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Customer Engagement in Sport: An updated review and research agenda

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Customer Engagement in Sport: An updated review and research agenda

Recent theoretical developments in marketing have posited the concept of “Customer Engagement” (CE) as a holistic approach to understand customers’ interactive experiences with brands or firms, with the intent to co-create value beyond that which is inherent in the transactional exchange. Customer¹ Engagement (CE), defined by Hollebeek, Srivastava, and Chen (2019, p. 167) as a customer’s “investment of operant [i.e., cognitive, emotional, behavioral]...and operand (e.g., equipment-based) resources...in [his/her] brand interactions” has been a rapidly developing field of marketing research over the last decade. At its core, the body of work on CE attempts to explain how consumers voluntarily come to play an active part in a brand offering (Bruneau et al. 2018), and to better understand the impact of engagement within this process. A wide range of research has reported behavioral outcomes arising from CE to include repatronage intent (Ahn & Back, 2018), brand advocacy (Sashi et al., 2019), brand purchase and referrals (Pansari & Kumar, 2017) and revisiting intention (Wei et al., 2017). This work has shaped understandings surrounding the role of the customer in various consumption settings, including sport.

At the heart of sport marketing activities is the activation, enhancement, and leverage of customer/fan interactions to cultivate relationships with sport organizations, making customer/fan engagement an important concept both theoretically and managerially (Funk & James, 2006). With the relationship between sport consumers and the teams they support said to be uniquely strong (Fujak et al., 2018), it is not surprising that adaptations and applications of CE work have appeared in the sport management literature. CE is considered to be heavily context dependent both in the way it develops and is expressed (Brodie et al., 2011). Yoshida et al. (2014) summarized the sport management work in this area to that point and expanded upon the concept of ‘fan engagement’ - a “specific form of customer engagement in the sport context” (p. 399). While an increased number of studies have been published, the work to date in the sport domain has mainly followed the wider

¹ We use the term “customer” throughout this paper as this has been the standard, but increasingly the term “consumer engagement” is being adopted to cover those who do not buy the product, but still consume it or engage with it in other ways.

CE literature, without incorporating recent advancements. As a result, the sport-centered CE research has tended to follow, rather than drive advancements in the area. Given that CE is context-dependent, and sport is known to have unique characteristics, the adaptability of CE work to it, has only been superficially examined. This has also limited contributions from sport management back to overall CE theory development.

Logical extensions of CE work extending transactional events (e.g., match attendance) to non-transactional activities (e.g., social media following) are only starting to be considered (e.g., Su et al., 2020). CE appears to be a highly relevant and potentially beneficial approach to recasting the management of sport consumer relationships (Yoshida et al., 2014), but a review of the work to date, alongside a position statement on current best practice and clear priorities for future work are required to ensure advances in research and practice in the sport management field. Thus, the purposes of the current study are (1) to critically review and extend existent literature on CE in the sport context, (2) to identify how the sport CE context meaningfully differs from others and (3) provide guidance for future research and practice in the sport context and beyond. To that end, throughout the paper, propositions and questions are raised as “Future Direction” (FD) statements and a conceptual model summarizing CE in a sport context is presented in Figure 1.

Customer Engagement in the sport context

Marketing practices have traditionally treated customers as exogenous to the organization, a passive recipient of the organization’s active value creation efforts (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Now it is recognized that customers are active participants in their interactions and co-create value by making voluntary resource contributions to the firm, helping it to achieve its mission (Harmeling et al., 2017; Karpen et al., 2012). This perspective is foundational to the construct of CE. The CE thesis recognizes that customers are predisposed to form deeper connections with an organization or brand in certain contexts, and this manifests in active behaviors to ‘co-create’ value in interactions with the brand (Storbacka et al., 2016). For organizations, this recognition dictates a move away from a focus on managing simple, one-off transactions, towards viewing customers as

highly involved co-creators of value. CE has grown in prominence with interest sparked by the realization that many customers seek an interactive and co-created experience, and this interaction provides additional resources for the marketing activities of the firm (Harmeling et al., 2017). CE, the process, and its benefits, explains some unusual observations in sport, such as why some long-suffering and unsuccessful teams still maintain fan bases.

The sport context has been long-regarded as being ‘different’ enough from other fields to warrant specific theoretical development and adaptations to practice. Whilst these differences are often over-stated, and for the most part, sport consumption follows patterns typically seen in consumer markets (Fujak et. al., 2018), some unique aspects of the sport context are likely to impact upon customer engagement. These include a) the uncertain outcomes of sporting contests or participatory events. Favored teams lose and injuries happen, which can impact future consumption or connections (Cialdini et at, 1976); b) the possibility of multiple focal points is high in sport, especially with team sport fandom, where coaches, athletes, team and even an allegiance to one sport over another (e.g., NFL vs. soccer) compete for fan connection (Kunkel & Biscaia, 2020); c) that sporting contests often involve the consumption of competing brands (including neutral or unfavored brands) unlike most contexts (Baker, McDonald & Funk 2016); d) when watching the favorite professional sport team or athlete, one must also watch the opponent, or many opponents in the case of sports such as golf or motor racing. The impact of this on CE has not been directly studied, but research on sport rivalries suggests it can be beneficial to increasing engagement (Tyler et. al, 2020); e) sport and its role in the identity of fans, often leads to public displays of engagement and allegiance. From cheering teams on at a stadium or bar to wearing branded merchandise, sport allegiances are often more publicly displayed than other favored brands (Lock & Heere, 2017); and f) the nature of many sports is seasonal, meaning there can be long periods with limited or even no consumer interactions. Many professional sport teams engage with fans during the “off-season” with training updates, player recruitment news and pre-season games in an attempt to not ‘go dark’ for long periods between events (Annamalai et al., 2021).

FDI: The unique aspects of sport, while not impacting upon overall patterns of consumer behavior, are likely to impact upon the expression of CE and its' management. How and why this impact occurs is yet to be determined, and requires examination.

There are conceptual similarities between CE and other well-established marketing constructs like 'involvement' or 'loyalty'. Where engagement differs from similar phenomena is in the recognition that deep relationships move well beyond cognition and "encompasses a proactive, interactive customer relationship with a specific engagement object (e.g., a brand)" (Brodie et al., 2011, p. 257). Early definitions described CE as being one-dimensional (typically behavioral), but more recently that has broadened, such that CE is defined as an individual customer's "state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in direct brand interactions" (Hollebeek, 2011, p.790). Reflecting a more rigorous understanding of CE, multi-dimensional conceptualizations are now most common. Such agreement primarily settles on a tripartite (i.e., cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) set of dimensions to address the concept (Brodie et al., 2011), as well as a focus on non-transactional interactions that are beyond the pure purchase of a good or service (Groeger et al., 2016).

With a specific focus on interaction, customer engagement sits within what Vivek et al. (2012) defined as an expanded relationship marketing approach, where the consumer represents a contributor to interactive relationships with brands and organizations. Applied to sport as a specific form of customer engagement, 'fan engagement' has evolved in sport marketing (Yoshida et al., 2014), with a focus on the non-transactional consumer-sport organization exchanges.

The consumption of sport has long been recognized as having the potential to be a complex and engaging experience involving emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. Described as a high involvement service, sport marketers are increasingly structuring activities to enhance consumer engagement and the concomitant emotional, psychological, and physical investment in brands (Mollen & Wilson, 2010; Yoshida et al., 2014). Correspondingly, scholars including Kumar et al. (2010) have emphasized the need for brands to generate effective strategies to reap the

benefits of engaged consumers, with CE suggested as favorable to the “attainment of superior organizational performance outcomes (i.e., behaviors)” (Hollebeek et al., 2014). As such, a greater understanding the antecedents and consequences of CE can help establish long-term, interactive relationships between customers and organizations, enhancing the organization’s performance and improving customer loyalty.

FD2: The nomological network of CE in a sporting context is yet to be determined. While some alignment with other contexts is anticipated, the unique motivations and complexities of sporting contexts is expected to result in unique antecedents and outcomes.

Operationalizing Engagement in Sport

Central to work on engagement is the operationalization of engagement focal points (Dessart et al., 2016). Sport, moreso than many product categories, allows consumers to ‘engage’ with multiple ‘points of attachment’ that serve as anchor points to a sport entity. These foci include leagues, teams, organisations, events, athletes or other consumers within fan communities (Kwon et al., 2005). Similarly, sport fan consumption can be undertaken through physical and virtual forms, adding complexity to how we measure and understand the activities that successfully build engagement. The following section provides an overview of the empirical brand and fan engagement constructs posited to explain engagement relevant to consumer-brand exchanges, which can be both transactional and non-transactional in nature (Yoshida et al., 2014).

In operationalizing CE in a more general marketing setting, some specific brand and fan engagement constructs are posited to explain engagement in consumer exchanges. For example, Hollebeek et al. (2014) developed a consumer brand engagement scale based on the three-dimension approach (cognitive processing, affection and activation) to reflect consumer's positively valenced activity during consumer/brand interactions. The cognitive dimension of CBE is “a consumer's level of brand-related thought processing and elaboration in a particular consumer/brand interaction.” The affective dimension is “a consumer's degree of positive brand-related affect in a particular consumer/brand interaction.” The activation or the behavioral dimension of CBE is “a

consumer's level of energy, effort and time spent on a brand in a particular consumer/brand interaction" (Hollebeek et al., 2014, p. 154).

Specific to sport, Yoshida et al. (2014) employed the three-construct Fan Engagement scale, primarily reflecting a set of non-transactional activities that sport fans may undertake relevant to their supported team. As background to the study, engagement points were defined and differentiated according to; a) transactional vs non-transactional activities, and; b) those in-role vs extra-role nature. This process suggested impression management, fan engagement, sport-related, and relationship building as groups of engagement behaviors relevant in sport (Yoshida et al., 2014). Of these, sport-related behaviors (transactional activities categorized as attendance, watching games via media, purchasing team products, and reading team content) and fan engagement behaviors (non-transactional actions including managerial cooperation, prosocial behavior, and performance tolerance) were presented as the most relevant for investigating engagement as a process.

Given the varied contexts of empirical research into engagement, the above two conceptualizations present different dimensions grounded within different, but related, structural components (antecedents and outcomes – see Figure 1). Modelled antecedents have included consumer involvement (Hollebeek, 2014), positive affect, team identification and BIRGing (Yoshida et al., 2014) as well as individual and game motivational factors (Stadner et al., 2016). In sum, foundation studies provide a range of constructs to measure engagement, primarily limited to attitudinal or intention level measurement of engagement and its outcomes (rather than actual behaviors).

In addition to the non-transactional constructs noted above (see Yoshida et al., 2014 for a complete discussion of proposed engagement points), physical or behavioral aspects provide an important point for engagement supported in conceptual definitions (Brodie et al, 2011). In sport contexts, many of these can be noted as transactional in nature, and summarized around core sport products (Mason, 1999). Games attended, games watched through media sources, merchandise, and

season ticket purchase reflect the most commonly identified core transactions consumers undertake with sport organizations.

To extend the understanding of engagement in sport, we must consider both transactional and non-transactional engagement, their interaction, and their impact on relational outcomes. Given sport consumers undertake complex, spontaneous, interactive and co-creative behaviors in their value exchanges with sport organizations (Brodie et al., 2011; van Doorn et al., 2010) it suggests multiple antecedents are possible to achieve individual and social purposes. Thus, we recommend:

FD3: A wide range of antecedents to sport CE exist, including some that are tangential to the sport product, such as socializing. These different antecedents may influence the nature of the CE with sport, for example, those driven by socialization may engage very differently from those driven by identification and require examination.

[Insert Figure 1]

Expressions of Sport Engagement

In this section, we begin by explaining the different types of CE and customer engagement behavior (CEB). Then, we attempt to provide a comprehensive answer to the question of how the engagement concept is different from related concepts such as co-production, co-creation, and fan loyalty.

Types and Evolution of CE and CEB

Table 1 summarizes the types and evolution of CE and CEB. This review highlights that two major approaches to CE have been adopted by most marketing scholars. First, CE can be viewed as a multidimensional construct which typically includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Its psychological components (cognition and affect) are based on the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002), which includes the three dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Vivek et al., 2014). For example, Hollebeek et al. (2014) identify three dimensions of CE that drive social media users' engagement in brands: cognitive processing, affective states, and behavioral investments. Further, recent research has expanded this tripartite

approach to also include social and spiritual dimensions (Conduit et al., 2019; Vivek et al., 2014). This multidimensional approach has been applied to Internet users' engagement in website experiences (Calder et al., 2009) and brand consumption (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). According to this perspective, the claim is made that CE is a hybrid concept of psychological, sociological, and behavioral dimensions in both offline and online environments.

[Insert Table 1]

The second approach that emerges is based exclusively on behavioral conceptualizations: CEB. While the broader CE literature recognizes both the customers' disposition to engage and its behavioral manifestation (Storbacka et al., 2016), under this approach the CE concept is exclusively viewed as the behavioral manifestation toward an organization or brand. These behaviors include both positively and negatively balanced CEBs such as compliance, co-operation, feedback, and helping others (Verleye et al., 2014), and creating, consuming, detaching, and destruction of social media content (Dolan et al., 2016). In spectator sport, fans have been found to engage in non-transactional extra-role behaviors (e.g., management cooperation, prosocial behavior, and performance tolerance; Yoshida et al., 2014) and website customization (Kharouf et al., 2020) when following professional sport teams or mega sport events.

While consumers' behavioral manifestations are diverse, a growing number of studies have been conducted to clearly define CEB as a consumer's contribution to a brand or company's performance and growth (e.g., Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). This contribution perspective provides a clear explanation of CEB that is a consumer's value-addition behavior through direct (e.g., purchasing) and indirect (e.g., augmenting, codeveloping, influencing, mobilizing, referring, and sharing) contributions to an organization (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Research in this behavioral approach has focused on consumers' unique voluntary behaviors in both real (physical) and virtual environments. CEB emerges as a unique behavioral construct in today's highly expressive, participative, and hyper-connected marketplace (e.g., Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Pansari & Kumar, 2017).

Distinguishing the Engagement Concept from Similar Concepts

In this review, one of the major concerns is to clearly distinguish between the engagement concept and other similar concepts (see Table 2). For example, there is notable confusion resulting from the conceptual overlap between CE and concepts related to relationship management and service-dominant logic (e.g., co-production, value co-creation, value creation, and participation). CE is a mid-range theory in that it is informed by the meta-theoretical perspectives of both service-dominant logic and relationship management (Jaakkola et al., 2019). CE therefore shares many characteristics with these phenomena, such as building on interactive experiences and resultant mutually co-created value, while remaining distinct (Conduit and Chen, 2017).

First, CE differs from co-production in terms of the product development process. Co-production is the creation of value proposition at the product design and development stages (Auh et al., 2007; Behnam et al., 2021). Consumers' participation in new product development (NPD) is an example of co-production. Conversely, CE is a consumer's contribution to the creation of desirable consumption experiences during the processes of using his or her resources (i.e., resource integration) and perceiving the value of sport products in consumption situations (i.e., value-in-use, Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Pansari & Kumar, 2017). While co-production could be considered akin to 'augmenting', a CEB recognized by Jaakkola and Alexander (2014), the CE concept is broader in its manifestations.

CE is related to, and yet distinct from, value co-creation and value creation. Value co-creation is a broadening, meta-theoretical perspective which recognizes the contemporary evaluation of value creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). At a micro-foundational level value co-creation can be considered as a process in which consumers, organizations, and other stakeholders integrate their resources in a manner to derive value (Grohs et al., 2020; Grönroos & Voima, 2013). Alternatively, value co-creation is considered as an outcome, which has been identified as a potential outcome to arise from CE (Brodie et al., 2011). A core distinction between value co-creation and CE can be found in the voluntary nature and heightened intensity associated with CE interactions. Value

creation, on the other hand, refers to the creation of value-in-use (Grönroos & Voima, 2013) that is associated with brand experience, brand relationship, and brand personalization (Ranjan & Read, 2016). Value creation is a personalized practice in consumption situations. CE goes beyond personalized consumption experiences and refers to consumers' cooperative and others-directed behaviors in actor-networks (Schau et al., 2009; Storbacka et al., 2016; Yoshida et al., 2014).

[Insert Table 2]

Moreover, CE is distinguishable from customer participation (e.g., participation in fan communities; Hedlund, 2014; Dong & Sivakumar, 2017). In spectator sport, fan participation represents how individuals actively cultivate and develop their sport consumption practices in fan communities (Hedlund, 2014). However, fan engagement, a specific form of CE, is seen as a fan's *interactive* experience with value creation practices not only in fan communities, but also in the interactions with various event actors such as teams, players, and management staff (Yoshida et al., 2014). CE emerges from an interaction with the focal actor and is a consumer's contribution not only to value creation in brand communities, but also to tasks related to partners' (e.g., companies, developers, and other stakeholders) concerns.

The engagement concept is also distinct from ritualized spectator behavior, brand experience, fan loyalty, and sport involvement. Ritualized spectator behavior is a set of actions that are largely fan-developed, take place prior, during, and after games, and occur in the form of communal fan behaviors (e.g., pre-match activities, flag waving, singing, chanting, socializing, and celebrating; McDonald & Karg, 2014). Fan engagement, in contrast, includes actor-focused consumer behaviors such as collaborative event attendance, voluntary participation in marketing programs, management cooperation, and prosocial behaviors in dynamic interactions among event actors (e.g., teams, players, other fans, and management staff; Yoshida et al., 2014). There may be overlap between rituals and engagement where sports organizations encourage and support ritualized behavior as a demonstration of support and engagement practices at a collective level.

FD3: The expressions of CE in a sport context are many, and likely to be inter-related.

Understanding the hierarchy and development process of sport CEBs requires longitudinal research examining the circumstances in which fans express different CEBs and how these expressions of engagement emerge in fan communities.

In terms of behavioral manifestations, brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009; Girish & Lee, 2019) and fan loyalty (Mahony et al., 2000) also encompass consumers' behavioral responses toward sport teams (e.g., behavioral experience and positive word-of-mouth). While both brand experience and fan loyalty are personally constructed in the consumer-brand relationship, fan engagement is more than just a mere set of event experiences and word-of-mouth recommendations. It accompanies a variety of active prosocial behaviors (e.g., voluntary participation, management cooperation, and fan-to-fan helping behavior) and contributes to the long-term welfare of a sport team in a collaborative, respectful, and meaningful way (Yoshida et al., 2014).

Finally, fan engagement differs from sport involvement in the sense that it includes spontaneous voluntary actions toward event actors (e.g., teams, players, and other fans) and can be expressed during sporting events (Yoshida et al., 2014). Sport involvement is a state of interest or motivation toward sport products, which can occur prior to sport consumption (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Further differentiating it from some similar concepts, CE can also be negatively valenced. CE encompasses a series of activities that act against a sport organization, such as dissuading, discrediting, deriding, and endorsing competitors (Azer & Alexander, 2020).

FD4: In a context where the outcome of the core experience is uncertain, negative fan engagement is under-researched. The origins or motivations of those undertaking negative sport CE requires a deeper understanding.

Actor engagement

Early research on customer engagement adopted a micro-level perspective and focused on the dyadic relationship between the focal subject (i.e., the customer or fan) and the focal object (i.e.,

the brand or team; Brodie et al., 2011; Harrigan et al., 2018). However, customer relationships and interactions are more complex, and recent conceptualizations of engagement have considered the role of multiple actors in interactions (e.g., Alexander et al., 2018; Brodie et al., 2019; Hollebeek et al., 2019; Storbacka et al., 2016). Actor engagement is thus defined as a “dynamic and iterative process that reflects actors’ dispositions to invest resources in their interactions with other connected actors in a service system” (Brodie et al., 2019, p. 174). This perspective recognizes that all actors are connected and inherently resource-integrators, and that each actor is involved with a multitude of value co-creation processes, and hence a series of different engagement activities, with other actors (Alexander et al., 2018).

Adopting a multi-actor perspective of engagement enables a broadened conceptual understanding. Conceptually, actor engagement extends our understanding of the engagement phenomenon as it enables us to consider 1) that engagement occurs with multiple different types of actors, including collective groups (i.e., organizations or teams) and non-human actors; 2) engagement can occur with multiple actors within the ecosystem either concurrently, in sequence, or in a nested format; 3) interdependent interaction (i.e. peer-to-peer interaction) occurs within the ecosystem and facilitates engagement emergence throughout the network; 4) engagement occurs at different levels of aggregation (i.e., micro, meso and macro levels); 5) actors come together to connect and share engagement practices in engagement platforms; and 6) institutions and frameworks shape and are shaped through engagement. Each of these characteristics of actor engagement will be considered here in turn to understand how the application of actor engagement can enhance our understanding in a sport management context.

Firstly, sport fans engage with a range of different types of individual and collective actors, including athletes, coaches, commentators, teams, brand communities, events, team sponsors, and even the sport itself (Woratschek et al., 2020). The conceptualization of actor engagement also considers non-human actors (Storbacka et al., 2016), encouraging further examination of fan engagement within e-sports and other technologically mediated sporting contexts (Kim & Kim,

2020). Initial work has suggested that CE within an e-sports context, particularly those involving high degrees of personalization and possibility for community connection, can foster affective engagement and related positive behaviors (Abbasi et al., 2020). The relationship between CE in e-sports and CE in traditional sport participation and fandom, however, remains unspecified.

Engagement with each of these types of actors may vary in form, intensity, and valence even when the actors are nested or embedded (i.e., athletes within teams) (Conduit et al., 2016; Dessart et al., 2016; Sim & Plewa, 2017). Engagement is a context dependent construct (Brodie et al., 2011), and how and why different forms of engagement manifest across these interdependent and often nested touchpoints is largely unknown. Do fans cognitively engage with individual athletes via a rational appreciation of their skill, while perhaps emotionally engaging passionately with the team, and behaviorally engaging with the sport itself through active participation? Whatever the combination, how do sport managers actively facilitate this multifaceted and multilayered nature of engagement across multiple engagement foci?

While it is recognized that actors engage with different touchpoints (i.e., different engagement foci) concurrently (Sim et al., 2018), the dynamics of how these interdependent engagement foci influence each other is not yet fully understood. As fans engage with a superstar athlete there are spillover, or halo effects, that also build engagement with the team, engagement with dedicated online brand communities, as well as with sponsors, and the sport itself (Bowden et al., 2017). However, what happens when a superstar athlete is injured or is traded to another club, where and how does the engagement transfer and manifest? Does engagement remain with the athlete and perhaps start to build with a new team, or does positive engagement stay with the team and disengagement or negatively valenced engagement with the athlete develop? If a sponsor leaves one team and supports another team, is there negative brand engagement and consumer brand sabotage as a result (Kähr et al., 2016)? Further research is required to understand the nature and predictors of these engagement transfer effects.

The foundational premises of actor engagement recognize that an individual actor's disposition to engage occurs as a result of their connections to other actors (Brodie et al., 2019). An individual's engagement disposition can be influenced by other actors through cognitive pathways such as vicarious learning and word-of-mouth behaviors (Ayi Wong et al., 2020), and/or through emotional and social contagion across a group of actors (Bowden et al., 2017; Kleinaltenkamp, 2019). However, the mechanics of how engagement spreads through socially connected actors largely remains unknown. Sport in essence is largely about social connections and social networks (Katz et al., 2020), and team sports in particular are recognized to foster a need for belonging and social connectedness (Walseth, 2008). Hence, the sporting context is ideal to examine the role that social connectedness plays in the emergence of engagement among groups of actors. However, do social connections always foster positive engagement or do the strong ties associated with sporting teams have a dark side and encourage negative engagement (Azer & Alexander, 2020)?

Much of the customer engagement literature has adopted a social media lens (e.g., Brodie et al., 2013; Dolan et al., 2019; Harrigan et al., 2018), as new digital technologies provide an exciting vehicle for groups of actors to engage with, and in relation to, the brand or engagement object (Breidbach & Brodie, 2017). Indeed, the foundational premises of actor engagement recognize that both virtual and physical engagement platforms provide groups of actors a space within which to coordinate shared engagement practices (Brodie et al., 2019). However, sport teams and fans have occupied shared engagement spaces (e.g., clubrooms, bars, and stadiums) and exhibited shared engagement practices and rituals, (e.g., wearing the team jersey, singing the team song; Bradford & Sherry Jr., 2015; Hedlund et al., 2018) well before virtual platforms became popular (Ahn et al., 2014). Following these ideas, the following avenue is recommended for future research:

FD5: The sport context is a rich vehicle to examine the role of both physical and virtual engagement platforms that bring together groups of actors (e.g., fans, athletes, sponsors), and understand how engagement practices develop within these platforms among collective groups of actors.

Finally, by zooming out and examining actor engagement at a macro level, it allows consideration of the institutional context within which engagement takes place. Previous research by Li et al. (2017) and others has considered the effects of institutional arrangements on the intensity and valence of engagement (Alexander et al., 2018; Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2019). Furthermore, the interplay between institutional work and engagement has been proposed to shape engagement practices and informs institutional change over time (Fehrer et al., 2020; Kleinaltenkamp, 2021). Institutional theory has been an important framework within the field of sport management (Nite & Edwards, 2021) and has been invoked to understand meaningful topics such as governance, institutional change, leadership, and the globalization of sport. However, Nite and Edwards (2021) recently called for more research that consider the role of institutional work from a multi-level approach, to allow consideration of concepts such as legitimacy, institutional logics, and emotions within the sports management field. The actor engagement literature (e.g., Ayi Wong et al., 2020; Fehrer et al., 2020; Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2021) provides a conceptual foundation that will further enhance this discussion.

FD6: Following Nite & Edwards (2021) call, how can institutional theory inform our understanding of CE in complex sport organizations, including how and when CE emerges and changes over time?

Collective engagement

Particularly relevant to the sport context, engagement also occurs when multiple actors (e.g., a group of spectators or fans) *collectively* engage with a focal object (e.g., a sport team or event). Sport is an ideal context to explore how interactive collective experiences with sport brands results in the emotional and social contagion of engagement (e.g., Bowden et al., 2017; Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2019). Notably, collective engagement is encouraged by new technologies, with scholars arguing that individuals interaction with brands has become inherently collective (Nunan et al., 2018). Sport consumers jointly and actively engage with sport objects and each other across social

media (Filo et al., 2015) and in other group-based scenarios before, during, and after matches (Fairley & Tyler, 2012).

These exchanges can empower sport consumers to directly contribute to organizational decision making (e.g., voting on team jersey options) and to form brand communities surrounding sport teams. Sport consumption and engagement has long been understood to occur not in isolation, but rather as part of a larger network of individuals forming a collective (Katz et al., 2019). Note the discontent voiced by fans, athletes and media pundits alike during the COVID-19 pandemic when most of the world's sporting competitions operated without crowds (Weimar et al., 2021).

The collective nature of sport consumption has been long established and is supported by the tenets of social identity theory (c.f., Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identity theorists posit that individuals make sense of themselves, others, and the broader world around them via group affiliations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Such group memberships form the basis for individuals to develop characteristics, values and behaviors which are shaped by these affiliations (Lock & Heere, 2017). These can manifest in both positive (e.g., Liverpool fans signing "You'll Never Walk Alone" on gamedays) or negative (e.g., Hooliganism) ways. At the same time, the sport fan is regularly exposed to 'out-groups' whom they don't identify with, such as rival fans or those who dislike sport altogether. The presence of out-groups can strengthen team identification and group identity for those who have cognitively adopted a salient team identity (Lock & Heere, 2017).

Consumers within brand communities help to establish rules, traditions and consumption norms which engulf brands (Schau et al., 2009). Sport management scholars have established the importance of group-based match day traditions in building support for new sport teams, in the absence of past successes or established histories (Doyle et al., 2017). Kletinaltenkamp et al., (2021) argue that this type of alignment of engagement behaviors (i.e., the adoption of traditions and rituals), sees collective engagement practices develop, which over time become embedded as social norms and institutional practices. These engagement practices then influence new fans as they adopt these practices and engage in a consistent manner.

The inherently social aspect of fan engagement is also evidenced across evaluations of group performance. Cialdini et al. (1976) showed the tendency for fans to more frequently demonstrate a team affiliation to others (via wearing team merchandise and referring to the team using the pronoun “we”) following a team victory than in the aftermath of a team loss (BIRGing). The inverse has also been observed whereby an individual may seek to distance themselves from a group after a poor performance (CORFing; Trail et al., 2012). The extent to which an individual identifies with the group in question governs their ability to manipulate their distance from the group (Wann & Branscombe, 1990). Fans may collectively respond to team threats such as scandals engulfing the team (Delia, 2019), potential relocation (Wegner et al., 2020) and sustained poor performance (Doyle et al. 2017). For example, Doyle et al. (2017) found fans employed socially creative and mobile strategies to mitigate poor evaluations of a new team’s on-field performance. Importantly, these actions not only have implications at the individual level, but further seek to preserve and maintain the status of the broader collective.

Researchers have examined how affiliations at the university, regional and national level impact engagement with related sport teams (Heere et al., 2011), as well as the inverse of this relationship (Katz & Heere, 2016). This body of work demonstrates how consumers build and develop relationships with one another centered around the focal point of attachment – the sport object (Katz & Heere, 2013). These connections facilitate a sense of community fostered through shared values and traditions which facilitate collective consumption activities (McDonald & Karg, 2014) and can lead to individuals experiencing greater senses of emotional support and well-being (Katz et al., 2020). Similarly, research within the large-scale sport event context demonstrates the important role in which the relationships created by, or strengthened through, spectating experiences shared with others can contribute to social-psychological health (e.g., Doyle et al., 2016), informing a growing body of work focused on the links between sport spectating and well-being (e.g., Inoue et al., 2020; Katz et al., 2020).

In ethnographic research, Katz and Heere (2013) demonstrated how brand communities may form around collective sport consumption activities like tailgating, uniting individuals from with family, work, church, and friendship groups around a focal point of interest (e.g., the sport team). Further research on season ticket holder repurchase decision making showed a season ticket holder's decision to renew significantly influenced by the composition and size of their team-related consumption network (Katz et al., 2020). An individual's attachment to a fan community is also an important variable to predict their sustained attendance at team games; whilst other variables like satisfaction and behavioral intentions, could not (Yoshida et al., 2015). Overall, we see evidence of fan engagement operating on a collective level, and that collectivity improving both the degree of engagement and its longevity by increasing the emotional and informational benefits to fans. To that hand, we consider the following to be an important research avenue:

FD7: Collective engagement is a feature of sport, but the particular impact of collectivity on engagement and the role of out-groups on engagement needs further consideration.

Non-transactional engagement

Given a person's levels of engagement is dependent on their investment of resources into interactions with an organization, customer engagement should include both transactional and non-transactional actions (Beckers et al., 2018). In the sport context, transactional fan engagement relates to the exchange of money, effort and/or time to obtain a product or service (Huiszoon et al., 2018) and often helps to fulfil self-interest tasks. It includes behaviors such as attending live games, watching games on TV and other media sources, purchasing season tickets, paying annual membership fees, buying team apparel, memorabilia, or other team-related products (Biscaia et al., 2016; Yoshida et al., 2014).

On the other hand, non-transactional fan engagement goes beyond consumption and economic contribution (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014) and refer to voluntary actions directed to benefit the team and other fans (Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Huettermann & Kunkel, in press). It relies on focal interactive experiences with the brand (e.g., team) and other actors (e.g., fans), thus being context-dependent

(Brodie et al., 2011) and representing an important route for building and improving fan-team relationships over time (Yoshida et al., 2014).

While the interest of academics and practitioners on the relationship between fans and teams had considered a transaction-based perspective (Huiszoon et al., 2018; Pansari & Kumar, 2017), the importance of establishing quality enduring relationships has seen a focus on non-transactional engagement (Yoshida et al., 2014). From the outset, research on CE has focused on customer interactions beyond purchase (van Doorn et al., 2010), but sport provides a good context to explore non-transactional engagement because of its strong emotional nature and numerous opportunities for interaction between fans and teams (Baker et al., 2016; Fujak et al., 2018). These interactions have been accelerated by the rise of social media allowing the provision of multiple additional touchpoints to encourage ongoing engagement experiences (Dolan et al., 2016; Filo et al., 2015). Table 3 presents a list of positive non-transactional fan engagement manifestations.

[Insert Table 3]

Through non-transactional engagement, fans contribute a range of resources that directly or indirectly affect the team and other actors (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Weimar et al., 2020) involved in the sport ecosystem (e.g., fans and sponsors). Furthermore, engagement experiences often occur within a broader network of consumers and other actors (Santos et al., 2019;) and may differ among groups of fans (Stander et al., 2016). For example, after buying a team game ticket (transactional), some fans share pictures of the purchase on social media to display their fandom, while others initiate interpersonal or technologically-mediated dialogues with other fans about the expected occurrences of the game (non-transactional).

Previous studies have suggested that non-transactional engagement often contributes to increased transactional behaviors (Huiszoon et al., 2018; Vivek et al., 2012), such as increased purchase of team apparel, game attendance and more budget allocation to team-related activities (Santos et al. 2019; Yoshida et al., 2014). From a conceptual perspective, non-transactional engagement can also be driven by certain transactional behaviors (Huettermann et al., 2019). For

example, the engagement in supportive team rituals during the games (non-transactional) occurs only after a ticket is purchased (transactional). Similarly, the purchase of team merchandise is often driven by word-of-mouth behaviors and positive interactions with other fans (Huettermann & Kunkel, in press; Santos et al., 2019).

Despite the common assumption that non-transactional engagement is beneficial for brands (Beckers et al., 2018), highly engaged fans may also be detrimental to sport teams (Huettermann et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020). Fans proactively engage, but with a negatively valenced perspective, resulting in CEBs that are detrimental to the brand and/or team (Dolan et al., 2016; Azer and Alexander, 2020). This occurs when fans engage in dysfunctional behaviors while attending live games (e.g., physically or verbally fighting with opposing fans, throwing objects into the field, booing the referees or opposition, or destroying team property) or interacting with the team and other fans through other vehicles (e.g., posting disrespectful messages, writing negative comments, unfavorable word-of-mouth, or clashing with opposing fans on social media).

It is also worth noting that engagement experiences occur in dynamic and iterative environments with specific situational conditions that may vary in complexity over time (Brodie et al., 2011). This is particularly relevant in the sport context because the off-season periods and teams' seasonal ups and downs can play a role in how fans interact with the team and other actors in the ecosystem (e.g., Su et al., 2020). In this respect, good team performance tends to influence positive manifestations of non-transactional fan engagement (e.g., BIRGing; Trail et al., 2016), while a reduction in fan interaction with the team on social media is common during periods without on-field competition (Weimar et al., 2021).

FD8: Sport managers need guidance on how best to measure and maximize the benefits of non-transactional fan engagement and reduce its downsides, particularly during off-season.

Best practice management of Sport CE

As we have discussed throughout, CE has direct practical implications, and recent work has begun to examine the most effective ways of managing CE in different contexts (Su et al., 2020).

Given the argument that sport is a well-suited context for CE, the question arises as to what sport managers should do to stimulate and foster engagement. The challenges for sport managers in fostering CE would seem to be many, including the sheer complexity of the sport market. With everything from community-based sport participation, professional teams, spectatorship, venue management, hospitality, equipment manufacture to fashion, the sport market covers a great assortment of enterprise. These different contexts require adaptation. We should not expect for example, CE in sport participation to act the same way as CE in fandom, nor CE in participatory sport settings to match that on display in spectator-based settings. Similarly, we must consider differences in CE that will exist with different points of attachment valued by a customer (e.g., at the athlete level vs. the event level).

Then there is the issue of how far one goes with encouraging CE. Hyatt et al. (2013) outline a range of ways teams have attempted to include fans in team management and decision making, dating back to the early 1950's. Some of these efforts, to have fans call plays or decide tactics in game, have backfired spectacularly in the past, but technology like social media and video gaming have made such input far more feasible today. Being possible does not, however, necessarily make it good practice. These technological leaps can assist with both the collection of data needed for CE and the delivery of engagement boosting activities like co-creation (see www.yinzcam.com for example), but a guiding framework is still required to ensure best practice. To that end, we summarize the main tenets that have emerged from this fast moving topic that might guide practice of CE in sport.

Many practitioners may be unclear about what is the best way to measure engagement in order to manage it effectively. There are some CEBs that have been linked to important business outcomes such as word-of-mouth and repeat purchases. Measuring these CEBs is important, and scales to do so can be found in the literature cited earlier in this paper or data can be gathered directly from source (e.g., social media engagement or sales databases). However, to influence CEBs a more nuanced understanding of CE in specific contexts is required. For example, it has

been shown that in a volunteering context, the usual three engagement areas (cognitive, affective and behavioural) are supplemented by spiritual and social engagement. Engaging volunteers through dimensions of spirituality via work, such as developing personal meaning through education about the organization and fostering human connectedness to grow the social engagement, can help improve volunteer retention (Conduit et al., 2019). The spiritual experience of sport, be it described as transcendence or the discovery of meaning or value, is central to the motivation to take part in sport and achieving success (Parry et al., 2007), and therefore examination of the role and effect of spiritual engagement in a sporting context is worthwhile.

Bearing in mind the importance of context, the customer engagement scale developed by Hollebeek et al. (2014) has shown to be a reliable measure of CE and has been adapted to sporting contexts (e-sports, retail and sports team; Abbasi et al., 2020; Behnam et al., 2021). This does require primary research however, and is therefore out of scope for those with limited resources. For those unable to capture data through dedicated research, but with the desire to evaluate and influence CE, there are alternate options available. Many CEBs are easily captured through online platforms, such as the use of hashtags in tweets, likes on Instagram or click-throughs on Facebook content.

CEBs are interconnected, in that we can expect a customer who is engaged to participate in a range of behaviors. A keen participant in organized distance running races would likely follow race organizers on social media, connect with others who race regularly, make suggestions on how races could be improved and even volunteer for events they weren't running in. The challenge for managers is getting a sense of which CEBs should be fostered first in order to spark increased engagement, or develop it amongst those not currently engaged. Whilst the temptation has been to short-cut the process by implementing loyalty programs, these are often expensive and of limited value in changing behavior (Sharp & Sharp, 1997). Increased patronage is not the only outcome sought from engagement, rather it is the customers' personal networks, their ability to build trust

and influence others on the firm's behalf, their knowledge about the brand and their creativity to drive new product insights (Harmeling et al., 2017).

FD9: Unlike previous fan models, it is clear engagement is not an 'escalator' where the goal is always to increase. Different degrees of engagement and expressions of that engagement work for different fans, and this nuance needs to be reflected in management practices. A deeper understanding of fan engagement processes is required.

To obtain such contributions from consumers, organizations are encouraged to focus on the following five interlocked actions: a) encourage a supportive culture, b) create platforms, c) build legitimacy, d) provide engaging content, and e) offer alternative pathways to connect. First, encouraging a supportive culture enhances CE. A suggestion from the work engagement literature (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008) is that supportive culture generates a sense of obligation on the part of consumers to care about the success and welfare of their favorite sport brands. For example, sport fans engage in a number of social activities (e.g., cheering, singing, chanting, and interacting) in a supportive fan community where both casual and devoted fans help each other to achieve their common goals (e.g., winning the championship). CE can be enhanced through a series of interactions between actors (e.g., sport teams, fans, and other stakeholders) in a socially supportive culture in both online and offline settings.

Second, creating digital platforms enables sport organizations to engage their consumers with social networking services and mobile applications before, during, and after games. Basic psychological needs theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) posits that people engage in activities or contexts that satisfy the basic needs for competence (e.g., feeling capable), relatedness (e.g., feeling connected), and autonomy (e.g., feeling spontaneous). In sport consumer behavior, social networking services and mobile applications can create need-satisfying conditions that help consumers become knowledgeable about sports, players, and rules (sense of competence), stay connected with sport organizations and other consumers (sense of relatedness), and contribute volitionally to their favorite sport objects (e.g., likes and retweets: sense of autonomy).

Third, building legitimacy aids engagement. Legitimacy is socially constructed and deemed to occur when an entity, or legitimacy object, is considered appropriate or desirable, given the social context in which it exists (Bitekine & Haack, 2015). Fans will only initiate engagement with the sports team (or another focal object) when they perceive the product to be legitimate (Ayi Wong et al., 2020). This legitimacy is assessed at an individual level, based on the fan's assessment of the instrumental, moral, and relational legitimacy, as well as an evaluation of whether the team is perceived to be legitimate by the collective group at a macro level (Bitekine & Haack, 2015). Intentions to engage with social media posts, for example, were highest when the information was presented from the athlete directly (Na et al., 2020).

Fourth, sport organizations need to provide engaging content that builds trust, commitment, and loyalty. Uses and Gratifications theory (U&G; Katz et al., 1973) explains the nature of media users, such that media users are goal-oriented and gratify certain needs when using media. U&G theory has been used in social media research (e.g., Filo et al., 2015) because it explicates how different content types (e.g., information, socialization) boost CE in virtual environments with different forms of content having different effects (Dolan et al., 2019). Recent research suggests that questions and answers on various topics, photos and videos are the most influential factors in reinforcing fan engagement (e.g., likes, comments, shares, and net positivity; Annamalai et al., 2021). While conventional media often focuses on emotional appeals, in a social media context, this is less likely to be shared or commented on than informational content (Dolan et al., 2019). The content of social media communications throughout the week is also important to consider with sponsor-related content tending to generate negative reactions when not linked to game-day (Weimar et al., 2020).

Finally, it is also important to note that CE in the sport context can be achieved by offering alternative pathways. Recent work highlights how sport event consumption can be facilitated by non-sport related factors like one's community ties or their relational bonds (Katz et al., 2020; Yoshida et al., 2015), whilst elsewhere, scholars have emphasized the impact of athlete's off-field

activities on CE (e.g., Doyle et al, 2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic also highlights the importance of organizations adopting innovative business practices to facilitate CE across both traditional and non-traditional consumption settings. For example, recent studies developed in the wake of the COVID-19 suggest sport brands can play a transformative role in crisis scenarios by enhancing fans' psychological well-being (Su et al., 2021) through the promotion of a sense of togetherness.

Collectively these findings support a systematic approach to adapting CE to the sport context. The conceptual model (Figure 1) is an attempt to synthesize how CE and CEB may occur encompassing various interlinked touchpoints, at different levels, in different ways, and with consideration given to the role of multiple actors. CE has the potential to bring together several currently disparate areas of research in sport, providing a common framework and language that has direct practical implications. The sport context is complex, and has unique characteristics that impact directly on engagement antecedents and expressions. The most valuable future CE work in sport will be that which, rather than simply applies mainstream CE work to sport, embraces the peculiarities of the sport context to identify boundary conditions to existing CE knowledge and advance mainstream CE theory.

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Table 1. Types and evolution of CE and CEB.

CE		
Construct	Type	Definition
Online engagement (Calder et al., 2009)	Personal and social experiences	The personal (inspiration, self-esteem, enjoyment) and social (e.g., participation and socialization) experiences an individual encounters when interacting with a website.
Audience engagement (Scott and Craig-Lees, 2010)	Cognitive and emotional reactions	A person's cognitive (mental effort) and emotional (affective response) reactions toward entertainment content
Online brand engagement (Mollen & Wilson, 2010)	Cognitive and affective commitment	A person's intellectual and emotional commitment to an active consumer-brand relationship through computer-mediated virtual environments
Customer brand engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2014)	Cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses	One's positively valenced responses that involve cognitive processing, affective states, and behavioral investments in the person's interactions with a brand.
CEB		
Construct	Type	Definition
Customer engagement behavior (van Doorn et al., 2010)	Behavioral manifestations	A customer's brand or company-related behavioral manifestations that result from motivational drivers, go beyond mere consumption activities, and occur in relation to his or her spontaneous, discretionary consumption behaviors.
Customer engagement behaviors (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014)	Voluntary resource contributions	A consumer's voluntary resource contributions toward the focal firm that accompany the four behavioral manifestations of augmenting, codeveloping, influencing, and mobilizing in the interaction between the consumer and the firm.
Fan engagement behavior (Yoshida et al., 2014)	Non-transactional, extra-role behavior	A set of fan behaviors that is non-transactional extra-role and benefits a consumer's favorite sport team, the team's management, and other fans.
Social media engagement behavior (Dolan et al., 2016)	Positively and negatively valenced behaviors	A consumer's positively and negatively valenced behavioral manifestations that have a social media focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers.
Actor engagement (Storbacka et al., 2016)	Disposition and behavioral manifestations	Both the actor's disposition to engage and the actor's behavioral manifestations in resource integration within a service ecosystem.
Customer engagement (Pansari & Kumar, 2017)	Value addition	A customer's value addition to the firm through direct (buying) or/and indirect (referring, influencing, and providing feedback) contribution.
Content engagement (Kharouf et al., 2020)	Webpage customization	A person's ability to customize his or her webpage, web experience, and an interactive relationship with a mega sport event (e.g., the World Cup).

Table 2. Distinguishing the engagement concept from related concepts.

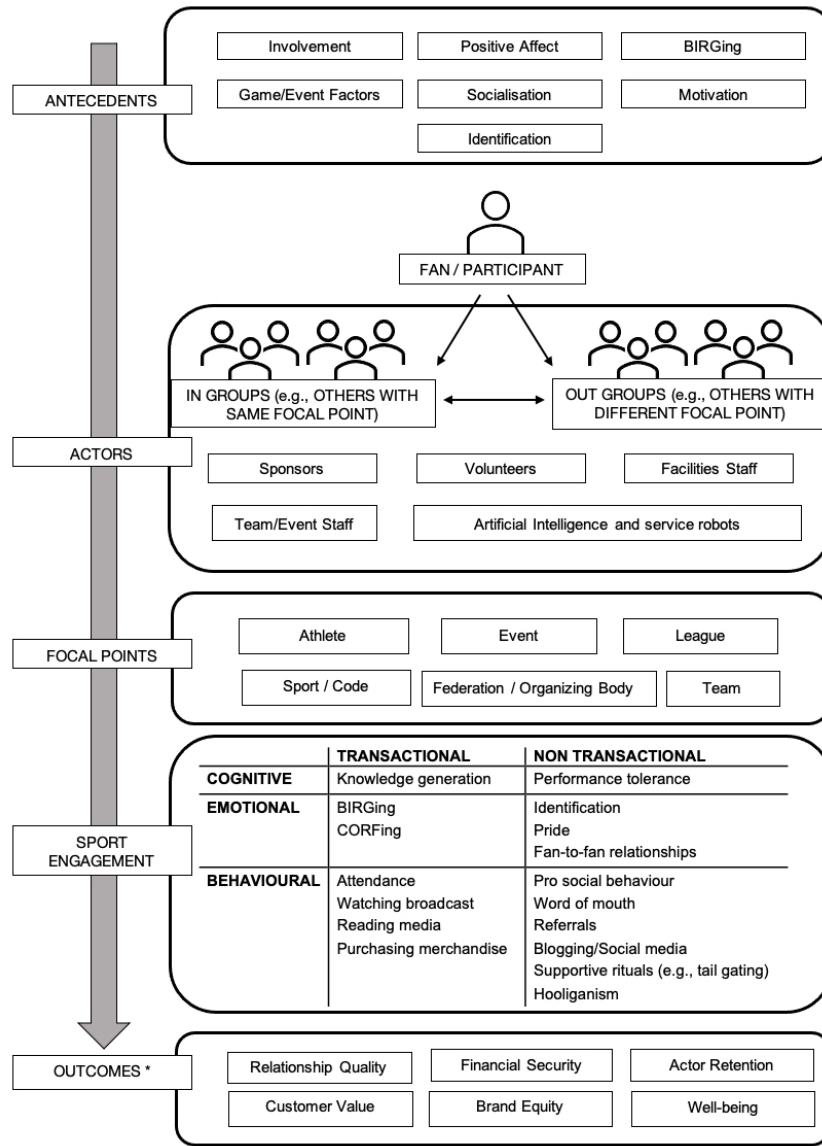
Concept	Definition	Conceptual similarity	Conceptual difference
Co-production in sport	A consumer's constructive participation in the product design and development processes (Auh et al., 2007; Behnam et al., 2021) in order to create value proposition (Vargo & Lusch, 2016).	Both CE and co-production are central concepts that act as cooperative behaviors to facilitate the value co-creation process (Auh et al., 2007; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014).	Co-production is the creation of value proposition at the product design and development stages (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). However, CE is a consumer's contribution to partners' (e.g., companies, developers, and other stakeholders) concerns at the stages of resource integration and value-in-use (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Pansari & Kumar, 2017).
Value co-creation at sport events	Joint value creation by multiple actors in heterogeneous actor-networks at sport events (Grohs et al., 2020)	CE represents the behavioral aspect of value co-creation because "engagement in practices is an act of value co-creation" (Grohs et al., 2020, p. 72).	Value co-creation is a broader concept than engagement and acts as a development process which involves not only consumers, but also companies and other stakeholders in business networks (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Vargo & Lusch, 2016).
Value creation at sport events	A consumer's creation of value-in-use during sport consumption, where value is socially constructed through sport consumption experiences (Grönroos & Voima, 2013).	Both CE and value creation accompany consumption practices in social contexts and are essential for the development of meaningful consumption experiences (Grönroos & Voima, 2013).	Value creation is the creation of value-in-use that is composed of experience, relationship, and personalization (Ranjan & Read, 2016). Value creation is a personalized practice in consumption situations. CE goes beyond personalized consumption experiences and refers to consumers' cooperative and others-directed behaviors (Schau et al., 2009; Yoshida et al., 2014).
Participation in fan communities	A fan's active involvement in the rituals, traditions, and other communal activities associated with a sport team (Hedlund, 2014) by investing time, effort, knowledge and other resources in the fan community (Dong & Sivakumar, 2017).	Similar to fan engagement behavior (Yoshida et al., 2014), fan participation represents how individuals actively cultivate and develop their sport consumption practices in fan communities (Hedlund, 2014).	Participation in fan communities is viewed as a fan's active involvement with value creation practices in fan communities (Hedlund, 2014). Fan engagement, on the other hand, is seen as a fan's active involvement with value creation practices not only in fan communities, but also in the interactions with various event actors (e.g., teams, players, and management staff; Yoshida et al., 2014).
Ritualized spectator behavior	A set of actions (e.g., pre-match activities, flag waving, singing, chanting, socializing, and celebrating) that are largely fan-developed, taken prior, during, and after games, and intended to reinforce fan identity (McDonald et al., 2014).	Ritualized spectator behavior is associated to a great extent with fan engagement because its conceptual focus is on value creation behaviors in fan communities (McDonald et al., 2014) which are part of the behavioral dimension of fan engagement (Yoshida et al., 2014).	Ritualized spectator behavior differs from fan engagement in the sense that the former depends largely on fan-developed value creation behaviors in fan communities (McDonald et al., 2014), while the latter includes value creation behaviors in dynamic interactions among event actors (e.g., teams, players, other fans, and management staff; Yoshida et al., 2014). Rituals are therefore best viewed as a subset of engagement.
Brand experience at sport events	A consumer's subjective, internal, and behavioral responses elicited by the stimuli of a sporting event brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Girish & Lee, 2019).	Brand experience includes consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses during brand consumption (Brakus et al., 2009) that share similar elements with the multidimensional conceptualization of CE.	In staged brand experiences, consumers are recipients of brand-related stimuli (Brakus et al., 2009). In sport, spectators play a less active role in branded event experiences than in engagement behaviors. Fan engagement is more than just a mere set of event experiences and encompasses a variety of active prosocial behaviors (Yoshida et al., 2014).
Fan loyalty	A person's enduring allegiance to a sport team, composed of attitudinal	Both fan engagement and fan loyalty encompass behavioral reactions and act as	Fan loyalty is primarily transactional and personally routinized in the fan-team relationship (Mahony et al., 2000). By contrast, fan

	(consistent commitment) and behavioral (repeat purchase) components (Mahony et al., 2000).	outcome variables of cognitive (e.g., team identification) and affective (e.g., consumer satisfaction) constructs in the consumer decision-making process (Mahony et al., 2000; Yoshida et al., 2014).	engagement has a stronger non-transactional component and is a socially routinized construct in the interactions with event actors (Yoshida et al., 2014). Although loyal fans tend to spread positive word-of-mouth, engaged fans actively contribute to the long-term welfare of their favorite teams in a collaborative, respectful, and meaningful way (Yoshida et al., 2014).
Sport involvement	A person's level of interest, desire, and motivation directed toward sport consumption activities (Funk, 2008).	CE and involvement are both value-driven, intentional, and goal-directed and act as a motivational force for individuals to become active sport consumers (Funk, 2008; van Doorn et al., 2010).	Sport involvement is a state of interest or motivation toward sport products, which can occur prior to sport consumption (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). CE differs from sport involvement because its behavioral component includes spontaneous voluntary actions toward event actors (e.g., teams, players, and other fans) which can be expressed during sporting events (Yoshida et al., 2014).

Table 3. Examples of positive manifestations of non-transactional sport customer engagement.

Manifestation	Definition	Example	Illustrative studies
Word-of-mouth	Messages spread through physical or electronic platforms aimed at influencing the perceptions or others about the team.	Sharing positive event experiences, information about the quality of the new team jerseys, or the team's history of success	Asada & Ko (2016); Yoshida et al. (2014)
Referrals	Messages spread through physical or electronic platforms aimed at incentivizing others to purchase team products and services.	Recommending others to attend team games and purchase team apparel.	Lee et al. (2020); Yoshida et al. (2014)
Fan-to-fan relationships	Interpersonal and/or computer-mediated interactions between fans concerning team events and other related information	Discussing past results, game features, player transfers and/or management decisions with fans through physical or computer-mediated interactions.	Santos et al. (2019); Thompson et al. (2016)
Team-to-fan relationship	Physical or computer-mediated reactions to content produced by the team	Commenting team-related events or liking and sharing social media posts	Ahn et al. (2014); Santos et al. (2019)
Blogging	Display of team fandom and knowledge to others in online environments.	Following the team on social media, sharing photographs, videos and other team-related information.	Cordina et al. (2019); Jaakkola and Alexandris (2014)
Prosocial behaviour	Interpersonal and/or computer-mediated interactions to help other fans on behalf of the team	Sharing information with other fans on the easiest ways to get to the stadium or the providing instructions on how to use specific team-services.	Thompson et al. (2016); Yoshida et al. (2014)
Basking in reflected glory (BIRGing)	BIRGing: promoting the association with the team's success	BIRGing: wearing team apparel and placing signs and flags in the year after important team victories	Trail et al. (2012); Yoshida et al. (2014)

Participation in member associations	The influence fans have on the team’s decisions and decision-making processes	Voting in team-related administrative issues or long-term strategic decisions as part of membership schemes.	Biscaia et al. (2016); Uhrich (2020)
Performance tolerance	Continued support and display of team-related products even during unsuccessful team performance	Wearing team jersey and defending the team publicly regardless of the on-field success.	Huettermann et al. (2019); Yoshida et al. (2014).
Pre-game tailgating parties	Participation in ceremonial social gatherings related to the team that encompasses eating, drinking, grilling.	Participating in tailgating events preceding team home games.	Bradford and Sherry Jr. (2015); James et al. (2001)
Knowledge generation	Development of insights to the team	Participating in focus groups or team forums organized by the team aimed at generating useful ideas.	Yoshida et al. (2014); Huettermann & Kunkel (in press)
Management cooperation	Constructive participation to ensure good service delivery at team-related events	Assisting frontline employees at the stadium to ensure the safety of spectators during team games.	Huettermann et al. (2019); Yoshida et al. (2014);
Supportive rituals	Engagement in choreographies and other traditions to celebrate team history, support the players and contribute to the game atmosphere.	Liverpool FC fans chanting ‘You will never walk alone’ during team games.	Hedlund et al. (2018); Underwood et al. (2001)
Volunteering	Altruistic actions to help the team.	Giving up free time to serve in a committee or help in the planning and deliver of team-related events.	Morgan (2013); Wicker (2016)



* Outcomes can be positive or negative

302x411mm (72 x 72 DPI)