

Effects of Team Performance on the Perception and the Attitude of Members of a Soccer Club's Loyalty Program

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Resumo

From the perspective of Social Identity Theory, this study investigated how a soccer club's performance affects supporters that are enrolled in a loyalty program, regarding their perception of offered benefits (financial and social), their attitude towards the program and the intention to maintain their membership. A longitudinal study was conducted on a panel of 371 members of the most popular soccer club in Brazil, covering a period of 11 matches with four survey rounds. The results suggest that the team performance affects even those supporters who show high identification with the club, changing their attitude towards the program and their intention to remain affiliated. However, differently from what literature suggests, such changes were not accompanied by changes in self-esteem, in the sense of belonging and in the status perception provided by the affiliation to the program. Perhaps other factors, such as social interactions, rituals of consumption and visible and observable mechanisms, not currently developed by the loyalty program, may be important for the feeling of affiliation, the involvement and the social distinction. Such factors may cause changes in the perception of social benefits, thus reducing the impact of the team performance on the program

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Abstract

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Keywords: Loyalty; Social Identity; Loyalty program; Intention.

Introduction

The purpose of loyalty programs is to establish a high level of consumer retention, especially in more profitable client segments, promoting satisfaction and generating value for the participants (Bolton, Kannan & Bramlett, 2000). They are widely adopted by companies of different industries, ranging from airlines and hotels to banks and retail (Dowling & Uncles, 1997; Bolton, Kannan & Bramlett, 2000; Kang, Alejandro & Groza, 2015;). Customer maintenance allows for a larger share of wallet and revenue increase (Meyer-Waarden, 2007), provides greater sales predictability (Evanschitzky et al., 2012), raises positive "word of mouth" and reduces churn (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). Such dynamics can also be seen in sports, with a growing focus on generating long-term relationships with supporters (Fleury et al., 2013).

In Brazilian soccer, such initiatives started in the turn of the XXI century, aiming at new sources of revenue and at relationship growth (Cardoso & Silveira, 2014; Gaspar et al., 2014). Loyalty program charges a monthly fee and the main benefits are financial, including discounts on products, services and tickets; and social, offering experiences, status and recognition to fans who join the program. Rewards may vary according to the plans offered by each soccer club (Fleury et al., 2016; Pereira et al., 2014).

There are more than 1.3 million active members of loyalty programs in Brazil, from more than 70 different soccer clubs (Best Soccer, 2017), which generate an yearly revenue of approximately USD100 MI (Itau BBA, 2016, 2017), already more than the revenues generated by the clubs' ticket box offices.

Even with the growth observed in recent years, the number of fan members of the vast majority of clubs fluctuates drastically, depending on the results obtained. For instance, the team Cruzeiro achieved the mark of 80.000 members after becoming Brazilian national

champion for the second time in 2014; but the numbers were cut in half in 2016, after a year of failures and raised again to 64.000 after conquering the Brazilian Cup in 2017 (Capelo, 2017; Pereira et al., 2014). Therefore, understanding the reasons behind membership cancellations is an important issue to football club marketing managers, involving portfolio management and budget compliance.

Under the Social Identity Theory (TIS) lenses, during periods of success of the beloved team, both highly identified fans and those with low identification would seek to increase their association with the club, to strengthen their social identity and self-esteem, by wearing the team's shirt after a title conquest. However, in moments of defeat, the strategy of disassociation, or cutting off the relationship with a club to preserve social identity, is an option that, according to this theory, would only occur with fans of low identification, since the highly identified members have their team affiliation central to their identity, hence cutting ties would not be an option for them (Russell & Wann, 1993).

This study aims to identify how supporters, who are part of the loyalty program of their team, react to both victories and defeats, regarding to the propensity to stay or exit the program, from Social Identity Theory's standpoint.

The benefits offered by loyalty programs can be of two kinds: financial / economic (Mimouni-Chaabane & Volle, 2010) or social (Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2016). Social benefits have the ability to dialogue with the social identity theory, from dimensions such as belonging and status (Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2016; Kang, Alejandro & Groza, 2015; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

According to the literature review on loyalty programs, some authors discuss the neglect of studies involving longitudinal data, especially identifying the impacts of the loyalty program on consumer attitudes and behavior (Dorotic & Verhoef, 2011), which is partially covered by the current research. Besides, the study seeks to demonstrate the magnitude of the impact that sports performance has on the evaluation of the social benefits of the loyalty programs by members with high identification levels, which, to the best of the authors knowledge, so far has not been analyzed.

Social Identity Theory and Loyalty Programs in Sports

The dualistic classification systems represent the first attempt to differentiate the sports consumers, being initially used in European soccer between 1970 and 1980 (Stewart, Smith & Nicholson, 2003). However, categorizing the fans showed to be much more complex than what was proposed by dualistic taxonomies, making the results simplistic and limited and hence leading to the development of multifaceted taxonomies. Thus, in the 1990s, levels of intensity in the links between the individual and the club began to be measured from the ordering of their beliefs and behaviors (Stewart, Smith & Nicholson, 2003). The work of Wann and Branscombe (1993) stands out with a great number of citations, and continues being one of the main scales used in the area. The use of identification with the team as a dimension of analysis for categorization allows its connection with theories, such as Social Identity (Giacomini, 2011; Pereira et al., 2014).

The Social Identity Theory (TIS) was developed by Tajfel and Turner in the late 1970s and is one of the main theories used in the field of Sports Marketing, for articulating important constructs such as identification, self-concept, status, belonging, self-esteem and influence in individuals' behaviors (Giacomini, 2011).

According to TIS, the self-concept of the individual is derived from the personal identity, composed of idiosyncratic characteristics of each person (skills, interests and personalities) and of the social identity, knowledge that the individual has of belonging to a social group, and that value and significant emotions are provided by being a member of this

group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel et al., 1971). Adherence to groups and strong identification with them helps to reduce the uncertainty of the social self, while promoting social rewards (prestige) or benefits (self-esteem) based on the interaction with the group. Therefore, the social identification is a reflection of an individual psychological relationship with groups of relevance and with their own identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and other studies that correlate the level of brand identification and brand association with the fans' behavior (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998) demonstrate that fans with high identification with the team will remain faithful, in attitudinal and behavioral terms, even when the team faces successive defeats.

On the other hand, Fleury et al. (2016) state that, not necessarily, higher levels of identification of the fans will produce a better perception of the social benefits of relationship programs. It is proposed that even member fans with high identification levels will evaluate social benefits in a less favorable way after failures, since such benefits are anchored in dimensions such as belonging, status and recognition, and the supporter will seek to preserve, even partially, their social identity. Therefore, even members with high identification will be inclined to step out of programs as a way to protect their social identity.

From the referential study of Wann and Branscombe (1992), regarding the levels of identification of the fans towards a club, their emotions and the social identity theory can be related. The authors pointed out that the level of identification of the supporter in relation to their club acts as a moderator in affective reactions (positive and negative), in victories or defeats. Therefore, the first hypothesis to be proposed is:

H1: The self-esteem of the fan-supporter will be significantly greater in positive times of the club than in negative ones.

Although there are studies examining the relationship between the motivation to engage in a group and their attitude towards the group (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990), no study was found linking an individual's self-esteem with their attitude toward being a member of a subgroup in sports. However, since attitude is an affective reaction to an object (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), and the reactions exhibited by fans are highly emotional and passionate (Sloan, 1979), it can be assumed that:

H2: The attitude towards participating in the loyalty program will be significantly greater at positive times of the team than at negative ones.

However, since members of the loyalty program represent a subgroup relative to the soccer fans, it may be considered that even highly supportive members may leave the program, hence the hypothesis can be considered:

H3: In negative moments, the members will significantly increase their intention to leave the program when compared to positive moments.

Loyalty Programs

The concept of loyalty program involves a wide variety of initiatives integrated into the marketing system, ranging from product discounts to exclusive events and special privileges (Henderson, Beck & Palmatier, 2011; Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder & Iacobucci, 2001). Consistent with this line of thought, and based on the extensive literature review by Henderson, Beck and Palmatier (2011), loyalty program is defined as "any institutionalized incentive system that attempts to increase customers' consumption behavior over time" (p.258).

Despite some variation among authors, the success of a loyalty program tends to converge around the efficiency in which a company creates or enhances a relationship that encourages the repurchase of products or services (Dowling & Uncles, 1997; Sharp & Sharp, 1997), increases the average value spent by customers (Bolton, Kannan & Bramlett, 2000), and produces value to consumers with rewards aligned with their profile, thus promoting

satisfaction and loyalty (Dorotic & Verhoef, 2011; Kang, Alejandro & Groza, 2015; Suh & Yi, 2012).

The soccer loyalty programs seek to offer a bundle of benefits, such as discounts (on products, services and tickets), and intangible rewards, such as purchase priorities, exclusive experiences and unique content. The purpose is to increase the club's revenue, directly and indirectly, by increasing the frequency of purchases of official products (shirts, for example) and increasing the attendance to stadiums (Pereira et al., 2014).

The benefits and rewards of loyalty programs can be categorized into two dimensions: economic (or financial) and social (or non-financial) (Brashear-Alejandro, Kang and Groza, 2015). The economic benefits are essentially instrumental, cognitive, functional and tangible, promoting value to consumers by providing means to achieve an end (Mimouni-Chaabane & Volle, 2010). It is possible to suppose that:

H4: The perception of the financial benefit will not vary significantly according to the team's performance.

There is a fundamental difference between being loyal to a company and being loyal to the loyalty program. Unlike loyalty to a brand, which has a more emotional nature, loyalty to a program tends to be strongly driven by its financial nature. Thus, consumers may not necessarily develop a favorable attitude to the company's loyalty program and still continue shopping from the company (Evanschitzky *et al.*, 2012; Meyer-Waarden, 2007).

Many loyalty programs seek to move consumers from a relationship based on economic dimensions to a social dimension, centered on strong relationships built over time and based on trust. It is assumed that the results will be better if the focus is shifted from the economic transaction program to an intensive consumer relationship (Henderson, Beck & Palmatier, 2011; Palmatier et al., 2006), through social benefits.

Social benefits can be personal recognition (when consumers know new people and are recognized by others through the loyalty program (Gwinner, Gremler & Bitner, 1998); benefits related to unique and exclusive, hedonic and emotional experiences, especially attracting consumers who value socialization opportunities (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003); the consumer's sense of belonging, which is a benefit stemming from the belief and expectation that the consumer has a position recognized by others within the group itself, using organizations to satisfy self-defining needs (Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2016; Fleury et al., 2016; Mcmillan & Chavis, 1986); the attribution of status, which can generate favorable comparisons with other consumers and raise the individual's self-esteem. This is a process fundamentally generated by social comparisons and classifications (Henderson, Beck & Palmatier, 2011).

Loyalty programs can be a way of approaching consumers and organizations, promoting the formation and development of identification, especially in terms of the social benefits offered (Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2016). Providing the consumer with opportunities to be called on to try out new products, or, when it comes to sports, have access to important matches through the loyalty program, are examples of social benefits to increase engagement with the organization (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Fleury et al., 2016; Mimouni-Chaabane & Volle, 2010).

The TIS explains how the individual involuntarily compares herself with other individuals and groups, and wishes to perceive herself as superior or differentiated (distinctive) (Turner, 1975). People seek to belong to groups associated with high status to reinforce their self-image and self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Therefore, the attainment of status depends on the combination of both internal and external perceptions of individuals. It is proposed that:

H5: The feeling of status for being part of the program will be significantly greater at positive club times than at negative ones.

It is also important to emphasize that identification is the perception of belonging to a group, involving direct or observable experiences of its successes or failures. Identification is

associated, by other social groups, with groups that are "distinctive" and prestigious (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), which allows to consider that:

H6: The feeling of belonging to the loyalty program will be significantly greater in positive moments of the club, than in negative ones.

Adopters of loyalty programs, when compared to non-program members, tend to display strong loyalty to the brand sponsor of the program, to exhibit very positive attitudes toward it, and to be heavy users. These characteristics tend to be even more noticeable in early adopters of loyalty programs (Doreen & Verhoef, 2011, Meyer-Waarden, 2008). Considering that loyalty programs are relatively new, still far from the maturation stage, it is expected that their members have a high degree of identification with the club. Thus, it is proposed that:

H7: Members of the loyalty program will have a high degree of identification with the club.

Method

A survey was conducted, with a questionnaire applied via e-mail. A longitudinal structure was adopted to allow for the study of changes over time and visualization of patterns in relation to the loyalty program.

Eight variables (intention, identification, status, belonging, attitude, financial benefits, team success and self-esteem) were measured. Two deserve greater emphasis on the choice of scales: identification and self-esteem. Likert five-point scales were used to measure attitude, intention, social benefits, and financial benefits.

Identification was used as variable of classification for the members. One of the most used scales in studies related to Sports Marketing was adopted, the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS), proposed by Wann and Branscombe (1993), SSIS has been extensively tested in different contexts and is considered a reliable way to access a fan's identification with his club (Wann et al., 2001), being translated into several languages, including Portuguese (Theodorakis et al., 2010; Wann & Weaver, 2015).

Several scales are available to measure self-esteem, the majority based on the personal identity evaluation and just a few on the social identity (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998; Tomas & Oliver, 1999). The Wann scale (1995), widely tested and validated, was adopted, allowing to access the self-esteem of sports fans through three items. Table 1 summarizes the scales used, with the number of items and the main authors for each dimension used.

The population comprised supporters of a popular soccer club in the city of Rio de Janeiro, which allowed the use of its database with about 100 thousand members of the program. Selection of the sample was random, with a single restriction - the participants should be residents in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Access to the database was facilitated by the club's board of directors.

Table 1 – Variables Operationalization

Construct	Items	Authors	Scale
Identification	7	Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Sutton et al, 1997; Wakfield & Wann, 2006	Wann & Branscombe, 1993
Belonging	3	Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2015; Mimouni-Chaabane & Volle, 2010; Fleury et al, 2016.	Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2015
Status	3	Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2015; Henderson, Beck & Palmatier, 2011; Dréze & Nunes, 2009; Fleury et al, 2016.	Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2015
Team's success	3	Cialdini et al, 1976; Fisher & Walkefield, 1998; Wann, 1993.	Biscaia et al, 2015
Self esteem	3	Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990, 1992; Rosembert, 1985; Hogg, 1998.	Wann, 1995
Attitude	3	Henderson, Beck & Palmatier, 2011; Pereira et al, 2014.	Pereira et al, 2014
Financial benefits	4	Kang, Brashear-Alejandro & Groza, 2014; Suh & Yi, 2012.	Kang, Brashear-Alejandro & Groza, 2014
Intention	3	Sharp & Sharp, 1997; Henderson, Beck & Palmatier, 2011; Evanschitzky et al, 2012.	Hhalifa, Kathy Ning, 2009; Lin, Lu & Ph, 2011; Pedersen, 2005; Pereira et al, 2014

The data was collected in November and December of 2017, during the final rounds of the Brazilian and South American Cups (total of 11 matches), with four survey rounds, allowing to capture data from a moment when there were but expectations in relation to the two championships until the last game of the year, when expectations had already turned into facts. The first round was discarded due to the low numbers of respondents.

Table 2 – Return rates

Rounds	Data	Total Sent	Return	%
1st Round	Oct 30th	15000	306	2
2nd Round	Nov 7th	20306	1437	7
3rs Round	Nov 17th	1437	619	43
4th Round	Dec 04th	619	371	60

Table 3 – Team results during the research

Date	Championship	Opponent	Results	Round
28/Oct	Brazilian Cup	Vasco	Tie 0 x 0	1st round
02/Nov	S. American Cup	Fluminense	Tie 0 x 0	
05/Nov	Brazilian Cup	Grêmio	Defeat 3 x 1	
08/Nov	Brazilian Cup	Cruzeiro	Victory 2 x 0	2nd round
12/Nov	Brazilian Cup	Palmeiras	Defeat 2 x 0	
16/Nov	Brazilian Cup	Coritiba	Defeat 1 x 0	3rd round
19/Nov	Brazilian Cup	Corinthians	Victory 3 x 0	
22/Nov	S. American Cup	Jun. Barranquilla	Victory 2 x 1	
26/Nov	Brazilian Cup	Santos	Defeat 2 x 1	
29/Nov	S. American Cup	Jun. Barranquilla	Victory 2 x 0	
03/Dec	Brazilian Cup	Vitória	Victory 2 x 1	4th round
Summary Performance:	2 championships	11 games	5 Victories; 4 Defeats and 2 Ties	Total of 4 rounds

To increase response rates, club idol players were used in the invitation e-mail arts, as well as callout phrases to participate in the survey, plus a symbolic prize (posting the name on the club website) for those who participated in all the rounds. The national ID number being used for control, the final round included only members who participated in all previous rounds.

Data Analysis

A total of 371 valid questionnaires were obtained. No relevant outliers were found. In almost all cases, the variables had asymmetric distribution, with skewness to the right. It was expected that the sample would be composed of fans with a high degree of identification with the club, with a very positive perception of the attributes of the loyalty programs, including social benefits (Fleury et al., 2016).

The alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the scales. The alpha improved significantly with the withdrawal of an item only in the scale of identification. All variables present alpha above 0.7, with the exception of self-esteem in rounds 3 and 4, and sports performance in round 3, which was considered acceptable for this study. The identification was collected only in the first round, since Lock et al (2014) demonstrated that it is invariable in short- and medium- term.

Table 4 – Variables means

Consolidated statistics - Round 4			Consolidated statistics - Round 3			Consolidated statistics - Round 2		
Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
AEST	3,95	1,0	AEST	3,95	1,1	AEST	4,04	1,0
DESE	3,28	1,1	DESE	2,48	1,1	DESE	3,04	1,1
ATIT	4,22	0,9	ATIT	3,80	1,1	ATIT	3,77	1,1
STAT	3,25	1,3	STAT	3,22	1,3	STAT	3,22	1,3
PERT	3,80	1,1	PERT	3,81	1,1	PERT	3,86	1,1
DESC	3,57	1,1	DESC	3,56	1,1	DESC	3,59	1,1
INTE	4,38	1,0	INTE	4,29	1,1	INTE	4,51	0,9

Table 4 shows that the most extreme evaluations of the sports performance (DESE) would be on rounds three and four, due to the negative results of the club, immediately before the 3rd round ($M = 2.48$), and positive, before the 4th round ($M = 3.28$). The difference between means was significant ($t = 20.5$, $p = 0.000$). Considering this, the two moments, 3rd and 4th round, were selected for hypothesis testing, once they represent the most significant differences in club performance. The hypotheses were tested by means of paired T-Test, considering the negative (round 3) and positive (round 4) moments.

Two facts were responsible for the acceptance of hypothesis 7: (1) When comparing the sample mean with partners with maximum evaluation ($M = 5.0$), there was no significant difference in any of them, with the exception of self-esteem. (2) The mean value of the identification was high ($M = 4.54$).

It was expected that self-esteem and social benefits (belonging and status), at negative times of the club, presented mean values significantly lower than those obtained at positive moments. However, H1, H5 and H6 were not accepted: for H1 (self-esteem), $t = 0.09$ ($p = 0.93$); for H5 (belonging), $t = -0.21$ ($p = 0.83$) and for H6 (status), $t = 0.86$ ($p = 0.39$).

Soccer loyalty programs in Brazil often do not generate observable external recognition of partners, either through social interaction or through the exploration of experiences. This directly impacts the feelings of belonging and status, since the programs do not arouse a sense of affiliation, involvement with the organization or acceptance by others, making it difficult to develop social identity (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Drèze & Nunes, 2009; Fleury et al., 2016). Besides, it was found that the members have a high level of identification with the club. As Fisher and Wakefield (1998) show, this profile is more loyal to the club, even in periods of bad results, which could explain why self-esteem, belonging and status do not depend much of results.

The financial benefits (H4) are also the main return offered and communicated by the clubs (Fleury et al., 2016; Pereira et al., 2014). As such benefits have a more rational, rather than an affective, nature, it was envisaged that moments of club victories and defeats would not significantly influence the assessment of the financial benefits (H4). The hypothesis was accepted ($t = 0.35$, $p = 0.73$).

There was a significant difference of the attitude in relation to the loyalty program between negative (round 3) and positive (round 4) moments (H2) ($t = 7.86$, $p = 0.001$). As an affective variable, it was expected to be affected by the results.

The intention to continue in the member program followed a similar behavior, showing significance ($t = 2.56$, $p = 0.010$) when comparing the positive and negative moments. This suggests that the match outcomes significantly influence the propensity to continue in the program. It is worth mentioning that the loyalty programs currently revolve, essentially, around the stadium (ticket discounts, ticket purchase priority and stadium experience). By linking the program and its major benefits to the stadium, clubs ultimately link the program to club sports results, which favors such a swing of the attitude variable.

Findings and Discussions

The results suggest that members have increased their propensity to leave the program after negative moments, but this would not be due to social benefits or self-esteem, as initially hypothesized.

Belonging, status and self-esteem remained unchanged between positive and negative moments of the team. Theory states that social benefits (status and belonging) and self-esteem are directly related to the social identity theory (Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2016; Kang, Alejandro & Groza, 2015; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which proposes that, for the construction of social identity, it is necessary that individuals be classified and defined from the

social groups to which they belong. However, in the loyalty program, other people do not know who is or is not a member, since there are no visible and observable mechanisms of membership, fundamental factors for the development of belonging and status (Brashear-Alejandro, Kang & Groza, 2016; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1975). Thus, a process of personal recognition is not generated (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This creates an obstacle in the development of the feeling of affiliation, involvement with the organization and acceptance, making it difficult to develop a social identity from the subgroup (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Drèze & Nunes, 2009; Fleury et al., 2016).

On the other hand, attitude is an affective response, intrinsic to individuals (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Even if he is not associated with the loyalty program, which, therefore, does not interfere with his social identity, he may still have positive or negative attitudes towards the program.

Team performance had a smaller than expected influence. Its role as a moderating factor was confirmed only in relation to attitude and intention to stay in the loyalty program. In unsuccessful times, even individuals with a high degree of identification with the club have a less positive attitude towards the program and their intention to stay on the program significantly diminishes.

Since membership is still tightly tied to ticket discounts, a financial benefit, it seems comprehensible that the numbers float according to the results. When the team is playing well, fans are eager to attend the matches, but the other way around is also true. Therefore, offering benefits that go beyond the matches seems to be a plausible way to achieve stability in the program numbers.

As a managerial recommendation, it is important that clubs take advantage of moments of victories and sports successes to encourage early renewals of the memberships. It is also suggested to develop other ways of creating visibility, so that members, and their status level, can be recognized by others, members or not (Heffetz & Frank, 2008). So far, the only tangible visible aspect that identifies the participant and their level in the program is a membership card that is provided at the time of joining the program.

Several studies suggest that loyalty programs focused exclusively on financial rewards tend to fail on sustaining consumers in the long run (Henderson, Beck & Palmatier, 2011). There is no clear evidence that such benefits result in successful loyalty programs (Dowling & Uncles, 1997; Fleury et al., 2016). The development of non-financial benefits, such as social benefits, are important for the development of consumer loyalty (Henderson, Beck & Palmatier, 2011). Through social benefits, loyalty programs will have the ability to develop and elevate loyalty and consumer identification with the club (Kang, Alejandro & Groza, 2015).

This study focused only on members of the Flamengo, due to the easiness of access to the club's database. Results and conclusions cannot be generalized. Future research can extend the scope of the longitudinal study, starting from the beginning of the championship and lasting until its end, perhaps considering more clubs.

The results suggest that the team performance affects the attitude towards the program and the member's intention to remain affiliated. However, differently from what literature points out, such changes were not accompanied by changes in self-esteem, in the sense of belonging and in the status perception. As feelings are an important path to the customer's heart, increasing the affiliation feeling by social distinction can come in handy in reducing the impact of the team performance on the program. Emotions, so dear to sports, can be useful to its management after all.

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