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Collegiate Fan Allegiance and Twitter’s Role Using the Revised Psychological Continuum Model (PCM)*: A Case Study of Clemson Men’s Basketball Fan

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PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is to investigate the Twitter’s role in the formation of team allegiance through the revised Psychological Continuum Model (PCM). The hypothesis for this study is that Twitter usage about a sports team will be positively correlated to fan allegiance. The primary focus will be to analyze how individuals interact with a sports team via Twitter and how those interactions form allegiance.

SPORTS FAN ALLEGIANCE
- The term “allegiance” can be identified as a commitment to a particular team in determining sports fan’ desire such as persistence, resistance of attitude, and cognitive thoughts through behavioral and attitudinal factors (Funk & James, 2006).
- Sports fan with high level of allegiance have well-formed attitudes which consists with values, self-concepts, and beliefs towards a specific team and these attitudes contribute to make a strong psychological connection between a fan and team (Crocket & Robinson, 2008).

BACKGROUND
- Advent of Web 2.0 → Revialization of Online Marketplace
- In August 2011, the usage of social media by adult Internet users in the United States increased over the last six years, from 9% in 2005 to 65% in 2011 (Madden & Zickuhr, 2011).
- Social media have provided two-way communication tools to reach both users in an innovative and unique way through images, videos, and follow on Twitter (Zhang, Sung, & Lee, 2010).
- Twitter is one of the most popular social-networking and communication technologies at the present time (Weingarten, 2008).

OBJECTIVE
- Funk (2001, 2006) suggested that the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM, shown in Figure 1) consists of hierarchical and psychological progressions, which are awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance.
- The PCM would aid understanding of the effects of people moving through the four stages and how each stage helps move an individual into the next level (Funk & James, 2006).

HYPOTHESIS & TESTING
- General Form Equation
  \[ Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ATT(Attraction)} + \beta_2 \text{TWI} + \beta_3 \text{ATT(Attachment)} \times \text{TWI} + \epsilon \]
  \[ Y_2 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ATT(Attachment)} + \epsilon \]
- Dependent Variables
  Attachment, Allegiance
- Hypothesis
  1. Twitter usage will be positively related to attachment process.
  2. Twitter usage about a collegiate team will be positively correlated to fan allegiance.

RESULTS
- Descriptive Statistics (N= 117)
  - Gender: Male 75, Female 42
  - Age: 18-22 73, 23-30 12, 31-40 13, 41-50 12, 51-65 7
  - Education: High school 16, Some college 53, 2-year college 2, 4-year college 26, Masters 8, Doctoral 5
  - Ethnicity: White 87, African American 12, Asian 14, Hispanic 2, Other 2
  - Occupation: Student 51, Non-student 66

- Correlation Matrix (N= 117)

CONCLUSION
It was found that independent and dependent variables is all valid through test. This study will determine whether fan allegiance of collegiate sports was directly influenced by frequency of Twitter usage. In addition, Twitter usage positively contributed to establish fan loyalty to attend future game and to study the developing relationship between individuals’ awareness and emotions related to watching sports games and their allegiance toward specific sports teams

This research will aid sport marketers to learn sport consumer behaviors, needs, and motivation online, which will help shaping internet marketing communication.