

How strong of a football fan are you? There's a test for that

January 27 2014, by Doree Armstrong

So, you think you're a loyal supporter of a certain football team? Would you care to put that to a scientific test?

University of Washington psychologist Anthony Greenwald has developed a new version of his [Implicit Association Test](#) to measure the strength of one's support for one of several football teams. Greenwald created the original Implicit Association Test in 1998 to gauge a person's unconscious beliefs and hidden biases. He and colleagues have since adapted it for numerous scenarios, including racial attitudes during the 2012 presidential election.

Greenwald developed the current football [test](#) with psychologist Colin Smith at the University of Florida. It is designed for fans of the four teams that played in the NFC and AFC conference championships: Seattle Seahawks, Denver Broncos, New England Patriots and San Francisco 49ers. The 10-minute [online test](#) asks participants to respond quickly to images and words on the screen. The images are versions of each team's logo or name, and the words include self-identifiers such as "mine" and "theirs." Fans can take three different tests: Seattle-San Francisco, New England-Denver and Seattle-Denver.

Greenwald said the psychological theory known as "[Basking in Reflected Glory](#)" claims that support for a team rises after a win and drops after a loss, so he encourages Seattle and Denver fans to take the test before the Super Bowl and again afterward to see if there is any difference in their support for a certain team. Fans can take the test as many times as they

want.

"I think on average the reflected glory theory is probably right, but I don't think that applies to everyone," Greenwald said. "I do think the strong fan is someone whose attachment is pretty unshakable. It's really a test of your strength as a fan that if you still show a strong association after the team has lost, then you are a real fan."

Greenwald says he is sometimes surprised by unexpected results from variations of the test. But when he took the Seattle-Denver test, he wasn't surprised to learn that he had a strong identification with Seattle.

"For sports teams, the test mostly produces results that people agree reflects them," he said. "For me, it could also be tapping into my generally positive associations with Seattle, apart from the team. But that sense of identity can fluctuate. Someone who's more of a fair-weather fan of a team may show weaker support for the team on this test after a loss."

Thousands of adaptations of the online Implicit Association Test have been taken by people more than 15 million times in the last 15 years, measuring unconscious attitudes about race, gender, sexuality, ethnicities and other topics.

Provided by University of Washington

Citation: How strong of a football fan are you? There's a test for that (2014, January 27) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-01-strong-football-fan.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.