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Sport team personality: It's not all about winning!

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ABSTRACT

As there is still no commonly accepted scale to measure the brand personality of sport teams, the purpose of this study was to develop and validate the Sport Team Personality Scale (STPS) in a professional sport context. The authors conducted a series of studies in the United States and United Kingdom with fans of the English Premier League, Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, the National Football League, and the National Hockey League. The STPS contains 18 items that load onto six factors: success, talent, entertainment, dedication, admiration, and care. The authors compared this new scale with existing sport team personality scales and used it to explore team identification and perceptual similarities and differences among teams. Results indicate that teams map along performance (i.e., success and talent) and character (i.e., admiration and care) factors and that the character factor is a more important source of team identification than the performance factor. Taken together, these results illustrate how the STPS can help sport managers position and differentiate teams within a league to improve marketing outcomes.

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1. Introduction

Past research has linked brand personality, "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p. 347), to several positive consumer and firm outcomes. For example, brand personality enhances consumer attitudes, preferences, purchase intentions, satisfaction, and loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Mengxia, 2007)—all of which are vital to the success of sport organizations. Consumers seek out brands with certain personalities because of the symbolic benefits these brands provide (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1993). Ultimately, consumers' identification with these brands can lead to long-term consumer-brand relationships. Brand personality is especially relevant to professional sport teams, because sport teams offer several symbolic benefits and fans often identify strongly with their favorite teams. Consequently, sport team personality is an important contributor to marketing outcomes such as team identification and subsequent brand loyalty (Karjaluoto, Munnukka, & Salmi, 2016).

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Despite the importance of brand personality and its relevance to sport teams, efforts to develop scales that measure sport team personality are limited. This lack of research is surprising, given that fans often attribute a variety of personality characteristics to professional sport teams. For example, the New York Yankees' mission to win the World Series emphasizes performance-related attributes such as "talented" or "successful." On the other hand, FC Barcelona's slogan of "més que un club" ("more than a club") highlights character-related attributes such as "caring" or "community-oriented."

While past research has demonstrated that general brand personality scales cannot capture the sport-specific elements that characterize sport team personality (Ross, 2008), existing sport team personality scales present conceptual or methodological limitations. From a conceptual standpoint, existing scales offer little consensus on the most important dimensions of sport team personality. For example, the number of factors in each scale varies widely—as does the conceptual meaning of each factor, which is not always clear. As a result, questions arise regarding which factors most adequately capture sport team personality, as well as how sport team personality can be used to examine other managerially relevant concepts. As things stand, it seems impractical to relate as many as six factors to other constructs of interest. From a methodological standpoint, several authors have acknowledged that existing scales do not yet "provide a sufficiently sound instrument" to measure sport team personality (Braunstein & Ross, 2010, p. 13). For example, existing scales report fairly high correlations between factors, which could be due to common method bias. Thus, researchers may have to control for common method bias, which often contaminates responses in personality and values research (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2012). Taken together, these challenges highlight the need for a new sport team personality scale, a comparative evaluation of a potential new sport team personality scale with existing scales, and an investigation of the relationship between sport team personality and other managerially relevant concepts such as team identification in a professional sport context.

To this end, we report a series of studies whose findings contribute to sport management theory and practice in the following ways. First, we develop and validate the Sport Team Personality Scale (STPS). The scale contains 18 items that load onto six factors (success, talent, entertainment, dedication, admiration, and care) and demonstrates adequate psychometric properties across a number of professional sport leagues—including the English Premier League (EPL), Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the National Football League (NFL), and the National Hockey League (NHL). Second, we compare the STPS to existing scales and show that the new scale captures the most important dimensions of sport team personality. Third, to illustrate how sport managers can use the STPS, we investigate its relationship with team identification and examine the perceptual similarities and differences between teams within a league. Results indicate that teams map onto performance (i.e., success and talent) and character (i.e., admiration and care) factors and that the character factor is a more important source of team identification than the performance factor.

In the following sections, we define the concept of brand personality and review existing brand personality scales, including previous attempts to measure sport team personality. Then, we develop and validate the proposed STPS, compare the STPS to existing scales that measure sport team personality, and examine the relationship between the STPS and other managerially relevant concepts to illustrate how this new scale can help managers position and differentiate teams within sport leagues to improve marketing outcomes. Finally, we discuss theoretical and managerial implications as well as limitations and directions for future research.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1. Brand personality

Brand personality refers to "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). The concept of brand personality is especially relevant to marketers because it can lead to a variety of desirable consumer and firm outcomes—including enhanced attitudes, preferences, purchase intentions, satisfaction, and loyalty to the brand and/or firm (Brakus et al., 2009; Mengxia, 2007)—thanks to its symbolic, self-expressive function (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1993). In general, consumers are attracted to, prefer, and choose brands that allow them to express themselves (Belk, 1988; Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993; Malhotra, 1988; Sirgy, 1982). Thus, brand personality is a valuable tool that can help differentiate brands and improve marketing outcomes. However, the ability to manage brand personality to achieve these effects depends on the existence of a reliable, valid, and generalizable measurement scale.

2.2. Measuring brand personality

Most empirical brand personality research stems from Aaker's (1997) introduction of a theoretical framework of brand personality and corresponding Brand Personality Scale (BPS). To develop the BPS, Aaker tested 114 personality characteristics across 37 brands using a large, nationally representative sample of U.S. consumers. This process resulted in 42 items that load onto five factors: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. While Aaker described the BPS as reliable, valid, and generalizable, subsequent researchers criticized the BPS for including items that do not reflect human personality traits, neglecting within-brand variance by aggregating consumer-level data and using the brand as the unit of analysis, and failing to replicate across different contexts and cultures (e.g., Aaker, Benet-Martínez, & Garolera, 2001; Austin,

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Siguaw, & Mattila, 2003; Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003; Bosnjak, Bochmann, & Hufschmidt, 2007; Geuens, Weijters, & De Wulf, 2009; Sung & Tinkham, 2005).

In an effort to address these limitations, Geuens et al. (2009) provided a new measure of brand personality. To develop the scale, the authors tested the applicability of 40 traits across 193 brands using data from over 12,000 Belgian consumers. This process resulted in 12 items that load onto five factors: responsibility, activity, aggressiveness, simplicity, and emotionality. The scale performed well across five studies and 10 additional countries. As a result, the authors concluded that the scale is reliable, valid, and generalizable.

While these two general brand personality scales provide researchers with tools to measure brand personality in a sport context, the brand personality factor structure may not always replicate for specific product categories (Austin et al., 2003). Several researchers offer conceptual arguments for the need to develop a sport-specific brand personality scale (Bibby, 2011; Lee & Cho, 2009, 2012). Given the unique characteristics that distinguish sport teams from traditional products—most notably, that the product (i.e., team performance) is often inconsistent and unpredictable; the sport product is intangible, ephemeral, experiential, and subjective in nature; fans experience strong personal and emotional identification with the sport product regardless of performance (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2014); and the team is made up of athletes, coaches, managers, and fans with their own unique personalities—we expect this to be the case in our context. Thus, it seems unlikely that a general brand personality scale would capture the sport-specific elements that characterize sport team personality, and indeed, empirical work that tested Aaker's BPS in a sport team context revealed that the model did not fit the data well (Ross, 2008).

2.3. Sport team personality

Building on Aaker's (1997) foundational work, we define sport team personality as the set of human characteristics associated with a sport team. While some past research has argued that Aaker's definition is too broad and incorporates characteristics that do not reflect human personality traits (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003; Geuens et al., 2009), other researchers failed to find support for human personality scales in a brand context and acknowledged that "it is unlikely that the same factors used to describe human personality are suitable for the description of brands" (Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Guido, 2001, p. 392)—confirming the need to augment human personality scales when evaluating brands (Aaker, 1997; Caprara et al., 2001). Consequently, we adhere to Aaker's more inclusive definition of brand personality—which incorporates all human characteristics associated with a brand—and as such, our conceptualization does not restrict sport team personality to only human traits but rather human characteristics related to sport teams.

While several studies investigate the related concepts of brand equity and brand associations in a professional sport context (Bauer, Sauer, & Schmitt, 2005; Gladden & Funk, 2002; Ross, James, & Vargas, 2006), brand personality is narrower in scope. Brand equity refers to "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (Keller, 1993, p. 1) and includes two dimensions: brand awareness and brand image. Brand associations refer to "anything in a consumer's memory linked to a specific brand" (Gladden & Funk, 2002, p. 56) that drives brand image. Brand associations can include factors such as brand marks, non-player personnel, stadium, rivalries, and team history (Gladden & Funk, 2002; Ross et al., 2006), to name a few. Past researchers have outlined three types of brand associations: attributes, benefits, and attitudes—all of which vary in terms of favorability, strength, and uniqueness (Keller, 1993). Attributes can be broken down further into two categories: product-related and non-product-related attributes. Benefits can be broken down further into three categories: functional and experiential (which are product-related) and symbolic (which are non-product-related). Brand personality represents attribute and benefit associations that tie human characteristics to brands, which are often symbolic in nature. While early empirical investigations of sport team brand associations do not mention brand personality (Gladden & Funk, 2002), follow-up work introduced team brand associations that do include brand personality (Ross et al., 2006).

In general, research on sport team brand equity and brand associations has recognized the importance of both productrelated and non-product-related attributes. In a sport context, product-related attributes, such as success or star players, contribute to team performance, while non-product-related attributes, such as product delivery or tradition, may not contribute to team performance directly but still affect consumer behavior (Bauer et al., 2005; Gladden & Funk, 2002). Interestingly, there is some evidence that non-product-related attributes are more important to consumer behavior, such as game attendance, than product-related attributes (Bauer et al., 2005). Similarly, we expect the STPS to reflect both productrelated and non-product-related human characteristics associated with a sport team as opposed to all possible brand associations, and like this past work, we examine whether product-related or non-product-related characteristics have a stronger impact on managerially relevant concepts such as team identification.

2.4. Measuring sport team personality

We classify past research that examines brand personality in a sport context into three main categories: studies that (a) apply existing brand personality scales, (b) adapt existing brand personality scales, or (c) develop new brand personality scales. We review each of these three categories and emphasize studies that investigate sport team personality.

First, several researchers have applied existing brand personality scales to the sport context (Čáslavová & Petráčková, 2011; Chien, Cornwell, & Pappu, 2011; Deane, Smith, & Adams, 2003; Diamantopoulos, Smith, & Grime, 2005; Donahay &

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Rosenberger, 2007; Rosenberger & Donahay, 2008; Ross, 2008). Of particular interest, Ross (2008) applied Aaker's BPS in a college sport team setting using a U.S. student sample. Results of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) revealed poor overall model fit as well as problems with reliability and convergent and discriminant validity evidence. Based on this unsuccessful attempt to replicate the BPS in a sport team context, Ross (2008, p. 23) concluded that "the BPS is not fully applicable to the area of [sport, and] further development of the scale is needed in order to improve the reliability and validity."

Second, several researchers have adapted existing brand personality scales to increase their applicability in the sport context (Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Carlson, Donavan, & Cumiskey, 2009; Giroux, Pons, & Maltese, 2017; Musante, Milne, & McDonald, 1999; Smith, Graetz, & Westerbeek, 2006). For example, Braunstein and Ross (2010) tested 84 personality characteristics from a variety of existing brand personality scales in a professional sport team setting using a U.S. student sample. Their analysis resulted in 40 items (17 of which overlap with the BPS) that load onto six factors: success, sophistication, sincerity, rugged, community-driven, and classic. While the results of a CFA revealed an adequate model fit and satisfied convergent validity evidence, there were problems with reliability and discriminant validity evidence. Consequently, the authors concluded that their scale does "not provide a sufficiently sound instrument" to measure sport team personality (Braunstein & Ross, 2010, p. 13).

Lastly, given the limitations of using a general brand personality scale in a sport context, several scholars have developed new sport-specific scales (Greenhalgh, Dwyer, & LeCrom, 2017; Heere, 2010; Lee & Cho, 2012; Schade, Piehler, & Burmann, 2014; Tong & Su, 2014; Tsiotsou, 2012)—three of which measure sport team personality. First, Heere (2010) proposed a new technique to measure sport team personality, where the managers responsible for cultivating the team's personality listed the adjectives they felt represented the team's personality. This methodology presents two potential problems for us. First, it may make comparisons across teams and leagues difficult, unless managers from all teams and leagues participate, which is not often feasible in practice. Second, we are interested in consumers' perceptions of sport team personality—as well as the relationships between these perceptions and other managerially relevant variables—and there may be a discrepancy between how managers would like to position teams versus the way consumers actually view the teams (Greenhalgh et al., 2017).

Next, Tsiotsou (2012) generated an initial pool of 80 items via content analysis of six well-known Greek sport teams' websites and tested 48 traits using a sample of Greek consumers. Results of this study showed that 19 items (only one of which overlaps with the BPS) load onto five factors: competitiveness, prestige, morality, authenticity, and credibility. While the results of a CFA revealed an adequate model fit and satisfied the minimum standard criteria for reliability and convergent validity evidence, some of the factors were highly correlated, and we question the labeling and content of some of the dimensions. For example, both traditional and radical loaded onto the same factor (authenticity), and wealthy and influential were the only two items that loaded onto the credibility factor, which is defined as "the team is trustworthy and reliable" (Tsiotsou, 2012, p. 245). We speculate that these issues may be attributable to either translation or cross-cultural differences in how participants interpreted these items (recall that prior brand personality scales received criticism for failing to replicate across cultures; Aaker et al., 2001; Bosnjak et al., 2007; Sung & Tinkham, 2005). Whether the results would replicate using an English-speaking sample remains an open question.

Finally, Schade et al. (2014) generated an initial pool of 105 traits based on a literature review, website content analysis, and expert interviews. After eliminating items that did not reflect human personality traits, as well as items experts deemed "inappropriate" (Schade et al., 2014, p. 655), the authors tested 26 items using a sample of German consumers. Their analysis resulted in 17 items (only three of which overlap with the BPS) that load onto four factors: extraversion, rebellious, open-mindedness, and conscientiousness. The results of a CFA revealed an adequate model fit and satisfied the minimum standard criteria for reliability and convergent and discriminant validity evidence. Nevertheless, we question the meaning and relevance of some factors. For example, traditional, faithful, and family-oriented loaded onto the extraversion factor, and sophisticated and social responsible loaded onto the open-mindedness factor. Interestingly, this scale is the only scale we discuss that does not capture the performance dimension of sport teams by including items such as successful or competitive. It is possible that these results are a function of either (a) limiting the scale to human personality traits, which may not be applicable to sport teams, or (b) translation or cross-cultural issues (we are not aware of any work that replicates the original results with an English-speaking sample).

While we recognize the considerable progress in measuring the brand personality of sport teams, we attempt to improve upon these existing scales in three ways. First, as the authors of existing scales acknowledge problems with reliability and validity evidence, we seek to develop a scale with sound psychometric properties. One common problem we observed with existing scales is high correlations between factors, which is consistent with the presence of uncorrected common method bias. As response biases such as halo effects, acquiescence, or stylistic response tendencies are often present in this type of research (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001), we account for common method bias when we develop the STPS and compare the STPS to existing scales.

Second, as there is very little consensus on the number and conceptual meaning of items and factors included in existing scales, we develop a scale that not only captures the most important dimensions of sport team personality (including dimensions from previous scales) but is also sufficiently compact to encourage practical application. In addition, to make the scale more accessible to a larger group of researchers and practitioners, as well as make comparisons across teams, the scale should contain human characteristics associated with professional sport teams across a variety of different sports. We examine the higher-order factor structure of the STPS and existing scales to ensure that the STPS captures the most important dimensions of sport team personality. Consistent with past sport team brand equity and brand association

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research that incorporates both product-related and non-product-related attributes (Bauer et al., 2005; Gladden & Funk, 2002; Ross et al., 2006), we expect the scales to load onto second-order dimensions that reflect factors that contribute to team performance (e.g., "talented" or "successful") as well as factors unrelated to team performance (e.g., "caring" or "community-oriented").

Third, the scale should be able to explain various phenomena related to sport team personality. While prior attempts to measure sport team personality generally focus on scale development rather than tying brand personality to other managerially relevant concepts, the ultimate purpose of such a scale is that it enables researchers to study the relationship between sport team personality and other concepts. One recent exception demonstrates the relationship between brand personality, team identification, and brand loyalty (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). Likewise, the STPS and its corresponding first-and second-order factors should be useful in understanding managerially relevant issues such as exploring the determinants of team identification or identifying perceptual similarities and differences among teams, which could prove beneficial in positioning and differentiating teams within or across leagues to enhance marketing outcomes. In the following sections, we describe item generation, scale development, and validation of the proposed STPS.

3. Item generation and preliminary scale development

Following Aaker's (1997) multi-stage approach, we generated an initial pool of sport team personality characteristics and subsequently reduced the number of items to a smaller set of personality characteristics that capture the most important dimensions of sport team personality. In the first stage, we conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven highly identified U.S. undergraduate student sport fans (M_{age} = 21.17, SD = 0.98, 29% female). In exchange for a financial incentive, participants with different favorite sport teams in the MLB, NBA, NFL, or NHL, listed characteristics associated with sport teams in their favorite league. Participants identified 198 unique items, only 12 of which overlapped with the BPS, providing additional support for the distinctiveness of spectator sport compared to traditional products.

In the second stage, we performed an extensive review of existing human, brand, and sport team personality inventories to supplement the interview data (e.g., Aaker, 1997; Anderson, 1968; Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Saucier & Goldberg, 1996; Sweeney & Brandon, 2006). We eliminated characteristics that overlapped or were not associated with sport team personality, leaving us with 235 items.

In the third stage, we sought to identify the most important sport team personality characteristics and reduce the total number of items. In exchange for extra course credit, 216 U.S. undergraduate students (M_{age} = 18.97, SD = 1.06, 46% female) rated the extent to which each of the 235 items could be used to accurately describe the personality of sport teams in their favorite league (MLB, NBA, NFL, or NHL), measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = "not at all applicable" to 7 = "very applicable." To prevent fatigue, each participant rated half of the 235 items. Participants were also invited to list additional characteristics in an open-ended question. We calculated mean applicability scores for each of the 235 items and retained items with a score of at least 5 out of 7 (i.e., greater than the midpoint of the scale). We also retained 18 items listed by participants that did not overlap with existing items. This procedure resulted in the retention of 108 items.

Although at this point Aaker (1997) moved straight to exploring the BPS factor structure, recall that we had two explicit goals for the STPS related to accuracy and implementation. On the one hand, the scale should capture all relevant aspects of team personality, but on the other hand, it should be sufficiently compact to encourage practical application. Thus, in a fourth stage, we aimed to gain insight into the dimensionality of the remaining sport team personality characteristics to retain all distinct factors while further reducing the total number of items. We accomplished this via a categorization task. In exchange for extra course credit, 45 U.S. undergraduate students (M_{age} = 20.69, SD = 2.56, 49% female) participated in a sorting task and classified the 108 items into distinct groups based on their similarity, keeping their favorite sport team in mind (in the EPL, MLB, NBA, NFL, or NHL). Based on the results of an average-linkage cluster analysis, we eliminated items that did not cluster well (most likely due to the ambiguity of the item, e.g., defensive, diverse, organized) or that had strong semantic similarity to another item in the same cluster (e.g., able and capable, high-quality and high-performance). This procedure resulted in the retention of 62 items.

In the final stage, we explored the factor structure of the remaining items. In exchange for extra course credit, 781 U.S. undergraduate students (M_{age} = 19.19, SD = 0.92, 48% female) rated the extent to which each of the 62 items could be used to accurately describe the personality of a team in their favorite professional sport league (EPL, MLB, NBA, NFL, or NHL), measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = "not applicable at all" to 7 = "very applicable." To include additional stakeholder perspectives and increase the variance in ratings, we randomly assigned participants to rate their favorite team, least favorite team, or a team about which they were knowledgeable but neither liked nor disliked (Bauer et al., 2005; Greenhalgh et al., 2017).

A preliminary analysis of the data revealed the presence of a strong general factor that pervaded all individual items participants rated. This is usually a sign of common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), which may be the result of response styles such as acquiescence, scale usage differences, difficulties in discriminating between personality items, or the tendency of fans to describe their favorite team in generally positive terms and their least favorite teams in generally negative terms. The high correlations between factors in past sport team personality research are certainly consistent with the presence of common method bias and, together with our results, support the need to address common method bias when assessing sport team personality. To correct for this bias, we double-standardized the data

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(Fischer, 2004); that is, we standardized the data both by row (across items for a given respondent) and by column (across respondents for a given item) to adjust for differences in scale usage among respondents.¹

Based on the results of an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using the double-standardized data, we eliminated items with low loadings on target factors or high loadings on non-target factors, leaving us with six distinct factors. In an effort to keep the STPS sufficiently compact—and consistent with past sport spectator consumer behavior scales (e.g., Wann, 1995)—we retained the three items with the highest loadings per factor. Thus, the preliminary scale has 18 items that load onto six factors. Based on the collective meaning of the three items that load onto each factor, we labeled the six factors: success, talent, entertainment, dedication, admiration, and care (see Fig. 1).

4. Study 1: testing the proposed STPS

The main objective of this study was to examine the psychometric properties of the proposed STPS and calibrate the scale using a large, non-student sample.

4.1. Method

In exchange for a small financial incentive, 619 U.S. MTurk participants (M_{age} = 27.20, SD = 8.15, 23% female) rated the extent to which each of the 18 STPS items could be used to accurately describe the personality of their favorite team or their favorite team's biggest rival in their favorite professional sport league (MLB = 23%, NBA = 21%, NFL = 48%, and NHL = 9%), measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = "does not describe this team at all" to 7 = "describes this team very well." Participants also rated six control items that were similar to STPS items but distinct from the dimensions captured in the STPS. We use these six items to correct for common method bias in participant ratings (i.e., scale usage differences or consistent endorsement of certain scale positions regardless of the content of the item). This is the preferred approach of correcting for common method bias, as it measures the bias directly at the individual-item level using designated control items (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

4.2. Results

A six-factor CFA on the 18 STPS items without correcting for common method bias revealed that the model fit the data well and that reliability and convergent validity evidence were both satisfied: all coefficient alphas were between 0.83 and 0.92 and standardized target loadings were at least 0.72, with an average loading of 0.86. However, as we anticipated, there were problems with discriminant validity in that the six factors were highly correlated: correlations ranged from r = 0.55 to 0.92 and averaged 0.77. These findings mirror similar results found in prior sport team personality research.

To correct for common method bias, we computed the mean score of the six control items and included it as a directly measured method factor in the analysis. Thus, each of the 18 STPS items loads onto its underlying substantive factor as well as the method factor, which removes method variance due to scale usage differences and other response biases (see Podsakoff et al., 2003, p. 888–895). A CFA where the 18 STPS items were specified as indicators of the six substantive sport team personality factors and the directly measured method factor yielded the following model fit: $\chi^2(120) = 341.27$, N = 619, standardized RMR = 0.023, RMSEA = 0.055, 90% CI = [0.048, 0.061], CFI = 0.979, and TLI = 0.971. Based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) recommendations that RMSEA should be below 0.06, standardized RMR should be below 0.08, and CFI and TLI should be above 0.95, the model fits well. The reliability of the care factor was somewhat low (0.65), but the reliabilities of all other factors were acceptable (see Table 1). All 18 items loaded onto the correct factor, and the average standardized loading was 0.56. The loadings on the directly measured method factor were also highly significant, which confirms the need to control for common method bias. Indeed, the correlations between the six factors were lower after correcting for common method bias, ranging from 0.04 to 0.83 (the highest correlation was between success and talent), and the average correlation was 0.45



Fig. 1. The Sport Team Personality Scale (STPS).

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¹ Although double-standardization is a common procedure to correct for common method bias, it does have its limitations, and we acknowledge its shortcomings in this exploratory study. After becoming aware of this problem, however, we used a stronger procedure to correct for common method bias in all subsequent studies.

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Table 1

Sport Team Personality Scale (STPS) factor reliabilities (Studies 1-3).

Factors	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 3
Items			(favorite team)	(rival team)
Success Accomplished High performance	0.82	0.68	0.72	0.66
Successful				
Talent Gifted Skilled Talented	0.78	0.72	0.73	0.75
Entertainment Entertaining Exciting Fun	0.79	0.72	0.68	0.57
Dedication Committed Dedicated Determined	0.81	0.76	0.79	0.69
Admiration Admirable Honorable Role model	0.81	0.80	0.57	0.70
Care Caring Community-oriented Service-oriented	0.65	0.68	0.53	0.64

(see Table 2) versus 0.77 before the correction. Thus, it appears that controlling for common method bias leads to a stronger

Table 2

STPS factor correlations (and standard errors) (Study 1).

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Success	1.00					
2. Talent	0.83 (0.025)	1.00				
3. Entertainment	0.41 (0.044)	0.51 (0.040)	1.00			
4. Dedication	0.62 (0.035)	0.60 (0.036)	0.49 (0.041)	1.00		
5. Admiration	0.36 (0.044)	0.40 (0.044)	0.52 (0.040)	0.58 (0.036)	1.00	
6. Care	0.04 (0.055)	0.05 (0.055)	0.33 (0.052)	0.39 (0.050)	0.69 (0.039)	1.00

and more interpretable representation of the dimensions that characterize sport team personality.

4.2.1. Second-order factor structure

To gain additional insight into the higher-order structure of the STPS, we performed a second-order exploratory factor analysis on the factor scores of the six first-order factors. Two Eigenvalues were greater than one and the two higher-order factors explained 85% of the total variance. The Promax-rotated factor pattern showed that success (0.97) and talent (0.97) loaded onto the first factor with dedication (0.61) and entertainment (0.45) loading onto this factor to a lesser extent. Care (0.94) and admiration (0.82) loaded onto the second factor with entertainment (0.40) and dedication (0.40) loading onto this factor to a lesser extent. Based on the collective meaning of the first-order factors that loaded onto each second-order factor, we label the first higher-order factor performance and the second higher-order factor character. The correlation between the two second-order factors was 0.37. These results are consistent with the sport team brand equity and brand association literature that distinguishes between product-related (i.e., performance) and non-product-related (i.e., character) attributes (Bauer et al., 2005; Gladden & Funk, 2002; Ross et al., 2006).

4.3. Discussion

To summarize, in Study 1, we provided support for the 18-item, six-factor STPS and showed that sport team personality can ultimately be characterized by performance and character. But whether the STPS improves upon existing scales is still an open question. Therefore, the purpose of Study 2 was to further examine the STPS and compare its psychometric properties and predictive validity evidence with existing scales that measure sport team personality.

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5. Study 2: validating and comparing the STPS with existing scales

The main objective of this study was to examine validity evidence of and compare the STPS with existing scales that measure sport team personality. Specifically, we investigated the scales of Braunstein and Ross (2010), Tsiotsou (2012), and Schade et al. (2014), as these three scales represent the most convincing sport team personality scales to date. First, we examined the psychometric properties of each scale, including model fit, reliability, convergent validity evidence, and discriminant validity evidence. Then, we explored the second-order factor structure of the various scales to see whether the STPS captures all the relevant dimensions of sport team personality. Finally, we assessed the predictive validity of each scale as it relates to a single managerially relevant construct—team identification. We were particularly interested in team identification because it affects consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses (e.g., Carlson et al., 2009; Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). For example, past research has demonstrated positive effects of team identification has also been linked with viewership (on TV and in person), purchase intentions, and retail spending on team merchandise (Carlson et al., 2009; Kwon et al., 2007). Finally, team identification mediates the relationship between brand personality and attitudinal and behavioral loyalty (Karjaluoto et al., 2016). For these reasons, we focused on the relationship between sport team personality and team identification.

5.1. Method

In exchange for a small financial incentive, 578 U.S. MTurk respondents (M_{age} = 34.12, SD = 10.78, 32% female) participated in this study. First, to obtain more knowledgeable and highly identified fans, we screened out participants with low levels of involvement with their favorite sport league, measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = "not involved at all" to 7 = "very involved." Participants who responded at or above the midpoint (i.e., 4) proceeded to the main survey, where they identified the three teams with which they were most familiar in their favorite league (MLB = 25%, NBA = 21%, and NFL = 55%). Then, we randomly assigned participants to one of the three teams, and they rated the extent to which each of the 83 unique scale items from the four scales and six control items could be used to accurately describe the personality of the team, measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = "does not describe this team at all" to 7 = "describes this team very well." Lastly, participants rated their identification with the team they evaluated (seven items from Wann & Branscombe, 1993, α = 0.93).

5.2. Results

Before correcting for common method bias, the average correlations between the factors in the four scales were once again quite high: the average inter-factor correlations were 0.67 for Braunstein and Ross (2010), 0.77 for Schade et al. (2014), 0.80 for the STPS, and 0.84 for Tsiotsou (2012). Therefore, we used six control items that did not overlap with any of the substantive items from the four scales to correct for common method bias in all four scales (as outlined in Study 1). Specifically, we conducted separate CFAs for each of the four scales, relating each item to both its underlying substantive factor and the directly measured method factor (see Table 3). The STPS had the best fit statistics compared with existing scales based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) criteria (see Study 1). The STPS also had the highest level of convergent validity evidence: 89% of target loadings were greater than 0.4, vs. 71% for Schade et al., 68% for Braunstein & Ross, and 42% for Tsiotsou, While the reliabilities of two STPS factors (success and care) were just below the 0.70 threshold (at 0.68), at least one factor in each of the other scales was also below this threshold; in some cases, factor reliabilities were much lower than for the STPS (e.g., 0.14 for Tsiotsou). Finally, even though we corrected for response bias, reducing the average correlation between factors from r = 0.80 to 0.48 for the STPS, there were still some problems with discriminant validity evidence. The highest correlation was r = 0.85 between success and talent (see Table 4) in the STPS. However, this was a problem common to all scales. For example, the highest factor correlation for each of the other scales was r = 1.00 for Braunstein & Ross, 0.85 for Schade et al., and 0.71 for Tsiotsou. Note that the highest correlations in the STPS were between first-order factors that load onto the same second-order factor, which mitigates the problem of lack of distinctiveness of the first-order factors and also demonstrates the value of considering second-order factors.

5.2.1. Second-order factor structure

To gain additional insight into the higher-order structure of all four scales, we performed an exploratory second-order factor analysis on the factor scores of the 21 first-order factors (six for the STPS; six for Braunstein & Ross, 2010; five for Tsiotsou, 2012; and four for Schade et al., 2014). Although four factors had Eigenvalues greater than one, the third and fourth factors explained a relatively small amount of the total variance. The first two factors explained 64% of the total variance, and the third and fourth factors increased the total variance explained by only 15%. Moreover, the third and fourth factors were not readily interpretable. For example, rugged (Braunstein & Ross) and rebellious (Schade et al.) loaded onto the third factor together with sophisticated (Braunstein & Ross); and while on the surface classic (Braunstein & Ross) and authenticity (Tsiotsou) may seem like they should load together on the fourth factor, individual items such as traditional and radical conflict with one another.

Table 5 displays the Promax-rotated (oblique) two-factor solution and corresponding standardized regression coefficients. The correlation between the two second-order factors was 0.38. Based on the collective meaning of the

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Table 3

Psychometric properties of the new and existing scales (Study 2).

Scale	Fit statistics	Convergent validity	Reliability
STPS	$\chi^{2}(120) = 415.58$ RMSEA = 0.065 SRMR = 0.027 CFI = 0.970 TLI = 0.958	16 of 18 (89%) standardized target loadings > 0.4	Success = 0.68 Talent = 0.72 Entertainment = 0.72 Dedication = 0.76 Admiration = 0.80 Care = 0.68
Braunstein and Ross (2010)	$\chi^2(725) = 3,108.18$ RMSEA = 0.075 SRMR = 0.060 CFI = 0.877 TLI = 0.860	27 of 40 (68%) standardized target loadings > 0.4	Success = 0.87 Rugged = 0.63 Sincerity = 0.84 Community-driven = 0.53 Classic = 0.79 Sophistication = 0.75
Tsiotsou (2012)	$\chi^{2}(142) = 839.02$ RMSEA = 0.092 SRMR = 0.049 CFI = 0.915 TLI = 0.886	8 of 19 (42%) standardized target loadings >0.4	Competitiveness = 0.80 Prestige = 0.59 Credibility = 0.48 Morality = 0.63 Authenticity = 0.14
Schade et al. (2014)	$\chi^{2}(113) = 511.96$ RMSEA = 0.078 SRMR = 0.048 CFI = 0.935 TLI = 0.912	12 of 17 (71%) standardized target loadings > 0.4	Extraversion = 0.67 Open-Mindedness = 0.68 Rebellious = 0.53 Conscientiousness = 0.74

Note. We computed composite reliabilities (analogous to α) using output from the CFA.

first-order factors that loaded onto each second-order factor, we found support for the performance and character factors obtained in Study 1, where success and talent loaded strongly onto the performance factor and admiration and care loaded strongly onto the character factor. Thus, we concluded that the STPS captures the most important dimensions of sport team personality identified by existing scales.

5.2.2. Relationship with team identification

To assess the predictive validity of each scale, we correlated the first-order factors with a single managerially relevant construct—team identification. Interestingly, the first-order factors that loaded onto the second-order character factor had the highest correlations with team identification (see Table 6). For example, the STPS first-order factors of care, admiration, and entertainment loaded onto the second-order character factor and were most highly correlated with team identification (rs = 0.35, 0.31, and 0.30, respectively, all p's < 0.001).

We also correlated the second-order factors with team identification and similar to the first-order results, there was a significant positive relationship between the character factor and team identification (r = 0.35, p < 0.001), but no relationship between the performance factor and team identification (r = 0.06, p = 0.14). Because there are no problems with multicollinearity for the second-order factors, we also regressed team identification on the two second-order factors. Similar to the correlational pattern, the character (b = 0.65, p < 0.001) factor predicted team identification in the expected way, whereas the performance factor (b = -0.14, p = 0.05) was not significant.

Overall, the first-order STPS factors represented three of the six highest correlations—the most of any single scale—and all three of these factors loaded onto the corresponding second-order character factor. Furthermore, the second-order character (but not performance) factor predicted team identification, providing preliminary evidence of the STPS' usefulness in understanding managerially relevant issues.

5.3. Discussion

To summarize, in Study 2, we demonstrated that the STPS performs well compared to existing scales that measure sport team personality. In addition, the STPS captured the most important second-order factors of sport team personality

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Success	1.00					
2. Talent	0.85 (0.031)	1.00				
3. Entertainment	0.24 (0.058)	0.50 (0.047)	1.00			
4. Dedication	0.60 (0.043)	0.69 (0.037)	0.54 (0.045)	1.00		
5. Admiration	0.27 (0.052)	0.45 (0.047)	0.63 (0.040)	0.53 (0.043)	1.00	
6. Care	-0.02 (0.058)	0.24 (0.055)	0.50 (0.050)	0.36 (0.053)	0.77 (0.034)	1.00

 Table 4

 STPS factor correlations (and standard errors) (Study 2

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Table 5

Second-order factor pattern of the new and existing scales (Study 2).

Scale	Second-order performance factor	Second-order character factor
First-order factors	•	
STPS		
Success	1.03	-0.31
Talent	0.94	-0.03
Entertainment	0.35	0.52
Dedication	0.72	0.24
Admiration	0.26	0.76
Care	-0.06	0.92
Braunstein and Ross (2010)		
Success	0.90	0.05
Rugged	0.46	0.17
Sincerity	-0.07	0.96
Community-driven	0.15	0.88
Classic	-0.10	0.45
Sophistication	0.21	0.20
Tsiotsou (2012)		
Competitiveness	0.95	-0.31
Prestige	0.77	0.25
Credibility	0.42	0.04
Morality	0.03	0.82
Authenticity	0.28	0.71
Schade et al. (2014)		
Extraversion	0.02	0.91
Open-mindedness	-0.06	0.90
Rebellious	-0.16	0.31
Conscientiousness	0.51	0.41

Table 6

Correlations between first-order factors of the new and existing scales and team identification (Study 2).

Scale	Team identification
First-order factors	
STPS	
Success	-0.09^{*}
Talent	0.03
Entertainment	0.30***
Dedication	0.10°
Admiration	0.31***
Care	0.35***
Braunstein and Ross (2010)	
Success	0.03
Rugged	0.09*
Sincerity	0.31***
Community-driven	0.27***
Classic	0.09^{*}
Sophistication	0.16***
Tsiotsou (2012)	
Competitiveness	-0.05
Prestige	0.18***
Credibility	0.03
Morality	0.26***
Authenticity	0.29***
Schade et al. (2014)	
Extraversion	0.31***
Open-mindedness	0.30***
Rebellious	0.05
Conscientiousness	0.16***

*p < 0.05.

p < 0.01.

identified by existing scales: performance and character. Finally, we showed that the STPS has greater predictive validity than existing scales as it relates to team identification and that the character (but not performance) factor is the primary determinant of team identification. This finding is consistent with past sport team brand equity research, such that non-

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product-related attributes have a greater positive impact on consumption than product-related attributes (Bauer et al., 2005). It is important to note, however, that some brand personality scales fail to replicate in different cultures and contexts. Therefore, in Study 3, we investigated the generalizability of the STPS by using a non-U.S. sample and a different sport (European football) to provide additional evidence of the managerial usefulness of the new scale.

6. Study 3: validating the STPS in another culture and context

As indicated previously, our proposed scale should be able to explain various phenomena related to sport team personality. Therefore, the main objective of this study was twofold: to (a) validate the STPS using a non-U.S. sample and sport (European football); and (b) examine the relationship between the STPS and team identification as well as perceptual similarities and differences among teams in a league to illustrate how researchers and practitioners can use the STPS to study issues related to sport team personality.

6.1. Method

A local online data collection firm in England helped us recruit fans of the 20 EPL teams that competed in the 2013–2014 season. In an effort to obtain more knowledgeable fans and greater managerial insights, we screened participants on the front end of the survey using a single measure of team identification, which we adapted from Wann and Branscombe (1993): "How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of your favorite Premier League team?" measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = "not a fan" to 7 = "very much a fan." Participants who responded at or below the midpoint of the scale (i.e., 4) did not proceed to the main survey. In exchange for a financial incentive, 589 EPL fans ($M_{age} = 45.48$, SD = 13.40, 26% female) rated the extent to which each of the 18 STPS and six control items could be used to accurately describe the personality of both their favorite team and their favorite team's biggest rival, measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = "does not describe this team at all" to 7 = "describes this team very well." Participants also rated their identification with their favorite team using three additional items adapted from Wann and Branscombe (1993): "How important to you is it that your favorite team wins?"; "How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of your favorite team?"; and "During the season, how closely do you follow your favorite team via any of the following: a) in person or on television, b) on the radio, c) in a sport magazine, or d) in Internet news, television news, or a newspaper?" measured on 7-point scales from 1 = "not at all important/not a fan/never" to 7 = "extremely important/very much a fan/almost every day" ($\alpha = 0.78$). The number of respondents per favorite team ranged from 24 to 30 fans (M = 29.50, SD = 1.57).

6.2. Results

As in Studies 1 and 2, we conducted CFAs that controlled for common method bias by relating each item in the STPS to its underlying substantive factor as well as the mean of the six control items. Although we were primarily interested in the team personality of respondents' favorite team, we also conducted the analysis for the rival team for additional validation. Separate CFAs for the favorite team and the favorite team's biggest rival demonstrated acceptable overall fits, although the model for the favorite team was slightly better: $\chi^2(120) = 361.14$, N = 589, standardized RMSR = 0.025, RMSEA = 0.058, 90% CI = [0.052, 0.065], CFI = 0.976, and TLI = 0.966 for the favorite team and $\chi^2(120) = 469.67$, N = 589, standardized RMSR = 0.025, RMSEA = 0.070, 90% CI = [0.064, 0.077], CFI = 0.974, and TLI = 0.963 for the rival team. Some of the factor reliabilities were below 0.7, but overall, the values were comparable to those in our previous studies (see Tables 7A and 7B), but they were between factors that loaded onto the same second-order factor (e.g., success and talent, care and admiration).

6.2.1. Second-order factor structure

We performed a second-order exploratory factor analysis on the factor scores of the six first-order factors for the favorite team. Two factors had Eigenvalues greater than one and explained 92% of the total variance. Success, talent, and entertainment loaded primarily on the first factor, and care, admiration, and dedication loaded primarily on the second factor; dedication cross-loaded onto the first factor as well, albeit to a lesser extent. The correlation between the two second-

 Table 7A

 STPS factor correlations (and standard errors) for favorite team (Study 3).

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Success	1.00					
2. Talent	0.94 (0.027)	1.00				
3. Entertainment	0.70 (0.039)	0.82 (0.033)	1.00			
4. Dedication	0.46 (0.046)	0.57 (0.042)	0.54 (0.044)	1.00		
5. Admiration	0.39 (0.059)	0.45 (0.057)	0.50 (0.056)	0.78 (0.042)	1.00	
6. Care	-0.01 (0.064)	-0.03 (0.064)	0.22 (0.063)	0.37 (0.058)	0.70 (0.061)	1.00

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Table 7B

STPS factor correlations (and standard errors) for rival team (Study 3).

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Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Success	1.00			·	·	
2. Talent	0.69 (0.048)	1.00				
3. Entertainment	0.30 (0.071)	0.52 (0.056)	1.00			
4. Dedication	0.45 (0.056)	0.65 (0.042)	0.37 (0.062)	1.00		
5. Admiration	0.01 (0.062)	0.16 (0.056)	0.75 (0.054)	0.28 (0.059)	1.00	
6. Care	-0.14 (0.063)	-0.10 (0.059)	0.45 (0.067)	0.19 (0.061)	0.81 (0.040)	1.00

order factors was 0.35. These results are consistent with the performance and character second-order factors obtained in our previous studies.

6.2.2. Relationship with team identification

As in the previous study, we correlated the first-order STPS factors for the favorite team with team identification. We were particularly interested in the relationship at the individual-respondent level, but the data were hierarchical (respondents were clustered within teams). Because the intraclass correlation (ICC: the ratio of between team variation in team identification for the favorite team to total variation) was very small (ICC=0.037), we can ignore the clustering effect (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Thus, for simplicity, we report simple correlations across respondents without taking clustering into account. The correlations with success, talent, and entertainment were not significant (r's = -0.04, -0.01, 0.06, p's = 0.37, 0.86, 0.17, respectively). In contrast, the correlations with care, admiration, and dedication were highly significant (r's = 0.22, 0.20, 0.17, respectively, p's < 0.001). Thus, the three performance-related factors were unrelated to team identification, whereas the three character factors were positively related to team identification. This result also held when we correlated the two second-order factors with team identification for the second-order character factor was not significant (r = 0.23, p < 0.001). Finally, when we regressed team identification on the two second-order factors, the character (b = 0.26, p < 0.001) factor predicted team identification in the expected way, whereas the performance factor was not significant (b = -.08, p = 0.06).

These findings are largely consistent with results from Study 2, except that entertainment loaded onto the character factor and was positively related to team identification in Study 2. We note that in Study 2, correlations were computed across favorite, rival, and other familiar teams, whereas we restricted correlations in this study to participants' favorite team. In any event, the results confirm that the character aspects of team personality are a more important source of team identification than the performance aspects.

6.2.3. Mapping league structure

To map the perceptual similarities and differences between participants' favorite teams in the EPL using the STPS we (a) computed individual-level factor scores based on the six-factor first-order CFA solution, (b) averaged the factor scores by team, (c) calculated a Euclidean distance measure between all pairs of teams based on the average factor scores per team, and (d) performed a metric multidimensional scaling analysis on the matrix of pairwise distances (a non-metric multidimensional scaling analysis revealed similar results). Before averaging factor scores by team (b), we ensured that aggregation was meaningful by conducting ANOVAs on each of the six factors using team as the grouping variable and computed ICC(2), which represents the relevant interrater reliability measure for our purposes (Dixon & Cunningham, 2006). All *F*-values were highly significant, justifying aggregation. ICC(2) values ranged from 0.70 to 0.90 and averaged 0.80. After performing steps (a) through (d) above, we found that a two-dimensional solution fit the data best, with a badness of fit statistic (i.e., Kruskal's stress formula 1) of 0.02 and a correlation between estimated and fitted distances of 1.00. These fit indices confirm that a two-dimensional solution is able to reproduce the distances in six dimensions almost perfectly.

To interpret the two dimensions, we correlated the coordinates of the teams with (a) the six STPS first-order factor scores, (b) team standing and the total number of points earned in the previous season (for 17 of the 20 teams that were in the EPL during the 2012–2013 season—Cardiff City, Crystal Palace, and Hull City were promoted to the EPL for the 2013–2014 season), and (c) the total number of points earned through week five in the current season (i.e., the week before participants responded to the survey). See Tables 8A and 8B for correlations. The first dimension reflected team performance, and a team's placement on this dimension was significantly related to talent (r=0.99), success (r=0.98), entertainment (r=0.98), dedication (r=0.80), and to a lesser extent, admiration (r=0.67). The objective performance measures also support this interpretation: better teams in terms of both rank in the previous season (r=-0.80) and points earned (r=0.60) scored higher on the first dimension. The second dimension reflected the character of the team, and a team's placement on this dimension was significantly related to care (r=0.96), admiration (r=0.73), and to a lesser extent, dedication (r=0.54). A team's placement along one dimension was not related to its placement on the other dimension (r=0.00, p=1.00).

In mapping EPL teams on the performance and character dimensions (see Fig. 2), we can see that the perennial powerhouses of English football (especially Chelsea, Manchester City, and Manchester United) appear on the right-hand side of the map, which indicates high scores on the performance dimension. We can also see that teams such as Everton, Hull City,

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Table 8A

Correlations between the first-order STPS factors and coordinates of English Premier League teams on the two dimensions from the multidimensional scaling solution (Study 3).

Factors	Performance dimension	Character dimension
Success	0.98***	-0.19
Talent	0.99***	-0.15
Entertainment	0.98***	0.03
Dedication	0.80***	0.54
Admiration	0.67**	0.73
Care	-0.15	0.96

^{*} p < 0.05.

Table 8B

Correlations between the objective performance data and coordinates of English Premier League teams on the two dimensions from the multidimensional scaling solution (Study 3).

Objective performance data	Performance dimension	Character dimension
Rank (in previous season, from 1 = best to 20 = worst)	-0.80***	0.33
Points (in previous season)	0.66**	-0.54 [*]
Points (in current season)	0.59**	-0.32

^{*} *p* < 0.05.

and Stoke City appear toward the top of the map, which indicates high scores on the character dimension. Interestingly, most of the top performers in the EPL are evaluated quite poorly by their own fans on the character dimension. Two other notable teams include Newcastle United and Swansea City. Newcastle United has a serious image problem as its fans rated it quite poorly on both dimensions. On the other hand, Swansea City has a very strong reputation, as it scored well on both dimensions. Swansea City's high score on the performance dimension can be explained by the team's performance in the 2012–13 season; the team won the FA Cup and qualified for the UEFA Europa League, even though it was just promoted to the EPL in 2011. This is quite an accomplishment for such a small club located in Wales. In addition to its high score on performance, Swansea City also received very high marks from its fans on the character dimension. These two notable examples show how perceptual mapping can help teams within a league identify both strengths and weaknesses in their brand positioning.

6.3. Discussion

To summarize, results from Study 3 demonstrated that the STPS generalizes to a non-U.S. sample and sport (European football). Furthermore, we illustrated how researchers and practitioners can use the STPS to study issues related to sport team personality.

7. Measurement invariance testing

To assess the degree of measurement equivalence of the STPS across the three studies, we conducted three separate sets of measurement invariance tests (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998): Study 1 versus 2, Study 1 versus 3, and Study 2 versus 3. First, we estimated the configural invariance model (model 1), in which all parameters in each group are freely estimated—that is, there are no invariance restrictions. If configural invariance holds, the factor structure is comparable across studies, but higher degrees of invariance are required to conduct more explicit comparisons across different groups of respondents.

Next, we compare the configural invariance model with two other invariance models: (a) a model that assumes metric invariance of the substantive loadings, where the 18 items that load onto the six first-order factors are restricted to be invariant across groups (model 2), and (b) a model that assumes metric invariance of both the substantive and method loadings, where the loadings on the six substantive factors as well as the loadings on the method factor are restricted to be invariant across groups (model 3). If metric invariance is satisfied, we can compare relationships between constructs across groups (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998).

While researchers can use the chi-square difference test to assess measurement invariance, this test is sensitive to sample size—with larger samples resulting in lack of invariance even when the violation is minor. To combat this problem, more recent work recommends comparing models based on alternative fit indices such as the Bayesian information criterion (BIC; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998) or the comparative fit index (CFI; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Therefore, in addition to the chi-square difference test, we also report these two useful alternative fit indices. For BIC, the model with the lowest value is

p < 0.01.

^{****} *p* < 0.001.

p < 0.01.p < 0.001.

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Fig. 2. Mapping English Premier League teams along the two dimensions of the multidimensional scaling solution (Study 3).

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preferred. For CFI, if the difference between models is below 0.01, the models may be treated as invariant (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

We summarize the results of these measurement invariance tests in Table 9. The chi-square difference tests are significant at the conventional 0.05 level (i.e., greater than the critical values of 21.02 and 43.77 for 12 and 30 degrees of freedom, respectively), implying that measurement invariance should be rejected. However, the deterioration in fit when measurement invariance is imposed is small as judged by BIC and CFI. For BIC, both invariant models fit better than the configural model, as the values are smaller, and for CFI, the difference between models is smaller than 0.01. Thus, we conclude that the STPS exhibits measurement invariance across three different samples and two different cultures.

Table 9

Measurement invariance testing.

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Models and comparisons	Criteria	Invariance across Studies 1 and 2	Invariance across Studies 1 and 3	Invariance across Studies 2 and 3
Model 1:	Chi-	$\chi^2(240) = 756.85$	$\chi^2(240) = 702.41$	$\chi^2(240) = 776.72$
Configural invariance	square			
	BIC	65,049.41	61,377.42	58,228.08
	CFI	.975	.978	.973
Model 2:	Chi-	$\chi^2(252) = 802.51$	$\chi^2(252) = 737.81$	$\chi^2(252) = 804.94$
Metric invariance of substantive loadings	square			
	BIC	65,010.02	61,327.66	58,171.55
	CFI	.973	.977	.973
Model 3:	Chi-	$\chi^2(270) = 858.99$	$\chi^2(270) = 799.73$	$\chi^2(270) = 846.73$
Metric invariance of substantive and method loadings	square			
	BIC	64,938.92	61,261.84	58,086.22
	CFI	.972	0.975	.971
Comparison of models 1 and 2	Chi-	$\chi^2(12) = 45.66$	$\chi^2(12) = 35.40$	$\chi^2(12) = 28.22$
	square			
	BIC	N/A	N/A	N/A
	CFI	.002	.001	.000
Comparison of models 1 and 3	Chi-	$\chi^2(30) = 102.14$	$\chi^2(30) = 97.32$	$\chi^2(30) = 70.01$
	square			
	BIC	N/A	N/A	N/A
	CFI	.003	.003	.002

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8. General discussion

After reviewing the brand personality literature and finding that there is still no commonly accepted scale to measure the brand personality of sport teams, we developed and validated the Sport Team Personality Scale (STPS) in a professional sport team context (Study 1). The STPS contains 18 items that load onto six factors (success, talent, entertainment, dedication, admiration, and care) and captures the central aspects of sport team personality found in existing scales (Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Schade et al., 2014; Tsiotsou, 2012) (Study 2). Interestingly, only two items (i.e., "exciting" and "successful") overlap with Aaker's (1997) BPS, and no items overlap with Geuens et al.'s (2009) measure of brand personality; moreover, none of the STPS factors overlap with the factors in these two existing brand personality scales—reinforcing the distinctiveness of spectator sport and the need for a sport team-specific brand personality scale. Finally, to illustrate how researchers and practitioners can use the STPS to explain various phenomena related to sport team personality, we examined the relationship between the STPS and team identification (Studies 2 and 3) as well as perceptual similarities and differences among teams (Study 3). Results demonstrated that the first-order factors load onto two second-order factors (performance and character) and that the character factor—which consistently includes care and admiration—is a more powerful source of team identification than the performance factor—which consistently includes success and talent. To our knowledge, this is the first research to provide higher-order factors to assist with the interpretation of brand personality results.

8.1. Theoretical implications

Consistent with past researchers who have criticized Aaker's (1997) BPS for failing to replicate across different contexts, we also found that the structure of sport team personality is unique. However, we do agree with Aaker's (1997) conceptualization of brand personality as well as past researchers who have argued that human personality traits are unlikely to be applicable to brands or appropriate in a brand context (Caprara et al., 2001). Hence, we see no reason why sport team personality items should be restricted to human personality traits (as in Schade et al., 2014). Rather, it seems more important to conceptualize sport team personality using all human characteristics related to sport teams. We also examined the higher-order structure of the STPS and found that the first-order factors from the STPS and other existing sport team personality scales load onto two second-order factors: performance and character. The STPS is the first brand personality scale we are aware of that examines the higher-order structure, allowing us to demonstrate that the STPS captures the most important dimensions of sport team personality. Related, we showed that the character factor is a more important source of team identification than the performance factor, supporting past research on sport team brand equity and brand associations, where non-product-related attributes (e.g., character) were more important to consumer behavior than product-related attributes (e.g., performance) (Bauer et al., 2005). Finally, we note a couple of methodological improvements in developing the STPS. In contrast to Aaker (1997), we used respondents as the unit of analysis and replicated the STPS across different contexts and cultures (see measurement invariance tests). This also allowed us to account for common method bias in participant ratings, where we measured the bias directly at the individual-item level using control items-one of the preferred methods of controlling for common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). None of the existing sport team personality scales controlled for such bias (Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Schade et al., 2014; Tsiotsou, 2012), which we suspect resulted in poor psychometric properties in some cases.

8.2. Managerial implications

Of interest to sport managers, we examined the perceptual similarities and differences between teams within a league using the STPS as well as the relationship between the STPS and team identification to illustrate how the STPS can help sport managers position and differentiate teams within a league to improve marketing outcomes. Specifically, we found that teams map along performance and character factors and that the character factor was a more powerful source of team identification than the performance factor. This finding may help explain why, prior to the 2016 World Series, MLB's Chicago Cubs were affectionately referred to as "loveable losers" yet maintained a great deal of fan support (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001), or why European football fans are still loyal to their favorite team even after the team is relegated (Königstorfer & Uhrich, 2009). In other words, it is possible that teams that excel on STPS character factors benefit from higher levels of team identification despite poor on-field performance.

Consequently, managers looking to enhance fans' identification with the team may want to focus on developing the admiration and care components of the team's personality. Luckily, unlike the performance factor, over which managers have less control, managers can more readily influence the character aspects of sport team personality. For example, teams can work to enhance perceptions of admiration and care by communicating a culture that values doing good via mission statements, public relations (Kolyperas & Sparks, 2011; Walker, Kent, & Vincent, 2010), personnel recruitment, and the implementation of corporate social responsibility and philanthropic initiatives that engage and improve the community (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Sheth & Babiak, 2010; Walters & Chadwick, 2009). These and other strategies that strengthen the character aspects of sport team personality may help managers improve team identification and subsequent marketing outcomes (Carlson et al., 2009; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann, 2006).

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8.3. Limitations

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While developing the STPS, we encountered a few methodological challenges. First, we found that a strong general factor pervaded individual item ratings (i.e., the correlations between all items were fairly high). This made it difficult to obtain factors that had discriminant validity. Unless participants take the time to consider each individual item carefully, it is likely that response biases such as halo effects and acquiescence will have undesirable effects on the data. To control for such biases, we recommend researchers prepare and administer several items that are not part of the final scale to control for common method bias (see Appendix A for items and instructions for administering the scale).

Second, one of our goals in developing the STPS was to create a compact scale that captured the most important dimensions of sport team personality across a number of sport teams and leagues. As a result, one could argue that we did not include items unique to specific teams or leagues, limiting the usefulness of the scale. Similarly, Caprara et al. (2001, p. 392) argue that personality items "may assume different meanings when used to describe different brands" due to contextual meaning. However, any attempt to develop a sport team personality scale that can be used across teams or leagues is subject to these criticisms. We feel that the benefits of creating a scale that is compact and accessible to a wide variety of researchers and practitioners outweigh the costs of eliminating items that are somewhat narrow in scope.

Third, because there are only three items to measure each of the six first-order factors, the factor reliabilities were somewhat low at times. In general, this should not be a problem because researchers can (and often do) employ linear combinations of the first-order factors. For instance, recall that in Study 3, success, talent, and entertainment loaded onto a performance factor and dedication, admiration, and care loaded onto a character factor. Using a unit-weighted average, these two linear combinations of the first-order factors lead to reliabilities of 0.87 and 0.85, respectively (Nunnally, 1978).

Note that the first-order factors may not always combine in the same way to form second-order factors, however. While success and talent consistently loaded onto the performance factor, and care and admiration consistently loaded onto the character factor, the entertainment and dedication loadings were less consistent across studies. Entertainment was more strongly related to performance in Studies 1 and 3 but character in Study 2—with non-negligible loadings on the other factor in Studies 1 and 2. Dedication was more strongly related to performance in Studies 1 and 3. So although the first-order factors emerged consistently across studies, to Caprara et al.'s (2001) point, the second-order factor structure may depend on the cultural context and sport league under investigation—offering researchers more flexibility to capture the unique structure of the sport or context in question.

At present, the reasons for these inconsistent entertainment and dedication second-order loadings are not clear. In some cultures, for some sports, and for some fans, a team may be entertaining because it performs at a high level, but if a team's performance suffers, it may have to resort to other things to keep fans entertained. Similarly, dedication will hopefully yield dividends and result in high performance, but a team may also be dedicated to social causes and gain fans' approval based on its off-the-field activities. This issue merits further investigation and could serve as an interesting longitudinal study for teams where on-field performance varies over multiple seasons.

8.4. Future research

There are several ways to extend this work. Researchers could continue to assess the reliability, validity evidence, and generalizability of the scale. At this stage, we have supporting evidence from two countries (U.S.A. and U.K.) and the major American sports, as well as European football. We conducted pairwise tests of measurement invariance among studies to assess invariance. These tests confirmed that the measurement model was largely invariant across samples. However, future research could apply the STPS to (a) different sport contexts such as individual, amateur, and women's sports and (b) in different countries, including non-English speaking countries. In addition, it would be interesting to compare and contrast results across a variety of stakeholders such as employees, subsets of fans, sponsors, and media (Harris & Ogbonna, 2008). Such comparisons could shed light on a potential disconnect between internal and external perceptions (Heere, 2010). If this is the case, managers should work to communicate the team's personality more effectively to boost marketing outcomes with respect to both consumers and sponsors (Chien et al., 2011; Deane et al., 2003; Musante et al., 1999).

Researchers could also delve more deeply into the relationship between STPS factors and various marketing outcomes (Schade et al., 2014). We explored the impact of the STPS on team identification, but there are a variety of other managerially relevant concepts that merit investigation. For example, while we demonstrated that the performance factor is not an important source of team identification, it may be an important driver of other marketing outcomes, such as attendance, retail spending, media consumption, or word-of-mouth. Researchers could also provide stronger evidence for the predictive validity of the scale by investigating how STPS factors explain actual consumer behavior as well as the degree to which each first- and second-order factor drives individual behaviors.

Lastly, we examined and mapped the perceptual similarities and differences between teams within a league using the STPS. In addition to helping managers position and differentiate individual teams, such an exercise may also be useful in explaining the overall health or attractiveness of a league. As teams both compete and cooperate, it would be interesting to see if a league is more successful when its teams are very similar or very different across various STPS factors. If similarities or differences on certain factors generate more interest in the league as a whole, teams may want to emphasize those aspects of

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team personality. In addition, researchers could examine how the combination of sport team personalities within a league affects the personality of the overall league (Chien et al., 2011).

9. Conclusion

Despite the popularity of the brand personality construct, there is still no commonly accepted conceptualization of sport team personality or scale to measure this concept. Although there are already existing scales to measure the brand personality of sport teams, these scales struggle with reliability, validity evidence, and generalizability issues. To address these shortcomings, we developed the Sport Team Personality Scale (STPS), which includes six domain-specific factors: success, talent, entertainment, dedication, admiration, and care. The STPS not only accounts for common method bias but replicates across different sports and cultures as well. Also consistent with past sport team brand equity and brand association research that distinguishes between product-related and non-product-related attributes, these six first-order factors map onto two second-order factors: performance and character. Finally, we demonstrated how researchers and practitioners can use the STPS to position and differentiate teams within sport leagues. Specifically, we illustrated that the character aspects of team personality are a more powerful source of team identification than the performance aspects and mapped teams within a league along these two dimensions. We anticipate that the availability of this new scale will encourage additional research on managerially relevant concepts that help managers improve marketing outcomes for sport teams.

Appendix A. Procedure

Instructions. Brands are sometimes thought to have distinct personalities. When we refer to brand personality, we are referring to the set of human characteristics associated with a brand.

For example, some would describe Coca-Cola as "cool, all-American, and real;" Pepsi as "young, exciting, and hip;" and Dr. Pepper as "nonconforming, unique, and fun."

In a similar way, sport teams (like brands) may be thought of as people, and human personality traits may be used to describe them. Please keep this in mind throughout the study and think of the teams you evaluate as a person to which personality traits can be attributed.

On the next page, you will see a variety of adjectives that might be used to describe a team's personality. Please rate the extent to which each individual adjective can be used to accurately describe the team's personality.

Please think carefully about how applicable each individual adjective is in describing the personality of this team. Do not assume that all adjectives are equally applicable in describing the team's personality. Please differentiate between those adjectives that are highly descriptive and those that are less descriptive in characterizing the team's personality. That is, your ratings should vary according to how well you feel the adjectives describe the team (or not).

Please rate how descriptive the following terms are of [team name]: accomplished, admirable, caring, committed, community-oriented, dedicated, determined, distinct*, entertaining, exciting, fun, gifted, high-performance, honorable, individualistic*, intelligent*, legendary*, popular*, role-model, service-oriented, skilled, successful, talented, young.²

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² The items appear in alphabetical order here but should be administered in a random sequence (see Fig. 1 for factors and corresponding items). Participants rated each item on a 7-point scale from 1 = "does not describe this team at all" to 7 = "describes this team very well." * Denotes the six items used to control for response biases.

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