



Η Επίδραση της Τοπικότητας και της Επιτυχίας της Ομάδας στην Ταύτιση με την Ομάδα, το Πάθος και την Ψυχολογική Ευημερία

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Περίληψη

Το μοντέλο ταύτισης με την ομάδα - κοινωνικής ψυχολογικής υγείας (Wann, 2006b) έχει προταθεί για να εξηγήσει τα αποτελέσματα της ταύτισης με την ομάδα στην ψυχολογική και κοινωνική ευημερία των φιλάθλων. Η παρούσα έρευνα επιχειρεί να επιβεβαιώσει μια σειρά χαρακτηριστικών του μοντέλου εξετάζοντας την επίδραση της εντοπιότητας της ομάδας και της επιτυχίας της ομάδας στο βαθμό ταύτισης των οπαδών, στο πάθος τους, στη συλλογική αυτοεκτίμηση και στην ευημερία. Οπαδοί ποδοσφαίρου στην Ελλάδα έλαβαν μέρος στην διαδικτυακή έρευνα. Διακόσιοι εβδομήντα άνδρες οπαδοί έδωσαν πληροφορίες αναφορικά με την ταύτιση τους με την αγαπημένη τους ομάδα, με το επίπεδο ευημερίας τους, και το πάθος τους για την ομάδα. Τα αποτελέσματα έδειξαν ότι η εντοπιότητα της ομάδας (τοπική και μη τοπική ομάδα) δεν άσκησε σημαντική επίδραση στην ευημερία και το πάθος των οπαδών. Αντιθέτως, το επιτυχημένο ιστορικό μιας ομάδας (επιτυχία της ομάδας) είχε στατιστικά σημαντική επίδραση στη συλλογική αυτοεκτίμηση, την ταύτιση με την ομάδα και το εμμοτικό πάθος, όπου οι οπαδοί λιγότερο επιτυχημένων ομάδων είχαν υψηλότερο μέσο όρο στις παραπάνω μεταβλητές σε σχέση με τους οπαδούς περισσότερο επιτυχημένων ομάδων. Τα ευρήματα επιβεβαιώνουν προηγούμενες έρευνες που υποστήριξαν την επίδραση της ταύτισης με την ομάδα στην ευημερία των οπαδών, ακόμη και όταν η αγαπημένη τους ομάδα ήταν μακριά τους. Στην εποχή της ηλεκτρονικής επικοινωνίας και την εγγύτητας που παρέχει το διαδίκτυο και τα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης, η δυνατότητα κοινωνικής συναναστροφής με συν-οπαδούς είναι περισσότερο εμφανής. Επιπλέον, βρέθηκε ότι οι οπαδοί λιγότερο πετυχημένων ομάδων είχαν περισσότερη συλλογική αυτοεκτίμηση, ταύτιση με την ομάδα και εμμοτικό πάθος για αυτή, πιθανώς σαν έναν τρόπο να προστατεύσουν την προσωπική τους αυτοεκτίμηση έναντι πιθανολογούμενων απειλών στην αγαπημένη τους ομάδα και κατά συνέπεια στην κοινωνική τους ταυτότητα.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: ταύτιση με την ομάδα, κοινωνική ευημερία, συλλογική αυτοεκτίμηση, αρμονικό πάθος, εμμοτικό πάθος, εντοπιότητα, επιτυχία ομάδας

Research

Effects of Locality and Success of a Football Team on Fans' Identification, Passion and Well-Being

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Abstract

The team identification - social psychological health model (Wann, 2006b) has been proposed to explain the effects of team identification on psychological and social well-being of sports fans. The current study attempts to validate a number of elements of the model by examining the effects of locality of the team and the success of the team on fan's identification, passion, collective self-esteem and well-being. Football fans in Greece were recruited and participated in an online study. Two-hundred seventy male participants provided data for their level of team identification, general well-being, social well-being and passion. Results revealed that locality (local and distant teams) had no significant effect on well-being and passion. On the contrary, success of the team had a significant effect on collective self-esteem, team identification and obsessive passion with less successful team fans showing significantly higher mean in the above measures compared to high successful team fans. Findings validate previous studies that supported the effects of team identification on fans' well-being even when the favourite team was a distant one. In the era of e-communication and proximity that social media and web offer, the chance to be in social connection with fellow fans is becoming more prominent. Additionally, it was found that fans of less successful teams had higher collective self-esteem, team identification and obsessive passion, possibly as a way to protect their own personal status and self-esteem against possible threats to their favourite less successful team and their social identity.

Keywords: *team identification, social well-being, collective self-esteem, harmonious passion, obsessive passion, locality, success*

Introduction

As the most popular sport in planet earth, football offers strong emotional experiences to its fans [FIFA]. According to social identity theory, fans are devoted and emotionally affected by the performance of their favourite team as well as being influenced psychologically by their participation in team related and fan related activities. Following a number of studies on the positive and negative effects of team identification (e.g. Bizman & Yinon, 2002; Dechesne, Greenberg, Arndt & Schimel, 2000; Hirt, Zillman, Erickson & Kennedy, 1992; Madrigal, 1995; Pringle, 2004; Ruiz-Belda, Fernandez-Dols & Carrera, 2003; Schwartz, Strack, Kommer & Wagner, 1987; Walton, Coyle & Lyons, 2004; Wann & Branscombe, 1992; Wann, Dolan, McGeorge & Allison, 1994). Wann (2006a, 2006b) proposed the team identification – social well-being model. According to this model, team identification has clear consequences to psychological health. The model posits that there are certain antecedents or causes for team identification which are grouped in three major categories: psychological, environmental and team-related (Wann, 2006b). Identification to a distant team results only in temporary social connections, specifically when the social event of attending or watching a game with fellow supporters becomes salient (Wann, 2006b). It was also concluded that merely supporting a team did not produce positive psychological outcomes (Wann & Pierce, 2005). The salience of team identity and social connections were important antecedents for the decreased state loneliness (Wann & Pierce, 2005). Collective self-esteem, though, was predicted by salient team identity, in the absence of fellow fans (Wann, Polk & Franz, 2011). In addition, fans who support distant teams are driven by the success of the team, while local fans meet their social identification and belongingness needs as members of an active local community (Branscombe & Wann, 1991).

Examining the type of well-being which is affected, Wann (2006b) concluded that only social elements of psychological health are affected positively by identification. In the same way, it is social rather than personal self-esteem which is enhanced from this process. Additionally, social well-being dimensions were found to be positively related to team identification, which was a significant predictor of social integration and social coherence but not social acceptance, social contribution and social actualisation (Wann & Weaver, 2009). Wann, Walker, Cygan, Kawase, and Ryan (2005) found a high degree of robustiveness in the relationship when they tested it in university dormitories and at an athletic event. Accordingly, the relationship between team identification and social well-being has been supported by Koo, Sung, and Martinez (2015) who demonstrated the association between high team identification and sense of personal worth which both influenced social adjustment. Fans when attending a basketball game reported higher social psychological health (state satisfaction) and lower levels of loneliness than when they were tested at their home, providing support for the state social psychological benefits of mere fandom (Wann, Martin, Grieve & Gardner, 2008).

Wann and Polk (2007) reported an association between team identification and belief in trustworthiness of other people, providing supporting evidence for the model, specifically with regard to social psychological health outcomes and the mediating role of connectedness with others. In addition, Wann, Waddill, Polk, and Weaver (2011) showed that team identification with a university sports team was positively related to the number of fans' enduring social connections and trait social well-being. The study, though, failed to reveal the model's proposition of the mediating role of social connections.

The team identification – social well-being model also implies that only highly identified fans appear to benefit from the positive psychological effects of team identification. At the same time, when the team performs poorly, highly identified fans react negatively and report higher levels of depression (Wann, 2006a). Wann, Keenan, and Page (2009) pointed out that high identification with more than one team had the same positive consequences of social psychological health, and this effect was present even off-season.

The above presentation of the model and related research findings suggest that further research is needed in order to clarify the relationship between team identification and well-being and the specific elements of the model.

The role of successful background of the team on fans' team identification

The role of the history of a team has been examined in relevant studies. Team identification was affected by the team's past history of success, but the outcomes of a game or a contest did not determine whether a fan was highly or low identified with the team (Wann et al., 1994). Similarly, End, Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, and Jacquemotte (2002) reported that college students followed successful teams and most importantly the most successful teams. Fans seem to know the benefits of association with a successful team, in the sense of elevated self-esteem as the

product of BIRGing and the use of CORFing in the form of alternative explanations for a bad performance. They named this phenomenon ‘premeditated BIRGing’ which is similar to what is known as ‘fair-weather fans’.

For member of successful groups, winning was shown to be one of the most important factors for identification, leading to engagement in behaviours that intensify their connection to the team (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). This was not the case though, for members of unsuccessful groups where loss did not lead to lower identification (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998).

Jones, Coffee, Sheffield, Yanguéz, and Barker (2012) examined the effects of winning an important game and found that winning the tournament was associated with longer positive effects, higher team identification and socializing practices. The effects on winning fans were stronger than the effects on losing fans. Fans are willing to adopt coping strategies in order to deal with their negative affect after unsuccessful outcomes of their team. Such a strategy might be exemplified when fans believe in team curses, which helps them to explain the team’s bad performance and loss in more acceptable ways (Wann & Zaichkowsky, 2009). Such external attribution strategies might be useful in dealing with physiological responses. Bernhardt, Dabbs, Fielden, and Lutter (1998) examined testosterone levels in fans of winning and losing teams and found that, as biosocial theory (Mazur et al., 1985 cited in Bernhardt et al., 1998) proposed, testosterone levels increased in winning team fans and decreased in losing team fans as a mode of interaction between competition and status. Van der Meij et al. (2012) reported higher cortisol levels in young males watching a crucial and important game of their national team. The authors explained the difference as a self-protection immune strategy from a possible negative outcome.

Aims and hypotheses

Following the assumptions of the team identification – psychological well-being model, the current study attempted to examine explicit associations between team identification, well-being, passion and collective self-esteem. In addition, fans of different teams in terms of their locality were compared in order to find out the impact of locality of the team. The study also introduced the dimension of team success, to find out differences in team identification, well-being, passion and collective self-esteem between fans of successful and less successful teams. Team identification was further examined as a dependent variable while a more sophisticated scale was introduced. Based on previous research findings, the following hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis 1, according to Wann’s model, stated that fans of local teams will be higher in identification, harmonious and obsessive passion, collective self-esteem, global and social well-being than fans of distant teams. Hypothesis 2 stated that fans of successful and fans of less successful clubs will differ in their identification, passion (harmonious and obsessive), collective self-esteem, global and social well-being.

Method

Design

An independent samples design was employed in the current study. Two independent factors were used in this study. The first one (locality) distinguished distant and local teams’ fans and the second one (success) divided fans of successful and less successful teams. Teams were categorized according to participants’ responses regarding their favorite team.

In order to find out whether fans identified with a distant or local team, participants were asked to indicate with accuracy the place that they currently lived. According to the team they declared as their main supporting team, they were separated into distant team fans and local team fans. Teams were separated as successful and less successful based on the International Federation of Football History and Statistics (IFFHS) ranking of the most successful clubs in Europe, during the decade 2001-2010 (IFFHS, 2012).

Participants

Participants were 270 males. Following previous studies, participants were recruited from different sources in order to secure that they were taking part for the first time, even though the possibility of a dual participation could not be eliminated. The mean age was 28.1 (SD = 7.9) with a range of 18 to 53 years old. The majority of the sample (53%) consisted of graduates or students of higher education.

Measures

Team identification: Team identification was measured using five items adapted from Heere and James’s

(2007) scale, with one indicative item from each of six sub-scales used. These were measured on a 7-point Likert scale with 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. These items were: “In general, others respect my football team” (public evaluation); “when someone criticises my football team, it feels like a personal insult” (interconnection of the self); “what happens to my football team influences what happens in my life” (sense of interdependence); “I am actively involved in activities that relate to my football club” (behavioural involvement); “I share similar life attitudes to those of other fans of my football team” (cognitive awareness). A formal procedure for translating and adapting a psychological scale in another language was applied thoroughly as following: An initial translation was provided by the principal researcher to a group of psychologists who reviewed the material. In the second phase of the process, the translated material was evaluated by a bilingual psychologist to ensure content validity. In the third phase, internal consistency was assessed and coefficient alpha of .69 was produced.

Collective self-esteem: This was measured with the Collective Self-esteem Scale (CSE) (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The subscale of private collective self-esteem which assesses the personal evaluation of membership and the group was translated into Greek and adapted with reference to the group of fellow fans for the purposes of the study. Internal consistency coefficient was $\alpha = .82$ for the current group of fans.

Global well-being: The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larson & Griffin, 1985) was employed as one of the most widely used instruments for the assessment of life satisfaction. Therefore, the scale was used as an appropriate one to depict influences in trait well-being of fans, as has been proposed in Wann’s model. The scale was translated into Greek by the researchers for the purposes of this study and produces a coefficient alpha of .78 for the current sample.

Social well-being: The Social Well-being Scale (Keyes, 1998) was applied to assess this construct. For the purpose of this study two sub-scales were used based on their reliability indexes: social integration and social actualisation. Social integration, according to Keyes (1998), is the way people assess their integration to and their association with society. An example item is: “I feel close to other people in my community”. The translated into Greek scale yielded an alpha coefficient of .70 for the overall sample of males. Social actualisation refers to the potential of society in terms of optimism about the progress of society. An example item is: “Society has stopped making progress”. The translated and adapted version had an internal consistency coefficient of .61 for the Greek male sample.

Passion: Passion was measured with the Passion scale (Vallerand et al., 2003). The original sub-scales have shown acceptable levels of construct and concurrent validity (Vallerand, Ntoumanis et al., 2008). The scale was translated into Greek and assessed fans’ passion for their engagement with football. The scale was translated into Greek and was adapted to soccer fans by the researchers for the purposes of the current investigation. Coefficient alpha for harmonious passion was .77 for the overall sample. Obsessive passion yielded an alpha coefficient of .89. Fans version scales of passion referred to their involvement with their favourite football club.

Procedure

The questionnaire was hosted in electronic platform. Announcements and invitations for the study were made in fans forums and blogs, which hosts fans pages of Greek or international teams. Because the aim of the study was to collect responses from fans of a range of football clubs, these announcements took place in fan pages of a considerable number of Greek and international clubs.

Ethical approval

The study and its protocol have received full ethical approval from the School of Life Sciences Ethics Committee at Northumbria University. Information for participants, consent form and debriefing sheets were provided, again following the guidelines of the Ethics Committee of the School of Life Sciences of Northumbria University.

Results

A 2x2 multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was applied. From Table 1, it can be observed that the mean for life satisfaction and social integration was almost equal across the categories. Distant and successful teams’ fans seemed to have lower social actualisation than the other fans. Collective self-esteem, team identification harmonious passion and obsessive passion were higher in the categories of distant and less successful and

local and less successful. The MANOVA results are presented in Table 2. A Bonferroni correction factor was applied by multiplying significance values by the number of tests in the analysis.

Table 1. Means for distant/local and successful/less successful teams' fans in well-being, collective self-esteem, team identification and passion.

	Distant		Local	
	Successful (N = 45)	Less successful (N = 81)	Successful (N = 19)	Less successful (N = 86)
Life satisfaction	19.09	19.20	18.84	19.29
Social integration	20.84	21.62	21.95	21.03
Social actualisation	11.64	13.34	13.00	13.10
Collective self-esteem	20.20	24.34	20.80	23.87
Team identification	18.96	23.96	21.00	24.36
Harmonious passion	34.62	38.42	34.42	36.19
Obsessive passion	29.47	33.76	29.41	33.74

Table 2. Main and interaction effects of locality and success of the team in well-being, collective self-esteem, team identification and passion.

	Locality		Success		Interaction	
	F	p	F	p ¹	F	p
Life satisfaction	0.01	n.s	0.09	n.s	0.03	n.s
Social integration	0.22	n.s	0.02	n.s	2.35	n.s
Social actualisation	0.60	n.s	1.56	n.s	1.22	n.s
Collective self-esteem	0.74	n.s	18.06	.000***	5.44	n.s
Team identification	2.00	n.s	23.12	.000***	0.90	n.s
Harmonious passion	1.23	n.s	6.43	n.s	0.86	n.s
Obsessive passion	0.01	n.s	8.12	.035*	0.00	n.s

Note: ¹ corrected significance values, / Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p \leq .001$

Locality did not have significant main effects in life satisfaction, social integration, social actualisation, collective self-esteem, team identification, harmonious and obsessive passion (Means of local and distant teams' fans are presented in Table 3).

Table 3. Means for distant and local teams' fans in well-being, collective self-esteem, team identification and passion.

	Distant (N = 126)	Local (N = 105)
Life satisfaction	19.14	19.07
Social integration	21.23	21.49
Social actualisation	12.50	13.05
Collective self-esteem	22.27	22.82
Team identification	21.46	22.68
Harmonious passion	36.52	35.30
Obsessive passion	31.62	31.49

Table 4. Means for distant and local teams' fans in well-being, collective self-esteem, team identification and passion.

	Successful (N = 64)	Less successful (N = 167)
Life satisfaction	18.97	19.24
Social integration	21.40	21.32
Social actualisation	12.32	13.22
Collective self-esteem	21.20	23.88
Team identification	19.98	24.16
Harmonious passion	34.52	37.30
Obsessive passion	29.36	33.74

Success had a significant main effect in collective self-esteem ($F 1, 227 = 18.06, p < .001$) (Means of successful and less successful teams' fans are given in Table 4). Fans of less successful teams had a significantly higher mean ($M = 23.88$) in collective self-esteem than fans of successful teams ($M = 21.20$). Similarly, a main effect of success was found in team identification ($F 1, 227 = 23.12, p < .001$) with less successful teams' fans having significantly higher mean ($M = 24.16$) in team identification than fans of successful teams ($M = 19.98$). Finally, obsessive passion was significantly different for fans of successful and less successful teams ($F 1, 227 = 8.12, p < .05$). Fans of successful teams had a significantly lower mean ($M = 29.36$) in obsessive passion than fans of less successful teams ($M = 33.74$). Success did not have a significant main effect in life satisfaction, social integration, social actualisation and harmonious passion. Interaction effects between locality and success were significant in well-being measures, collective self-esteem and passion sub-scales.

Discussion - Conclusions

Hypothesis 1 stated that fans of local teams will show a higher mean than fans of distant team in identification, passion, collective self-esteem, global and social well-being. Results revealed that locality did not affect well-being measures (life satisfaction, social integration and social actualisation) despite previous evidence that local team fans formed long-lasting social connections which in turn affected level of well-being (Wann & Pierce, 2005; Wann, Dimmock & Grove, 2003). Current study examined global and social well-being as the outcomes of identification with a local or distant team. Wann (2006a, 2006b) argued that long lasting social connections with a local team elevates levels of well-being and psychological health.

Results from this study failed to support this argument. Greek fans of local and distant teams did not show different levels of life satisfaction, social integration and social actualisation. Wann, Polk, and Franz's (2011) finding that distant team fans coming into contact with fellow fans (for example watching a game of their favourite distant team) showed less state loneliness (as a measure of social well-being), supported the argument that even distant fans could have elevated social well-being. This could be an explanation for the absence of differences in the present study between local and distant team fans. Branscombe and Wann (1991) asserted that local team fans are affected more than distant team fans and this was attributed to everyday interaction with fellow fans and the opportunity to feel integrated into a given local community. Furthermore, local fans were considered to have higher level of social well-being because of their sense of belongingness and communality (e.g. Clopton & Finch, 2010; Reding, Grieve, Derryberry & Paquin, 2011; Sani, Bowe & Herrera, 2008).

In sum, current results showed that locality was not a significant condition for positive psychological outcomes in fans examined. Supporting a local team did not merely provide advancement in well-being. Sense of belongingness for distant team fans might also be achieved, as Wann, Polk, and Franz (2011) have argued, by a vicarious sense of belongingness, integration and contact with fellow fans. This interaction might exist not only in the stadium but also in a virtual environment like fans blogs and forums, which was the environment of the current study. This supports Eastman and Land's (1997) argument that highly identified fans that they do not have the chance to attend games (like distant team fans) search for social bonding and interaction opportunities with fellow fans using other means.

Similarly, locality did not affect significantly the level of harmonious and obsessive passion, team identification and collective self-esteem. Collective self-esteem was examined along with social well-being in a number of previous studies as being one of the positive outcomes of identification with local teams (Eckstein & Delaney, 2002; Hughson, 1998; Reding et al., 2011; Sani et al., 2008), and it was concluded that locality affects collective

self-esteem by creating a unique local identity which satisfies the need to belong and to be included. Wann et al. (2005) and Wann, Polk, and Franz (2011) argued that positive outcomes are associated even in the absence of immediate contact with the game (not attending a game). Therefore, fans of distant teams join together frequently to watch games on TV and as such social connections and positive outcomes like well-being, collective self-esteem and identification occur. The fact that fans in this study reported high levels of everyday contact concerning their favourite team through media sources signifies that distant fans could reap positive benefits.

Success of the team was hypothesised to significantly influence identification, passion, collective self-esteem, global and social well-being (Hypothesis 2).

Whether the club was a successful one or less successful did not influence fans' well-being (global and social). It seems that fans were not affected by the relevant success of the team they supported. Past research has found that good performance influences positive moods and self-esteem (e.g. Bizman & Yinon, 2002; Madrigal, 1995; Wann et al., 1994; Wann, Royalty & Rochelle, 2002) when highly identified fans were examined after a positive game result. Hence, current study provided new evidence on the relationship between overall success of a team and psychological impact on fans.

Success of the team was associated with fans' levels of obsessive passion, with supporters of less successful teams having higher levels of obsessive passion. Moreover, fans of less successful teams were more identified with their teams and had higher collective self-esteem than fans of successful teams. This is in accordance to Greenwood, Kanters and Casper's (2006) findings, where fans of successful were not found to be more identified with their teams. As such, this study showed that a consistent successful performance and profile of the team does not necessarily lead to higher levels of identification with the team. Besides, if fans were identified and passionate only for successful teams then there would be no fans left for the less successful ones. It should be noted here, that the category of 'less successful' clubs contained teams that they are not only characterised as unsuccessful. Rather the category consisted of teams that have a moderately successful history. On the other hand, the group of 'successful' clubs had teams which are the very top successful teams in Europe and Greece.

Giulianotti (2002) has argued that those fans who follow successful teams as consumers and not supporters are less identified and less passionate with their successful team. Moreover, they are willing to change their object of admiration (the team) when it is no longer winning. These fans, according to End et al. (2002), have different motives and they are attached to successful teams in order to enhance their level of self-esteem (BIRGing). For that reason they are characterised as, 'fair-weather' fans. Similarly, past research, focusing on the influence of team success on identification found that past history of success affects level of identification (Wann et al., 1994), with college students following the most successful teams (End et al., 2002) and fans of successful groups viewing victory as the most important factor for identification (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). Highly identified fans evaluated more positively their group after a win (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1999) and had higher testosterone levels after a win (Bernhardt et al., 1998).

According to Branscombe and Wann (1991) fans of distant teams are driven by the desire to win and experience the vicarious achievement while fans of local teams are strongly identified with their community 'pride'. Therefore, when the motive for identification is to win, this identification could be easily influenced by the deteriorating progress of the team. On the other hand, fans of less successful clubs are there for them in good and bad times, passionate for them with an overwhelming feeling of being unique as members of this team and fellow fans. For Funk and Pastore (2000) the emotional significance of the team affects the loyalty to the team, and this loyalty is related to persistence and frequency of time thinking or behaviourally involved with the team, resistance to change, biased thinking and feeling for the in-group and the out-group and loyalty-related behaviours (Funk & James, 2001). James, Kolbe, and Trail (2002) argued that this psychological significance takes the form of an important and intimate interpersonal relationship which is difficult to abandon.

Limitations

The fact that the study was an open survey to fans produced a representation of teams that does not necessarily reflect the totality of fans in the country. Some teams were not represented; therefore, the generalisability of findings to all Greek fans cannot be assured. It is also imperative to state that groups of fans were not of equal size, which constitutes a concern over the violation of assumptions in the analysis performed. In relation to this, the well-being scales showed a reliability coefficient at the lower acceptable level for research. It would have been interesting to study designated groups of fans and take into account recent game results in order to examine more systematically the effects of locality and success variability on well-being. Similar to the above, another

limitation is that the assessment took place in a virtual context (fan blogs) and not in a natural setting; therefore control over situational factors was minimal.

Concluding, it could be argued that not all fans are driven by their desire to be attached to a winning team. There are fans that show a strong identification with their less successful teams and this could make them more passionate and more willing to support their teams. Thus, it might be the case that fans of the most successful teams are less obsessively passionate and less identified either because they do not have something to fight for, in relation to their team, or that different personality types are attached to the top teams. Such attachment could provide people with the opportunity to feel good about themselves and enhance their overall self-esteem and self-worth. Finally, fans might actually feel a sense of superiority for supporting an unsuccessful team, as their enthusiasm and devotion is clearly not dependent upon victories (Wolfson, Wakelin & Lewis, 2005).

Significance for Sport and Physical Education

Involvement in sports in an active or passive way brings a number of certain positive psychological outcomes. Recent data from well-being research globally, suggest that social integration, sense of belonging, flow and meaning are significant determinants for a full of joy and content life. Current study showed that emotional and behavioural attachment and identification to a football team can join together individuals and communities in order to produce social integration, collective feeling and general well-being. As such, this study supports the positive aspect of being a football fan when fans are involved, identify and react in a healthy way towards the sport, the players and the fans overall.

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