


# Lurk or De-Lurk?

## The Role of Participation Type and Sport Fanaticism in Understanding the Link Between Brand Community Identification and Oppositional Brand Loyalty

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### ABSTRACT

Drawing on three theories—uses and gratification, social identity, and reasoned action—this study investigates the moderating role of type of participation and the sport fanaticism between brand community identification (BCI) and oppositional brand loyalty (OBL). Moreover, it explores the influence of sports fanaticism on the type of participation. A convenience sample of 455 members from the online communities of the two most famous competing clubs in Egypt (Al-Ahly and Zamalek) was used; the validity of the proposed model has been verified. To test the proposed hypotheses, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) relying upon WarpPLS.7 was utilized. The findings indicated that sports fanaticism is more influential on posting engagement behavior than lurking engagement behavior. Moreover, BCI is a key enabler of OBL. Furthermore, the sport fanaticism does not moderate between BCI and OBL. Finally, BCI has stronger positive effect OBL among posters than lurkers in OBCs. Key academic and practical implications in the sport industry are justified and clarified.

### KEYWORDS

Brand Community Identification, Oppositional Brand Loyalty, Sport Fanaticism, Type of Participation

### INTRODUCTION

Companies have invested significantly in marketing through social media to increase brand awareness as a new advertising medium in recent years (Liao et al., 2020). Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram allow users to communicate with each other knowledge about brands and engage with them (Reyes-Mercado & Barajas-Portas, 2020). These media are platforms that improve content via text, images, audio, and video; it is indeed a supplement to marketing efforts in attempting to attract more customers, and it is one of the most rapidly growing content channels in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Alalwan, 2018). This form of marketing concentrates efforts on generating content that attracts consumers' interest and motivates them to interact via platforms such as Facebook to

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target a greater number of consumers in an automated way without any need to upgrade or post the content regularly (Chu et al., 2013).

Additionally, persons can use social media sites to communicate with one another and develop social interactions through the web (Hook et al., 2018). The characteristic of sharing, or retweeting, of posts that the marketer creates if the consumer is interested in the content, makes social media one of the most successful tools of advertising (Kuo & Hou, 2017). This allows the brand's message to reach a large number of people in a very short amount of time and without difficulty if these tools are used correctly; and social networking encompasses a wealth of information about the services and products that potential customers might be interested in, which is easily reachable and targets users' preferences and impacts their intent to buy (Neti, 2011).

Besides, the uses and gratification theory (UGT) is used as a theoretical approach in this study to better explain why and how individuals try to find out, select, and utilize certain media to meet specific social and personal desires (Dessart & Veloutsou, 2021). This theory appears to be true in online settings, such as online brand communities (BOCs) (de Vries & Carlson, 2014). Moreover, brand community success essentially depends on customer loyalty and brand community identification as an item resulting in it (Dessart & Veloutsou, 2021). Facebook, in particular, is one of the most widely used social networking platforms to connect with companies and to build OBCs (Hook et al., 2018). The brand generally aims to encourage participation by sharing vivid, engaging, instructive, and fascinating content (de Vries et al., 2012), and company-generated content has a link with users' participation (Shahbaznezhad & Rashidirad, 2020). Furthermore, there exists a lack of research on online brand communities. The majority of studies are on brand community identification (BCI) and two shapes of loyalty; that is, sustainable brand loyalty (Dessart & Veloutsou, 2021) and oppositional brand loyalty (Dessart et al., 2016) in OBCs as conducted in areas with high levels of participation (active posters). So, one of the primary goals of this research is to determine the moderating role of type of participation between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty.

On the other hand, in the field of sport in particular, the phenomenon of sport fanaticism appeared with the emergence of sport competitions. Accordingly, social networks have been blamed for status conflicts and online communities that bring fans together. They degrade and despise one another by speaking in an unethical manner because the ease with which an expression of animosity in the form of voice goes viral online motivates others to participate and create opinions. Without committing actual violence, the hostility action appears to satisfy the urge to "hostility" against each other side, and bad people may disguise their identity on social networks, which is one of the factors that foster such conduct; they create an account by impersonating someone else, or even set up numerous accounts, or steal other people's accounts (Bajari, 2017). Furthermore, the sport fanaticism in OBCs leads to a lot of bad behavior, such as a breach of the team's rules and fan opposition (Huettermann et al., 2019). Likewise, though social identity theory is commonly researched in sport previous research, little was done to examine social media interactions and fans' reactive behavior during sport competitions (Mudrick et al., 2016).

Although, many football clubs strive to achieve oppositional brand loyalty on the OBCs (Liao et al., 2020), this type of loyalty may lead to adverse consequences in the field of sport specifically, as a result of the appearance of some bad behavior from the fanatical fans (Amani, 2019; Popp et al., 2016). So, the present study relied also on the theory of reasoned action (TRA), which explains that user's behavior is governed by their intentions to do the activity, which are generated through the two items of their attitude and their subjective norms (Song et al., 2021), to investigate the moderating role of the sport fanaticism between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty. Hence, the second major goal of this research is to explore the moderating role of the sport fanaticism between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study can be formulated as such:

- To identify the direct impact of brand community identification on oppositional brand loyalty.
- To explore the direct effect of the sport fanaticism on the type of participation (posting/ lurking).
- To investigate the moderating effect of type of participation between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty.
- To identify the moderating effect of the sport fanaticism between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty.

Compared to prior studies, in light of the contradictions of opinions between a group that holds that there is a significant relationship between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty (Confente & Kucharska, 2021; Kaur et al., 2020; Kuo & Hou, 2017) and another group that believes that this relationship is not essential (Marticotte et al., 2016), the nature, direction, and strength of this relationship should be investigated as one of the gaps that this research seeks to address. Besides, this is the first research to look at the impact of sport fanaticism on posting and lurking engagement behavior. Moreover, this study is the first to determine the moderating role of the sport fanaticism between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty. Furthermore, this study is the first to explore the moderating role of type of participation between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty in the online clubs' communities in Egypt. Also, this study is applied to sport clubs, and in this regard, sport clubs prefer positive loyalty more than oppositional brand loyalty, where sport fanaticism often leads to political instability and insecurity of societies (Budi & Widyaningsih, 2021). Besides, incidents of violence around sporting events frequently result in potential financial and image harm to sport teams including reduced match and yearly ticket revenue, as well as consequences such as financial penalties and even competition exclusion (Toder-Alon et al., 2019). Finally, from sociological and socio-demographic perspectives, the three theories of uses and gratification, social identity, and reasoned action are applied to investigate the proposed model.

As a result, this research is theoretically anchored in the three theories above to describe how the sport fanaticism and type of participation moderate between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty in the online clubs communities in Egypt.

Hence, by concentrating on posting engagement behavior in OBCs, the study adds to the literature of brand community. Moreover, this study contributes to the context of marketing by bridging two vital points of brand research: brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty. The study also investigates the moderating role of sport fanaticism and type of participation. It provides a deeper understanding of the consumer-content linkages in the context of sport OBCs.

Consequently, the research questions guiding this study are:

- RQ1:** What is the direct impact of brand community identification on oppositional brand loyalty?
- RQ2:** To what extent does the sport fanaticism affect the type of participation (posting/lurking)?
- RQ3:** To what extent does the sport fanaticism moderate the link between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty?
- RQ4:** To what extent does the type of participation moderate the link between brand community identification and oppositional brand loyalty?

There are five main components to this study besides the introduction section above. Section 2 introduces the theoretical background, the variables being investigated, and the hypotheses being tested. The methodology and data collection are covered in Section 3. The results following research hypotheses have been presented in Section 4. The implications of the results for academics and practitioners are discussed in Section 5. Finally, Section 6 concludes with a discussion of the limitations and recommendations for future research.

## THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### Brand Community Identification

According to the social identity theory, members of a community may benefit from presenting their group in the best light possible, and one method of doing that is to portray other communities (and their brands at the base of the communities) as less desirable (Marticotte et al., 2016). Individuals resort to communicating with relatives, friends, and groups through social networks, which are a means for exchanging opinions and ideas, mobilizing advocacy, supporting certain issues, and creating awareness about various issues, through various forms of videos, graphics, and forms of expression (Sean, 2008, p. 93). The dominance of (web 2.0) technologies has helped the spread of Internet users to social media and to provide a huge volume of information, which made it one of the most important Internet means that allow companies to showcase their products and services. Firms generating content on social networks can be defined as “a variety of digital information sources created, activated, disseminated and consumed by companies as an educational medium about products, brands and services, related to these companies” (Chauhan & Pillai, 2013). It can be concluded that companies are aware of the need to develop multi-directional relationships with their customers and to enhance interaction between the two parties (Li & Bernoff, 2011).

The content created through the firm focuses on two goals: the first is informational, as it focuses on the unique features of the brand that make it superior to other brands, and the second goal is transformational, as it focuses on matching the brand with the aspirations, experiences, and feelings of the users (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Therefore, companies and organizations have sought to create a presence through social networking sites, where one of the most significant current forms of communication is virtual communities that many companies are keen to use and launch, as it has become a means of acquaintance between the company and its customers through which the company provides all the information that the customer seeks to know (Dellarose, 2009).

The OBCs can be defined as “social entities that reflect the brand’s virtual reality in consumers’ daily life and how the consumer and the brand relate to each other” (Franzia et al., 2015). Brand identity is a term that has received a lot of attention in recent years and has been defined from multiple perspectives. Waren et al. (2001) pointed out that the process of distinguishing brands is simply the process of creating and managing this identity. Besides, Scarpi (2010) defined BCI as “an individual awareness of affiliation to OBCs whereby customers consider themselves as a real or symbolic part of the team.” In addition, the process of creating a strong brand identity is one of the most important reasons for its success. Thompson and Sinha (2008) mentioned that community identification includes a psychological connection between the community, rooted by a brand, and its participants, that is going to lead to social identity.

### Sport Fanaticism

According to the latest statistics, prepared in January 2021 by the data portal observatory (<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-egypt?rq=egypt>), Egypt’s Facebook user base totals 49 million people (about half of the population), and this number reflects the importance of Facebook in shaping awareness and directing its behavior patterns, due to its impact on the individual and groups, whether the content is real or not. It also helps to express freely and unload emotions, trends, and opinions, which makes it one of the forms of ideology that dominates culture. Social networks have also become platforms for satirical content and ridicule of others, whether in language, words, expressions, posters, pictures, or videos, in many areas, including the sport community, football issues, poverty, education, and various societal issues (Bedard & Schoenthaler, 2018). Besides, fan identification has become the cause of undesired, fatal, and destructive results for followers in the sport business, regardless of its contribution to the sector’s prosperity (Wakefield & Wann, 2006). In this regard, BCI, according to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), is a specific and non-geographically constrained social community that is based on a well-defined organized set or settings of social bonds among team fanatics or fans.

Fanaticism is defined as “a scenario in which an individual or group adopts an ideological, religious, cultural, or other belief excessively, resulting in negative consequences and even major feuds and clashes” (Bajari, 2017). Consequently, a fanatic, according to (Thorne 2011), is “a person who has an excessive fondness or passion for a specific individual, organization, trend, artwork, or concept and displays extreme conduct that others perceive as disordered and breaking social standards.” Accordingly, the term “fanaticism” describes a strong bond between clubs and the fans that follow them (Alim et al., 2020). With his study, Thorne (2011) has defined the concept of fanaticism and associated terms as follows:

- **Fan:** Someone who is fond of a specific topic, subject, or individual, including sport, football clubs, television, music, and so on. This individual usually does not take part in the activity directly, but rather watches it and joins in related activities, devoting time and money.
- **Fandom:** A subculture of individuals with similar interests by a sense of closeness to those who share a common interest and a specific jargon. In many cases, this is accompanied by a little sense of superiority toward people who are not “in the know,” especially when the level of participation is great. Fanaticism: It is the top level of fandom, and its intensity varies depending on the person. The degree of interest can range from low to high. As a result, rather than being a binary, fanaticism is regarded as a continuous variable. It is the consequence of some variables that will be investigated.
- **Dilettante:** This category is interested in a specific area, but they have no desire to expand their degree of interest. For a brief time, the fan may display behavior that is representative of all three different levels of fan behavior.
- **Dedicated:** Persons coordinate their activities around these activities, acquire objects relevant to these fields, communicate with others who share a common interest, and participate in meetings and forums.
- **Devoted:** Self-driven fan behavior manifests itself in actions that are similar to all three types of fan behavior, including a great desire for owning and higher degrees of fanaticism than the last type of fan.
- **Dysfunctional:** Fan behavior demonstrates traits seen in all three categories of fan behavior, but also participates in socially misbehavior that goes against the norms, values, and traditions prevailing in society.

Sport-related misbehavior and fanaticism are becoming ever more apparent and public, as a result of developments in social networking (Bass et al., 2014). Sport fanaticism is described as a psychological feeling characterized by blind animosity (hatred without cause) towards competing teams and a blind fondness for one’s favorite teams (Alqmase et al., 2021). Four distinct elements of sport fanaticism have been discovered and validated; first: instigation; this component indicates hostile social contact between sport followers and out-group football fans. Instigation depicts hostile social contact between in-group and out-group football supporters via face-to-face. Second; Committed interaction; this element depicts sport fans’ dedicated and concentrated viewing to not miss their team’s performances. Third; vicarious impact: this component represents a sport fan’s outward conduct during matches and toward the club, where a significant impact and/or internal link is thought to exist. Four; superstition; this element concerns a sport fan’s ritualistic activity as related to team colors, uniforms, and viewership behavior (Dwyer et al., 2018). The fanatic indicators that promote sport -fanaticism are aggressiveness, passion, hatred, and agitation, whereas the anti-fanatic indicators that decrease sport fanaticism are affection, knowledge, adaptability, and respect (Alqmase et al., 2021). In this regard, studies have been conducted on football fans’ fanaticism and violence in the political square serve which as a point of reference for policy suggestions to avoid a scenario of national security risk because of damaging, hostile behavior (Budi & Widyaningsih, 2021).

## Type of Participation

If everyone is speaking, who is the listener? Nguyen (2020) confirmed that lurkers and posters are two sorts of people that participate in OBCs. Individuals who read postings without contributing their own thoughts are referred to as the lurkers, while those who exchange information online are referred to as the posters, besides, explained that in certain cases, de-lurking techniques are not advised. The emergence of the lurking concept coincided with the emergence of online communities on social networking sites. As the known “90-9-1” rule implies, 90% of participants in a collaboration site (as in a virtual communities) are just reading post, 9% are modifying posts, and 1% are generating new posts (Amichai et al., 2016; Cranefield et al., 2015). Before talking about the definition of the phenomenon of the lurkers, there are some concepts that the English dictionary considers synonymous with this concept should be mentioned such as sneaking, hide, hiding, crouch, prowl, sneak snoop, slink, lie in wait, skulk, concealment, and moving stealthily (Edelmann, 2017). Because of the recent emergence of this concept, some authors see it as a positive phenomenon, and others see it from a negative perspective. Table 1 shows the negative and positive definitions of lurkers according to what the relevant studies have shown.

**Table 1. Negative and positive definitions of lurkers**

Studies	Definitions of lurkers		Negative, positive, and quantitative perspective
(Ling et al., 2005)	describes the propensity to maintain a strategic distance from contributing whereas profiting from the endeavors of others		negative perspective
(Nonnecke et al., 2004)	somebody who needs something for nothing		
(Rafaeli & Raban, 2005)	freeloaders or free-riders who take without responding and are seen as covering up and assuming untrue identities		
(Amichai-Hamburger, 2005)	somebody who watches what is going on, but doesn't take an interest or remains quiet, and is in this way related with observation, quiet, laziness/passivity, or bystander behavior		
(Nonnecke & Preece, 2003)	lurking is “a vital and individual actions that include a ‘complex set of rationales, activities, and contexts’ driven by the individual’s needs, objectives, personal background, and reasons”		positive perspective
(Mazuro & Rao, 2011)	lurking is “a ‘reception only’ participation, which permits lurkers to pick up a superior and more profound understanding of online peers’ opinion and to be able to gain an understanding of perusing diverse points of view”		
Nonnecke and Preece 2003	lurking is a strategic and individual activity that includes an “intricate arrangement of activities, reasoning, and contexts” driven by the individual’s requirements, objectives, reasons, and individual foundation		
(Nonnecke et al., 2004)	somebody who	“never” posts	quantitative perspective
(Nonnecke & Preece, 2000)		has not posted in recent months	
(Ridings et al., 2006)		posts infrequently	
(Stegbauer, 2002)		has not provided benefits in the first 12 months	
(Hara, 2000)		provides 1 post/week	
(Taylor, 2000)		provides less than the normal number of postings	

The UGT is the most important in the study of “the audience of the means of communication,” through which the objectives, patterns, and methods of use are determined, in addition to the possibility of identifying the audience, their backgrounds, characteristics, and how they relate to the medium. It has been distinguished from previous theories in that it focused on the characteristics of the audience exposed to the media in terms of characteristics and motives away from the previous belief that the public accepts what is presented to it through the media (Liu & Han, 2020). The most important assumptions of the UGT related to social networking sites indicate that there are psychological and social factors that generate needs for the user and make them build expectations about the ability of social networking sites to satisfy those needs (Apuke & Omar, 2020). Besides, it also assumes that users are positive and active in their use of the media and that they use these means to achieve specific goals that meet their needs and expectations (Apuke & Omar, 2020; Liu & Han, 2020). As a consequence, using UGT, the insufficient quality of information as well as data given in the virtual communities has been identified as a contributing factor to lurking behavior (Nguyen, 2020; Park & Gabbard, 2018).

Karnik et al. (2013) tried to identify the importance of the UGT in social networking, and the study concluded that the contribution (commenting, sharing, publishing) is one of the most important gratifications for users of virtual communities via Facebook (Karnik et al., 2013). OuIrsloot and Odekerken-Schröder (2008) concluded that the motives for customer participation in the brand’s online communities are to ensure the quality of the products, then the relationship with the product that carries this brand and the extent of interest in it, then interaction with other customers, and the symbolic aspects of the brand. Besides, OBCs are based on an organized set of social relationships between fans of a particular brand, and although most members do not know each other, they are ready to exchange knowledge about the brand, as well as engage in interactions that have some positive effects (Habibi et al., 2014).

Turning to another theory for explaining customer participation in virtual communities, in various domains, including online marketing, the innovation diffusion theory has drawn strong empirical support in explaining customer acceptance (Amaro & Duarte, 2015). “An idea, activity, or thing that is seen as new by a person or another item of adoption” is what innovation is. Otherwise, diffusion is defined as “the process by which an innovation is shared through particular channels among the participants in a social system over time” (Agag & El-Masry, 2016). As a result, according to the innovation diffusion theory, potential consumers make decisions about whether to embrace or refuse an innovation based on beliefs that consumers develop about the invention” (Shi et al., 2020). To sum up, social factors (low interaction links), organizational factors (poor community leadership), individual factors (low perceived ease of use), and technological factors (restricted functionality of the systems) all contribute to lurking behavior, as mentioned in the individual, social, organizational, and technological (ISTO model) (Nguyen, 2020).

### ***Oppositional Brand Loyalty***

Customer loyalty appears to be a two-edged sword, encouraging both positive behavior toward his brand and negative behaviors toward the rival brand (Marticotte et al., 2016; Muniz &

O’Guinn, 2001). Users may trash-talk a rival brand to decay it and make it less of a threat to the user’s favorite brand, when competing brands pretend a threat to the brand that the user supports, users are more likely to acquire a desire to outrage them (Ewing et al., 2013). Trash-talking is a type of negative word-of-mouth in which users disparage a competitor team by concentrating and debating about its flaws (actual or imagined) to promote their preferred team (Japutra et al., 2014). Brand loyalists may take a major part of the brand’s meaning and feeling of self from their impressions of rivals’ brands, and they may display their brand loyalty by opposing rivals’ brands (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2003). The rivalry between brand communities, according to Ewing et al. (2013), shows itself often explicitly in the form of comedy, epithets, and scorn, which can also spill over into outright animosity on occasion. Latent tensions between brand communities are heightened by particular events and

situations. Vicarious prejudice with one or the other group, even from non-users of either brand, is another unique aspect of this brand competition. The term “oppositional brand loyalty” (OBL) was coined by Muniz and Hamer (2001).

OBL is a psychological phenomenon that occurs when participants of OBCs have hostile and opposing beliefs about competing brands and even act hostile toward them (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Moreover, OBL is participant of the OBCs who refuse or resist suggestions for usage brands from competitor companies (Ewing et al., 2013). As a result, OBL is a psychological phenomenon in which a person expresses appreciative behavior toward his or her preferred brand while displaying hostile conduct toward competitors or rival brands (Amani, 2019). Participants who have OBL have a high level of commitment to their preferred brand, as well as a deliberate resistance and animosity towards rival brands (Kuo & Hou, 2017). Furthermore, participation in community activities via users with OBL may motivate current users to strengthen their endorsement for the brand and resist rivals, which may cause a more centralized connection between the brand and current users (Thompson & Sinha, 2008). To put it another way, OBCs members are more likely to give a positive assessment of their group or brand, while perceiving competing brands or communities as worse brands (Kuo & Hou 2017). Likewise, as evidenced by online comments, OBL drives consumers’ rejection of a competitor’s brand and active exhibition of an aggressive attitude toward these businesses (Kuo & Feng, 2013).

### *Sport Fanaticism and Type of Participation*

According to Huettermann et al. (2018), user-participation elements can be beneficial (supporter resource incorporation, supporter learning, and supporter information exchange), or bad (supporter norm violation and resistance to the team). Supporter resource development and founder of supporter value are two advantages that these elements may provide. Alternatively, they may suffer from the following drawbacks: supporter value erosion and the formation of supporter identity conflict. Moreover, Al-Sulami (2014) claimed that media in general, and especially social media, is indeed one of the primary reasons for sport fanaticism, and participation in OBCs by sport fans can have major and quick consequences for community users. According to Alshehri (2016), social networking has a detrimental influence on sport fanaticism, but it may have a great impact if fans are more informed about how to utilize social networks wisely. Likewise, Wann et al. (2003) investigated the link between BCI and fan aggressiveness and discovered that fans that are well known are more likely to engage in violent and aggressive conduct. Additionally, one of the unifying attributes of followers across all types of fanaticism, according to Thorne (2006), is the need to interact with people who have similar interests. Besides, Budi and Widyaningsih (2021) argued that football fans are found to be quite fanatical and violent. Due to group harmony and adrenaline-triggered genetics, an individual’s personality might alter while they are in a group, and violent behavior and participation in harmful anarchic activities are triggered by this state.

As a consequence, the following hypothesis regarding sport fanaticism’s influence would be proposed.

**Hypothesis 1:** Sport fanaticism is more influential on posting engagement behavior than lurking engagement behavior.

### **Brand Community Identification and Oppositional Brand Loyalty**

Social identity theory’s in-group preference is equivalent to the OBL seen in brand communities because brand communities foster an environment conducive to the development of OBL (Kuo & Hou, 2017). Abdelkader and Ahmed (2019) confirmed that the team’s identification fit significantly affected the fans’ perceptions towards the team’s content trustworthiness. Additionally, Kaur et al. (2020) claimed that overall brand loyalty is increased as a result of BCI, and consumer brand



engagement positively mediates this relationship. Likewise, Confente and Kucharska (2021) stated that BCI is a key determinant in fostering attitudinal rather than behavioral loyalty.

Besides, Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013) pointed out that brand evangelism is affected by consumer-brand interactions, and positive referrals toward his brand and negative brand referrals are influenced by brand identification. Furthermore, Kuo and Hou (2017) indicated that the relationship between BCI and OBL was partially mediated by brand commitment and fully mediated by self-brand connection. Moreover, Liao et al. (2020) found that identity-prominent circumstances such as inter-consumer brand competition and participation in OBCs give a boost to the link between consumer-brand identification and OBL. On the contrary, Marticotte et al. (2016) found there is no link between BCI and oppositional brand referrals.

Subsequently, this author posits the following hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 2:** BCI positively influences OBL.

### **The Moderating Role of Sport Fanaticism**

According to the theory of social identification, Cikara and Fiske (2012) claimed that when users join communities, they recognize their distinctions. Differences are also defined by the degree to which they display enmity and contempt for members of that community who are not participants in their group. As a result, the deeper the user relates to the community, the more likely a user is to engage in trash-talking. Besides, based on social identity theory, supporters who are closely identified with the club seem to see themselves as having more in common with some other followers who are OBCs members (Phua, 2012). Dalakas and Melancon (2012) proposed that fans who have a strong identity with the brand may spiral out of control, participating in dysfunctional behavior and posing as bullies, trolls, or fanatics. Likewise, Hickman and Ward (2007) indicated that users of the brand community have unfavorable attitudes and actions toward competitors, including “stereotypes and prejudices,” which refers to customers’ unfavorable perceptions of persons with a certain feature. When *schadenfreude* was used to mediate, Amani (2019) discovered that fans and BCI have a substantial positive and major effect on the OBL in regards to a competing club. Additionally, when sentiments of satisfaction stem from the misery of a competitor club, its fans, it can lead to hostile behavior shown as oppositional brand loyalty. Moreover, fan identification can persuade a person to be loyal to a favored team club to the point of becoming a fanatic, to increase buying intent for sponsor brands, and to reduce the desire to switch to followers of the sponsored team (Ramírez et al., 2019). Furthermore, Ashour (2020) suggests that using Facebook contributes to football fanaticism as a result of a bad interaction, uncontrolled misuse, and a lack of responsibility; additionally, the article identified two specific variables that influence football fanaticism via Facebook, which are a lack of sport manship and a high trust level in Facebook pages as a key source. Al-Thunayan (2014) performed a content analysis study in which the historical contents of OBC clubs are examined via the lens of football fanaticism. The study found that media information shared on Saudi OBC clubs is appealing and elicits emotional responses and sport passion. Furthermore, the findings suggested there were no automatic methods that could help combat sport fanaticism. Al-Sulami (2014) also performed a survey to see how OBCs affect sport passion. OBCs promote sport enthusiasm, according to their results. The findings suggested that sport fanaticism among OBCs necessitated methods to increase content quality. Likewise, Wann et al. (2015) suggested that team identification indicated a willingness to participate in vocally hostile behavior, but physical violence, on the other hand, was not predicted by identity. Also, Popp et al. (2016) identified the features and causes of anti-brand OBCs on Facebook that resist a professional sport team. The study also highlights anti-brand OBCs members’ co-destructive activities that affect the football club’s brand as well as its sponsors. Anti-

brand groups, on the other hand, may have a beneficial function in football by strengthening the link between supporters of the opposing brand and OBCs, as well as fostering competition among fans.

In short, this research will add to these findings by proposing the following.

**Hypothesis 3:** The sport fanaticism moderates the relationship between BCI and OBL.

### The Moderating Role of Type of Participation

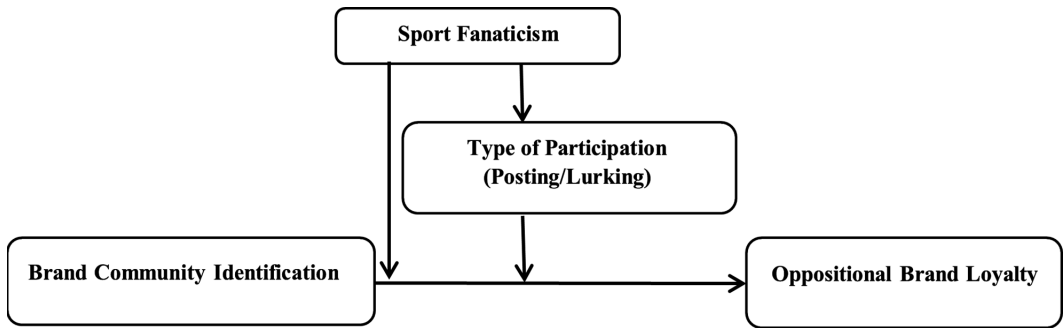
According to social identity theory, anti-brand groups' cohesiveness is crucial for satisfying self-definitional demands through resisting a certain brand (Popp et al., 2016). It is generally recognized that social media supports a set of Internet platforms that let customers generate, find, share, and appraise online information (Abdelkader & Mohamed, 2018). Not everyone on social media is a poster (active); the majority are lurkers (passive) (Bigne et al., 2020). Lurking improves by reading, revising, and organizing other people's posts. Though if lurkers never use or spread the knowledge they obtain, the impact of OBCs can affect their opinions (Edelmann, 2013). While some differences between Internet lurkers and posters (actors in OBCs) have been observed, little research has been done to investigate these disparities. For example, Bigne et al. (2020) revealed that positive emotions have more influence on users WOM, revisit intentions, and WOM in the presence of posting engagement behavior than lurking engagement behavior. Besides, according to Abdelkader and Ebrahim (2019), the content generated by the user is more influential on customer engagement and repurchase intentions than content generated by a marketer. Moreover, even when users are lurkers, research shows a relationship between liking OBCs and purchase intention (Dijkmans et al., 2015) and brand loyalty (Haverila et al., 2020).

Besides, Marticotte et al. (2016) found that participation in trash-talking has a positive relationship with a desire to distort a competitor's brand. Consumer interaction via social OBCs has a direct impact on the brand attitude and an indirect impact on buying intention. In the same vein, even for passive members, engagement in the community and desire to support the community is proven to be enablers of brand loyalty (Kumar & Nayak, 2019; Olson, 2018). Likewise, Dessart and Veloutsou (2021) claimed that inactive OBCs users can be persuaded to behave in a way that benefits a brand. Users identify with OBCs because of their information value as well as human perceptions, and identification is the main indicator of customer loyalty. In the same vein, According to Kamboj and Rahman (2016), users' active participation has a substantial impact on brand loyalty, both directly and indirectly through brand commitment. Additionally, passive users' engagement can drive their intention to buy and WOM regarding the community (Kumarand, 2019). Dessart et al. (2015) revealed that user participation affected customer loyalty indirectly via OBCs commitment, and when users engage in OBCs, they prefer to focus on the advantages (rather than the expenses) received from their participation. Similarly, Xiabing et al. (2015) showed that OBC commitment mediates between user engagement and brand loyalty.

However, Shang et al. (2006) confirmed that the enablers and results of posting and lurkers varied. Additionally, lurking affects brand loyalty less than posting, and the basic role of lurking was to search for information concerning the brand rather than the affective needs of the customer. Likewise, Mousavi et al. (2017) demonstrated that identification is a great indicator of emotional brand commitment, and that it is similar to attitudinal loyalty; therefore, this connection might have been even greater for passive users than for posters. Similarly, Fernandes and Castro (2020) found that both posting and lurking have been influenced by the need for identification, but the former is of more influence. In contrast, the study found that lurking affects loyalty more than posting. Besides, Williams et al. (2012) indicated that both passive users and actors are members of their team and are interested in attending games. Nevertheless, according to this research, lurkers attend games more regularly than posters.

Hence, the following hypothesis regarding the type of participation's influence would be proposed.

Figure 1. The conceptual framework



**Hypothesis 4:** In OBCs, BCI has a more positive impact on OBL among posters than lurkers.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Sample and Data Collection

A descriptive-analytical method (by describing the phenomenon and solving the problem within the scope of scientific research, and then analyzing the data collected about the phenomenon so that the appropriate explanation and results can be provided about that phenomenon) was used to test the link between BCI and OBL. The empirical data were collected during February and March 2020. Quantitative research is typically performed electronically to reach broader users who are more likely to reflect the population's opinions accurately. So, the data were collected via the E-Questionnaire method using Google drive templates to distribute the survey via the web. Target respondents for this study included two anti-brand communities in Egypt. The study sample was determined by selecting the two online clubs communities in Egypt on its official Facebook Pages (Al Ahly SC and Zamalek SC).

These two community members are chosen for the following reasons. Firstly, Egypt and Tunisia brag the absolute longest-standing football associations in the district (Sadiki & Saleh, 2020). Secondly, the football rivalry between the fundamental Cairo rivals, Zamalek and Al-Ahly, is firmly associated with social and political philosophies, and Al-Ahly and Zamalek have generally dominated both Egyptian and African mainland club soccer competitions (Al Ganideh, 2020). Thirdly, the two most popular football clubs in Egypt are Al-Ahly and Zamalek, and the yearly meeting between the two clubs mentioned is one of Egypt's and the African-Arab area's most popular football matches (Abd El Sabour, 2016). Table 2 shows the number of fans in online communities of Club SC's official Facebook page.

To make sure of the translation equivalence, the survey list was translated into Arabic (the language of users) and then translated into English again. Using convenience sampling, employing the snowball sampling technique, some considerations were taken into account when distributing the questionnaire: the frequency of publishing the link at different times during the day, and at different times during the week, and finally, the person who answers the questionnaire must be a fan of the

Table 2. Number of fans in online communities of Club SC's official Facebook page

Club SC	Number of fans in online club SC communities	Club SC Official Facebook Page
Al Ahly	14,293,122	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Officialahlysc/">https://www.facebook.com/Officialahlysc/</a>
Zamalek	6,896,088	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ZSCOfficial/">https://www.facebook.com/ZSCOfficial/</a>

Source: Online Communities of Club SC Official Facebook Page

club for more than a year, to comprehend the service and the content created. The survey was given to the respondents in the context of the virtual communities they had specified. A total of 455 valid were correct, and completed responses were obtained and considered valid for data analysis. The frequency of respondents' profiles is displayed in Table 3.

The same respondent provided both predictor and outcome variables. Podsakoff's ex-ante method was selected to decrease variance in the data since they was prone to common method variance. Harman's single factor test findings showed that the loading was less than 50% on the single factor. As a result, common method variance isn't an issue in the present research (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

# Measures

To quantify these research variables, valid and reliable scales were adapted from prior studies. To measure the BCI, a six-item scale by (Dessart & Veloutsou, 2021; Kaur et al., 2020; Marticotte et al., 2016) was created. Besides, to measure sport fanaticism, a nine-item scale by Dwyer et al. (2018) was utilized. Moreover, to measure OBL, a five-item scale by Kuo et al. (2017) and Liao et al. (2020) was used. Finally, the type of participation was measured, with a four -item scale adapted (for lurking) and a five-item scale adapted (for posting) from Fernandes and Castro (2020). All of the scales have been used in prior research with similar content and have an acceptable Cronbach's alpha.

# DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The structural equation modeling (SEM) method was used because it allows studying the direct and indirect relationships between the study variables. The data collected were examined using partial least squares-based SEM (PLS-SEM) because it tests the most complex models that contain a large number of variables (Hair et al., 2021). The method of SEM using a program to evaluate the proposed models includes two main steps. The first step is to assess the measurement model, which is used to evaluate the reliability and validity of the study variables. The second step is to evaluate the structural model, which is used to evaluate the suggested model's appropriateness for the research and to check the research hypotheses.

# Measurement Model

Based on SEM using WarpPLS.7, for the possibility of relying on the survey list, validity and reliability tests will be conducted as follows. Firstly, to ensure the content validity, the survey was presented to some business administration professors at the faculty of commerce at Kafrelsheikh University; in addition to that, it was presented to 28 students who follow the pages of the two clubs under study via Facebook, to ensure the correct understanding of what the survey terms refer to, and to modify any survey items based on their opinions. Secondly, convergence validity was measured by average variance extracted (AVE), which will be at least 0.50 for each dimension or variable to be measured

Table 3. Frequency of respondents' profile

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	259	57%
Female	196	43%
Club SC Fans		
Al Ahly SC	279	61%
Zamalek SC	176	39%

(Hair et al., 2021). The results of Table 4 show that all values of AVE are acceptable. Thirdly, in the model, if latent variable (LV) (Square Root Of AVE) values, which explores the variance among each item, have high variance than for other different constructs, discriminant validity is achieved (Henseler et al., 2016). In Table 5, findings indicate that all values are acceptable, as the indicators of the LV among each item are higher than the LV of all inter-construct correlations, implying that the scales employed have adequate discriminant validity.

On other hand, regarding reliability assessment, some procedures are included. Firstly, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and CR are employed to conduct test the internal consistency. Hair et al. (2021) claimed that to judge the acceptance of the reliability level of the scale items, the values of both Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and CR must be 0.7 or above. Table 4 shows that Cronbach's coefficients varied from 0.889 and 0.941, and CR varied from 0.953 and 0.916, and these percentages are greater than 0.7, so the study's measurements were found to be quite reliable. Finally, because individual loadings are greater than 0.5, according to Table 4, it can be said that individual item reliability has been achieved (Hair et al., 2021).

To verify that the data does not face the multi-collinearity problem, the findings of the analysis revealed that the values of variance inflation factors (VIF) for each variable of the study were acceptable, as they ranged between 1.231 and 2.330. According to Kock and Lynn (2012), VIF should not exceed 5 to be acceptable values. The normality was also tested through the values of the skewness and kurtosis coefficients, and the results of Table 4 indicated that the values of the skewness and kurtosis coefficients ranged between ( $\pm 1$ ). This confirmed that the variables follow the normal distribution (George & Mallery, 1999).

To check model fit, there are three indicators calculated by WarpPLS.7: average path coefficient (APC), average R-squared (ARS), and average variance inflation factor (AFVIF). The quality of model fit is considered acceptable if the significance of the values of APC and ARS is less than 5%, and AFVIF is less than 5 (Hair et al., 2021). In table 6, APC and ARS recorded 0.343,  $P < 0.001$ , and 0.334,  $P < 0.001$ , respectively. And AFVIF 2.854,  $P < 0.001$ , which reflects an acceptable fit for the study model, which means that it can be relied upon to describe the relationships between the study variables. Additionally, when academics examine the PLS-SEM results of multiple groups of data for much the same PLS path model in a PLS multi-group analysis (PLS-MGA), the GoF may well be beneficial, and the GoF indicators should be 0.36 or more (Henseler et al., 2016). Table 6 announced that GoF = 0.521, which reflects an acceptable fit for the study model.

## Structure Model

Following the evaluation of the measurement model, the hypotheses were tested using a structural model. Table 7 demonstrated that all the hypotheses proposed in this study were accepted except H3. First, the link between sport fanaticism and both posting and lurking engagement behavior was assessed. Presumably, the association was significant ( $\beta = 0.617$ ,  $p <$

0.001) between sport fanaticism and lurking engagement behavior and was significant ( $\beta = 0.656$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between sport fanaticism and posting engagement behavior. In general, the link between sport fanaticism and both posting and lurking engagement behavior is significant. Table 7 shows that sport fanaticism is more influential on posting engagement behavior than lurking engagement behavior, supporting H1. Besides, according to Table 7, the results demonstrate that BCI positively influences OBL ( $\beta = 0.434$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), boosting H2.

Furthermore, a two-group model was used to examine the moderating effect of the sport fanaticism between BCI and OBL; to do that, a formula employed by Chin et al. (2003) was applied. Table 7 shows that sport fanaticism doesn't moderate the relationship between BCI and OBL, not supporting H3. Finally, the same formula is used to identify the moderating of the type of participation (posting/lurking), as it would identify whether type of participation moderates the effect of BCI on OBL. Table 7 shows that BCI has a stronger positive effect on OBL among posters than lurkers in OBCs, supporting H4.

**Table 4. Measurement statistics of construct scales**

Construct/Indicators	Standard Loading	CR	VIF	Cronbach's $\alpha$	AVE	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Brand community identification (BCI)									
BC1	0.836	0.916	1.231	0.889	0.645	3.45	0.966	(0.382)	(0.238)
BC2	0.867								
BC3	0.832								
BC4	0.786								
BC5	0.716								
BC6	0.771								
The Sport Fanaticism (SP)									
SP1	0.613	0.929	1.872	0.917	0.506	3.06	0.849	(0.041)	(0.237)
SP2	0.703								
SP3	0.546								
SP4	0.672								
SP5	0.656								
SP6	0.696								
SP7	0.749								
SP8	0.733								
SP9	0.702								
SP10	0.781								
SP11	0.788								
SP12	0.801								
SP13	0.761								
Lurking engagement behavior (LEB)									
LEB1	0.886	0.939	2.048	0.914	0.795	4.06	0.838	(0.032)	0.898
LEB2	0.893								
LEB3	0.894								
LEB4	0.894								
Posting engagement behavior (PEB)									
PEB1	0.862	0.946	2.330	0.928	0.777	3.47	0.977	(0.368)	(0.150)
PEB2	0.889								
PEB3	0.890								
PEB4	0.906								
PEB5	0.859								
Oppositional Brand Loyalty (OBL)									
OBL1	0.827	0.953	1.231	0.941	0.772	3.17	0.963	(0.018)	(0.977)
OBL2	0.830								
OBL3	0.929								
OBL4	0.913								
OBL5	0.856								
OBL6	0.911								

Notes: BCI=Brand community identification; OBL =Oppositional Brand Loyalty; LEB= Lurking engagement behavior; PEB= posting engagement behavior; SP=Sport Fanaticism

**Table 5. Discriminant validity of the correlations between constructs**

Constructs and measurements	BCI	LEB	PEB	SP	OBL
BCI	0.803				
LEB	0.630	0.892			
PEB	0.631	0.691	0.881		
SP	0.767	0.592	0.655	0.711	
OBL	0.433	0.326	0.284	0.501	0.879

Notes: BCI=Brand community identification; OBL =Oppositional Brand Loyalty; LEB= Lurking engagement behaviour; PEB= posting engagement behaviour; SP=Sport Fanaticism

**Table 6. Model fit and quality indices**

APC	ARS	AFVIF	GoF
0.343	0.334	2.854	0.521
P <0.001	P <0.001		

**Table 7. Hypothesis test results**

Hypothesis	Independent	Moderator	Dependent	Path coefficients	S.E.	P-value	Accepted / Rejected
<b>H1</b>	SP	-	LEB	0.617	0.054	>0.001	<b>Accepted</b>
		-	PEB	0.656	0.053	>0.001	
<b>H2</b>	BCI	-	OBL	0.434	0.055	>0.001	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H3</b>	BCI	SP	OBL	0.079	0.058	0.090	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H4</b>	BCI	PEB	OBL	0.138	0.056	0.009	<b>Accepted</b>
		LEB		0.114	0.052	0.015	<b>Accepted</b>

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Conclusion

In this research, a model was constructed and examined in which the sport fanaticism and type of participation influence the link between BCI and OBL. Moreover, it explored the influence of sport fanaticism on posting and lurking engagement behavior. The findings indicated that, following the research hypotheses, sport fanaticism is more influential on posting engagement behavior than lurking engagement behavior. This result means that the behavior of fans, whether active or passive participants, is related to sport fanaticism. This result is consistent with the study result of Thorne (2006).

Furthermore, brand community identification appears to be a significant enabler of oppositional brand loyalty, according to the findings. As a result, BCI will generate OBL. These findings indicated that OBL is important in encouraging club supporters to participate in club activities. So, sport teams may encourage their supporters to participate in online communities to increase their OBL. This finding is in line with previous study findings (e.g., Kuo and Hou, 2017; Liao et al., 2020), which found that OBL is linked to BCI. However, this finding is incongruent with previous study finding (e.g., Marticotte et al., 2016), which showed that there is no link between BCI and oppositional brand referrals.

Besides, complementing previous studies of club fans behavior (e.g., Kuo & Hou, 2017; Liao et al., 2020), this study revealed that sport fanaticism does not moderate the connection between BCI and OBL. The role of sport fanaticism in moderating the relationship between BCI and OBL has not been investigated to date. This research revealed that the relationship between BCI and OBL is not contingent upon sport fanaticism. This result is a reflection of the misconception that increasing fanaticism on social media will increase the degree of OBL, and so clubs must take into account to adopt good behavior towards the content posters created by the club in a way that limits the negative effects of the phenomenon of sport fanaticism. At the same time, this study is an extension of previous studies that investigated the role of fans' behavior in OBCs in general (e.g., Al-Thunayan, 2014; Ashour, 2020; Dalakas & Melancon, 2012; Hickman & Ward, 2007) and with OBL towards sponsors of a rival club in specific (e.g., Amani, 2019; Dessart et al., 2015; Kumar & Nayak, 2019; Olson, 2018; Popp et al., 2016; Ramírez et al., 2019; Xiabing et al., 2015).

Finally, findings show that BCI has a stronger positive effect on OBL among posters than lurkers in OBCs. To the author's knowledge, the present research is one of the first studies to investigate the moderating role of type of participation between BCI and OBL. However, this study is an extension of previous research that examined the moderating role of type of participation in OBCs in general (e.g., Bigne et al., 2020; Dessart and Veloutsou, 2021; Dijkmans et al., 2015) and with brand loyalty in OBCs specifically (e.g., Dessart et al., 2015; Haverila et al., 2020; Kumar & Nayak, 2019; Olson, 2018; Shang et al., 2006; Xiabing et al., 2015).

### **Theoretical Contributions**

This study contributes to the literature on fan engagement behavior by looking at the effect of sport fanaticism on posting and lurking engagement behavior. As a result, this is the first study for using reasoned action in understanding the influence of sport fanaticism on posting and lurking engagement behavior in the online clubs' communities in Egypt. This study revealed that sport fanaticism is more influential on posting engagement behavior than lurking engagement behavior. The current study additionally contributes to the body of knowledge on BCI and OBL in the sport field by providing theoretical contributions. First, this study adds to the theories of reasoned action and social identity by suggesting that OBL is affected by BCI that clubs might generate. This study revealed strong evidence for a link between BCI and OBL. Besides, the study is the first to determine the moderating role of the sport fanaticism between BCI and OBL. The nature, direction, and strength of this relationship were investigated as one of the gaps that this research seeks to address. Moreover, incidents of violence around sporting events frequently result in potential financial and image harm to sport teams including reduced match and yearly ticket revenue, as well as consequences such as financial penalties and even competition exclusion (Toder-Alon et al., 2019). The link between BCI and OBL is not dependent on sport fanaticism, according to this study. This finding reveals the myth that rising fanaticism on social media would raise the degree of OBL. Accordingly; clubs must consider the ethical character in information posts provided by the club in a way that minimizes the negative impacts of sport fanaticism. Finally, this study also added to the UGT by suggesting that OBCs' behavior is affected by brand community identification that clubs might generate. So, compared to prior studies, this study is the first to investigate the moderating role of type of participation between BCI and OBL in the online clubs' communities in Egypt. According to the results, BCI has a greater beneficial effect on OBL among posters than lurkers in OBCs. As a result, the present research contributes to the body of knowledge, by generalizing and validating the role of type of participation as a mediator in this association, which was largely established and investigated in Arab countries. Moreover, this study is applied to sport clubs; in this regard, sport clubs prefer positive loyalty more than OBL, where OBL often leads to political instability and insecurity of societies (Budi & Widyaningsih, 2021).



## Practical Contributions

Several findings in the area of sport are presented in this study for managers and governments. To begin with, club administrations must realize that the active participation of fans in the virtual community of the club, whether active or passive participants, is related to sport fanaticism. However, sport fanaticism is more influential on posting engagement behavior than lurking engagement behavior in the club's virtual community. This result confirmed that the managers of sport clubs should look for reasons other than football fanaticism that will help the active participation of fans of the club's page on Facebook. This will be clearly shown in the next recommendations.

Second, the research findings highlighted that fans' loyalty to a club's brand can be strengthened by building a strong brand identity. Social identity theory supports this finding in examining social media interactions and fans' reactive behavior during sport competitions (Mudrick et al., 2016). The need of investing in BCI to develop OBL should be recognized by top management of sport teams. In OBCs, clubs should openly connect with their supporters and take their participation into account. The clubs should highlight their success through the content created by the club through its Facebook page, considering that the club's successes are ones for all fans, from their perspective. As a result, to encourage fans to remain loyal, club administrations should utilize social media to build a strong brand identity.

Third, the study emphasized that BCI and OBL have a significant link that is not dependent on sport fanaticism. Therefore, considering the harmful and good effects of anti-clubs groups on social networking sites, as well as the ever-increasing volume of clubs communities' fans, club managers should be conscious of this issue. Besides, anti-brand activity on the website must be monitored by teams to obtain information that could be used for the club's image. Moreover, anti-club interaction frequently contains information about a competitor's shortcomings, so clubs should be aware of this and carry out necessary enhancements and modifications; as such, they may then transform co-destructive activity into advantages. Finally, policymakers must enact legislation that criminalizes clubs that use their Facebook page to promote sport fanaticism.

Finally, as long as posters and lurkers have an influential role in the relationship between BCI and OBL, similar attention should be paid to participants' classification as "lurkers" and "posters fans." The theory of reasoned action explains this result, which is that a user's behavior is governed by their intentions to do the activity, which are generated through the two items of their attitude and their subjective norms (Song et al., 2021). Because of the interactive effect resulting from the current study findings concerning the type of participation with BCI in improving OBL, the club administrations, as well as according to the finding of this study that showed that in OBCs, BCI has a higher positive influence on OBL among posts than lurkers, the club administrations should be interested in active participation in the club community on the club's official page on Facebook. For example, the top management of clubs in OBCs should lower the restrictions upon clubs' early message/post screening, and reduce the pace of removal of content submitted by fans that are not deemed beneficial by community top management in pursuit of personal values and interests. Finally, club administrations should encourage followers to actively participate on the club's page by rewarding the active member who speaks positively about the club and its products, such as an honorary club membership grant if their participation exceeds a certain number, or a grant of free tickets for club matches, or giving them the club's uniform for free.

## LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This work has limitations that bring up new research avenues. This study is focused on football clubs' communities, so the findings may or may not apply to another kind of sport. Fans of other kinds of sport, such as handball or basketball, might be needed to test the hypotheses. Moreover, future

studies should examine the results' consistency across the socio-demographic categories that are both theoretically and practically important (e.g. income level, ethnicity, age, gender, educational level). Besides, this research would yield valuable insights into sport customization and marketing; age, monthly income, and gender, for example, may all moderate between BCI and OBL. Finally, a type of non-probability sampling was relied on in this research, which is convenience sampling. For future research, it is recommended that probability sampling should be used in testing the current model so that the results can be generalized.

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