B group.

Some articles could be placed into two thematic blocks at the same time. This is interesting, as it can provide a cross-sectional view of the concept of fan identification, from which it can be addressed by the clubs.

### **3.2 Characteristics of the instruments utilized for the collection of information about the process of identification**

After the literature review, a lack of standardized criteria related to the instrument and variables studied and utilized for the process of fan identification was observed. There was a total of 30 articles where the authors created their own questionnaires instead of utilizing already-existing tools. From this total of articles, 8 were identified with the first thematic block described above, 11 with the second, 7 with the third, and 4 with the fourth block. On the other hand, 54 of these articles utilized questionnaires created and validated by other authors, for example, the questionnaire Football Team Identification, the Team Identification questionnaire (1 study), the Attachment and Identification Scale (1 study), and the Sport Team Personality Scale questionnaire (1 study). Thus, a great variety of scales were utilized for the evaluation of the identification in different areas. Nevertheless, within this subject matter, a prevalence for the use of a specific questionnaire was observed. One of the main instruments utilized in the articles examined in this review was the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS).

## **4. Discussion**

The main objective of this review was to study and understand the elements that make football fans feel identified with their favorite teams to achieve their loyalty. The main finding of the present research study was that within the current literature, a great variety of instruments and themes were found which were identified with the assessment and evaluation of football fan identification.

In relation to the social agents' dimension, or C2C, as it was called, it was observed that these could have an important influence on the identification of the individual with a specific football team (Bouchet & Lacassagne, 2011; De Groot & Robinson, 2018; Delia, 2014; Dimmock, Grove & Eklund, 2005; Gau, Wann & James, 2010; Jones, 1997, Jones, 2000; Klugman, 2009; Kossakowski & Besta, 2018; Lock, Taylor & Darci, 2011; Medcalf & Griggs, 2014; Sayan, Gorgulu & Aslanbay, 2017; Wann et al., 2011; Yoshida et al., 2015). On many occasions, these social agents could become the main factor that influences fan identification. This is due to the attainment of associated rewards, such as the membership to a group or feeling part of a collective, thereby constructing an affective social identity. On the other hand, the football clubs could also have an influence on this feeling of belonging through the actions aimed at improving the community where they are located, such as, e.g., corporate social responsibility activities (Kenneth, 2014; Walker & Kent, 2009). The existing historical rivalry between football teams was another way of achieving fan identification due to the sympathies or antipathies that could be created in the fans (Berendt & Urich, 2016). The hate that football fans feel towards rival clubs has an effect on fan identification (Argan & Özgen, 2019). This feeling of belonging can be developed and vary on specific occasions due to the individual's race or religion (Porat, 2014). Another important element for this feeling of belonging and identification was the nationality of the fan. Many authors defended identification as part of the process of

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belonging to a country within the world of sports, especially in football (Bravo et al., 2013; Devlin, Billings & Brown, 2015; Hills, Heere & Walker 2018; Jones, Coffee, Sheffield, Yangüez & Barker, 2012; Kossakowski & Besta, 2018; Lock, Taylor & Darci, 2011; Mutz & Gerke, 2017). For all the reasons mentioned above, we can observe how the club's fans can be a determining factor for others to become fans through their actions or the way they are.

The present study set out to find which strategies could be utilized by the clubs to increase fan identification, or as previously mentioned, C2B actions. One of the most important issues to deal with and promote by the football club for the creation and development of fan identification, is the history of the club itself or the city where they belong to (Blank, Koenigstorfer & Baumgartner, 2017; Charleston, 2009; Grieve et al., 2009; Gkorezis, Bellou, Xanthoupoulou, Bakker & Tsiftsis, 2016; Guest & Luijten, 2017; Jones, 2000; Kenney & Kenney, 2012; Llopis-Goig, 2013; Schlesinger & Nagel, 2018; Wolfson, Wakelin & Lewis, 2005). On many occasions, the past success of the team, their performance or the history of the city, are sufficient for achieving fan identification with the club. Within these types of concerns from the club itself, the club members, or the signing up of a specific player or coach into the ranks of the club could be a possible trigger for the presence of this identification (Dhurup et al., 2010; Guest & Luijten, 2017; Lock et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2012), as the players or coaches have their own base of followers, who could then become fans of the club as soon as the players or coaches become part of the team. The fan identification could be obtained through different ways (Abosag & Roper, 2012; Biscaia, Correira, Ross & Rosado, 2013; Kang, 2015; Kenneth, 2014; Kerr & Emery, 2011; Kunkel et al., 2016; Lock, Taylor, Funk & Darci, 2012; Melnick & Wann, 2010; Mintert & Pfister, 2015; Newson et al., 2016; Özgen & Argan, 2017; Porat, 2010; Stevens & Rosenberger, 2012). Everything a club does must have a significant effect on the identification of the fans with the club, and for this, utilizing the club's roots, origins or great successes could be a good strategy. In the case that this is lacking, the club must create and communicate new milestones to generate this identification. All the actions proposed here were oriented towards the fan (customer) so that in one way or another he/she consumes the resources available to the club, thus obtaining benefits.

And to conclude with the categories obtained, the loyalty of the fans had a crucial effect on the sustainability of the sport clubs, as it had the same effect as the loyalty of the clients on corporate sustainability (B2C). Thus, the more identified the fans are, the more loyal they will be to the club.

In the end, fans are the brand's (club) consumers. The interaction with the fans can be developed through different communication channels of the club, and even through surveys on their preferences in relation to the merchandising products. The aim of this is clear, as clubs seek the continuous consumption of their goods by the fans, thus creating a feeling of belonging between them, to thereby contribute with the increase in the consumption of the brand (Biscaia, Ross, Yoshida, Correira, Rosado & Marôco, 2015; DeSarbo & Madrigal, 2012). According to Hills, Heere & Walker (2018), the general notion of representation is a valuable predictor of the identification of the consumer. This

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consumption could materialize through the purchasing of merchandising elements, stadium and sport events attendance (Ballouli et al., 2017; Carvalho et al., 2013; Decrop & Derbaix, 2002; Derbaix & Decrop, 2011; Doyle et al., 2016; Gong, Pifer, Kim & Qian, 2015; Kerr & Emery, 2011; Madrigal, 2000; Oman et al., 2016), or watching the different sports events through the television or social networks (Devlin et al., 2015; Meier et al., 2015; Schramm & Knoll 2015; Solberg & Mehus, 2014; ; Thomas, 2015; Wakefield, 2016). For these reasons, the more the fans feel ownership of the team, the more likely they are to buy club products or services.

Another aspect to bear in mind is that different brands and sponsors become involved in sports and football because of the benefit obtained from fan identification with the clubs (Angell, Gorton, Bottomley & White, 2016; Biscaia, Correia, Ross & Rosado, 2014; Hickman, 2015; Kerr & Emery, 2011; Kerr & Emery, 2016; Martínez & Janney, 2015; Parganas, Papadimitriou, Anagnostopoulos & Theodoropoulos, 2017; Thomas, 2015; Zucco, Rodrigues, Kock & Riscarolli, 2015). More specifically, the fans who are most identified with their teams pay more attention to the sponsor who collaborates with their favorite clubs, with the fan becoming a potential consumer or client of this sponsor.

Also, evaluating the results obtained on the different scales used by the authors to measure fan identification, it was observed that the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) was the one most often used to measure this concept (Guest & Luijten, 2017; Grieve et al., 2009; Hickman, 2015; Madrigal, 2000; Meier et al., 2015; Oman, Pepur & Arneric, 2016; Rainey, Yost & Larsen, 2011; Walker & Kent, 2009; Wann et al., 2001; Wann et al., 2011), so it can be a very useful tool for clubs, as it is possible to assess the degree of identification of the fans with their team, as well as their involvement, their spending on the team and whether their close environment is also involved in the team in one way or another.

## 5. Conclusions

To conclude, this review confirms the importance of the different aspects that should be taken into consideration for fan identification, to be taken into account in the management of football clubs.

In first place, this identification could be achieved through different means. The team's own story, as well as the city, the style of play, the players and coaches (past and present), nationality, community or actions performed for the benefit of a given community, were significant matters for obtaining fans who identified with a football team.

In second place, the place where the sports event takes place is also important, being an important aspect that must be taken into account by the clubs, due to its meaning and the accommodations and services that could be offered.

In third place, it was observed how, through identification, the fans could transform their own perception of their football team, achieving loyalty through time. This loyalty makes the fan experience everything that revolves around the club more intensely, becoming more aware about the positive actions as well as the negative ones. Overall, this will result in the fan becoming a very active consumer of the club in every aspect.

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To measure this identification, the clubs could utilize different scales. The most utilized scale was the SSIS (Sport Spectator Identification Scale). Nevertheless, it is of vital importance that the instrument utilized to measure this identification consider each of all issues described herein. No instruments were found in this review that met this requirement, which could become a future line of research.

For all of these reasons, as implications for the management strategy, the clubs must always maintain the fans as the main axis of their business strategy for the creation of income. Thus, they should have in mind the needs and wishes of these fans for their football team, working with the emotional and social components of the identification with their club to have an influence on their loyalty and their consumption behaviors.

## **6. Limitations**

As a limitation of this research, we found that there was no study that brought together all the strategic lines that could be used to develop fan identification to a football team.

## **7. Management implications**

The purpose of this systematic review was to understand the different ways in which fan identification was important for clubs and how it could generate financial resources.

## **8. Future lines of research**

A future line of research could be the development of all the identification lines jointly in a football team and measure fan identification before and after applying several of the strategies presented here. In addition to this, football clubs should take into consideration the opinion of all their fans, as they are their main customers, and without them, they would be out of business.

Another relevant aspect that should be investigated is the creation of a tool to measure the identification of football fans, and this tool could include certain variables so that it could be adapted to the context of each club, such as the country or region in which the team is located.

Finally, in addition to the lines of research outlined here, football clubs should examine new trends (such as eSports) and observe if they can gain new followers through these sports categories.

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