An Experimental Investigation of Fan Reactions to NFL Players and Teams Regarding Competition Decisions

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Abstract

As top athletes compete in fewer sporting contests, this experimental investigation explored reactions of National Football League players' decisions to compete or not compete in a season and considered fan segments by gender and adult status. Linear mixed effects modeling examined fans' reactions to competition decisions, and a mixed ANOVA examined fans' emotions. Across two studies, fan groups expressed similar reactions where players were not perceived more negatively for not competing, and team perception was not impacted. However, fans expressed positive perceptions of players when a family concern was expressed and they did not play; negative perceptions resulted when a family concern was expressed with a decision to play. Further, fans expressed similar emotions to not competing, including not being revolted, but emerging adult-aged women were more likely to be proud and stressed by a player not competing than men. Practitioner implications include highlighting athletes' various on-the-field and off-the-field roles.

Keywords: experimental research, fans, athlete image, sport consumer behavior, NFL, social roles

1. Introduction

In today's sports world, the consistency with which top athletes compete is lower than in previous generations as athletes look to limit injuries, improve their physical and mental health, and better care for themselves and their families (Katherine Clemmons, 2021). Decisions not to compete have led to various fan reactions, where some have been supportive (Asmelash, 2023; Kirschner, 2023). However, others expressed disappointment and frustration in not being able to see their favorite player (Kirshner, 2023; Rohrbach, 2023) and felt athletes were entitled (Bromberg, 2022; O'Malley, 2023). Sport managers now operate in this marketplace to connect with fans, while knowing player availability is more limited. However, few investigations have explored fan reactions to players' competition decisions (Reilly et al., 2023).

A recent sociohistorical event provided an opportunity to examine competition decisions.
The COVID-19 pandemic threatened the health of individuals and their families (CDC, 2021) and also

impacted the National Football League (NFL). Specifically, players contemplated whether to play in athletic competitions for the safety of themselves and their loved ones (Keh, 2020). While the pandemic differed from a standard athletic setting, it presented a realm where many players and fans reacted to competition decisions. Ultimately, 67 NFL players opted out of the season (NFL, 2020), and fans expressed an array of reactions, largely negative, about the players and the impact on their teams (Heath, 2020; Smith, 2020). These negative fan reactions were also expressed even if a player just shared such a consideration (Errigo, 2020; Florio, 2020). However, it is possible some fans had positive reactions to the athletes. As such, this setting offered an opportunity to enhance our understanding of consumers by investigating fan reactions to player decisions to compete in the season, as well as exploring segmentation differences in gender (i.e., men and women) and adult status (i.e., emerging adults and adults).

This project also expanded the limited experimental sport marketing research to provide causal understandings rather than correlational associations (Ko & Lee, 2018) and examined how NFL fan segments perceived players and their team, based on players' hypothetical decisions to play or opt out of athletic competition.

Fan Segmentation and the NFL

Fan segmentation is a common technique to better understand consumers by dividing a heterogeneous market into smaller, more homogeneous sub-groups (Dees et al., 2022; Pitts et al., 1994). Segmentation attendance differences have been denoted by ticket-type, age, and gender (James & Ridinger, 2002; Hungenberg & Mayer, 2019). However, this attendance segmentation approach neglects the various forms of spectatorship (e.g., game broadcast and media consumption), particularly as a large number of fans will never attend a game but are still vital to supporting the team and players (Dees et al., 2022). Also, fan reactions to players are not uniformly expressed between generations nor gender (James & Ridinger, 2002; Tobar, 2006). Further, the NFL has particularly struggled to connect with the segment of fans currently in college (i.e., emerging adults; Orr, 2020), which will soon have strong buying power as adult consumers, and some are less enthusiastic about sports (Crupi, 2024; Silverman, 2020). Additionally, the NFL consumer appears to be an under-researched topic (Billings et al., 2020; Hu & Cole, 2016). In terms of fan behavior, men have enjoyed the Super Bowl social setting, but women wanted to view athletes in a human way (Clark et al., 2009). Shane-Nichols et al. (2021) also put forth that the NFL fan prototype should be defined differently for men and women, which supported gender segmentation. As such, there is a need to better understand fans by gender and how emerging adult fans compare to other adult fans, particularly in their perceptions of NFL players and teams.

Consumer Perceptions of Team Image and Athlete Image

The literature has also explored consumer perceptions of teams and athletes, and the importance of awareness, images, and connected associations consumers attach to their favorite team's name and symbol (Bauer et al., 2008; Dees et al., 2022; Gladden & Funk, 2002). These positive associations with a team are an important long-term element in the minds of consumers, as is the organization's core values and ensuring they align with fans (Ross, 2007). In the NFL, the importance of consumer self-expression has been denoted for team loyalty (Walker & Kent, 2009). Wang et al. (2020) also indicated that consumers utilized an NFL team to enhance self-image, which stimulated positive fan behavior. However, when a shortage of social attractiveness occurs, team-related consumption is withheld. Thus, NFL teams and players must convey positive actions

that publicly support desirable personal values and attributes in sport marketing activities to strengthen consumer loyalty. An athlete's image is also emerging in the literature, where athlete identity must first be established and then the desired image communicated (Linsner et al., 2021). Congruence, or the match between the desired athlete image and perceived image by consumers, is also an important area but lacking research (Linsner et al., 2021).

Additionally, Arai et al. (2013) denoted three athlete image dimensions: athletic performance, attractive appearance, and marketable lifestyle. Therefore, if a player does not compete, it removes one dimension. Further, personal and family decisions also impact those dimensions, especially when an NFL player is considering opting out of competition for health and safety reasons. Moreover, perceived authenticity can impact popularity (Arai et al., 2013). As such, congruence between communicated athletic image and the perceived image must match (Taniyev et al., 2022), particularly as differences exist between younger and older fans in authenticity (Moulard et al., 2015). Thus, the potential for players to opt out of athletic competitions presented an opportunity to explore how fan segments (i.e., age, gender) would respond in relation to their team and athlete image perceptions.

Theoretical Framework

This work was guided by Identity Theory and Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Witt & Wood, 2010), which recognize that individuals' qualities may be inferred by gender and employment roles. In this outlook, NFL players are strong men who possess athletic competencies and have overcome pain. Gender roles also play a role (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Typically, men are thought to be more agentic than women (e.g., dominant, competitive, assertive) and, per Social Role Theory, individuals are expected to behave consistently with perceived attributes (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Witt & Wood, 2010). As such, NFL players engaging in acts of dominance, competitiveness, and assertiveness during games are likely perceived by fans to possess those traits as central tenets of their identities across various roles (e.g., partner, parent, worker). Additionally, the emerging adult cohort holds different views of family and parenting than other adult cohorts. In particular, emerging adults expect equitable distributions of family caregiving tasks (Boehnke, 2011; Fromm, 2017). This shift in gender role expectations could impact their views of athletes' competition decisions compared to other adult cohorts.

Furthermore, emotions are tied to Identity Theory and Social Role Theory because deviations between expectations and actual behavior often result in their own negative emotions (Stryker & Burke, 2000) and negative emotional reactions by others (Eagly & Wood, 2012). However, congruency between expectations and behaviors leads to more positive emotional reactions, and this feedback can guide individuals' subsequent behaviors as it relates to role beliefs, identity, and enactment of social roles (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Witt & Wood, 2010). Thus, for some fans, player competition decisions may be inconsistent with expectations and prompt negative reactions. However, NFL players are not invincible, and COVID-19 could have threatened their athleticism and health, but also their families. Hence, competition decisions could also have been perceived positively. Differing reactions to playing decisions, then, may be a function of the player's provided reasoning. Therefore, this project expanded the limited experimental sport marketing research (Ko & Lee, 2018) and examined how fans perceived athletes and their team, based upon players' hypothetical decisions to play or opt out of athletic competition.

Present Studies

The current project examined fans' reactions to NFL players and their team when considering the hypothetical competition decision of an athlete (i.e., play or not play) due to COVID-19, with a focus on fan gender and life stage segments (i.e., emerging adults and adults). Both studies incorporated a within-subjects, experimental component that manipulated the COVID-19 concern expressed and the play decision using vignette scenarios. A within-persons design reduces the likelihood that findings are due to individual differences between groups, as each participant is exposed to multiple conditions, which serves as a control to isolate the influence of the variables (Charness et al., 2012). To promote open science initiatives, the study was pre-registered on Open Science Framework (OSF; https://osf.io/jmkaq/?view_only=72705697baa540cdbf7dc87e04241764). Social Role Theory and Identity Theory informed the development of the below hypotheses, where five specific hypotheses (H1-H5) were pre-registered, and one exploratory question (EQ) was also examined: (H1) On average, participants will report no change in their perceptions of their favorite NFL team, regardless of the concern expressed by a player or their decision to play for the season. (H2) On average, participants will perceive players in the vignettes who opt not to play for the season more negatively than they had previously, regardless of the concern expressed, than those who opt to play for the season. (H3) On average, participants will perceive players in the vignettes who express concern for self and opt not to play for the season more negatively than those who express a general concern and opt not to play for the season. (H4) On average, participants will perceive players in the vignettes who express concern for family and opt not to play for the season more negatively than those who express a general concern and opt not to play for the season. (H5) On average, participants will perceive players in the vignettes who express general concern and opt to play for the season more positively than those who express concern for self or family and opt to play for the season. (EQ1) What are participants' general emotional reactions to players who had opted out of the NFL season?

As the team was not influencing the decision for the player to opt-in or opt-out of the season, no change was expected in fans' perceptions, thereby contributing to H1. However, fans expect athletes to perform on the field and fulfill their player roles. When behavior deviates from expectations, it often results in more negative reactions (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Stryker & Burke, 2000), thus contributing to H2. Similarly, when reactions were based on a rationale around concern for themselves or a family member, it was expected to be more negative than a general concern because of the agentic expectation of players by fans (Eagly &Wood, 2012), thus contributing to H3-H5. Lastly, to gauge reactions of fans when a football player deviated from the expected role of playing, general emotions were measured for EQ1 to more broadly explore the area of fans' role expectations (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Witt & Wood, 2010).

2. Methodology

Study 1

Study 1 examined emerging adults' reactions to NFL players' hypothetical competition decisions on whether to participate in the season or opt out after expressing specific concerns about COVID-19. Emerging adults were sampled in this study as they are the up-and-coming NFL fans who will have

strong buying power in the near future (Orr, 2020; Silverman, 2020).

Materials

Only measures used in the analyses are described below; the full survey is on OSF (link).

 Fanhood. Participants were first asked to select their favorite NFL team. Next, participants indicated their fanhood for NFL football and their favorite NFL team on 10-point scales from 1 *Not a fan* to 10 *A big fan* (Clark et al., 2009; Mayer & Hungenberg, 2021).

 Experimental Vignettes. Eight shell vignettes were created for four offensive and four defensive positions, and presented randomly: quarterback, wide receiver, blind side tackle, offensive lineman, defensive end, linebacker, defensive back, and defensive lineman. Within each shell, a concern was expressed, and the player's competition decision was made explicit. Both concern and competition decisions varied within each participant and within each scenario; one concern and one competition decision were randomly assigned in each vignette. Three concern options were chosen: *self* (i.e., "concerned about his health and the possibility of contracting COVID-19"), *family* (i.e., "concerned about the health of his family and the possibility of exposing them to COVID-19"), and a control comparison (i.e., "concerned about COVID-19"). Two competition decisions were chosen: *to play* or *not to play*. As such, each shell read, "The [position] of your **Favorite NFL team** has shared that he is concerned about [concern], and/but has opted [competition decision] this season [original emphasis]."

 Perception of Player and Team. After each vignette, participants responded to a perception change item for the player and for the team on 7-point scales from 1 *Much more negative* to 7 *Much more positive*, with a mid-point of *No change in perception*.

 Opt-Out Emotions. Participants provided general responses to players opting out on 5-point scales from 1 *Does not describe my feelings* to 5 *Clearly describes my feelings* for the following emotions: Proud, Disappointed, Stressed, Annoyed, and Revolted.

 Demographics. Participants shared their age, gender, race, and sexual orientation.

Procedure

The project was pre-registered on OSF, which further details the study procedures. Prior to data collection, the project was approved by an Institutional Review Board. Emerging adults at a liberal arts college in the southeast of the United States, who self-identified as NFL fans, were recruited to participate in an online survey from the Psychology and Sport Management Departments' subject pools.

After reviewing the study's information, participants answered questions about their fanhood. Then, participants read "Next, you are going to be presented with eight statements and asked to envision how you would feel if the starting/first-string player on your favorite NFL Team had made each decision. Please read each statement fully before answering the questions [original emphasis]." Participants were then presented with each vignette and a series of perception questions. Next, participants shared their general emotions about NFL players opting out of a season, followed by their demographic information. Participants received course credit/extra credit for their time.

Participants

A total of 139 college-enrolled emerging adults participated; 31 were removed for failing attention checks or denoting that their data should not be used. The excluded participants did not differ from the retained on relevant demographic or fanhood variables (all p > 0.118). The analytic sample consisted of 108 emerging adult fans (M_{age} = 19.13, SD = 1.14; 37% men, 62% women, 0.9% other; 92.6% Caucasian/White, 4.6% African-American/Black, 2.8% other; 88.9% heterosexual, 9.3% bisexual, 0.9% gay/lesbian, 0.9% asexual). They considered themselves pretty big NFL fans (M = 6.54 out of 10, SD = 1.99) and of their favorite NFL team (M = 7.45 out of 10, SD = 1.94). Emerging adults' favorite NFL teams represented 22 of the 32 franchises.

Data Analysis

To examine H1-H5 on fans' reactions to players' hypothetical competition decisions based on specific COVID-19 concerns, linear mixed effects modeling was conducted in R-studio using the lme4 package (Bates et al., 2015). Separate modeling was conducted for player and team perceptions. Models were compared to identify the best-fitting model (Winter, 2013). The null model examined perception by only including random intercepts for participants (M0 = Perception ~ (1 | id)). Model 1 examined perception as a function of the interaction between COVID-19 concern and competition decision and included random intercepts for participants (M1 = Perception ~ Concern x Play + (1 | id)). Model 2 added random slopes for the COVID-19 concern by competition decision interaction (M2 = Perception ~ Concern x Competition Decision + (Concern x Competition Decision | id)). An alternative was created for each model that included a player position covariate. To examine EQ1, a 5 (emotions: proud, disappointed, stressed, annoyed, revolted) x 2 (gender: men, women) mixed ANOVA was conducted.

Study 2

Study 2 examined a broader age range of adult fans' (i.e., not emerging adults in college) reactions to NFL players' hypothetical competition decisions on whether to participate in the season or opt out after expressing specific COVID-19 concerns. Adult fans were sampled to evaluate if the Study 1 findings from emerging adult fans would replicate in a broader sample of fans, or if the two fan groups differed in their reactions, potentially due to life stage differences.

Materials

The same materials were used as those in Study 1.

Procedure

The same procedure was employed as in Study 1. However, participants were recruited online via NFL Chat forums, Facebook fan groups, and social media posts. A majority of participants (98.6%) were recruited from social media. Upon completion, participants could enter themselves into gift card raffles.

Participants

A total of 122 adult fans participated in the study; 52 were removed for failing attention checks or saying their data should not be used. The excluded participants did not differ from the retained on

relevant demographic or fanhood variables (all $p > .200$). The analytic sample consisted of 70 adult fans (M_{age} = 33.57; SD = 13.89; 67.1% men, 32.9% women; 91.4% Caucasian/White, 5.7% Hispanic/Latino, 1.4% African-American/Black, 1.4% other; 97.1% heterosexual, 1.4% gay/lesbian, and 1 person did not disclose). They considered themselves pretty big NFL fans (M = 7.43 out of 10, SD = 2.00) and of their favorite NFL team (M = 8.27 out of 10, SD = 1.69). Adult fans' favorite NFL teams represented 22 of the 32 franchises.

Data Analysis

The same analytic strategy from Study 1 was employed in Study 2.
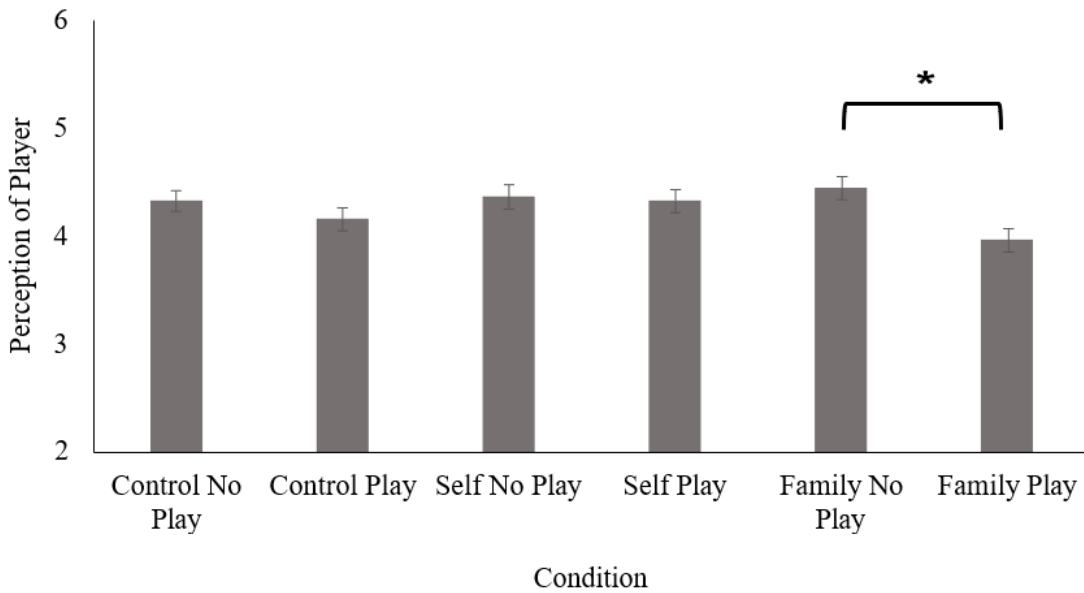
3. Results

Study 1

Examining hypothesis 1, the linear mixed effects modeling for emerging adult fans' team perceptions revealed that the alternative version of model 1 was not significantly different from the alternative version of the null model. As hypothesized, the model demonstrated that, when controlling for player position, the COVID-19 concern and competition decision did not influence emerging adults' perceptions of their favorite NFL team ($X^2(5)$ = 9.04, p = .108).

Examining hypotheses 2-5, the linear mixed effects modeling for emerging adult fans' perception of players revealed that model 1 demonstrated the best fit to the data, and there was no improvement in the covariate model with player position 1. The model demonstrated that the COVID-19 concern and play decision impacted emerging adults' perceptions of NFL players ($X^2(5)$ = 25.72, p < .001; Figure 1). Specifically, emerging adult fans were more positive in their perception of players who had expressed a family concern and opted not to play (~ .22 ± .13 SE), but they were more negative in their perception of players who had expressed a family concern and opted to play (~ -.43 ± .18 SE). As such, while there were significant findings, hypotheses 2- 5 were largely unsupported.

Examining the exploratory question, the 5x2 mixed ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of emotion with NFL player opt-outs (Wilk's λ = .30, F(4, 101) = 59.79, p < .001, ηp^2 = .70), qualified by an interaction between emotion and gender (Wilk's λ = .86, F(4, 101) = 4.28, p = .003, ηp^2 = .15; Figure 2). Comparisons were examined using estimated marginal means with Bonferroni corrections. Overall, emerging adult fans were less likely to indicate feeling revolted than any other emotion: proud (Mdiff = -1.35, p < .001, 95% CI [-1.76, -.95], d = 1.36), disappointed (Mdiff = -1.12, p < .001, 95% CI [-1.46, -.77], d = 1.16), stressed (Mdiff = -.90, p < .001, 95% CI [-1.24, -.56], d = .98), or annoyed (Mdiff = -.74, p < .001, 95% CI [-1.03, -.45], d = .88). Furthermore, they were less likely to indicate feeling annoyed than feeling proud (Mdiff = - .61, p = .022, 95% CI [-1.17, -.05], d = .50) or disappointed (Mdiff = -.38, p = .009, 95% CI [-.69, -.06], d = .32). Focused on the interaction, emerging adult-aged women were more likely to indicate feeling proud (Mdiff = 1.01, p < .001, 95% CI [.49, 1.53], d = .77) and stressed (Mdiff = .50, p = .037, 95% CI [.03, .97], d = .42) with an NFL player opt-out decision than emerging adult-aged men. No other comparisons were significant (all p > .629).
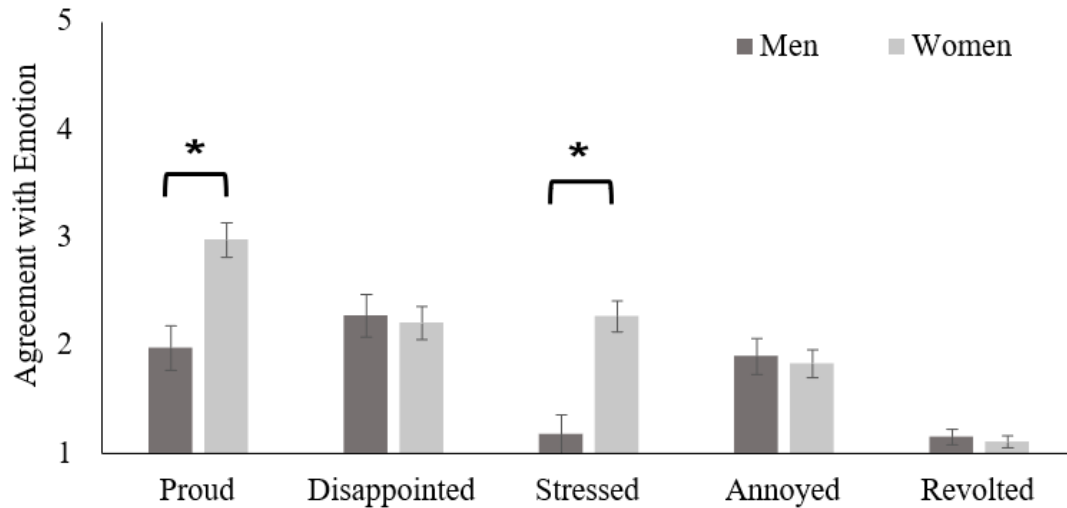
Figure 1

Emerging Adults' Perceptions of NFL Players Based on Concern and Competition Decision

Note. Error bars denote standard error.

Figure 2

*Emerging Adults' Emotions of NFL Players Not Competing*

Study 2

Examining hypothesis 1, the linear mixed effects modeling for adult fans' perceptions of the team revealed that model 1 was not significantly different from the null model, and there was no improvement with the alternative model. As hypothesized, the model demonstrated that COVID-19 concern and play decision did not influence adult fans' perceptions of their favorite NFL team ($X^2(5)$ = 5.78, p = .329).

Examining hypotheses 2-5, the linear mixed effects modeling for adult fans' perception of players revealed that model 1 demonstrated the best fit to the data, and no improvement in the covariate model with player position 2. The model demonstrated that the COVID-19 concern and play decision impacted adult fans' perceptions of NFL players ($X^2(5)$ = 14.67, p = .012; Figure 3). Specifically, adult fans were more positive in their perception of players who had expressed a family concern and opted not to play (~ .25 ± .11 SE) but more negative in their perception of players who had expressed a family concern and opted to play (~ -.33 ± .16 SE). As such, while there were significant findings, hypotheses 2-5 were largely unsupported.

Examining the exploratory question, the 5x2 mixed ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of emotion with NFL player opt-outs (Wilk's λ = .39, $F(4, 63)$ = 25.14, p < .001, η_p^2 = .62). The interaction between emotion and gender was not significant (Wilk's λ = .91, $F(4, 63)$ = 1.65, p = .174, η_p^2 = .10). Main effect comparisons were made using estimated marginal means with Bonferroni corrections. Adult fans, overall, were less likely to indicate feeling revolted than any other emotion: proud (M_{diff} = -1.24, p < .001, 95% CI [-1.71, -.77], d = 1.26), disappointed (M_{diff} = -.68, p < .001, 95% CI [-1.06, -.30], d = .83), stressed (M_{diff} = -.32, p = .030, 95% CI [-.63, -.02], d = .49), or annoyed (M_{diff} = -.38, p = .004, 95% CI [-.68, -.09], d = .54). No other comparisons were significant (all p > .05).

Figure 3.
Adult Fans' Perceptions of NFL Players Based on Concern and Competition Decision
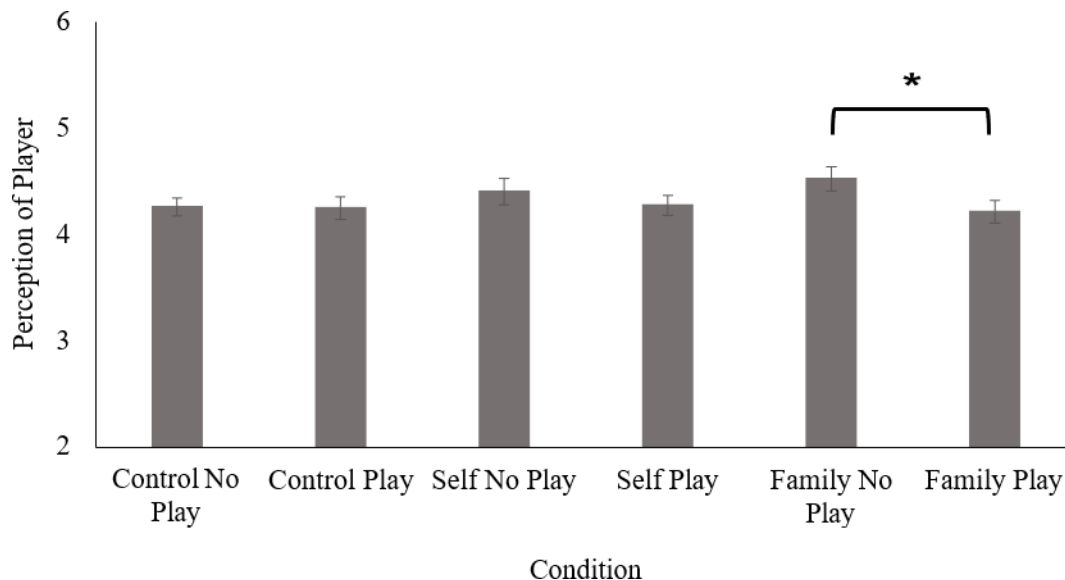
Note. Error bars denote standard error.

4. Discussion

This project contributes to the understanding of fans' perceptions of NFL athletes and teams through an experimental research design. In sum, hypothesis 1 was supported across both studies with no change in NFL team perceptions regardless of player concern expressed or competition decision. Additionally, although hypotheses 2-5 were largely unsupported, there was an interesting finding related to family-focused concerns in both studies. Further, the emotional responses of both life-stage samples were largely similar (e.g., participants were not revolted). One exception relates to gender differences (e.g., emerging adult-aged men and women felt differently; adult fans' emotions did not differ by gender).

The results of the experimental component indicated that players were perceived more positively when a family concern was provided and the player did not compete, while players were perceived more negatively when a family concern was provided and they opted to play. Perhaps fans recognized and appreciated the varied social roles of players, role conflicts from expressed values, and deemed the family role above the athlete role amid a global health pandemic. Still, further research is needed to understand why fans responded in this manner, which could explore the congruence concept (Linsner et al., 2021; Taniyev et al., 2022).

Contrastingly, the experimental component indicated that fan perceptions of the team were largely not impacted by the player's decision. Thus, sport practitioners can temper their concern that fan engagement will be altered by the decision of a player not to compete. As such, a team could take the approach of not commenting on the playing decisions of its team members. However, the above results suggest that fans recognized the multiple roles of athletes. Therefore, a team may be wise to also recognize these roles, and support players in them, including any decisions to not compete in a game because of a family role (e.g., parental leave, caring for a sick family member, the passing of a loved one). Then, it may behoove teams to invest in their players as people and subsequently highlight their players' off-field capacities, and communicate those to the public to enhance their own imagery and fan loyalty. This messaging might reduce role conflict emotions of fans and aid relationship management efforts between the team and consumers. NFL efforts to support players could also aid some emerging adult fans to be more aligned with a team and not just a player (Orr, 2020; Walker & Kent, 2009; Wang et al., 2020).

In terms of the emotional responses, the results indicated that regardless of life stage, fans were not revolted by player decisions to opt out of competition but were more likely to be proud of such an action. To some, this result would be unexpected (Broomberg, 2022; Leetaru, 2016; Neubaum & Kramer, 2017; O'Malley, 2023; Smith, 2020) and is a reminder to sport practitioners that media commentary by on-air personalities and social media reactions are not the only indicators of fan sentiment. Importantly, sport managers must make adjustments to consumers based upon their given market context (Mayer & Hungenberg, 2021) and should recognize that their fans can simultaneously hold two or more emotions at the same time (e.g., proud and disappointed) regarding their perceived image of an athlete.

While both life stage groups indicated being somewhat proud of the athlete's decision not to compete, emerging adult-aged women indicated their pride at a significantly higher level than emerging adult-aged men. The emerging adult-aged women also felt significantly more stressed by these player decisions than the emerging adult-aged men. As such, they may have experienced a heightened degree of mixed emotions, an understandable reaction amid the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein they may have desired leisure outlets like watching sports but were also concerned for their

own and others' health. Moreover, these results support the dedication of women as sport fans and counter past research on gendered expectations of football fans (Clark et al., 2009; Shane-Nichols et al., 2021). Sport managers will then need to meet these fan expectations of the emerging adult-aged women with gender segmentation strategies. One fan strategy to appeal to and invest in these up-and-coming consumers could be to provide content of players as athletes on the field and off the field in their other life roles.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation is the sample size. While a within-subjects design does not need to be as large as a between-subjects design (Charness et al., 2012), statistical power would have been improved with a larger sample and/or balanced conditions. Additionally, future work should aim for improved racial representation aligned with NFL consumers. Future inquiries could also aim to consider an individual sport like golf or tennis, where athletes have more event participation control, rather than a team sport with a consistent league schedule. These endeavors could also name specific players, coaches, and their role identities. Future work could also explore college football and players' decisions to opt out of bowl games. In all, this project provided an experimentally-focused understanding of sport consumer behavior, considered fan segments, and engaged in open-science initiatives.

Author Note

Conflict of Interest. No potential conflicts of interest are reported by the authors.

Compliance with Ethics. The study was approved by the authors' institutional review board before being conducted. Moreover, participants were presented with a study information sheet before choosing to participate.

Open Science Statement . The project was pre-registered on Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/jmkaq/?view_only=72705697baa540cdbf7dc87e04241764). The survey and supplemental materials are shared there. The data are available upon request from the second author.

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