

Football Fanaticism Levels of Turkish University Students in terms of Sports Literacy and Different Variables

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the fanaticism levels of university students in Kilis and its surrounding provinces in terms of sports literacy and some variables. The population of the research consists of approximately 120,000 students studying at 6 different universities in Kilis and its surrounding five provinces (Gaziantep, Hatay, Adıyaman, Osmaniye, Kahramanmaraş) in the south of Turkey. The sample of the study consists of a total of 480 students, 176 female and 304 male, randomly selected among the students studying at universities in Kilis and surrounding provinces in the 2022-2023 education period. A personal information form was used to collect information about the independent variables. The "Football Fans Fanaticism Scale" (FFFS), which was prepared by Taşmektepligil et al. (2015) was used as a data collection tool for the scale of the fanaticism levels of the students. While evaluating the findings obtained in the study, SPSS 25 was used for statistical analysis. While evaluating the study data, descriptive statistical methods were used. Independent sample T-Test and ANOVA Test were used in the analysis of the data. In the analyses, the level of significance was determined as $p < 0.05$. In the findings, it was determined that while there was a significant difference according to the age variable of the participants, the type of following the competitions and the gender variable, there was no significant difference on the fanaticism scale scores in terms of the variables of using licensed products and the team being supported. It was concluded that male individuals are more fanatical than females. Another conclusion is that the younger students were more fanatical than the older students. It has been found that those who follow the matches of the team support from stadiums and all channels have higher levels of fanaticism.

Key words: Fanaticism, Student, University, Sport Literacy

INTRODUCTION

Sport

As a necessary component of life, sports have developed into a significant subject of study and practice that has a significant impact on the person, society, and the social structure. Sports activities have sparked the development of significant and universal values like camaraderie, solidarity, and tolerance that support people's long-term social and personal growth. Sports activities have a significant role in combating against illnesses brought on by modern lifestyles (Balci et al., 2018).

Sports is an important phenomenon that supports people physiologically, psychologically, and sociologically in their lives, as well as many common norms and unites individuals in a common characteristic.

Sports events, which are an inseparable part of daily life, appear as a human event that consists of the trio of spectators, champions and medalists, whose visual aspect is prominent, which drags the masses after them, and which can be

commercialized by changing the meaning of politics and ideologies (Özcan, 2001).

Fanaticism

Football, which is often regarded as the most thrilling sport and a significant aspect of many people's lives, has implications for many people that go beyond those of a game and a pastime (Aydın et al., 2008). This fan phenomenon has been the biggest benefactor for the football industry. Supporting is essentially a civic ritual carried out by participants who have a strong attachment to the team (Eker, 2010).

On the other hand, fanaticism is a behavior that appears in a variety of contexts, such as politics and sports. The word "fanaticism" comes from the Latin word (*fanum*), which means "temple" or "holy place." The word "fanaticus" is used to characterize those who are literally and utterly insanely committed to the temple. The word "fanatic" in English refers to a person who has wild, illogical, or religious impulses (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2018).

Fanaticism or fanatical behavior has been researched for many years (Dwyer et al., 2018). Independent fanaticism represents the sport between matches and teams. Having the knowledge of revealing the identity of people who follow football and getting help, in addition to this, they can become losers with the indispensable passion of football (Murphy et al., 1990). Groups that receive fanaticism enhancements may engage in choices, antisocial or violent behavior (Dalpian et al., 2014). Fanaticism, on the other hand, exhibits extreme actions, including violence, in a socially undesirable framework, in contrast to the way that love and attachment to a team are shown in the context of societal acceptance (Kazan, 2009).

The size of the sports industry, its cultural support, the large number of spectators and its strong economic impact appear as one of the most important factors that increase this interest and feeling of admiration (Naumenko, 2018). Fanatic viewers may resist losing competitively or failing the relevant sports service, resulting in apathy or pessimism towards the team (Jovanovska, 2020). In this case, since fanatic behavior can turn into violence, the necessity of managing the interest in question arises. Because the concept of sport is a social phenomenon and continues to exist in order to support healthy individuals with the reduction of violence in society. This purpose also conforms to the living principles of the modern world (Baltas, 2021).

Sport Literacy

The concept of literacy can be expressed as the ability to read and write texts written in alphabet in its most general form (Reinking, 1994). The concept of literacy, with its most basic feature, means having the ability to read written texts in any language, to make sense of what they read and to understand all these. If we look at the definition of literacy, which is understood today, it is the state of having the competence to use a set of communicative symbols that are understood correctly by the society in which one lives (Kellner, 2001). The concept of literacy is a skill based on the correct use of operational symbols interpreted by the general public. The quality of being a communicative symbol interpreted by society is a system that renews literacy and is put forward in line with the expectations of every age (Önal, 2010). From this perspective, although literacy is seen as a skill that meets the conditions and needs of the period, it has an identity that renews itself and its meaning in periodical changes (İşler, 2002).

Since the concept of literacy is found in all areas of life, some types have emerged. For example, information literacy in the sense of having and using the information necessary for life, cultural literacy that explores the factors that make up the society and the causes and causes of these elements, and universal literacy that aims to look at events, situations and phenomena are some of them (Gürtekin, 2019).

Different and multiple applications can occur in education systems. Multiple intelligences, multiple learning environments, multiple perspectives and interdisciplinary perspectives can be given as examples. Literacy, which has taken its place in the lives of individuals and societies, can

provide important gains for them. However, many different understandings of literacy may emerge. Literacy used today; can be classified in more than one way. In the emergence of these types, the social status, perspectives, expectations and interests of individuals are effective. Individuals can show their talents in different types of literacy. This shows that their areas of interest are different (Önal, 2010).

The concept, which was defined as “Media Education, Media Pedagogy, Media Education” when it first appeared, is now expressed as media literacy (İnal, 2009). When media literacy is examined as a concept, the first condition is to have the ability to reach media messages, to perceive these messages correctly and to produce new messages. Paker (2009) perceives the concept of media literacy as reading and critically evaluating the incoming messages in detail, understanding the hidden meanings, if any, and producing new messages. Mora (2008), on the other hand, defined media literacy education as a practice that enables children, youth and adults to be evaluated with an inquiring and rational perspective in order to protect them from the current negative effects of the media. Özel (2018) stated that media literacy is different from the classical media and discussed media literacy as the purpose of the message and the stages of formation of this message.

It is a well-known fact that sports have aims such as raising individuals who are physically and mentally healthy, open to change. Sports literacy, which is expressed as the level of proficiency (Demir et al., 2019), which enables to make information-based decisions in the selection of sports equipment used in our lives, is considered necessary for the creation of sports awareness. Due to economic and technological developments, the quality and level of education is increasing day by day; this situation results in an increase in the duties and responsibilities of the students studying (Yıldırım, 2015).

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of students' demographic information

Variable	Groups	f	%
Gender	Male	304	63.3
	Female	176	36.7
Age	18-20	284	59.2
	21-23	136	28.3
	24-26	44	9.2
	27 and over	16	3.3
Licensed product use	No	300	62.5
	Yes	180	37.5
Preferences of following teams	TV	108	22.5
	Internet	208	43.3
	Stadium	156	32.5
	All	8	1.7
Teams supported	Fenerbahçe	142	29.6
	Beşiktaş	109	22.7
	Galatasaray	185	38.5
	Others	44	9.2

Table 2. Independent t-test analysis in terms of students' gender variable

Variable	Groups	n	M	SD	t	p
Football fans fanaticism scale	Female	176	3.094	0.536	-3.773	0.000*
	Male	304	3.311	0.645		

p<0.05*

Table 3. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results in terms of students' age variable

Variable	Groups	n	M	SD	F	p	Significant Difference
Football fans fanaticism scale	a. 18-20	284	3.326	0.643	16.183	0.003*	a-c
	b. 21-23	136	3.217	0.567			a-d
	c. 24-26	44	2.979	0.230			b-d
	d. 27 and over	16	2.384	0.397			c-d

p<0.05*

Table 4. Independent t-test analysis in terms of students' licensed product use variable

Variable	Groups	n	M	SD	t	P
Football fans fanaticism scale	No	300	3.191	0.632	-1.852	0.342
	Yes	180	3.299	0.584		

p<0.05*

This phenomenon of fanaticism among today's sports fans shapes people's tendencies and orientations in many ways. It is seen in the current literature research that this attitude has effects on their lives, from shopping in daily life, to adjusting their daily activity planning according to the matches. Sports literacy is also an important factor when following the teams they support from the media, social media, print media, television and stadiums. Sports literacy of students also affects their fanaticism. In line with the interests, needs and expectations of the students, their follow-up status is shaped accordingly. It is thought that the interaction between sports literacy and fanaticism is affected by many variables such as the age of the students, their gender, the purchasing preferences of the teams' licensed products, the team they follow and the way they follow their teams.

In this study, it is aimed to examine the fanaticism levels of university students in terms of sports literacy and some variables in the light of current literature information. When the existing literature is examined, it is thought that the studies on this subject are insufficient. As a result of the study, it is aimed to contribute to the literature by obtaining information about the sports literacy of university students in terms of gender variable, age variable and preference to follow their teams, the variable of the team they support, and the variables of purchasing the licensed products of the team they support. This study has an important place in determining the fanaticism levels of university students and in terms of giving us information in line with the variables mentioned above. In addition to these, it is expected that our study results will contribute to all the studies that have been done and will be done in the field.

Research Questions

The questions to be answered during the research are as follows:

1. Is there a difference in the level of fanaticism of the participants in terms of gender variable?
2. Is there a difference in the level of fanaticism of the participants in terms of the age variable?
3. Is there a difference in the level of fanaticism in terms of the participants' preference to follow their teams?
4. Is there a difference in the level of fanaticism in terms of the team variable that the participants support?
5. Is there a difference in the level of fanaticism in terms of the participants' preference for purchasing licensed products?
6. Is there a relationship between the variable of following the teams of the participants and sports literacy?

METHOD

In this section, information on the study model, study group, data collection tools, collection of data and analysis of data sub-sections are presented.

Study Model

This study was carried out with the general scanning model. It is widely used in quantitative research methods. Büyüköztürk et al. (2013), the data obtained from the method can be easily observed, measured and analyzed. It is a research method with an experimental approach. In addition, the general survey model successfully reflects the survey by reaching the entire population or reaching a representative sample of the population (Karasar, 2012; Şimşek, 2012).

Participants

The population of the research consists of approximately 120,000 students studying at 6 different universities in Kilis and its surrounding 5 provinces (Gaziantep, Hatay, Adıyaman, Osmaniye, Kahramanmaraş) in the south of Turkey. The sample of the study consists of a total of 480 students, 176 female and 304 male, randomly selected among the students studying at universities in Kilis and surrounding provinces in the 2022-2023 education period.

Table 5. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results for the preferences of following teams variable

Variable	Groups	n	M	SD	F	p	Significant Difference
Football fans fanaticism scale	TV	108	3.082	0.460	25.474	0.001*	a-c
	Internet	208	3.066	0.600			a-d
	Stadium	156	3.518	0.612			b-c
	All	8	3.961	0.452			b-d

p<0.05*

Table 6. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results of supported team variable

Variable	Groups	n	M	SD	F	p	Significant Difference
fans fanaticism scale	Fenerbahçe	142	3.185	0.686	1.774	0.151	<i>Significant Difference</i>
	Beşiktaş	109	3.347	0.671			
	Galatasaray	185	3.196	0.546			
	Others	44	3.244	0.484			

p<0.05*

Data Collection Tool

A personal information form developed by the researchers was used to collect information about the independent variables. In addition, the Football Fan Fanaticism Scale (FFFS) was used as a data collection tool. The answers given to the "Football Fans Fanaticism Scale" (FFFS), prepared in a Likert type and consisting of 13 positive items, developed by Taşmektepligil et al. (2015), were "a) I strongly agree"(1), "b) I agree"(2), "c) I do not agree"(3) and "d) I do not agree at all" (4). When the total scores of the scale are examined, those with a total score of 1-13 are Not Supporters at all, those with a score of 14-26 are Team Supporters, those with a total score of 27-39 are Fanatic, and those with a total score of 40-52 are Extremely Fanatic. There is no sub-dimension of the scale. The Cronbach alpha reliability value for the overall scale was found to be 0.84. Football fan fanaticism scale. Taşmektepligil et al. (2015) was taken from its source and included in this study.

Data Analysis

While evaluating the data in our study, SPSS Statistics 25 program was used for statistical analysis. While analyzing the study data, descriptive statistical methods (frequency, mean, standard deviation and percentage) were used. While evaluating the hypothesis tests, first of all, Skewness and Kurtosis values were examined to determine the normality of the data. Since the data obtained were between +1.5 and -1.5, it was accepted that the data formed a normal distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). Therefore, Independent Samples T-Test and One Way ANOVA Test were used. When comparing multiple groups, Levene's Test was applied and Scheffe's test, which is one of the Post-hoc tests, was used. The results were accepted as 95% confidence interval and the level of significance was accepted as p<0.05.

FINDINGS

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the majority of the participants are male (63.3%). Looking at the age groups, it is seen that the 18-20 age group (59.2%) has the highest

rate. When the groups within the variable of using licensed products are examined, it is seen that the group answering No (62.5%) is higher. When the variable of preference to follow their team is examined, it is seen that the group giving the Internet answer (43.3%) is higher. When we examine the table in terms of the team variable that is supported, it is seen that the group giving the answer to Galatasaray (38.5%) has a higher rate.

When examining whether there is any significance between the gender variable of the participants and the t-test results, a statistically significant difference (p<.05) was observed in favor of the male participants (Table 2).

Considering the age variable of the participants, the ANOVA results shown in Table 3, it is observed that there is a p<0.05 and a significant relationship between them. When the relations between the groups are examined, it is seen that there is a significant relationship between the a-b, a-d, b-d, c-d groups.

Regarding the licensed product use variable of the participants, there was no statistically significant difference between the football supporter and fanaticism scale (Table 4).

When the variables of the preferences of following the teams and the one-way ANOVA test results (Table 5) are examined in terms of the football fanaticism, it is observed that the age variable is p<0.001 and there is a significant relationship between them. When the relationships between the groups are examined, it is seen that there is a significant relationship between groups a-c, a-d, b-c, b-d (p<.05).

In terms of the team variable of the participants (Table 6), there was no statistically significant difference between the participants in terms of the Football Fans Fanaticism Scale (p>.05).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The level of football fanaticism of university students in terms of gender, age, using licensed products, the type of following the competitions and the team variables they support, and sports literacy were examined.

When we analyzed the fanaticism levels in terms of gender variable, a statistically significant relationship was

found. Considering this significance, it is observed that the average scores are in favor of male participants. When the studies in the literature are examined, Bahçe and Turan (2022) concluded that the level of fanaticism in favor of male participants was high in their research. On the other hand, Yıldız and Açak (2018) found a significant gender variable in their study on high school students, but unlike our study, they observed that the average scores of female participants were higher. In addition to these, Dimmco and Grove (2005) found that there was no significant difference in terms of gender in their study. According to the research, while women find it difficult to include the phenomenon of football in their own lives, men can easily reveal it with a sense of belonging (Doewes et al., 2020). In another study, it was determined that people develop a kind of identity perception on consumption and brands (Fuschillo, 2020). This situation emerges as another factor that strengthens the theory that men can develop a perception of fanaticism according to club advertising and brand value. According to another study on the psychology of football fanaticism, fans are influenced by different phenomena such as advertisements to support their clubs, and this leads them to show higher interest (Budi and Widyaningsih 2021). In another study, which states that the phenomenon of fanaticism shows positive or negative feelings towards the club that is wanted to be supported, it is emphasized that this situation develops with the emergence of violence and the feeling of competition. According to the research, the behavior of showing interest in violence and approaching criminal elements fuels fanaticism (Agusman and Setiawan, 2018).

When the levels of fanaticism were examined in terms of the age variable, a significant relationship was found. In our study group, it was seen that the average scores of the participants in the 18-20 age range were higher. It was observed that the average scores decreased as the age of the participants increased. Research; emphasizes that the subjects of interest become less important as the age progresses (Brooks, 2018). A different study, which examines the changes caused by sportive admiration on the life cycle and is powered by social identity theory, shows that adult people's emotional well-being and life satisfaction increase as they get older, and accordingly they tend to be less members of clubs or fan groups (Gantz and Lewis, 2021). In another study, which examined the relationship between the feeling of fanaticism and the membership cards and the age factor, with 1547 participants, it was concluded that membership card-style club loyalty can strengthen the feelings of fanaticism at an early age (Setiadi and Franky, 2019). When the literature was examined, Güler (2020) obtained similar results in parallel with our study. Again, Açak et al. (2018) reached similar results in their research. It was observed that there was a significant difference in terms of the age variable that emerged during the period of Kurak (2019).

When the relationship between fanaticism levels and the variable of using licensed product was examined, no significant relationship was found. When the data in our study group were examined, it was seen that the average scores of those who answered no were higher. When the studies in

the literature are examined, contrary to our study, Yıldız and Açak (2018) reached significant results in their study on high school students.

When we examine the level of fanatics according to the variable of following the competitions, it is seen that there is a significant difference. When we examine the data in our study group, the highest percentage of the participants follow the competitions of their teams on the internet. When we examine the average scores between the groups, those who watch from the stadium and then those who follow from other channels have higher average scores. Considering this, it is seen that the parties who go to the stadium to support their teams and those who follow their teams with all their means without being limited to this are more fanatical. When the literature is examined, Yıldız and Açak (2018) and Kural (2017) have reached significant results in their studies in terms of this variable.

When the levels of fanaticism were examined in terms of the team variable, no significant difference was found. When the average scores were examined, it was seen that similar scores were achieved. When we look at the studies in the literature, contrary to our study, in the study conducted by Kurak (2020), it was concluded that the fans who supported the Galatasaray team had higher fanaticism scores.

Considering the percentages and frequencies in terms of the variable of students' sports literacy and following their teams, the number of 208 (43.3%) followed on the Internet, 156 (32.3%) watched from the stadium, 108 (22.5%) watched on television, and the number of those who followed all of them 8 (1.7%) was found. According to this situation, it was concluded that students use social media more to follow the developments in sports teams. Katırcı (2009) concluded in his study that male individuals watch television more to follow sports competitions. Although this study is seen as different from the result we found, when the technological conditions of today's technology and the technological conditions of the time are compared, watching sports competitions can be seen as more usual. Today, with the development of technology, following many situations over the internet supports the accuracy of the result we found.

Although the results we found regarding fanaticism differ from individual to individual, some of the students had high levels of fanaticism according to the variables we shared in the findings in our study group, while this situation differed from others. Researchers we looked at in the literature encountered similar results (Brawn et al., 2015; Fagbemi, 2018; Kramer et al., 2018; Pruna and Bahdur, 2016; Iwuagwu et al. 2023).

As a result, in our study, in which we examined the fanaticism levels of university students in terms of some variables, it was concluded that male individuals were more fanatical than females. The fact that male individuals were more interested in football than females played an important role in the emergence of this result. It was concluded that the younger students were more fanatical than the older students. This has played a role in the emergence of this result, as individuals have a higher rate of defining their teams and belonging to them at younger ages, and because

they approach more emotional issues while shaping their attitudes. It has been concluded that those who follow the matches of the team they support from stadiums and all channels have higher levels of fanaticism. It is important for this result that individuals with high levels of fanaticism want to watch the matches from the stadium, which is the closest and most supportive place to their team, since they have a high sense of belonging to the team. It has been concluded that the students follow their teams more on social media within the scope of sports literacy. Today, with the internet age, many hobbies and communication are done through social media accounts, so it has played a role in the emergence of such a result.

In our study of the football fanaticism levels of university students living in Turkey, male students are fanatics in terms of gender. In terms of age factor among university students, students between the ages of 18-20 are more fanatical than other age groups. According to the statistical results of the student group in our study, those who watch the matches from the stadium show a more fanatical tendency than the other groups. University students use social media the most while following information about sports.

Our suggestions to the researchers who read our study and our expectations from our study; It is expected that our study will be a source for other studies in the field and contribute to the literature together with previous studies in this field. In future studies, different and similar high school and university student groups can be compared and different results can be obtained. Different results can be investigated by adding different grade levels and age groups to these comparisons. Studies on students living in different countries and studying in different cultures can compare their levels of fanaticism in the context of country and culture. While creating new research by taking into account the results and findings of our study, good and new studies can be made based on the existing data. In addition to fanaticism, researching different emotional states on students and examining the underlying causes of fanaticism with thematic analysis and creating new research plays an important role in the psychological and sociological analysis of fanaticism.

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