

Motivational Antecedents to Fandom and the Resultant Effects in the Foreign Contemporary Music Market

OUTSTANDING ABSTRACT: Culture, Identity and Ethnicity

Hyun Sang An, hyunsang.an@mnstate.edu

Wooyang Kim, wooyang.kim@mnstate.edu

C. Anthony Di Benedetto, tonyd@temple.edu

ABSTRACT

Fandom, as a sociocultural construct, has been studied to understand the behavioral, sociological and psychological factors pertaining to fans (enthusiastic followers of a music artist, sports team, celebrity, or entertainer) (Meenaghan, 1998), and considered as a vital source of free labor to the fan club (Galuszka, 2015). The concept of fandom is more extensive than that of fanship in that it considers social interaction in terms of belongingness, that is, identifying as a member of a specific group (Galuszka, 2015; Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). The concept of fandom is currently an emerging issue in the extension of the contemporary music market driven by millennials, who are dominant music consumers and who share common interests in specific music artists as a means of expressing group identity (Fluent, 2017). Particularly among millennials, the foreign contemporary music market has globally emerged and enlarged fandom cultures primarily through online social media without barriers (Yang, 2018). For instance, BTS, a world-famous K-pop group, has a powerful fandom, named ARMY, which strongly influences the global contemporary music market and possesses a shared group identity regardless of ethnic differences (Premack, 2017). That is, fandom culture can be explained by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), focusing on social interaction at a group level. This is because fandom culture can be viewed as intergroup behavior (between-group) rather than interpersonal behavior (within-group), one of the most common sociocultural structures which permeates the routine life of millennials, and particularly with respect to preferences in music artists. According to social identity theory, being a member has implicit and/or explicit motivations (e.g., cognitive and/or emotional factors) to encourage an individual's voluntary effort to achieve belongingness by participating in various group activities (e.g., music purchase and information sharing to other social groups) and to expand its leverage of a specific fandom identity. Nonetheless, few studies in the marketing discipline have examined fandom cultures, its antecedents such as motivational factors, and resultant consequences. Therefore, the

purpose of this study is to apply social identity theory to investigate the antecedents (motivational rewards) to be a member of fandom and their consequences.

This study used 319 U.S. millennials (aged between 23 and 38 years old) via Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) and measured six constructs with 31 items to examine the following causal relationships: foreign music experience (FME), motivational rewards (cognitive motivation [CM] and emotional motivation [EM]), willingness to join fandom (WF), and post-behavioral intentions (purchase intention [PI], and information sharing intention [ISI]). To test the reliability and validity of the scales, we conducted a rigorous process as suggested by Fornell & Larcker (1981) and Kline (2015): 1) exploratory factor analysis (EFA, varimax rotation, by checking internal reliability [Cronbach's α], eigenvalue, factor loadings, and explained variance) and 2) confirmatory factor analysis (CFA including overall model fit, composite construct reliability, convergent reliability, and discriminant validity). First, the results of EFA showed that the six constructs meet sufficient soundness (the total explained variance at 75.09% and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceed .894). Second, the results of CFA achieved acceptable model fit among the six latent variables: $NC = 2.04$; $\chi^2 (419) = 854.47$ ($p < .001$); $TLI = .95$; $CFI = .96$; $RMSEA = .057$ (90% of CI: .052 – .063); and $PCFI = .86$. The follow-up tests – composite construct reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity – revealed a fair construct validity to examine our proposed etiologic model using structural equation modeling (SEM). The SEM results supported our model, describing an etiologic relationship between millennials' motivational factors and the outcome constructs, via willingness to join fandom: $NC = 2.276$; $\chi^2 (427) = 972.027$ ($p < .001$); $TLI = .940$, $CFI = .945$, $RMSEA = .063$ (90% of CI: .058 – .069); and $PCFI = .868$. To be precise, the proposed model indicated that four paths (FME-EM, EM-WF, WF-PI, and WF-ISI respectively) were supported while three paths were not supported (FME-CM, FME-WF, and CM-WF, respectively).

This study examined the behavioral pattern of millennials, in terms of their willingness to join fandom in terms of a series of etiologic relationships among the six constructs, by applying social identity theory. The findings suggested that when millennials have a certain level of experience with foreign contemporary music, emotional motivators (but not cognitive motivators) are an essential determinant to persuade them to join fandom. Moreover, this antecedent relationship is related to increased music purchase intention and information sharing intention, routine activities of fandom. The contribution of our study is the following. For academicians, our proposed model suggests social identity theory may be successfully used to explain fandom culture in terms of an etiologic relationship between motivational rewards and resultant outcomes of millennials' socio-psychological behavior. For marketers, our findings suggest that emotional motivation in millennials' reward system is the main driver to persuade them to join fandom, and the effect of fandom can enhance music agencies' sustainable profitability due to fandom's voluntary (perhaps fanatic) activities through buying and promoting music artists' releases (Galuszka, 2015; Reysen & Branscombe, 2010).

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Keywords: foreign music experience, information sharing intention, motivational rewards, music fandom, purchase intention

Relevance to Marketing Educators, Researchers, and Practitioners

For academicians, our proposed model suggests social identity theory well explain fandom culture in an etiologic relationship from motivational rewards and resultant outcomes of millennials' socio-psychological behavior. For marketers, our findings suggest that emotional motivation in millennials' reward system is the main driver to persuade them being fandom, and the effect of fandom can enhance music agencies' sustainable profitability due to fandom's voluntary (perhaps fanatic) activities through buying and promoting musician's albums and/or singles.

Author Information

Hyun Sang An, Minnesota State University-Moorhead

Wooyang Kim, Minnesota State University-Moorhead

C. Anthony Di Benedetto, Temple University

Track: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity

ID#: 1434