Substitute or compliment? Fantasy football and NFL fandom.

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National Football League (NFL) fandom is among the most popular leisure pursuits in North America. Within this fandom lies an ancillary sport activity termed fantasy football. This pastime has exploded in the past two decades to include over 17 million participants and create a $3.5 billion economic impact (FSTA, 2013). Despite this growth, critics suggest fantasy football diminishes the NFL experience by distracting NFL fans, devaluing defensive players, and most importantly, damaging team loyalties. Given these accusations, this study investigated the moderating relationship of fantasy football-related media consumption on the relationship between commitment and favorite NFL team media consumption. The study was guided by the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). A multiple group structural equation model was proposed. Discussed are the theoretical results as well as practical implications for marketers and managers looking to more completely understand the impact of fantasy football participation on brand loyalty and traditional NFL fandom.

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