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Consumer Perceptions of the Inaugural College Football Championship Tournament: A Longitudinal Study

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Although activities of the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) and its member universities have been examined through a lens of economic and legal issues, the present research explores the consumer perspective. A longitudinal study of sports consumers was conducted over a seven month period leading up to the College Football Championship Tournament. Measures of Commitment to Fandom of NCAA Football, Meaningfulness of the College Football Championship Tournament, Affinity for the NCAA Football Organization, and Perceived Greediness of the NCAA Football Organization reveal changes in perception consistent with media coverage but not with what one would expect based on the findings of most studies published from economic and legal perspectives. Perceptions of Meaningfulness of the tournament increased and became a strong predictor of intention to recommend viewing and viewership self-assessment decisions while the other perceptions had no statistically significant difference over time. Of particular interest, perceived Greediness of the NCAA had no significant change over time and was not a significant predictor of viewing intention or non-regret / regret over the decision to view. Discussion of the findings, future research, and limitations are presented.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and collegiate sports in general has been the subject of a great deal of academic research. Theoretical foundations such as cartel theory from economics (Siegfried & Burba, 2004) and social movement theory from sociology (Koch & Leonard, 1978) have been used to explore the dynamic nature of what Zimbalist (1999) described as the “schizophrenia of intercollegiate athletics which is at once amateur in parts and intensely commercial” (p. 100). Much of this research has been from perspectives such as the profitability of collegiate sports, the concept of amateurism vs. commercialism, and the appropriate (and inappropriate) roles of the NCAA. There have been relatively few articles that focus on the topic directly from the consumer perception of collegiate sports and the NCAA.

The inaugural College Football Playoff (CFP) involving four teams and three games (i.e., two semi-finals and one championship game) presented an opportunity for inquiry directly from the consumers’ perspective. Based on previous literature, topics of interest consisting of fan commitment to college football as a sport, meaningfulness of the CFP, and affinity for, and perceived greediness of, the NCAA as an organization were identified as constructs which could be measured to gauge consumer perceptions. A panel of sports fans was developed and grouped by sport interest, and then subjected to a longitudinal study leading up to the CFP. The timing of the surveys taken by panel members coincided with media coverage leading up to the championship tournament to determine whether or not perceptions change, what motivates consumer intentions to recommend viewing, and self-assessment of their own viewership decisions. The results indicate that consumers are not as interested in the NCAA or its structure as existing literature would indicate. Furthermore, perceived greediness of the organization was not a contributing factor to decisions about viewership, in stark contrast to the perspective taken from--and often an assumption of--an economics or legal standpoint. The present research makes an important contribution to theoretical and practical knowledge by measuring perceptions directly from sports consumers. It also makes a methodological contribution by gathering data directly from those consumers for a longitudinal study.

The concept of having a CFP has been a part of public discourse since as far back as the 1950’s (Seifried, 2012). Because the present research takes the perspective of sports consumers, meaningfulness of the CFP from their point of view is of great importance. Real and Mechikoff (1992) concluded that the impact of sporting events that are played out in the mass media is much greater than what can be measured in utilitarian terms, such as economic indicators and fan attendance. Instead, “its symbolic or expressive importance is far greater than that for many Americans because it provides a language or interpretive structure that at once reflects, explains, and interprets social life” (Real & Mechikoff, 1992, p. 337). The present research explores this perspective through direct consumer perceptions.

Literature Review

Since there have been so few studies in existing research which gather data directly from consumers, the aim of the present research is to capture this perspective. As a result of this gap, the Literature Review focuses on related studies grouped by topic under the headings of *Economics and Amateurism*, *Media Coverage of the Playoff Tournament*, and *Framing*.

Economics and Amateurism

On its website, the NCAA lists as its core values *the collegiate models of athletics, the highest levels of integrity and sportsmanship, the pursuit of excellence in both academics and athletics, the supporting role that intercollegiate athletics plays, an inclusive culture, respect, and presidential leadership* (“NCAA,” 2015). Although the stated purpose does not mention financial concerns, according to Fort and Quirk (1999) another role taken by the NCAA has been its own economic betterment and that of its university members; university administrators, athletic directors, NCAA administrators, and conference commissioners “(a)ll care about income and upward mobility that, in turn, enhances their future welfare” (Fort, 2016, p. 123).

Furthermore, different groups of advocates for college football reform have three major issues on which they have differences of opinion, one of them being “the relationship of commercialism to academic values” (Sack, 2009, p. 77), and DeBrock and Hendricks (1996) indicated that some of the actions related to the structure of the NCAA such as conference affiliations are based on this goal of economic betterment for the Association and its Members. What contributes to the blurred lines of how consumers may perceive the NCAA and member universities is that to meet their objectives, the organization and schools rely upon economic benefits (realized or unrealized) by taking such actions as changing conference affiliations (Groza, 2010; Quirk, 2004), managing punishments for violations to promote competitive balance (Depken II & Wilson, 2006), and distribution of television rights (Pacey, 1985). Several researchers pointed to the distribution of media revenue and made the claim that the NCAA, because of its emphasis on overall economic benefit for itself and its members, acts more like a profit-driven cartel than a non-profit organization (Humphreys & Ruseski, 2009; Koch, 1973; Stieber, 1991). Of particular note is the 1984 Supreme Court Decision that led to moving control over television revenues for college football games from the NCAA to individual member schools (Pacey, 1985; “Sherman Act,” 1992; Siegfried & Burba, 2004; Zimbalist, 1999).

At the root of the cartel conflict is that college-level football activities “generate professional-level revenues” (Kahn, 2007, p. 209) but do not pay the athletes who are playing in the games. This inherently draws conflicts ranging from issues of congruency between norms of U.S. players and International players (Abbey-Pinegar, 2010) to the role that athletics should play in academics (Cullen, Latessa, & Byrne, 1990). Addressing this point directly, Sanderson and Siegfried (2015) claimed that the NCAA utilized a controlled labor market (collegiate athletes) and administration of some revenue streams (broadcast) to develop both monopoly and monopsony power. This, according to the authors, is creating backlash and eventual reform through legal cases and internal reform.

The NCAA’s focus on both the economic and academic well-being of its members creates a conflict of interest (Baxter & Lambert, 1990), which makes it susceptible to being perceived as greedy and corrupt (Benford, 2007). In addition to regular season television rights, corporate sponsorship of college bowl games (Rubel, 1995) has also drawn attention to revenues generated by an amateur league that it is conceptually similar to the National Football League’s (NFL) Super Bowl advertising, which gained great popularity among sports fans and non-sports fans alike (McAllister, 1999). Of particular note is the amount of money generated by college football, which “average(s) more than \$35 million per school in some conferences and Bowl Championship Series (BCS) appearances can net more than \$15 million” (Logan, 2011, p. 2493). Another perception is that the polls used in the team ranking system are designed for agenda-setting toward commercializing the league, which some believe will not change even after the

four-team-playoff system is in place (Funk & McElroy, 2013). The combination of unpaid players and large revenues for member teams of the NCAA raises the question of whether or not fans perceive the parties involved as greedy, and whether or not that perception affects viewership decisions.

This is where the contribution of the present research is distinctive and strongest. It is important to note that though the articles in this economics and amateurism section lead to questions about perceptions of greed, none of them includes as its data source perceptions gathered directly from consumers. The articles apply economics and sociology theories to data gathered about everything from athletics-related revenue and expenditures to trends of voting on *Associated Press* (AP) and Coaches ballots to content analysis of advertising discourse, and some articles review legal and rules-based arguments, but none include the direct perceptions of the sports consumers. The only data relied upon that are from a human perspective appear to be a survey of college football head coaches (Cullen et al., 1990) and qualitative depth interviews by Benford (2007) who interviewed sports reformers. Neither group can take the perspective of typical sports consumers. This does not mean that the articles in this section do not add excellent knowledge to our field. However, it does mean that when assessing the conflict between economics and amateurism in college athletics there is a dearth of research that measures the consumer perspective directly from the consumer. Also missing from the literature is direct consumer response to the media coverage of college-level sporting events.

Media Coverage of Playoff Tournament

The College Football Playoff was established to begin at the end of the 2014 season consisting of a four-team-playoff followed by a championship game (Heekin & Burton, 2014). In 2012, it was announced that ESPN would broadcast the playoffs in a deal worth approximately \$470 million per year (Bachman, 2012) and totaling \$7.3 billion over 12 years (K. Weaver, 2013). The amount paid by ESPN to air the championship tournament is being treated in the present research as an indication that it is accompanied by a substantial amount of advertising and promotion, and that sports consumers are exposed to such promotion. This perspective mirrors that of Gamache (2014) who identified growing revenues and expenses that ESPN experiences which are associated with airing college sports. Furthermore, ESPN indicated during the summer prior to the playoff that it had a media plan rivaling that of the Super Bowl (“Masters Of Insight,” 2015). This is consistent with the indications of a longitudinal study by Turner (2014) who found a shift in ESPN programming--as represented by their signature show *SportsCenter*--from episodic content focused on disseminating basic results to more thematic content focused on dramatic insight and interpretations of sports stories including news coverage framed in ways that promote ESPN’s own programming. This event, therefore, was identified in the present research as an endpoint for a longitudinal study measuring fan perceptions as the event approached. Sporting events provide excellent opportunities for media coverage to engage in framing as a means of influencing audience perception of the event and its elements (Dumitriu, 2012).

Framing

Framing allows media to construct a particular version of an event and “can be applied to many different aspects of messages and to many different types of messages” (Weaver, 2007, p.

144), which is particularly apropos for consuming sports, as it involves viewing events and related content through multiple platforms. Framing has been explored in sports media consumption in a number of different ways, mostly in how the media frames perceptions of gender (e.g., Angelini & Billings, 2010; Billings & Angelini, 2007; Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991; Koivula, 1999; Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993; Reid & Soley, 1979; Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard, 2002). Framing turns out to be an important topic because of how the CFP is perceived by consumers and influenced by the media. Supporting this perspective, when making a strong case for the principal-agency theory mindset as opposed to an arms-race mindset when applied to understanding college athletics spending, Fort (2016) pointed out that “(t)he College Football Playoff that determines the FBS national champion is also a marvel of cooperation among ‘Power 5’ conference commissioners that represent their individual conference members . . . , the sports network ESPN, and bowl organizers” (p. 127).

Framing has been the focus of other sports-related topics outside of gender, for example when contributing to public opinion of funding for a new sports stadium (Buist & Mason, 2010) or the build-up to a sporting event (Messner, Duncan, & Wachs, 1996). Of particular interest to the present research, Lewis and Proffitt (2013) discovered that coverage of owner – player labor issues has been framed from a perspective where consumers are victims of a battle between billionaires and millionaires. The influence of media on consumer perceptions is extremely powerful, to the point that “(i)t is implausible . . . to try to uncouple the production, distribution, and consumption of sport from the media’s role in these processes” (Rowe, 2000, pp. 22-23).

Conceptual Development

College Football Playoff

As indicated in the introduction, meaningfulness of the CFP is an important measure because it captures direct consumer perception of the event from their perspective. Based on the notion that framing by the media can influence perceptions by consumers, and given that ESPN is integrally involved in the production and dissemination of the event, we expect this measure to increase over time and to be a significant predictor of consumers’ perception of the tournament.

H1: Meaningfulness of the CFP will increase as the tournament approaches.

H2: Meaningfulness of the CFP will be a significant predictor of intention to recommend viewing prior to the CFP.

H3: Meaningfulness of the CFP will be a significant predictor of viewership non-regret / regret after the CFP Championship Game.

Conflicting Perceptions of Greed

Considering the attention that academic researchers might pay to economics, amateurism, and revenues associated with the CFP, one might expect a negative effect on consumer perceptions of the NCAA and the tournament. On the other hand, there is evidence that commercialization at the collegiate athlete level does not necessarily have a detrimental consequence. For example, Rubel (1995) found that while title sponsorship of college bowl games met with some initial negative reaction, it did not last long in the eyes of consumers.

Similarly, Dees, Bennett, and Villegas (2008) found evidence that highly involved college football fans had high likelihood of purchase from companies who sponsor their favorite team.

Eddy (2014) concluded that sponsorship of a college football venue may not meet with as much negativity as many universities fear. This may be partially explained by findings from Keaton, Watanabe, and Gearhart (2015) who compared consumers of college football and NASCAR and found that college football fans are motivated more by tradition and experiential aspects of the games, including shared fandom based on family and geography, than by the media channels through which they are consumed. Furthermore, Reynolds (2003) indicated that NCAA football fans are driven by these experiential factors regardless of conference division levels. In other words, even though economic and legal perspectives of how NCAA College Football operates point toward conclusions of competitive balance possibly to reach greedy ends, consumers may not perceive exposure to commercialism in the form of increasing television coverage, advertising, and sponsorship in a negative light. The present research views the conflicting views of greed as a gap in the literature and uses the CFP as context for measuring changes in consumer perceptions of greed over a period of time leading up to the event.

H4: Perceived Greediness of the NCAA Football Organization will increase as the CFP approaches.

H5: Perceived Greediness of the NCAA Football Organization will be a significant predictor of intention to recommend viewing prior to the CFP.

H6: Perceived Greediness of the NCAA Football Organization will be a significant predictor of viewership non-regret / regret after the CFP Championship Game.

Fandom of NCAA Football

Sport fandom has been described as being akin to a relationship, including emotional attachments and points of identification (James & Kolbe, 2000). Richardson (2004) expanded on this notion by finding evidence that this commitment can be made stronger through encouraging a sense of community among fans. In the case of the present research, the community is viewed as sports fans, not just fans of any particular team. Commitment to fandom is a measure of perceptions that is used because it focuses on the sport itself, as opposed to only the tournament.

H7: Commitment to Fandom of NCAA Football will increase over time as the CFP approaches.

H8: Commitment to Fandom of NCAA Football will be a significant predictor of intention to recommend.

H9: Commitment to Fandom of NCAA Football will be a significant predictor of viewership non-regret / regret after the CFP Championship Game.

Affinity for NCAA

As indicated in the literature review and earlier in this section, the NCAA as an organization has been the subject of research in terms of the cross-section of economics and amateurism, possibly leading to perceptions of greed. One of the questions being asked in the present research is whether or not perceptions of greed necessarily result in a change in attitude about the organization. Contextually, this is important because some consumers may or may not

relate the organization and the tournament to perceptions of greed. Theoretically, it is important because measuring perceptions of the organization indicates the likelihood that consumers relate the structure behind the event with the event itself. For this reason, affinity for the NCAA as an organization is being measured and longitudinally compared.

H10: Affinity for the NCAA Football Organization will decrease as the CFP approaches.

H11: Affinity for the NCAA Football Organization will be a significant predictor of intention to recommend viewing prior to the CFP.

H12: Affinity for the NCAA Football Organization will be a significant predictor of viewership non-regret / regret after the CFP Championship Game.

Intention and Behavior

Measuring changes in intended and actual behaviors is important to determine what impact the constructs have on sports consumer actions. During the two periods leading up to the event, the focus of the outcome variables must be related to intentions; during period three the focus of the outcome variables must be on actual behavior because data is collected after the championship game is played. Consistent with the premise that the NCAA fan base is community-minded, intention to recommend the tournament was measured prior to the event to reflect sports consumers' consciousness of kind (Muniz Jr & O'Guinn, 2001). After the event, the focus of the outcome variable was on the viewing or non-viewing of the event to ensure that all participants could express their feelings about the championship tournament.

The design of the present study is focused on viewership as consumption, and the decision to view as a consumer decision. Taylor (1997) indicated that measures of regret are an effective way of assessing satisfaction or dissatisfaction of consumer decision. For this reason, the outcome variable in the above hypotheses during periods 1 and 2 is designed to measure viewership recommendation, while the outcome variable during period 3 is designed to measure consumer non-regret or regret over their decision to view or not view the championship game.

To measure *Non-regret / Regret* during period 3 in a manner that can be compared to *Recommendation to View* measured during periods 1 and 2, respondents were first asked whether or not they viewed the college football championship game. Those who reported that they did not watch the game answered questions worded in the format "Looking back on my decision to not watch the CFP Championship Game, I regret my choice" whereas respondents who reported that they watched the game answered questions worded in the format "Looking back on my decision to watch the CFP Championship Game, I don't regret my choice." These statements were followed by Likert-type scales ranging from strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree so that they measured perceptions on equivalent scales. The exact wording of this group of questions can be found in Appendix 2.

Method

A Sports Fan Research Panel was developed through a combination of social media postings, a press release, and snowball sampling. Because data would be gathered using a web-based survey, members of the panel were recruited through a web page that asked for demographic data and ranking of sport preferences (Appendix 1). These included NCAA Football, NCAA Basketball, NFL Football, NBA Basketball, Major League Baseball, PGA Golf,

NHL Hockey, UFC Mixed Martial Arts, and MLS Soccer. In addition, respondents were asked to provide sports-related data such as favorite teams and athletes, and were asked to rank their favorite sports-related television networks.

It is important to note that this initial survey was a panel recruitment tool. The sports provided to respondents for ranking were intended to gather levels of interest in several sports, information that would eventually be used to form groups that were meaningful to the panel members. The primary purpose of asking panel members about a variety of sports in addition to other sports-related questions such as favorite teams is to reduce bias resulting from context effect (Wainer & Kiely, 1987). This item-priming bias can be minimized through the survey design by asking respondents about more than just the college football championship and the NCAA (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon, & Podsakoff, 2003). Another important reason for creating groups was to reduce the attrition rate during the time of the study. “The attrition rate with a longitudinal study can be large depending on the length of time over which the study is conducted. Also, it is dependent upon how willing the participants are to be available for each measurement” (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000, p. 606). By classifying panel members into groups based on sport interests, the present study increased the likelihood that they would maintain interest in responding to the surveys, as at least half the questions would be about a sport of interest to them. Although the context of interest to this study is the CFP, the population of interest is sports consumers, not just consumers of college football. Furthermore, matching panel members by topic of interest has been shown to increase power of the statistical tests of the sample (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

Consistent with this approach, and further clarifying the survey design, each panel member answered the same sets of questions about two different sports during each period: college football and the sport associated with their sport group of interest. Therefore, it is also important to note that analysis of data referring to college football includes all panel members; group membership refers to the second sport about which panel members answered the equivalent set of questions. Finally, respondents were asked to report their gender, age range, and education level on the initial survey so that they could be used as control variables. The survey questions used for each group during each period appear in Appendix 2.

The measures used in the survey were all adapted from previous literature. Items for *Commitment* (to fandom of NCAA Football) were adapted from Morgan and Hunt (1994), *Meaningfulness* measures (of NCAA Football Championship Tournament) were adapted from Mano and Oliver (1993), *Affinity* items (for NCAA Football Organization) were adapted from Homer (1995), and *Greediness* measures (of NCAA Football Organization) from Grégoire, Laufer, and Tripp (2010). For periods 1 and 2, *Intention to Recommend* was measured using items adapted from Cheema and Kaikati (2010); for period 3, *Non-regret / Regret* was measured using items adapted from Lin and Huang (2006). A verification question appeared approximately three quarters of the way through each perception survey which was worded “(f)or verification purposes please leave this question blank.” Any cases which included an answer for this question were removed from the analysis.

Based on the responses to the recruitment survey, respondents were categorized into one of three groups – National Football League (NFL), NCAA Basketball (NCB), or Major League Baseball (MLB); categorization was determined by how each respondent ranked their interest in the sports mentioned above. These groupings were also chosen because of their conceptual distance from college football. NFL football involves the same sport as NCAA Football but at a professional level; NCAA Basketball is a different sport but at the collegiate level; Major League

Baseball is a different sport played in a professional (as opposed to amateur) league. The purpose of creating these groups is so that interaction effects can be tested (group x period) to see if groups of fans self-selected into the different groups react differently over time.

Three data collection periods were identified ranging from June 2014 (prior to promotion of the tournament) to January 2015, immediately after the championship game was played. The only difference among the surveys is that for the first two periods *Intention to Recommend* was measured as a dependent variable for the planned multiple regression analysis, but for the survey during period 3 *Non-regret / Regret* over the decision to *not view / view* the championship game was measured for reasons indicated in the section titled Intention and Behavior.

Qualtrics survey software was used to build three panels, one for each sport-related group described earlier in this section. Data for period 1 was gathered from June 4th to 16th; for period 2 from October 3rd to 16th; and immediately following the championship game for period 3 from January 13th to 29th. The CFP included a first round played on January 1st followed by the championship game on January 12th. Data from each period was used for a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). At the end of data collection period 3 the consumer perception constructs (*affinity, commitment, meaningfulness, greediness*) were tested for differences between periods, groups, and period x group interaction effect. Next, multiple regression analysis was used to test perception constructs as independent variables with dependent variable *Intention to Recommend* during periods 1 and 2 and *Non-regret/Regret* during period 3. Additional tests were performed, as described in the Ad-Hoc Analysis section below.

Results

Descriptive data about the sports consumer research panel appear in Table #1. Exactly, 455 people clicked on the link to the initial survey, 402 of whom completed enough information to be included in the panel with a gender make-up of 301 (75%) males, 85 (21%) females, and 16 (4%) who did not report gender. Panel members who participated in the surveys included 291 respondents during period 1, of whom 231 (79%) were male, 55 (19%) were female, and 5 (2%) did not report gender; 285 in period 2, of whom 213 (75%) were male, 65 (23%) were female, and 7 (2%) did not report gender; 221 in period 3, of whom 167 (76%) were male, 48 (22%) were female, and 6 (3%) did not report gender.

Results of the CFA for each period's data are presented in Table #2. All of the items loaded as expected with two exceptions. CFM04 (Means Nothing To Me / Means A Lot To Me) loaded with the other items for *Meaningfulness*; however, in all three periods this item had the lowest coefficient in the factor, and the Cronbach's Alpha without the item was higher than it would be with the item. With seven other items being used to measure the construct *Meaningfulness*, this item was removed. In period 3, the item CFG03 (Has Good Intentions / Has Bad Intentions) did not load as strongly as it had in periods 1 and 2. The item remained in the calculation of the summated scale (SUMMCFG) measuring the construct *Greediness* for theoretical and practical purposes. As part of a longitudinal study it is important to use the same measures for all periods, and the measure of perceived greediness is stronger with three items than two for the overall study.

Results of difference testing among the main effect *Sports Fan Group* yielded statistically significant differences at the .05 level, indicating that categorization by focus of sport fandom was successful. Results of the longitudinal test are presented in Table #3. The results reveal a statistically significant difference in the measure of *Meaningfulness* of the CFP. *Meaningfulness*

increased from periods 1 to 3, supporting H1. A Sheffe's test was performed and revealed no statistically significant differences from periods 1 to 2 or from periods 2 to 3, indicating the increase occurred over the course of the study from July to January. Therefore, H4, H7, and H10, were not supported; however, the results are of interest and represent an important contribution explored further in the Discussion section. When testing for a Period x Group interaction effect, none of the four perceptions had a statistically significant interaction effect, indicating there is no evidence that perception changes in group mean differences over time are influenced by the grouping by sport interest.

Results of multiple regression analysis by period are presented in Table #4 and reveal levels of explained variance ranging from 57% to 67%. During Periods 1 and 2, *Affinity* for the NCAA College Football Organization, *Commitment* to Fandom of College Football, and *Meaningfulness* of the CFP were all significant predictors of *Intention to Recommend*. Therefore, H2, H8, and H11 are supported, and H5 is not supported. During Period 3, only *Commitment* and *Meaningfulness* were significant contributors to *Non-regret/Regret* about the decision to *not watch / watch* the college football championship game. Therefore, H3 and H9 are supported, but H6 is not supported. To test the influence of the control variables, each was added individually to the multiple regression equation for each period and tested for statistical significance. Only age range resulted in a statistically significant change during period 2. When including age range as an independent variable, only the coefficient for *Affinity* showed an impact greater than 10%, decreasing from .124 to .094; however, the R^2 for the equation decreased from .67 to .64, indicating that the influence of age range reduced the percentage of explained variance in the dependent variable and had only a minimal impact. Furthermore, it is of interest to note that the control variable *Sport Fan Group* was not a statistically significant predictor of viewership intentions or regret / non-regret; this indicates there is no evidence that a panel member's primary sport interest affected their viewership intentions or regret / non-regret over their decision to watch or not watch the CFP Championship Game.

Of interest, and discussed further in the Discussion section, is that the two significant predictors of how people feel about their decision to view (behavior) are related to the sport itself, whereas the independent variables related to the NCAA Football Organization are not significant predictors. It is important to note that all of the data analyzed are perceptions of the college football championship and the NCAA Football Organization; the categorization by sport interest refers only to the general interest of the panel members included in each respective group.

To diagnose the assumptions of multiple regression, standardized residuals of the regression for each period were analyzed for normality of distribution using a normal probability plot. The distribution of residuals for each period exhibits normality. The distribution of residuals for each of the independent variables displayed on a scatterplot form a null plot, indicating independence of the error terms for each independent variable (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The only minor, but not surprising variance from normality in the distribution of residuals is displayed in a scatterplot of the dependent variable for each period. The plots appear to approach linearity, indicating time-based dependence (Hair et al., 2010) which is expected because of the length of time during which data was gathered within each period. Unlike studies where data can be gathered from all respondents at one point in time, the present research is gathering data that is subjective in nature during a time period with outside uncontrollable influences to perceptions over the course of two or three weeks. Therefore, it is

expected that some time-based dependence of the error terms may be exhibited. Considering the results of the above residual tests there is no need to correct the standard errors.

Post-Hoc Analysis

During period three, which began just after the championship game was played and broadcast live, panel members were asked the question “Did you watch the championship game?” The research design purpose of this screening question is to determine which set of items about their decision to view the game, as described above in Conceptual Development, should be presented. The questions asked relate to non-regret / regret over the viewing decision and are treated as an equivalent measure of viewing recommendation during periods one and two. This also provides an additional, post-hoc opportunity to use the initial question as an outcome variable for binary logistic (logit) regression analysis.

Binary logistic regression displayed high accuracy of prediction and an acceptable level of explained variance. As displayed in Table 5, the prediction percentage had an overall success rate of 85.2% (94.8 for YES, 54.8 for NO), with a Hosmer & Lemeshow test result of .141, “a nonsignificant value indicating that the model fit is acceptable” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 339). *Meaningfulness* of the tournament and control variable *Education* were the only statistically significant predictors of whether or not the panel members viewed the game, with Pseudo R² effect sizes of .48 (Nagelkerke Pseudo R²) and .33 (Cox & Snell Pseudo R²). This makes theoretical sense, indicating that whether or not a sports fan finds meaningfulness in the tournament affects his or her decision to view the championship game. Furthermore, it is important to note that *Sport Fan Group* was not a statistically significant predictor of whether or not the sample chose to watch the game; this indicates there is no evidence that the panel members’ self-selected sport group of choice affected their viewership decision.

To address the possibility that bias may be unavoidably present in period 3 as a result of asking the qualifying question about watching the championship game, a related post-hoc analysis was run comparing two multiple regression equations; one for subjects who watched the game and another for those who did not watch the game using *Non-regret / Regret* as the dependent variable. Not surprisingly, for those panel members who reported that they watched the game the regression results were similar, with *Meaningfulness* of the tournament and *Commitment* to fandom being the significant predictors (Table 6). For panel members who did not watch the game, the only significant predictor of *Non-regret / Regret* was *Commitment* to fandom. These two regression results interpreted together appear to indicate the group that did view the championship game were driven both by their commitment to fandom (of college football) and the meaningfulness of the tournament, while those who did not watch the championship game were driven by their low commitment to fandom of college football. The meaningfulness (or lack thereof) of the tournament was not a significant predictor of this group’s non-regret over the decision to not watch the game.

Another post-hoc analysis was performed using a two-stage test to detect selection bias related to people who intended to view the championship tournament during period two and the outcome of period three. In the first stage equation, the selection dependent variable used was whether or not the championship game was *watched*, with the independent variables *intention to view*, *age*, *education*, and *gender*; the second stage equation consisted of the variables in the multiple regression equation for Period 3 from Table 4 –dependent variable *Regret/Non-Regret* with independent variables *Commitment* and *Meaningfulness*.

Because the study combines a longitudinal study of comparison groups, selection bias is expected; however, a test for selection bias can help explain the size of that bias (Shadish et al., 2002). Consistent with this, the two-stage equation indicated no statistically significant independent variables and Rho of -0.8919, meaning that the residuals of the two equations are highly correlated. This, in combination with the significant multiple regression equation without controlling for selection bias, is discussed further in the following section.

An additional post-hoc analysis focused only on the NFL group so that comparisons could be made between how the independent variables--as they relate to college football--explain viewing of the college football championship compared to how the independent variables--as they relate to professional football--explain viewing of the Super Bowl. As can be seen in Table 7, for consumers who indicated interest in professional football the same independent variables focused on the sport and event: *Commitment* (to fandom of NFL Football) and *Meaningfulness* (of the Super Bowl) are the perceptions that drive regret / non-regret over the decision to view / not view the college football championship. *Affinity* for the NFL Organization was also a significant predictor of recommendation to view the Super Bowl, though affinity for the NCAA Football Organization was not a significant predictor in period three for the NFL group's non-regret / regret over the decision to view / not view the CFP Championship Game. This is consistent with the make-up of the group, as the members of this group indicated they were fans of NFL Football, but not necessarily fans of NCAA College Football. Control variables *Gender* and *Education* were also significant predictors of recommendation to view the Super Bowl.

Discussion

The inaugural playing (and airing) of the CFP presented an opportunity for research into the consumer perspective on college athletics directly from the sports consumers' perception, as well as the effect that a media build-up has on those consumer perceptions. Research from economic and legal perspectives indicated reasons to believe that policies and strategies which are justified as protecting competitive balance and betterment of NCAA member universities could be perceived as greedy and even corrupt (Benford, 2007). On the other hand, there is evidence from previous research that indicates sport fans may not be as affected by commercialism (Eddy, 2014; Rubel, 1995) as academic theorists have indicated. For this reason perceptions were measured for feelings about both the sport as well as the NCAA organization.

The findings presented in the previous section point researchers in some very interesting directions for practice as well as theory. Pragmatically, producers and marketers of sport--particularly amateur sport--can manage perceptions of greed, and possibly other potentially negative perceptions, by maintaining focus on what Real and Mechikoff (1992) described as the symbolic or expressive aspects of the sport. While the current study uses the NCAA as context for the focus of the potentially negative perception, there is enough evidence to support the possibility that this finding could be applied to other organizations such as universities or athletic conferences and to other potentially negative perceptions.

Theoretically the findings indicate that how consumers perceive sports, in particular amateur sports, may not be the way economic theory or legal findings would suggest. It behooves us as researchers to pay close attention to direct consumer perception when we apply economic theory or legal rulings to an issue. Subjectivity of perception is a powerful dimension of sport fandom that encompasses emotion, self-identity, and other human traits that may go against what we could assume a particular theory might indicate. In the present study the context

used involved the CFP and the NCAA. Consumers appear to be so interested in the sport and tournament that even though we have decades of economics-based studies that tell us the organization that runs it is susceptible to perceptions of greed, the present research did not find evidence of perceived greediness having an impact on the decision to recommend the CFP, or regret over the decision to view or not view the championship game. More research is necessary to better understand why the measurements related to the organization did not influence consumers' perception of consuming the tournament, but those related to the sport and tournament itself were significant predictors of the viewing of the tournament.

While the absence of evidence that perceptions of greed affect consumer intentions or behavior is the main focus of the findings, the discussion of media coverage and framing is included as partial understanding of how perceptions may have changed over time. Meaningfulness of the CFP increased, as hypothesized. This is not surprising because promotion of the event framed consumers' attention on the event itself. Furthermore, a common theme in the advertising revolved around creating history; for example, the song "Centuries" by Fall Out Boy was the audio track for official promotions of the tournament (Bazan, 2014) featuring lyrics such as "Some legends are told / Some turn to dust or to gold / But you will remember me, remember me for centuries." This is consistent with Murray and Murray (1996) who indicated that a high percentage (82%) of U.S. television commercials using music feature lyrics affiliated with functional consequences of what is being advertised. The promotional messages related to the use of the Fall Out Boy song emphasized tradition and making history by being the first Division I Football Bowl Subdivision four-team playoff tournament, consistent with an increase in the meaningfulness of the tournament. According to a recent issue of *Journal of Advertising Research*, which examined the campaign undertaken by ESPN for the 2015 CFP, research conducted for ESPN and not affiliated with the present article revealed that "fans were eager to witness an historic moment in sports history" ("Masters Of Insight," 2015, p. 343).

Of particular interest in the findings is the lack of statistical significance for consumer perception of greed when answering questions about the NCAA, especially as it relates to attitudes toward viewership of the championship tournament. This indicates that whether or not consumers consider the NCAA greedy, no evidence was found to indicate that it has any effect on consuming the sport, as will be discussed below in further detail.

With regard to the perception over time, one possible reason that measures of perceived greediness did not have statistically significant increases is the timing of the data collection periods. Data was collected for period 1 during a time when there was a great deal of press coverage regarding the court case involving former collegiate player Ed O'Bannon. This case involved the NCAA's practice of earning revenue from the names and likenesses of collegiate players in television broadcasts and video games (Strauss & Tracy, 2014). The case was decided during August 2014 in favor of O'Bannon, ruling that the NCAA would have to pay athletes for such activities. The press coverage surrounding the case was prominent leading up to and following the August 2014 decision. Panel members may have associated the revenue earned from the use of amateurs as greedy, possibly elevating measures of perceived greediness during periods 1 and 2. Although this explanation could not have been accounted for or tested as part of the research design, there is support from previous research. The explanation is consistent with the findings by Lewis and Proffitt (2013) included in the literature review that the focus of media attention related to labor disputes of professional athletes takes a consumer perspective as opposed to that of the relationship between organization and athlete. By the time period 3 data was gathered the focus of media attention changed from the court case and the question of

collegiate athletes being paid to the championship tournament, which emphasized the sport's tradition and the history-making appeal of the tournament and not the NCAA as an organization.

While some of the explanation for the changes in perceptions may reside in the novelty of the inaugural playing of the four-team playoff, one interpretation indicates that the media build-up to the championship tournament was effectively focused, reducing attention on greed and re-focusing it to the sport itself and the tournament. This is supported by the success of the ESPN campaign, which reversed a trend of *decreased* viewership between regular season and post-season for each of the previous three years (average decline of 2.4% per year) to an *increase* in viewership between regular season and post-season of 4.8% during the year of the inaugural tournament. According to the profile in *Journal of Advertising Research*, "25% of the average intent to tune in to one of the 'New Year's Six' CFP games could be attributed to ESPN's promotional media effects" ("Masters Of Insight," 2015, p. 346)

Taking the results of the multiple regression analysis in concert with the results of the difference testing, an interesting perspective emerges that is supported by related research. Prior to the championship tournament, *Commitment* to fandom and *Meaningfulness* related to the sport itself, along with *Affinity* for the NCAA as an organization were significant predictors of intention to recommend. For both of these periods the coefficients for *Affinity* (for the NCAA) were lower than those related to the sport itself; after the tournament, only perceptions related directly to the sport were meaningful, indicating that sports consumers are more focused on the sport and the teams involved than on the NCAA. Furthermore, the trend of *Meaningfulness* throughout the study increased in importance as a variable that predicts *Intention to Recommend* and *Non-regret / Regret* of the decision to view.

One interpretation of these findings is that consumer perceptions are increasingly positive over the time of the study, and the focus is on the sport itself and the teams involved, especially the championship tournament, and not the NCAA. This is consistent with findings by Trail, Anderson, and Fink (2005) who concluded that self-identification leads to self-esteem as one of the strong contributors to conative loyalty. The focus of college football fans is on one's self-identity with the team and/or university, not the organizational structure of the league or division in which the team plays. The importance of a fan's identity with a favorite team is consistent with findings by Norris, Wann, and Zapalac (2015) who indicated that identity is stronger in fans when they believe their team is likely to have a poorly performing season. More importantly, on a broader level, spectator sports consumers' interest in the sport and teams seems to be enough to counteract and overcome perceptions of greediness of the organization that produces the sport. According to the present research, this is the case even when the organization represents amateurs and maintains stated objectives--including athleticism and academics--and when it represents the unstated objectives of revenue and profitability.

Similarly, the focus of fan attention on the tournament and teams is consistent with two related findings in studies using college football consumers. Trail, Robinson, Dick, and Gillentine (2003) differentiated between fans and spectators by noting that fans hold attachments to team tradition and universities whereas spectators hold attachments to aesthetics of the game and athleticism. Based on this distinction, Robinson, Trail, Dick, and Gillentine (2005) determined that Division I football consumers exhibited traits of fans as opposed to consumers. Of interest about the fan attention is its consistency with the promotion and advertising that surrounded the media coverage leading up to the tournament. Relating this to the post-hoc analysis that found selection bias in the regret/non-regret measurement with regard to the previous period's viewing intention, there is reason to believe that the build-up of media

coverage takes effect early in the season. In other words, by detecting selection bias in the multiple regression equation for regret/non-regret during period 3 (post-test) that is related to intention to view during period 2 (pre-test), it is apparent that the post-championship perceptions of viewers' evaluation of their decision to watch or not watch the game were already present during the season before the selection of teams in the tournament were even announced.

The indication from both a practical and theoretical perspective is that the consumer perception of amateur sports is driven by more than economic theory. Producers of organized sports can delve deeper into the affect-related benefits of consuming sport to manage the relationship which develops between institution and consumer. This perspective may minimize the consequence of potentially negative perceptions while revealing opportunities to maximize potentially positive perceptions.

Limitations and Future Research

As in all studies, there are unavoidable limitations that must be acknowledged, some of which can be addressed in future studies and some of which are inherent in certain types of studies. One inherent limitation is the nature of using panels for longitudinal studies, particularly attrition rates. During period 1 there were a total of 291 participants. During period 2 there were 285 participants, and during period 3 there were 221 participants. Although these are sufficient numbers for the statistical tests performed the possibility exists that those survey-takers who dropped out of the study reflect a particular personality type that may have affected the results in a meaningful manner (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

Research findings of consumer perceptions that appear to oppose what one would expect from previously published research, particularly research rooted in studies not involving data gathered directly from consumers, is of interest for further investigation. This appears to be the case for the present study, particularly the lack of evidence that perceptions of greed had any effect surrounding the well-publicized College Football Playoff. This is especially surprising considering the attention paid to the conflict between amateur athletics and the generation of revenue. Therefore, a future avenue of research is a qualitative study that examines those perceptions of greed. One area of particular interest is whether greed of an organization is perceived as being unimportant to the assessment of the sport itself, or if those perceptions are rooted elsewhere, such as in the media outlets through which the games are aired.

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Table 1

Number of Panel Members and Responses by Period, Group, Gender

Panel Membership	Male	Female	Not Reported	Total
NFL Group	98	32	5	135
NCB Group	100	30	4	134
MLB Group	103	23	7	133
Total	301	85	16	402
	75%	21%	4%	

Period 1	Male	Female	Not Reported	Total
NFL Group	84	24	2	110
NCB Group	72	19	1	92
MLB Group	75	12	2	89
Total	231	55	5	291
	79%	19%	2%	

Period 2	Male	Female	Not Reported	Total
NFL Group	74	28	3	105
NCB Group	68	21	0	89
MLB Group	71	16	4	91
Total	213	65	7	285
	75%	23%	2%	

Period 3	Male	Female	Not Reported	Total
NFL Group	53	16	3	72
NCB Group	53	17	1	71
MLB Group	61	15	2	78
Total	167	48	6	221
	76%	22%	3%	

Table 2

Confirmatory Factor Analysis by Period

Period 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis					Chronbach's Alpha
80.5% Variance Explained					
	Meaningful	Affinity	Commitment	Greed	
CFM03	.898	.085	.258	.070	
CFM07	.888	.139	.256	.029	
CFM01	.859	.060	.301	.013	
CFM08	.840	.108	.338	.041	
CFM05	.826	.122	.148	-.004	
CFM06	.794	.063	.467	.007	
CFM02	.763	.033	.465	.027	.962
CFA05	.060	.910	.060	-.168	
CFA02	-.002	.898	.093	-.117	
CFA04	.074	.897	.093	-.211	
CFA01	.011	.882	.179	-.215	
CFA03	.163	.869	-.011	-.114	
CFA06	.217	.838	-.001	-.136	.954
CFC02	.399	.066	.864	.023	
CFC01	.374	.087	.858	.059	
CFC05	.405	.071	.845	-.048	
CFC03	.398	.067	.831	.018	
CFC04	.183	.076	.737	-.074	.945
CFG01	-.002	-.258	.023	.758	
CFG02	.183	-.182	-.059	.758	
CFG03	-.092	-.450	.024	.648	.685

Period 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis					Chronbach's Alpha
82.8% Variance Explained					
	Factor				
	Meaningful	Affinity	Commitment	Greed	
CFM07	.886	.131	.345	-.002	
CFM01	.885	.119	.331	-.029	
CFM03	.878	.110	.369	-.020	
CFM05	.853	.204	.244	.001	
CFM08	.851	.122	.378	-.042	
CFM06	.742	.078	.540	.006	
CFM02	.692	.109	.538	.069	.973
CFA01	.057	.885	.123	-.206	
CFA02	.051	.883	.128	-.213	
CFA04	.048	.877	.136	-.265	
CFA05	-.003	.877	.180	-.232	
CFA06	.261	.841	.050	-.043	
CFA03	.309	.822	.051	.023	.950
CFC01	.375	.086	.878	-.003	
CFC02	.392	.131	.873	-.046	
CFC05	.429	.104	.854	-.034	
CFC03	.417	.105	.838	.021	
CFC04	.315	.147	.638	-.098	.954
CFG02	.138	-.207	-.126	.831	
CFG01	-.118	-.425	.037	.702	
CFG03	-.110	-.557	.066	.590	.750

Period 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis					
84.0% Variance Explained					
	Factor				Chronbach's
	Meaningful	Affinity	Commitment	Greed	Alpha
CFM07	.888	.178	.308	-.002	
CFM01	.888	.136	.359	-.046	
CFM08	.861	.172	.371	-.048	
CFM05	.859	.223	.318	-.006	
CFM03	.849	.191	.364	-.012	
CFM02	.664	.232	.577	.054	
CFM06	.664	.243	.586	.069	.975
CFA06	.192	.890	.110	.009	
CFA04	.190	.890	.170	-.190	
CFA03	.196	.870	.141	.088	
CFA02	.131	.854	.168	-.279	
CFA05	.172	.841	.130	-.327	
CFA01	.158	.829	.199	-.331	.959
CFC02	.342	.175	.887	-.066	
CFC05	.348	.158	.873	-.077	
CFC01	.379	.181	.868	-.077	
CFC03	.416	.184	.835	-.025	
CFC04	.307	.109	.599	-.040	.949
CFG02	.012	-.302	-.040	.825	
CFG01	.025	-.412	-.050	.755	
CFG03	.114	-.695	-.134	.311	.761

Table 3

Mean Difference Test by Period

Period Change:	Period 1	Period 2	Var. from		Period 3	Var. from		Var. from	
			Period 1	<i>p</i>		Period 2	<i>p</i>	Period 1	<i>p</i>
Commitment to Fandom	3.6	3.59	-0.28%	.915	3.62	0.84%	.725	0.56%	.801
Meaningfulness	3.99	4.12	3.26%	.449	4.31	4.61%	.096	8.02%	.018
Affinity	3.17	3.22	1.58%	.634	3.26	1.24%	.582	2.84%	.320
Greed	3.79	3.93	3.69%	.829	3.91	-0.51%	.321	3.17%	.137

NOTE: All Measures on a scale of 1 to 6

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis Results by Period

Period #1 - Dependent Variable "Intention to Recommend Viewing of NCAA College Football Tournament"			
<i>Dependent Variable Mean 4.01; SD 1.23</i>			
Independent Variable	Standardized Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
Affinity (for NCAA Org.)	.121	.041	<i>p</i> < .01
Commitment (to Fandom)	.392	.045	<i>p</i> < .01
Meaningfulness (of Tournament)	.440	.044	<i>p</i> < .01
Age	-.086	.017	<i>p</i> = 0.034
<i>Greed (of NCAA Org.)</i>	.007	.061	.888
<i>Sport Fan Group</i>	-.001	.060	.979
<i>Gender</i>	.033	.129	.441
<i>Education</i>	.039	.040	.347
N = 291			
Model Sig: <.001			
R ² = .64			

Period #2 - Dependent Variable "Intention to Recommend Viewing of NCAA College Football Tournament"			
<i>Dependent Variable Mean 3.96; SD 1.29</i>			
Independent Variable	Standardized Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
Affinity (for NCAA Org.)	.124	.045	<i>p</i> < .01
Commitment (to Fandom)	.290	.048	<i>p</i> < .01
Meaningfulness (of Tournament)	.514	.048	<i>p</i> < .01
Age	-.105	.017	<i>p</i> = .01
<i>Greed (of NCAA Org.)</i>	.021	.066	.692
<i>Sport Fan Group</i>	.070	.059	.087
<i>Gender</i>	.073	.122	.094
<i>Education</i>	.028	.038	.495
N = 285			
Model Sig: <.001			
R ² = .64			

Period #3 - Dependent Variable Non-regret / Regret Decision to View NCAA College Football Championship Game			
<i>Dependent Variable Mean 4.24; SD 1.67</i>			
Independent Variable	Standardized Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
Commitment (to Fandom)	.278	.085	<i>p</i> < .01
Meaningfulness (of Tournament)	.517	.087	<i>p</i> < .01
<i>Affinity (for NCAA Org.)</i>	.013	.102	.852
<i>Greed (of NCAA Org.)</i>	-.055	.092	.395
<i>Sport Fan Group</i>	-.044	.101	.411
<i>Age</i>	.093	.029	.084
<i>Gender</i>	-.082	.227	.183
<i>Education</i>	-.085	.067	.113
N = 221			
Model Sig: <.001			
R ² = .57			

NOTE: Statistics related to the overall model and the statistically significant variables reflect the variate containing only significant independent variables; statistics related to the non-significant independent variables reflect descriptive information when all variables are included in the multiple regression analysis.

Table 5

Logistic Regression of Watched / Did Not Watch

Classification Table				
		Predicted		
Observed		No	Yes	% Correct
Step 1	No	23	19	54.8
	Yes	7	127	94.8
Overall Percentage				85.2

Independent Variable	Exp(B)	Std. Error	Wald	Sig.
Meaningfulness (of Tournament)	3.816	.218	37.658	<i>p</i> < .01
Education	.668	.183	4.856	<i>p</i> = .028
<i>Commitment (to Fandom)</i>	<i>1.45</i>	<i>.286</i>	<i>1.686</i>	<i>.194</i>
<i>Affinity (for NCAA Org.)</i>	<i>0.865</i>	<i>.322</i>	<i>0.205</i>	<i>.651</i>
<i>Greed (of NCAA Org.)</i>	<i>1.086</i>	<i>.276</i>	<i>0.089</i>	<i>.765</i>
<i>Sport Fan Group</i>	<i>0.907</i>	<i>.295</i>	<i>0.109</i>	<i>.742</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>1.104</i>	<i>.083</i>	<i>1.405</i>	<i>.236</i>
<i>Gender</i>	<i>0.436</i>	<i>.598</i>	<i>1.93</i>	<i>.165</i>
Hosmer & Lemeshow Significance Test	0.141			
Cox & Snell R ²	0.311			
Nagelkerke R ²	0.466			

NOTE: Statistics related to the overall model and the statistically significant variables reflect the variate containing only significant independent variables; the statistics related to the non-significant independent variables reflect descriptive information when all variables are included in the binary logistic regression analysis.

Table 6

Multiple Regression "Watched" and "Not Watched" Period 3

"WATCHED" Group; Dependent Variable: Regret / Non-Regret Viewing of NCAA College Football Tournament			
<i>Dependent Variable Mean 5.09; SD .75</i>			
Independent Variable	Standardized Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
Commitment (to Fandom)	.269	.053	p < .01
Meaningfulness (of Tournament)	.408	.067	p < .01
<i>Affinity (for NCAA Org.)</i>	.097	.061	.302
<i>Greed (of NCAA Org.)</i>	-.103	.058	.255
<i>Sport Fan Group</i>	-.003	.065	.971
<i>Age</i>	.060	.018	.424
<i>Gender</i>	-.091	.155	.269
<i>Education</i>	.119	.044	.112
N = 162			
Model Sig: <.001			
R ² = .39			

"DID NOT WATCH" Group; Dependent Variable: Regret / Non-Regret Viewing of NCAA College Football Tournament			
<i>Dependent Variable Mean 1.9; SD 1.1</i>			
Independent Variable	Standardized Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
Commitment (to Fandom)	.610	.094	p < .01
<i>Meaningfulness (of Tournament)</i>	-.237	.168	.295
<i>Affinity (for NCAA Org.)</i>	.207	.177	.275
<i>Greed (of NCAA Org.)</i>	-.039	.131	.785
<i>Sport Fan Group</i>	-.455	.147	.652
<i>Age</i>	.042	.051	.725
<i>Gender</i>	.029	.294	.842
<i>Education</i>	-.031	.096	.808
N = 59			
Model Sig: <.001			
R ² = .37			

NOTE: Statistics related to the overall model and the statistically significant variables reflect the variate containing only significant independent variables; statistics related to the non-significant independent variables reflect descriptive information when all variables are included in the multiple regression analysis.

Table 7

NFL Group Period 3 Perceptions of NFL Football

Dependent Variable: Likelihood to Recommend Viewing the Super Bowl			
<i>Dependent Variable Mean 4.83; SD 0.99</i>			
Independent Variable	Standardized Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig.
Affinity (for NFL Org.)	.166	.070	<i>p</i> = .02
Commitment (to Fandom)	.422	.119	<i>p</i> < .01
Meaningfulness (of Super Bowl)	.334	.130	<i>p</i> = .01
Gender	.702	.193	<i>p</i> < .01
Education	.145	.069	<i>p</i> = .04
<i>Greed (of NCAA Org.)</i>	-.057	.097	.571
<i>Age</i>	-.025	.031	.771
N = 72			
Model Sig: <.001			
R ² = .64			

NOTE: Statistics related to the overall model and the statistically significant variables reflect the variate containing only significant independent variables; statistics related to the non-significant independent variables reflect descriptive information when all variables are included in the multiple regression analysis.