Brand love in sport marketing: proposition of a relational model of emotional and affective attachments for the fan membership programs

[1]**Plínio Rafael Reis Monteiro**
[2]**Pâmela de Souza Dias**
[3]**Luiz Carlos Carvalho**

Abstract

Objective: The present study aims to identify how loyalty programs of the Socio Fans type, act as fosters of stronger emotional and affective ties between fans and their teams, from the point of view of the concepts of value, brand love, satisfaction and loyalty.

Method/approach: A descriptive quantitative research was carried out from an online questionnaire that addressed the constructs of the research problem. The sample was statistically treated using multivariate techniques, with emphasis on exploratory factorial analysis and the modeling of structural equations.

Main Results: The data indicated that the fans who perceive more benefits in the program are more satisfied with their experience and thus tend to participate more actively in various activities associated with the team.

Theoretical contributions: Among the various managerial measures adopted recently in teams national, we have the growing professionalism and the tendency to treat the team as a brand, seeking to increase the loyalty of its fans. In this sense, the study contributes by showing that a higher perceived value determines the growth of the intention to acquire or associate with the PST and the satisfaction with the experience positively impacts the positive communication about the program.

Relevance/Originality: The study brought contributions to academics and managers about the benefits of offering relationship programs in the context of football. It is also characterized as relevant research for Sports Marketing, presenting significant information for academics of the sports field.

Keywords: Brand love; Sport marketing; Fan membership programs; Customer value

[1] Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais – UFMG, Minas Gerais, (Brasil). https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5626-2945 E-mail: < preisufmg@gmail.com>

[2] Universidade de São Paulo – USP, São Paulo, (Brasil). https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5762-7766 E-mail: pandjoca@yahoo.com.br

[3] Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais – UFMG, Minas Gerais, (Brasil). https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5626-2945 E-mail: < luiz.bh@gmail.com>

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1 Introduction

Sports marketing growth boosts a new business model, that seeks to expand public's interests, proper environments to generate incomes and sponsorships, financially favoring the clubs (Langoni, 2013, p. 42).

Among the many sports marketing possibilities to work in Brazil, we highlight the ones related with football culture. Its popularity is notorious and it is the country's most popular sport, in terms of public range and high publicities possibilities. The feeling of love and passion towards a team is one of the things that bring together the clubs and their supporters. Therefore, brand love is a theme that sports consumers behavior studies explore a lot, especially in the football environment (Santana & Sobrinho, 2010).

Comparing with conventional fields using incomes segmentation demographic varieties, such as place, gender and age, supporters' commitment level with their clubs is an outstanding factor that turns marketing actions more effective to reach their target audience (Fleury et al., 2016, p. 46). Espartel, Müller Neto and Pompiani (2009) say that the teams and their supporters' relationship could be even more intense if the management looked up some things more closely, like the stadiums lack of security and comfort.

Among the many ways to attract the public and obtain new income sources, we highlight the club's official fan membership program (FMPs). They offer many benefits, such as tickets discounts, family members' inclusion and access to exclusive areas, in exchange for a monthly fee (Pereira, 2014, p. 23).

Fan membership programs models have potential to reduce the Brazilian's football clubs' financial problems. The ticket boots incomes are uncertain, because one cannot guaranty that the team will play well all season (Cardoso & Silveira, 2014). Therefore, this influences the supporters' presence in the matches and allowed a less volatile income, duo to more willing to go the games, FMPs monthly incomes, buying partners services and official club items.

It is crystal clear the supporter's role as the club's essential resource. As they are considered the sports main consumers, they are highly value to the sports industry. Therefore, the management might be alert to the market's tendencies, like new attractions and Medias, since they influence the

supporters when they create a changeable and competitive environment (Rein, Kotler & Shields, 2009, p.39).

Building relationships between the teams and their supporters requires independents social relations and the clubs products and services, like the Fan membership program (FMP). In sport marketing, the demand's development is generally linked with matches results and the supporter's passion for their teams (Reale, 2011).

As a result, proposing models that identify the supporters' involvement with their teams is necessary. Good examples of reliable and wildly used scales are the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) adaptation, proposed by Wann and Branscombe (1993) and Soccer Fanatism fan Scale proposed by Wachelke et al. (2008). These scales differ the supporters' level of commitment in identifications mark, but the EFTF also includes the fanatics (Wachelke et al. 2008).

In that perspective, this research intends to identify the Official Fan Membership Programs' effects in building affective ties with their supporters.

2 Theorethical background

In this section, we describe the literature's main concepts regarding this research and propose the development of a new research model.

2.1 Sports Marketing and Fan membership programs

Sports are business excellent publicity, because they attract from supporters and athletes until brands and media. Consequently, Sports marketing is very effective way to bring together public and organizations and also increases the sports club's incomes (Lois, 2013). Big investments in the 2014 Football World Cup, as stadiums buildings and reforms, security, public transports, public lighting and cities cleaning, brought more visibility to the national football (Azevedo, 2013, p. 138), highlighting sports marketing importance now a days.

The relationship with their supporters is essential, because the teams personal meaning is positively associated with the brand sponsors. Therefore, bigger number of supporters means bigger brands visibility (Zucco et al., 2015, p. 151).

"Consumer behavior" is a concept related with an individual or a group's attitudes that fulfill their needs through products and services. In football, family and friends influence buying behaviors, because they go to the matches with the supporters (Flecha, 2015).

Sports consumers are the ones who go to sports events and supporter's behavior is a growing theme. Expensive tickets, sports events costs, selling mass games and big media cover brought attention to supporter's studies, their motivations and behaviors during the games (Flecha, 2015).

Recently, teams and football management organizations have been renewing practices to avoid supporters boycott, corruption and stadiums violence. Associated with a good management, they encourage Brazilians football market investments (Pozzi, 1998, p. 28). Sponsorship is the main investment in sports marketing (Zucco et al., 2015). However, other actions bring closer the teams and their sponsors, highlighting the Fan membership programs.

This program is considered a kind of loyalty program that offers all kinds of rewards for public efforts relationship with the organizations (Costa et al., 2014). In sports marketing, the actors are the teams, their supporters and other stakeholders, like power, public, society, investors and sponsors.

Generally, loyalty programs were born in flying companies as miles programs. Duo to their success, they soon were spread to other areas, such as financial and agriculture services. Programs like that intends to create a long-term bonding with their target audience that brings middle and long terms rewards (Rocha, Toledo & Almeida, 2008).

Besides football, basketball, rugby and baseball also implemented loyalty programs to increase their clubs revenues (Azevedo, 2013, p. 71). Furthermore, they grow the bonding with the team, increasing not only their revenues but also the brands presence in their official members' daily life.

In football, fan membership programs are an innovative model. Aware of their great success among European clubs, the national teams realized their potential. That strategy softens the ticket

boots revenues dependency, since the supporter's presence is unreliable and depends of the team's success. Only the fanatics (supporters parcel) goes frequently to the stadium.

In conclusion, the clubs that have fan membership programs may get a constant and significantly revenue increase, since they create stronger bonds with their spectators (Cardoso & Silveira, 2014, p. 21 e 22). Besides, FMPs offers other benefits, like shopping clubs and discounts programs. Therefore, clubs and their supporters become even closer together duo to other benefits beyond football.

Gaspar's studies (et al., 2014) present five national teams Fan membership programs models. Many package deals offer vantages like discounts, buying tickets in advance (including by the internet) and point accumulation to be exchanged. Therefore, the FMPs are one of the many national sports marketing professionalization signs.

2.2   Hypothesis and research model

As it was mentioned before, football clubs seek a higher involvement with their supporters through marketing tools, like loyalty programs. One of the article main topic is that Fan membership programs may a cause an income increase, through direct (members incomes) or indirect ways (improving the clubs and their supporters relationship).

European teams FMPs' success, which inspired our national teams, makes this premise stronger (Pereira, 2014, p. 23), since they increase the supporters' involvement. In order to achieve the goals "outside the field", understanding the relationship with the supporters, their behaviors and attitudes, is essential.

Supporters have a relationship with their teams' trough many ways, like attending the matches, buying products and becoming an official member. A loyal supporter has an affective and emotional attachment with one team. These feelings cannot be measured under a cost-benefits perspective, typically from social exchange, since they usually support the team even in a low faze (Espartel, Müller Neto & Pompiane 2009).

Consequently, brand love concept is defined as the costumer emotional attachment with a brand, product or place and suits this research. Consumers' behavior researchers believe that loving

a brand represents an intense emotional attachment with their "loving objects" (anything but a person), such as brands, products and place (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

Loving a brand is a stronger feeling than liking and it is related to the way brands build our individual identity (Ahuvia, 2005). Like an interpersonal affair, brand love means have stronger feelings and reactions toward it, as passion, jealousy, fury and scare. So, we realize that supporters develop an identity inseparable from their teams. As greater their attachments get, greater emotional reactions are expected (Santanna, 2009).

According to Santanna (2010), brand love is influenced by the team's performance in a certain scenario. This means that better the club's performance, bigger the love. A good and predictable performance might reassure the brand love in a long term; meanwhile we must keep in mind that naturally attachments are stronger and more stable than the team's performance. Indeed, brand love is stronger, because it is more stimulated by internal factors than external and variable factors (Sarkar, 2011).

The market offers the consumers many choices. Therefore, turning their customers happy becomes a great business concern. In 1950, this has become a very important accepted and used marketing concept (Czepiel & Rosenberg, 1997). Day (1982, p. 113) points out that satisfaction is not "a kind of attitude", in spite of what other researchers think. Felling satisfied or not is a different response from the brand related and behavior ones.

In the supporters context, it is suitable the "performance happiness" concept, meaning that the fulfilling expectations feeling gained by supporters cumulative experiences with the teams results in a certain amount of time (Santanna, 2009). This topic sustains the following hypotheses:

H1. There is a linear positive relationship between the brand love and the club's performance satisfaction.

Brand love will not only influence the performance's perception, but also will determine and expand the benefits perception coming from other resources related to the club. Clubs as Barcelona, Benfica and Real Madrid are Europe FMPs success practical examples. That clubs uses their supporters passion to offer many services that materialize such passion (Martins, 2016).

In Brazil, FMPs has become a reality, even though later, since only in the last few years the clubs realized its potential to increase their revenues and improve their marketing management

(Martins, 2016, p. 12). Sport Club Internacional were the first Brazilian club to consider and implement business supporters focus measures and therefore were the first one to create in 2002 an fan membership programs in Brazil (Avancini et al., 2010).

Marketing uses the perceptive value concept to build new value proposals. Perceptive value is a comparison between the consumers sacrifices (or costs) and the offers benefits. Sacrifice corresponds to all the consumers' efforts during a service or good evaluation, choice and uses options. In addition, benefits correspond to the problems results or solutions (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996).

Perceptive value brings an affective dimension, emotional value, which is the users affective states or feelings waken offer capability (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991). Brand love represents a strong emotional attachment with their "loving objects" (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), correspondingly falling in love with an object influences its perceptive value.

One of the FMPs premises is that teams provide loyalty programs to increase their supporter's loyalty. In that case, the offered "rewards", in a more concrete way, are clubs efforts membership programs benefits. They expect that membership programs feel valued and willing to contribute. Therefore, a supporter that is a loyalty program member believes that FMPs increases ones relationship with the respective club (Costa et al., 2014).

Although, seasonal and fulltime consumers have some similar preferences, there is some differences between them. Identify such preferences might help to take decisions to loyalty more consumers (Tasci, 2017). This enforces the supporters' desires identification and understanding necessity.

Having in mind the perceptive value concept and how functional, symbolic and emotional benefits impact it, we expect that more affective bonding supporters realize a better Team's Fan membership programs cost-benefit relationship. Briefly, we can now propose a second hypothesis:

H2. There is a linear positive relationship between the brand love and the Fan membership program's perceptive value.

Satisfaction might be comprehended under two different lights: specific satisfaction and loaded satisfaction (Boulding et al., 1993). Specific satisfaction is a unique, instable and

changeable over time transaction. It is a short-term meeting. Loaded satisfaction happens through the long-term individual and organization interaction (Rossi & Slogon, 1998). Regarding these concepts, this study approaches relationship satisfaction (loaded satisfaction) and performance satisfaction (specific satisfaction).

Performance satisfaction and relationship satisfaction were developed with different goals. One does not exclude the other; on the contrary, one complements the other (Olsen & Johnson, 2003, p. 194). Madrigal (1995) studied sports supporters and suggested that their satisfaction is related with instantaneous events experiences. He also believes that satisfaction judgment is important to supporters' maintenance. Loaded satisfaction is more stable and it is kept in a medium term, even though the problems, like titles lack, discomfort and stadiums insecurity.

In conclusion, teams currently performance specific satisfaction in competitions helps build a relationship satisfaction (loaded), even though the second one is more stable determines supporters other explicit behavior intentions. This leads to our third hypotheses.

H3. There is a linear positive relationship between the clubs performance satisfaction and the supporters' relationship satisfaction with the team.

As it was mentioned before, relationship satisfaction depends of a teams loaded experiences process, which at least partially depends of recently competitions performances. On the other hand, buying experience is formed by other components that lead to a satisfactory experience. Perceptive value is presented as an experience satisfaction determinant in loaded perspective models (Ribeiro et al., 2008). Perspective value is determined by all the benefits and income costs in a transaction. This study proposes that Fan membership programs benefits might be a value equation essential part, even for the supporters that are not part of the program. For that reason, we expect an FMP best value evaluation reflects in an experience bigger satisfaction, as we propose in the hypotheses below:

H4. There is a linear positive relationship between the Fan membership programs perspective value and the team's performance satisfaction.

Espartel, Müller Neto e Pompiane (2009) analyzed the football supporters loaded feelings and experiences related with their teams focusing in determinant loyalty conditions. The study checked that as long as the supporters' long-term expectations are fulfilled, they get closer to the

team. It is well known that satisfaction is a loyalty determinant in many knowledge fields (Filho et al., 2010; Fornell, Johnson & Anderson, 1996).

Satisfaction is an important costumer's loyalty process factor. Therefore, managers should put an effort to offer better products and services, to perpetuate the organization good image avoiding consumers' regrets. Satisfaction's user development influences rebuying and consequently loyalty (Wahab et al., 2016).

According to Oliver (1997, p.34), loyalty is "rebuy deep commitment...causing one to buy many times the same brand, or a group of brands, ignoring behaviors changes influences and marketing efforts". In that case, loyalty is traditional financial transaction, as it is expected in Fan membership programs renew signature.

Loyalty can be also considered as an acquiring service steady way, like other brand love studies (Filho et al., 2010). FMP loyalty means renewing signature (for Official Members) or sings the program (for nonmembers). In addition, the satisfaction comes from the teams loaded experience and not from the program. Therefore, FMP cost-benefits evaluation is related to the desire to keep renew or sign this service. All things considered, we present the following hypotheses:

H5. There is a linear positive relationship between the relationship satisfaction and the Fan membership programs loyalty.

H6. There is a linear positive relationship between the perceptive value and the Fan membership programs loyalty.

In sports zone, loyalty is not only linked with a product or service acquired. On the contrary, often this loyalty may show up in different ways, not only financially. Santana (2009) names this behavior loyalty and it is present when we watch the matches (stadium and television), keep track of the team's news and wear the team's colors and uniform. Some of them are related with financial transactions, such as watch the games in closed television channels (Pay Per View) and buy teams licensed products. Many Fan membership programs offer benefits to increase their behavior loyalty, through discounts packages and buy tickets in advance or more comfortable.

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In Silva's study (et al., 2013), with Atlético and Cruzeiro's supporters, we noticed that consumers loyalty is meaningful to professional football clubs' official products field and it contributes for management context. There was 30% official products sales increase when both teams had a good championship performance, in other words, when specific and loaded satisfaction is higher. Thus, we can point out the following hypotheses:

H7. There is a linear positive relationship between the relationship satisfaction and the teams' behavior loyalty.

H8. There is a linear positive relationship between the satisfaction and the teams' performance behavior loyalty.

H9. There is a linear positive relationship between the perceptive value and the teams' behavior loyalty.

Another health relationship with the team natural consequence is the supporter's wiliness to say nice things about it (Espartel, Müller Neto & Pompiane 2009). This is very important, because word of mouth communication strategies have low costs, fast delivery (internet, for example) and less costumer resistance (Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2009, p. 90).

This communication is called Electronic Word of Mouth when it happens in the virtual environment (Phelps et al., 2004). It is a little explored opportunity by Brazilian clubs that can strength fans exchange information and consequently known their desires and conquer new supporters. Claro and Bortoluzzo (2015)'s studies defined that "gossip agents" are any costumer who realizes in other consumers a products reference source.

Sports managers must promote fellowship and supporter's interaction through social Medias. Sports consumers tend to use social Medias to get sports information, which allows information access and exchange with other people. Such supporters' involvement influences behavior intention and satisfaction (Phonthanukitithaworn & Sellitto, 2017).

As positive communication (word to mouth) is a consequence of the teams' experience and of cost-benefits relationship offers suitable, we propose the last two hypotheses:

H10. There is a linear positive relationship between the relationship satisfaction and Fan membership programs positive communication.

H11.   There is a linear positive relationship between the perceptive value and Fan membership programs positive communication.
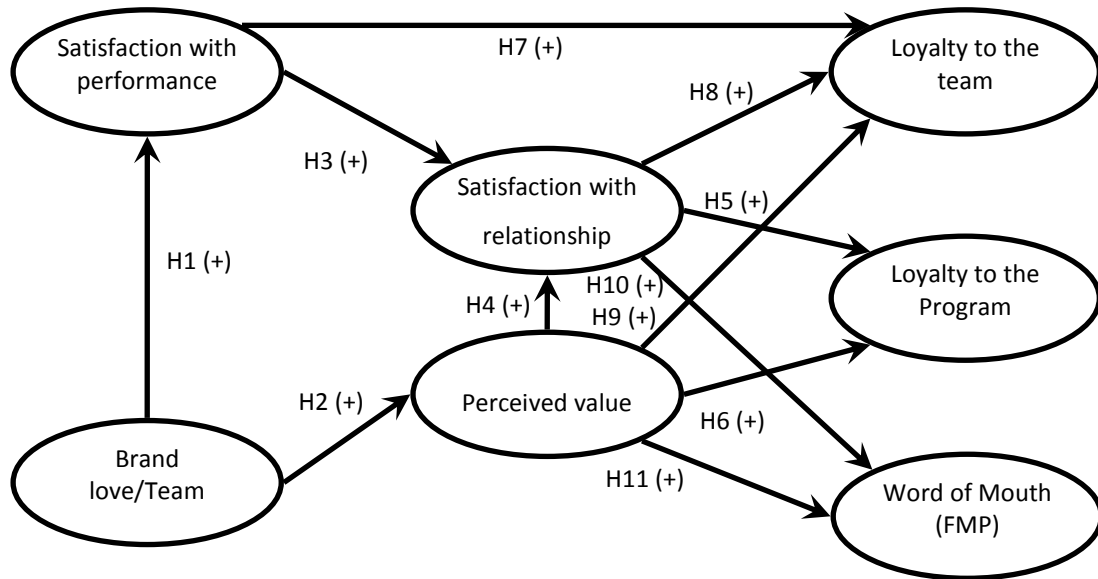
H12.

Figure 1 - Tested model
Source: Designed by the authors

3 Metodology

We did a descriptive quantitative research based in a questionnaire with all the research problems constructs. We created this instrument considering previously treated and tested literature scales, ensuring the results comparability and reassuring the measures validity.

The instrument begins with filtered introductory questions about football involvement and their teams. Filter questions asks if the supporter supports some football team and if ones main team is from Minas Gerais state. Frame 1 briefs this study questionnaire constructs and sources.

Frame 1 - Indicators and constructs

Construct	Question	Source
Perceived value In FMP	v010_VP1 - Compared to the advantages of the FMP, the price charged is relatively fair.	Adapted from Fornell *et al.* (1996), Lopes *et al.* (2009) e Vieira e Slongo (2008)
	v011_VP2 - Compared to the advantages of the FMP, the advantages are acceptable.	
	v012_VP3 – The FMP of my team has an excellent cost-benefit.	
Football Involvement	v013_EF1 -How important is football in your personal life?	Extracted from Santanna (2009)
Knowing FMP	v014_CONH1 - How do you assess your level of prior knowledge about the functioning of your FMP?	Adapted from Vieira e Slongo (2008)
Brand love	v015_AM1 - This is a great team.	Adapted from Santanna (2009)
	v016_AM2 - This team makes me feel very good.	
	v017_AM3 - This team is totally awesome	
	v018_AM4 - I have neutral feelings about this team	
	v019_AM5 - This team makes me very happy	
	v020_AM6 - I love this team	
	v021_AM7 - This team is indifferent to me	
	v022_AM8 - This team is pure fun	
	v023_AM9 - I'm in love with this team	
	v024_AM10 - I'm very attached to this team	
Satisfaction with performance	v025_SD1 - How satisfied are you with the results of recent tournaments and championships achieved by your team?	Adapted from Santanna (2009)
	v026_SD2 - What is your satisfaction with your team compared to the performance of your main rivals/opponents?	
Satisfaction with relationship	v027_SR1 - I am very pleased with my relationship with my team	Extracted from Santanna (2009)
	v028_SR2 - The relationship with my team exceeds my expectations	
	v029_SR3 - The relationship with my team can be described as ideal	
Behavioral loyalty the team	v030_LCT1 - I will try to watch the games of my team in the stadium in the next months	Adapted from Santanna (2009)
	v031_LCT2 - I will watch the matches of my team on television when I will can't go to the stadium	

	v032_LCT3 - I am willing to pay to watch my team's games in closed channels (pay per view)	
	v033_LCT4 - I will follow news of players, coaches, and leaders of my team	
	v034_LCT5 - I intend to purchase licensed products from my team in the coming months	
	v035_LCT6 - I am willing to use the colors and/or the shield of my team in the day to day	
Loyalty to the FMP	v037_LPST1 - I intend to renew/sign the contract with my FMP	Adapted from Fornell *et al.* (1996), Lopes *et al.* (2009) e Vieira e Slongo (2008)
	v038_LPST2 - I would renew/sign the contract with my team's FMP even if the price went up a little	
	v039_LPST3 - I will strive to sign/keep my contract with my FMP	
Word of Mouth (FMP)	v036_WOM1 - I say positive things about the FMP from my team to other people	Adapted from Fornell *et al.* (1996), Lopes *et al.* (2009) e Vieira e Slongo (2008)
	v041_WOM2 - I recommend the FMP from my team to other soccer fans	
	v042_WOM3 - I encourage other fans to join my team's FMP	

Source: research data

We used 11(between 0 and 10) points Likert biphasic scales (Costa, 2011). Most of the questions have agreement shape labels with little variations, depending of the construct, such as intensity use (Very high, high, medium, low or very low) to measure football involvement.

We used convenience samples (non probabilistic) in spreading and applying this research in social Medias, including the main football teams (*América, Atlético* and *Cruzeiro*) football discussion groups, official pages and fanpages. This study public contains *Minas Gerais* main teams' supporters, collected through researchers advertising in social media. We prioritize supporters who lived in *Minas Gerais*. In the end, we collected 152 valid answers in *Google Forms* electronic instrument between 2015 July and October. We analyzed the data using multivariate techniques, specially exploratory factor analyses and structural equation modelling, using *Partial Least Squares* (Hair et al., 2014; Hulland, 1999).

4 Results discussion and analyses

In this section, we will present and analyze these research main results.

4.1   Sample procedures and description

Most of the people who answered were male (59%), between 20 and 40 years old (74%), university education (70%) and singled (63%) or married (30%). The main family income category was between R$2.040 and R$ 10.200, (63%). Regarding Fan membership programs, 13% were their teams' program member, 19% were former members and 68% were never members. Among the official members, the relationship average time were 1, 97 years (s = 1, 20).

4.2   Data preparation preliminary analyses

We elaborate this questionnaire to ensure that there were not any missing values. When we evaluated data normality, we noticed significative deviations in 13 skewness estimates and 10 deviations in kurtosis estimates (using Z test for parameters). Applying Jarque Bera test, we noticed deviations in 66% of the variables (21). The deviations are expressive, especially considering negative kurtosis lower than -1 (17) (Muthen & Kaplan, 1992). We used interquartilic range criteria, (1,5) deviations related with median to classify univariate outliers, since we detected 37 univariate cases. Multivariate outliers were analyzed by Mahalanobis distance reason trough the variable number (32), which only four cases were detected. Outliers were kept and we tested the model with and without these cases to check adherence (Hair, et al., 2010). We found correlations above ±0, 90 limits (maximum correlation = 0,932) and some VIF values marginally above 10 cutoff (Kline, 2005), that might indicate multicollinearity problems, but we also found acceptable convergent and discriminant valid levels (as described after). Therefore, this problem does not damage these study conclusions. Random elected scatter plots do not reveal violations of linearity assumption.

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4.3 Measurement quality analyses

After that, we evaluated the instrument measured quality, using the following footsteps: unidimensionality, reliability/consistency, convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity.

We used exploratory factor analyses (with principal components extraction and direct oblimin rotation) to measured dimensionality, doing it by each scale group at time, since we tried to identify unidimensionality consistency measures, according to this study scales (Netemeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003). Besides, the sample size prevents factorial analyses tests with all the indicators.

On the brand love constructor, the following indicators were erased to ensure a unidimensionality consistency solution: v018_AM4 (I do not like nor dislike this team), v021_AM7 (I am indifferent towards this team) and v022_AM8 (This team is the best). The other ones presented one-dimensional scales in all cases, so they did not have to be excluded. Besides, we analyzed KMO measure and explained variance, whose values were above limits suggested in literature (Hair, J. F. et al., 2010).

On the next step, we evaluated the construct validity beginning with convergent and discriminant validity using Fornell e Larcker's framework (1981). For the convergent validity, we checked the factor weights significance analyzing if the t values were above 2,58 threshold (Bagozzi, Yi & Phillips, 1991). Such a criteria were fulfilled by all items with 1% of significance, (the lowest t value were 9,69). And for the discriminant validity, we compared the square correlations comparison with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measure constructors, where a shared variety between constructors and their indicators (MVE) above the correlation square between constructors, which means discriminant validity favorable evidence (Netemeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003). These criteria were used in all pared constructors analyzed. Regarding trusting parameters, we analyzed Alpha de Cronbach (AC), Composite Reliability (CR) (cutoff 0,70) and AVE (cutoff 0,50). They revealed model adherence in all cases (HAIR et al., 2010). Table 1 contains this assessment resume. Diagonal values represent construct Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Above diagonal values represent factors correlations. Below diagonal values represent squared correlations.

Table 1 – Correlations, validity and reliability measures

DIM	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Brand love	1	*0,87*	0,60	0,50	0,82	0,63	0,69	0,41
Word of Mouth (WOM)	2	0,36	*0,91*	0,84	0,69	0,45	0,58	0,56
Loyalty to the Program	3	0,25	0,71	*0,93*	0,67	0,46	0,50	0,47
Loyalty to the team	4	0,67	0,48	0,45	*0,73*	0,58	0,69	0,44
Satisfaction with performance	5	0,40	0,20	0,21	0,34	*0,96*	0,68	0,28
Satisfaction with relationship	6	0,47	0,34	0,25	0,47	0,46	*0,87*	0,44
Perceived value	7	0,17	0,32	0,22	0,19	0,08	0,20	*0,87*
AVE		0,87	0,91	0,93	0,73	0,96	0,87	0,87
CR		0,98	0,97	0,97	0,94	0,98	0,95	0,95
ALPHA		0,98	0,95	0,96	0,92	0,96	0,92	0,93

Source: research data

At last, we did nomological validity evaluation, testing models' structures relations. Figure 2 shows the results. Values inside the ellipse represent explained constructors' variance percentage (R^2). Arrows path values represent factorial loads or structures standards weights. They all are meaningful ($p < 0,01$).
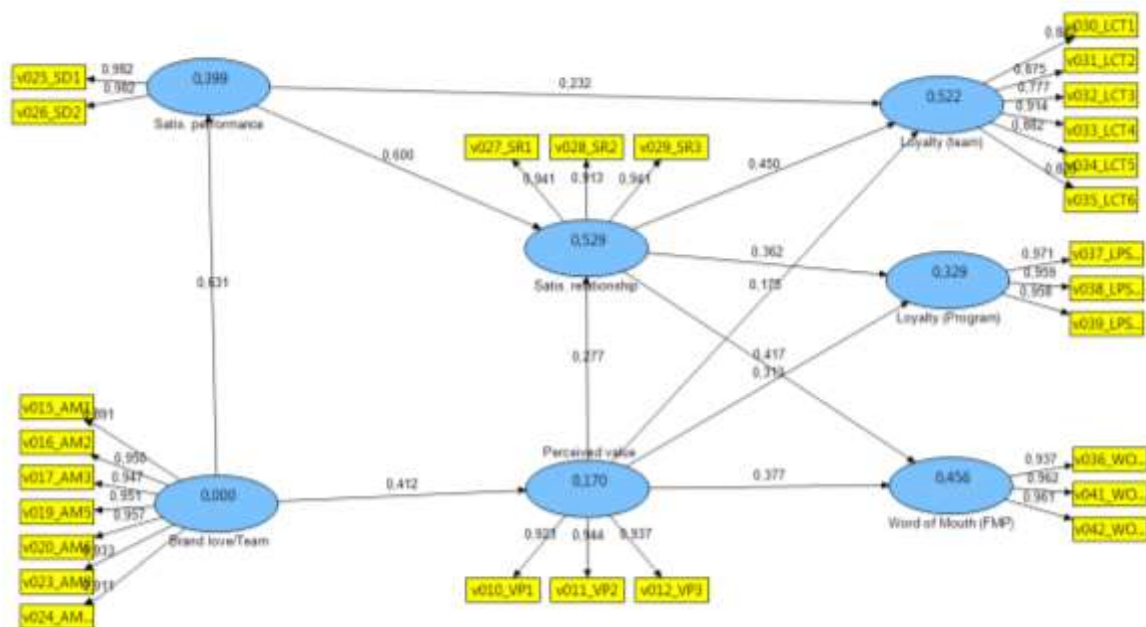

Figure 2 – Structural model for the research
Source: research data

One may notice that 39, 9% of performance satisfaction variance can be explained by Brand love. Expressive positive weight (β=0,631) points out that affective related tends to judge the team's performance in a more positive way. It also explained Fan membership programs perceptive value (R2=0,170), but less accurately (β=0,412). In spite of brand love being capable of create a better Fan membership programs benefits and cost-benefits perception, other personal factors and other programs facilities might explain a suitable cost-benefits relationship.

Perceptive value and performance satisfaction explained the team's relationship satisfaction (R2=0,529). Performance satisfaction seems to influence more the constructor (β=0,600) then the Fan membership programs perceptive value (β=0,277). However, the Membership Program approaches their supporters, even when they are not members.

Fan membership programs loyalty is explained by performance satisfaction (□=0,362) and Fan membership programs perceptive value (β=0,313). The difference between both program loyalty constructors' weights shows that the intention of renewing or signing FMP is much more influenced by perceptive value. Therefore, it is important to design an attracted package deal to increase the supporters signatures. In addition, these tends to improve teams and supporters relationship (more performance satisfaction and more behavior loyalty), even when supporters are not official members.

We observed a similar result regarding word to mouth constructor: Positive communications potential and Fan membership programs recommendation, where performance satisfaction (β=0,417) and Fan membership programs perceptive value (β=0,377) influences were similar. Both weights were bigger for word to mouth, explaining better (R2=0,456). This means that a positive perceptive value and good relationship with the team have a spreading program communication impact, stronger then signing or renewing the program intention, despite personal factors (like revenues availability) or context (members numbers limit) that might limit behavior loyalty, but not word to mouth. Table 2 briefs these results, including tested hypotheses evaluation.

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Table 2 – Research models Structures weights

Independent	Dependent	Weight	Error	T value	Hypothesis	Conclusion
Brand Love	Sat. (performance) R²= 0,399	0,640	0,063	10,076	1	Supported
Brand Love	Perceived Value R²= 0,170	0,417	0,071	5,767	2	Supported
Sat. (performance)	Sat. (relationship) R²= 0,529	0,600	0,069	8,736	3	Supported
Perceived Value		0,279	0,070	3,937	4	Supported
Sat. (relationship)	Loyalty to the Program R²= 0,329	0,361	0,069	5,221	5	Supported
Perceived Value		0,321	0,082	3,838	6	Supported
Sat. (performance)	Loyalty to the team R²= 0,522	0,234	0,108	2,145	7	Supported
Sat. (relationship)		0,451	0,101	4,446	8	Supported
Perceived Value		0,179	0,063	2,780	9	Supported
Sat. (relationship)	Word of mouth (program) R²=0,456	0,416	0,073	5,728	10	Supported
Perceived Value		0,382	0,073	5,148	11	Supported

Source: research data

5 Conclusion

In the last few years, sports marketing is in the spotlight, duo to hosting great events like 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Rio Olympic games. Besides, we noticed a bigger sports professional management concern, especially in football because of it's recently slump.

So, many football teams clear and efficiency management appeared, among them those that bring together clubs and their supporters and creates new incomes. Fan membership programs is one of the most popular practices in that direction. These loyalty programs are very important to the national teams' prosperity. Our study results show that Fan membership programs increase supporter's satisfaction and highlights how they guarantee more stable incomes for the teams.

Teams' passion, or brand love, is teams' satisfaction positive evaluation foundation, being more punctual and competitions performances related or being long-term loaded experiences. Brand love also determines perceptive value, linked with Official Membership Programs. On the other hand, Fan membership programs brings a long-term satisfaction, even when the supporters

are not members. Therefore, FMP, besides creating clubs directs incomes, also approaches the supporters, because relationship satisfaction explains behavior loyalty.

Data shows that supporters who are aware of FMP benefits are more pleased with their experience and therefore are more active teams members, like watching games, buying official products among other things. A bigger perceptive value defines becoming a member intention. The hypotheses supports the fact that experience satisfaction impacts in a positive way Fan membership programs positive communication, showing a spreading effect in long term performance and marketing as way to earn new revenues.

This study contributes to academics and managers about the vantages to offer football relationship programs. In addition, it is an interesting sport marketing research, because in spite of been developed in business; it presents meaningful information to sports researchers.

The lower explanation factor of Fan membership programs perceptive value is an important limitation. It might point out that the program costs and benefits more concrete must be researched to evaluate which benefits may create a bigger perceptive value and so increase loyalty and satisfaction.

The fact that the answers majority comes from non-members supporters is another limitation. To understand these, we used ANOVA on the constructors' average, comparing exploratory natures. We detected average differences between currently and ex members and those who were never members. In all the constructors, currently and ex members had superior averages ($p < 0,05$) then the others.

FMP's bigger explaining constructors' power is an additional analyses. One example occurs in the group of those who were never members, where FMP perceptive value effect over "teams loyalty" is not meaningful ($b = 0,10$; $p = 0,13$). On the other group, the relationship is strong and meaningful ($b = 0,29$; $p < 0,01$), with 58% constructor explanation and strong direct and indirect perceptive value effects (against 48% among no-members). Such evidences reinforces that FMP is effective to create relationship attachments between the club and their supporters, especially those who value the program benefits and have strong bonds with their teams.

It is suggested for future research to consider more teams from the national and international scenario, because these findings requires greater expansion in order to establish generalizations

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about the hypotheses, taking into account specially cultural differences that may affect the relationships proposed.

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