Chapter 2
Understanding Consumer Fandom: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT
The interest in consumer fandom has been strong in the last two decades and different perspectives have been proposed to examine the issue. However, the current literature only offers limited insight into what consumer fandom means and what the main antecedents and consequences of consumer fandom are. To fill the gap, the aim of this chapter is to integrate various perspectives and theoretical bases on formulating consumer fandom and to present an integrated conceptual framework of the antecedents and consequences of consumer fandom. Grounded on social identity theory, the conceptual framework proposed in this chapter identifies two self-related antecedents: self-identify and self-discovery, and three social-related antecedents: social integration, social enhancement, and subjective norms. In addition, purchase and repurchase intention, loyalty, and word of mouth are highlighted as three consequences of consumer fandom. Level of engagement is identified as the moderator between consumer fandom and its consequences.

INTRODUCTION
Research on consumer fandom is burgeoning, and yet the understanding of its antecedents and consequences remains rather unclear. This chapter defines consumer fandom as subcultures, groups, and/or communities of like-minded consumer, revolving around a unifying interest or object. Fragmented findings exist in the literature that discourage application of the knowledge in practice. In addition, the literature lacks a unified theoretical foundation on the antecedents and consequences of consumer fandom. This significantly undermines the future research efforts aimed at enhancing the understanding of consumer fandom.
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fandom. Prior studies have investigated identification of fans in sports fandom (Chung et al., 2008; de Groot and Robinson, 2008; Jenkins, 2014; Melnick and Wamm, 2004; Miller and Benkwitz, 2016; Seregina and Schouten, 2016), fandom and team/brand/virtual communities (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Brodie et al., 2013; Dholakia and Bagozzi, 2004; Dholakia et al., 2004; Dionisio et al., 2008; Deluca, 2018; Hook et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2008; Madupu and Cooley, 2010; Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001; Muniz and Schau, 2005; Munnukka et al., 2015; Mzoughi et al., 2010), participation in physically active leisure (Beaton et al., 2009), consumer fanati-
cism (Chung et al., 2008; Thorne and Bruner, 2006; Thorne, 2011), Sports fan segmentation (Doyle et
al., 2013; Funk and James, 2001; Gwinner and Swanson, 2003; Hunt et al., 1999; Mahony et al., 2000;
Moutinho et al., 2007; Pu and James, 2017; Tapp and Clowes, 2002; Wann and Branscombe, 1990,
1993), and loyalty in an era of digital music fandom (Obiegbu et al., 2019). After decades of research,
however, an integrative conceptual framework of the underlying antecedents and outcomes of consumer
fandom is still lacking (Thorne and Bruner, 2006).

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a conceptual framework of antecedents and consequences of
fandom by integrating the extant literature on fan classification and fan evolving process. Specifically, the
conceptual framework identifies self-identify, self-discovery, social integration, social enhancement, and
subjective norms as five antecedents of consumer fandom, as well as purchase and repurchase intention,
loyalty, and word of mouth as three consequences. Level of engagement is identified as the moderator
between consumer fandom and consequences. This chapter contributes to the existing literature in sev-
eral ways. First, the proposed framework will help reduce the ambiguity and confusion in the literature
and serve as the basis on stimulating further research on the antecedents and consequences of consumer
fandom. Second, the theoretical framework encourages scale development of many constructs included
in this framework. Third, the framework can be applied to study a variety of consumer fandom contexts.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. First, the definitions of fan and fandom will be discussed,
followed by a summary of theoretical models and theory of fandom. Next, based on the extant literature
on fandom studies, a conceptual framework of the antecedents and consequences of fandom will be
proposed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a conclusion and future research directions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fan and Fandom

Fan describes a person who has a special relationship with the object of their affection, particularly when
the intensity of involvement is high (Obiegbu et al., 2019). The difference between a fan and a follower
seems to depend on the degree of passion, engagement, and attachment. For example, in the domain of
sport fandom, Wann et al. (2001) propose a two-category classification: sport fans and sport spectators.
A key difference between the two groups is that sport fans are “authentically” interested in, and follow,
a sport, athlete or team while spectators might well watch an event in person, or through various media
outlets, without having a specific “interest” in it (Miller and Benkwitz, 2016).

There is no consensus on the definition of and dimensions of fandom. Table 1 provides some defini-
tions of fandom in the literature. According to Thorne and Bruner (2006), fandom refers to a subculture
of like-minded people. In sports management, “fandom” has described the social structure that allows
individuals to be a part of the sport without participating in the game (Branscombe et al., 1991; King,