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Fans club brand relationship: football passion

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Abstract: Football fans are consumers with a special behaviour with their football club brand. Football is the most popular sport in the world. Demographically, organisations worldwide are becoming increasingly homogeneous. The main aim of this study is to explore why football fans are willing to do some kind of sacrifices in order to continue their relationship with their preferred club brand. Therefore, 97 telephone interviews (from a list of 123 potential respondents) were conducted with entrepreneurs, managers, students, lawyers, retired, employees (public and private), professors, athletes, coach. Participants were contacted in accordance with the procedures of snowball sampling type starting with finding the perpetrators of personal contacts that fit the profile request for the study: the main criterion of the integral elements of this first study is to be people who really like football, people who have the willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of their relationship with the football club brand and team. The findings of the first study reveal four major facets: passion/soul, be different, leave all behind, personal risk. The study contributes to knowledge in marketing field, as well as provides insights to brand managers.

Keywords: football sport; passion/soul; passive sacrifice; active sacrifice.

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1 Introduction

Brand names are part of a particular lexical category and require different strategies (Gontijo et al., 2002), and these strategies have to be adapted not only to the countries to which is the destiny, but also to the regions and public-target. Demographically, organisations worldwide are becoming increasingly homogeneous (Lauring and Selmer, 2010a). We can then speak of a global marketing and its growing importance. Since the saturation of domestic markets to greater competition (having a key role the internet) through greater cooperation, globalisation of marketing is a reality, not only as an element of pressure but also of opportunity. Nowadays, a company acting in a local market or just in a national market can no longer avoid competitive pressure globally. However, a brand alone does not exist and as such the relationship that exists between various brands (Jevons et al., 2002). For instance, in the management level, if loyalty to any type of good or service, is a key factor for the performance of the brand (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), is more for sport and specifically to a football club.

The competition between all actors is changing the face of business and at breakneck speed. Thus, the value of the brand depends on customer satisfaction and value that gives the consumer the consumed (Torres and Tribó, 2011) and this is critical because, according to Shamma and Hassan (2011), affects not only the financial results as well as non-financial. For the same authors is what distinguishes the brand from other competitors and is an important measure of success of the brand. As argued by Keller (1993) the motivation to learn more about the brand's value is twofold: financial factors (earn more) and improve marketing productivity (because there is an increased cost of the entire set of operations required for the brand). According to Keller and Moorthi (2003) the leading brands define lifestyle and as such have great value. Since there is a proliferation of brands and an increasingly difficult to show differences (Gonçalves Filho et al., 2007), if a brand is the engine of the company, being one of the most valuable assets (Keller and Lehmann, 2009), the importance of brands has been increasingly

referred to as the advent of increased competitiveness and need for organisations to show differences and add value to goods and service (Gonçalves Filho et al., 2007).

Like people, brands can be signal of quality that is not visible (Baek et al., 2010) which leads to that trademarks can be considered metaphors based on a wide range of comparisons between brand attributes and that are part of human beings (Keller and Richey, 2006; Stern, 2006). Stern (2006) adds that a brand can have personality (which compares the brand with unique traits) or identity (basic comparison of features common to both), or reputation (more on the character) or image (comparison between a physical brand and their mental representation).

According to Baek et al. (2010), a strong brand is one that has credibility (which is created and formed of greater consistency, clarity and greater investment in the brand over time). Berry (2000) distinguishes between good and service because in the goods the brand is 'palpable' (tangible), that is, the characteristics of the good can represent the brand, however, in the services the company is the brand; but specifies that a strong brand allows a better visualisation and understanding of intangibles. Nevertheless, as said by Keller et al. (2002) in an increasingly competitive world populated with millions of marks it must be taken into account not only the differentiation of the brand but also the benchmark market and what it has in common with the other competitors. In this vein, each football club, with its logo, symbol, shorthand, colour and other elements is a brand, and so should be managed with the same assumptions than brands of organisations associated with other sectors of economic activity. The market is now erected in the supreme value, leading, with the help of the media, creating an increasingly devout herd, catch and dislodge the principles and values in all spheres of activity: economic, cultural, educational and social (Bento, 2013). Sports and particularly football is an industry which generates a huge amount of euros per year (e.g., Szymanski, 1998; Tunaru et al., 2005) with their club brands and sports celebrities and downright fans and consumers. Nevertheless, the mechanism behind the relationship between the club brand and the fans. Therefore, the present study is the first step to explore why football fans are willing to do some kind of sacrifices in order to continue their relationship with their preferred club brand. The article is structured as follows. After the introduction next sections provides a theoretical foundation, methodology, analyse of the interviews, and finally the theoretical and managerial implications.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Sports and football

Increasingly, sport is one of the cornerstones of politics and economy and as such is very difficult to have a speech against the sport. Aspects such as the concept underlying that sport is good for people, make them better citizens, creates pride in the community and generate a positive image are difficult to refute, not to mention that the issue of employment for the sport, in its most business, creates jobs and generates value for consumers (Hall, 2006).

In sport, the Olympics are one of the biggest sporting events, social and economic aspects of the modern world. Of what depends on Olympic success? Basically, two factors: the size of Olympic team (which itself depends on the country socioeconomic status) and the size of the population. In this aspect the rate of growth, unemployment

and health are determinant factors. That is, the larger countries with the highest rates in respect of health and social care course earn more medals for not only have more talent like this provide the same talent greater social support, and sports (Vagenas and Vlachokyriakou, 2012).

In the last two decades, professional sports have been studied from various perspectives: sociology, ethnography and anthropology (Benkowitz and Molnar, 2012), public relations (Hopwood, 2007; L'Etang and Hopwood, 2008), sponsorship (Frank, 2012), cultural studies (Benkowitz and Molnar, 2012), a variety of ideological positions (e.g., Sugden and Tomlinson, 2000). Regarding team sports, football (soccer in USA) is the most popular sport in the world (Nicolau, 2011). The football and society are not separated by the wall of China [Claussen, (2006), p.587]. Sport, and football in this particular case seems to have been ignored as a subject of sociological thought and research, especially because it has always been seen as having characteristics that fall on the less 'respectable' and relevant set of dichotomies that assures the dominant social values (Tiesler and Coelho, 2006). Football, as team sport, provides a social experience that is not easy to describe: the whole is more than the sum of its parts [Claussen, (2006), p.584].

Traditionally, the biggest difference between sport and business world has to do with the fact that the business is composed by the financial results and the respective profits and in sports the victory is everything, pursued by any cost. What happens is that, currently, the conditions are changing starting from a point that financial results attract resources that are key factors for having a successful performance (Smith and Stewart, 2010). The sports competition can be characterised by profound changes both at technological, social and economic (Gopalakrishnan and Damanpour, 1997).

The football and sport in general, in today's society, more than ever, are very popular (Kaynak et al., 2007). Through physical activity not only trains the body to have better health and a better quality life, without neglecting the physical appearance, more and more important these days and not just for professional sports, as demonstrated by several studies (Berri et al., 2011) but also the character of the person (Bockrath and Franke, 1995).

The sports spectacle in modern society, composed of a number of sporting events on a global scale (World Championships football, Olympics, World Championships in Athletics, among others) cannot be dissociated from economic factors that are deeply rooted in global brands, sponsorship, the huge budgets for their implementation, a whole array of businesses involved, as well as all marketing around one of these great events, as shown by Yoon and Choi (2005) business that becomes increasingly more profitable began to require a new management and marketing expertise. The world of sport moves a lot. In an industry that generates billions of euros per year (Szymanski, 1998) and its activity even be considered a new form of religiosity (Xifra, 2008), is a fact of the importance of football in modern life, including in the restricted world of high finance (Tunaru et al., 2005).

When World Cup 2006 was 27 billion cumulative viewers and only the final has an audience of over 700 million [Fédération Internationale de Football Association, FIFA, 2007 cited in Haugaasen and Jordet (2012, p.177)] we can say that football-oriented public spectacle has become, in the last decade of the 20th century, a component of the entertainment industry, marking also the image of the game. In the literature, there is no consensus in the values regarding sports industry and specifically in the industry of football. A report by Deloitte's Sports Business Group places the value of the 2007–2008

European football market at approximately 20.5 billion USD [Coombs and Osborne, (2012), p.201]. To Klayman (2008) the sports industry it is estimated that the year of 2012 generate almost 141 billion dollars. Regarding Brown and Walsh (2000, p.134), football on its own is said to be worth USD 250 billion worldwide. No question that football is 'big business' [Kriemadis et al., (2010), p.291]. This huge amount of money brings competitiveness, even between different sports, but not only! Currently, not only compete with each other, compete in a global market. Those who practice tennis think twice about buying a better tennis racket or buying sneakers, or else they will see a football game or if they prefer to spend money on a movie in the theatre.

Bearing in mind the above, it becomes pertinent to research proposal intends to study in the context of football, the activities and efforts that the fans are willing to do to continue their relationship with the club. Therefore, given the relevance of football phenomenon and, as far as we know, the inexistence, in marketing and sport literature contexts, of an instrument to measure and analyse the willingness to do certain activities in favour of the relationship between a consumer and his/her preferred brand, the purpose of the study is to start to develop a scale to measure the willingness to sacrifice for a football club brand by football club fans. The mentioned activities could put in risk or even be dangerous for the consumers' finances (e.g., go with the club to other countries, buy expensive tickets or merchandise) and/or for the family and friends relationship (e.g., neglect the time with family and friends). The findings of this study could also give clues for understandings the extreme relationship between consumers and their preferred brands, which could be of others product categories.

2.2 Consumer-brand relationship

The last decade of the 20th Century marks the beginning of the interest in scientific studies on the relationship between a brand and consumers. It is possible to elevate the customer-brand relationships to the desired level of human relationships (Park et al., 2013a). The Fournier (1998) seminal work on relationship theory and the proposed brand relationship quality model stand out as the lever to create the consumer brand relationship research field. This conceptualisation starts with the idea that human anthropomorphise inanimate objects and can think about brands as if they were human characters. In this context, the theories on relationships between two partners or individuals can be adapted to the relationships between consumers and their brands (Loureiro, 2011).

Fournier (1998) was the first to propose a six-faceted brand relationship quality construct which comprises love/passion, self-connection, interdependence, commitment, intimacy, and brand partner quality. The transposition of the close relationship to the dyadic relationship between a consumer and a brand and the building a strong tie lead us to the context of sport, particularly football. Indeed, if in any relationship with a brand the loyalty condition is important in the case of football is a sine qua non-condition. Therefore, several questions arise: What makes a person go to the stadium? What makes a person leave the comfort of his home (where he could watch the game on television), getting in the car (or public transport), catch lines, waste too much time to enter the stadium, catching cold, to hear words, risking their physical and go to the stadium? Only an emotional context is possible to explain this decision?

What seems to be a core aspect is that the four factors mentioned by Fournier (1998) as modellers relations (reciprocity, density, multiplicity and context), they are all presents, in the case of football, in their ceilings. However, it is an ever-changing

relationship that is interdependent and that defined and redefined over and over. The victory has enormous weight.

Since a relationship is a mutually co-created entity [Fournier and Alvarez, (2012), p.178] and the reality is that individual context significantly shapes a person's brand relationships [Fournier and Avery, (2011a), p.66], an individual's unique history of interpersonal experiences shapes not only how that individual thinks and feels about relationships generally and what is to be expected from them, but also how that individual behaves in those relationships [Fournier and Alvarez, (2012), p.180].

Although a brand has not an objective existence, being just a collection of perceptions retained in the mind of the consumer [Fournier, (1998), p.345] in the case of football, given its specificity, it goes beyond that. It is a way of life, one being in life, almost a religion (Xifra, 2008). Relationships mould themselves according to three aspects: social, psychological and cultural. Being the FC Barcelona at the time of Franco, was to be against the Spanish unit, and the Catalan culture stifled and psychological context of the Catalans own inferiority before the people of Madrid.

The brands coexist in systems not only for living but also help to give meaning to life (Berry and Seltman, 2007). Consumers choose life, not brands [Fournier, (1998), p.367]. In the case of football, it is a lifestyle (Atherton, 2010; Schmitt and Leonard, 1986). A brand can be multiple things for one person and the same thing for many people [Aaker, (1997), p.348; Keller, (2003), p.598]. Like football.

Companies must remember that they interact with people, and not everybody wants the same. So, companies must recognise these differences and propose relationships having in considerations these particularities, recognising the two sides of the relationship and the 'inter-action between them' (Fournier and Avery, 2011a). Yet, a consumer's relation with a brand is of a special kind.

Brands are commercial entities. They have monetary value. Brands can be bought and sold. There are goods and services tied to brands. There are logos and taglines, and all sorts of visual and verbal communications associated with brands. Brands are created and managed by entrepreneurs, and by individuals and groups in organisations (e.g., Aaker, 1997; Berry, 2000; Gontijo et al., 2002; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Berry and Seltman, 2007). Ontologically and epistemologically speaking, brands do not have bodies; they do not have thoughts and feelings; they do not have intentionality (they cannot initiate actions on their own), and they cannot interact. To associate a strong emotion with a brand, to say that one is 'attached to a brand' or that one 'loves a brand', may be just a fantasy or an odd kind of fetish (Schmitt, 2013).

In view of various branding concepts which have been studied in association to consumer-brand relationship, several studies related satisfaction, quality, trust, and brand loyalty (e.g., Oliver, 1999; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Loureiro, 2009; Loureiro and Kastenholz, 2011) to examine mass-market brands to determine to what extent, in a consumer setting, human personality and brand personality are related. Aaker (1997) made the first attempt to build the dimensions of brand personality, which Loureiro and Santana (2010) adapted, for the first time, to the context of website brands.

Ahuvia (2005) shows the role and importance of loved objects and activities in structuring social relationships with brand. Further, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) and later (Batra et al., 2012) tested hypotheses involving brand love, a new marketing construct that assesses satisfied consumers' passionate emotional attachment to particular brands. Brand love is linked to trust, commitment, loyalty and positive word-of-mouth (Loureiro,

2010). Negative brand relationships can be damaging not only to consumers, but also to the companies involved [Fournier and Alvarez, (2013), p.4].

Amid the cultural conversation, most brands seem inauthentic; their presence intrusive and out of place [Fournier and Avery, (2011b), p.193]. Open source branding takes place when a brand is embedded in a cultural conversation such that consumers gain an equal, if not greater, say than [Fournier and Avery, (2011b), p.194]. Some of the relationships people have with brands appear to be based on long-established determinants of loyalty, including switching costs, risk aversion, social pressure, ignorance, inertia, and market constraints (Alba and Lutz, 2013).

Among several studies assessing the relationship between self-connection or related terms, we can highlight the studies reported by Escalas and Bettman (2003). They focus on reference groups and communities (e.g., Algesheimer et al., 2005; Muniz and Guinn, 2001) as a source of brand associations, which can be linked to one's mental representation of self to meet self-verification or self-enhancement goals. This reflects the extent to which individuals have incorporated a brand into their self-concept.

2.3 Consumer-brand relationship models

How consumers perceive and relate to brands has become a question fundamental to consumer psychology field of research (Priester and Petty, 2013). Human relationships, in general, involve more complex and diverse forms of the relationships than customer-brand relationships (Park et al., 2013a). People stick with their relationships for a variety of reasons [Rusbult, (1987), p.156]. A few models can be point out as seminal in consumer-brand relationship (Loureiro, 2012). The holistic approach proposed by Fournier (1998) mentioned before, the causal approach of Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), and the systemic approach of Batra et al. (2012), the Chang and Chieng (2006), the A-A model (Park et al., 2013b), or the investment model (Rusbult, 1980).

Fournier (1998) was a pioneer in the work of the development of a relationship theory in consumer research. Through the research of case studies, Fournier has done a relational work between the brand and the consumer, revealing the importance of the consumer-brand relationship and starting a new way of understanding the role of the consumer and the consumed.

Chang and Chieng (2006) develop a framework of consumer-brand relationship. Their findings reveal that individual and shared experiences work through brand association, brand personality, brand attitude, and brand image to shape a consumer brand relationship. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) try to determine why and under what conditions consumers enter into strong, committed, and meaningful relationships with certain companies, becoming champions of these companies and their products. Aggarwal (2004) finds that when consumers form relationships with brands, they use norms of interpersonal relationships as a guide in their brand assessments.

Arising from the theory of interdependence, the investment model analyse the tendency to persist in a relationship (Kelley, 1979; Kelley and Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959). Dependency is a central feature of the structure of interdependence. The investment model suggests that the level of satisfaction and quality alternative does not fully explain the dependence. Therefore, a third factor is proposed: the size of the investment. The investment size refers to the magnitude and importance of having sources that are linked to the relationship – resources that would decrease in value or tend to be lost if the relationship were to end (Becker, 1960; Rubin and Brockner, 1975;

Staw, 1976; Teger, 1980; Tropper, 1972). With the development of the relationship, the partners invest many resources in the same directly with the hope that it will improve it. Require commitment and time spent. The more resources are invested, the greater the likelihood of continuing the relationship.

Nevertheless, the process in the relationship between a brand and a consumer that leads to a strong commitment and willingness to sacrifice (even if not a conscience sacrifice) for a brand, like a football brand club, is not yet understood. A field where the sacrifices of a brand seems to be the limit, although the actors do not feel they are doing any kind of sacrifice, is in sports, especially football a reality. What we want to know, according to Selmer et al. (2012) is the extent to which the propensity for sacrifice in football allows sharing behavioural, cognitive and emotional on fans.

Strong commitment is often the result of factors that have nothing to do with the quality of a relationship [Rusbult, (1987), p.156]. The high cost of the tickets and the travelling, the time consumed, nothing is too much to be part of the club, to feel the emotions of the team, to be considered one as equal. However, the deep knowledge of the phenomenon of consumer-brand relationship and its causal relationships are not yet properly established (Loureiro, 2012). Negative brand relationships are in fact more common than positive relationships, with an average split across categories of 55% 45% [Fournier and Alvarez, (2013), p.3].

3 Methodology

This study is the first step of our project and of 97 structured telephone interviews (from a list of 123 potential respondents). Each interviews lasting 5 to 15 minutes. Respondents were between 22 and 81 years of age. The percentage of men is 97% and profile varies from a entrepreneur, manager, student, lawyer, retired, employee (public and private), professor, athlete, coach.

Participants were contacted in accordance with the procedures of snowball sampling type (Ford, 1975) starting with finding the perpetrators of personal contacts that fit the profile request for the study: the main criterion of the integral elements of this first study is to be people who really like football, people who have the willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of their relationship with the football club brand and team.

Starting this stage through a network of personal contact is important to note that there will be no dialog between the participants and the researchers regarding the study itself before it can begin to be performed. After the end of the interview the interviewer asked for names of possible participants interested in being part of this sample or if the respondent would be willing to schedule an in depth interview.

All interviews and analyses were conducted by the author in order to enable a unifying vision and execution throughout the work (Fournier, 1998). The interviews were conducted confidentially and saved (recorded). Participants were asked to the narration of some episodes in relation to football (soccer) and his experiences. Therefore, the analysis started with a complete reading of the transcripts in order to capture the behaviours, believes and trends of the respondents. From a script very clear and succinct, the interviews were as open as possible, getting interviewed with complete freedom to explain their reasoning, telling the story, event/situation which in his opinion illustrates their dedication to the club. Given some difficulties with regard to realise the requested examples were given of what is intended to perform the work. Then, the fans of football

club brands stories were regarding individual and collectively in order to discover patterns and particularities or singularities.

Below the main questions asked:

- I would like to ask you to tell me a story/situation/event experienced by you and related to the football club of your heart.
- A story/event that shows your attachment (link) to this club, in other words a story/event about something left out, forgotten, or passed into the background had not thought of do before because of its connection with the football club of your heart.
- Basically, what we would like to know is what kind of actions, attitudes, situations that you are willing to do to keep that connection with the club, to live this passion, to be connected to the club.

4 Major findings

We hypothesise and find that the more strongly consumers are attached to a brand, the more willing they are to forsake personal resources to maintain an ongoing relationship with that brand. Thus, they are willing to express an intent to engage in difficult behaviours – those that require investments of time, money, energy, and reputation, so as to maintain (or deepen) a brand relationship [Park et al., (2010), p.32].

The results with regard to willingness to sacrifice to follow a football club brand, give us four dimensions: live it all behind, the physical risk, passion and be different (see Figure 1).

Leave everything behind includes both the family level or at the professional level or at the personal level. Leave the family behind and travel dozens of hours in a bus, get out of the work sooner or not go to work or even stop doing business is another of the characteristics that mark the leave everything behind. Not to be present at family birthdays or important dates, everything is done for the club.

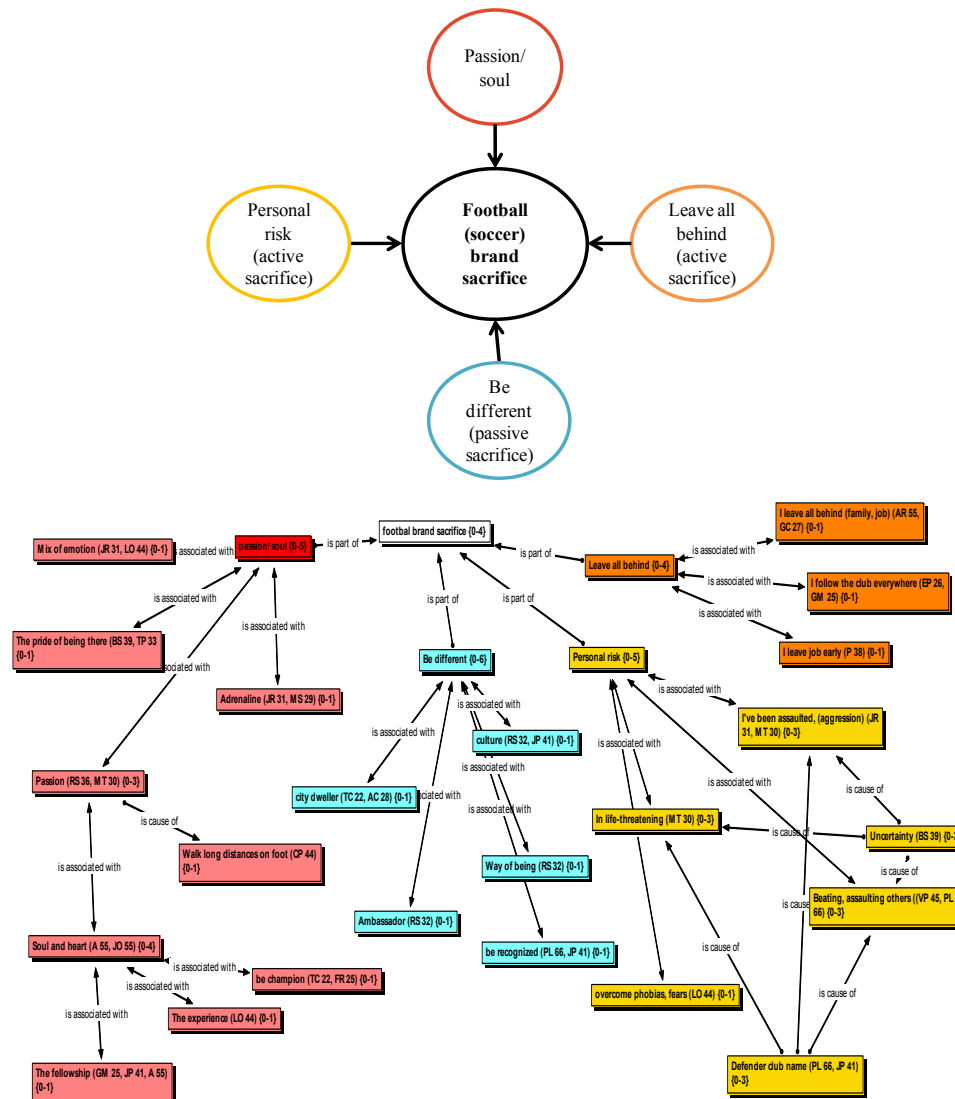
The physical risk is another dimension. Being assaulted, fear, walk to fight and risk their lives is part of the sacrifice that is made by the club, to be present. Bring with sticks, stones, water bags, anything goes (and everything suffers) for fading support from fans of the club they represent. The situations range from a fear of emotional fear (being in a stadium in the minority physics, hear songs and threatening visual immense pressure), a physical fear (fleeing situations of possible attacks) where often there is a situation of mutual physical aggression. The risk of life occurs mainly in situations of visits to other stadiums or the enclosure itself, or outside the same. This kind of risk reveals to be a clear indicator that distinguishes the true believer, one who is not afraid to be afraid.

Passion is another differentiating feature. The way you talk about the club, which is experienced, what the club represents, is very clear to these fans. They feel that they are the heart and soul with the club with the club goals. The pride of being present, whether in big wins, but especially in the darker series, but specially in defeat, in difficult times is a hallmark of these fans. Be present not only in defeat but in complicated situations both at climatic (storms, extreme cold), infrastructure (in crowded places), access will be able to present (to be hours and hours waiting for ticket go through the situations in professional and personal life would not). The experience of a range of factors such as

adrenaline experienced in the encounter stage, the conviviality that is generated by all the adventures, excitement; all factors that make up the passion.

The feeling to be different to a distinctive form of culture, or she/she has a supporter of both club and team, because he/she is also an inhabitant of a city almost millennial (invincible in its history). One way that makes this adept feels an ambassador of the club, the city and the country beyond.

Figure 1 The four facets and network built using Atlas Ti software (see online version for colours)



Several other aspects are referred to as the fact that it was European champion in 1987, primarily for the young, not only for being a champion and being the first European conquest of FC Porto, but how it was won: against a colossus World football (German

Bayern Munich), since losing half of the first part, playing a football fearless and bold that touched the Germans to their stronghold with the culmination of the Algerian Madjer goal with his back to goal through a coup heel, one of the greatest achievements in world football until the present day.

Being recognised by society and especially by their peers, not only through a status in the group but also the more formal aspects such as praise in the minutes, the seniority of membership pins, etc). Curious also is the fact that how to overcome phobias (like riding a plane) or physical sacrifices (kilometres walk on crutches) as aspects that highlight the condition adept differentiator that makes everything for the club.

5 Conclusions

In these interviews we tried to have a fans truly interested but that they were part of different groups (the group travelling by plane with the team, the group travelling by plane, the group that travel by bus, the group that will drive is own car, the group only goes to home games, etc.), thus enriching more work due to a more plural and the vast vision of the football phenomenon.

5.1 The difference between liking football and be adept at a club

Examples: like football is one thing, like a football club is another and being a staunch supporter of a football club is quite another. There are clearly elements that characterise the willingness to sacrifice for the football club brand. Since leaving everything to follow the FC Porto 'leave work early', the physical threat 'risk of life', to have a passion for the club to do 'walk 14 km walking' to see a match or feel different just because off being a supporter 'is another way of being'.

Passion driven, positive emotional connections and long term relationship (Batra et al., 2012) are three aspects that characterise the relationship between the believer, the real follower and his football club. A huge passion, intense, is common to the adept that lives his club with big emotion, positive emotions and the interaction that is generated are data acquired in its relationship with the club. The nature of long-term relationship goes beyond loyalty (Fournier, 1998) as demonstrated by the danger of life or submit to unpleasant situations (airplane ride when you have a phobia, privations like the example of broken leg) only to follow the club.

5.2 Brands and a football club: differences

"A brand may enjoy animistic properties but is not a vital entity. In fact, the brand has objective existence at all: it is simply a collection of perceptions held in the mind of the consumer" [Fournier, (1998), p.345]. What happens with the football club is different, more complex from what happens with a brand. The club is alive, communicates, creates moods, and requires the organisation of personal life. The club is one of the reasons why some fans live. Ensuring regular interaction between a consumer and a human brand helps create the conditions under which an attachment is likely to grow (Thomson, 2006). The Ellen Degeneres example of that in their daily television show Dancing with the public, creates consistency and familiarity (with the audience in the studio and at home). A bit like the football players do not only in celebration of goals as well in establishing

direct communication with supporters, such as when they nod in response to custom song. Fans felt responsible for inspiring their team to victory, took credit for distracting opponents, and believed that they could influence officials into making decisions in their team's favour. However, they did not accept personal blame for poor results (Wolfson et al., 2005).

The importance of context. The context is very important because as one interviewee said 'the stories are to be lived' and the other 'is not the same thing watching the football on television'. There is a specific culture in football and its fans. Using a journalistic jargon of war one must be embedded. This may suggest that the use and management of a common language has a more positive impact on social life in multicultural organisations than previously presumed [Lauring and Selmer, (2010b), p.280].

Meaning in life. If, as regards Fournier (1998, p.367) "consumers not choose brands, they choose lives" in the case of FC Porto fans we can say they choose a way of life due to their dedication, their flexibility adapting professional and personal life considering the matches, the huge amount of money they spend and the time and emotions invested.

Approximately 4.1% of the world's total population regularly plays football [Haugaasen and Jordet, (2012), p.178], but as Kennedy said, in 1968, about poetry, health or courage in relation to gross national product and his incapacity of given an overview of a nation [Gable and Haidt, (2005), p.103], the passion or the importance of football cannot be measured, weighed, quantified: for many football is what makes life worth living.

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