Assessing the Effect of Family Structure on Perceptions of Fan-Family Conflict

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Abstract

Fan-family conflict refers to the difficulty experienced fulfilling family role demands as a result of fan role participation. Prior research suggests team identification leads to higher fan-family conflict as a result of the resources devoted to one's fan role (i.e. time, money, energy), strain associated with maintaining a positive social identity, and incompatible behaviors commonly liked to fan role engagement (Simmons & Greenwell, 2014). The current study sought to understand how family role demands impact perceptions of fan-family conflict, specifically, how perceptions of fan-family conflict vary based on family structure. Results of this study challenge our understanding of this effect, showing perceptions of fan-family conflict are highest among single, childless fans. Data presented on several fan and family related variables (time devoted to the fan role, team identification, family involvement, and family role support) aid in explaining this phenomenon.

Introduction

On the surface, the role of a sport fan is not overly complex. Fans watch their favorite teams and athletes play, adorn themselves in team-related paraphernalia, read news about their team online, and occasionally engage in a bit of trash talk. We know, however, through prior conceptualizations of the sport fan role offered by Gibson, Willming, and Holdnak (2002) and Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw (1999), that sport fandom involves much more than consumption and banter between fans. The sport fan role can be resource intensive, requiring commitments of time, energy, and money over long periods. Sport fans persevere through challenges, such as losing seasons, which can threaten their role identity as a fan. Some fans, characterized by Hunt et al. as dysfunctional fans, engage in disruptive or deviant fan role behaviors unsuitable for the family role. When viewed through this lens, the potential exists for inter-role conflict between the sport fan role and other roles within an individual's role set (Goode, 1960), namely family.

Consider, for example, a die-hard college football fan faced with the choice of watching her son's soccer game, or watching her favorite team play its conference rival. Or the fan who slips into a funk after a tough loss, leading to disengagement with those around him. Or even a dysfunctional fan who shouts vulgarities at the television during the game and throws the remote control into the couch while watching the game with his spouse and children. These examples speak to the finite nature of resources such as time and money associated with sport fandom, the potential for strain from the fan role to spill over into the family role, and incompatible behaviors that, at times, may exist between one's fan and family roles.

Fan-family conflict (FFC) has been defined as "the extent to which engagement in the sport fan role interferes with one's ability to fully function in the family role" (Simmons & Greenwell, 2014,

p. 95). Scholars have reported evidence of fan-family conflict in prior work (Gantz, Wenner, Carrico, & Knorr, 1995; 1995b; Simmons & Greenwell, 2014; Smith, Patterson, Williams, & Hogg, 1981; Vallerand et al., 2008). Specifically, factors such as fan role time demands and role identification have been identified as contributors to conflict. Less is known, however, about how family role demands influence fan-family conflict. An effect of family structure on inter-role conflict has been detected in studies within work-family conflict (e.g. Boyar, Maertz, Mosley, & Carr, 2008; Cooke & Rousseau, 1984), and various leisure-family conflict contexts (e.g. Ruseki, Humphreys, Hallman, & Bruer, 2011; Simmons, Mahoney, & Hambrick, 2016); however, our understanding of inter-role conflict between sport fan and family roles is limited.

The relationship between family structure and fan-family conflict is relevant for both sport properties and families. As noted by Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2014), changes in one's family structure may bring about changes in values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Not surprisingly, family structure is often considered in marketing research to aid in explaining consumptive behaviors and decision-making processes of families (Putler, Li, & Liu, 2007; Wagner & Hanna, 1983). Sport organizations would benefit from understanding challenges their fans face when making consumptive decisions, and how their consumption levels change with changes in family structure. For families, recognizing areas where inter-role conflict may arise, and more specifically, how perceptions of inter-role conflict evolve with marriage/partnership and children may help to mitigate some of the unfavorable outcomes (e.g. decreased role satisfaction, role strain) typically associated with inter-role conflict (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). Therefore, the aim of the current study is to build on the findings presented by Simmons and Greenwell (2014) to better understand the effect of family role demands on perceptions of fan-family conflict.

Inter-role Conflict

Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of the sport fan role is important prior to conceptualizing inter-role conflict, and by extension, fan-family conflict. A role may be thought of as a set of activities and behaviors within a given context (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). In that sense, watching games, cheering on one's team, participating on team message boards, wearing team merchandise, playing fantasy sports, and trash talking fans of the opposing team, would be examples of activities and behaviors commonly associated with the sport fan role. Roles, or more specifically, role identities, such as that of a sports fan, provide individuals with a sense of meaning and self-definition (Burke, 1980; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Thoits, 1991). The more important one's role identity is to his/her overall self-concept, the more an individual will exhibit behaviors normative of that role (Hogg et al., 1995; Thoits, 1991). It would be expected then that highly identified sport fans will conform to fan role behaviors to a greater extent than lesser-identified individuals.

Our role behaviors and obligations do not exist in a vacuum, however. Each role identity consists of behaviors and demands that may either conflict with or compliment behaviors and demands of alternative roles (e.g. family member, volunteer, hobbyist, student). Inter-role conflict is a product of incompatible role pressures stemming from participation in two or more roles (Greenhaus & Beutall, 1985; Kahn et al., 1964). Consequently, individuals experience role strain as they attempt to juggle the demands of their various role sets. Goode (1960) contended role strain is a product of over-demanding role obligations resulting in conflict or lack of clarity with respect to resource allocation decisions.

Inter-role conflict may be experienced in a number of forms (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Simmons & Greenwell, 2014). Time-based conflict occurs when the time demands of one role interfere with one's ability to satisfy the time demands of another role. In this sense, time is a finite resource that cannot be simultaneously distributed to multiple roles. Strain-based conflict references the tendency for strain or stress from one role to spillover, negatively affecting compliance with demands of alternative roles. The third type of inter-role conflict, behavior-based, can occur when the behavioral expectations of two or more roles do not align. Using the fan and family roles as examples, deviant fan role behaviors such as excessive drinking, vulgar language directed at players; game officials; or other fans, or aggressive/violent behaviors, typically do not conform to behavioral expectations associated with one's family role. Finally, economic-based conflict speaks to the finite nature of money as it relates to allocation towards satisfying multiple role demands.

Academicians have studied inter-role conflict extensively, with much of that focus highlighting the challenges associated with balancing demands of work and family roles (e.g. Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Hargis, Kotrba, Zhdanova, Baltes, 2011). Less focus has been devoted to life domains outside of work, and their effects on perceptions of conflict and associated outcomes (e.g. quality of life, role satisfaction). Non-work, or personal, roles; such as leisure, volunteer, community member, or friend; carry unique characteristics that lend themselves to a distinct line of inquiry. Specifically, as proposed by Wilson and Baumann (2015), consequences for failure to fulfill personal role obligations are not likely to be as severe as those stemming from required roles such as work or family. Thus, individuals have more control over how they choose to allocate resources in personal roles. Further, results from the Wilson and Baumann study suggested personal role conflict with work and family accounts for additional variance in home and health-related outcomes beyond traditional work-family conflict measures, speaking to the importance of expanding our understanding of inter-role conflict outside of the work-family dichotomy.

Inter-role Conflict and Serious Leisure

Serious leisure is one such personal role domain where a climate for inter-role conflict exists. As noted by Stebbins (1982), serious leisure participants, as opposed to casual leisure, exhibit perseverance through strains such as fatigue, injury, and anxiety. Serious leisure was also characterized by longevity of commitment to participation and significant personal effort. Further, serious leisure participants adopt beliefs, values, and norms common to others in that same social category. These distinguishing characteristics are important to our understanding of leisure-related inter-role conflict because they speak to the resources (e.g. time and financial), strain, and behavioral expectations surrounding leisure role participation.

Serious leisure role participation is also closely tied to one's role identity (Stebbins, 1982). To that point, Gillespie, Leffler, and Lerner (2002) noted, "passionate avocation indeed shapes identity beyond and sometimes in conflict with identities derived from work, family, religion and so forth" (p. 286). Such conflict with family was evident in the authors' interviews with dog sport enthusiasts. Several respondents admitted to having lied to family members about the time devoted to their dogs to avoid conflict. Some expressed disagreements over the amount of money spent on their dogs, while for some, the dog enthusiast role was a source of friction between family members resulting in failed relationships or significant modifications to their own lifestyles to carve out time for their leisure pursuit (Gillespie et al., 2002). These examples align with Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) time-based and strain-based inter-role conflict typologies.

Others have also examined inter-role conflict between leisure and family roles. Stalp and colleagues (Stalp 2007; Stalp & Conti, 2011), for example, found professional quilters struggled creating time and space provisions for their leisure pursuits. Interviewees reported strain over the amount of money spent on quilting materials and supplies, feeling the need to defend their purchases to family members, and in some cases hiding fabric stashes from family (Stalp, 2007). Hambrick, Simmons, and Mahoney (2013) interviewed female Ironman participants to ascertain how they balanced the demands of leisure, work, and family roles. Financial commitments, time restraints, and gender stereotypes regarding the females' role in the home, were key antecedents identified by the authors contributing to perceptions of conflict. Marathon participants in the Goodsell and Harris (2011) study spoke of strain in terms of finding the energy to satisfy demands of both running and family.

To be sure, dog sports, quilting, and marathon/Ironman participation are leisure activities in which the participant is directly involved with the product of they produce. The current study focuses on inter-role conflict between the family and sport fan role, a leisure role in which participants are highly involved in the production of the leisure activity (i.e. fan role engagement), but do directly not produce the sport/event/product in the same way as quilters or endurance athletes. That said, results from all three of these studies align with Goode's (1960) contention regarding over-demanding role obligations. Herman and Gyllstrom (1977) noted, "inter-role conflict is primarily a function of the number of social roles held" (p. 331). As the number of roles in an individual's role set increases, the difficulty experienced when attempting to balance the obligations associated with those roles will also increase.

Fan-Family Conflict

The sport fan role may also be thought of as a serious leisure, particularly for highly identified fans. Gibson et al. (2002) argued fans "with high levels of commitment and team identification" (p. 398) satisfy Stebbins' (1982) classification of serious leisure participants, noting such sport fans: a) persevere through ups and downs of team successes and failures; b) remain committed over a long period of time, with the intensity of commitment strengthening over time; c) exert significant personal effort following their team, as demonstrated through attendance, travel, acquisition of knowledge, and game day routines; d) perceive benefits associated with being a fan, most notably bonding with friends and family over sport, and the sense of vicarious achievement experienced when the team wins; e) exist within a unique social world consisting of clubs, online communities, rituals, and game day behaviors; and f) come to define themselves, in part, by their sport fan role. Gibson et al. (2002) offered an in-depth look into the unique social world of sport fandom, including the resources necessary (e.g. time, money, effort) to follow one's team; however, the study stopped short of assessing the impact of the sport fan's commitment, exertion of effort, perseverance, and identity on other relationships, such as family.

A handful of scholars have examined the impact of the fan role on familial relationships and family-role demands. Smith et al. (1981) interviewed 52 "deeply committed sport fans" (p. 30) in an effort to understand their sport fan role involvement. More than a quarter of respondents indicated their sport consumption was a "source of friction with other family members" (p. 38). The most commonly cited negative aspect of their sport fan role was the time commitment necessary to follow sport. Respondents indicated feelings of guilt over spending time on sport, in lieu of competing role demands such as work or family, suggesting personal strain may be a consequence of time-based inter-role conflict between the sport fan and family roles.

Gantz and colleagues assessed the effect of televised sport consumption on relationships, finding for the most part, watching sport on television was not a source of conflict between spouses/partners (Gantz et al., 1995a; 1995b). That said, 21.9% of the 192 females interviewed reported having resented their spouse for watching sports on TV, while 34.0% of 197 males felt as though their spouse had resented them for watching sports. Further 8.7% of the total population interviewed indicated televised sport plays a negative role in their relationship, suggesting the potential for conflict between sport fan and family roles does exist (Gantz et al., 1995a). A similar ratio was reported in the Gantz et al. (1995b) query. Perhaps more importantly, such instances of fan-family conflict appear to have consequences in the family role. Respondents indicating conflict and resentment over the role televised sport plays in their relationships scored significantly lower on a spousal relationship evaluation measure than those who did not indicate conflict (Gantz et al., 1995a; 1995b).

Prior research has also demonstrated a link between fan role passion/identification and inter-role conflict between fan and family roles. Path analysis results from Vallerand et al. (2008) suggested obsessive passion for a team predicts relationship conflict with one's partner. Such conflict, in turn, was significantly inversely related to relationship satisfaction. More recently, Simmons and Greenwell (2014) assessed time-based, strain-based, behavior-based, and economic-based inter-role conflict between sport fan and family roles as product of one's team identification. Results indicated perceptions of conflict were relatively low overall; however, significant differences were detected between highly identified and lesser-identified sport fans in terms of both time- and strain-based FFC, when controlling for family involvement. The authors noted more than a quarter of the study's participants reported moderate to high levels of time-, strain-, and behavior-based fan-family conflict and 20% experienced moderate to high levels of economic-based fan-family conflict. This is a significant finding suggesting (a) some people struggle balancing the demands of the sport fan and family roles, and (b) further inquiry is need to identify factors influencing these perceptions in addition to role identification and role time demands.

The Effect of Family Structure

Family structure, or more specifically, marital status and the presence of children living at home, is an important factor to consider within any inter-role conflict framework as family is a strong reference group influencing consumption and resource allocation decisions (Bauer & Auer-Srnka, 2012; Shank & Lyberger, 2015). The more involved an individual is with their family role, the more resources they will devote to fulfilling family role demands (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999). Thus, as family role demands increase, as a result of marriage or children in the home, from a finite resource perspective, fewer resources are available for competing role demands. Indeed, prior research shows marriage and the presence of children in the home have a curtailing effect on the amount of time available for personal leisure activities (Herman & Gyllstrom, 1977; Nomaguchi & Bianchi, 2004; Ruseki et al., 2011; Such, 2006).

As alluded to above, the simultaneous pull for resources; such as time, energy, and money, has the potential to create inter-role conflict. This is particularly true among highly salient roles (Frone & Rice, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Married/Partnered individuals and individuals with children living at home typically have greater demands placed on their family role (Boyar et al., 2008), which in turn has been shown to intensify perceptions of inter-role conflict (Blanchard-Fields, Chen, & Hebert, 1997; Grzywacz, Almeida, & McDonald, 2002; Herman & Gyllstrom, 1977). This relationship extends to inter-role conflict between family and leisure roles.

For example, fathers in the Simmons et al. (2016) study examining inter-role conflict among Ironman participants experienced more difficulty than non-fathers juggling the demands of work, family, and Ironman. Those with kids spoke of rigid negotiation strategies necessary to train for Ironman, such as focusing on intensity as opposed to duration of one's workout or waking up early to work out before the kids are awake, so as to minimize the effect of training on competing role demands. Similarly, Goodsell and Harris (2011) noted marathon participants who were parents struggled with exhaustion from childcare, which in turn sapped motivations to run. Results from the Crawford and Huston (1993) study contradicted those reported above regarding leisure time differences between parents and non-parents (no significant differences were found); however, differences were detected in conflict-of-interest leisure participation among parents. While the majority of leisure time among couples was spent in mutually preferred leisure activities, new parents spent more time in leisure activities the wives liked and the husbands disliked compared to childless couples.

These findings suggest family structure plays a critical role in understanding perceptions of inter-role conflict between family and leisure-related roles. Marriage and children in the home impact not only the amount of time and energy available for leisure, but also the activities in which one engages. These are important findings as inter-role conflict has been linked to a variety of detrimental consequences such as diminished role performance, role satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction, as well as role strain/stress and exhaustion (Allen et al., 2000; Carlson & Perrewe, 1999; Bruening & Dixon, 2007; Gantz et al., 1995b). To date however, limited research has been conducted examining how family structure impacts perceptions of fan-family conflict. Given the nature of the sport fan role as characterized by Gibson et al. (2002), and the findings reported by Simmons and Greenwell (2014), Gantz et al. (1995a; 1995b), Smith et al. (1981), and Vallerand et al. (2008) suggesting the fan role can, at times, interfere with family role demands, further research is warranted investigating the nature of, and antecedents influencing fan-family conflict.

Deeper insight into this construct has significance in both theoretical and practical settings. As noted above, research investigating the effect of one's sport fan role on his/her family role is scant. Building on the work of Simmons and Greenwell (2014), this exploratory study extends the inter-role conflict framework into a specific serious leisure role to better guide our understanding of what inter-role conflict is, and within which contexts it might exist. On the practical side, understanding how perceptions of fan-family conflict differ based on family structure will help families better prepare for how their fan and family roles might be affected as family structure changes occur. Sport marketers benefit by gaining additional insight into the challenges fans face when making consumption decisions, and how one's identity as a fan, and associated role demands, interact with competing roles within their consumers' role set. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how perceptions of fan-family conflict differ based on family structure (married/unmarried, Children at home/No Children at home). Two research questions were developed to guide this study's purpose:

> RQ1: What is the difference in fan-family conflict (time-based, strain-based, behavior-based, economic-based) based on family structure?

> RQ2: What is the difference between team- and family-related factors (team identification, weekly hours spent following team, annual money spent on team, family involvement, family support for sport fan role) based on family structure?

Method

Data Collection

Participants in this study were fans in attendance at an NCAA Division 1 FBS college football game. Questionnaires were distributed to fans in their seats beginning 60 minutes prior to kickoff through the start of the game. The researchers employed stratified random sampling in effort to gather data generalizable to the larger population. Seating sections within each ticketing price point were randomly selected for inclusion in the study. As this study concerns inter-role conflict between sport fan and family roles, a concerted effort was made to target spectators appearing to be 25 years of age or older to elicit responses from individuals with families, as opposed to students in attendance. In total, 571 surveys were distributed, 440 of which were deemed usable for this study (77% usable response rate).

Instrument

The questionnaire contained 29 items assessing (1) perceptions of time-based, strain-based, behavior-based, and economic-based fan-family conflict; (2) involvement within the family role; (3) family support for the sport fan role; and (4) identification with the home football team. All items were measured on a 7-point likert scale with anchors of 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree). An additional eight items were included to collect demographic and consumptive information. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate the number of hours spent per week watching/reading about the team at the data collection site, as well as the amount of money spent on team-related consumption on an annual basis. The former was an open-ended response format, whereas the latter was categorical.

Fan-Family Conflict

Perceptions of inter-role conflict between sport fan and family roles were gauged using the fan-family conflict measure employed by Simmons and Greenwell (2014), which was shown to be a valid and reliable measure of the construct. The scale was adapted from Carlson, Kacmar and Williams' (2000) and Stephen and Sommer's (as cited in Carlson et al., 2000) work-family conflict scales. Simmons and Greenwell created four new items to assess economic-based fan-family conflict based on the time-based work-family conflict items used by Carlson et al. (2000) and Gutek, Searle, and Klepa (1991).

The fan-family conflict measure consisted of 16 items with four subscales (four items each) designed to assess respondent perceptions of time-based, strain-based, behavior-based, and economic-based fan-family conflict. Item examples from each of the subscales include: "Following (*team name)* keeps me from my family activities more than I would like", "When I get home from a (*team name*) game I am often too preoccupied with thoughts of the game to participate in family activities/responsibilities", "I am not able to act the same way at home as I do at a (*team name*) game", and "My family complains about the amount of money I spend on (*team name*)."

Family Involvement

A four-item scale modified from Kanungo's (1982) Job Involvement Questionnaire (JIQ) was utilized to measure involvement within one's family role. A sample item from the family involvement measure is "The most important things that happen to me involve my family." Scholars have adapted the JIQ to measure family role involvement in a similar manner in prior

work (Carlson & Frone, 2003; Frone & Rice, 1987; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Simmons & Greenwell, 2014).

Family Support

Fick, Goff, and Oppliger's (1996) four-item spousal support scale was modified for use in this study; however, rather than spousal support, items were worded to capture family support of the sport fan role. Two additional items were added to the family support measure to assess behavioral support, that is, the degree to which family members are also fans of the team. Sample items from this scale include "My family has a favorable attitude toward me following (*team name*)" and "I can discuss issues concerning (*team name*) with my family."

Team Identification

The three-item Team Identification Index (Trail & James, 2001) was used to measure respondent identification with the home team. A sample scale item is "Being a fan of (*home team*) is very important to me."

Data Analysis

The first research question sought to understand how respondents differed in their perceptions of fan-family conflict (time-based, strain-based, behavior-based, and economic-based) as a product of family structure. Data were subjected to a 2 x 2 MANCOVA, with marital status and the presence of children in the household entered into the analysis as independent variables. To better understand this relationship however, it is important to control for the effect of team identification within the analysis. As noted above, prior research has identified a clear link between identification and more intense sport consumptive behaviors (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; James & Trail, 2008; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Further, this study seeks to advance the findings reported by Simmons and Greenwell (2014), who found significant differences in time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based fan-family conflict as a product of one's identification with a team. As such, team identification was included as a covariate. With respect to the second research question, a series of ANOVAs were utilized to detect significant differences between family structure groupings (single, no children; single with children; married/partnered, no children; married/partnered with children) and the team- and family-related factors of interest. Annual team-related expenditures were analyzed using descriptive statistics due to the categorical nature of the data collected.

Results

The sample in this study had more male participants (*n* = 282, 64.7%) than female (*n* = 154, 35.3%). In terms of family structure, 114 (25.9%) respondents were single with no children living at home, 35 (8.0%) were single with children at home, 118 (26.8%) were married/partnered without children, and 173 (39.3%) were married/partnered with children in the household. The majority of respondents (73.3%) were 30 years of age or older. A total of 63.2% of the overall sample indicated an annual household income in excess of $60,000, with 119 (28.4%) of those respondents having reported making more than $100,000 per year. For the sample as a whole, mean scores for the fan-family conflict typologies were relatively low (time-based: *M* = 2.17, *SD* = 1.34; strain-based: *M* = 2.06, *SD* = 1.27; behavior-based: *M* = 2.13, *SD* = 1.34; economic-based: *M* = 1.89; *SD* = 1.15). Conversely, respondents indicated relatively high levels of family

involvement (*M* = 6.11, *SD* = 1.26), team identification (*M* = 5.53*; SD* = 1.58), and family support for their sport fan role (*M* = 5.56, *SD* = 1.44).

Measures of internal consistency reliability for each of the scales utilized in the questionnaire exceeded the .70 threshold established by Nunnally (1978). For the four fan-family conflict subscales, Cronbach's alphas ranged from .788 (Economic-based FFC) to .830 (Strain-based FFC). Reliability estimates for the family involvement and family sport scales were .915 and .926, respectively. Finally, the Team Identification Index yielded an internal consistency reliability estimate of .900.

MANCOVA was utilized to answer research question 1. A statistically significant interaction effect between marital status and the presence of children in the household was not detected (Wilk's Λ = .993, $F_{[4, 432]}$ = .736, p = .568) indicating the effect of children on perceptions of fan-family conflict was consistent across both levels of marital status while controlling for team identification. An analysis of multivariate main effects revealed a statistically significant effect of marital status on fan-family conflict (Wilk's Λ = .956, $F_{[4, 432]}$ = 4.96, p = .001). The significant main effect was followed up with separate univariate analyses to detect differences among each dependent variable. Significant univariate main effects were found on time-based FFC ($F_{[1, 435]}$ = 15.53, p < .001), strain-based FFC ($F_{[1, 435]}$ = 9.99, p = .002), and behavior-based FFC ($F_{[1, 435]}$ = 5.36, p = .021). The main effect of marital status on economic-based FFC was not significant ($F_{[1, 435]}$ = 1.83, p = .178). Effect size measures ranged from $η^2$ = .012 for behavior-based FFC to $η^2$ =.034 for time-based FFC, indicating a small effect of marital status on the outcome variables of interest (Stevens, 2002). Statistically significant differences were not found based on the presence of children living at home.

As shown in Table 1, single respondents indicated significantly higher levels (p < .001) of time-based FFC (*M* = 2.56; *SD* = 1.65) than married/partnered individuals (*M* = 1.97; *SD* = 1.11). A similar pattern was evident across both strain-based and behavior-based FFC. In terms of strain-based conflict, mean scores among single participants in the study (*M* = 2.36; *SD* = 1.47) were significantly higher (p = .002) than married respondents (*M* = 1.90; *SD* = 1.13). Single individuals also had significantly higher (p = .021) behavior-based FFC scores (*M* = 2.35; *SD* = 1.52) than respondents indicating they were married at the time of data collection (*M* = 2.01; *SD* = 1.23).

For the second research question, data were analyzed using a series of ANOVAs to detect differences with respect to several team- and family-related factors based on family structure. As shown in Table 2, the single with no children group devoted significantly more time on a weekly basis (*M* = 8.62, *SD* = 10.72) following the home team at the data collection site than either married group, irrespective of children ($F_{[3, 380]}$ = 5.73, p = .001). Both married/partnered groups were relatively similar with in terms of weekly hours (Married/Partnered, no children: *M* = 5.20, *SD* = 3.83; Married/Partnered with children: *M* = 5.35, *SD* = 5.28). It should be noted, however, data were widely spread around the mean, ranging from one hour per week to 40 hours per week, resulting in a standard deviation of 6.81 for the sample as a whole.

Table 1: *Means and Standard Deviations Based on Family Structure*

	Married/Partnered			Not Married/Partnered		
	Children	No Children	Total	Children	No Children	Total
Time	2.08 (1.16)	1.82 (1.01)	1.97_a (1.11)	2.45 (1.58)	2.60 (1.67)	2.56_b (1.65)
Strain	2.02 (1.21)	1.73 (0.99)	1.90_c (1.13)	2.22 (1.45)	2.41 (1.48)	2.36_d (1.47)
Behavior	2.11 (1.30)	1.87 (1.12)	2.01_e (1.23)	2.32 (1.56)	2.36 (1.51)	2.35_f (1.52)
Economic	1.98 (1.23)	1.63 (0.92)	1.83 (1.13)	1.96 (1.25)	1.99 (1.17)	1.99 (1.18)

Note. ab = Sig at p < .001; cd = Sig at p < .01; ef = Sig at p < .05; Fan-Family Conflict measured on 7-point Likert Scale

Significant differences were also detected based on family involvement mean scores among the family structure groupings (F[3, 436] = 15.42, p < .001). Married respondents, both with children in the home (M = 6.41, SD = 1.02) and without (M = 6.34, SD = 1.14) were significantly more involved with their family role than unmarried, childless respondents (M = 5.49, SD = 1.41). Team identification and family support mean scores were fairly consistent across all family structure groupings, with the single with no children group reporting the highest amount of team identification (M = 5.60, SD = 1.51), and both married/partnered groupings experiencing higher levels of family support for their sport fan role (Married/Partnered, no children: M = 5.71, SD = 1.24; Married/Partnered with children: M = 5.62, SD = 1.39) than unmarried participants. No statistically significant differences were found with either variable.

Data representing annual financial expenditures relating to the sport fan role were categorical in nature. Table 2 displays financial expenses divided into three tiers: $0 – $250, $251 – $2,000, and More than $2,001. Among single participants, irrespective of children, the largest percentage of respondents indicated spending up to $250 per year on the home team. Conversely, 69.8% of married/partnered respondents without children and 54.7% of married/partnered respondents with children reported spending between $251 and $2,000 on the team on annual basis.

Table 2: *Means and Frequencies for Fan- and Family-Related Factors*

Family Structure	Hours/Week	Team ID	Family INV	Family Support	Annual $ Spent on Team		
					$0 - $250	$251-$2,000	$2,001 +
Single, No Children	8.62$_c$	5.60	5.49$_a$	5.34	59.1% (*n*=65)	36.3% (*n* = 40)	4.5% (*n*=5)
Single w/ Children	5.77	5.31	5.90	5.40	55.9% (*n*=19)	35.3% (*n* = 12)	8.8% (*n*=3)
Married/Partnered, No Children	5.20$_d$	5.50	6.34$_b$	5.71	22.3% (*n*=26)	69.8% (*n* = 81)	7.8% (*n*=9)
Married/Partnered w/ Children	5.35$_d$	5.54	6.41$_b$	5.62	37% (*n*=63)	54.7% (*n* = 93)	8.2% (*n*=14)
Total	6.33	5.53	6.11	5.56	40.2% (*n*=173)	52.6% (*n*=226)	7.2% (*n*=31)

Note. ab = Sig at $p < .001$; cd = Sig at $p < .01$; Team ID, Family INV, Family Support measured on 7-point Likert Scale

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how perceptions of time-based, strain-based, behavior-based, and economic-based fan-family conflict differed based on one's family structure. Results illustrated the complex relationships between family structure and fan-family conflict, and shows how fans' relationships with their teams may evolve as their family structure changes. Single individuals in this study experienced significantly higher levels of time-, strain-, and behavior-based fan-family conflict than married/partnered individuals irrespective of parental status when controlling for the effect of team identification. Further, mean scores on the four dependent variables suggest parents and non-parents experience fan-family conflict with similar intensity. These findings challenge prior work in both work-family and leisure-family contexts suggesting marriage and children contribute to inter-role conflict as a product of the increased family role demands facing married/partnered individuals and parents (Boyar et al., 2008; Cooke & Rousseau, 1984; Ruseki et al., 2011; Simmons et al., in press).

While these findings may at first seem counterintuitive, a more in-depth look at the data helps explain this phenomenon. Single respondents with no children in this study devoted upwards of three hours per week more to their fan role than the other three family structure groupings (see Table 2). Although not to a significant degree, this group also identified more strongly with the home team at the data collection site than married/partnered and parent respondents. Conversely, the single with no children group reported the lowest family involvement scores, and received the lowest amount of family support for their sport fan role. It is also worth noting, single parents, when compared to married/partnered parents, devoted more time to their sport fan role on a weekly basis, were less involved with their family role, and received less fan role support from their family.

These findings are important for a number of reasons. First, they suggest a potentially evolving relationship a fan has with his/her team. Married individuals and those with children devote less time to sport-related consumption than their single, child-less counterparts, and the importance of their team to their identity appears to lessen, if just slightly. Sport organizations must be aware of this evolution and continue to recognize the importance of segmentation in their marketing strategies. What worked to entice a fan to consume when he/she was single may not continue to work as the fan progresses through changes in his/her family structure. Second, respondents with families consistently scored higher on the family involvement measure compared to team identification. Role involvement will influence the amount of time and energy someone devotes to a given role (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Carlson & Perrewe, 1999; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Results from the current study reflect this shift, as a drastic decline in time devoted to the sport fan role is observed among respondents with family role demands. Those more involved with their families are also more likely to be cognizant of behaviors appropriate for family role demands, and prioritize their family role ahead of their fan role, thus alleviating some degree of strain-based fan-family conflict. Indeed, Halbesleben, Harvey, and Bolino (2009) found individuals who are more conscientious of their family role demands experience less conflict with competing role demands, as those individuals are more likely to work proactively to anticipate and address areas where inter-role conflict might occur. It would not be a stretch to assume individuals who are more highly involved with the family role are also more conscientious of family role demands.

Still, both family involvement and team identification mean scores suggest that, for the most part, both fan and family roles are important to those with families participating in this study. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) and Frone and Rice (1987) suggest this simultaneous pull for resources from two highly important roles should result in higher conflict. It might be expected then that those with families would experience the highest degrees of fan-family conflict. This was not the case in the current study, and it is here that the fan role offers a unique contribution to our understanding of inter-role conflict. Unlike work and other leisure activities in which inter-role conflict has been assessed such as among Ironman participants (Hambrick et al., 2013; Simmons et al., 2016), marathon participants (Goodsell & Harris, 2011) or dog sport enthusiast (Gillespie et al., 2002); the sanctions for non-compliance with sport fan role demands are not detrimental to one's continued participation in that role. An employee, for example, cannot regularly miss work or fail to satisfactorily complete their job and expect to remain gainfully employed. Likewise, completing an Ironman event, or placing in a dog sport competition, would be nearly impossible without devoting oneself to countless hours of training. Such demands cannot be sacrificed if role-related outcomes are to be achieved.

The fan role is different in that sanctions associated for missing a game, not being able to participate in message board discussions, or having to DVR a game to watch it when the kids are asleep are self-imposed. The fans themselves define what their fandom means to them and what they're willing to sacrifice to meet the demands of competing roles. In this way, fans have more choice in terms of how to allocate their time and energy than one might with their job or when training for an Ironman. Applying a notion proposed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) to fan-family conflict, if the sanctions for failure to fulfill fan role demands do not influence pressures to satisfy those demands, it is likely perceptions of fan-family conflict will be less intense, as the sanctions for non-compliance with family role demands (e.g. failure to pick up child from school, not completing chores around the house) are more severe.

Another way in which the fan role is different than the aforementioned leisure activities lies in the potential for family integration. Whereas training for Ironman and dog sport competitions require significant hours of intense engagement, often away from the home, it is much easier to incorporate family into one's fan role. Indeed, the family support data may explain why fan-family conflict means for those with families is lower than single, childless fans. Research has consistently shown the presence of social support can alleviate perceptions of inter-role conflict (Goff, Fick, & Oppliger, 1997; Hambrick et al., 2013; van Daalen, Willemsen, & Sanders, 2006). The minimal negative effect of televised sport consumption on spousal relationships reported by Gantz et al. (1995b) is likely explained by the behavioral and logistic support spouses demonstrate for their partners watching sports. In that study, more than half of the respondents indicated when they are watching sports on television, their spouse watches with them. Those who do not were likely to be doing chores around the house or participating in a leisure activity of their own, providing the time for their spouse to watch sports. In the current study, even though not significant, family support was highest for individuals who were married and had children. Thus, it might be expected those individuals with higher family support for their sport fan roles would experience less inter-role conflict.

Limitations and Future Research

This study advances our understanding of the fan-family conflict phenomenon, even challenging prior research regarding the effect of family structure on perceptions of inter-role conflict. Limitations exist, however, which must be considered when interpreting this study's findings. First, ANOVA results for research question 2 should be interpreted with caution due to violations of normality and homogeneity of variance. Second, of the study's 440 participants, only 35 were single with children living at home. This may be because these individuals have less support at home and were unable to attend the game in which the data collection took place. Further, examining the effects of family structure on perceptions of fan-family conflict does not take into account complexities of a true family life cycle (i.e. divorced with children, individuals with children with different partners, the numbers and ages of children in the household). Each variation of this cycle may bring about changes in family role demands, in turn affecting how one perceives fan-family conflict. Future research should attempt to capture these differences.

Only individuals in attendance when data were collected had the opportunity to participate in this study. This may explain the low fan-family conflict mean scores. Individuals with higher levels of fan-family conflict may be less likely to attend the games, either consuming through an alternative medium, or missing the game altogether. Efforts to reach this group, perhaps through surveys posted on team message boards, may result in a sample where fan-family conflict is more prevalent. Replicating this study with a sample of fans drawn from those not in attendance at a sporting event would also make a valuable contribution to this line of inquiry, especially given the seemingly counterintuitive relationships found here.

Finally, the forms of conflict utilized in this study are grounded in prior work-family conflict literature. Results from this study, as well as those reported by Wilson and Baumann (2015), make the case that personal roles, outside of work, necessitate their own line of inquiry. The current work builds off the findings reported by Simmons and Greenwell (2014); however, our understanding of the fan-family conflict phenomenon is still in its early stages. The next logical progression in fan-family conflict research would be a qualitative study designed to identify the types and directionality (e.g. fan-to-family, family-to-fan) of fan-family conflict, relevant antecedents, as well as outcomes and negotiation strategies. Further, the low fan-family conflict mean scores may be a product of social desirability in participant responses. Developing rapport

with respondents through interviews may aid in minimizing participants' need to answer in a socially desirable manner.

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