



Why football fans want to wear the  
jersey – Multidimensional team  
identification motivating replica jersey  
consumption

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<b>Title of thesis:</b> Why football fans want to wear the jersey – Multidimensional team identification motivating replica jersey consumption.	
<b>Abstract:</b>  <p>The replica football jersey is an iconic symbol of fandom in the world's most watched sport. The market for sports team merchandise is a multi-billion dollar industry, prompting inquiry into why sports fans feel compelled to consume the merchandise of their respective teams. Grounded in social identity theory, team identification, a fan's psychological connection to a sports team, has proven strongly predictive of fan behaviour in various regards. Current research shows that fans who are highly identified with their teams are prone to consume more merchandise, it however remains unknown which psychological features of identification translate into consumer behaviour. To address this gap, this thesis employs a multidimensional perspective of team identification to disentangle the established connection between team identification and team merchandise consumption.</p> <p>This thesis explores the gap based on two core questions guiding the research process. First, how can team identification be conceptualized as multidimensional to disaggregate the construct's established connection to fans' motivation to consume team merchandise? And second, to what extent are the individual dimensions of team identification associated with fans' motivation to purchase replica football jerseys, and which dimensions show the strongest relationships? To answer these research questions a conceptual model is created, rooted in social identity theory and a multidimensional conceptualization of team identification, operationalizing motivation to consume through purchase intent. To test the model and answer the latter research question, a quantitative survey of self-identified football fans (n = 124) is conducted. Data collected was subsequently subjected to multiple regression analysis to measure the associations of individual facets of identification with purchase intent of replica football jerseys and test the model as a whole.</p> <p>The results of the empirical study indicate that team identification is significantly associated with a fan's motivation to consume replica jerseys, but not all facets of identification are associated with the outcome equally. Notably, the extent to which a fan's identity is interconnected with the team showed a significant positive association with an inclination to consume replica jerseys. Other facets of identification showed weaker, some even negative, but statistically insignificant association with purchase intent. The findings refine the conclusions of previous research that "more identified fans buy more" and provide new implications for both theory and practice in the field of sports merchandise.</p>	
<b>Keywords:</b> Team identification, team merchandise, replica football jerseys, purchase intent, sports merchandise consumption, social identity theory.	

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<b>Sammandrag:</b>  <p>Replica-fotbollströjor är bland de mest ikoniska symbolerna för supporterskap i världens mest bevakade sport. Marknaden för licensierade supporterprodukter är en mångmiljardindustri vilket väcker frågor om varför supportrar känner behovet att konsumera supporterprodukter från deras respektive lag. Med grunden i social identitetsteori har lagidentifikation, en supporters psykologiska koppling till ett idrottslag, visat sig vara starkt förutsägande av supportrars beteende i ett flertal avseenden. Aktuell forskning visar att supportrar som besitter en hög grad av identifikation med deras lag är mer benägna att konsumera supporterprodukter från laget, dock är det fortfarande okänt vilka psykologiska aspekter av identifikation som har direkta band till konsumentbeteende. För att undersöka detta gap, använder sig denna avhandling av ett flerdimensionellt perspektiv av lagidentifikation för att vidare utreda det etablerade sambandet mellan lagidentifikation och konsumtion av supporterprodukter.</p> <p>Denna avhandling undersöker forskningsgapet utgående från två nyckelfrågor som vägleder forskningsprocessen. Först, hur kan lagidentifikation konceptualiseras som flerdimensionellt för att vidare utforska konstruktionens etablerade koppling till supportrars motivation att konsumera supporterprodukter? Och som andra, till vilken utsträckning visar de individuella dimensionerna av lagidentifikation kopplingar till en supporters motivation att konsumera supporterprodukter, och vilka dimensioner visar de starkaste kopplingarna? För att besvara dessa forskningsfrågor skapas en konceptuell modell, förankrad i social identitetsteori och en flerdimensionell konceptualisering av lagidentifikation som operationaliserar motivationen att konsumera genom köpintention. För att testa modellen och besvara avhandlingens andra forskningsfråga utförs en kvantitativ undersökning av självidentifierade fotbollssupportrar (n = 124). En multipel regressionsanalys utförs sedan med insamlade data för att mäta sambanden mellan de individuella aspekterna av lagidentifikation och köpintention och för att testa modellen i sin helhet.</p> <p>Resultaten av den empiriska studien påvisar att lagidentifikation har ett signifikant samband med en supporters motivation att konsumera replica-fotbollströjor, men även att inte alla aspekter av identifikation visar lika nivåer av samband till utfallet. Framför allt visar resultaten att graden till vilken en supporters identitet är integrerad med laget har ett starkt, statistiskt signifikant, samband till en motivation att konsumera replica-tröjor. Andra aspekter av identifikation visade sig ha svagare, vissa även negativa, men statistiskt icke-signifikanta samband med köpintention. Utfallet av studien bygger vidare på slutsatsen av tidigare forskning “mer identifierade supportrar köper mer” och bidrar med nya implikationer för både teori och praktik inom området för supporterprodukter.</p>	
<b>Nyckelord:</b> Lagidentifikation, supporterprodukter, replica-fotbollströjor, konsumtion av supporterprodukter, social identitetsteori.	

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

To be a sports fan means being part of something bigger than oneself. Participating in any sport whether as an athlete or as a spectator offers an opportunity to connect with others (Jacobson, 2003). For spectators who are very invested in their viewing of a particular team, often referred to as supporters or fans, sports fandom involves a connection to the team itself and a collective identity of fandom with other fans who follow the same team (Yoshida et al., 2014). Through a shared identity of fandom, fans access shared rituals, symbols, and narratives which may become salient to their identities. For many fans, their identity as sports fan is not confined to exist only between whistle blows and on matchdays, it is instead a persistent connection, present in the individuals' everyday life (Lock & Heere, 2017).

Research focused on sports fandom has conceptualized the connection between an individual, a team, and its fanbase through a construct by the name of team identification. Whilst the term has many definitions a simple definition would be that the term refers to a sports fan's psychological connection to a sports team (Wann, 1997 cited by Wann et al., 1999a, p.1296). Researchers focused on team identification have mainly concerned themselves with both exploring how team identification may be quantified and with how it may be associated with different kinds of fan behaviour (Lock & Heere, 2017). Many have developed psychometric measurement tools for the construct, incorporating various theories as background viewing it as either one scale of intensity or something made up of multiple subdimensions (Lock & Heere, 2017). And, after validated measurement tools became available, the uptake into consumer behaviour research started. Much research examining team identification in relation to fans spending money as a way of expressing their fandom through team-related products or attending games, has found that a fan's level of team identification is highly predictive of their consumption behaviour (Kwon et al., 2022). Due to the predictive capacity of team identification, a large body of research that concerns itself with understanding the influence of team identification on how fans engage in consumption has sprung up.

A particularly interesting field for consumer behaviour research in sports is the one of licensed team merchandise. The market for team merchandise is large, valued at 26.47 billion USD in 2018 (Statista, 2018). In the world's most watched sport football (soccer) (Statista, 2024), we can find one of the most iconic pieces of sports team merchandise, the replica football jersey. It was originally meant only to be worn by players on the field to distinguish between the two teams playing, but it later took on a new role in the mid-1970s when teams started selling copies of these shirts as merchandise, naming them replica jerseys (Butler, D & Butler, R, 2021). Following this change, fans could wear the same uniform as the players they were

cheering on, and over time the replica football jersey became a symbol of football fandom and a commercial success.

When viewed through the lens of team identification, merchandise such as the replica football jersey plays an interesting role. The replica jersey can act as an outward display of the fan's identity and connection to the team, a piece of clothing that allows self-expression and self-definition (Hofmann, 2016). The case of the replica football jersey illustrates how team identification may be present through tangible objects such as merchandise in an outwardly expressive form.

### **1.1 Research problem**

Theodorakis et al. (2016) claim that there are two distinct approaches applied in team identification research, namely the unidimensional and multidimensional approaches. The unidimensional approach was the first to be developed, measuring team identification on a single scale of intensity by combining survey items to assess “how much” a fan identifies with a team. Due to its brevity and ease of implementation, allowing for an easy interpretable measurement of team identification, the unidimensional approach is favoured by the majority of research (Lock & Heere, 2017).

A large body of research is presently available examining the connection between unidimensional team identification and consumption of merchandise. Kwon et al. (2022) synthesized the findings of 9 different studies examining the correlation between the strength of team identification and team merchandise consumption, concluding that the strength of a fans' level of identification with a team is a medium to large predictor of whether they purchase merchandise or not. Other studies report similar conclusions, see e.g. Kwon and Armstrong (2002), or Kwon and Kwak, (2014). The findings from this field of research indicate that a fans' single scale intensity of identification with a sports team is associated with team merchandise purchasing behaviour.

Theodorakis et al. (2016) note that the unidimensional approach is indeed dominant in team identification research. However, they further note that the unidimensional approach to team identification has been challenged by Dimmock et al. (2005) as well as Heere and James (2007a) who developed multidimensional scales for measurement. These authors argued that a fan's team identification is multifaceted, best viewed as a result of subdimensions rather than a singular scale of intensity (Dimmock et al., 2005; Heere & James, 2007a). And so, rather than producing a single score of intensity the multidimensional approach shows a fan's

identification with a team through subdimensions, reflecting distinct facets of identification which in combination show to what extent the fan identifies and what underlying components make up their identification (Dimmock et al., 2005; Heere & James, 2007a). This distinction is important as while many fans may appear equally identified with a team, they may be so due to different reasons, some may identify strongly because of components such as pride, while others identification may rest on factors such as emotional interdependence. While unidimensional scales would treat these fans as equivalent, the multidimensional approach reveals nuances in their psychological connection to a sports team.

With the multidimensional approach's capacity to distinguish between the underlying components of team identification, it provides an opportunity to examine if these components have varying associations with consumer behaviour. As research by Dimmock et al., (2005) and Heere & James (2007a) proves that the connection between fan and team may be viewed as multifaceted, it would be reasonable to expect that so too is the link between team identification and consumer behaviour.

And so, while unidimensional research has found that the overall strength of identification predicts consumption of merchandise (Kwon & Armstrong, 2002; Kwon et al., 2022, and Kwon & Kwak, 2014), it remains unknown whether the dimensions proposed in multidimensional frameworks vary in association with consumer behaviour. This thesis initiates an exploration of this gap by isolating all proposed dimensions of a multidimensional team identification framework and subsequently testing to which extent they are associated with a motivation to consume team merchandise, providing a more granular understanding of the established connection between identification and consumption in current literature.

	Unidimensional Team Identification	Multidimensional Team Identification
Consumer behavior application	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Schurr et al. (1988)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Decrop et al. (2002)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Kwon &amp; Armstrong (2002)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Matsuoka et al. (2003)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Kwon &amp; Kwak (2014)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Rocha &amp; Fleury (2017)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Kwon et al. (2022)</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">This thesis</div>
Theoretical development	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Wann &amp; Branscombe (1993)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Mahony et al. (2000)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Trail et al. (2003)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Theodorakis et al. (2016)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Tsigilis et al. (2022)</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Dimmock et al. (2005)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Heere &amp; James (2007a)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Heere &amp; James (2007b)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Heere et al. (2011)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Lock et al. (2014)</div>

**Figure 1 - Matrix illustrating the research gap**

A more granular understanding of which parts of team identification motivate consumer behaviour also aligns with current industry concerns. The presently available research on Unidimensional team identification's relation to merchandise consumption reveals only one target group: highly identified fans. "The mass market is dead" said Kotler (1989, p. 47), nearly 36 years ago. And this also seems to be the case with the sports industry. Genius Sports (2024) surveyed marketers aiming to engage sports fans and their study showed that 43% of marketers aiming to engage sports fans stated that more targeted advertising would enhance their campaigns and 30% of marketers said that personalizing their messaging is the biggest challenge in engaging sports fans. These statistics underscore the importance of gathering and leveraging detailed insights into sports fans' consumer behaviour to better target marketing efforts based on what's known about them as consumers. By examining which dimensions of team identification emerge associated with a motivation to consume team merchandise, the findings of this thesis lay the basis for more targeted advertising efforts to sell team merchandise such as replica football jerseys.

And so, to contribute to research on team identification as a multidimensional construct and its role in consumer behaviour, this thesis will measure how proposed dimensions of the construct associate with fans' intention to purchase replica football jerseys. To both conceptualize and measure team identification, Heere and James' (2007a) Team\*ID scale is employed. The Team\*ID scale conceptualizes team identification as a result of identifying with the team in the following dimensions: Public Evaluation, Private Evaluation, Interconnection of Self, Sense of Interdependence, Behavioural Involvement, and Cognitive Awareness. Prior research has established a clear association between team identification and consumption of team merchandise but treats the construct as uniform. This thesis steps beyond the notion of one-dimensionality to assess whether and which subdimensions emerge associated with an inclination to consume team merchandise.

## **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to develop a conceptual model utilizing a multidimensional view of team identification which provides a more granular understanding of the established connection between a fans' team identification and motivation to purchase team merchandise. Second, the study conducted measures the association between each proposed dimension of team identification and motivation to purchase merchandise, operationalized through purchase intent, to measure the extent to which each dimension accounts for the established connection between team identification and motivation to purchase team merchandise.

Research questions:

1. How can team identification be conceptualized as multidimensional to disaggregate the construct's established connection to fans' motivation to consume team merchandise?
2. To what extent are the individual dimensions of team identification associated with fans' motivation to purchase replica football jerseys, and which dimensions show the strongest relationships?

By measuring the association of each subdimension of team identification together with motivation to consume replica jerseys this thesis' results and implications are of interest for both theory and practice. From the theoretical perspective, this thesis extends research on team identification and consumer behaviour by moving beyond a unidimensional view, addressing a gap in literature on the dimensions of identification that are associated with a motivation to consume. From the perspective of practice, the results are relevant to both marketers and club managers as insights can inform segmentation and targeting strategies based on how fans connect with the team to design campaigns which appeal to the specific facets of identification found to be strongly associated with a motivation to consume.

### **1.3 Delimitations**

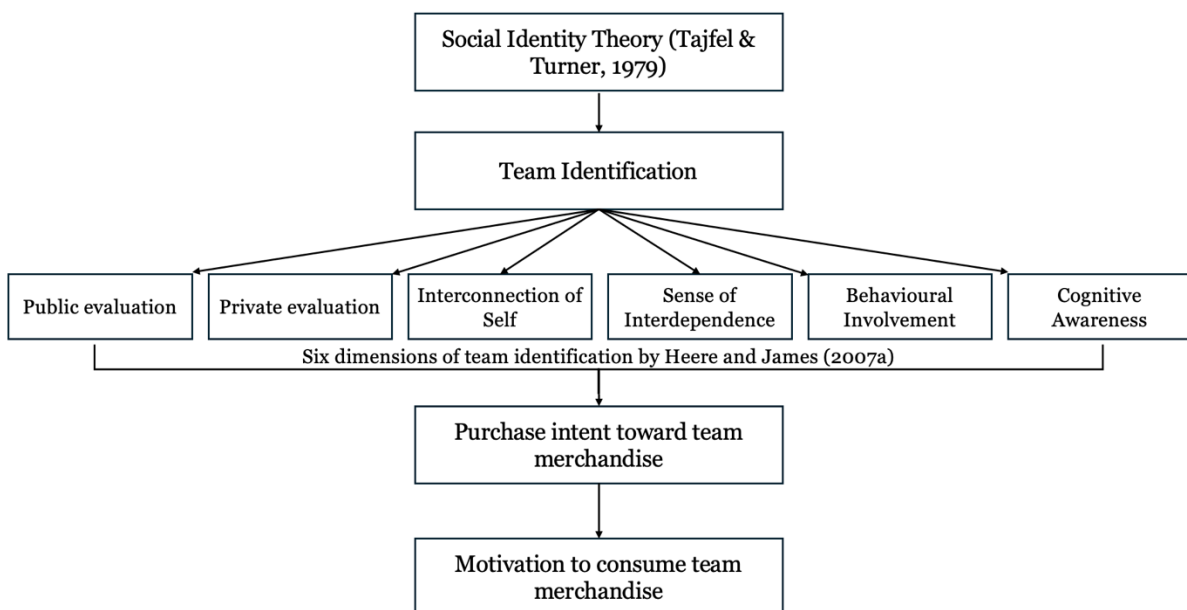
The theoretical scope of this thesis is within the framework of social identity, with a focus on team identification as defined and measured by Heere and James (2007a). This thesis does not incorporate other theoretical perspectives on fan identity such as identity theory, attachment theory, or fan typology. Complementary theories such as Belk (1988), Wicklund and Gollwitzer (2013), and Cialdini et al. (1976) are discussed to inform, but not integrated into or tested in, the theoretical model. Additionally, they are used as theoretical support for the hypotheses developed and as grounds for discussion of the results. Furthermore, purchase intent toward replica football jerseys, reflecting motivation to engage in purchasing behaviour is the sole dependent variable for the model. Thus, other types of behaviour such as match attendance or viewing habits are excluded.

Concerning empirical delimitations, the scope is similarly narrowed to ensure the focus of the study. Participant selection is confined to self-identified football club fans. Respondents must affirm that they consider themselves fans of a particular football team, as determined by

screening questions in the survey. “Spectators” i.e. individuals who may participate in watching football games without attachment to a team are intentionally excluded as the aim of the study is not to test whether non-identified individuals are motivated to purchase. The fan sample is not restricted to supporters of any single club, but are all recruited in Finland and must currently reside in Finland. Limiting the geographical context to Finland provides a consistent cultural and market context for the study while still allowing diversity in team affiliation. Participants must be over the age of 18 for both ethical reasons and to ensure that the data for results is collected from individuals with independent authority over the purchase decision, which may not be the case with individuals below the age of 18. Finally, the study omits other potential purchase motivators unrelated to social identity such as the price of jerseys, design, or identification with individual players.

## 2 TEAM IDENTIFICATION AND TEAM MERCHANDISE CONSUMPTION

This chapter of the thesis presents the theoretical framework and the conceptual model created for the study for measuring how multidimensional team identification may be associated with a motivation to consume team merchandise. The section starts by presenting the conceptual model in Figure 2. The chapter further discusses team identification as a construct, the foundational theory supporting team identification in the model, and how the construct is defined in this thesis. Following the introduction to team identification, the chapter will discuss uni- and multidimensional measurement and application of team identification and present the multidimensional measurement scale chosen for the model. Additionally, purchase intent will be discussed as an outcome of the model to present the choice for it as the dependent variable in the study, its practical and theoretical implications, and how it will be assessed in the study. Furthermore, the theoretical framework will discuss the symbolic role of team merchandise, how identity may link to team merchandise consumption, and how identity may be, and is, used in the marketing of merchandise such as replica football jerseys. Finally, before a summary of the theoretical framework is provided the set hypotheses will be presented and motivated.



**Figure 2 - The conceptual model.**

## **2.1 Defining team identification**

Lock & Heere (2017, p. 1) argue that team identification research is experiencing an “Identity crisis”, despite a substantial body of research on team identification, the definitions and theoretical approaches used when discussing, measuring, and applying the term lack consistency in research. So, to delimit how team identification is addressed, applied, and defined in this thesis, their theoretical analysis will be utilized to define the scope of the construct in the context of this thesis.

Sports consumer research on team identification is mainly reliant on two separate approaches to the concept: the identity theory approach and the social identity approach (Lock & Heere, 2017). Lock and Heere (2017) further argue that the social identity approach is to be used when examining how shared identity between group members is of interest i.e. identification with a football team and its broader community. An identity theory approach is instead recommended when examining how an individual’s identity as a fan, measures in comparison to other personal identities or when examining how fans may reaffirm their identities as fans through their behaviour i.e. analysis of “fan identification”, contra team identification (Lock and Heere, 2017). This thesis aims to explore the impact of belonging to a group (team), and how that belonging associates with a motivation to purchase team merchandise, aligning with the social identity approach.

The two main theories upon which the social identity approach is reliant are social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), of which the former is prominent in research (Lock & Heere, 2017), including the work of Heere and James (2007a). Considering this information, this thesis examines team identification through a social identity approach to align with the purpose of examining how group membership shapes purchasing intentions. Within the social identity approach, an SIT approach is adapted based on it being more commonly utilized in team identification research where it has also laid the basis for multidimensional team identification measurement.

To then define team identification for this study, it must be in alignment with Heere and James (2007a), as their scale of measurement is implemented in the study. They in turn adapted Tajfel’s (1978, p. 63) definition of social identity to define team identification as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group [team], together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.” (Heere & James, 2007a, p.56). This definition is used as it captures team

identification's roots in social identity theory, and the construct is viewed as social identity in a sports setting.

## **2.2 Measuring and applying team identification**

As was mentioned, there are many distinctions to be made when applying team identification in research. One of the core distinctions in the context of this paper is the one between one- and multidimensional approaches to measuring and applying team identification. Whilst there are advocates for both approaches the choice of approach is highly dependent on the nature of the research at hand. Both uni- and multidimensional approaches have their distinct benefits and drawbacks and so, this section of the paper will present both approaches to discuss the choice of a multidimensional approach and the chosen multidimensional scale – the Team\*ID scale for measurement of multidimensional team identification by Heere and James (2007a).

### **2.2.1 Unidimensional approach to team identification theory**

Initially, team identification was approached and measured as a one-dimensional construct. The perhaps most widely applied tool for measurement applied in studies has been the SSIS developed by Wann and Branscombe (1993). The original SSIS consists of 7 items. These items are used to determine the level of team identification and include assessment of e.g. how important it is for the respondent that the team in question is performing well or how strongly the respondent sees themselves as a fan of the team in question (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The responses to each question are then grouped for a measurement of the strength of an individual's extent of identification with a sports team.

Later, other unidimensional scales have also been developed and utilized in research (Theodorakis et al., 2016). These one-dimensional scales are all designed to measure the level of identification a fan has with a team to then determine whether it is high or low. This view allows for easy measurement but foremost it allows team identification to be applied straightforwardly as a variable in studies accounting for the possibility of team identification influencing behaviour either as one of, or the sole antecedent, of that behaviour. As a result of this there is a substantial amount of research looking for a correlation between higher team identification and sports fan behaviour such as attending games (Matsuoka et al., 2003; Schurr et al., 1988; Rocha & Fleury, 2017), socio-psychological well-being (Wann, 2006; Wann et al., 2011; Wann & Pierce, 2005), acts of aggression towards other teams or fanbases (Wann

et al., 2003; Toder-Alon et al., 2019; Wann et al., 1999b) or the consumption of team licensed merchandise (Kwon et al., 2022, Kwon & Armstrong, 2002, Kwon & Kwak, 2014).

The popularity of one-dimensional approaches to team identification has built a substantial research body on how it may be an antecedent of behaviour occurring amongst sports fans, this research has however not concerned itself with team identification as more than a single scale of intensity, disregarding that the connection between fan and team may be more nuanced meaning that the behavioural outcomes observed may not be as uniform across highly identified fans as expected. As the purpose of the coming study is to explore the nuances of the connection between fan and team and its dimensional effect on replica jersey consumption, the current body of unidimensional research serves as an indicator that the connection between identification and behaviour is present which motivates a deeper exploration of this connection.

### **2.2.2 Multidimensional approach to team identification theory**

Despite the popularity of team identification in sports fan research, the construct is less frequently the sole focal point of research. When discussed on its own in theory development papers the concept is a complex one, with some authors suggesting that there is more to the concept than a single scale of intensity. Development and utilization of multidimensional measurement scales in contrast to unidimensional ones allows for a more granular exploration of why fans identify through a set of proposed dimensions. Furthermore, a multidimensional conceptualization of team identification allows for an exploration of which parts of the connection between fan and team associate with motivations toward certain behaviour which is foundational for the model created for this thesis.

These multidimensional team identification scales have been developed as some researchers believe that the approach would be better aligned with fundamental theory in social psychology – SIT (Theodorakis et al., 2016). The first multidimensional scale for measurement was developed by Dimmock et al. (2005). Based on the definition of social identity by Tajfel (1978, as cited in Dimmock et al., 2005, p. 75) “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” the authors identified the three dimensions of social identity, leading them to develop an initial three-dimensional scale. The initial dimensions used, based on Tajfel’s definition of social identity, in the study were: cognitive (knowledge of group membership), affective (emotional attachment to the group), and evaluative (to which extent membership of a group is valued) (Dimmock et al., 2005). In

the study conducted utilizing these three dimensions, the authors found that the cognitive and affective dimensions were so closely intertwined that they may be combined into one cognitive-affective dimension. Contrastingly, the evaluative dimension was split into two, one on personal evaluations (how a fan personally evaluates their relationship to a team) and one on perceived other evaluations (how a fan believes that others perceive their team). Whilst their research made a significant contribution to team identification theory aligning the concept more closely with SIT, the framework lacks practical applications and uptake in research.

Two years after the publication of Dimmock et al.'s paper (2005), Heere and James (2007a) developed their multidimensional scale for assessing team identification. Their research too based their scale on SIT but argued that the scale developed by Dimmock et al. (2005) lacked an examination of the validity of their proposed dimensions and that the combination of cognitive and affective dimensions into one raise concern about discriminant validity (Heere & James, 2007a). Whilst Dimmock et. al.'s research made significant progress toward the multidimensionality of team identification Heere & James (2007a) argue that the construct is an even more nuanced one and that the measurement of the construct requires the application of further dimensions to capture the full connection between fan and team. The result of Heere and James' (2007a) research was a six-dimensional scale to measure team identification, which was named the Team\*ID scale.

Whilst neither of these multidimensional scales has been widely applied, the Team\*ID scale has shown greater promise in research currently available in its ability to capture the multidimensional nature of team identification. Heere and James (2007b) were the first to apply the Team\*ID scale to examine how identification with external groups influences team identification. The study found that the scale had a good model fit, but it was noted that it might need further refinement to improve the discriminant validity of the dimensions (Heere & James, 2007b). Team\*ID has also been implemented in a study assessing team identification with a college sports team in the USA, and its associated community groups (university, city, and state) (Heere et al., 2011). The study found that Team\*ID worked well across all four groups and that identification with the university, city, and state could predict identification with the team itself. Additionally, merchandise purchasing was used as an outcome of the study, indicating a strong correlation between multidimensional team identification as a whole and self-reported consumption of merchandise (Heere et al., 2011). Furthermore, Lock et al. (2014) later also applied the Team\*ID scale in a longitudinal study to test the structural stability of the scale over time. The findings of the study suggested that a

slightly refined model of five dimensions, with a “sense of interdependence” removed better captured team identification (Lock et al., 2014).

In comparison to the model by Dimmock et al. (2005), Team\*ID is more comprehensive and argued to be more theoretically robust (Heere & James, 2007a), although comparisons between multidimensional scales are yet to be done. Due to Team\*ID’s more comprehensive nature, with double the number of dimensions in comparison to the scale of Dimmock et al. (2005), Team\*ID allows for even more granular insight into what dimensions of team identification are associated with purchase intention, allowing for a more granular answer to the question of what dimensions of multidimensional team identification motivate purchasing of team merchandise. And so, the Team\*ID scale of multidimensional team identification measurement was chosen for the study in this thesis. In the following section, the scale and its dimensions are going to be discussed in further detail.

### **2.2.3 The Team\*ID scale**

To understand how multidimensional team identification links to purchasing intentions of replica football jerseys this thesis has adopted the Team\*ID scale by Heere and James (2007a). The scale was created to better understand the components that are present in shaping identification with a sports team, this indirectly also offers the possibility for more explicability into what components of team identification shape specific behaviours. The two main theoretical contributors to the background of the scale are SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Ashmore et al.’s (2004) framework on group identification. Implementing social psychology theory, the Team\*ID scale then conceptualized team identification as a multifaceted construct, reflecting that individuals may identify with sports teams in more than a singular way.

Heere and James (2007a) conducted their research in a two-phase research design which involved both an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis arriving at six dimensions of team identification. When viewed together these dimensions reveal how an individual identifies with a sports team, and perhaps even more importantly how there may be differences in how individuals identify with a sports team. The six dimensions identified are as follows:

Public evaluation – referring to a fan’s perception of how the “public” or others perceive the sports team that they support. The dimension was assessed based on a Likert-scale response to questions such as “Overall, my college football team is viewed positively by others.” (Heere & James, 2007a, p. 73).

Private evaluation – reflects how the fans themselves perceive the value of belonging to the team and its broader community. Private evaluation was assessed based on a Likert-scale response to questions such as “In general, I’m glad to be a fan of my college football team” (Heere & James, 2007a, p. 73).

Interconnection of Self – measures to which extent the team is part of the fan’s self-concept or to which extent their identity as fans are “who they are”. The dimension was assessed based on a Likert-scale response to questions such as “Being a fan of my football team is an important reflection of who I am” (Heere & James, 2007a, p. 74).

Sense of Interdependence – reflects an individual’s feeling of a shared fate with the team and its supporters. The dimension was assessed based on a Likert-scale response to questions such as “What happens to my college football team will have an impact on my life” (Heere & James, 2007a, p. 74).

Behavioural Involvement – refers to what extent an individual takes action to express their team identity through their behaviour. Behavioural involvement was assessed based on a Likert-scale response to questions such as “I am actively involved in team-related activities” (Heere & James, 2007a, p. 75).

Cognitive Awareness – relates to how knowledgeable individuals are concerning the team. Cognitive awareness was assessed based on a Likert-scale response to questions such as “I have knowledge of the successes and failures of my college football team” (Heere & James, 2007a, p. 75).

The six-dimensional scale is comprised of 21 items to measure the six outlined dimensions. Heere and James (2007a) concluded that the scale indicated a good model fit, suggesting that the scale was theoretically grounded and empirically employable.

To answer the second research question of the thesis the Team\*ID scale will be utilized by isolating each dimension of the Team\*ID scale and comparing them to a measure of purchase intent of replica football jerseys. The authors themselves never looked at the dimensions in separation, with Dr. Heere noting that this thesis will be the first to do so (B. Heere, personal communication, March 18, 2025). However, without prior studies measuring associations between individual dimensions of the Team\*ID framework and consumer behaviour outcomes, predicting which dimensions, if any, will show unique associations to purchase intent becomes difficult. Hypothesis development is further discussed in section 2.5. In

summary, the Team\*ID scale serves as the independent construct in the model, and its six dimensions will be tested for their correlation to the purchase intent of replica football jerseys.

### **2.3 Purchase intent – The outcome of the model**

To understand and quantify how team identification affects fans' motivations toward purchasing team merchandise, the conceptual model in this thesis employs purchase intention as the outcome. Utilizing purchase intentions allows for exploration between team identification and consumer behaviour without being reliant on observing past behaviour, namely past purchases, allowing for pragmatic measurement in combination with team identification assessment. This chapter will define purchasing intention and discuss its background in research, discuss its practical implications, and finally Spears and Singh's (2004) scale for measurement of purchase intent.

#### **2.3.1 Definition and background of purchase intent**

Purchasing intention is frequently used as an indicator of planned future behaviour in consumer behaviour research (Morwitz et al., 2007), serving as a pragmatic alternative to observing purchasing directly. The construct can be defined as the likelihood that a consumer intends or is willing to purchase a specific product or service in the future (Wu et al., 2011). The conceptualization of the construct owes much to the foundational work of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) who in their Theory of Reasoned Action positioned intention as an immediate predecessor of behaviour. In their work, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p. 16) state that "A person's performance of a specific behaviour is determined by his intention to perform the behaviour", i.e. intention is a direct predictor of voluntary behaviour. Intention toward a behaviour according to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), is made up of both attitude toward the behaviour in question and the subjective norms concerning that behaviour. Later, Ajzen (1991) developed a new framework, the theory of planned Behaviour, which also added perceived behavioural control as an antecedent of intention alongside attitude and subjective norms. Ajzen (1991) however maintained that intention was the central determinant of action. The theoretical foundation laid by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen (1991) positioning intention as central to behaviour, laid the basis for both the measurement of purchase intention and the use of the construct in research on consumer behaviour.

#### **2.3.2 Practical and theoretical implications of employing purchase intent**

While the central aim of this thesis is examining team identification's influence on motivational intent, rather than predicting actual sales, it is relevant to assess what practical

implications purchase intent has and how its use as an outcome for the model aligns with previous research in the field. This section will discuss the gap between intention and actual purchasing behaviour, whether purchasing intent may correlate with actual behaviour, and how the use of purchase intent as an outcome for the model aligns with previous research on team merchandise consumption.

Whilst purchase intent as a driver of actual behaviour is being supported by theory, it is important to recognize that the gap between stated intentions to purchase and actual purchasing is well-documented in consumer behaviour research. This gap can be referred to as the “intention-behaviour gap” (Carrington et al., 2014). To quantify this gap, Sheeran (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of meta-analyses, involving more than 82 000 responses. The study found that purchase intention accounts for 28% of the variance in actual behaviour, highlighting the fact that the construct is informative but not robustly predictive of actual purchasing in many cases. The discrepancy between intention and behaviour in the study can be attributed to two types of respondents: the ones who intend to act but do not follow through (inclined abstainers), and those who act without displaying intention to do so (disinclined actors) (Sheeran, 2002). Therefore, it is important to note that the outcome of purchase intent does not directly predict purchases in most cases, but it does reveal the level of intent and motivation toward the purchase which is of interest in this thesis.

Although the aim of the model is not to predict purchases directly it is worth considering the practical implications of using the construct as an outcome for the model, specifically if purchase intent has any predictive power on actual purchases in the model. As noted, the intention-behaviour gap indicates that purchasing intention is not a robust predictor of actual purchasing. However, it has been proposed by Morwitz et al. (2007) that purchase intent may predict actual purchasing behaviour with good accuracy when certain conditions are met. In the table below the six conditions outlined by Morwitz et al. (2007) are presented and compared to the study to assess how well purchase intent may extend to predict actual consumption of team merchandise among fans through the model.

**Table 1 - Conditions for increasing predictive capacity of purchase intent (Morwitz et al., 2007)**

<b>Condition for predictive accuracy of purchase intention</b>	<b>Study's alignment with the condition.</b>	<b>Fulfilment of condition</b>
1. The product is existing, rather than new.	Team merchandise is well-established as a product category, familiar to most fans.	The condition is deemed to be fulfilled
2. Product is a durable good, rather than non-durable.	Replica jerseys and other merchandise are durable goods.	The condition is deemed to be fulfilled
3. Short time horizon between measurement and behaviour.	The survey asks about the current and upcoming seasons.	The condition is deemed to likely be fulfilled with the time constraint of purchase intention applied.
4. Purchase intention is measured for a specific brand or model, rather than a general category.	Purchase intention is measured for merchandise from a specific brand (team).	The condition is deemed to be fulfilled
5. Purchase intentions are measured as a trial rather than a predictor of actual sales.	Purchase intention serves as an indicator of a fan's motivational will to purchase, aligning with trial-based prediction.	The condition is deemed to be fulfilled.
6. Intentions are collected in comparative rather than monadic format.	A monadic format is applied, and no comparison of alternatives is made which may slightly inflate scores of purchasing intention.	The condition is not met, monadic to team merchandise.

As five of the six criteria are deemed to be met (1-5), with only one criterion (6) not being met, it can be suggested that the model can offer some predictive insight into actual team merchandise consumption based on the conditions outlined by Morwitz et al. (2007), increasing the likelihood of high intent correlating to actual purchases as measured in the coming study. The conditions for improving accuracy sought to be in alignment with help position the study better in terms of practical implications, as industry professionals are likely more interested in effects on actual sales, but the main aim of the model remains to assess intent and how motivated fans are to engage in the purchasing behaviour.

Previously, purchase intent has also been widely used as an outcome to measure the impact of various antecedents on merchandise purchasing in sport consumer research; see e.g. Kwon et al. (2022), Kwon et al. (2007), Lee et al. (2013) and, Ahn et al. (2013). Due to its extensive use in research examining differing drivers' impact on fans' merchandise purchasing behaviour, utilizing it allows for better comparison with the findings of other studies in this area of research which also use purchase intent as an outcome.

To summarise, purchase intent as employed in the model is theoretically grounded and widely accepted as a measure of motivation to engage in purchasing. While the construct is not intended to predict actual purchases, its established role in consumer behaviour research, previous application in sports marketing research, and the study's alignment with the conditions proposed by Morwitz et al. (2007) suggest that its use has both practical and theoretical relevance. This dual relevance supports its use as an outcome for the theoretical model.

### **2.3.3 Measuring purchase intent**

Due to the widespread use of purchase intent in consumer behaviour research the measurement of the construct has become an important topic of discussion. This chapter discusses the measurement of purchase intent, how research has approached it, the chosen measurement scale by Spears and Singh (2004), and how it will be applied in this thesis.

Despite its many applications in research, Spears and Singh (2004) argue that there has been very little consistency in how purchase intent is measured, with many approaches lacking a solid psychometric foundation. Further, they note that purchase intent has often been assessed by single-item, 7-point scales with some studies using more than one item for measurement. Additionally, Spears and Singh (2004) also argue that the wording used within these scales lacks consistency, justification, and validation for the wording. This lack of standardization in measurement raises concerns regarding the psychometric accuracy of the construct (Spears & Singh, 2004). It becomes apparent that the selection of a measurement scale to assess purchase intent is vital to ensure that the model is accurately able to capture purchase intention.

Spears and Singh (2004) themselves aimed to address the concerns raised by developing their 5-item, 7-point semantic differential scale to measure purchase intent. Their scale was developed through a multi-step process that involved gathering 15 items used previously in purchase intent measurement by researchers which were reduced to 11 items through an evaluation of generalizability and compatibility. The 11 remaining items were in turn subjected to an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis across two samples which brought them to their final 5-item scale which asks participants to rate intention using opposing adjectives, including: "Never/definitely, Definitely do not intend to buy/definitely intend, Very low/high purchase interest, Definitely not buy it/definitely buy it, and Probably not/probably buy it" (Spears & Singh, 2004, p. 60). The final scale showed robust psychometric properties and

discriminant validity across items (Spears & Singh, 2004). Given its strong theoretical foundation in purchase intent research and demonstrated reliability the final 5-item scale was deemed a good fit for the study.

To conclude the chapter on purchase intent. Purchase intent as an outcome for the model serves to conceptualize the fan's motivation to engage in purchasing replica football jerseys. Whilst it may not be reliably robustly predictive of actual sales, its background in consumer behaviour research and widespread uptake in sports consumer research support its use to conceptualize motivation. The selected measurement scale by Spears and Singh (2004) further ensures a reliable assessment of how motivated the surveyed fans are to purchase replica jerseys.

## **2.4 Background, consumption, and marketing of team merchandise**

This chapter of the theoretical framework is focused on presenting team merchandise, homing in on the focal point of the thesis, the replica football jersey. To better understand how team merchandise purchase intent is influenced by team identification this chapter is focused on discussing the relevant theory on team merchandise, and replica football jerseys. The chapter will first discuss the symbolic role of merchandise and how apparel is linked to the fan identity, second, the chapter discuss the relevant theory which may help explain why identification translates into purchases and finally the identity-based marketing that is currently present for replica football jerseys to understand how this thesis may contribute to it.

### **2.4.1 The symbolic role of team merchandise for identity**

Sports teams are often identifiable through the colours of the club and associated symbols. These colours and symbols are in turn adopted by fans in their attire and accessories (Schleifer & Tamir, 2023), most commonly through team merchandise. A fan's affiliation with a team is easily recognizable when they are wearing team merchandise, typically featuring team colours and/or symbols. This merchandise, such as the replica football jersey, is central to fan culture. It can both signal belonging to a group but also carry very deep personal meaning for some supporters.

Team merchandise, and the replica football jersey in particular, has evolved. In the past football fans expressed their support and allegiance with homemade signs or scarves. The replica jerseys, examined in this thesis, were rare or limited to children's wear (Stride et al., 2019). Since the late 20th century however the replica jersey has become a "common dress"

for adult fans, dominating the merchandise scene as preferred match-day wear (Stride et al., 2019). The mass wearing of these jerseys, especially during events like match days has a role in uniting strangers into a community, highlighting the role that the replica jersey has in linking the individual to a group identity of the team. For devoted fans, the wearing of team merchandise is not a trivial fashion choice but a ritualistic act to show solidarity with the “fan tribe” (Dionísio et al., 2008). Furthermore, the role of team merchandise is not limited to expressing allegiance to the fan's team, or in the words of SIT the “in-group”, but also to distinguish between the in-group and rival fans or the “out-group” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Decrop et al., 2002). Ultimately, through the lens of group identity, team merchandise is highly important, allowing fans to visually express both belonging to one group and exclusion from others.

In addition to its role in signalling group identity, team merchandise also carries personal meaning for many fans. Qualitative research shows that supporters attach personal meaning to jerseys and other team-related memorabilia that they own, emphasizing connection to family, friends, and fond memories (Apostolopoulou et al., 2012). Team merchandise may evoke memories of attending games with loved ones or recollections of past team successes intertwining the apparel with a fan's personal history (Apostolopoulou et al., 2012). With its link to past experiences in the mind of the fan, the symbolic meaning is not only social, but also deeply personal.

To conclude, team merchandise such as the replica football jersey carries highly symbolic value for both social and personal reasons. The wearing of it strengthens the connection to the in-group of other fans, dissociates the fan from other groups of fans which binds it to social identity. Further, it may be bound to personal identity through the experiences that the fan has had whilst wearing it.

#### **2.4.2 Identity as a driver of consumption**

To understand why team merchandise consumption is linked to team identification several theories may help explain the link. These theories are in this thesis examined as a key to interpreting fan behaviour informing the conceptual model. They are however not tested in the empirical model but present to enlighten why some wish to “wear their identity” through team merchandise, possibly making them more inclined to consume it.

Some highly identified fans may perceive team successes as their own and seek to display their affiliation with the team during times of success. Cialdini et al. (1976) found that people associated with a team would engage in what they described as “basking in reflected glory” or

BIRGing. To BIRG, people would engage in certain behaviours such as wearing team-related apparel following team successes or more frequently discuss the team with the pronoun “we”. BIRGing has also been linked to higher levels of team identification directly by Wann and Branscombe (1990), who found that highly identified fans were more likely to engage in BIRGing. Tying BIRGing into the Team\*ID scale, it could be most centrally associated with identification through a sense of interdependence (if fate is shared so too are successes and they belong to the individual fan and the team) and public evaluation (if the team succeeds, fans would likely believe others deem the team more prestigious making them more likely to BIRG publicly). As BIRGing is an outward display of association during times of success, owning and wearing team merchandise would be a natural way to do so.

Another useful theoretical lens is Belk’s (1988) theory of possessions and the extended self. Belk (1988) suggests that individuals may perceive possessions as a reflection of the identities they perceive as important. If an identity is important to an individual, Belk’s (1988) theory on possessions and the extended self, could suggest that this individual would seek out possessions which they believe reflect that identity. In terms of the Team\*ID scale, high interconnection of self through the lens of “possessions and the extended self” would mean that the fan is more likely to seek out possessions related to the team, such as team merchandise, as they are part of that salient identity.

Wicklund and Gollwitzer’s (2013) theory of symbolic self-completion is another useful lens to interpret why identity would be associated with consumption. Their theory posits that individuals utilize socially recognizable symbols, associated with their identities to “complete” those identities in the eyes of others and for themselves (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 2013). In the context of this thesis, team merchandise could be such a symbol, and assuming this, a way to complete one’s identity as a fan and signal it outward. By owning team merchandise fans may reaffirm their identity as a fan of the team to others, affirming themselves as true fans of a sports team. In Heere and James’ (2007a) Team\*ID scale, this could relate to “compensation mechanisms”. If the fan feels that their identity as a fan is incomplete in some way, e.g. if they are unable to be behaviourally involved, they may wish to complete their identity as a fan by symbolic means, such as purchasing team merchandise. And so, the theory of symbolic self-completion could be an interpretative tool for understanding why fans with low identification in some dimensions still desire team merchandise.

When viewed through these theoretical lenses it becomes apparent that the link between identity, through team identification, and merchandise consumption could occur as the result

of several reasons if interpreted based on the theory discussed. These theories help frame hypotheses and interpret the findings of the empirical study.

### **2.4.3 Identity-based marketing of replica football jerseys**

To comprehend why a better understanding of the association between team identification and merchandise purchasing is useful for marketers in the sports industry, it is important to understand identity-based marketing, its uses, and implications.

Identity-based marketing is reliant on consumers' personal and social identities to create relationships with the brand. Reed et al. (2012) found that when an identity is salient, attention toward products and brands related to this identity is increased, laying the basis for identity-based marketing. For identity-relevant product categories, such as replica football jerseys, consumers may often select or avoid products based on how well they signal their desired affiliation with a group or differentiate them from others who are dissimilar (Berger & Ward, 2010). This occurs because identification with a brand or feeling that the brand is aligned with one's identity, creates a sense of oneness with the brand, driving committed relationships to it (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Studies in this field further suggest that consumer identification with the brand increases desirable outcomes such as brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012; Popp & Woratschek, 2017). To summarize, research within the field of identity-based marketing highlights the potential of utilizing identity for positive outcomes if it is understood and applied correctly to align with the target audience.

Marketers may leverage specific identities in their messaging, making them more resonant with the receiver of the advertisement (Forehand et al., 2002). Oyserman (2009) found that people can be reminded of their social identities. Furthermore, when reminded of their social identities, people are also more likely to act in ways aligned with that identity (Oyserman, 2009). Additionally, personalization and identity-based cues such as references to groups that the consumer belongs to may aid in illustrating that the brand marketed fits who they are, building a stronger connection to the brand (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). And so, in the case of sports merchandise marketing, leveraging the social identity of fans through their team identification becomes a powerful way of making marketing resonate with the fans.

Despite a lack of research on how identity is leveraged specifically in the marketing of sports team merchandise, it is apparent that it is not lost in the marketing of merchandise such as replica football jerseys. Viewing recent announcements of new replica jerseys for the 2024/2025 season it is noticeable that marketers are leveraging group identity in different

forms in the promotions of new jerseys. Examples of this include Chelsea FC's jersey launch titled "We burn blue", tapping into group identity through the symbolism of blue flames to unite fans of the club, Chelsea FC fans, under a shared emotional narrative of commitment to the club (Chelsea FC, 2024). Similarly, Aston Villa's announcement features fans of the club, players and staff as well as famous public figures from the club's native city of Birmingham, such as Ozzy Osbourne, to reinforce local pride and a sense of community, playing on the social identities of supporters (Aston Villa Football Club, 2024). Finally, Newcastle United's "Away day ready!" announcement of their new away jersey depicts fans traveling together, invoking shared rituals and a sense of shared experiences defining the away match-day experience of the supporter base (Newcastle United Football Club, 2024). Viewing announcements of new jersey's such as these, it becomes evident that marketers of these jerseys aim to leverage the social identity of fans to engage them in the purchase of the teams new replica jersey.

It is however also clear that the current identity-based marketing of replica football jerseys leverages the social identity very generally and rarely tailored specifically to different forms of identification, rather to fan-identity at the general level. Perhaps coincidentally, this aligns with what is currently known in research about how team identification and consumption of merchandise are linked – general identification drives consumption. As was mentioned in chapter 1.1 "Research problem", this thesis aims to aid sports marketers with information on which types of identification are key in motivating replica jersey consumption to help marketers better understand how identity could be useful when creating messaging regarding replica football jerseys.

## **2.5 Hypotheses for the study**

This chapter of the theoretical framework will outline the hypotheses set for the upcoming study. Hypotheses are grounded in the results of previous studies which found team identification to be predictive of purchase intent, extended to test the predictive capacity of all six dimensions, part of the Team\*ID framework.

Previous research on team identifications' impact on purchase intent has consistently shown that stronger identification is linked to merchandise spending. In the unidimensional field, where these studies are found, Kwon et al., (2022) found a medium to large effect size between team identification and merchandise purchase intent ( $r = 0.42$ ), in their meta-analysis. Similarly, Heere et al. (2011) measured the effect between multidimensional team identification and self-reported merchandise consumption, reporting that overall identification (all dimensions combined) explained 84% of the variance in self-reported

licensed merchandise spending in their sample of college students ( $\beta = 0.91$   $R^2 = 0.84$ ). To summarize, findings from studies on the predictive capacity of team identification, whether measured as one construct or as a multidimensional whole, show that it positively associates with merchandise consumption. As was mentioned, it however remains untested is the associations between individual dimensions of team identification and purchase intent of team merchandise. Based on previous findings, it is reasonable to expect that as the construct of team identification, no matter if measured one- or multidimensionally, is positively associated with a motivation to consume, that each of its constituent dimensions should also be positively associated with motivation to consume.

Aligning with this logic, the hypotheses developed test each of the six dimensions of the Team\*ID scale (Heere & James, 2007a), utilizing conceptual argumentation on the dimension itself and theory from chapter 2.4.2 as background regarding how the dimension may relate to a motivation to consume replica jerseys.

The first dimension of Team\*ID is public evaluation, reflecting the fan's perception of how outsiders view the fan's association with the team (Heere & James, 2007a). A fan who believes that others respect or admire the team and fans of the team is predicted to be more likely to wish to publicly display their association motivating purchases of football jerseys. Further, if public evaluation is high, a fan would likely wish to associate more publicly which aligns with Cialdini et al.'s (1976) theory on BIRGing. Thus, fans scoring high on public evaluation could be more motivated to purchase the team jersey as a form of status display and group affirmation if outside opinion impacts their view of their belonging to the teams fanbase.

*H1 - Public evaluation is positively associated with purchase intent toward replica jerseys from the fans' team.*

The private evaluation dimension captures a fan's internalized and personal assessment of their team affiliation – essentially, how proud and good they feel about being a supporter (Heere & James, 2007a). A fan scoring high in this dimension is deriving strong personal satisfaction and self-esteem from their team identification. A fan's private evaluation is predicted to be positively associated with a motivation for owning team-related products such as football jerseys. When a supporter attaches strong positive meaning to their fandom of a team it is predicted to increase their motivation to purchase a jersey for personal enjoyment and a reminder of their connection to the team.

*H2 - Private evaluation is positively associated with purchase intent toward replica jerseys from the fans' team.*

Interconnection of self refers to the degree to which a team is integrated into the fan's identity and sense of self (Heere & James, 2007a). Scoring high in this dimension means that being a fan does not only mean following the team, being a fan is part of who the person is. When a team has become deeply ingrained in the fan's self-concept, it is predicted that they are naturally more motivated to purchase the team jersey as an extension of that identity. This connection is informed further by Belk (1988) whose theory posits that goods such as football jerseys may be viewed as extensions of oneself, and so if being a fan is a large part of a fan's self-concept, they are likely to be more motivated to purchase goods such as jerseys as extensions of their identity.

*H3 - Interconnection of Self is positively associated with purchase intent toward replica jerseys from the fans' team.*

The sense of interdependence dimension reflects the fan's feeling of being one with the team and other fans – believing that one's fate is intertwined with the team's outcomes and the fan community (Heere & James, 2007a). When this bond is experienced, fans may be urged to support the team more actively as supporting the team is essentially supporting themselves as the two are intertwined. As purchasing team-licensed merchandise such as a jersey is supporting the club financially (albeit modestly) and the wearing of it signals unity this dimension is believed to be positively associated with purchasing intention toward jerseys. The expected association between this dimension and purchase intent is further informed by Cialdini et al.'s (1976) observations of BIRGing, as fans with a high sense of interdependence are likely to view team victories as personal victories, wishing to display that outward, possibly by wearing team merchandise.

*H4 - Sense of Interdependence is positively associated with purchase intent toward replica jerseys from the fans' team.*

Behavioural involvement reflects to what extent the fan takes action to engage with and support the team (Heere & James, 2007a). Fans who score high in this dimension are already investing both time and effort into their fandom of the team and since they regularly support their fandom through action this dimension is likely to be tied to higher purchasing intent toward jerseys. As Dionísio et al. (2008) argue, ritualistic behaviours such as attending games may involve symbolic acts such as the wearing of jerseys and so the purchasing of one could

be seen as an extension of behavioural involvement prompted by repeated engagement with the team.

*H5 - Behavioural Involvement is positively associated with purchase intent toward replica jerseys from the fans' team.*

The final dimension, cognitive awareness, reflects which extent the fan is knowledgeable about the team (Heere & James, 2007a). Cognitive awareness extends to knowledge of team history, current players, and stats but it may also extend to awareness of new team merchandise which is released. The ways in which this awareness may extend to consumption are twofold. Firstly, cognitively attentive fans may be more likely to both notice and seek out team products as they are likely to be more aware of the latest jersey releases, special edition jerseys, or sales and thus more frequently tempted to purchase. Secondly, constant cognitive engagement may strengthen emotional attachment indirectly, motivating purchases. While knowledge of the team might not directly translate into purchases continuous team-related stimuli through e.g. news and discussions may increase the purchasing motivation of jerseys.

*H6 - Cognitive Awareness is positively associated with purchase intent toward replica jerseys from the fans' team.*

## **2.6 Summary of theoretical framework**

Utilizing social identity theory as basis, this thesis examines team identification's association with fan behaviour. Social identity theory posits that individuals derive parts of their self-concepts from their memberships in groups, or in the realm of sports, fan's identities are defined by their team identification. Team\*ID, the framework chosen in this thesis for a multidimensional conceptualization of team identification, captures that connection across six, interrelated, but distinct dimensions. Namely, public evaluation, private evaluation, interconnection of self, sense of interdependence, behavioural involvement, and cognitive awareness. These dimensions reflect the ways in which team identification may be present in any given sports fan, and together they describe the ways in which fans identify heterogeneously with teams through facets of identification. Utilizing this multidimensional framework allows for a granular understanding rather than a one-dimensional intensity score, accommodating for the expected variation in identification and their effect on consumer behaviour-related outcomes expected in this thesis.

Importantly, this theoretical framework and the conceptual model created helps explain why a strongly identified fan would be inclined to purchase team merchandise. Team merchandise

is framed from an identity-related standpoint. Further, some theory is discussed as useful lenses for interpreting why identification may relate to consuming team merchandise. Belk (1988) argues that an individual's view possessions related to their identity as extensions of that identity, in the context of this thesis team merchandise could be viewed as possessions which are part of the fan's identity. Wicklund and Gollwitzer (2013) discuss how symbols may be used to complete or affirm identities outward, which in the context of this thesis is applied as a way of understanding how team merchandise may help fans "complete" their identities and signal the identity outward. These theoretical perspectives, alongside well-documented phenomena such as BIRGing (Cialdini et al., 1976) help interpret why the hypothesized link between team identification and merchandise consumption that this thesis explores would present.

Given this foundation, this thesis specifically measures how Team\*ID dimensions relate to fans purchase intention for replica football jerseys. Prior research consistently indicates that the stronger the identification, the greater the likelihood of purchase. With this link established a key question remains, given that multidimensional frameworks posit heterogenous identification through dimensions, which dimensions affect how inclined fans are to purchase? By examining each dimension separately in the model this thesis aims to see which facets prove most influential. And so, the theoretical discussion led to a set of hypotheses (H1-H6), each expecting a positive relationship between a dimension and the dependent variable of purchase intent. In combination they operationalize the idea that the more strongly a fan identifies, whether it be through behavioural engagement, cognitive awareness or a strong integration of their identification into their self-concept, the more inclined they are toward the purchase of replica football jerseys.

In summary, the theoretical framework has established the logical link between multidimensional team identification and intent to consume replica jerseys. It provides a rationale for expecting that fans that are highly identified with their teams will show greater motivation to own team merchandise. This foundation informed the development of hypotheses, guiding the transition into the coming empirical study, and prior to that the methodology of the study. The following chapter details how research was conducted, describing research design, measures, data collection and analysis to test these hypothesized relationships, connecting theory to empirical analysis.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

The methods section of this thesis will present and argue for the empirical methods chosen to test the set hypotheses and answer the thesis' second research question. The chapter presents the research strategy, survey design, the measurement scales utilized, sampling and data collection procedure, the data analysis steps conducted in IBM SPSS following data collection and assess the reliability and validity as well as ethical considerations of the study.

#### **3.1 Research strategy**

This study employs a quantitative, deductive, cross-sectional survey design to examine the hypothesized relationships between multidimensional team identification and football jersey purchase intention and answer the second research question of the thesis. According to Saunders et al. (2023), quantitative research emphasizes numerical measurement of variables and statistical analysis, which are well suited for testing this thesis' theory-driven hypotheses. In comparison to a qualitative approach, the quantitative method allows for a larger sample of data to be collected feasibly which facilitates objective analysis of the relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2023; Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Aligned with the collection of quantitative data, a deductive approach is adopted, existing theory and the research model guide the formulation of specific hypotheses, which are in turn tested empirically. Saunders et al. (2023) describe a deductive strategy as beginning with theory, employing structured methods, and aiming to produce findings by verifying predicted relationships. As this study builds on established theory and scales for the measurement of team identification and consumer behaviour, a deductive strategy helps ensure that the study's collection of data and analysis is structured to confirm or refute the associations hypothesised. This contrasts with an inductive approach which would aim to generate new theory from the data; in this thesis theory is already known, informing the hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2023). An abductive approach (a combination of inductive and deductive) was not opted for as the goal is not to refine theory, but rather to test the created propositions.

In terms of research purpose, this study is explanatory rather than purely descriptive or exploratory. Explanatory research aims to clarify causal relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2023). As the research question explicitly asks how dimensions of team identification present in a fan associate with purchase intent, supported by previous research on unidimensional team identification, it implies a statistical association between the two variables. It is however important to note that the cross-sectional survey design does not allow the results to reflect definite causality between the variables tested, rather, it tests for

association between the variables. As the goal of the study is not to describe the characteristics of the sample, nor to probe for new, completely unresearched phenomena, both descriptive and exploratory research purposes were considered less fitting than explanatory.

As was mentioned, the chosen time horizon for the research is cross-sectional, meaning that data is collected at one single point in time, rather than over multiple periods (longitudinal study) (Saunders et al., 2023). For this study a cross-sectional survey enables efficient data collection from a large sample without the time demands or participant drop-out risks which are associated with longitudinal studies (Rindfleisch et al., 2008). When examined longitudinally Lock et al. (2014) found that the dimensions of the Team\*ID scale exhibited relatively good stability over time which supports the use of a cross-sectional approach. It is however noteworthy that some dimensions such as cognitive awareness may be more sensitive to temporal variation. As such, whilst the findings from this cross-sectional approach test the theoretically grounded predictions for associations, the definite causality sometimes associated with an explanatory purpose, cannot be established as the data is collected only at one point in time. Due to feasibility concerns and the relative temporal stability of Team\*ID, the cross-sectional approach was however deemed appropriate for the study.

The sampling strategy employed for the survey to collect primary data is a structured questionnaire. Saunders et al. (2023) emphasize that a questionnaire is an efficient way to collect responses from a large sample before quantitative analysis as all respondents answer the same questions. As the study conducted is quantitative, a questionnaire is determined to be suitable for the collection of data from a large sample of football fans. Furthermore, the measurement scales chosen for both team identification are easily integrated into a questionnaire, making the measurement of both independent and dependent variables feasible with a structured questionnaire. As all respondents answer the same questions in a structured questionnaire and responses are predetermined, Hair et al. (2011) note the importance of rigorous questionnaire design and pretesting to ensure accuracy in the data collected. The design and pilot testing of the structured questionnaire to ensure the accuracy of the data collected will be discussed in the upcoming chapter.

### **3.2 Survey design**

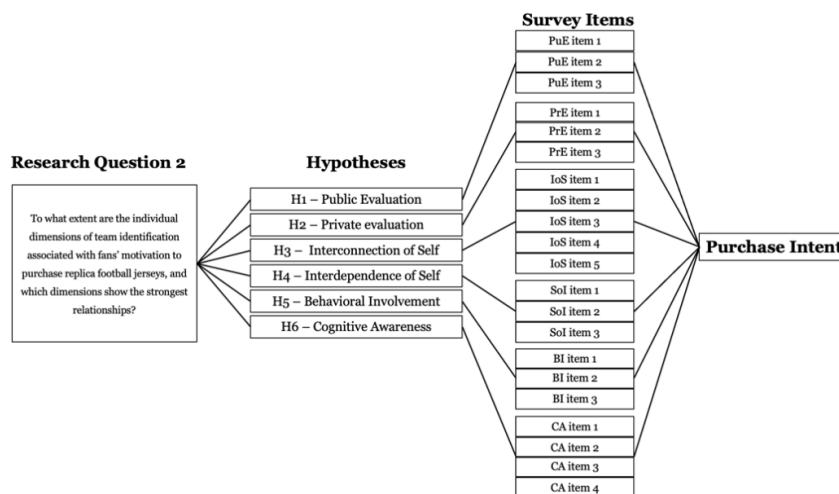
As was mentioned a structured, self-administered online questionnaire is employed in this study to collect quantitative data. Administering the survey online offers practical benefits such as minimal cost and logistical burden associated with in-person and paper surveys (Hair et al., 2011), whilst allowing for quick access to geographically dispersed football fans around

Finland. Additionally, Saunders et al. (2023) state that respondents to self-administered questionnaires are relatively unlikely to answer in socially desirable ways, which is specifically important in this study's context of assessing personal ties to group membership affecting personal intent.

The survey was available in English only. Both measurement instruments, the Team\*ID scale and the chosen 5-item, 7-point semantic differential scale for purchase intent have been developed and tested previously in English, showing good psychometric properties in their original language. To preserve the psychometric capabilities of the measurement tools employed, the choice of not translating the questionnaire to Finnish or Swedish was made. Furthermore, Finns are highly proficient in English, shown in a recent measurement of the English Proficiency Index conducted by EF (2024), which further suggests the questionnaire would be correctly interpreted by participants if administered in English.

The questionnaire was created and hosted on Webropol, a program designed for data collection through surveys. The program was used for creation, any adjustments, collection, tracking of responses, analysis of the data during the data collection, and finally to export the data into IBM SPSS for analysis of the results.

The final questionnaire included a set of screening questions, a 21-item measurement of team identification utilizing the Team\*ID scale (Heere & James, 2007a), a five-item measurement of purchase intent toward replica jerseys and demographics questions at the end. Figure 3 presents a flowchart mapping each hypothesis to the relevant Team\*ID items and purchase intent items.



**Figure 3 - Flowchart linking hypotheses to corresponding survey items**

### **3.2.1 Measuring Team\*ID in the questionnaire**

As was mentioned, the questionnaire consists of two, core, multi-item scales. The independent variable of the study is team identification, assessed with the Team\*ID scale (Heere & James, 2007a). This scale measures identification across the six previously discussed dimensions utilizing 21 items to which respondents answer using 7-point Likert scales anchored in (1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). The choice of measuring the 21 items using 7-point Likert scales is twofold. Firstly, Likert scales are well suited to attitudes and opinions (Hair et al., 2011) which the Team\*ID scale is set to measure. Secondly, Heere and James (2007a) used 7-point Likert scales proving their ability to accurately collect the required data to assess identification. Heere and James (2007a) only mention the anchoring labels of the scales that the Team\*ID model utilizes but do not mention if other numerical values were assigned labels in their research. To minimize ambiguity and ease interpretation following Hair et al. (2011), the survey of this study has descriptions for all numerical values on Team\*ID items, descriptions are as follows: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = somewhat agree and 7 = strongly agree.

Most of the original items from Heere and James' (2007a) paper were modified slightly as the original items all state "college football team", the word "college" was simply removed. Item 16 in the questionnaire "I participate in activities supporting my college football team, such as tailgating or attending games." (Heere & James, 2007a, p. 75) was slightly modified as the word "tailgating" was deemed too culture-specific to the United States, the final version of item 16 in the questionnaire was instead "I participate in activities supporting my football team, such as pre-match gatherings or attending games." as "pre-match gatherings", synonymous to "tailgating", was deemed to better reflect similar activities amongst Finnish football fans. With exception to these minor changes, the scale was kept intact as it was deemed fitting for the context of the study. Items 1, 2, and 17 are reverse scored as is the case in the original scale, with other items scored directly. The final count of items per dimension is: Public evaluation: 3, Private evaluation: 3, Interconnection of Self: 5, Sense of Interdependence: 3, Behavioural involvement: 3 and cognitive awareness: 4.

### **3.2.2 Measuring purchase intent in the questionnaire**

The study's dependent variable, purchase intent, is measured using Spears' and Singh's (2004) 5-item, 7-point semantic differential scale. The scale is adopted in this study to assess the respondent's intention to engage in the specific behaviour of purchasing a replica jersey from

the team they support. According to Saunders et al. (2023), the semantic differential scale is designed to ask respondents to rate a single object (a jersey purchase in the case of this study) across multiple bipolar adjective pairs. Each item on this scale consists of two opposite adjectives which anchor both endpoints of a 7-point scale allowing the respondent to indicate to what degree they lean toward either end. In accordance with the recommendation by Bloomberg et al. (2014, cited in Saunders et al., 2023) the position of negative and positive adjectives varies between each of the 5 items to reduce the possibility of respondents only reading the item on the left, (thus: Position of the negative item in questionnaire: right, left, left, right & left). The alteration in the positioning of the negative and positive items meant that items 1 and 4 are reverse scored for the results. As only one object is rated across all five items it is important that this object is understandable and encompasses all set conditions. To achieve this the following instruction precedes the items to measure purchase intent:

“During the current or upcoming 2025/2026 season, how likely are you to purchase an official replica jersey (home, away, third, goalkeeper, or special edition) from your club?

Please answer each of the following five 7-point scales. On every line, pick the dot between the two endpoints which best reflects your opinion. Make sure to respond to all five scales, even if they seem similar.”

The instruction encompasses a clear instruction and description of what is meant by “football jersey” as well as a time specification in alignment with the conditions set by Morwitz et al. (2007). The adding of further instruction to the question was done after pilot testing of the questionnaire and will be discussed in further detail when the pilot testing is discussed.

### **3.2.3 Structure and flow of the questionnaire**

At the start of the questionnaire, four brief screening questions are present. Screening questions are present to ensure respondent eligibility following the set empirical delimitations (Hair et al., 2011). The questions confirm that the respondent resides in Finland and is a fan of a football team that offers jerseys for sale as merchandise to ensure they meet the criteria of the study, if criteria were not met the survey was automatically terminated, the respondents were made aware of termination prior to answering each question as the negative option included a disclaimer “If no, the survey will end by next section” to avoid confusion amongst respondents who did not meet the criteria. Additionally, all screening questions were set as mandatory, and participants could not proceed without answering them to ensure that the final data included only valid responses meeting the criteria of empirical delimitations.

After screening questions, the questionnaire moves on to the measurement of Team\*ID as previously discussed, grouped into subdimensions so as to not include all 21 questions on one page, aiming to mitigate respondent fatigue and increased drop-out rates as a result. After team identification measurement the questionnaire moved to purchase intent measurement. Finally, demographic questions are posed at the end as suggested by Hair et al. (2011), as placing them at the end reduces the likelihood of these factors impacting the respondent's answers to other questions and nonparticipation. Demographic questions included only age and gender for assessment of variation in the sample to determine the generalizability of results and to ensure all respondents were over the age of 18. Both questions regarding demographics were set as mandatory to mitigate the risk of results from respondents under 18 being part of the final data, the question for gender includes an option of “Prefer not to say” if any respondent has the desire to not disclose this information.

### **3.2.4 Pilot testing of the questionnaire**

Finally, before full development, a small-scale pilot test was conducted with 5 respondents who fulfilled the inclusion criteria (screening questions and being over the age of 18). Pilot testing is important in questionnaire development as it ensures that respondents can interpret and answer questions correctly to ensure that the survey collects accurate data (Saunders et al., 2023). The primary purpose of this test in the case of the study was to assess the questions' interpretability, especially for the Team\*ID measurement as it was employed in a new cultural context. Additionally, to align with the recommendations of Saunders et al. (2023) the pilot test also focused on aspects of face and content validity including instruction clarity, comprehensibility of individual items, layout and visual appeal of the questionnaire, whether items appear sensitive, confusing or redundant and how long the questionnaire took to complete. Respondents of the pilot study completed the survey and provided informal, written feedback upon completion based on a set of questions created utilizing Saunders et al.'s (2023) recommendations for pilot testing questionnaires.

As a result of the pilot study question 26, the assessment of purchase intent, was slightly altered from the original “During the current or upcoming 2025/2026 season, how likely are you to purchase an official replica jersey (home, away, third, goalkeeper, or special edition) from your club?” to also include an instruction to answer all five items despite some appearing redundant due to similarity. As a result of this feedback the following instruction was included for question 26: “Please answer each of the following five 7-point scales. On every line, pick the dot between the two endpoints which best reflects your opinion. Make sure to respond to all five scales, even if they seem similar.”. The additional instruction was included to ensure that the respondents were made aware that question 26 included five different items which all

were to be answered based on their opinion regarding the purchase of a jersey. After this alteration, participants of the pilot study were once again asked to respond to the survey, all five participants agreed upon the additional instruction being a good addition for increasing the clarity of the questionnaire.

Three of the respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire on both a laptop and a smartphone as the layout altered slightly for the desktop and mobile versions of the questionnaire for question 26 (measurement of purchase intent). The desktop version of the questionnaire displays the 5-item, 7-point semantic differential scale horizontally with items stacked upon each other and options vertically while the mobile version presents them slightly more separate with options on a vertical axis. When responding to the mobile version of the questionnaire both anchoring adjectives fit the screen if the respondent centres the item on a vertical axis, all five items are displayed on the same page in both the desktop and mobile version. No questions or concerns were reported by these three respondents regarding the layout and so no changes were made to the overall layout of question 26.

Following a minor addition to question 26 the questionnaire was deemed ready for distribution following the pilot test with all participants agreeing upon instructions being clear. The average response time of participants in the pilot study was approximately 10 minutes, and this information was used as part of the opening informational screen of the questionnaire to inform participants on how long the questionnaire could take them to complete in approximation in order to ensure they started answering only when they had the time required to complete the full questionnaire.

### **3.3 Sampling and collection of data**

The questionnaire was open through an online link and distributed during a period of two weeks between 21.08-04.09.2025 collecting a total amount of 140 responses (n=140). The survey was mainly spread through football clubs in the Helsinki region and Ostrobothnia, reaching members of football clubs or networks related to football to gather data from respondents fulfilling the screening criteria. Initially members of football clubs were identified and contacted to ask whether the survey could be shared within the football club. Furthermore, respondents were also permitted to share the questionnaire link onwards to further networks in which suitable participants could be reached. During data collection the questionnaire is known to have reached four networks in Ostrobothnia, all of which football teams, and five networks in the Helsinki region, including four football teams and one social network linked to football, the link was also shared once in personal social media through Instagram, further one respondent is known to have shared the link to their own followers through Instagram.

The target population of this study is football fans in Finland who support a football team from Finland or abroad who offer jerseys for sale, making them potential consumers of this team's merchandise. As it is infeasible to obtain a complete list, or sampling frame, of all members of this population, the study employed non-probability sampling techniques following Saunders et al. (2023). Specifically, the non-probability sampling was mainly reliant on purposive sampling in which participants are chosen based on expected relevance (Hair et al., 2011), assessed in this study through the questionnaires screening questions and targeted data collection through football-related networks. Furthermore, Purposive sampling was chosen as the participants of the study must be football fans identified to some degree and to whom a jersey purchase from their supported club is available to ensure that the final data used encompasses the intended type of football fans. Finally, an element of snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling is useful when members of the target population are difficult to identify (Saunders et al., 2023), in the case of this study it enabled the questionnaire to reach further participants than the ones in the originally contacted networks.

Of the final 140 responses, 126 (n=126) completed the survey fully answering questions in all sections, of these responses 124 (n=124) were retained after data cleaning, detailed later under 3.4 "Analysis of data". Most respondents were in the age group of 18-25 (58.9%) with responses present in all age groups except for the 66+ category. Regarding gender, most respondents identified as male (94,4%). Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the sample. Additionally, it is noteworthy that 13,7% of the respondents were fans of Finnish football teams, including HIFK, HJK, FF Jaro, Ilves Tampere and, Vaasan Palloseura. The remaining 86,3% were fans of clubs abroad, common names occurring include: FC Barcelona, Liverpool FC, Manchester United FC, Chelsea FC, and Arsenal FC. All foreign clubs found in the data reside in Europe.

**Table 2 - Demographic characteristics of the sample n=124**

Gender	N, %	Age group	N, %
Male	117, 94.4%	18-25	73, 58.9%
Female	5, 4%	26-35	36, 29%
Prefer not to say	2, 1.6%	36-45	8, 6.5%
		46-55	6, 4.8%
		56-65	1, 0.8%

The sample included respondents from most age groups outlined in the survey and each option for gender, with exception to “prefer not to say”, gathered at least one response. Webropol gathered data on responses during data collection stating that the survey was opened by 416 people and 168 started responding to the questionnaire, meaning that approximately 83% of people who started responding completed the full questionnaire. The average response time was 7 minutes and 5 seconds.

Per Green’s (1991) recommendation for sample size in multiple regression analysis under assumptions of  $\alpha = 0.05$  and approximately 80% power,  $n=124$  fulfils the criteria for both multiple correlation analysis, or the models prediction of purchase intent as a whole, and tests of individual predictors or partial correlations, which is the case when checking for how individual dimensions may associate with purchase intent. Green’s (1991) recommendation for subjects are  $n \geq 50 + 8M$ , where  $M$  is the number of independent variables, for multiple correlation analysis, which is fulfilled as  $124 > 50 + 8*6$ . The formula for number of subjects to check for partial correlation is  $N > 104 + M$ , with  $M$  once again representing independent variables, fulfilled as  $124 > 104 + 6$  (Green, 1991).

### **3.4 Analysis of data**

This part of the methods section discusses the analysis of the collected data to detail the measures taken during data analysis to test the set hypotheses. The section discusses both the preliminary data cleaning and preparation and the main inferential test utilized, multiple regression analysis.

Following collection, data collected from the survey was exported into IBM SPSS (v29) for analysis. Aligning with data-quality procedure by Hair et al. (2011), cases exceeding a missing reponses rate of 15% on the 26 central items (>4 items), were removed before scale construction to ensure excessive missing data did not bias the results. As a result of this measure, two responses were removed, yielding the final  $n=124$ . Following this a visual check for outliers was performed using boxplots and expectedly, no outliers were identified, and all scale responses were found to be within the expected range of 1-7.

After cleaning the data was prepared for analysis by reverse coding several items to align scoring within the averaged composites later generated. Reverse coding is required in cases where both negatively and positively worded items are present within a set of items which are intended to be part of a multi-item scale, in such cases negatively worded statements are often reverse coded before generation of composite variables (Hair et al., 2011). As was mentioned in 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 some items on both the Team\*ID scale (Heere & James, 2007a) and the

Purchase intent measurement scale (Spears & Singh, 2004) were negatively worded or reversed and thus required this adjustment. As a result of this, items: Public evaluation 1 & 2, Behavioural involvement 2 and, purchase intent items 1 and 4 were reverse scored to ensure internal scoring consistency before scale generation. Averaged composites were then generated for each Team\*ID dimension and purchase intent by averaging the items within the scales, making the composite variables generated directly comparable to the constituent items.

After generation of scales the data was prepared for standard multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis is used when aiming to predict a dependent variable using multiple independent variables (Hair et al., 2011; Pallant, 2020) making this method of data analysis suitable for the acquired data. Multiple regression allows for testing both how well the model predicts purchase intent and the relative contribution of each subscale (dimension) of the model while controlling for the others (Pallant, 2020) Multiple regression was utilized with the Team\*ID dimensions set as independent variables aiming to predict the dependent variable of purchase intent. The model used is as follows:

$$PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{PuE}) + \beta_2(\text{PrE}) + \beta_3(\text{IoS}) + \beta_4(\text{SoI}) + \beta_5(\text{BI}) + \beta_6(\text{CA}) + \varepsilon$$

The model includes:

PI – Purchase Intent

$\beta_1$  PuE – Public Evaluation

$\beta_2$  PrE – Private Evaluation

$\beta_3$  IoS – Interconnection of Self

$\beta_4$  SoI – Sense of Interdependence

$\beta_5$  BI – Behavioural Involvement

$\beta_6$  CA – Cognitive Awareness

$\varepsilon$  – Error term

Before interpretation of the results from multiple regression analysis, preliminary correlations were checked for by computing zero-order Pearson correlations amongst the composite variables to screen for high associations amongst the predictors to flag any possibly problematic correlations (Pearson correlations exceeding .5), and to check for what associations are present at the zero-order level before conducting standard multiple regression (Pallant, 2020). Furthermore, the standard assumptions will be checked before multiple regression analysis including linearity of relationships, normal and evenly spread residuals, screening for multicollinearity using tolerance and VIF, and checking for influential cases with Cook's- and Mahalonobis distance (Pallant, 2020).

Results are then reported aligning with common practice with model fit reported with  $R^2$ , adjusted  $R^2$ , and F-test, as well as unstandardized and standardized beta coefficients for each independent variable (Hair et al., 2011).

### **3.5 Reliability and validity**

This part of the methods section assesses both the reliability and validity of the study conducted. Both reliability and validity play a pivotal role in the assessment of quantitative research (Saunders et al., 2023). Reliability reflects to which extent the findings of a study are replicable, validity represents the extent to which the study accurately measures what it intends to (Saunders et al., 2023).

Reliability of the composite variables which were generated was checked by computing Cronbach's alpha values for all scales following reverse coding. Ideally, Cronbach's alpha should be  $>.7$  (Pallant, 2020), but in cases where scales have fewer items than 10 this may be difficult to achieve (Pallant, 2020). All composite variables received scores of  $.7$  or above apart from behavioural involvement receiving a score of  $.683$ . Full results of tests for Cronbach's alpha and discussion regarding them are presented in the chapter 4.2.

Reliability was improved by ensuring consistency in the data collection and preparation process. Firstly, the questionnaire was administered in a standardized manner; all participants answered an identical survey with identical question wording and order. Secondly, scoring rules (normal and reverse scoring) were uniformly applied to all items. These steps in data collection and preparation aimed to ensure that differences in responses reflect actual differences in team identification on purchase intent in the participants, rather than variations in the administration of the study as emphasized by Saunders et al. (2023).

As emphasized by Saunders et al. (2023) the replicability of findings is crucial for reliability. To ensure that the study conducted is replicable a detailed account of data collection and analysis is given in the methods section, including info on coding, IBM SPSS analysis and the inclusion of the questionnaire as an appendix. A detailed overview of the methods applied in the study allows future research to replicate these methods and reach comparable results.

Measurement validity, referring to the extent to which the study measures what it intends to (Saunders et al., 2023), is benefitted from the use of previously validated scales in the data collection. Team identification was measured utilizing the Team\*ID scale (Heere & James,

2007a) and purchase intent was measured with Spears and Singh's scale (2004). Both scales used have been rigorously tested in development for their psychometric capability and applied in previous research which lends credibility to the measurement validity of this study. As was mentioned, only minor wording adjustments were made to the Team\*ID items to fit the context of the study to ensure the scale maintained its validity. Furthermore, a small pilot study was conducted to check the clarity of instructions and question wording leading to minor adjustments in aims of enhancing measurement validity (Saunders et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the survey being cross-sectional, carries implications for the internal validity which are to be noted. Internal validity refers to the extent to which the findings may be attributed to the factors accounted for (Saunders et al., 2023). And as was mentioned earlier, a study being cross-sectional inherently means definite causality cannot be established. This limitation must therefore be acknowledged, claims of causality are therefore avoided in presentation of findings. Instead, interpretation of the findings aligns with the level of internal validity discussing findings in terms of relationships or associations observed.

Finally, external validity, or the generalizability of the findings, must account for the method and context of the study (Saunders et al., 2023). As the study employed non-probability sampling, meaning that findings cannot be generalized to the broader population. It is important to note that whilst the findings may be used to understand similar groups than that of the sample, the findings are to be cautiously viewed when examining dissimilar populations. A detailed description of the sample has been given in this methods section to allow for further research to make own judgements when considering application of the findings in contexts which are dissimilar to the setting of this research.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

To ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner participation was voluntary, the privacy of participants was respected, participants were adequately informed about the research and protected from harm in accordance with recommendations by Hair et al. (2011).

Before starting the survey participants received information on the purpose of the study, an approximate duration of completing the questionnaire, that the data collected would only be used for this thesis, and that participation was voluntary. Participants were able to agree with the terms of the questionnaire by proceeding, indicating their consent for participation but were also informed that they were able to withdraw at any point without giving reason which would automatically terminate their response ensuring that it was not part of the data used.

The research topic does not concern sensitive attitudes or intentions, and no further briefing of the participants was therefore considered necessary.

No directly identifying data was collected from participants and all responses were handled confidentially. Reporting is only done at an aggregate level ensuring that no individual may be identified from responses, consistent with guidance by Hair et al. (2011) to respect privacy, additionally this protects the research by reducing the risks of respondents answering in socially desirable ways.

Furthermore, data was stored in a password-protected format digitally in line with safekeeping recommendations for digital data (Hair et al., 2011). Additionally, eligibility was limited to people over the age of 18, ensuring that all participants were able to provide their own consent. Finally, all data will be deleted within 12 months of the thesis being graded and approved.

### **3.7 Use of AI**

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are increasingly used in academic research. Large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT are used to help draft texts, summarize information, and write code (Van Dis et al., 2023). Current literature on this topic notes that whilst possessing significant potential in an assistive capacity, users are to be cautious of limitations and ethical implications of utilizing AI tools (Jarrah et al., 2023). While AI content may appear well written and convincing at first glance, it may include factually incorrect information, calling for rigorous human oversight by qualified researchers if used in academic writing (Van Dis et al., 2023). To mitigate risks inherent with use of AI tools in research, transparency and a critical approach have been adapted in this thesis to ensure the integrity and reliability of the research conducted.

OpenAI's ChatGPT is the sole AI tool utilized in this thesis. ChatGPT was utilized in an assistive capacity to navigate IBM SPSS, refine language, support in reference checking and to find information and papers of potential interest to the topic of research. All writing is produced by the author, and any suggestions taken from ChatGPT have been applied only after careful consideration and review. To ensure transparency in AI use, prompts given to, and answers given by, ChatGPT are shared at the end of the thesis in the appendices section. The prompts and answers selected for inclusion were selected as they best represent the capacity in which AI was used to align with calls for open disclosure of AI use in academia (Van Dis et al., 2023). Further it is to be noted that none of the data collected through the survey was shared with ChatGPT to maintain the integrity of the collected data.

To summarize, this reflection is both to acknowledge the potential and efficiency gains of utilizing AI tools in an assistive capacity and accounting for the consideration given to limitations and ethical concerns and their mitigation to ensure the integrity of the research.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section of the thesis will present the empirical findings of the study. The section is divided into seven parts. Firstly, descriptive statistics are presented for a brief analysis of the sample's characteristics in terms of identification and purchase intent as well as what levels of variation were observed in the responses. Further, reliability checks of the averaged composite variables are presented, followed by the results of tests for preliminary correlations using Pearson's correlation. Before the presentation of the results of multiple regression analysis the tests to check for alignment with assumptions for the multiple regression analysis are presented. At the end of the chapter the results of multiple regression analysis are presented, the thesis's hypotheses are tested and finally the results are briefly summarized before transitioning into the following chapter on discussion regarding them.

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics of averaged composites

In this chapter the descriptive statistics of all averaged composites will be presented. The composite variables were generated after reverse coding of the items and contain all original items of both the Team\*ID- and purchase intention scales. Means and standard deviations were calculated to gain an understanding to what extent the sample identified in the set dimensions and to which extent they were intending to purchase a replica jersey on an aggregate level. The descriptive statistics of all scales are summarized in table 3, found below.

**Table 3 - Descriptive statistics of the averaged composites. n=124. All scales with values 1-7.**

Composite	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic
Public Evaluation (PuE)	4.59	1.36	1.33	6.67
Private Evaluation (PrE)	6.30	0.81	1.67	7
Interconnection of Self (IoS)	4.15	1.36	1.40	7
Sense of Interdependence (SoI)	3.46	1.61	1.00	7
Behavioural Involvement (BI)	3.52	1.66	1.00	7
Cognitive Awareness (CA)	5.77	0.95	2.75	7
Purchase Intent (PI)	4.06	1.66	1.00	7

Across the identification scales, private evaluation showed the least variability in responses ( $M = 6.30$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ), this indicating that the sample generally feel very good about supporting their respective team and feeling personal pride in their fandom of that team, spread among answers on this scale was low in comparison to other scales suggesting that this type of identification is broadly shared within the sample. Similarly, Cognitive awareness was also quite high ( $M = 5.77$  &  $SD = 0.95$ ), indicating that the fans in the sample were knowledgeable regarding the team and its history and cognitively invested in team matters. Contrastingly, sense of interdependence ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ) and behavioural involvement ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.66$ ) showed the lowest means and most variation across answers which implies that there are large differences in the extent to which fans perceive they are one with the team and how frequently they participate in team related activity. Both public evaluation ( $M = 4.59$  &  $SD = 1.36$ ) and interconnection of self ( $M = 4.15$  &  $SD = 1.36$ ) had means close to the middle of the scale. Purchase intent had a mean of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 1.66, indicating that on average the motivation to purchase replica jerseys was moderate but with a wide spread in the sample. The observed minimum and maximum statistics show a large spread with several scales spanning the full 1-7 range.

To conclude, from table 3 we are able to see that the fans in the sample were largely personally proud and glad regarding their fandom and simultaneously highly cognitively aware of the team's history and current events, they were however less uniformly behaviourally involved with the team or possessive of feelings of interdependence. Purchase intent had a mean close to the middle of the scale, with high variance. The differing means and high variances indicate that fans in the sample indeed identify heterogeneously through these dimensions and that purchase intentions too varies amongst football fans, motivating the further analysis for which dimensions are associated with higher purchase intent.

#### **4.2 Reliability check of composite variables**

As was mentioned, the reliability of the composite variables was tested by computing Cronbach's alpha to check for internal consistency in the Team\*ID dimensions and purchase intent measurement. Pallant (2020) states that Cronbach's alphas of  $>0.7$  indicate good internal consistency. Results of this test are found below in table 4.

**Table 4 - Cronbach's alphas for composite variables. n = Varies by composite due to removal of incomplete responses in analysis.**

Composite	Number of items	Valid n	Cronbach's alpha
Public Evaluation (PuE)	3	113	.842
Private Evaluation (PrE)	3	121	.782
Interconnection of Self (IoS)	5	98	.802
Sense of Interdependence (SoI)	3	109	.860
Behavioural Involvement (BI)	3	113	.683
Cognitive Awareness (CA)	4	116	.820
Purchase Intent (PI)	5	124	.936

Notably the number of cases in the reliability analysis of the composites varies, the number of cases included is indicated in the column "Valid n" in table 4. The reliability check of the composites was conducted using cases with answers for all items in a given composite, known as listwise deletion, meaning only cases that had answered all items in a scale were part of the reliability analysis leading to a variation in the number of cases per reliability analysis.

As can be seen in table 4, most composites received Cronbach's alpha values exceeding .7. Behavioural involvement showed marginal internal consistency with a value of .683, as Pallant (2020) recommends, a test was conducted to assess whether Cronbach's alpha would increase with the removal of any item from the composite. Indeed, removal of item 2 from the dimension, the negatively worded "I do not participate in activities with other fans of my football team." would result in an increase to .742. However, the item displays a positive corrected item-total correlation (.374) suggesting it contributes to assessment of behavioural involvement. Additionally content validity was prioritized over a marginal increase in the alpha, and thus, the composite was generated with all three items intact. The other items showed acceptable values, with the purchase intent composite showing a very strong internal reliability of .936 indicating that all individual items are strongly coherent as a measure of purchase intent.

### 4.3 Preliminary correlations

Zero-order Pearson correlations were calculated to analyse the associations between independent variables and to check for the association of individual dimensions with purchase intent before the multiple regression analysis.

In the matrix below, table 5, the Pearson's correlation of each variable is listed. Among the dimensions for identification some dimensions were found to be more strongly correlated than others. Cohen (1988, as cited in Pallant, 2020) classifies relationships between .5 – 1 as large. Adhering to that classification, the relationships between interconnection of self and sense of interdependence, interconnection of self and behavioural involvement, interconnection of self and cognitive awareness, and sense of interdependence and cognitive awareness can be considered large. This calls for diligence when conducting the multiple regression analysis to ensure that the model is able to separate the correlation to purchase intent between the mentioned dimensions. To ensure this, VIF and tolerance checks are performed and assessed (Pallant, 2020).

**Table 5 – Pearson's correlation matrix. n = 124, two-tailed, pairwise deletion, p < .05(\*), p < .01(\*\*).**

	PuE	PrE	IoS	SoI	BI	CA	PI
PuE							
PrE	.188*						
IoS	.073	.256**					
SoI	.055	.278**	.757**				
BI	-.022	.013	.504**	.471**			
CA	-.163	.164	.572**	.507**	.499**		
PI	.070	.254**	.451**	.382**	.243**	.159	

Furthermore, in the results interconnection of self showed comparatively high correlations to purchase intent ( $r = .451$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Sense of interdependence ( $r = .382$ ,  $p < .001$ ), private evaluation ( $r = .254$ ,  $p = .004$ ), and behavioural involvement ( $r = .243$ ,  $p = .007$ ) all showed positive correlation. Cognitive awareness ( $r = .159$ ,  $p = .079$ ) and public evaluation ( $r = .070$ ,  $p = .441$ ) were not significant in this test.

### 4.4 Assumptions for multiple regression analysis

In this section the assumptions checks done prior to analysis of the results from multiple regression are presented. As was mentioned in chapter 3.4 the assumptions checked are:

linearity of relationships, normal and evenly spread residuals, screening for multicollinearity using tolerance and VIF, and checking for influential cases with Cook's- and Mahalanobis distance (Pallant, 2020). Additionally, it is noteworthy to restate that the number of cases is sufficient for checking both the overall model's association with purchase intent and the associations of individual dimensions with purchase intent as per Green (1991), formula and calculations for this are found in chapter 3.3.

When checking for linearity and homoscedasticity the scatterplot of standardized residuals vs. Standardized predicted values showed no clear deviation from a centralised rectangle, as is preferred (Pallant, 2020). No visible curve or funnel was visible to indicate assumptions of linearity and heteroscedasticity being violated (Pallant, 2020). Furthermore, the largest standardized residual found in the data was 2.286, well within the range of +/- 3,3 recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013, as cited in Pallant, 2020). The scatterplot used to check for linearity and homoskedasticity is found as an appendix at the end of the thesis.

The normality of residuals was checked for using a P-P plot. The P-P plot shows that the standardized residuals follow the diagonal closely, this indicates a normal spread of errors (Pallant, 2020). The P-P plot, together with a histogram presenting the normal distribution of errors is found as an appendix at the end of the thesis.

Multicollinearity was checked for using tolerance and VIF values. The concerns outlined in chapter 4.3 when conducting the preliminary correlations check regarding the occurrence of possible multicollinearity between some of the Team\*ID items were assessed here. The applied diagnostics to check for multicollinearity found no values outside of acceptable ranges. Tolerance ranged from .362 to .899, all values above the preferred .1 (Pallant, 2020). VIF values were all under the cutoff for concern which Pallant (2020) places at 10, with the values ranging between 1.113 and 2.766. The tolerance and VIF values are all found under chapter 4.5 in table 8.

Finally, influential cases were checked for using Cook's and Mahalanobis distances as is recommended by Pallant (2020). Cook's distances were all found to be under Pallant's (2020) cutoff of 1, with the highest value being .087 indicating no cases having undue influence over the results. For Mahalanobis distance, one case was found to have a high value of 37.758 indicating an unusual response which the model could not predict. The case was filtered out and found to be one possessing a very high level of team identification but had the minimum value in the averaged composite for purchase intent (1). The regression was run both with and without the case, but it was not found to have any significant influence over the results and

was thus retained. A table including these residual statistics is found as an appendix at the end of the thesis.

#### 4.5 Multiple regression analysis

Following Pallant (2020) a standard multiple regression, using enter method, was conducted. A standard multiple regression refers to all variables being entered into the model simultaneously to test the predictive capacities of each variable or predictor and the model as a whole (Pallant, 2020). Meaning that in the case of the standard multiple regression analysis conducted, all Team\*ID dimensions were entered simultaneously in the form of the averaged composite variables previously discussed as the independent variables and the averaged composite variable for purchase intent was entered as the dependent variable.

**Table 6 - Multiple regression predicting purchase intent, model summary.**

R	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$	Standard error of the estimate	F (degrees of freedom (df))	Significance (Sig.)
.499	.249	.211	1.473	6.476 (6, 117)	<.001

The overall model was significant in predicting purchase intent with  $F(6, 117) = 6.476$  and  $p < .001$  and explaining about a quarter of variance in purchase intent  $R = .499$ ,  $R^2 = .249$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .211$ , with a standard error of 1.473. The full results of the model are presented above in table 6. In table 7 below the Anova results are presented.

**Table 7 - Results of ANOVA**

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	84.309	6	14.051	6.476	<.001
Residual	253.881	117	2.170		
Total	338.189	123			

Below in table 8 are the results per coefficient for the multiple regression analysis conducted. In the table the unique association of each variable is present with levels of significance and results for the values of tests for collinearity.

**Table 8 - Coefficients and collinearity diagnostics**

	Unstandardized beta (B)	Coefficients standard error	Standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ )	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	1.386	1.348		1.028	.306		
PuE	-.031	.103	-.025	-.300	.765	.899	1.113
PrE	.328	.176	.161	1.860	.065	.859	1.164
IoS	.511	.162	.420	3.155	.002	.362	2.765
SoI	.081	.130	.079	.626	.533	.403	2.483
BI	.089	.099	.089	.899	.371	.649	1.542
CA	-.341	.184	-.197	-1.852	.067	.566	1.768

When controlling for the other dimensions, interconnection of self emerged as the sole significant positive predictor of purchase intent. ( $B = .511$ ,  $\beta = .420$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Coefficients for the dimensions private evaluation and cognitive awareness were near significance but did not reach  $p < .05$ . Sense of interdependence, behavioural involvement and public evaluation were not significant. As was mentioned in chapter 4.5, tolerance and VIF values indicate acceptable levels of collinearity, detailed results are presented above in table 8.

#### 4.6 Hypothesis testing

To aid in answering the second research question "To what extent are the individual dimensions of team identification associated with fans' motivation to purchase replica football jerseys, and which dimensions show the strongest relationships?" of this thesis hypotheses H1-H6 were set in chapter 2.5. Consistent with previous studies measuring team identification as unidimensional (Kwon et al., 2022) or multidimensional but aggregating dimensions before measuring association with consumption on merchandise (Heere et al., 2011) the hypotheses set expected positive relationships between all dimensions of identification and purchase intent. Utilizing standard multiple regression of which the results were reported in the previous chapter, all hypotheses were tested, decisions for H1-H6 are found in table 9 below.

**Table 9 - Decisions for hypotheses 1-6 based on results from multiple regression analysis**

Hypothesis	Predictor	$\beta$	Sig.	Decision
H1	PuE	-.025	.765	Not supported
H2	PrE	.161	.065	Not supported
H3	IoS	.420	.002	Supported
H4	SoI	.079	.533	Not supported
H5	BI	.089	.371	Not supported
H6	CA	-.197	.067	Not supported

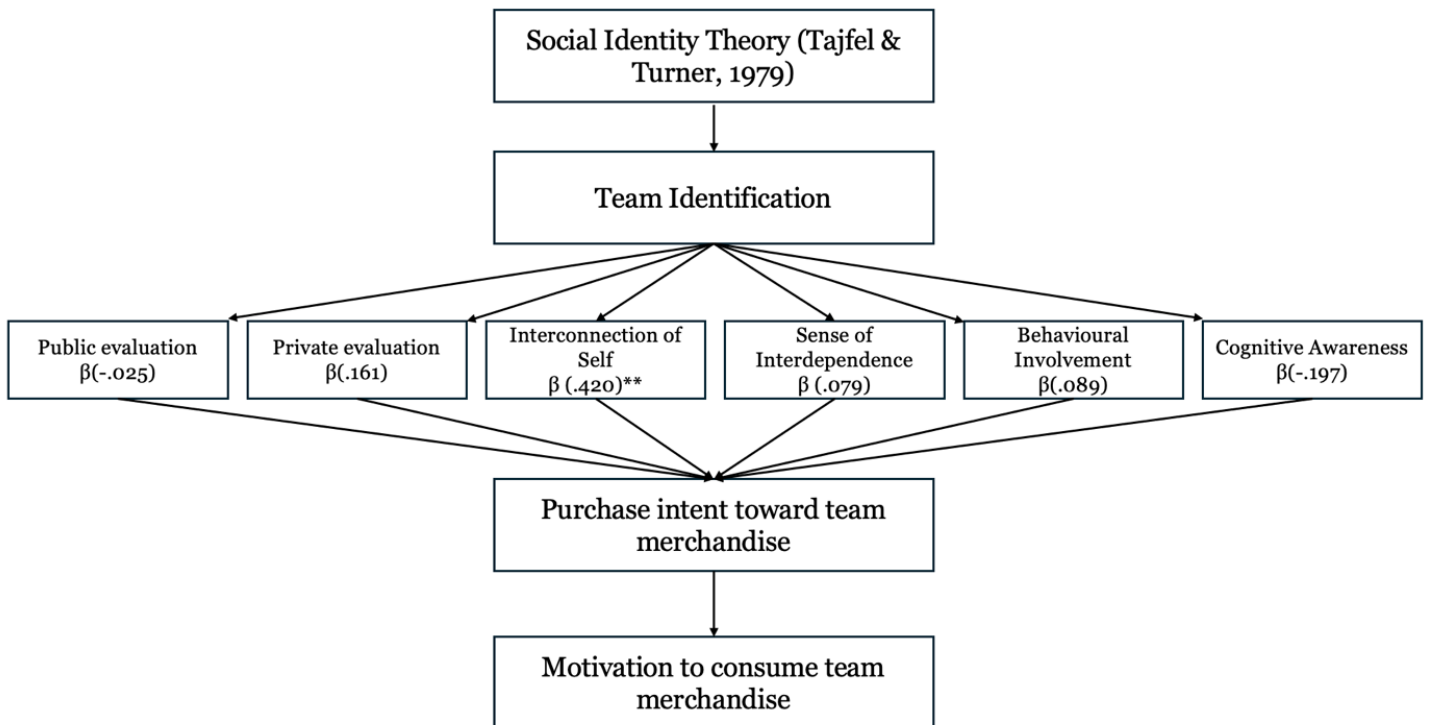
As can be seen in table 9, H3 is the sole supported hypothesis. H2, H4, and H5 all showed positive associations consistent with the hypothesized relationships but failed to reach significance ( $p < .05$ ) with the sample meaning these hypotheses could not be supported by the data. H1 and H6 showed negative associations with purchase intent, contrary to the hypothesized positive relationship but these too failed to reach significance in the data meaning and thus the decision was that the hypotheses were not supported.

#### 4.7 Summary of empirical findings

To summarize this chapter, the results show that when regressed together against purchase intent as the dependent variable, the six Team\*ID dimensions explain some of the variance. The model used in multiple regression analysis reached statistical significance and accounts for around a quarter of the variance between identification and purchase intent ( $R^2 = .249$  or 24,9%). When dimensions were entered simultaneously into multiple regression, interconnection of self emerged as the sole dimension with a statistically significant positive association with purchase intent, with a standardized beta value of .420 ( $p = .002$ ). The remaining five dimensions did not exhibit statistically significant associations with purchase intent at the .05 level, despite many showing positive effects, statistically significant at the .05 level, on the zero-order level discussed in 4.4. The assumptions for multiple regression analysis were met with results and measures taken presented in 4.4 and values for tolerance and VIF presented in chapter 4.5, table 8.

Returning to the second research question of the thesis. The results indicate that a fans interconnection with the team emerges as the focal point in the association between team identification and purchase intent when all dimensions are accounted for. Zero-order correlation indicated positive bivariate associations between interconnection of self, sense of interdependence, private evaluation and behavioural involvement and purchase intent, but

the latter three did not persist in association in multiple regression. Thus, when testing the hypotheses, H3 was supported while the remaining five were not supported at a significance level of .05. The results from the study are entered into the thesis's conceptual model in figure 4 below. Further discussion regarding outcomes and their implications is presented in the following chapter.



**Figure 4 - The refined conceptual model. Note: n = 124, p < .05 (\*\*)**

## **5 DISCUSSION**

This final chapter of the thesis discusses the results and outcomes observed in the study. Firstly, the core findings are discussed to generate a deeper understanding of their meaning and what insights can be gained from them. Further this chapter discusses what theoretical implications the findings hold and how they may be viewed in combination with the thesis theoretical framework to understand where theory applies, where it could be refined and what implications these findings have for further theory. Practical implications are presented to inform industry professionals on how these findings may be used in the field of sports management and which aspects are central to consider when integrating identification into business practices. Finally, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are discussed to identify the study's drawbacks, generating possibilities for future studies to improve on and which interesting avenues of research remain.

### **5.1 Core findings**

This thesis set out to disentangle the established relationship between team identification and team merchandise consumption with, special focus on the replica football jersey, through a multidimensional examination and application of team identification. To summarize prior to further discussion, the empirical findings of the study indicated that the identification-facet interconnection of self was found to possess significant positive association with purchase intent toward replica jerseys. This core finding indicates that deep identity integration with the team into one's self concept, or for those whom being a fan is "who they are", is associated with a heightened motivation to purchase the club's replica jerseys. In numerical terms the result is visible in a standardized beta value of .42 ( $p = .002$ ).

Contrastingly, other dimensions did not make significant contributions in terms of association with purchase intent on their own in the multiple regression analysis. Whilst dimensions of cognitive awareness and private evaluation showed minor associations to purchase intent, approaching statistical significance, they did not meet the thresholds for statistical significance, thus their respective hypotheses could not be supported by the data. The three remaining dimensions showed no association to purchase intent in the results of multiple regression. Further noteworthy was the observed negative relationship between public evaluation and cognitive awareness when modelled against purchase intent in the conducted multiple regression, although associations were not significant, the associations trended in the opposite

direction of their respective hypotheses (H1 & H6). Finally, the overall model was significant, explaining approximately a quarter of variance in purchase intent.

Interpretation of these results yields some interesting insights. First, the dominance in association of interconnection of self among the dimensions examined would indicate that the primary identification-related factor associating with a motivation to consume replica jerseys is the extent to which the identity of being a fan of the club is integrated into the fans self-concept. This suggests that when being a supporter is central to one's self-concept, owning the team's jersey could be a natural extension of that identity, consistent with the idea of the jersey as a material extension of one's identity as discussed by Belk (1988). Further, the result resonates with qualitative observations, namely those of Apostolopoulou et al. (2012), of how team merchandise is treated as deeply personal and symbolic. Contrastingly, fans who identify through other dimensions, for instance those who are highly cognitively invested possessing vast amounts of knowledge on team related matters or those who derive pride from team success but do not internalize them as part of themselves are in comparison less motivated to purchase a jersey. And so, the results would indicate that without strong interconnection of self, the incentive to obtain the replica jersey diminishes.

The lack of association amongst dimensions, with exception to interconnection of self, and purchase intent provides further intriguing basis for discussion. As it was hypothesized that all dimensions would show positive association with purchase intent, but five of them were not supported, this prompts discussion on the reasons for this outcome. For some of the dimensions, reasoning and context may help explain the results.

Behavioural involvement showed positive but insignificant association with purchase intent. In personal communication with Dr. Heere (March 18, 2025) behavioural involvement was discussed as one of the most likely dimensions to emerge highly associated with purchase intent, together with interconnection of self. A possible explanation of this dimension not reaching significance with a positive standardized beta coefficient is the geographical context and empirical delimitations of the study. All respondents reside in Finland, but the teams whom they support may reside in different parts of Finland, or as was the case with most respondents, abroad. The geographical distance between fan and club may mean limited opportunities to engage in the typical fandom related behaviours probed for in the questionnaire such as attending matches or gathering with other fans prior to them. Thus, whilst a positive, although

insignificant association was observed, the connection between behavioural involvement and purchase intent was possibly diluted due to the geographical setting of the study.

The surprising result of a slight negative association of cognitive awareness with purchase intent requires further reflection. The result suggests that highly knowledgeable fans, familiar with history, players, statistics, do not necessarily possess a strong motivation to purchase the team jersey, in some cases this knowledge even appears to detract from that motivation. Whilst at glance the result could be viewed as counter-intuitive it could mean that with high cognitive awareness the need to associate with the in-group through material means is lowered, if the fan engages in activities such as discussions with other fans and consuming information about the team allowing them to express their identity in non-material ways. Meaning that highly cognitively invested fans possibly view knowledge as the primary marker of fandom and merchandise as a commercial and undesirable. If examined through the lens of symbolic self-completion theory, this could mean that highly cognitively aware fans are likely to view their identity as “complete” meaning they do not look for other ways to complete that identity. Whilst the data is unable to confirm this discussion it is possible that cognitive fandom does not always translate into a motivation to display it outward through material means.

The non-significant association between public evaluation and purchase intent also warrants discussion. It was hypothesized that a stronger the more the fan believes that their team is positively viewed by others, the more motivated they would be to associate with the team, and during times of success “bask in their reflected glory” as was observed by Cialdini et al. (1976). The results however showed no statistically significant link, possibly indicating that the motivation to purchase merchandise and the fans perception of the public sentiment on their team are not related. This dimension too could have been affected by the geographical context as fans of foreign clubs in Finland may not feel as much attention being paid to their team and fandom as the surroundings are less likely to be highly invested, contra local fans who reside where there is likely to be more discussion regarding the team. The data suggests that external validation for one’s fandom, or how other perceive the fans’ social identity of fandom, is not associated with a motivation to purchase jerseys, suggesting that internal motivation may trump external motivation in this matter.

Sense of interdependence showed no statistically significant unique association to purchase intent in the multiple regression results. This dimension overlapped heavily with interconnection of self on the zero-order level and had the second strongest correlation (.382) with purchase intent. As the drop off in correlation when comparing zero-order level correlation and multiple regression results is quite large, the results would indicate that the

unique characteristics of sense of interdependence are not associated with purchase intent once interconnection of self enters the model.

Personal evaluation had the highest mean score in descriptive statistics, indicating that the general sentiment of the sample was that respondents feel proud and glad to be supporters of their football teams. It was hypothesized that greater personal pride would associate with purchase intent toward replica jerseys but the association, although positive, did not reach statistical significance in the sample. The results could indicate that positive personal sentiment of one's association with the team does not associate with a motivation to consume the team's replica jerseys if the association with the team is not deeply ingrained in the fans self-concept.

Finally, the overall explanatory power of the model is noteworthy. Together the six dimensions explain a substantial portion of purchase intent. Kwon et al.'s (2022) meta-analysis found unidimensional team identification to account for a medium to large effect ( $r = .42$ ) on intention to consume team merchandise. Heere et al. (2011) found a very high variance explained with an  $R^2$  of .84 between team identification and self-reported licensed product spending. To summarize, this thesis, like other research, found a meaningful, positive association between purchase intent and team identification. The focal insight however remains that the nature of fans' identification matters as much as the degree of it when looking for association with purchase intent. From what can be gathered in the results, it would suggest a fans level of identification may not necessarily associate with an intent to consume team merchandise in cases where that identification is present through dimensions which show insignificant associations with purchase intent. Conversely, a fan who might be identified to a lesser extent on an aggregate level might be highly motivated to purchase merchandise due to them being strongly identified through their interconnection of self.

In conclusion, the core findings suggest that a fans' motivation to purchase a replica jersey is associated with the fans' level of team identification, more specifically with the extent to which that identification is central to their self-concept. The findings refine the notion "more identified fans buy more", revealing what lies at the core of this well-established relationship. Next, the discussion will turn to placing this insight within the theoretical framework and prior literature which informed the study.

## 5.2 Theoretical implications

This study contributes to theory on team identification and consumption by refining how social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the Team\*ID framework (Heere & James, 2007a) associate with consumer behaviour. Aligning with SIT the results of the study confirm that identification with a group, or sports team, is associated with a motivation to act in ways supporting the in-group, or purchasing the team's replica jersey in the case of this thesis. Fans who integrate the in-group, or team, into their self-concept display the strongest desire to perform activities related to that in-group, purchasing merchandise as is the case in this thesis.

SIT cannot however alone specify which parts of the connection between an individual and a group prove focal for the connection as it is unable to on its own distinguish between facets of identification. Heere and James (2007a) applied Ashmore et al.'s (2004) framework to examine collective identity multidimensionally, creating dimensions of team identification in their Team\*ID framework. The empirical study conducted shows that only certain dimensions of identification associate with a motivation to consume replica jerseys, suggesting that the dimensional structure of a fan's identification could impact a consumption related outcome. Ashmore et al. (2004) proposed the same point: different elements of identification may relate to different outcomes. In the case of this study, the degree to which the identification is integrated into the fans self-concept, emerges as the central element associating with intentions to consume whereas other dimensions such as behavioural involvement or personal pride do not independently associate with the consumption related outcome.

This thesis also contributes to literature on team identification measurement and theory. The study is likely to be the first in isolating facets of team identification to test correlations between individual dimensions and consumer behaviour. As the results showcased differences in association, and how they affect the chosen outcome of purchase intent, they underscore the value of a multidimensional application for gaining a nuanced understanding of the relationship between identification and outcomes affected by it.

Furthermore, in terms of the Team\*ID scale, the measurement instrument was applied intact, with all dimensions used in multiple regression. On the zero-order level interconnection of self and sense of interdependence were found to have a high correlation to each other with both being associated with purchase intent. In multiple regression however, the drop off in association between sense of interdependence and purchase intent was noticeable in comparison to the zero-order level. This finding aligns with concerns regarding the

discriminant validity of sense of interdependence and interconnection of self, raised by Heere and James (2007b) as well as Lock et al. (2014). These findings prompt theoretical considerations of whether these two dimensions are indeed distinct in fans or whether some modifications to the scale would be beneficial, the findings of this study lend credibility to the latter option.

This thesis assumed, and later found, an association is present between team identification and purchase intent toward team merchandise. To illuminate why this connection is present, theoretical lenses for interpreting the association were discussed in chapter 2.4.2. Findings of the study are consistent with Belk's (1988) theory on "possessions and the extended self" indicating that it could be applicable in the realm of sports. As Belk (1988) posits, individuals are likely to integrate material possessions into their self-concept, if they are related to their salient identities. As results show identity salience to be of high importance in this context, they lend credibility to a view of team merchandise as part of the extended self for fans, bridging between prior theory on psychology and the sports industry.

Symbolic-self completion theory by Wicklund and Gollwitzer (2013) provides further basis for discussion on the application of consumer behaviour in a sports context. To reiterate, symbolic self-completion suggests that individuals will seek to complete the salient identities they believe to be incomplete through symbols associated with that identity (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 2013). The outcome of the empirical study prompts further discussion regarding how symbolic self-completion theory could present in the context of this thesis. It was speculated that symbolic self-completion theory could be viewed as a connection between weak behavioural involvement with an increased purchase intent if merchandise could be seen as a way of completing identity. As was mentioned, it is uncertain whether the observed low and statistically insignificant connection between behavioural involvement and purchase intent is due to the study's geographical context or whether similar results would be observed with an identical study conducted in other contexts. If, the results are similar independent of geographical context the theory of symbolic self-completion could aid in explaining these results if fans who engage less, desire team merchandise more to "complete" their fandom.

Finally, the ongoing discussion on uni- and multidimensional team identification is to be addressed. As was mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, both approaches have their advocates and adversaries, benefits and drawbacks. Whilst the findings of the study support the move toward multidimensional theorizing in consumer behaviour applications of team identification for a true understanding of why identification associates with outcomes, unidimensional team identification is still highly viable in future research. This thesis finds

that how a fan identifies can be equally as important as the aggregate level of that identification when modelled against purchase intent for replica jerseys. These findings suggest that a multidimensional view can be used to complement a unidimensional application to assess why certain outcomes occur if findings appear inconsistent on the unidimensional level. Results of the study show that higher identification is still found to be predictive of a higher motivation to consume merchandise, but the connection is found to not be as straightforward as previous research would indicate with dimensions associating to various degrees and in both positive and negative directions, although five of six associations were statistically insignificant.

In summary, the findings reinforce several theoretical frameworks. SIT has been applied in the sports context numerous times, and results are aligned with core logics of this theory, showing higher identification with an in-group affecting the individual's behaviour on matters related to that in-group. Theories such as Belk's (1988) "possessions and the extended self" as well as Wicklund and Gollwitzer's (2013) theory of symbolic self-completion are applicable in the realm of sports in reasoning, these were however not part of the thesis' conceptual model and not tested in the empirical study, they remain useful theoretical lenses to observe the results through. The results encourage future theory and research to pay mind to the nature of a fans identification as dimensions might have different associations or even possibly differing effects on certain outcomes as found in this thesis. This study is merely a first step in the direction of disentangling a complex connection between identity and consumption in the sports context and much of this association can still be explored.

### **5.3 Practical implications**

Insights from this research carry some practical significance for sports industry professionals including sports marketers, merchandise managers and fan engagement strategy. Revealing that not all aspects of team identification are equal in association with a motivation to consume merchandise, the findings enable the sports industry to create more targeted and effective marketing for team merchandise, especially football replica jerseys.

First, marketers should recognize that a fan's motivation to purchase a jersey can be rooted in their needs for identity expression and reinforcement. In these cases, the jersey surpasses its role as mere apparel but a worn identity expression. Marketing efforts tapping into this personal connection are therefore more likely to be persuasive. If used as informative basis the results would indicate that for identity driven marketing, narratives should aim to tap into

the centrality of the fandom identity avoiding more generic identity-related narratives. As was mentioned, identity driven marketing benefits from findings that identity salience increases attention toward products related to that identity (Reed et al., 2012) and combining this with insights from this thesis' findings could be used as basis to create marketing resonating strongly with identified fans.

From what can be gathered from the results, appeals to social status or prestige, or public evaluation, are likely to be less effective to drive fans' motivation to purchase replica jerseys. As results indicate motivation to purchase not associating with beliefs that one's team is positively perceived by others, they caution marketers on integrating this into messaging when aiming to sell jerseys. Likewise, the lack of correlation between knowledge about the team and a desire to purchase jerseys suggests that sentiments regarding cognitive investment would not play well into merchandise marketing.

As behavioural involvement was not identified to be a prerequisite for possessing a motivation to buy jerseys the implications are to reach out to the fans that are not present in person on matchdays. Like most industries, sports merchandise too has moved into e-commerce and international shipping. The findings of the study further encourage teams with an international following to reach out with targeted marketing to regions where they have fans, unable to be behaviourally involved in team related activities as these fans too can be inclined toward merchandise purchases through online stores. As was mentioned, it cannot be determined whether the link between behavioural involvement and purchase intent was diluted by the geographical context of the study, but the data does indeed show that even fans with low behavioural involvement can be worth reaching out to in replica jersey marketing.

Whilst not significantly associated with purchase intent, private evaluation was positively correlated with a motivation to purchase replica jerseys. This finding ties into the already broadly utilized practice amongst football clubs of releasing special edition replica jerseys commemorating successes, usually titles won by the team. Although findings indicate that pride without deep attachment is not strongly associated with a motivation to purchase a jersey it could be useful during periods where fans' internal pride peaks during team successes and they are likely to hold positive sentiments regarding their fandom of the team.

To summarize, the findings of this thesis suggest practitioners to consider the importance of identification in the marketing of team merchandise such as the replica jersey. In identification terms it is the salience of that identification and the personal ties to it that emerged important while behavioural involvement, cognitive awareness or perceived prestige

was not observed to possess similar levels of association with a desire to purchase merchandise. Identity-based marketing appeals can utilize the results found here as basis to inform how to resonate with fans in terms of their bond to the team. Furthermore, from what is found in both results of this thesis, research on identity-related consumption, and team merchandise as a product category, the marketing of team merchandise may benefit by paying mind to the identity that these products represent.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research**

While this thesis and the results of its empirical study provide novel contributions it is not without limitations. A focused assessment of these limitations helps contextualize the findings and in pointing towards avenues for future research to build upon them.

The research was conducted in Finland and all participants resided in Finland. With the lack of its own globally prominent football league Finland is a unique context in footballing terms as many fans have attached to clubs abroad as found in the sample with the majority of respondents supporting foreign clubs. This carries inherent limitations to examine the effects of behavioural involvement as many of the respondents may lack the monetary means or time to regularly engage in club related activities on-site when their teams reside and play elsewhere. Public evaluation too is likely to be a more prominent factor in settings where the team is local, and more people are likely to have their opinions on the teams within those local areas. Hence, future research could test the model in other cultural contexts in closer proximity to clubs with large followings in order see if the observed pattern holds or if different dimensions gain prominence as the average geographical distance to the team is reduced.

In relation, the sample consisted of self-identified fans, non-fans or “spectators” were screened out. If examining inclination toward purchasing of merchandise with further antecedents than team identification in mind results would likely differ somewhat. To better understand at what levels of identification fans become inclined to purchase merchandise future research could include a broader spectrum of identification in samples including participants who have weaker relationships to teams.

The cross-sectional design carries limitations for causal inference as discussed in the methods chapter. Identification was assumed to influence purchase intent in this context based on results of previous research and theory and hypotheses were thus developed in that direction. It must however be noted that causal inference cannot be ascertained based on a cross-

sectional study. Conducting similar research but longitudinally would help test whether the relationship between team identification and purchase intent is indeed causal.

Further, most of the sample (94.4%) consisted of male respondents and most respondents belonged to age categories 18-25 and 26-35 which limits the generalizability of findings to a broader Finnish population. Football fandom is diverse, and a study encompassing a more diverse sample would likely reveal further interesting results as demographics of the sample change.

Finally, the study relied on self-reported purchase intent. The limitations of this dependent variable have already been discussed in detail previously under chapter 2.3.2. If stronger evidence for the influence of team identification on consumer behaviour is sought after, further research would benefit from observing purchasing directly. Observing purchasing directly in combination with a longitudinal study, measuring team identification pre-purchase, around the time of the purchase and a period after the purchase would help establish the effects of team identification on direct merchandise purchasing and whether the purchase of team merchandise in turn affect team identification in order to establish a more comprehensive understanding of the associations found.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 The questionnaire

Welcome to the survey on football fans and their consumption of team jerseys! My name is Elias Brännbacka, and this survey is part of the data collection for my master's thesis in Marketing at Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki.

The purpose of my thesis is to explore how football fans identify with their favourite team seeing whether and how that identification influences their motivation to purchase official team jerseys. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary, but your input is highly valuable and will contribute to a better understanding of football fan behaviour and team merchandise consumption. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete and mainly consists of multiple-choice questions.

All collected data is anonymous and will be handled confidentially, in accordance with Hanken's data management guidelines. The information will only be used for this thesis and stored in a password-protected digital format. You may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. The results will only be presented at an aggregated level in the final thesis, and all data will be deleted within six months after the analysis is completed.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [elias.brannbacka@student.hanken.fi](mailto:elias.brannbacka@student.hanken.fi).

If you agree to the above terms and consent to participate in the survey, please click "Next" to begin.

Thank you for your participation!

#### Screening questions

*Do you currently reside in Finland (Yes/No)*

*Are you a football (soccer) fan? (Yes/No)*

*Do you support a football club that sells official replica jerseys as merchandise? (Yes/No)*

*What is the name of the previously indicated football club of which you are a fan? (Full name)*

#### Team\*ID measurement.

*For the following questions, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement about the team you support (Indicated by you in question 4).*

*Public Evaluation:*

1. Most people have a negative view of my football team, compared to other teams.
2. In general, others think the football team I am a fan of is unworthy of support.
3. Overall, my football team is viewed positively by others.

*Private Evaluation:*

4. I feel good about my football team.
5. In general, I'm glad to be a fan of my football team.
6. I am proud to think of myself as a fan of my football team.

*Interconnection of Self:*

7. When someone criticizes my football team, it feels like a personal insult.
8. I'm very interested in what others think about my football team.
9. The football team's successes are my successes.
10. When I talk about my football team, I usually say "we" rather than "they".
11. Being a fan of my football team is an important reflection of who I am.

*Sense of Interdependence:*

12. My destiny is tied to the destiny of the football team.
13. The behaviour of my football team can affect me personally.
14. What happens to my football team will have an impact on my own life.

*Behavioural Involvement:*

15. I participate in activities supporting my football team, such as pre-match gatherings or attending games.
16. I do not participate in activities with other fans of my football team.
17. I am actively involved in team-related activities.

*Cognitive Awareness:*

18. I am aware of the tradition and history of my football team.
19. I know the ins and outs of my football team.
20. I know the rituals that go with being a fan of my football team.
21. I have knowledge of the successes and failures of my football team.

**Purchase intent**

*During the current or upcoming 2025/2026 season, how likely are you to purchase an official replica jersey (home, away, third, goalkeeper, or special edition) from your club? Please answer each of the following five 7-point scales. On every line, pick the dot between the two endpoints which best reflects your opinion. Make sure to respond to all five scales, even if they seem similar.*

1. Definitely - Never
2. Definitely do not intend to buy - Definitely intend to buy
3. Very low purchase interest - High purchase interest
4. Definitely buy it - Definitely not buy it
5. Probably not buy it - Probably buy it

**Demographic questions**

*What is your age?*

Under 18, If under 18, the survey ends by next section.

18-25

26-35

35-45

46-55

56-65

66+

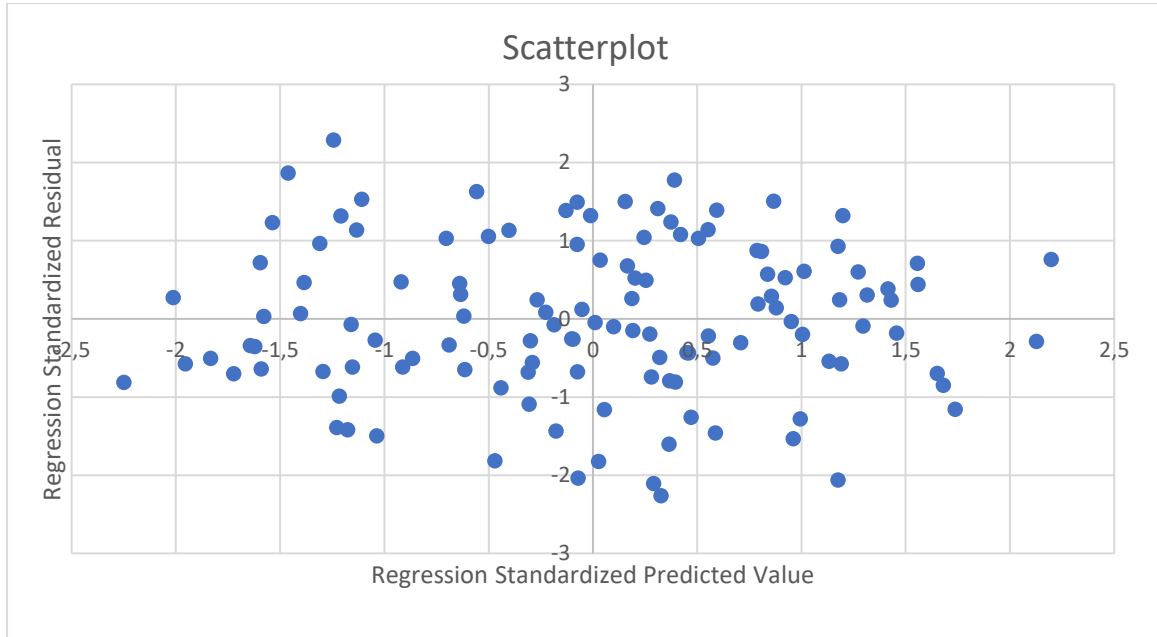
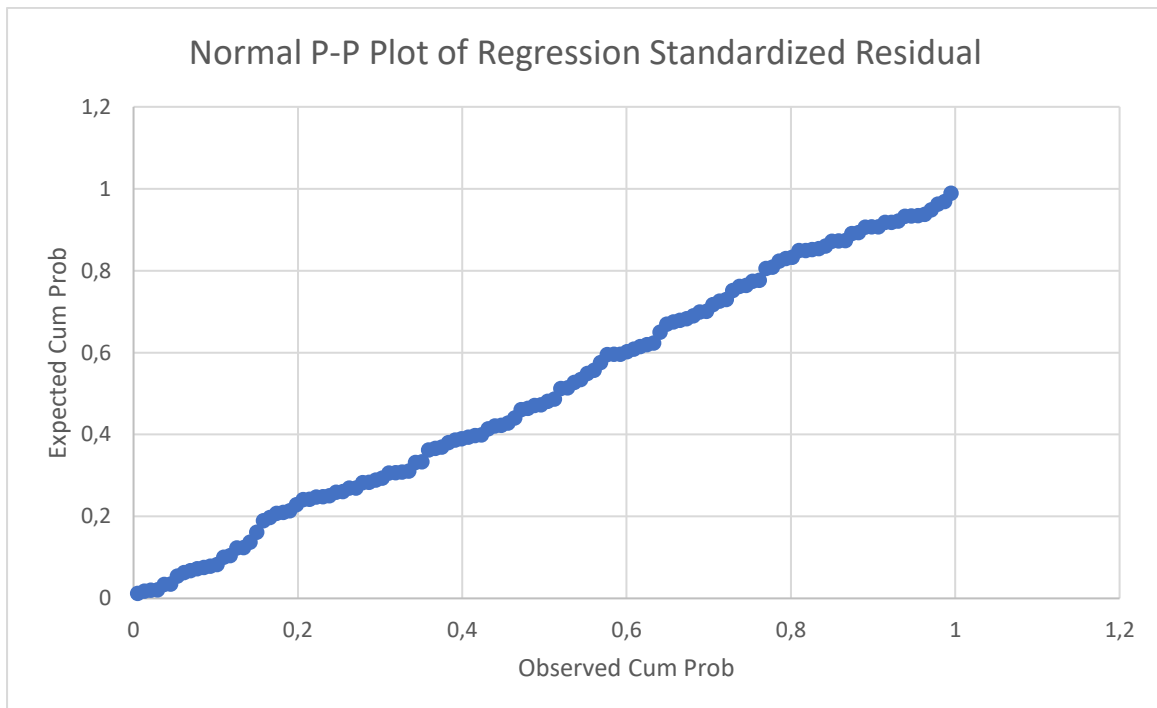
*What is your gender?*

Male

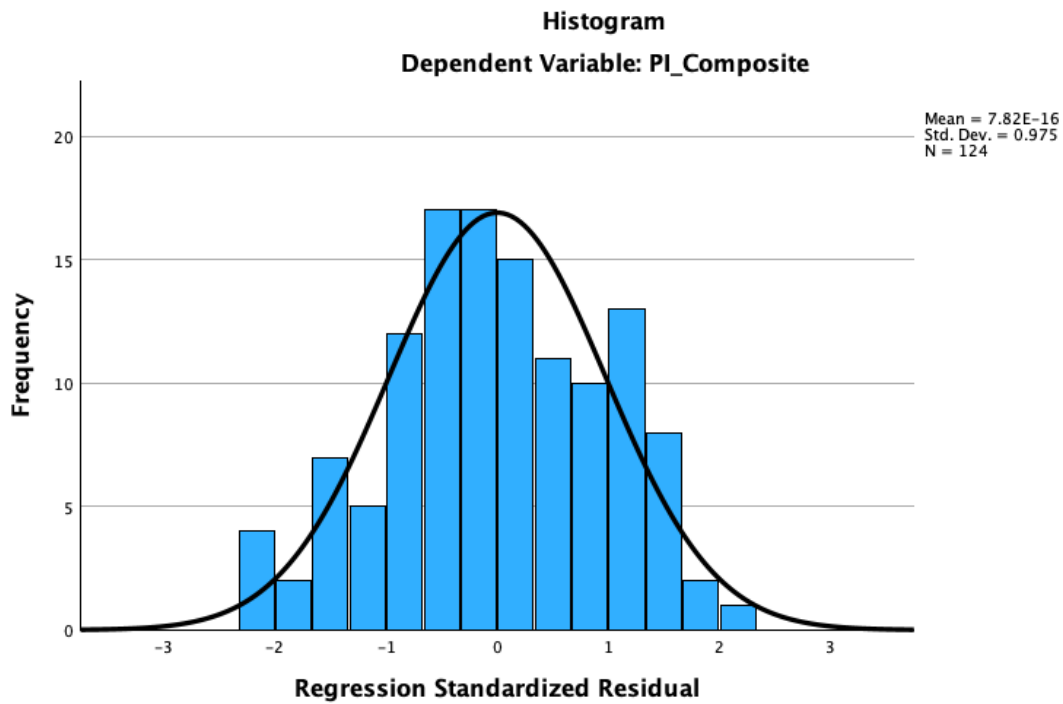
Female

Other

Prefer not to say

**Appendix 2 Scatterplot checking for linearity and homoskedasticity****Appendix 3 P-P plot checking for normal distribution of residuals**

### Appendix 4 Histogram of the normal distribution of standardized residuals



### Appendix 5 Table over residual statistics

**Residuals Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.2001	5.8820	4.0629	.82791	124
Std. Predicted Value	-2.250	2.197	.000	1.000	124
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.168	.827	.339	.089	124
Adjusted Predicted Value	2.3570	5.8527	4.0669	.82940	124
Residual	-3.33270	3.36739	.00000	1.43669	124
Std. Residual	-2.262	2.286	.000	.975	124
Stud. Residual	-2.330	2.359	-.001	1.008	124
Deleted Residual	-3.53602	3.58512	-.00395	1.53623	124
Stud. Deleted Residual	-2.376	2.407	-.002	1.015	124
Mahal. Distance	.607	37.758	5.952	4.217	124
Cook's Distance	.000	.087	.010	.016	124
Centered Leverage Value	.005	.307	.048	.034	124

## Appendix 6 Use of AI – Prompts and answers

### Prompt and answer one - Navigating IBM SPSS

Prompt: I've 26 questions with responses to all on scales of 1-7, all scales have been coded in the same way with 7 meaning fully positive or agreement and 1 reflecting negative sentiment or total disagreement. I need to generate composite 7 variables from these items, how do I proceed generating summated scales in SPSS?

Response: Since all of your items are already coded in the same direction (1 = least positive, 7 = most positive), creating composite summated scales in SPSS is straightforward. The key steps are:

---

#### 1. Decide on Your Composite Structure

You said you want 7 composite variables from 26 items. This usually means each scale has a defined set of items (e.g., Scale 1 uses items Q1, Q2, Q5, Q7...).

Make sure you know which items belong to each scale.

---

#### 2. Check Reliability (Recommended)

Before computing the composite variables, it's best to verify that the items belonging to each scale actually hang together.

SPSS Menu: Analyze → Scale → Reliability Analysis

- Put the items for one scale into the *Items* box.
- Select Model: Alpha
- Click Statistics → check Scale if item deleted
- Run.

Look for:

- Cronbach's  $\alpha \geq .70$  (acceptable)
- If an item lowers  $\alpha$  substantially, consider removing it.

Do this for each of your 7 scales.

---

#### 3. Create Summated (or Mean) Scale Variables

You can either sum or average the items. If all scales have the same possible range and number of items, summation is fine. If the scales differ in number of items, use the mean, so all composite scales stay on a 1–7 metric, which is easier to interpret.

SPSS Menu:

Transform → Compute Variable

Example for Scale 1 (mean score):

Target Variable: Scale1

Numeric Expression: MEAN(Q1, Q3, Q5, Q8)

Click OK.

Repeat for each composite variable.

#### 4. Option (If You Prefer Syntax)

COMPUTE Scale1 = MEAN(Q1, Q3, Q5, Q8).

COMPUTE Scale2 = MEAN(Q2, Q4, Q6, Q9).

COMPUTE Scale3 = MEAN(Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13).

...

EXECUTE.

Using MEAN() automatically handles missing values as long as at least one item is present.  
If you want to require the respondent to answer *all* items in a scale:

COMPUTE Scale1 = MEAN.4(Q1, Q3, Q5, Q8). /\* require 4 items \*/

#### 5. Interpret the Composite Scores

Because you used means:

- All composite scales range 1 to 7
- Higher = more positive / stronger agreement

Which makes interpretation consistent across scales.

#### Summary

Step Action

- 1 Identify which items form each scale
- 2 Run reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) for each scale
- 3 Compute composite scores using *Mean()* or *Sum()*
- 4 Ensure interpretation remains on 1–7 scale (use means)

If you'd like, I can generate SPSS syntax for all 26 items automatically—just tell me which items belong to each of your 7 composite scales.

#### Prompt and answer two – refining language

Prompt: Help me in assessing clarity and give suggestions for refinement to the sentence

“Using social psychology, the Team\*ID scale in turn conceptualizes the construct of team identification as a construct of multiple dimensions, showcasing how individuals may identify with their respective sports teams in more than one way”

Answer: Got it — here is a refined sentence:

**Refined Sentence:** “Drawing on social psychology theory, the Team\*ID scale conceptualizes team identification as a multidimensional construct, illustrating that individuals may identify with sports teams in more than a single way.”

Final sentence included in the thesis: Implementing social psychology theory, the Team\*ID scale then conceptualized team identification as a multifaceted construct, reflecting that individuals may identify with sports teams in more than a singular way.

#### Prompt and answer three – refining language

Prompt: Help me craft a clear way of conveying that use of a deductive approach is aligned with my method of quantitative data collection. Briefly defining the deductive approach as using theory and my own research model to develop my hypotheses to then test them in my study.

All in one sentence.

Answer: Understood — here is **one** clear, polished sentence:

“In line with the quantitative design of this study, a deductive approach is applied, whereby established theory and the research model guide the development of hypotheses that are subsequently tested through empirical analysis.”

Final sentence included in the thesis: Aligned with the collection of quantitative data, a deductive approach is adopted, existing theory and the research model guide the formulation of specific hypotheses, which are in turn tested empirically.

#### Prompt and answer four – Checking referencing

Prompt: Please double check that all references cited this far in the text are present in the references section at the end.

Attachments: Manuscript 28.03

Answer: All references cited in the text up to this point are present in the reference list **except the following**, which are **missing and should be added**:

- **Ajzen (1991)** — *Theory of Planned Behavior* is cited in Section 2.3.1 but not included in the reference list.

- **Spears & Singh (2004)** – cited as the purchase intention scale but not included in the reference list.
- **Juster (1966)** – referenced when discussing purchase intention measurement but not included in the reference list.

All other in-text citations are matched correctly in the reference list.

#### Prompt and answer five – Finding potentially interesting papers and information for review

Prompt: Who are the most important authors on sports team identification theory development?

Answer: Here are the names you'll most often see cited in developing (and extending) sports team identification theory:

- **Daniel L. Wann & Nyla R. Branscombe** – Pioneers of team ID measurement; created the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS).
- **Daniel C. Funk & Jeffrey D. James** – Introduced the **Psychological Continuum Model (PCM)**, a core framework for how fans progress from awareness to strong team attachment.
- **Bob (B.) Heere & Jeffrey D. James** – Advanced **multidimensional team identity** and how multiple group identities (city, university, etc.) shape team ID.
- **Robert Madrigal** – Showed how team ID influences emotions, satisfaction, and judgments around game outcomes; also reviewed the team ID literature in marketing contexts.
- **Henri Tajfel & John Turner** (foundational) – Their **Social Identity Theory** underpins what “team identification” means in sport. (Frequently cited in team-ID papers as the theoretical base.)

If you want, I can also list highly cited papers for each and a quick reading path.

#### Prompt and answer six – Finding potentially interesting papers and information for review

Prompt: Can you look for seminal papers on sports team identification and ties to consumer behaviour and come up with a list?

Answer: Here's a compact “starter canon” on team identification and consumer behavior—each item is (a) widely cited and (b) explicitly links identification to loyalty, attendance, spending, satisfaction, or intentions.

1. **Wann & Branscombe (1993)** – *Sports fans: Measuring degree of identification with their team*. Introduces the 7-item Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS), the workhorse measure used to relate team ID to fan behaviors.
2. **Madrigal (1995)** – *Cognitive and affective determinants of fan satisfaction with sporting event attendance*. Shows how identification feeds emotions and satisfaction, which in turn shape post-game intentions (e.g., return, recommend). Seminal for satisfaction/behavioral-intent paths.

3. **Sutton, McDonald, Milne & Cimperman (1997)** — *Creating and Fostering Fan Identification in Professional Sports*. Managerial roadmap: how organizations cultivate ID to drive ticket sales, media consumption, and merch. A foundational practitioner-oriented piece.
4. **Fisher & Wakefield (1998)** — *Factors leading to group identification: A field study of winners and losers*. Demonstrates how identification persists (and sometimes strengthens) despite poor performance—key for understanding loyalty beyond wins/losses.
5. **Mahony, Madrigal & Howard (2000)** — *Using the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) Scale to segment sport consumers based on loyalty*. Links strength of team commitment to behavioral loyalty (attendance, viewing). Useful for segmentation tied directly to actions.
6. **Funk & James (2001)** — *The Psychological Continuum Model (PCM)*. Conceptualizes how fans move from awareness → allegiance; widely used to explain how identification deepens and predicts consumer behavior along the way.
7. **Underwood, Bond & Baer (2001)** — *Building service brands via social identity: Lessons from the sports marketplace*. Shows how social identity processes (incl. team ID) build brand equity and, downstream, purchase/loyalty effects—bridging sport and services branding.
8. **Trail & James (2001)** — *Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC)*. Not a pure ID scale, but frequently paired with ID to predict conative loyalty, repeat attendance, and spending; clarifies motives that interact with identification.
9. **Heere & James (2007)** — *Stepping Outside the Lines: Developing a Multi-dimensional Team Identity Scale*. Advances beyond unidimensional ID—showing different identity facets (e.g., city, university, nation) that relate to distinct consumer behaviors.
10. **Trail (2005)** — *A Model of Sport Spectator Conative Loyalty*. Integrates prior work (incl. Madrigal) to explain how identification, satisfaction, and motives predict intentions like attending, buying, and recommending.
11. **Bhattacharya & Sen (2003)** — *Consumer–Company Identification (CCI)*. Broader marketing cornerstone (not sport-only) often imported into sport to explain how identification yields loyalty, advocacy, and resilience—useful theoretical scaffolding for team ID effects on consumer outcomes.
12. **Bernache-Assollant et al. (2007/2010s streams)** — *Consumer loyalty in sport spectatorship services*. Empirical links among team ID, satisfaction, and loyalty (attitudinal + behavioral). Helpful evidence connecting the dots.

If you'd like, I can turn this into a mini annotated bibliography (with one-line takeaways and "best figure/table to cite" for each) or pull direct PDFs where available.