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Take Me Out to the Facebook Page

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Take Me Out to the Facebook Page

Abstract

This analysis examines why fans would visit a professional baseball team's Facebook page. The broader objective is to understand motivations for using communication channels in social media. Given the popularity of Facebook, with over 2 billion active monthly users starting in 2017 according to Statista¹, insights from use of this communication channel should provide an important understanding of how digital and social media channels work. The results support a proposed model for understanding fans' interactions with a sports team's Facebook page. Team identification related positively with the value fans put on relevant outcomes from visiting the site. Socially relevant outcomes were highly valued among those who visited the team's page. From the standpoint of practice, the results suggest that sports teams may want to enhance their marketing efforts by employing strong emphases on the social relationships that fans have with other fans of the same team, and relationships the fans might build with players through live encounters with them on the team page. Managers of team pages should determine what various outcomes (gratifications sought) fans value as part of their identification with the team.

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Keywords

Facebook marketing, sports marketing, media uses and gratifications, planned behavior, channel beliefs

INTRODUCTION

Professional sports teams increasingly use social media, most notably Facebook, to communicate with and encourage their fans. Yet little was known about how fans actually engage with teams through their Facebook pages, and what impact team Facebook pages might have on their fans. This study employed an online, probability sample survey of local fans that were voluntarily on the email list of a major league baseball team. Research questions and hypotheses relate to the factors that motivate fans to regularly use the team's page.

The study was guided by a blending of theoretical concepts, including the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)², and the TPB-compatible, expectancy-value model of media uses and gratifications.³ TBP indicates how a person's performance of a behavior is ultimately based on one's perception of relevant social norms, one's ability to control the behavior, and one's expectations about the various outcomes of the behavior. An expectancy-value formulation measures one's subjective assessment of outcomes from performing the behavior, in this application, as one's needs that would likely be gratified by performing the behavior.

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One analysis,⁴ found that the more the fans visit the team's page, and the more they identify with the team, the more likely they are to attend games and buy team merchandise. The following analysis examines why fans might repeatedly use the team page.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Uses and Gratifications

Given the nature of the social networking site, it would seem that a variety of factors could relate to the user's needs, or gratifications sought, from a connection with a team via Facebook. These factors are:

Social identification, appealing to the user's need to feel a part of a distinctive group and identify oneself as a fan of a particular team;

Social integration and anticipated communication, providing a forum for socialization with peers and information that can be used in discussions with others;

Surveillance, providing special information and updates about the team;

Diversion, providing a means for entertainment and relief from stress or boredom.

As a subset of audience-based media research, the uses and gratifications approach examines, according to Ruggiero⁵ the "gratifications that attract and hold audiences to the kinds of media and types of content that satisfy their social and psychological needs" (p. 3) as well as the "motives and selection patterns of audiences for the new mass media" (p. 4). Because individuals or groups have varying motives, behaviors, and attitudes related to media consumption, the information gleaned from communication research that utilizes the uses and gratifications approach can be used to understand different media uses and the consequences associated with them.

At its core, the uses and gratifications perspective maintains that individuals select certain media to fulfill varying wants or needs. These needs are based on the individual's social and psychological makeup and are considered motives for using the media. The theory assumes that the audience is active and discerning in selecting media, choosing it in response to these specific needs.⁶ Thus, according to Papacharissi,⁷ "Based on perceived needs, social and psychological characteristics, and media attributes, individuals use media and experience related gratifications" (p.137).

According to Palmgreen and Rayburn⁸, human behavior is shaped largely by our expectations of how things will turn out; these expectations are based on past experience, communication with others, and through processes of inference and deduction. Related to uses and gratifications of media, then, this theory is based on the proposition that individuals do "have perceptions of the gratifications available from various alternatives, and that they act upon these perceptions" (p. 61).

Gratifications of Social Networking Site Usage

By understanding how a certain type of medium is put to use, which factors mediate that use, and what types of consequences stem from that use, researchers can begin to understand media consumption and media effects. Looking at newer media in particular, Papacharissi⁹ notes that, “online media have the capacity to fulfill both interpersonal needs of expression, inclusion and social interaction and mediated needs of surveillance and information seeking, entertainment and pass time or habit” (p. 145).

Two studies that specifically examined motives for Facebook use among a group of students found that most students use Facebook to maintain current relationships.¹⁰ In addition, it is a means to pass time, be entertained, and meet new people. Similarly, in examining college students’ use of Facebook, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke¹¹ found that the main uses and gratifications for having an account were to keep in touch with old and current friends, as well as to post and look at photographs, make new friends, and locate old friends. Additional motives included learning about events, posting events, feeling connected, sharing personal information, meeting academic needs, and satisfying romantic needs. These additional motivations for Facebook use add some dimensions to the original set of motives uncovered previously¹² and could be particularly useful in determining motivations that an individual has in connecting with a sports team via Facebook in particular. Furthermore, the study’s results lend strength to the argument that Facebook is a unique medium.

Facebook as a Unique Medium

Charney and Greenberg¹³ state:

Knowing what needs people are looking to fulfill and what types of activities they prefer and participate in while online will enable companies, media producers, policy makers and media effects researchers to better understand how to deal with [the expanding technology of the Internet]. (p. 379).

Thus, it is important to explore how people in society are using Facebook. How are people using Facebook differently than other media? Specifically, what are the gratifications that people are seeking which drive them to use or avoid Facebook? How does or does not Facebook fulfill those needs for individuals?

Boyd and Ellison¹⁴ define social networking sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct profiles (public or semi-public) within a system, configure a list of other users with whom they share a connection (i.e., peers, family, friends, etc.) and view and explore their list of connections and the lists of others. In their estimation, social networking sites are unique because they allow users to define their social networks and share them with others, which “can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made” (p. 211). Gvili and Levy¹⁵ compared seven different digital communication channels and found social network sites yielded significantly more favorable attitudes among users in regard to informative content, entertainment value and trustworthiness.

Consistent with this research, the Pew Research Center¹⁶ reports that, today, 68% of online adults use social networking sites, although this varies with age, from 88% use among 18-29 year olds to 38% use for adults 65 and older.¹⁷ When asked about their motivations for using social networking sites, the two primary reasons reported were to connect with family members and current friends and to reconnect with old friends. Other factors that play a role in motivating individuals to use social networking sites include connecting around a shared interest, making new friends, reading comments by public figures and seeking out potential romantic relationships.

The focus of this study is on Facebook in particular because it is one of the oldest sites (founded in 2004) and it is also the one of the most popular social networking sites with more than 2.2 billion active users, according to its website.¹⁸ And, as Ulusu observes, Facebook “presents a number of opportunities for companies to get close to their markets” (p. 2951).¹⁹

According to its website, Facebook is, by definition, “a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and coworkers.”²⁰ The company also prides itself on producing technologies that “facilitate the sharing of information through the digital mapping of people’s real-world social connections.” One study²¹ found that “a need for social connectivity is met through Facebook and allows its users to stay loosely connected with friends and family and to be part of the larger Facebook community” (p. 355).

Ulusu²² examined Facebook users’ engagement with brands and advertising via the site and found that users are usually interested in brand announcements on the site and that they feel part of the brand communities they choose to follow. This sense of community, engagement, and feeling as if one is “part of” a brand is important to note because many companies have taken advantage of the site as a platform for building their businesses, hoping to enhance their relationships with consumers. Unlike traditional marketing and advertising media such as television, print, radio and billboards, Facebook offers an opportunity for companies and consumers to engage in two-way communication, or dialogue. In this way, marketers may be able to gain valuable insight into the minds of their consumers and garner feedback.

It is important to identify the driving factors, motivations, or gratifications sought, by individuals connecting with an entity on Facebook in the first place, so that these entities can ensure that these needs are being met. In the process, identifying any inaccurate beliefs that individuals might have about the company will be useful as well, as this information can assist in helping to create new messaging and marketing surrounding the medium to help overcome incorrect assumptions or misperceptions. The primary focus here is on the needs that lead an individual to connect with a team via Facebook and, further, the role of using a team’s Facebook page in affecting an individual’s level of team identification.

THEORY APPLIED

This analysis examines why fans would visit the team page, a behavior. Underlying the research is Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).²³ Research into this well-tested theory indicates that an individual's intention to perform a behavior under specified circumstances (especially during an upcoming time frame) predicts actual behavior well. Thus the ultimate "dependent" variable in this analysis is the *behavioral intention* to visit the team's page during the upcoming baseball season.

TPB proposes that a person's behavioral intention is predicted by (1) his or her subjective ability to perform the behavior (*perceived behavioral control*), (2) felt social pressures to perform that behavior (*subjective norms*), and (3) his or her attitude toward performing that behavior, as determined by an individual's *behavioral beliefs*.

Behavioral beliefs are based on the perceived likelihood that performing the behavior would lead to various outcomes (*outcome beliefs*), with each outcome weighted by the extent to which the person values that outcome (how good or bad that outcome would be), also known as *outcome evaluation*. Employing an informal cost-benefit analysis, the individual may weigh and consider various behavioral beliefs. All else being equal, people tend to favor doing things that, on balance, are likely to produce good outcomes, and avoid the opposite. People form behavioral beliefs via personal experience with the behavior (or one like it), the information they have gathered about the behavior, and their own inferences.

Based on the "expectancy-value" concept of behavioral beliefs from TPB, Rayburn and Palmgreen²⁴ developed a scheme that would improve "media uses and gratifications" theory and research,²⁵ to better understand and predict what motivates people to use mass (and other) media. Applying their model, behavioral beliefs become the "gratifications sought" (or expected) from a medium, in this case, the team page. Based on prior experiences with that medium, individuals judge how much their needs have been met (*gratifications obtained*), which then influences their expectations about the outcomes of using the medium -- in this application, a professional baseball team's page -- in the future, and their motivation to do so.

The Path Model

The path model proposes that the fans' intentions to visit the team page in the upcoming season are affected directly by their habits of past visits, injunctive subjective norms (felt social pressures) to use the page, and what the model in Figure 1 terms "channel beliefs"²⁶, or the gratifications (valued outcomes) that fans expect to get from using the team Facebook channel. Thus, our first research question and set of hypotheses are:

RQ1: What are the relationships of intentions to visit the team Facebook page in the upcoming baseball season with the three proximate predictors shown in the model? Specifically, we hypothesize that this intention will be positively related to: (H1a) channel beliefs, (H1b) frequency of previous visits to the page, and (H1c) injunctive subjective norms to use the page.

As the unidirectional arrows illustrate, upstream variables can influence intention to visit the team page indirectly as well as directly. So, we will also be attentive to the "total effects" that upstream variables have, that is, a combination of their direct effects as well as the indirect effects they might have on downstream variables through mediating variables. Please note that we are using the terms "effects" to be consistent with modeling terminology; the data are only correlational, and do not directly establish cause-effect relationships.

Channel beliefs are based on both the outcome (likelihood) beliefs and the outcome evaluations (the measures are multiplied). Various relevant channel beliefs were included in this study. The model proposes that fans' channel beliefs are based on the experiences they have had previously in visiting the team page (experiential beliefs), what they have heard about the site from advertising and other sources (informational beliefs), and injunctive subjective norms.

For example, Wann's team identification model²⁷ proposes, in part, that a team's fan gets psychological benefits from being in an environment where the team's fans are easily identifiable. Thus, among those who identify more with the team, valued (good) outcomes of visiting a team's site might include an opportunity to be among others who support the team, and the opportunity to show others one's own support for the team. Outcome beliefs represent the fans' varying perceptions of how likely it is that visiting the team site would produce those very outcomes for themselves. These were among the channel beliefs in this study.

Thus, our second research question and set of hypotheses are:

RQ2: What is the relationship of channel beliefs about the team Facebook page with their four predictors in the model? Specifically, we hypothesize that channel beliefs will be positively related to: (H2a) the frequency of the individual's previous visits to the page, (H2b) his or her identification with the team, (H2c) exposure to communications about the page from other sources, and (H2d) injunctive subjective norms to use the page. We will be attentive to total effects as well.

A positive relationship between past visits to the team Facebook page and team identification, based on this data set, has been found and published previously.²⁸ It is represented in Figure 1, and will be re-analyzed as part of this path analysis.

METHOD

An Internet survey was conducted with a probability sample of individuals who had opted to receive emails from a major league baseball team. Further, individuals surveyed also had to be at least 18 years old, live within the primary media market of the team and dwell within easy traveling distance of the ballpark. A sample of 3,000 was contacted by email and given access to the Internet survey administered by Turnkey Surveyor; 571 respondents (19%)

completed the survey, which took about 10 minutes. The survey had been approved by the human subjects review board of the authors' university.

Respondents were asked a variety of questions related to the team's marketing efforts, including their purchasing of tickets and team merchandise, their following the team via Facebook and other media, and personal identification with the team. Key demographic information was also gathered: 59.1% were male, modal income was \$50-74,999 (20.3% fell in that range), and the average age was 40.8 ($SD=12.8$). Most commonly, respondents had attended 1-5 games the previous season (28% fell into that modal range), another 23.8% had attended 6-10 games, and 19.4% 11-15 games. Non-attendance was negligible. The margin of error (95% confidence) for percentages based on the full sample is +/- 4.1%.

For this report, only the 179 fans (34% of the respondents) who had been to the team Facebook page at least once before are included so that past experiences with the site could be considered properly in testing the model and so that their ability to access the page (perceived behavioral control) was established in advance. The margin of error (95% confidence) for percentages based on this subsample is +/- 7.3%. This subsample included proportionately more of the younger respondents [average age was 34.3 ($SD=10.2$)] and those of somewhat lower income [modal income was \$25-49,999 (24% fell into that range)], perhaps because they were also younger. There was a slightly higher representation of women in the subsample, although the respondents were still primarily male (52.5%). Most common among these respondents, 19.6% had attended 1-5 games the previous season, another 19.6% 6-10 games, and 19.0% 11-15 games. Non-attendance was negligible.

Measures

Along with the demographic and game attendance variables noted above, only a subset of variables -- those relevant to this analysis -- are included in this report. Descriptive statistics, variable correlations, and reliability coefficients are shown in Table 1.

The respondent's intention to visit the team's Facebook page was measured by a single item that asked the respondents: "We realize that not everyone might want to do so, but how often do you think you might visit the [team name] Facebook page during the upcoming baseball season?" Response options ranged from 1 "never" to 4 "frequently" (mean=3.36, $SD=0.69$).

The frequency of past visits to the team Facebook page was assessed by averaging two items ($\alpha=.89$), each on a scale that ranged from 1 "less than once a month" to 7 "several times a day": (1) how often they usually visited the page during the baseball season (mean=3.54, $SD=1.74$) and (2) how often during the offseason (mean=2.54, $SD=1.56$). The combined scale has a mean of 3.04 ($SD=1.57$).

The extent of the respondent's frequency of exposure to information specifically promoting the team Facebook page via various communication channels was measured by

averaging nine items ($\alpha=.92$), each on a scale ranging from 1 "never" to 4 "frequently": the team's internet page or email (mean=3.15, $SD=0.99$); at a team's game (mean=2.98, $SD=1.14$); radio or television broadcasts (mean=2.91, $SD=1.22$); another Facebook page (mean=2.91, $SD=1.09$); friends (mean=2.91, $SD=1.19$); family (mean=2.70, $SD=1.29$); another online source (mean=2.66, $SD=1.25$); print advertisements (mean 2.55, $SD=1.32$); and outdoor billboards (mean=2.44, $SD=1.38$). The combined scale has a mean of 2.80 ($SD=0.86$).

Injunctive subjective norms (perceived social pressure) was assessed by a single item measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree": "Most [team] fans I know would expect me to use the [team] Facebook page" (mean=3.44, $SD=1.05$).

Team identification was measured by the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS),²⁹ adapted for this specific baseball team. Six of the seven SSIS items, each on a 1-8 scale, were averaged for this analysis. Various items, for example, asked how important is it to the individual that the team wins, whether their friends see them as fans of the team, and how often they display the team's logo at home, at work, or on their clothing. One item that asked how often the respondent followed the team through different media, including the internet, was omitted from this analysis because it too closely duplicated the communication measures in the analysis. The mean of the combined scale ($\alpha=.83$) was 6.95 ($SD=0.79$).

Channel beliefs) were measured by 14 items (see Table 2) created specifically for this study. Items tapped various dimensions of gratifications that might be sought by using the team Facebook page, including outcomes related to surveillance (e.g., awareness of promotions and special offers, keeping up-to-date), diversion (e.g., entertainment, passing the time), and social interactions (e.g., communicating with others, showing others one's support for the team). Social factors are an important component of SSIS, and so are reflected among these channel beliefs items as well.

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Channel beliefs scales were in bipolar expectancy-value format,³⁰ such that the perceived likelihood (e) of each outcome (-3 to +3 likelihood scale) was multiplied by the personal value (v) the respondent puts on that outcome (-3 to +3 badness- goodness scale) The product terms ($e*v$) for the various beliefs were then averaged to become the channel beliefs scale ($\alpha=.94$, mean= 2.27, $SD=2.74$). Positive channel belief scores represent the respondent's beliefs that personally visiting the team Facebook page would likely provide outcomes that the respondent values, or not provide outcomes the respondent considers bad. Negative scores occur when the respondent anticipates that visiting the page would probably not result in a good personal outcome, or likely produce a bad one.

Analysis

The IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and AMOS structural equation modeling programs were used for the analyses. Age, income, sex, and the number of the team's games attended the previous season were used as control variables. Variables used in

the path analysis were residualized by the control variables prior to the AMOS analysis. Path coefficients are standardized. Hypothesis tests are one-tailed.

RESULTS

The path analysis results (Figure 2) showed a fairly good fit between the structural model and the data (RMSEA=.05, PCLOSE=.38, CFI=.99, SRMR=.03, $X^2_4=6.11$, $p=.19$). The model accounts for 45% ($p\leq.05$) of the variance in intentions to visit the team Facebook page in the upcoming baseball season. The relationship between past visits to the team Facebook page and team identification, as published previously from this data set,³¹ is illustrated again as a path coefficient in this model ($\beta=.30$, $p\leq.01$).

The first research question (RQ1) concerned the direct predictors of the respondent's intention to visit the team Facebook page in the upcoming season. The first hypothesis (H1a) proposed that channel beliefs will have a positive relationship with this intention. The path analysis supports this hypothesis ($\beta=.18$, $p\leq.01$).

Table 2 shows that some of the strongest individual motivations for intending to visit the team Facebook page, based on their partial correlations with intention to visit the page, involve surveillance (getting information on promotions and special events, partial $r=.44$; accessing special offers on tickets and merchandise, partial $r=.44$; getting official team information, partial $r=.35$) or enhancing communication with others subsequent to their visits to the page (getting information to talk about with friends, partial $r=.37$; accessing information to share with others, partial $r=.37$; showing others one's support for the team, partial $r=.33$), all significant at $p\leq.001$. Diversion -- a desire for entertainment -- is also in this mix (partial $r=.34$, $p\leq.001$). Overall, the outcomes that fans value correspond well with what they expect to get for themselves when they visit the page ($r=.79$, $p\leq.001$; $\rho=.75$, $p\leq.01$; $N=14$). But there were some occasional exceptions. For example, fans tended to put some value on identifying themselves to others as fans, and on interacting with players, but were somewhat unsure as to whether visiting the page will help them do that.

The next two hypotheses proposed that the frequency of the respondents' past visits to the team Facebook page (H1b) and injunctive subjective norms (i.e., felt social pressures) to use the page (H1c) will be positively related to intentions to visit the page. Results show that both direct-effects hypotheses are supported (H1b, $\beta=.43$, $p\leq.01$; H1c, $\beta=.26$, $p\leq.05$). Total effects of these predictors on intentions to visit the page (Table 3), which include direct effects plus the indirect effects (i.e., relationships mediated through intervening variables), are also statistically significant and positive (total effects of past visits = $.47$, $p\leq.01$; of injunctive subjective norms, $.30$, $p\leq.05$).

The second research question (RQ2) inquired about the relationships of channel beliefs with its four predictors from the model. H2a, which predicted a positive, direct relationship between previous visits to the team Facebook page and beliefs about the valued outcomes of

revisiting that page (channel beliefs), was not supported, but came close ($\beta=.11, p=.06, ns$). However, the total effects (Table 3) that past visits have on channel beliefs ($.20, p\leq.05$) are statistically significant. Thus, it seems that, via enhancing team identification, past visits to the team Facebook page enhance channel beliefs to a statistically significant degree (indirect effects $=.08, p\leq.05$). The strength of the respondents' identification with the team does have a positive relationship with channel beliefs (H2b, $\beta=.28, p\leq.01$), as does the frequency of their exposure to communications about the team page from other sources (H2c, $\beta=.20, p\leq.01$) and felt social pressures to use the page (H2d, $\beta=.22, p\leq.01$). Combined, the predictors account for 29% ($p\leq.05$) of the variance in channel beliefs.

Figure 2 also shows that felt social pressures to visit the team Facebook page correlate positively with past visits to the page ($r=.33, p\leq.05$) and with exposure to various communication channels about the page ($r=.28, p\leq.05$). Exposure to these channels also correlates positively with previous visits to the page ($r=.39, p\leq.05$).

DISCUSSION

The results show the value of this model, and its theoretical underpinnings, for gaining a useful understanding of fans' use of a sports team's Facebook page. Since these results are correlational, cause-effect relationships can only be implied, not empirically demonstrated.

The path model and the actual patterns of relationships in the data fit each other reasonably well. The model also accounts for nearly half (45%, or $R^2=.45$) of the differences from fan to fan in their plans to visit the team Facebook site in the upcoming season. All five of the upstream variables in the model appear to have significantly enhanced the fan's intention to visit the team's page. In order of the strength of total effects (direct plus indirect), they are: (1) past visits; (2) felt social pressures to visit the site; (3) channel beliefs; and, in about equal measure, (4) team identification and (5) the fan's exposure to ads and other information about the site. The fact that previous visits to the team site are the best overall predictor of intentions to come back indicates that fans overall find use of the page rewarding.

All but one of the predicted relationships between the variables in the path model were supported by the data. The exception was that previous visits to the team Facebook site did not relate directly to channel beliefs. The relationship was very close to being statistically significant, however, and thus certainly worthy of further research. Perhaps there are additional channel beliefs that would improve the measure by capturing other motivations to visit the page, especially based on the user's previous experiences visiting the site. However, past visits did relate to channel beliefs at least indirectly: past visits strengthened team identification, which in turn positively affected channel beliefs and thereby further motivated intentions to revisit the site.

The most salient individual channel beliefs, based on their expectancy-value means and correlation with intentions to revisit the team site, were based on instrumental needs, such as

taking advantage of special offers and promotions, as might be expected. However, socially-based needs, in particular gathering team-related information to share with others, were also quite important to fans and motivated intentions to use the team page to the extent the fans expected that the page would help them fulfill those needs as well. Other social forces in the form of injunctive subjective norms -- the fans' beliefs that other fans they know think they should visit the site -- were also strong motivators to visit the site.

Thus, from the standpoint of practice, the results suggest that sports teams may want to enhance their marketing efforts by employing strong emphases on the social relationships that fans have with other fans of the same team, and relationships the fans might build with players through live encounters with them on the team page. Using the expectancy-value approach to channel beliefs, managers of team pages should -- as did this study -- diagnose what various outcomes (gratifications sought) fans value, as compared to what they expect the page to provide them, so that the page can provide and advertise related content. According to a leading digital sports strategy agency, maintaining authenticity in the content provided is paramount to maintaining relationships.³²

Generally, this model should have substantial theoretical and practical value to efforts researching and promoting the use of Facebook sites, even beyond those of sports teams.

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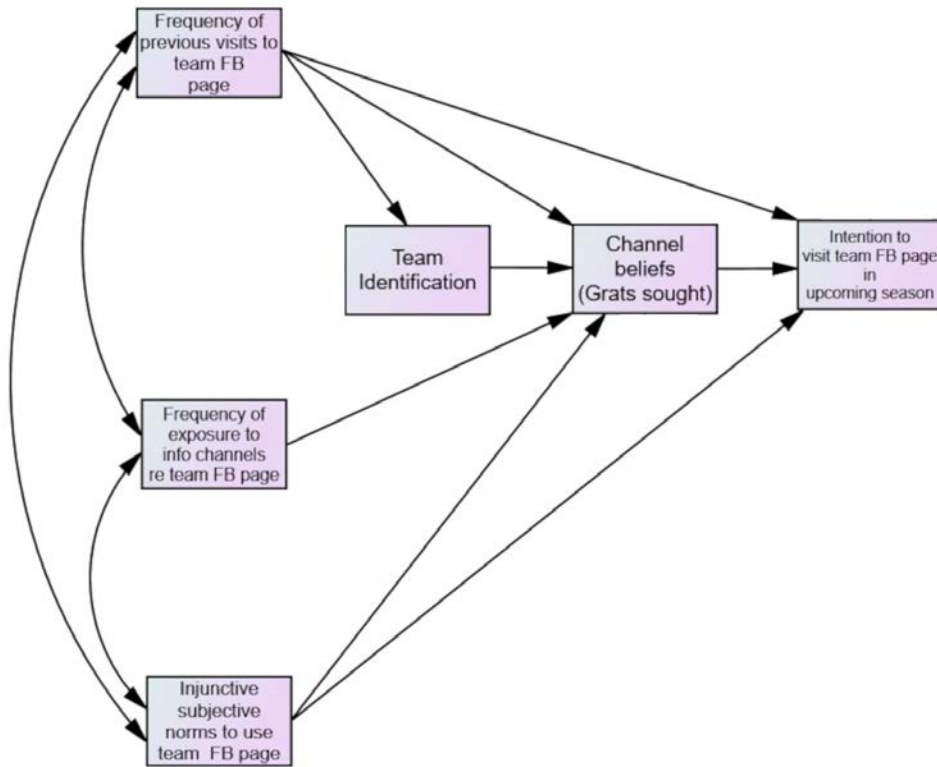


Figure 1 Proposed path model of intention to visit team Facebook page

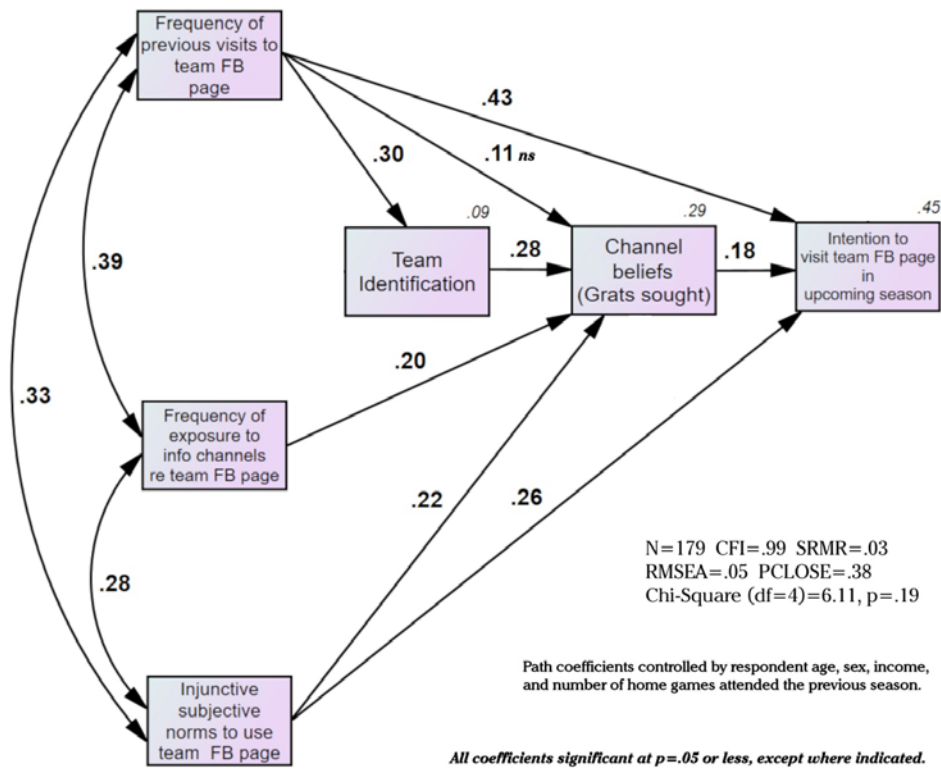


Figure 2 Tested path model of intention to visit team Facebook page

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables in path model

(Residualized variable relationships are below diagonal)

Diagonals: Unstandardized means, (standard deviations), *potential range of scale, (observed minimum, maximum)*

N=179

	Frequency of previous visits to team page	Injunctive subjective norms to use team page	Frequency of exposure to information channels re team page	Team identification	Gratifications sought	Intention to visit team page in upcoming season
Frequency of previous visits to team page	3.04 (1.57) 1 to 7 (1, 7)	.39***	.39***	.35***	.37***	.57***
Injunctive subjective norms to use team page	.32***	3.44 (1.05) 1 to 5 (1, 5)	.29***	.12ns	.37***	.49***
Frequency of exposure to information channels re team page	.39***	.27***	2.80 (0.86) 1 to 4 (1, 4)	.11ns	.33***	.41***
Team identification	.30***	.08ns	.09ns	6.95 (0.79) 1 to 8 (4, 8)	.32***	.19*

Gratifications sought	.34***	.34***	.34***	.35***	2.27 (2.74) -9 to +9 (-8.36, 9.00)	.44***
Intention to visit team page in upcoming season	.58***	.45***	.42***	.19*	.42**	3.36 (0.69) 1 to 4 (1, 4)

Significance: *ns* $p > .05$ * $p = .05$ ** $p = .01$ *** $p = .001$

Table 2: Channel Beliefs: Descriptive statistics for gratifications sought from team Facebook page and their relationships with respondents' intentions to revisit the page in the upcoming baseball season.¹

Variable: "For me, visiting the [team name] Facebook page would..."	Expectancy ² (e) <i>mean (SD)</i>	Value ³ (v) <i>mean (SD)</i>	e*v <i>mean (SD)</i>	Partial <i>r</i> with intention to visit team page ⁴
Help me find information on promotions and special events.	1.86 (1.39)	1.92 (1.23)	3.94 (3.87)	.44
Provide me with exclusive offers on things like tickets and merchandise.	1.40 (1.74)	2.02 (1.12)	3.24 (4.40)	.44
Give me access to information that I can talk about with my friends.	1.11 (1.71)	1.54 (1.29)	2.25 (3.73)	.37
Give me access to information I can share with others.	1.22 (1.72)	1.58 (1.26)	2.74 (3.80)	.37
Give me official [team name] information.	1.90 (1.35)	1.93 (1.17)	3.96 (3.88)	.35
Be entertaining to me.	1.14 (1.69)	1.54 (1.25)	2.31 (3.72)	.34
Help me show others my support for the team.	0.93 (1.86)	1.69 (1.21)	2.37 (4.12)	.33
Allow me to keep up with current events/issues that affect people like me.	1.09 (1.77)	1.60 (1.22)	2.21 (3.76)	.28

Help me identify myself to others as a [team name] fan.	0.58 (2.01)	1.62 (1.32)	1.74 (4.33)	.26
Help me to interact with the [team name] organization.	0.73 (1.76)	1.27 (1.31)	1.70 (3.66)	.26
To pass the time.	0.82 (1.78)	1.09 (1.37)	1.92 (3.47)	.23
Help me feel like I am part of a special group of [team name] fans.	0.37 (1.93)	1.05 (1.44)	1.53 (3.37)	.22
Help me socialize with other [team name] fans.	0.19 (1.94)	0.71 (1.38)	1.19 (2.97)	.22
Help me to interact with [team name] players.	-0.07 (1.98)	1.31 (1.49)	0.73 (4.22)	.16

¹ N=179 previous visitors to team Facebook page.

² Scale: -3 to +3 (-3= very unlikely, +3=very likely) that visiting the Facebook page would result in the given outcome.

³ Scale: -3 to +3. Respondent rates the anticipated outcome as -3=very bad, 0= neither good nor bad, +3=very good.

⁴ Partial correlation coefficients are controlled by the following covariates: sex, age, income, and the number of team games attended the previous baseball season. All coefficients are significant at $p \leq .05$. Items are ranked in order of the strength of the correlation of their expectancy-value (e*v) scores with intention to visit the team Facebook page during the upcoming baseball season.

Table 3: Standardized "total effects" coefficients

	<i>Upstream variables</i>				
<i>Downstream variables</i>	Frequency of previous visits to team page	Injunctive subjective norms to use team page	Frequency of exposure to communication channels about team page	Team Identification	Channel beliefs (gratifications expected)

Team Identification	.30				
Channel beliefs (gratifications expected)	.20	.22	.20	.28	
Intention to visit team page in upcoming season	.47	.30	.04	.05	.18

All coefficients statistically significant at $p \leq .05$.

"Total effects" represent direct (see path diagram results) relationships between variables plus indirect relationships between variables (i.e., as mediated by other variables).

Residualized variables: controlled by age, sex, income, and the number of home games the respondent had attended the previous season.

N=179