

CONSUMER MISBEHAVIOR: THE DARK SIDE OF BRAND LOYALTY

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ABSTRACT

This study intended to explore potential negative behaviors of highly identified sport consumers as well as to identify the causal mechanism or mediator by which high identification/loyalty may result in such negative responses from consumers. A scale development process was used to develop a new mediating construct for the fan identification literature, the Importance of Winning Index (or IWIN). Structural equations modeling was used to analyze the surveys. The IWIN construct represents a new and distinct construct from fan identification. Additionally, IWIN mediates the relationship between fan identification and negative outcome behaviors, thus serving as an explanatory mechanism of when fan identification can produce negative behaviors (in this study schadenfreude, or wishing ill/harm on rivals). The study raises important ethical and social responsibility issues with broader implications suggesting that sports organizations need to promote strong identification among their fans in a responsible manner.

References Available on Request.