

Beyond the Jersey: How National Bias Fuels Player Identification and Reshapes Sports Consumption

Research Article

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Abstract: The research presents novel insights by examining the underexplored role of sports fan ethnocentrism (SFE) in shaping player identification and team identification (TI), and reveals how national pride affects sports consumption behaviors. By applying partial least squares (PLS)-structural equation modeling with survey responses gathered from 488 Bangladeshi cricket enthusiasts, the research reveals two key findings: (1) SFE shows a stronger association with fans' connection with individual players than with teams, and (2) TI remains the strongest predictor of long-term fan engagement behaviors. Theoretically, the study advances social identity theory by demonstrating how ethnocentrism operates differently at player vs team levels in sports fandom. For practitioners, these findings suggest that sports organizations should develop dual strategies, leveraging star players to attract ethnocentric fans while strengthening team identity to maintain loyalty. Employing importance-performance map analysis identifies priority areas for managerial intervention to optimize fan engagement strategies.

Keywords: Sports fan ethnocentrism • Player identification • Team identification • Social identity theory • PLS-SEM • IPMA

1. Introduction

The global sports industry now generates vast revenues from major global tournaments. For example, the FIFA World Cup, through the rapid growth of online streaming platforms, TV rights, ticketing, and lucrative sponsorship agreements, is expected to generate a revenue of around \$11 billion for the 2023–2026 cycle (FIFA, 2024). Similarly, North American leagues such as the National Football League (NFL) reported a revenue of around \$12 billion in 2022 (Ozanian, 2023) and Major League Baseball (MLB) hit a record of \$12.1 billion in 2024 (Brown, 2025). Furthermore, the Indian Premier League (IPL), a global franchise-based league hosted by India, secured approximately \$6.2 billion in only media-rights agreements for 2023–2027 (Diksha & Saptaparno, 2022). These figures indicate a clear understanding that professional sports have become a global business, and understanding how fans are connected to sports is no longer optional.

Under these settings, a global franchise league such as the IPL highlights a distinct structure of contemporary fandom compared to a non-franchise league such as the English Premier League. Franchise leagues typically engage fans from diverse geographical areas who support teams and players through global media platforms (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007; Ratten & Ratten, 2011). In addition, these leagues are characterized by frequent player mobility, shorter team histories, and robust player-centric promotion. Through player-centered orientation, these leagues could redefine traditional fan attachment structure (Lock & Heere, 2017) and raise a concern about whether the team, the player, or both act as a focal point of fan identification.

Rooted in social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), identification is defined as “a oneness or belongingness with an entity” (Mael & Ashforth, 1992, p. 104). In the context of sports, team identification (TI) has been studied extensively as a crucial construct predicting fan loyalty, media engagement, attendance, word of mouth, and merchandise purchase (Lock & Heere, 2017; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). However, in

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sports, identification is not always team-based. Rather, fans can identify themselves with an individual player (player identification, PI), especially when the player represents a culture, nation, or personal values (Arai *et al.*, 2013; Carlson & Donovan, 2013). Players often act as “human brands” that could predict emotional attachment and consumption, independent of the team consideration (Thomson, 2006; Parmentier & Fischer, 2012). This phenomenon could be more evident in the franchise leagues in which fan engagement is often associated with star players.

One factor that might predict these two types of identifications is sports fan ethnocentrism (SFE). SFE reflects the belief that players from one’s own country possess superior abilities compared to those from other nations (Hu & Bedford, 2012). Leveraging SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), SFE predicts fans’ affective bonds with homegrown athletes and can skew their perceptions of international players within global leagues (Chiu & Won, 2020). Empirical evidence on SFE remains limited or mixed. While some investigations link stronger SFE to heightened intentions to watch national contests (Chiu *et al.*, 2015), others find it has negligible effects on overall TI (Chiu & Won, 2020). This inconsistency reinforces the need for broader exploration of how SFE, especially in the franchise league, might initially strengthen PI connection than TI and subsequent fan consumption behavior.

As professional sports continue to grow in popularity and commercialization (Agha & Dixon, 2021), sports organizations are constrained to cultivate fan loyalty and ensure sustainable revenue streams amid heightened competitive pressure, contextual influence, and shifting marketing trends (Yurtsizoglu *et al.*, 2025). Three primary consumptions are considered crucial for organizational success: game attendance, media consumption, and licensed or accredited merchandise purchases (Kim *et al.*, 2011). Prior research has widely explored the psychological and sociological predictors of fan attendance (Dhurup, 2012; Yoshida, 2017). Attendance intention (AI), which is a fan’s predisposition to attend games, has been linked to motivations such as identification, community interaction, and fun (Trail *et al.*, 2003). At the same time, sports media consumption has evolved with innovative digital platforms (Solberg & Gaustad, 2022), including live streaming and social media engagement. Licensed merchandise serves the economic and symbolic purposes by reinforcing fan identity and group affiliation (Baek *et al.*, 2020; Sveinson & Hoerber, 2022).

Theoretically, although in sports, SIT effectively explains in-group favoritism or bias (us vs them) through categorization, identification, and comparison, it has not sufficiently developed to explain how this bias is

associated with two distinct identification target (i) the individual player and (ii) the team within the same group and single game environment. The current study argues that in the franchise league, fans have to define “us” whether it refers to the local player or the team first, and fan ethnocentrism does not strengthen all in-group attachments. Thus, the study extends SIT theory understanding beyond simple group comparison to explain fandom and address major gaps in this context.

This study addresses three critical gaps in the current understanding of sports fandom. First, while SFE is examined as an antecedent to both PI and TI in isolation (Chiu & Won, 2020; Hu & Bedford, 2012), little is known about how its relative association differs with these two identification targets. For example, in global franchise leagues such as the IPL, national pride may intensify PI due to iconic local players, while in traditional leagues (e.g., English Premier League (EPL), National Basketball Association (NBA)), it may stimulate stronger TI. Second, while SFE is linked to general sport consumption (Chiu *et al.*, 2015), it remains unclear whether its degree of association differs across behaviors like attendance, media use, and merchandise buying, each varying in cost, commitment, and symbolic value (Kim *et al.*, 2011; Sveinson & Hoerber, 2022). Existing models often overlook whether SFE predicts these actions equally, indirectly via PI/TI, or through distinct pathways. In addition, there is a lack of research assessing the association between TI and PI and these significant consumption behaviors. Third, while SFE, PI, and TI have been identified as predictors of fan behaviors (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2011), empirical evidence remains scarce on their relative importance across dominant consumption behaviors, limiting theoretical understanding and organizational resource allocation.

The purpose of the current research is to examine how SFE is associated with player and TIs and how these identity forms relate to different fan consumption behaviors in global franchise context. We considered the Bangladeshi fans in the context of global franchise league, IPL. Specifically, we examined fans’ identification with an IPL team (Delhi Capitals) and a prominent Bangladeshi player (Mustafizur Rahman) of that team. Bangladeshi cricket fans are ideal for the study because cricket is deeply embedded in their culture, and they consider Mustafizur Rahman a national hero with strong identification. This national identification became even more visible in a recent incident in January 2026, when an IPL club excluded him from their team, it raised a social and political conflict between Bangladesh and India, which led Bangladesh to boycott the T20 World Cup 2026 (Hughes, 2026).

The study focuses on the broader sports identification and consumer behavior literature grounded in SIT. Previous research has predominantly examined the link between TI and fan behavior, while ignoring how nationalistic sentiments, such as fan ethnocentrism, are linked to identification at the player and team levels.

The present investigation has three primary objectives.

- (1) Compare SFE's relative association with identification and test whether it has a differential effect on player and TI in global franchise leagues;
- (2) Assess how PI and TI distinctly predict high-commitment (attendance), moderate-commitment (merchandise purchasing), and low-commitment (media consumption) behaviors; and
- (3) Identify which psychological construct offers the greatest marginal return for enhancing each specific consumption behavior, enabling targeted marketing strategies.

This approach resolves ambiguities in SFE's behavioral pathways and identifies maximally effective leverage points for fan engagement.

Accordingly, based on three dominant research gaps and the research objective, the study proposes the following research questions.

RQ1: Is SFE more strongly associated with PI than TI in the franchise league? (**Addressing Research Gap 1**)

RQ2: How do PI and TI predict key sports consumption behaviors, including AI, media consumption, and licensed merchandise purchasing? (**Addressing Research Gap 2**)

RQ3: Which psychological construct (SFE, PI, or TI) offers the greatest association with each consumption behavior (AI, media consumption intention [MCI], or Licensed merchandise consumption intention [LMCI])? (**Addressing Research Gap 3**)

The theoretical contributions of this study are three-fold. First, the study extends understanding of SIT by clarifying how SFE operates as an antecedent and acts differentially at the player and team levels. It clarifies the distinct identity formation process in a globalized franchise context. Second, the findings will offer concrete empirical support for PI and TI behavioral roles within the consumption domain. Third, by integrating PLS-structural equation modeling (SEM) with Importance-performance map analysis (IPMA), the study extends prior research (Carlson & Donovan, 2013; Chiu & Won, 2020) and offers strategic and theoretical insights for sports organizations.

This study answers calls (Chiu & Won, 2020) to explore SFE more deeply and creates the ground for future cross-cultural work on how identity affects sports consumption.

Focusing on understudied Bangladeshi cricket fans enhances our understanding of cultural influences on sports consumption in emerging markets.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

2.1 AI

Behavioral intentions have long been recognized as reliable predictors of actual actions. For example, Yoshida (2017) examined the interplay of social and psychological factors in shaping spectators' intentions to attend sporting events and their overall demand. More recently, Quansah (2022) demonstrated how aspects of sports facilities influence individuals' intentions to attend football matches in sub-Saharan Africa. Farrag and Althawadi (2022) created a motive-driven classification system to build a comprehensive framework for predicting AI among tennis spectators. Nevertheless, examination of AIs specifically within the context of identification is limited.

2.2 Sports Media Consumption

Technological advances have significantly expanded sports media consumption, enabling fans to access content through both traditional and digital platforms (e.g., social media, mobile apps). This transformation has led to significant financial gains; for instance, the NFL's media rights alone brought in \$7.75 billion in 2018 (Solberg & Gaustad, 2022). Consequently, research increasingly examines media consumption habits, revealing that identification correlates with fans' use of diverse media to follow teams (Kim & Manoli, 2022) and corresponds with platform-specific engagement campaigns such as Twitter fan initiative (Clark & Maher, 2019). Although studies on ethnic nationalism have linked it to fan identification and consumption behaviors (Devlin & Billings, 2016), SFE has received relatively little attention as a potential antecedent of these outcomes (Chiu & Won, 2020).

2.3 LMCI

Sports clubs and leagues rely heavily on LMCI as a key revenue stream and a vehicle for reinforcing brand messages to their fan base (Kim et al., 2011). Kwon et al. (2022) highlight that the strength of the consumer-team

relationship is the primary predictor of LMCI across diverse merchandise categories. Accordingly, contemporary sports marketing research has increasingly emphasized licensed sports merchandise, particularly investigating how TI is linked to fans' intentions to buy officially sanctioned products (Chiu & Won, 2020).

2.4 SIT

Tajfel and Turner's SIT (1986) describes self-categorization as the mental mechanism through which people sort themselves into separate groups, guided by attributes like ethnicity, cultural background, gender alignment, or common benefits. These social groups comprise individuals sharing similar social identities or perceiving common group membership (Abrams & Hogg, 1988), a process fostering ethnocentrism (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). Central to social identity is the capacity to classify oneself and others into "in-groups" and "out-groups." Consequently, SIT offers a suitable conceptual framework for investigating the association of ethnocentrism with diverse behavioral outcomes (Sharma *et al.*, 1995).

2.5 SFE

At its core, ethnocentrism is defined as the propensity for individuals to prioritize their group and see themselves as a higher level than other groups. Since the 1980s, "ethnocentrism" has been widely explored within marketing research. The term "consumer ethnocentrism" was coined by Shimp and Sharma. (1987), Research has shown that ethnocentric consumers favor locally produced goods over foreign alternatives, motivated by favorable attitudes and stronger purchase intentions toward domestic products (Sharma *et al.*, 1995).

Hu and Bedford (2012) introduced the concept of SFE, suggesting that fans may show ethnocentric behavior similar to consumers who prefer domestic products. Just as ethnocentric consumers are more likely to choose local goods, supporters who believe their nation's players are superior may be more motivated to follow those athletes' performances (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Chiu & Won, 2020). This belief can foster a strong psychological connection with national players, potentially influencing fan behavior. For instance, Chiu *et al.* (2015) reported a positive association between ethnocentrism and the intention to watch games among Korean and Taiwanese-based baseball supporters. Similarly, Shin *et al.* (2019) found that 1.5 and second-generation settlers were more engaged with sports

media when athletes matched their racial identity. However, not all findings are consistent, as Chiu and Won (2020) noted that SFE did not significantly predict MCI among Taiwanese fans. These mixed results provide a rationale for proposing the hypothesis.

H1: SFE has a significant positive association with fans' intention to consume media.

2.6 Identification

Identification often entails forming an emotional connection with a specific player or team, influencing how fans engage with and support them (Wu *et al.*, 2012). SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) explained identification, ethnocentrism, and in-group preference. The preference for the "we-group" over the "other-group" is shared by identification and ethnocentrism. Empirical data showed a significant correlation between ethnocentrism and the varied levels of identification with a specific entity (Devlin & Billings, 2016). In other words, ethnocentrism can predict the extent to which individuals feel connected to a player or team. Strong ethnocentric attitudes are often related to higher levels of identification, particularly with athletes who share their national or cultural background (Chiu & Won, 2020). Therefore, fans who identify more strongly with their ethnic group are more inclined to do so. Still, it has been suggested that sports fans form distinct types of identification due to their varied devotion to their favorite teams and athletes (Trail *et al.*, 2003). In order to better understand the function of SFE in establishing various forms of identification, this study took into account both TI and PI. As a result, the following hypotheses were established:

H2: SFE has a significant positive association with the fans' PI.

H3: SFE has a significant positive association with the fans' TI.

2.7 TI and Behavioral Intentions

SIT posits that group membership critically corresponds with numerous behaviors (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), with sports TI representing a form of generalized social identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Highly identified (passionate) fans are more likely to engage in sports-related consumption, as James and Trail (2008) noted. Empirical research consistently shows that higher levels of identification are closely linked to increased consumption activities (Carlson *et al.*, 2009; Chiu & Won, 2020; Clark & Maher, 2019; James & Trail, 2008).

For example, Stathopoulou et al. (2022) identified a positive link between TI and attendance among Sub-Saharan African fans. Lee (2021) found a strong positive relationship between team identity and purchase intention among South Korean sports fans. Similarly, James and Trail (2008) demonstrated that club identification serves as a significant predictor of AI, MCI, and LMCI among MLB fans in the southwestern US. These collective findings support the assumptions

H4: TI is significantly and positively associated with fans' AIs.

H5: TI has a significant and positive link with fans' MCIs.

H6: TI has a significant and positive association with fans' intention to purchase licensed products.

2.8 PI and Behavioral Intentions

This study's review of identification literature reveals prestige and distinctiveness as fundamental characteristics driving identification toward individuals or brands. Consistent with SIT, individuals are inclined to associate with figures demonstrating prestige and distinctiveness, including athletes with robust brand personalities (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003). Reflecting this framework, Carlson and Donovan (2013) operationalized PI using these two traits. Prior scholarship also indicates that brand personality can predict TI and purchase intention (Carlson et al., 2009).

While TI has traditionally received considerable attention, a growing body of research points to the unique contribution of PI in forecasting various aspects of fan action. For example, Wu et al. (2012) found that while TI generally exerted a more direct association with loyalty, PI was significantly but indirectly linked to behavioral outcomes. Carlson and Donovan (2013) reported a positive correlation between PI, game attendance, and merchandise consumption among American football fans. Similarly, Chiu and Won (2020) demonstrated that PI strongly predicted media consumption among Taiwanese baseball fans. Moreover, consumers often purchase athlete-branded items, such as signature sneakers or apparel, to express support for individual players. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H7: Sports fans' PI has a significantly positive association with their AI.

H8: Sports fans' PI has a significantly positive association with their intention for media consumption.

H9: Sports fans' PI has a significantly positive association with their intention to purchase licensed merchandise.

2.9 PI and TI

The interconnection between PI and TI is well-documented. Wann, Tucker, and Schrader (1996) postulated that fan allegiance to a team often stems from identification with specific players. Moreover, identification with a broader group, such as a sports team, may be predicted by identification with a related individual or subgroup, such as a specific player or unit within the team (Carlson & Donovan, 2013). Empirical evidence consistently confirms a positive association with PI on TI (Carlson & Donovan, 2013; Lock & Heere, 2017; Wu et al., 2012). Based on this body of research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H10: The extent of TI among sports fans is significantly and positively associated with their PI.

The theoretical model is shown in Figure 1.

3. Methods

3.1 Context

Delhi Capitals, a franchise in the IPL, was selected for the context of TI in this study. The IPL, a premier Twenty20 cricket competition featuring eight city-based teams, attracts top global talent. Its brand was valued at US\$6.7 billion, and its broadcasting revenue now competes with leagues like the NFL, EPL, and NBA.

Mustafizur Rahman, an internationally recognized Bangladeshi bowler, was chosen to represent PI and SFE. Since entering the IPL in 2016, he has claimed 46 wickets while maintaining an economy rate of 7.80. In 2022, playing for the Delhi Capitals, he secured eight wickets at 7.63. As the only Bangladeshi in the 2022 IPL and a national icon, Mustafizur was a fitting representative for exploring SFE and PI.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

The respondents comprised Bangladeshi citizens aged 15 years or older who actively followed IPL, were aware of Mustafizur Rahman's participation in the Delhi Capitals, and had viewed at least one match of the 2022 IPL season. This age threshold was selected so that the maximum active fans are included, and respondents could answer questions meaningfully. The criteria are logical as they support the study's focus on the fan group who have exposure to the league and the focal player, and are supported by established prior studies such as Chiu and Won (2020) and Hu and Bedford (2012).

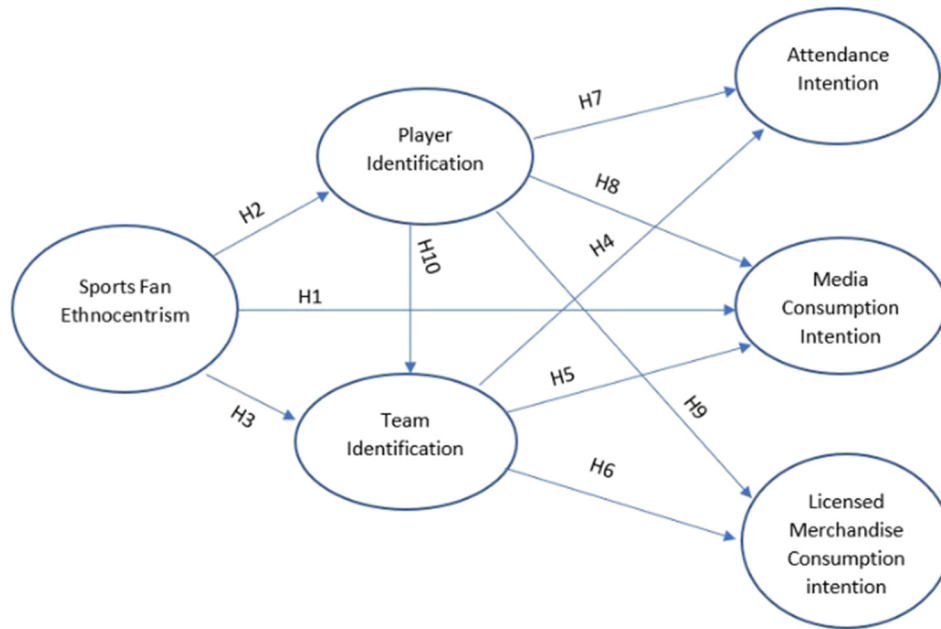


Figure 1. Theoretical model.
Source: Author's contribution.

Convenience sampling was conducted in public places, including university campuses, shopping centers, and parks, in Noakhali and Chittagong City. Respondents were selected from these two major cities of Bangladesh because of the availability of eligible participants and accessibility. The data were collected between September

4 and 18, 2022, and the time period was immediately after the IPL 2022 season, so that respondents could easily recall the event and minimize recall bias.

Potential participants were selected based on two criteria. First, Participants must be Bangladeshi citizens, and second, they must have viewed at least one match of the Delhi Capitals featuring Mustafizur Rahman during the 2022 season. Eligible respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and ensured confidentiality. Questionnaires were provided in English and Bengali, with expert-reviewed translations. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Parental consent was obtained for respondents under 18 years of age. Of the 600 distributed questionnaires, 488 valid responses were retained after removing 112 incomplete responses. Most respondents were male (88.5%), aged 20–29 (60.2%), and earning under BDT 20,000 annually (46.7%). These characteristics align with prior research showing sports fans are predominantly young males (Chiu & Won, 2020).

Demographic details are presented in Table 1.

3.3 Measures

The research items were adapted from prior literature. SFE measures were modified from Hu and Bedford (2012). Three items from Chiu and Won (2020) and Trail et al. (2003) were adapted for player and TI, respectively. MCI used three items

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	432	88.5
Female	56	11.5
Age		
Below 20	76	15.6
20–29	294	60.2
30–39	99	20.3
Over 40	19	3.9
Income (BDT.)		
Below 20,000	228	46.7
20,001–30,000	118	24.2
30,001–40,000	81	16.6
40,001–50,000	37	7.6
Over 50,000	24	4.9

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents.
Source: Author's contribution.

from Kim et al. (2011), while AI included two from Trail et al. (2005) and one from Kwon et al. (2007). Licensed merchandise intention was measured using items adapted from Kwon et al. (2007) and Kim et al. (2011). Items were randomized to reduce order bias and rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

3.4 Justification for the Structural Model

The proposed model is significant because it addresses three crucial aspects that were missing in the prior fandom research. First, previous studies predominantly used only TI as an antecedent of consumption (Trail et al., 2005; Wann & Branscombe,

Items	Variables and item details	Mean value	SD	Outer loadings	CA	CR	AVE
SFE					0.765	0.850	0.589
SFE1	I watch IPL games because there are Bangladeshi players in them.	3.367	1.371	0.655			
SFE4	Even though it may cost me extra time or money, I still support our players and their teams in the IPL.	3.072	1.482	0.740			
SFE5	I watch our athletes play in order to show my support.	4.176	0.972	0.821			
SFE6	I will support our players always because they are the best to me.	4.154	1.012	0.839			
PI					0.943	0.963	0.897
PI1	I identify with Mustafizur Rahman than with the Delhi Capitals.	3.844	1.136	0.940			
PI2	I am a big fan of Mustafizur Rahman more than I am a fan of the Delhi Capitals.	3.883	1.201	0.945			
PI3	I consider myself a fan of Mustafizur Rahman rather than a fan of the Delhi Capitals.	3.871	1.250	0.957			
TI					0.910	0.943	0.847
TI1	I consider myself to be a “real” fan of the Delhi Capitals.	2.166	1.141	0.903			
TI2	I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the Delhi Capitals.	1.941	1.041	0.918			
TI3	Being a fan of the Delhi Capitals is very important to me.	1.934	1.123	0.939			
MCI					0.952	0.969	0.913
MCI1	I will track the news on the Delhi Capitals through the media (e.g., TV, internet, radio, etc.).	3.514	1.290	0.946			
MCI2	I will watch or listen to the Delhi Capitals’ game(s) through the media (e.g., TV, internet, radio, etc.).	3.654	1.261	0.963			
MCI3	I will support the Delhi Capitals by watching or listening to the Delhi Capitals’ game(s) through the media (e.g., TV, internet, radio, etc.).	3.576	1.247	0.958			
AI					0.947	0.966	0.904
AI1	I intend to attend the Delhi Capitals’ game(s).	2.186	1.124	0.956			
AI2	The likelihood that I will attend the Delhi Capitals’ game(s) in the future is high.	2.033	1.143	0.948			
AI3	I will attend the Delhi Capitals’ game(s) in the future.	2.172	1.163	0.947			
LMCI					0.955	0.971	0.917
LMCI1	I will likely purchase the Delhi Capitals’ licensed merchandise.	2.135	1.204	0.955			
LMCI2	In the future, purchasing (Delhi Capitals) licensed merchandise is something I plan to do.	2.004	1.166	0.962			
LMCI3	In the future, I intend to purchase licensed merchandise representing the Delhi Capitals.	2.125	1.265	0.956			

Table 2. Measurement model item loadings, construct reliability, and validity results.
Source: Author’s contribution.

1993), neglecting PI as a distinct predictor. At the same time, PI could be crucial in the franchise-based tournaments. Second, although in some studies, SFE was positioned as a predictor of identification, it was overlooked in its differential association with PI and TI (Chiu & Won, 2020; Hu & Bedford, 2012). Third, previous models typically positioned consumption behavior as a single dimension construct, ignoring consumption patterns dictated by the level of commitment. For example, attendance requires consumers' high commitment, whereas media consumption, such as watching a live game on a digital device, requires the lowest commitment.

The theoretical model extends the scope of prior relevant fandom models. For example, Carlson and Donovan (2013) examined the Brand personality connection with athlete identification and subsequent consumption behavior, which assessed PI, but no connection was established with SFE. Similarly, Chiu and Won (2020) investigated SFE connection for identification and media consumption only, overlooking the behavioral diversity predicted by commitment and ignoring PI's mediation role between SFE and TI. The current model positions PI as a crucial factor in the identification formation in the global context and its subsequent direct and indirect roles, overcoming prior models' scope constraints.

The inclusion of IPMA further strengthens the model and its implications. While PLS-SEM indicates relationship significance, IPMA complements the structure by indicating which construct provides the greatest marginal return. This combination is crucial as it connects theoretical significance with actionable implications. This dimension is missing in the similar prior models (Kim et al., 2011; Trail et al., 2005).

3.5 Conceptual Distinction Between TI and PI

Within the social identity framework, although TI and PI are related constructs, conceptually they are distinct entities or targets of fan loyalty. PI indicates a fan's psychological link with an individual player who acts as a "human brand" and is derived from perceived prestige, distinctiveness, or parasocial attachment (Carlson & Donovan, 2013). On the contrary, TI is derived from fans' psychological connection with a collective organization that stems from its rich history, belongingness, contribution, or community involvement (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). The distinction is even more significant in the current study context. With regard to the global franchise league (IPL) organized by India, Bangladeshi fans identify themselves with Mustafizur Rahman on the basis of common nationality and

national pride, which is different from the basis of TI with the Delhi Capitals, which is a distant team with no cultural or community connection. For example, a fan might celebrate player success (taking a wicket or being awarded the best player) even if the team loses (weak attachment with the team), whereas another fan might be disappointed with the overall performance of the team even though he had no player attachment. This conceptual difference is further supported by the current study result of discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker criterion and Heterotrait–Monotrait [HTMT] ratio, Tables 3 and 4), which confirms that the measures are capturing distinct empirical phenomena.

3.6 Data Analysis

Sample size adequacy was determined beforehand using G*Power 3.1.9.2. Considering the number of predictors in the model, with an alpha level of 0.05, statistical power of 0.80, and an effect size (f^2) of 0.15, the minimum recommended sample size was 74 participants. Our final sample size ($N = 488$) therefore exceeds this requirement.

The Mann–Whitney U test was conducted in SPSS 24 to check for non-response bias, comparing responses from the first 100 and last 100 participants. The absence of significant differences ($p = 0.0001$) indicates non-response bias is unlikely. Common method bias (CMB) was evaluated using Harman's single-factor test, which showed that a single factor accounted for 45.33% of the variance – below the critical 50% threshold – indicating CMB is not a significant issue.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was implemented employing SmartPLS 3.3.3. PLS-SEM was chosen because it effectively handles complex models even with smaller sample sizes and does not require strict assumptions

	AI	LMCI	MCI	PI	SFE	TI
1. AI	0.951					
2. LMCI	0.774	0.958				
3. MCI	0.582	0.570	0.955			
4. PI	0.423	0.365	0.714	0.947		
5. SFE	0.364	0.342	0.592	0.662	0.767	
6. TI	0.754	0.680	0.507	0.399	0.408	0.921

Notes: The square roots of AVE are shown in bold on the diagonal of the correlation matrix (variance shared between the constructs and their respective measures). The off-diagonal values below the diagonal show correlations between the constructs.

Table 3. Fornell–Larcker criterion.

Source: Author's contribution.

	AI	LMCI	MCI	PI	SFE	TI
AI						
LMCI	0.814					
MCI	0.613	0.598				
PI	0.447	0.385	0.753			
SFE	0.417	0.389	0.679	0.777		
TI	0.812	0.729	0.545	0.432	0.477	

Notes: The optimal value for HTMT is below 0.85.

Table 4. HTMT ratio.

Source: Author's contribution.

about data distribution. Analysis followed the two-stage method recommended by Hair et al. (2017):

- Measurement model assessment: Assessment of reliability and validity.
- Structural model assessment: Testing of hypothesized relationships using 5,000 bootstrap samples for significance testing.

4. Results

4.1 Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model's key components are construct reliability, discriminant validity, and convergent validity, which were evaluated following Hair et al. (2017). For reflective constructs, outer loadings should exceed 0.708, and convergent validity was assessed via average variance extracted (AVE). Three items (SFE2 = 0.508; SFE3 = 0.558; and SFE7 = 0.498) were removed due to substandard loadings. SFE1 was retained (0.655) based on content validity considerations. Post-refinement, loadings ranged from 0.740 to 0.962. Both Cronbach's α (CA: 0.765–0.955) and composite reliability (CR: 0.850–0.971) exceeded the 0.70 reliability threshold. Convergent validity was established as AVE values (0.589–0.917) surpassed the 0.50 benchmark. Complete results are detailed in Figure 2 and Table 2.

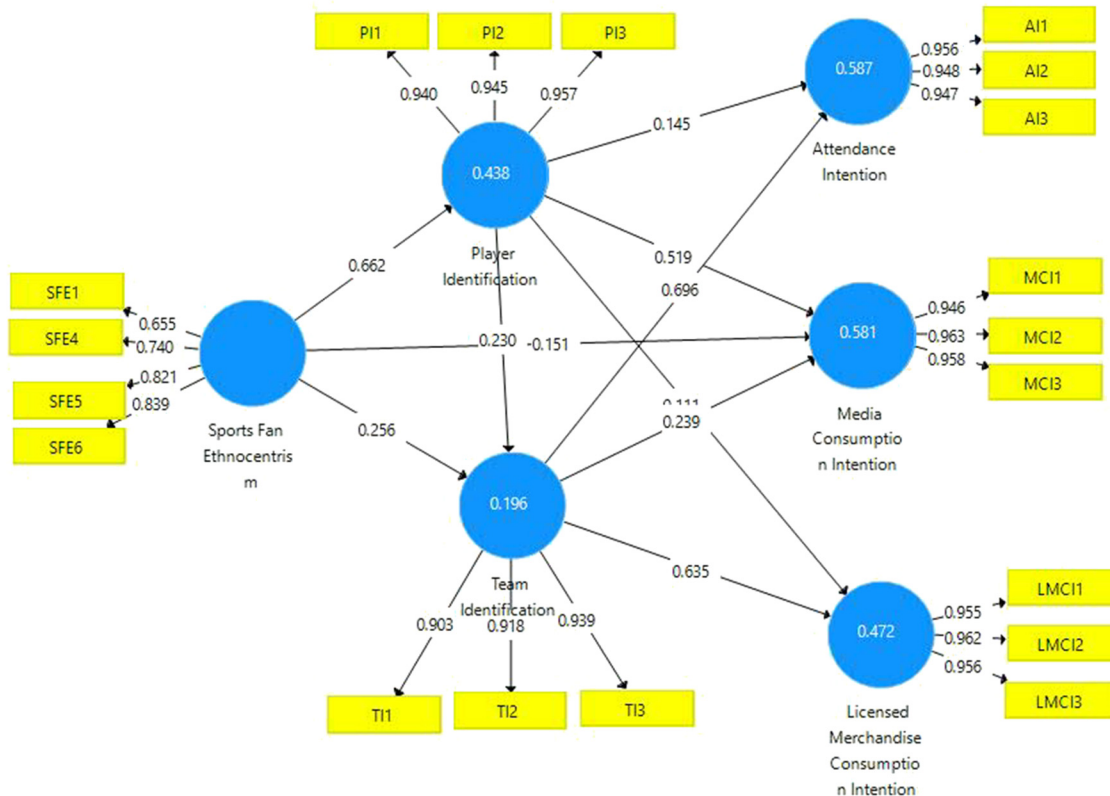


Figure 2. Hypothesized model with loadings and R-squared values.
Source: Author's contribution.

Discriminant validity was evaluated using the HTMT ratio and Fornell–Larcker criterion. As shown in Table 3, the Fornell–Larcker analysis confirmed discriminant validity for all constructs: the square root of each construct's AVE exceeded its correlations with other constructs.

Discriminant validity was further assessed using the HTMT ratio, which compares within-construct correlations to between-construct correlations. In this study, the maximum HTMT value observed was 0.814, below both the conservative threshold (0.85) and liberal threshold (0.90), confirming discriminant validity (Table 4).

4.2 Structural Model Assessment

Multicollinearity was assessed by calculating variance inflation factors (VIFs), with the largest VIF observed being 1.86, well below the critical value of 3.3 (Hair et al., 2017). The model's explanatory capacity ranged from moderate to substantial, as indicated by R^2 coefficients of 0.585 for AI, 0.578 for MCI, 0.470 for LMCI, and 0.437 for PI (Hair et al., 2017). Goodness-of-fit was further corroborated by an standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) of 0.059, comfortably under the conventional cutoff of 0.08.

Predictive relevance was demonstrated through Stone–Geisser Q^2 statistics, all exceeding zero in the blind-folding procedure: AI = 0.524, MCI = 0.524, LMCI = 0.430, PI = 0.389, and TI = 0.165. To quantify the connection intensity of each predictor, effect sizes (F^2) were computed (Table 4). Every path yielding statistical significance exhibited an F^2 of at least 0.02 (Hair et al., 2017).

Hypothesis testing results appear in Table 5 and Figure 3.

H1 proposed that SFE is positively linked with MCI, and the results supported the assumption ($\beta = 0.151$, $t = 2.621$, $p < 0.05$), which means ethnocentric fans tend to engage with media consumption behavior.

H2 and H3 assessed SFE's association with PI and TI, respectively. SFE showed strong positive effects on both PI ($\beta = 0.662$, $t = 19.741$, $p < 0.001$) and TI ($\beta = 0.256$, $t = 4.381$, $p < 0.001$), thus confirming H2 and H3. The significant finding is that the effect size of PI was larger than TI (0.662 vs 0.256), meaning SFE predicts PI strongly.

H4, H5, and H6 hypothesized that TI is positively associated with AI, MCI, and LMCI, respectively. Subsequently, TI exhibited significant direct link with AI ($\beta = 0.696$, $t = 22.573$, $p < 0.001$), MCI ($\beta = 0.239$, $t = 7.525$, $p < 0.001$), and LMCI ($\beta = 0.635$, $t = 16.129$, $p < 0.001$), validating hypotheses H4, H5, and H6.

H7, H8, and H9 predicted PI positively predict AI, MCI, and LMCI, respectively. PI was found positively associated with AI ($\beta = 0.145$, $t = 4.483$, $p < 0.001$), MCI ($\beta = 0.519$, $t =$

Hypotheses numbers	Hypotheses	Path values (Beta)	Sample mean (M)	SD	T statistics	Bias corrected at 95% confidence interval		P values	Decision	R squared	f squared
						2.5% LL	97.5% UL				
H1	SFE → MCI	0.151	0.149	0.058	2.621	0.031	0.264	0.009	0.009	Supported	0.578 (MCI)
H2	SFE → PI	0.662	0.664	0.034	19.741	0.597	0.724	0.000	0.000	Supported	0.437 (PI)
H3	SFE → TI	0.256	0.261	0.058	4.381	0.138	0.369	0.000	0.000	Supported	0.193 (TI)
H4	TI → AI	0.696	0.695	0.031	22.573	0.631	0.749	0.000	0.000	Supported	0.585 (AI)
H5	TI → MCI	0.239	0.237	0.032	7.525	0.180	0.303	0.000	0.000	Supported	0.109
H6	TI → LMCI	0.635	0.633	0.039	16.129	0.540	0.710	0.000	0.000	Supported	0.470 (LMCI)
H7	PI → AI	0.145	0.146	0.032	4.483	0.088	0.209	0.000	0.000	Supported	0.043
H8	PI → MCI	0.519	0.522	0.052	10.051	0.425	0.624	0.000	0.000	Supported	0.348
H9	PI → LMCI	0.111	0.113	0.035	3.225	0.054	0.182	0.001	0.001	Supported	0.020
H10	PI → TI	0.230	0.226	0.055	4.211	0.119	0.329	0.000	0.000	Supported	0.037

Note: N = 488, SFE = Sports Fan Ethnocentrism, MCI = Media Consumption Intention, PI = Player Identification, TI = Team Identification, AI = Attendance Intention, LMCI = Licensed Merchandise Consumption Intention, LL = Lower Limit, and UL = Upper Limit.

Table 5. Structural path analysis: Hypothesis tests.

Source: Author's contribution.

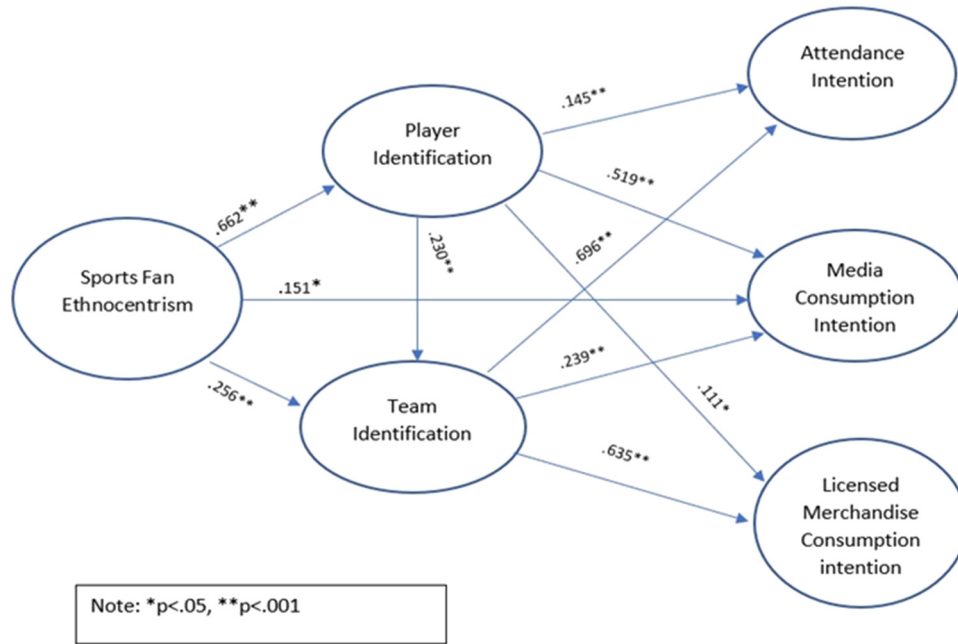


Figure 3. Theoretical model with path coefficients.
Source: Author's contribution.

10.051, $p < 0.001$), and LMCI ($\beta = 0.111$, $t = 3.225$, $p < 0.05$), providing support for H7, H8, and H9.

Finally, H10 assumed PI has a positive association with TI. The result validated the H10 ($\beta = 0.230$, $t = 4.211$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that if a fan identifies himself with a player, he will subsequently identify with the team.

4.3 Mediation Analysis

Further, the current study examines several mediating indirect paths between SFE and behavioral intentions:

MCI, AI, and LMCI, in which we observe that SFE not only directly but also indirectly, through player and TI, predicts sports behavioral intentions (Table 6).

4.4 IMPA

An IPMA was conducted for AI, MCI, and LMCI to complement the PLS-SEM analysis. IPMA identifies managerial improvement priorities by comparing total effects (importance) and average latent variable scores (performance) of predecessor constructs (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016).

Specific indirect association	Path values	<i>T</i> statistics	<i>P</i> values	Relationship confirmed/rejected
SFE→ PI→ AI	0.096	4.316	0.000	Confirmed
SFE→ PI→ MCI	0.343	7.996	0.000	Confirmed
SFE→ PI→ LMCI	0.074	3.088	0.002	Confirmed
SFE→ TI→ AI	0.178	4.224	0.000	Confirmed
SFE→ TI→ MCI	0.061	3.732	0.000	Confirmed
SFE→ TI→ LMCI	0.162	4.248	0.000	Confirmed
SFE→ PI→ TI	0.152	4.134	0.000	Confirmed
SFE→ PI→ TI→ MCI	0.036	3.954	0.000	Confirmed
SFE→ PI→ TI→ AI	0.106	4.146	0.000	Confirmed
SFE→ PI→ TI→ LMCI	0.097	4.025	0.000	Confirmed

Table 6. Mediation analysis.
Source: Author's contribution.

Variables	AI		MCI		LMCI	
	Importance	Performance	Importance	Performance	Importance	Performance
PI	0.293	71.638	0.613	71.638	0.257	71.638
SFE	0.458	69.074	0.793	69.074	0.333	69.074
TI	0.747	25.225	0.285	25.225	0.635	25.225
Mean value	0.499	55.312	0.564	55.312	0.408	55.312

Table 7. Importance–performance values for latent variables.
Source: Author's contribution.

Following del-Castillo-Feito *et al.* (2022), four quadrants were defined: Q1 (Keep Up), Q2 (Focus Here), Q3 (Possible Overkill), and Q4 (Low Priority). Quadrant boundaries were determined using weighted averages from IPMA results (Table 7).

Key findings: TI showed the highest importance for both AI (total effect = 0.747) and LMCI (total effect = 0.635). However, its performance scores were low (Figure 4a–c), indicating a substantial performance gap. This reinforces the Delhi Capitals case finding that TI is critically undervalued despite its strategic impact.

5. Discussion

This study presents a conceptualized and assessed theoretical model that integrates SFE or national bias to show how it predicts PI and TI in the globalized franchise league and subsequent consumption behavior. It extends SIT theory by illustrating the multilevel identity process. The findings reveal the following noteworthy observations.

First, SFE exerts a significantly stronger association with PI ($\beta = 0.662$) than with TI ($\beta = 0.256$), confirming previous study findings linking ethnocentrism and individual player attachment (Chiu & Won, 2020; Perreault & Bourhis, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Wu *et al.*, 2012). The result further extends SIT by arguing that, within the global franchise context, the “in-group” argument is not homogeneous and simple. Rather, ethnocentric fans first connect with the player from their country who is deemed the most meaningful and relevant member of the team. In contrast, Franchise teams generally lack deep historical roots and are regionally distant, making them less accessible as an “in-group” entity. Therefore, SFE is filtered through Player connection, and national pride is expressed through player first, not the team. However, Chiu and Won (2020) found that SFE did not significantly predict TI among Taiwanese baseball fans in MLB, a franchise league in the USA. The inconsistency indicates

another significant issue: this SFE-TI connection might be dependent on league historical depth and identity permeability, too. MLB teams like the Baltimore Orioles have 125 years of rich history and established identity, and a Taiwanese player is merely a guest there. Thus, in this case, SFE was primarily connected to the player but could not be transferred to the team. In contrast, IPL was established in 2008, and teams such as Delhi Capitals lack deep roots. In the case of Bangladeshi fans, the team was not a fixed institution, but rather defined by their local player. The team was permeable enough, transferring SFE smoothly from player to team.

The comparison advances SIT in three ways. First, it highlights the “identity permeability” of groups that dictate how an individual can predict their group identity. Established groups with a lasting history could resist the influence of short-term group members. Second, identity objects are positioned hierarchically and sequentially. PI can operate as a gateway to the TI if accessible. Third, prior identification studies emphasized context, such as geographic proximity and place-based attachment (Heere & James, 2007), whereas in franchise leagues, emphasis is placed on individual identity, even if location is not proximate.

Similarly, SFE significantly predicts MCI, aligning with Sharma *et al.* (1995) and Tsai *et al.* (2013), suggesting that ethnocentric fans engaged with social media (such as Facebook, Twitter) to follow favored players. However, it contradicts Chiu and Won's (2020) insignificant MCI link among Taiwanese MLB fans and emphasizes cultural variations and contextual differences. Mustafizur Rahman, who is a highly visible national symbol, has immense influence on fans' motivation (Hughes, 2026) that helps explain the increase in fans' media engagement. In contrast, MLB fandom in Taiwan may be structured differently, where the national player link with media consumption is minimal.

Second, by quantifying the distinct pathways through which PI and TI predict high-commitment (AI), moderate-commitment (LMCI), and low-commitment (MCI) behaviors, we reveal a clear pattern: TI dominates high- and

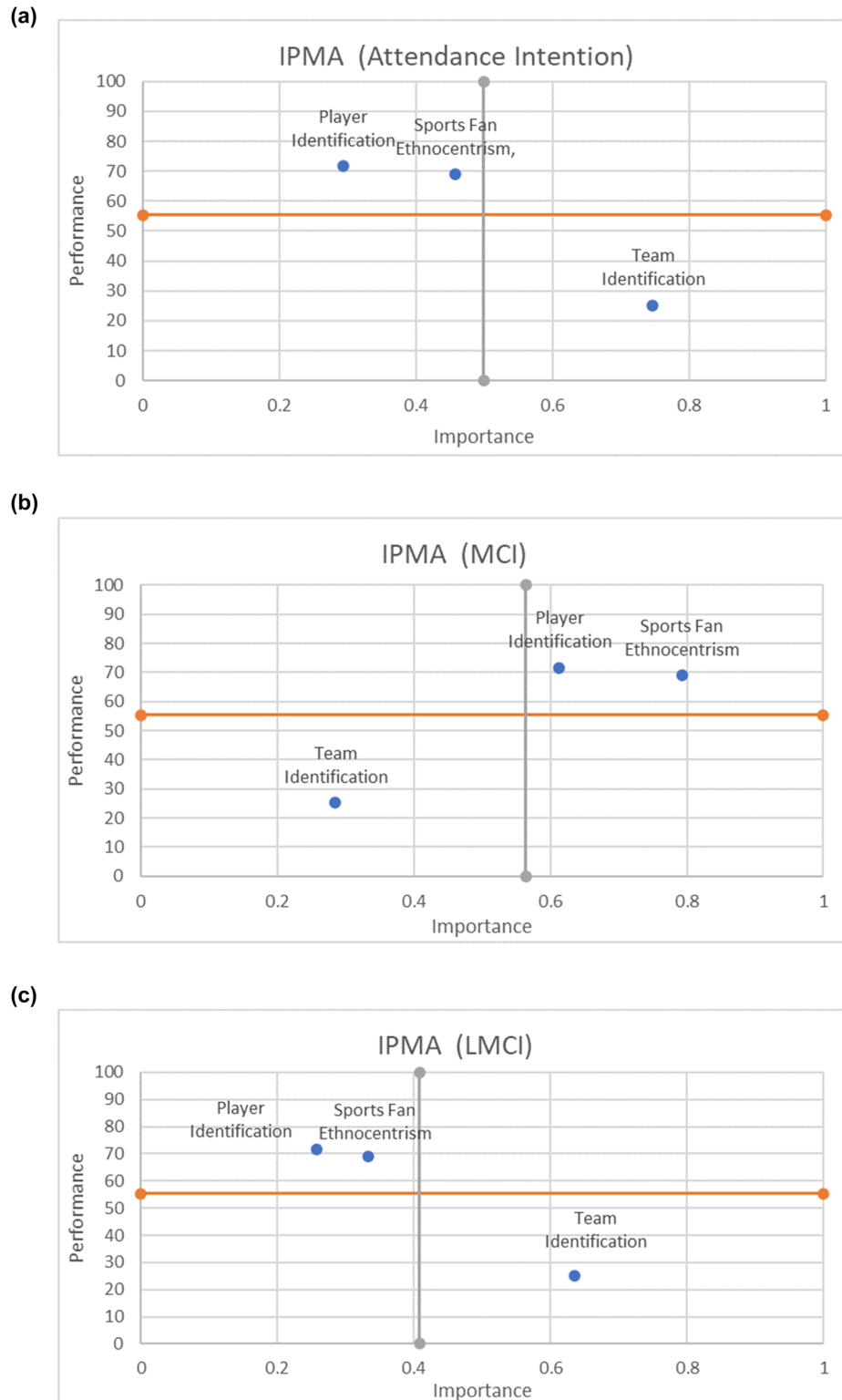


Figure 4. (a) Importance–performance map (Latent variable (LV) = AI). (b) Importance–performance map (LV = MCI). (c) Importance–performance map (LV = LMCI).
Source: Author's contribution.

moderate-commitment domains, whereas PI predicts low-commitment engagement. Specifically, TI's association with AI ($\beta = 0.696$) far exceeds that of PI ($\beta = 0.145$), consistent with Trail *et al.* (2003, 2005), Kim and Manoli (2022), and Stathopoulou *et al.* (2022), and is notably higher in our Bangladesh sample where fervent fandom was evident during WC2022 coverage by the BBC than in South Korea ($\beta = 0.44$) or Sub-Saharan Africa ($\beta = 0.011$). Merchandise consumption similarly reflects a strong TI effect ($\beta = 0.635$) vs a modest PI effect ($\beta = 0.111$), echoing Carlson *et al.* (2009) and James and Trail (2008) on team symbols' reinforcing role. In contrast, PI ($\beta = 0.519$) more strongly predicts MCI than TI ($\beta = 0.239$), aligning with Fink *et al.* (2009) and Carlson and Donovan (2013) in showing that player-centric content predicts social-media engagement. These results indicate differing psychological functions of fans about identification targets. TI predicts high and moderate commitment behavior because these actions approve group belonging and social validation, whereas PI does not promote high commitment because only media will allow for selective engagement with a particular player without financial commitment. In addition, while PI is dominating, the fan would not go beyond low commitment because it might signal TI, which might not be preferable at that point.

Third, mediation analysis demonstrates that PI has a partial mediation effect on the SFE $\rightarrow$ TI relationship (indirect effect = 0.438, $p < 0.001$), indicating that ethnocentric fans form player attachments before extending loyalty to the team. PI also mediates SFE's effects on AI, LMCI, and MCI. In contrast, TI mediates only the SFE-AI and SFE-LMCI paths, highlighting a layered, sequential process through which ethnocentric motivations translate into consumption behaviors (Chiu & Won, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2012). The sequential mediation (SFE-PI-TI) provides stronger empirical support, and further reaffirms the SIT extension proposed above that PI is not parallel to TI, rather it acts as a gateway to the TI. Further, the SFE-PI-behavior connection is significant because, in the study context, the player is the only national representation in the team, and ethnocentric motivation cannot be attached to the Team.

Finally, our IPMA diagnoses which antecedents offer the most excellent marginal returns. Although the results are excellent insights to generate actionable strategies, the present results might indicate deeper structural dynamics. For example, the weaker position of TI should not be interpreted as solely managerial failure. In the context of franchise leagues, team identity development could rely on several contextual factors, such as the franchise nature of the team, long-term historical attachment, irregular

player transfers, or geographical proximity to fans. These factors could negatively affect the collective attachment of distant fans. In contrast, domestic players are readily available with strong emotional attachment and meaningful representation, especially when the player has a deep national identity.

In addition, mediation analysis reveals that PI and TI play mediating roles in influencing sports consumers' behavior. The study revealed that PI is essential in developing TI through its mediation of the SFE-TI connection, supporting the study of Chiu and Won. (2020). That means ethnocentric fans tend to identify with individual players before identifying with the team. Moreover, PI mediates SFE and sports consumption behaviors, consistent with Chiu and Won's (2020) findings. Chiu and Won found that TI links SFE and consumption intentions, consistent with our study's results.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Theoretical Contribution

Theoretically, this study advances the sports-fandom literature in three primary ways. First, by applying SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) to a global franchise context, we demonstrate that SFE not only fosters collective "us versus them" distinctions but differentially activates identification with native players vs the foreign franchise itself. While prior work has linked ethnocentrism to group-level attachments (Perreault & Bourhis, 1999; Devlin & Billings, 2016), our findings reveal that in highly globalized leagues such as the IPL, SFE more strongly predict PI than TI through identity permeability, hierarchical identity, and context dependance, thereby refining SIT's boundary conditions and reconciling conflicting results (e.g., Chiu & Won, 2020).

Second, we contribute a novel integrative model that positions SFE, PI, and TI as antecedents of three distinct consumption intentions: AI, MCI, and long-term LMCI. Unlike previous frameworks that treat fan ethnocentrism as a uni-dimensional predictor of aggregate consumption (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2011), our model disaggregates behavioral outcomes by commitment level and illustrates how SFE's association unfolds with separate PI- and TI-driven pathways. In doing so, we fill a critical theoretical void by showing that PI, often overlooked in favor of team-level constructs, exerts a substantial link with low-commitment (MCI) and moderate-commitment (LMCI) behaviors, and even mediates the SFE $\rightarrow$ TI link.

Third, through rigorous mediation and IPMA, we chart a fine-grained process model in which SFE sequentially engages PI and TI to predict each consumption intention. Our mediation results (e.g., $SFE \rightarrow PI \rightarrow AI$; $SFE \rightarrow PI \rightarrow TI \rightarrow LMCI$) uncover nuanced indirect effects scarcely examined in prior sport-consumer research (Carlson & Donovan, 2013; Fink et al., 2009). Meanwhile, the application of IPMA to SFE is, to our knowledge, unprecedented; by identifying TI as the highest-importance/lowest-performance lever for attendance and merchandise, and PI/SFE as adequate for media consumption, we introduce a practical yet theoretically rich tool for prioritizing identity-based interventions. Collectively, these contributions deepen our understanding of identity dynamics in a global sports ecosystem and pave the way for future longitudinal and cross-cultural validations.

6.2 Practical Contributions

This study offers guidance on three actionable areas for sports leagues, franchises, and marketers seeking to harness ethnocentric fan motivations and identity dynamics to predict engagement and revenue.

First, Clubs should focus on recruiting players who serve as a national bridge. When a club or team signs a contract with a player having strong national identity and cultural ties (such as Mustafizur Rahman), it immediately gets access to that community and market. To leverage this, teams could highlight these players in pre-game broadcasts, social media posts, and marketing campaigns aimed at their home countries' markets. In addition, player-centric official merchandise, such as jerseys with the player's name, branded accessories, could inspire the ethnocentric fans to display pride while engaging with the league. Teams should arrange community events such as youth clinics, autograph sessions, or cultural celebrations that would bring fans. For example, Manchester United's promotion of Asian players to capture viewership in India, or the Los Angeles Dodgers' spotlighting of Latino stars, demonstrated how SFE-driven content yields vicarious fulfillment, elevates media consumption, and opens new sponsorship and broadcast-rights opportunities (Chung et al., 2015).

Second, Teams should build team loyalty through fan experiences. Our study results indicated that Bangladeshi fans were less connected to the Delhi Capitals than to their national player. The result is crucial because the study further indicates that team loyalty motivates fans to engage in high commitment, such as purchasing tickets and merchandise. To overcome the issue, the team should

emphasize fan experiences such as starting digital membership programs that provide fan access to exclusive behind-the-scenes content, a virtual tour of the team, and interaction with players online. Teams could arrange fan festivals during the off-season, targeting the overseas market by displaying team history, arranging interactive games, or interacting with former star players. Besides this, the team should create heritage storytelling campaigns, such as displaying documentaries on team journeys or celebrating major winning moments, so that fans can emotionally get attached to the team.

Third, as the study confirmed, PI predicts TI, teams should use star players to promote deeper team loyalty. Rather than treating player and team marketing as separate identities, they should converge both so that fans could connect liking a player to supporting the whole team. For example, franchises could combine player-focused content, such as performance highlights, success celebrations, or training videos, with team stories such that the player fits in with team goals and is a part of the team identity. Similarly, teams could offer products connecting both identity, such as a jersey that has the player's name with the team's symbol. Moreover, they could launch loyalty programs in which fans will earn loyalty points for engaging with player content, such as watching videos or sharing content, and those points could be redeemed for team experiences, such as discounted match tickets or access to exclusive team merchandise.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study advances understanding of SFE, but several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The cross-sectional design does not allow causal inferences, especially the mediation effect reported in the study (e.g., $SFE \rightarrow PI \rightarrow TI$). Apparently, the arrow might imply temporal sequences that cannot be confirmed with single-point data, requiring longitudinal data to infer. Thus, the research findings are not a proven causal connection, but a theoretical structural association. In addition, focusing on a single player-team context (Mustafizur Rahman/Delhi Capitals) risks contextual bias. While helpful in isolating SFE effects, findings may not generalize to leagues dominated by national athletes (e.g., K-pop stars in Korean baseball) or distinct fan cultures (e.g., NBA, EPL). Future research should incorporate multiple players/teams across diverse leagues to assess SFE's operation in varied settings.

The sample lacks demographic diversity (88.5% male, concentrated Bangladeshi cities, income homogeneity),

limiting generalizability. Cricket's gender-skewed fandom in South Asia contrasts with markets like European football, where female viewership grows. Future studies should employ quota sampling across gender, age, and income strata. Future research must validate the model in diverse sports (e.g., football, basketball) and markets (e.g., Europe, Latin America) to broaden applicability, testing SFE's cultural boundaries and consistency. Examining women's leagues and non-cricket sports can uncover underexplored gender-based variations.

Future studies should also explore moderators influencing the SFE-fan identification relationship, such as team performance, player mobility, or external crises (e.g., scandals). Additionally, place identification (e.g., city pride) could interact with SFE in driving consumption, enhancing the model's explanatory power. Longitudinal tracking across seasons is essential to capture how behavioral intentions shift with athlete/team changes. Mixed-method approaches (e.g., surveys with interviews) could offer deeper insights into SFE's psychological mechanisms, particularly whether PI stems from parasocial bonds or national hero-worship. While Chiu et al. (2015) argue for SFE's cross-cultural relevance, this Bangladesh-specific setting necessitates caution in generalization. Addressing these avenues will enhance understanding of ethnocentrism, identity, and fandom in global sports.

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Author contribution

Md Mahbubul Haq, Attila Kajos, Miklos Kozma: conception and design of the study, and manuscript preparation; Md Mahbubul Haq: acquisition of data; Attila Kajos: analysis and interpretation of data.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethics approval and informed consent

As the data were collected through a survey, informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to participation. No formal ethics committee approval was required for this study.

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Appendix

Questionnaire (English Version)

Sports Fan Ethnocentrism Impact on Player Identification, Team Identification, and Consumption Behavior: An Application of PLS-SEM and IPMA.

Dear participant

This questionnaire was designed to get response of a research about ‘Sports Fan Ethnocentrism Impact on Player Identification, Team Identification, and Consumption Behavior’. Your contribution will be appreciated; your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for research purposes. The analysis of the survey will involve statistical aggregates making the individual responses impossible to be identified by the study results.

Therefore your response would be used for scientific research and If you want to proceed for response record, tick yes. Tick no if you are not interested.

Are you want to proceed for data response input?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is your age at least 15 years?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you watch any game in IPL season 2022?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please indicate tick (✓) for your response.

Name: _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age: ☐ Under 20 ☐ 20–29 ☐ 30–39 ☐ Over 40

Income (BDT): ☐ Below 20,000 BDT ☐ 20,001–30,000 BDT ☐ 30,001–40,000 BDT
☐ 40,001–50,000 BDT ☐ Over 50,000 BDT

Questions related to the research

SL	Question	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Sports Fan Ethnocentrism (7)						
1	I watch IPL games because there are Bangladeshi players in them.					
2	I expect to see our players beat foreign players.					
3	I expect a top-level performance from our players in IPL.					
4	Even though it may cost me extra time or money, I still support our players and their teams in IPL.					
5	I watch our athletes play in order to show my support.					
6	I will support our players always because they are the best to me.					
7	Real Bangladeshi should always support our players.					
Player Identification (3)						
1	I identify with the Mustafizur Rahman than with the Delhi Capitals.					
2	I am a big fan of Mustafizur Rahman more than I am a fan of the Delhi Capitals.					
3	I consider myself a fan of Mustafizur Rahman rather than a fan of the Delhi Capitals.					
Team Identification (3)						
1	I consider myself to be a “real” fan of the Delhi Capitals.					
2	I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the Delhi Capitals.					
3	Being a fan of the Delhi Capitals is very important to me.					

Media Consumption Intention (3)

- 1 I will track the news on the Delhi Capitals through the media (e.g., TV, Internet, Radio, SM etc.)
- 2 I will watch or listen to the Delhi Capitals' game(s) through the media (e.g., TV, Internet, Radio, SM etc.)
- 3 I will support the Delhi Capitals by watching or listening to Delhi Capitals' game(s) through the media (e.g., TV, Internet, Radio, SM,etc.)

Attendance Intention (3)

- 1 I intend to attend the (Delhi Capitals)'s game(s).
- 2 The likelihood that I will attend the (Delhi Capitals)'s game(s) in the future is high.
- 3 I will attend the (Delhi Capitals)'s game(s) in the future.

Licensed Merchandise Consumption Intention (3)

- 1 I am likely to purchase (Delhi Capitals)'s licensed merchandise in the future.
- 2 In the future, purchasing (Delhi Capitals) licensed merchandise is something I plan to do.
- 3 In the future, I intend to purchase licensed merchandise representing the (Delhi Capitals).

Thank you