The Crowded World of Fantasy Sport, Facebook, and Fandom: Implications of the Dual-screening Phenomenon on Team Identity Salience

Ben Larkin, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Janet S. Fink, University of Massachusetts Amherst

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Introduction
Traditionally, points of attachment beyond attachment to team have lacked significance in explaining fan loyalty (Kwon et al., 2005). More recently, however, social media and fantasy sport have emerged, creating additional identities that have drastically impacted the consumption behavior of sport fans. Past research has suggested that social media (Reichart Smith & Smith, 2012) and fantasy sport involvement (Dwyer, 2011) serve to enhance one’s team identity. However, other work has suggested perhaps these identities actually serve to undercut or divert attention away from one’s favorite team (Dwyer et al., 2013; Price et al., 2013). Following this uncertainty, this study investigates the impact of social media and fantasy sport involvement on team identity salience. This is done through the assessment of a structural equation model framed within the tenets of identity theory (e.g., Stryker, 1980). The model hypothesizes the effect of fantasy sport involvement on team identity salience to be mediated by fear of missing out and attachment to league, as well as the effect of social media involvement on team identity salience to be mediated by fear of missing out and basking-in-reflected-glory (BIRG).

Literature Review
Involvement in fantasy sport has been found to alter traditional consumption in the form of increased media consumption and a more keen interest in league-wide games beyond those which feature one’s favorite team (Drayer et al., 2010). Thus, while it seems as though fantasy sport consumption may result in increased attachment to the league as a whole, sport fans now have the capacity to interact with sport products at a level previously unimaginable just a decade ago (Seo & Green, 2008), and can therefore accommodate multiple salient identities. Due to this increase in available sport information, it seems as though a phenomenon known as the fear of missing out (FoMO) has emerged for sports fans, perhaps especially those that dual-screen (i.e., follow the conversation on social media and/or follow their fantasy team while watching games). FoMO has been defined as “a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent” (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013, p. 1841). The FoMO phenomenon has been posited to stem from the information revolution (e.g., the emergence of computers and internet), whereby individuals gained access to greater degrees of information and content in virtually all aspects of life (Herman, 2008). Certainly, a fantasy sport participant could fear missing out on content and information related to their fantasy team or their favorite team; however, Dwyer and Drayer (2010) found that highly involved fantasy sport users were more apt to maintain their association with their favorite team over their fantasy team. Thus, it would seem that while fantasy sport instills feeling akin to FoMO, it would be more for content related to one’s favorite team, and thus enhance one’s team identity. FoMO has been shown to be heavily related to social media use (Przybylski et al., 2013). That is, those high on FoMO make extensive use of social media as a means of basic need satisfaction. Sport fans have been shown to express feelings akin to the fear of missing out, as participants in Larkin, Fink, and Trail’s (2014) work expressed feelings of being out of the loop when watching live at the stadium and less tuned into to the content and information they are accustomed to accessing at home. Accordingly, it is expected that this FoMO stemming from social media involvement should be positively related to team identity salience. Recent research has also suggested that sport fans use social media for the purposes of cheering, celebrating, and derogating the opposition (Reichart Smith & Smith, 2012), behaviors that are akin to basking-in-reflected-glory (BIRGing). Since highly identified fans have traditionally been more apt to BIRG, it would seem this would be positively related to team identity salience. In short, social media and fantasy sport involvement during games is expected to be positively related to team identity salience through FoMO, attachment to league, and BIRG.
Methods
Initially, a convenience sample of 40 students at a large northeastern university were recruited to pilot test the survey. Subsequently, a convenience sample of 225 participants were recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk service to complete the main study. Social Media and Fantasy Sport Involvement were measured using a modification of Zaichkowsky’s (1994) Personal Involvement Inventory, Attachment to League and BIRG were adapted from Kwon et al.’s (2005) instrument, FoMO was adapted from Przybylski et al.’s (2013) study, and Team Identity Salience was developed for use in this study due to our feeling that past measures of this construct did not accurately capture the conceptual definition of the construct (e.g., Laverie & Arnett, 2000).

Results
Both the measurement and structural models demonstrated adequate model fit per widely accepted structural equation modeling guidelines (Bollen, 1989; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). Furthermore, convergent and discriminant validity were established per Kline’s (2005) criteria. All hypotheses were supported, with the exception of the direct relationship between BIRG and Team Identity Salience ($b = .075, p = .358$) and the indirect relationship between Social Media Involvement and Team Identity Salience through BIRG ($b = .044, p = .360$). Further details of the results will be provided in the presentation.

Implications and Conclusion
The current study makes a number of theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical standpoint, in response to the debate as to whether fantasy sport and/or social media enhance or detract from one’s team identity, the current study explicates the processes through which these stimuli serve to enhance one’s team identity. In addition, it extends our understanding of identity theory in a sport consumer context by studying the multiple identities of sport fans at the situational rather than meta-level. Third, to the authors’ knowledge, the current study is the first to study FoMO in a sport consumer context. Thus, perhaps the biggest contribution of this study is the evidence it provides for the role FoMO plays in spectator sport. It explained 30% of the variance in team identity salience, with an additional 16% unique variance explained as part of the indirect paths from both fantasy sport involvement and social media involvement to team identity salience through fear of missing out. Further, with a mean score ($M = 4.42$) above the mid-point (4 on a 7-point scale), it appears the phenomenon is both important and prevalent amongst sport consumers, particularly while watching games. From a practical standpoint, the current study also comes with implications for sport organizations’ distribution of content through social media channels. The results suggest perhaps sport fans turn to these channels for unique content and conversation relevant to the sport events they are watching. In addition, despite sport fans’ abilities to accommodate multiple identities (e.g., fantasy sport and favorite team identity), it seems organizations and broadcasters could make it even easier for fans during sporting events by making strategic use of on-screen graphics and technologies. Limitations and future research will be discussed during the presentation.