How Value Congruence Affects Fan Consumption Behaviour

Abstract:

This paper examines whether consumers holding certain ethical values demonstrate paralleled consumption behaviour when they perceive those same values in products and services they patronise. Our study investigates whether this value congruence leads to greater levels of consumption in number of items purchased and the amount spent. To explore this connection, we integrate a large customer survey (n=1925) with the sales records of a Premier League football club in the UK. We find that value congruence has a substantive impact upon consumption behaviour. This is a helpful finding for ethics in business as it identifies a monetary incentive for businesses to reflect the moral values found in their customers.

Introduction:

This paper is an examination of how people's personal values (the ethics and morals they see in themselves) may direct their consumption habits. In particular, we examine if identifying with particular moral values, while also identifying those values in a business, leads people to engage with that business, purchasing a product or service more often. To explore this relationship, a large survey of supporters of a Premier League football club is used to examine how those supporters view the values of the team as well as their own values. We then investigate whether a positive correlation in values (value congruence) affects purchasing behaviour.

Central to our contribution to the current literature, our research uses actual customer spend data, uncommon in this area of research. Research on the impact of values or ethics predominantly uses the survey respondents' consumption intentions, perceptions, and memories of past purchases (see reviews from Andorfer and Lieb, 2012; Hassan et al., 2016) There is scant research that uses actual purchase records (e.g. Carlson et al., 2009; Tapp and Clowes, 2002) and where actual purchase records are used, the research tends to be small scale and commonly uses student body samples (Hassan et al., 2016). Our research adds to the existing literature by using several years' worth of spend data, providing a new element of reliability compared to those studies using smaller, less longitudinal indicators of purchase intention.

Our data comes from a fan survey of a particular English football Premier League team. Examining football fans adds value to research into consumer values and purchasing behaviour because of the enhanced characteristics of identity and intensity found in fans. Enhanced identification with the product/brand emphasizes the value associations investigated while

greater intensity/loyalty means more consistency with purchase behaviour. We will further discuss the value of these traits later in the review of the literature.

The English Premier League itself is coveted globally, not just for prestige but for the money it brings to the clubs. Recent television deals have meant that clubs can now expect to receive their share of £4.7bn in the coming years (BBC News, 2021). Although there has been social and economic turmoil due to the global COVID pandemic the new deal only represented a 10% drop from the original deal signed 3 years previously. Moreover, in the past 2020/21 season it was estimated that Premier League clubs attracted a combined revenue of £4.5 billion (Deloitte, 2021). More than ever, a good reputation and a positively perceived brand image have become increasingly important (Blumrodt et al., 2013). Football, like many other sports, elicits complicated consumption patterns as resourceful fans do not necessarily need to make a purchase to consume the experience. Fans can watch the match at a pub or even a friend's house. And they can still maintain a 'fanatic' identity without purchasing jerseys or any other merchandise. As a result, it is important for football clubs to actively engage current and potential fans to ensure loyalty, maintain support, and develop their base.

Whether the intention is toward profit, altruism, or both, professional sports teams who demonstrate desirable values, such as doing charity work in the community, can create a more positive brand image which could, in turn, create new fans and foster greater loyalty. Sanders et al., (2014) investigated football in the community, more specifically at a lower league club. The findings did not point towards there being a specific fiscal benefit, but instead, more general benefits to the local community, education, and work. Other research has shown that acting ethically not only benefits the community but can also have a fiscal value. The most recent Ethical Consumer Market Report (ECM) found that the UK market for ethical purchases was

valued at an all-time high of £98bn. Perhaps most interestingly is that year-on-year more of the population are choosing to boycott certain products and services over concerns about ethical reputation (ECM, 2020). However, there are mixed findings in the research with arguments on both sides regarding the impact of a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) behaviours. For example, research into companies' CSR has found that ethical behaviour impacts patrons' behaviour (e.g. Lichenstein et al., 2004). Although it has been found that CSR behaviour alone does not affect purchase intentions, there has been much research focusing on consumer perceptions (e.g. Brunk, 2010, 2011; Lichenstein et al., 2010). There has, of course, been research to the contrary stating that ethical behaviour and CSR practices do not greatly impact the behaviour of consumers (e.g. Öberseder et al., 2017; Vitell, 2015; White, MacDonnell and Ellard, 2012). CSR research itself has evolved rapidly over the last few years and has received increased attention (Rodriguez-Gomez et al., 2020). Areas such as inclusivity (e.g. Johnson, 2021), ethics (e.g. Streimikis et al., 2020), and environmental sustainability (e.g. Seto-Pamies and Papaoikonomou, 2020) have all been investigated more thoroughly. Unfortunately, research into how CSR activity in these areas has influenced customer spending is not as prevalent. Our research takes a deeper look into the connection between the value reputation of the organisation, consumers' identification with these values, and subsequent purchase behaviour.

Values and Self Expression

This research centres on a connection between consumers' personal values and their desire to purchase products reflecting their self image. We use Schwartz's (1994, p21) definition of values as, 'desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity'. Values have central roles in cognitive structures (Wade-Benzoni, Hoffman and Thompson, 2002) and are increasingly recognized as

4

significant in business (e.g. Scott, 2000; 2002). By establishing which values are important to consumers, it is possible to forecast attitudes and behaviours (Kamakura and Novak, 1992). In relation to ethical decision-making, personal values play an important role (Fitzsche and Oz, 2007) and influence ethical consumption (eg, Dickson, 2000; Doran 2009; Ladhari and Tchetgna, 2015). From a marketing viewpoint, past research has echoed the importance for using values as an alternative to traditional segmentation (Boote, 1981; Kennedy, Best and Kahle, 1988). Recent research has even suggested that values might be even more important to brand success than product attributes (Voorn et al., 2018).

Much of the marketing literature reflects that consumers purchase brands as methods of self-expression (Aaker, 1999, 1997). It is the personality of the brand which has an impact on the strength of the connection (Aaker, 1997). Consumers prefer brands that have a perceived higher similarity of image to their own (Govers and Schoormans, 2005; Sirgy, 1982). This interaction between both the consumer's self-concept and the product user identity is where self-congruity takes place (Sirgy et al., 2000). Previous literature has linked self-congruity to an array of positive outcomes for brands, including positive brand attitudes (Liu et al., 2012) and brand consumption (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Roy and Rabbanee, 2015). Our research connects personal values to self-congruity, self-expression through consumption.

Value Congruence

Self-congruity affects consumer behaviour and influences identification. Under the same umbrella as self-congruity is value congruence. More specific than self-congruity, the focus is on the values of an individual overlapping with those of an organisation. There is an extensive amount of scholarly research on value congruence in organizational studies and applied psychology (see Edwards and Cable, 2009). Much of that previous research focuses on the

impact of value congruence on employees and their satisfaction, loyalty, trust, and attitudes within their current organization (for examples see Amos and Weathington, 2008; Edwards and Cable, 2009; Ostroff et al., 2005; Schuh, 2018). However, we examine the impact of value congruence on consumption behaviour specifically. As mentioned previously, there are few studies which focus on the connection between the company's values and their customers' values and the effect that correlation has on the customers' purchasing behaviour.

We should pause to acknowledge here that much of the ethical consumption literature, a large amount of research, might be considered value congruence literature. After all, most of those studies examine consumers' stated preference for more ethical products or their stated intention to purchase those products and their propensity to take action, or often to not take action, on those stated preferences. To highlight examples, research on ethical consumption often examines determinants of ethical consumption, such as emotion (Escadas et al., 2019), uncertainty (Gregory-Smith, Manika and Demirel, 2017), or gender differences (Morrell and Jayawardhena, 2010).

The key difference between that literature and our conceptualization of value congruence research is that previous consumption research tends to focus on a single value or ethical behaviour in isolation, such as a focus on green purchases (see the previously mentioned Gregory-Smith et al., 2017; Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Tanner and Kast, 2003; Young, Hwang, McDonald and Oates, 2010 for examples) or ethical fashion (see Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014; Rudell, 2006; Shen, et al., 2012 for examples). Or the research examines specific products whose primary selling point is as an 'ethical product' such as Fairtrade products (Andorfer and Liebe, 2012; Doran, 2009; Ladhari and Tchetgna, 2015; Morrell and Jayawardhena, 2010; Shaw et al., 2005). This does not allow for the holistic examination of more general (not primarily

ethically focused) organizations or brands' value reputations and the essential identification of congruence of different types of values found in the business with different types of values found in the consumer. This sets research of value congruence apart from other ethical consumption research.

Extant studies explore the impact of value congruence upon consumption behaviour, but recent research has shown this area to be understudied, especially in the marketing literature (Voorn et al., 2018). Looking first at identification, Tuškej et al. (2013) used a Slovenian snowball sample survey to investigate the influence of value congruence on brand identification. Value congruence was found to positively affect consumers' identification - the cognitive state where the individual comes to view him or herself as a member of a social entity (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000). The positive relationship between value congruence and identification was further supported by Maisam and Mahsa (2016). This is an important finding as previous research links high levels of identification to increases in attendance (Bhattacharya, Rao and Glynn, 1995) spending (Carlson, et al., 2009; Kwon and Armstrong, 2002; Lichtenstein et al., 2004) and loyalty (Kang et al., 2015). If value congruence affects identification there should be a further impact upon consumption behaviour, but value congruence can impact upon consumption behaviour in other ways as well.

Zhang and Bloemer (2008) examined how value congruence directly influenced consumers' satisfaction, trust, commitment, and loyalty within the service industry (examining both banks and clothing stores) in the Netherlands. Later, they continued their research, delving further into the impact upon affective commitment (Zhang and Bloemer 2011). Through an analysis of over 1000 survey responses, they found that value congruence had a significant impact upon consumers' relationship with service providers. Voorn et al. (2018) explored the

7

comparative impact of personality traits, product attributes, and brand values; finding values to be most important to consumers. They examined these relationships through an experimental design that required participants to rank how personally important each (traits, attributes, or values) was/is/would be to their purchase choice. Focusing on e-commerce, Cazier et al. (2017) examined how value congruence influenced consumers' willingness to pay higher prices to reserve goods. Also using an experimental design, they found value congruence to have more impact than trust in consumers' intensions to pay higher prices. These studies, which most directly examine the impact of value congruence on consumption behaviour, provide a solid examination into the importance of value congruence, but they rely on respondents self-reporting purchasing behaviour or ask respondents hypothetical questions. Our study takes a different approach.

We believe that we add substantially to this literature in two primary areas. First, we use data on actual purchases, not survey results about the intention to purchase that may not be as accurate as actual purchase records. This is an addition, not only to the literature on value congruence but in the broader area of ethical consumption as well. Research in the field of ethical consumption often uses survey data that asks consumers about their attitudes toward a product or business, their intention to consume or purchase history (e.g. Carrington et al., 2010; Hassan et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2011). Less common in the field are analyses that utilize actual records of consumers' purchasing behaviour such as ours, with much of the literature focusing on self-reporting from consumers (see Hassan, et al., 2016).

Second, we examine the consumption of products and services being provided by a large professional football club. As previously mentioned, there is a link between value congruence and identification which could have significant monetary value (Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Tuškej

8

et al., 2013). Within football literature, this is especially important as higher levels of identification with a club have been found to impact purchases and purchase intent (e.g. Kwon et al., 2007; Wann and Branscombe, 1993) switching behaviour (Harada and Matsuoka, 1999) and spectatorship (e.g. Lee and Kang, 2015; Sutton et al., 1997; Wann and Branscombe, 1993). With the rise of transnational fans and the opening of new markets with recent television deals, more and more fans are being exposed to the values of the brands. This is an important area not only for academia but also for industry. Professional sport is a large and important sector in itself, but this area of research also has implications for other areas of entertainment consumption as well as branding, public relations, and organizational reputation.

Types and Behaviour of Fans

Research into consumer purchase intention, as with all research, must carefully evaluate the sample data used for analysis. This research examines fans of a Premier League football club. More specifically, the focus is on those fans who have demonstrated a degree of behavioural loyalty by signing up to the football club's customer relationship management system. This also indicates a purchase has taken place demonstrating that these fans are spending customers. Sports fans might not be considered typical consumers, but examining this particular consumer type is beneficial to our analysis in several ways.

What sets sports fans apart from more typical consumers is identity, loyalty, and a sense of personal connectedness (Sutton et al., 1997). More than for consumers of other products, certain fans of particular sports clubs will stick with their club through good times and bad, when the product is of both high and low quality. We expect that this will have two important consequences.

First, an examination of the impact of other independent variables, including value

congruence, on purchasing behaviour should have low influence. Essentially, other variables will pale in comparison to a fan's individual devotion to the team. This sets up a difficult test where any other variable must have strong substantive impact to demonstrate any meaningful relationship. While other variables are much less important than personal devotion to the team, we do not mean to imply that they are trivial. In fact, these other variables become that much more important to the business success of the individual teams because they become the other avenues the clubs can use to remain viable/profitable. Tests for the impact of value congruence in other industries should not have this difficulty demonstrating the impact of multiple determinants. This more difficult test of the importance of value congruence on consumption behaviour is one of the elements this research adds the current research in this area.

Second, we expect fan consumption behaviour to remain essentially constant for individual consumers. The effect of a business' moral reputation, their perceived values, will not be toward changing current fans' purchasing behaviour, but rather on drawing in new fans. While we often think of a sports clubs' fan base as rather static, new fans are quite important to the sustainability and growth of the business. This can be seen in how major professional sports are doing more and more targeting of international audiences to draw in new fans. For example, the NFL have recently started playing league games in the UK (Forbes, 2018) with Spanish football's La Liga potentially primed to visit America (Financial Times, 2018). The Premier League has also started targeting prospective fans through new mediums such as esports (BBC News, 2018). This has led to the rise of the 'Transnational Fan' (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007). With the globalisation and glocalization of football there are now fans who are following clubs that may be on different continents. The shift towards transnational fans is an important one that is under-researched in respect to purchase behaviour.

Given the global reach of sports clubs, our analysis will distinguish between local and satellite fans.[1] Kerr and Gladden (2008) posit that because of the lack of proximity to spectate and/or consume there is a difference in the loyalty of satellite fans. Motivations to follow the team could be different in contrast to those who have become a fan in the traditional means; friends, family and geographic location. The displaced fan also could behave differently in their consumption patterns (Kerr and Gladden, 2008). We expect the values reputation of the team to have a greater impact on satellite fans as they do not have the more traditional connections to the team and thus look to other reasons to choose a team to follow. However, the opposite argument, that local fans will be more aware and thus potentially more impressed by any charitable/local community activity by the club, could also be true.

Also stemming from the rather unchanging support level of many fans, our cross-sectional analysis is quite appropriate for an examination of how business reputation influences supporters differently. The reputation of the club has not changed and therefore we do not expect a change in fan behaviour over time. What we do expect is that the club's reputation, and more specifically how that reputation matches each individual fan's own values, should affect individual fans differently, but with the expected outcome of a general pattern of more engagement with the club (purchases) when value congruence is greater.

Methods:

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[1] Previous research has identified non-local fans as 'Satellite Fans' (Kerr and Gladden, 2008). In essence, these fans are unable to spectate and consequently consume the team experience by other means. Wann (2001) describes those who are overseas to be 'displaced fans'. This conceptualisation accounts for those fans who have previous connections with the club, predominantly because they have moved (for a variety of reasons).

To explore the relationship between value congruence and consumption behaviour, a dataset of football supporters of a Premier League football team was examined. The original survey sampled 2918 supporters, but when the data was connected from the survey data to the organisation's purchasing records, there was missing data reducing the sample to 1925 respondents. The team hired a private firm to conduct the poll and offered a chance to win season tickets and a number of other prizes as incentives. The poll was conducted in February of 2016.

The respondents to the survey were 91% male and 9 % female. A study conducted by YouGov (2020) found that 19% of English men watched the Premier League very frequently, compared to 6% of women. This statistic (while an imprecise approximation) would suggest that potentially three-quarters of fans are male and one-quarter female. A gender disparity certainly exists among fans, but probably not to the extent found in our survey. Similarly, the median income for full-time employed UK workers in 2016 was just over £28 thousand (ONS, 2021) while the median income for our survey respondents was roughly £44 thousand. The average age of respondents was 47, however, we have no fan data on age to compare. The average amount spent on club purchases per year by our respondents was £228.

One important element that separates our sample of Premier League fans and the population of Premier League fans, and what probably drives these differences in demographics, is the fact that our sample is restricted to fans who have made purchases directly from the club, one of the official club stores or the club website (e.g. match-day tickets, season passes, merchandise). Those fans who make these types of purchases will exhibit certain differences in characteristics than those fans who do not. This must be considered as we evaluate the results of our analysis. However, those fans who purchase from the club are certainly an important segment of the fan base, especially to the club itself and its need for revenue. Elements of our

analysis will most likely hold true for other fans as well, but the extent of those correlations is uncertain.

The poll we used asked a large number of questions, but for this research, only key variables of interest were examined. The primary goal was to investigate how value perceptions of a business and oneself can lead to changes in purchasing behaviour. While purchasing behaviours are several and diverse, models were developed around two specific dependent variables: average spending per year (continuous data averaged over a four year period) and total purchases over the previous two years (count data). It is important to separate these two concepts as income or other circumstances may impact one differently than the other. As spending is continuous and purchases are measured as a count, we use a robust regression to model the first and a Poisson GLM to model the second.

The key variable of interest is value congruence. Do fans see the same ethical values in their team as they see in themselves? Some do and some do not. But in those who do see similar values, does that correlation in values influence their purchasing behaviours? To answer this question two different questions were examined from the poll. The first asked respondents to name three words or phrases they would use to describe the team. The question was open-ended so respondents could choose any words or phrases that came to mind. Sorting through these terms, only those focused on values were selected and coded. After an initial round of coding by the researchers each of the words/themes written by the participants were discussed in relation to the existing list. Once the initial coding was concluded, a second round of coding and discussions took place to ensure reliability and validity.

The second question offered respondents a grid of 30 values and asked respondents to select the 5 that are most important to them. The 30 values listed in the survey can be found in

appendix A. While the values listed in the survey are not identical to any popular scholarly lists of value categories, the list bears a striking resemblance to Schwartz's (1992) values list. All of the values listed on the survey are related to the 10 original values listed by Schwartz (1992).

Responses were then matched to the two questions and found three primary areas of overlap: social responsibility[2], family, and honesty. The overlap in these three concepts constitutes our primary variable of interest and what we conceptualize as value congruence. The variable is measured as a simple count. Each time the respondent perceived overlap on one of the three dimensions was counted, resulting in a count variable with a potential range of 0 to 3. This is a fairly simple measure of value congruence measured through three different values-based dimensions. While it is not a perfect measure of value congruence, the variable does provide information on how the respondents see their own values, those of the team, and where the two overlap.

To discern other independent effects, the models also include the following control variables: income, attention, age, and optimism. Income is acquired through a banded measure (over 13 bands or categories) with the average of each band taken as the respondent's income (measured in thousands of pounds) to create a roughly interpretable measure. Income is a commonly used variable in research into purchase behaviour (for examples see Han, Nunes, and Dreze, 2010; Loureiro et al., 2001; Paul and Rana, 2012), following the conventional wisdom that more income encourages greater spending, especially on non-essential items such as football tickets or merchandise.

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[2] Included in social responsibility are survey responses indicating charitable giving or helping/giving back to the city, community, or society. There were several rounds of coding these variables from the original survey responses. The football club conducted their own coding. The authors then reviewed and amended the codes considering the fundamental categories of values found in the literature. A research assistant then did a careful review to identify any questionable categorizations. The authors then reviewed the data and codes again to ensure the coding was as valid as possible.

Attention is a categorical variable where the respondent listed how often they read or watch team related news, features, videos, or other media content. Answers to the question were grouped into a 7 point Likert scale as follows: (1) several times a day, (2) Every day, (3) A few times a week, (4) Once a week, (5) A few times a month, (6) Once a month, and (7) Less regularly than once a month. It is important to note that more attention is coded with lower values and less attention with higher values. Attention is a strong indicator of interest in the team/product and also probably correlates with team identification, loyalty, and excitement. As such, it would be expected that a negative relationship will appear in the models given how the variable is measured. The connection between fandom and consumption behaviour is not well studied but Dionisio et al., (2008) suggest this link.

Another control variable is age. While age also somewhat correlates with income and possibly introduces some multicollinearity into the model, the variable is still important to include as people's tastes/interests/loyalties can change over time. The variable is also important because fans of different ages will have different experiences and memories of the team. Previous research has demonstrated that age can impact how consumers respond to different sales strategies (Turley and Milliman, 2000).

The final control variable is optimism. This is based on a question asking respondents if they perceive their lives to be better or worse in ten year's time. The scale ranges from -5 (much worse) to +5 (much better). This is a measure of overall optimism, and by contrast pessimism, which should correlate with increased spending. The more traditional view is that optimism leads to a greater propensity for consumer spending (Curtin, 1982). However, there is research on this topic that has demonstrated counterintuitive findings (Hadju, 2017).

Two different models were run on the data, a robust regression and a zero-inflated

Poisson (ZIP) regression. The robust regression is run with average spending as the dependent

variable as that variable is continuous. The ZIP regression is run with number of purchases as the

dependent variable. We run these two different models because the amount of spending (cost)

and number of purchases are different purchasing behaviours. They may be related, but the

number of purchases can indicate a level of engagement and activity that is lost when only

examining total spending amounts. Different behaviours may be represented in each. For

instance, impulsive or even compulsive purchasing behaviour may be more evident in number of

purchases over a period of time than total amount spent. The same control variables discussed

previously were used for both models.

The robust regression is an alternative to OLS which is used when the model may be

unreliable due to the presence of outliers in the data. The robust regression we use follows the

M-estimation technique which is appropriate for influential data points in the dependent variable.

While the exact identification and definition of an outlier is up to debate, some particularly large

spenders in our survey dataset have encouraged us to run both OLS and robust regressions.

Fortunately, we received nearly identical results from both the OLS regression and the robust

regression. The results from the robust regression have been discussed in this article, but OLS

results are available from the authors upon request.

Regarding the zero-inflated Poisson model, the count-of-purchases data analysed is most

appropriately modelled with a count distribution. The Poisson is the typically used GLM for

count data. The zero-inflated version of this model is used as there is an expectation of an

overabundance of zeros in our data that are the result of a systematic process in the generation of

the data. The football club records all online purchases, as well as those made in-store with credit

cards, and matched those purchases back to particular customers who filled out the survey (the independent variables were provided by the football club from their sales records, not through answers on the survey of supporters). But any other purchases of football club merchandise or services that customers make are not recorded. This means that, while the data is the best available record of the football team's sales, it is not a perfect record and there are a number, possibly a great number, of sales not represented in the dataset. Thus, excess zeros exist in our data. The ZIP regression has a simultaneous logit model that models the excess zeros.

As the literature review notes, theory benefits from understanding the differences between local and non-local fans. Therefore, two different models on three different sets of respondents were run: the full sample, local fans, and non-local fans. This was done to understand the differences in purchasing behaviour between those fans who are local to the area (within the city region of the team) and those fans who are not. There would be an expectation of differences for several reasons. First, local fans are simply much more likely to attend matches and buy tickets. For this reason alone, there should be differences in spending. But we also expect these fans may have different reasons for supporting the team and may, therefore, be affected by ethical perceptions of the team differently. This could be for various reasons. Local fans might be more aware of the community service of the team, as that service is much closer to home, and may be more influenced by what they see from the organisation. Alternately, away fans may need more of a reason to be fans in the first place. If they do not have a tie to the team in the first place (like being local originally or having friends/family who are supporters), they will have developed their interest/preference from another source. That source could be an ethical perception of the team that they feel mirrors their own values. So running the models on both local and non-local fans should give us some insight into these different groups.

17

Finally, the ZIP regression was run again to compare different types of purchase behaviour: purchases of merchandise versus purchases of match tickets and club memberships. We wanted to see whether value congruence with the team affected different types spending habits differently. Merchandise tends to be smaller purchases focused on creating a brand/image connection with the consumer. Match tickets and various club memberships (including season ticket holders) are purchases where the consumer has a more direct engagement with the football club.

Results:

The first set of model results can be found in Table 1. These results are split along the two different models (the robust regression for spending amounts and the ZIP regression for purchase counts) and three different respondent subgroups (all respondents, local fans, and non-local fans). Value congruence between fan and club demonstrates statistically significant correlations with different groups for both spending and purchase counts. We will first discuss the robust regression results in detail and then move on the ZIP regression results.

(Table 1 about here)

The robust regression model has average spending per year (computed over a four year period) for the dependent variable. For the combined group, the value congruence variable has a statistically significant p-value less than 0.05. We can interpret the value congruence coefficient of roughly 35 to mean that for every level of value congruence, fans spend roughly £35 more on club purchases per year. While £35 more spending per year does not seem like much, for fans who have two congruent ethical values the amount doubles to £70, and £105 for three levels. The

average of value congruence in the sample was 0.24 from which we can estimate that value congruence accounts for about £8 of spending per fan per year.

It is unclear how many fans the team actually has and the exact number is probably indeterminable. But one can examine social media followers to create an estimate. In 2016, the club had over 700,000 twitter followers. Surely the number of fans is larger than the number of twitter followers as not all fans will be followers on the app (especially back in 2016). But let's take the number of 700,000 fans as a minimum estimate. Doubling fans' average value congruence from 0.24 to 0.48, assuming our model predictions are correct, results in an increase of £8 spending per year per fan or £5.6 million extra revenue for the team per year. Of course, doubling the average value congruence of all fans is an improbable feat, but this extrapolation of our results highlights the potential importance of value congruence to a business' bottom line. And again, £5.6 million is in one manner a conservative estimate of the revenue increase as the club almost certainly has more than 700,000 fans.

The investigation into the local and non-local subsets of fans for spending per year suggests a more complicated story. The value congruence coefficient for local supporters is not statistically significant. The coefficient for non-local supporters is statistically significant and similar to the coefficient for all fans, demonstrating a roughly £32 increase in spending for every level of value congruence. The different result for local and non-local fans is an interesting finding. Intuition would suggest that local fans would be more reactive to the team's values reputation as their proximity would suggest a greater awareness of the team's ethical conduct.

Our data cannot explain this pattern, but we suggest two different reasons for the counterintuitive finding. First, local and non-local fans should demonstrate different reasons for becoming fans in the first place. Local fans often become fans because of their proximity to the

team, while many non-local fans may have chosen to follow the team for any number of reasons. The team's reputation and values may have significantly contributed to why they became fans in the first place and thus affect how those fans conceptualize their relationship to the team.

Secondly, distance dictates that local and non-local fans experience the team differently. Local fans have greater ability to attend matches in person and they follow the team surrounded by their own group. Thus peer pressure may impact upon local fans more than non-local fans. Non-local fans experience the team at a distance and may therefore be inclined to demonstrate their fandom by purchasing branded equipment to make their fandom more visible. As there is probably less peer pressure to purchase branded items to demonstrate loyalty, value congruence plays a greater role in non-local fans' decision to engage with the team through a costly purchase. The peer pressure to demonstrate loyalty may also explain why income is a significant variable only for local fans. If those fans are encouraged to demonstrate loyalty to the team, income may be the key limiting factor in their efforts to exhibit loyalty to the team.

To examine this relationship in more detail, Figure 1 demonstrates the expected spending amounts for the whole sample and the non-local subset over the range of the value congruence variable. Given the regression results for local fans, non-local fans appear to be driving the relationship of the whole sample. We can see the expected amount of spending for non-local fans rise from roughly £123 to £220 over the whole range of the variable. But this sort of a change is unrealistic. The change from £123 to £155 as value congruence moves from 0 to 1 demonstrates the potential benefit of businesses creating another shared value with their customers, with the understanding that not all customers will react in the same manner. We should note that the confidence intervals for the expected results of the model, especially at the higher ends of the variable range, suggests care in interpreting these findings. We can be more confident in

spending changes resulting from a value change between 0 and 1 or 0 and 2. We should not have confidence in spending changes as value congruence moves from 1 to 2 or even 1 to 3. While the linear point estimates suggest a continuing increase in spending as value congruence increases, it may be that a single shared value between business and customer produces the entire effect seen in our findings.

(Figure 1 about here.)

Moving on to the ZIP regression results, the general finding of value congruence producing a positive effect in spending behaviour is reinforced. The ZIP regression models use a count of the number of purchases the respondent has made over the past four years as the dependent variable. These counts do not distinguish between large purchases such as season tickets or small purchases such as a pin or coffee mug. Value congruence demonstrates a statistically significant relationship with the number of purchases for both the whole group and local supporters. The Poisson coefficients are in log-odds and therefore not as easily interpretable as the robust regression coefficients. Before we interpret the substance of the results let us dig a bit deeper into correlations with the types of purchases fans make.

The second set of models we ran can be found in Table 2. These analyses compare fan purchase behaviour for merchandise with match tickets and memberships. As discussed previously, we ran these models to examine how fans' purchasing behaviour may be different with different types of items. Simply lumping coffee mugs in with season tickets, as if they were equivalent purchases, probably is not wise. Conceptually, merchandise can be more image/brand focused purchase that invokes associations with the team but does not include more substantive engagement such as actually watching matches or attending team events that come with

21

memberships. Match tickets and memberships represent engagement with the team that is more involved and suggests engagement with the product rather than simple image association.

(Table 2 about here)

The results in Table 2 show the strong statistical significance value congruence has in almost all of our models. In particular, these findings are interesting because different groups show different behaviour as value congruence rises. Looking at merchandise purchases, we find that value congruence has a surprisingly negative relationship for non-local supporters. At the same time, local supporters demonstrate a positive relationship. This may seem contradictory, but it follows that as value congruence rises fans may wish for more substantive engagement with the team, thus more match and membership types of purchases rather than image based merchandise. And if more money is spent in one area, that could mean less available for the other.

But then why does this negative shift in purchasing behaviour not hold for local fans? Local fans are more likely to experience the team in more of a social setting than non-local fans. That social aspect may encourage continued purchasing of the merchandise/image-associated types of products. So increased value congruence continues to raise purchases for both types of products for local fans.

Considering the substantive effect of value congruence, the ranges of most of the predictions are roughly 2 to 5 purchases. Again, this may seem modest, but the cost of the average purchase in our data is £53. Increasing value congruence from 0 to 1, multiplied by the actual number of fans, results in large changes in revenue similar to the spend data models.

Also present in our models are four control variables: income, attention, age, and optimism. Income displays statistically significant relationships at times but the results are very

inconsistent. This demonstrates that conventional wisdom claiming fans will spend more if they earn more may be too simplistic.

Alternatively, attention is the most statistically significant variable in our models and consistently demonstrates a strong and positive relationship with purchasing behaviour (the exception being the merchandise purchases of local supporters). This makes sense if we think of attention as a rough indicator of loyalty to, interest in, or identification with the team. The more fans identify themselves as fanatics, the more likely they are to spend money on the team. Local supporters may find attention a good substitute for merchandise spending. However, that view is speculative and further research is needed in this area.

Age also provides a positive relationship with purchasing behaviour, although to varying statistical significance. While age will correlate with income, as income is also included in the model, there must be something else driving more spending/purchasing with age. This could be that the income of older fans tends to be more disposable. Finally, our optimism variable also tended to have somewhat inconsistent results.

Discussion:

This research provides evidence that increased value congruence may change consumer behaviour toward both more purchases and higher levels of spending. These findings reinforce some of the previous conclusions regarding the market importance of value congruence (Tuskej et al., 2013; Cazier et al., 2017; Voorn et al., 2018; Zhang and Bloemer 2008, 2011). Those previous studies provide the theoretical underpinnings - increases in brand identification, commitment, satisfaction, loyalty, and the overall importance of value perceptions compared to other purchase determinants - needed to expect a causal connection between value congruence and increases in consumption. However, our study takes a step further and links actual purchase

data and consumer behaviour to value congruence. And we do so using a Premier League football club's records of actual customer purchase data rather than using consumer intention data.[3] This result further develops the concepts of personal values and self-expression and builds upon much of the previous research in both areas (Aaker, 1997; Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Grovers and Schoormans, 2005; Roy and Rabbanee, 2015).

Our results have demonstrated surprising differences in the impact of value congruence on local vs. non-local fans. In particular, as value congruence between fan and club increase, match and membership purchases also increase, but merchandise purchases were positive for local fans and negative for non-local fans. Previous research has also shown that, although both groups are consumers of the brand, they perhaps have different motivations as to why they are fans (e.g. Giulianotti and Roberston, 2007). Some non-local fans are displaced locals and are consuming potentially in a different manner than they would have done before they were displaced (Kerr and Gladden, 2008).

As discussed above, the difference in merchandise purchases demonstrates a difference in how each group consumes the team experience. As value congruence creates stronger identification between fan and club, both local and non-local fans may wish for a more substantive engagement with the team (more match/membership purchases). But local fans are more likely to experience their fandom socially, with other local fans, and they are geographically placed in close, often visual proximity to other fans.[4] So there is a stronger drive

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[3] As mentioned previously, a large amount of the previous research in the area of consumer congruence focuses on intentions and attitudes towards purchases (Carrington et al., 2010; Hassan et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2011). Of the sparse empirical research focused on actual consumption patterns a vast majority is done through self-reporting (Hassan et al., 2016).

[4] A further element to this discussion arises from our definition of a non-local fan. We include both overseas fans and those fans who are in-country but outside the city in which the football club resides. We are currently unable to distinguish between the two, but doing so may tell a further story. However, the fact there is a disparity warrants more investigation. The negative relationship between merchandise purchases and non-local fans needs further research conducted at a qualitative level to precisely identify the causal mechanism.

to visibly demonstrate team support. Our interpretation of this unexpected difference is supported by previous research on branding as being more-and-more socially reproduced (Davis et al., 2014; De Chernatony and Segal-Horn, 2001; Tuominen, 2007).

Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Research:

The previous research on the impact of ethical business behaviour on consumer behaviour has been varied. Further, the field has taken only limited steps toward investigating connections between customers' values and the values of the businesses with whom they interact. Marketing research has examined the concept of self-congruity and how customers connect their brand purchases to themselves. Several researchers have examined the self-congruity interaction between both the consumer's self-concept and the product (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2012; Roy and Rabbanee, 2015; Sirgy et al., 2000). But there continues to be very little value or value congruence literature which focuses on the relationship between the brand and the consumer (Zhang and Bloemer, 2008). Our research helps to fill this gap by looking explicitly at the connection between value congruence and consumer purchasing behaviour. We also make use of an exclusive large-scale dataset, demonstrating the substantive positive effects of value congruence on spending and purchases and, ultimately, a business's bottom line.

Our overall results show positive value congruence generally leads to higher spending and more purchases. This is a good sign for the development of ethical business as it indicates a substantive monetary incentive for businesses to demonstrate the moral values found in their customers. For marketers this presents an opportunity when constructing the outbound messages from the brand. Individual companies could identify which values their customers prioritize and

how the brand could reflect those values. For example, if a club is looking to enter a new market, research could be undertaken to see which countries, regions, groups or subgroups share the same values as the club. Clubs could then target segments of the market that were potentially more primed to form an affinity with the club and, as a result, spend more. In contrast, clubs could also use this information to target their existing fans to see if they could align their values to the fan community as a whole. This could be done through social media, club initiatives, sponsors, CSR activities and even through re-branding. The latter is perhaps the most extreme course of action, but teams such as Juventus, Manchester City, Nantes and the Premier League have managed this.

Building a rapport with the fan community takes time and needs to be perceived as being genuine by consumers. This is something that has the potential to be resource intensive in both time and money. But, as our results show, the potential impact on the bottom line could be worth millions in revenue. The link between value-based identification and purchase data is of significant value to businesses.

Future research should examine other contexts to see if the results are replicable. Are these findings generalizable to businesses that are not professional sports organizations? We have data from a unique type of business. However, we believe that our general findings would hold in other contexts. While most businesses do not have products that consumers are 'fanatical' about, they do have brand image and company reputation. These findings are a useful addition to understanding the effect of value congruence, but the applicability of this theory to other industries is an area in need of further research. Future studies could test the ethical value-purchase behaviour connection in other contexts. More research could also be conducted into whether certain values have a stronger association with spending behaviour.

A limitation of this study is the demographic characteristics exhibited by the sample. In particular, the sample group was more male, older, and higher earning than the overall fan population. The sample consists of those fans who have made purchases directly from the club rather than fans of the club in general. Conclusions drawn from the analysis are most applicable to the fan segments represented in the survey. A ripe area for future research is to investigate whether our findings hold for other fan segments. Do female fans, younger fans, or lower earning fans exhibit different patterns of value congruence and purchasing behaviour? Controlling explicitly for gender is an area ripe for further research, something for which our sample is inappropriate given the small number of women in the sample. The purchasing behaviours of women, and the values they find important, may exhibit different patterns. Other demographic effects, such as race, class, or education, also deserve further investigation.

Another limitation is that the analysis was of a cross section of consumers. We examine the perceived values of the business through the lens of each individual fan, but only in a single snapshot in time. This allows us to most directly compare the pattern between values and behaviour, but it does not examine how the perception of a company's values might change over time and how that change would then impact the consumer's purchase behaviour. Similarly, the data does not identify whether the organisation's values have been internalised by the fan. Have the values of the club become, over time, the values of fans? Or do fans have these personal values initially and through good marketing the messages of the club reflects them? It is also unknown whether fans sought out the club because of this perceived congruence of values. Unfortunately, a longitudinal study is beyond the scope of this research, but future studies would add value by examining this connection over a longer period of time.

Appendix A: Values listed in the survey.

Adventure	Knowledge
Ambition	Learning
Authenticity	Financial security
Beauty	Pleasure/ gratification
Creativity	Power
Curiosity	Preserving the environment
Duty	Protecting your family
Enjoying life	Simplicity
Equality	Social responsibility
Faith	Thrift/ Money saving
Health and fitness	Wealth
Helpfulness	Working hard
Honesty	Righting wrongs
Success	Being different/standing out
Independence	Recognition

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Table 1. Impact of Value Congruence on Consumer Behaviour: Spending and Purchase Count Models.

	Model Results					
	Per Year Spending: Robust Regression Model			Purchase Count: Zero-Inflated Poisson Model		
Coefficients with Standard Errors	All Supporters	Local Supporters	Non-Local Supporters	All Supporters	Local Supporters	Non-Local Supporters
Value Congruence	35.450*	-7.827	32.350*	0.052**	0.056	0.052*
	(16.182)	(31.279)	(13.896)	(0.017)	(0.031)	(0.022)
Income(thousands)	0.472	2.445***	0.211	-0.0005	0.001*	-0.001**
	(0.284)	(0.620)	(0.237)	(0.0003)	(0.0006)	(0.0004)
Attention	46.568***	47.873***	32.314***	0.159***	0.152***	0.160***
	(6.573)	(14.767)	(5.390)	(0.009)	(0.016)	(0.011)
Age	2.140***	1.691	2.084***	0.008***	0.007***	0.009***
	(0.503)	(1.014)	(0.426)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.0007)
Perceived Future	-4.215	-5.570	-1.390	-0.011**	-0.027***	0.0003
	(2.967)	(5.690)	(2.557)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.004)
Intercept	-207.727***	-142.732	-181.006***	1.254***	1.357***	1.170***
	(52.321)	(117.524)	(42.803)	(0.071)	(0.126)	(0.086)
Logit side of Zero-Inflated Poisson: Variable Coefficient and Intercept			Attention	-0.263***	-0.082	-0.269***
				(0.049)	(0.136)	(0.054)
			Intercept	0.705*	-1.269	0.968**
				(0.298)	(0.854)	(0.330)
N	1925	500	1425	1925	500	1425

Note: Robust regression produces results less influenced by extreme values (outliers) than OLS regression. Variable coefficients provided with symbols denoting p values. Standard Errors provided in parentheses.

* $p<0.05$
** $p<0.01$
*** $p<0.001$

Table 2. Comparison of Merchandise and Non-merchandise Purchasing Behaviour: Zero-Inflated Poisson Models.

Coefficients with Standard Errors	Merchandise Purchasing			Match/Membership Purchasing		
	All Supporters	Local Supporters	Non-Local Supporters	All Supporters	Local Supporters	Non-Local Supporters
Value Congruence	-0.085*	0.375***	-0.173***	0.089***	0.034	0.118***
	(0.039)	(0.104)	(0.043)	(0.020)	(0.032)	(0.025)
Income(thousands)	-0.002***	-0.027***	-0.001*	-0.001**	0.003***	-0.002***
	(0.0007)	(0.003)	(0.0007)	(0.0004)	(0.0006)	(0.0054)
Attention	0.074***	-0.141*	0.106***	0.130***	0.138***	0.119***
	(0.021)	(0.056)	(0.022)	(0.010)	(0.016)	(0.013)
Age	0.010***	-0.015***	0.015***	0.011***	0.009***	0.015***
	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.0007)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Perceived Future	0.016*	-0.039*	0.016*	-0.020***	-0.032***	-0.006
	(0.007)	(0.019)	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Intercept	1.802***	4.970***	1.425***	1.096***	1.202***	0.900***
	(0.152)	(0.426)	(0.163)	(0.081)	(0.131)	(0.103)
Logit Side						
Attention	-0.302***	-0.279	-0.330***	-0.252***	-0.104	-0.251***
	(0.074)	(0.187)	(0.081)	(0.048)	(0.131)	(0.053)
Intercept	3.541***	3.871**	3.577***	0.844**	-1.042	1.010***
	(0.473)	(1.206)	(0.518)	(0.293)	(0.819)	(0.328)
N	1925	500	1425	1925	500	1425

Note: Variable coefficients provided with symbols denoting p values. Standard Errors provided in parentheses.
 * p<0.05
 ** p<0.01
*** p<0.001

Figure 1. Expected Spending for All Fans and Non-Local Fans. Robust Regression Results with 95% CI.