

*Full Length Research Paper*

# The relationship between fan identification and moral disengagement of physical education and sports students

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Sport and physical education can play an important role on the development of moral behavior. However, there has been a surge in unethical conducts both in and out of sports fields in recent years. Conducts such as match fixing and incentive payment which fall into the realm of corruption are unacceptable by some fans. For some others, these are deemed as acceptable. Tenacity to win at the expense of anything cripples fair-play principle. This study aims at exploring whether identification of fans with their sports teams has an impact on their attitude to match fixing and incentive payment. The outcomes of the study reveal that fans with high identification are less likely to accept that their teams arrange some match fixing and/or incentive payment and they do not want their teams to be subject to any penalties. Moreover, fans with high moral disengagement are of the opinion that their teams do not get involved in any match fixing and incentive payment. The higher the level of identification gets, the higher moral disengagement becomes.

**Key words:** Fans, moral education, team identification, match fixing, incentive payment.

## INTRODUCTION

Moral is composed of three dimensions; cognitive, emotional and behavioral. Cognitively, when faced with problems people tend to decide what to do or not to do, judge or create values or conceptions (Gander and Gardiner, 1981). Behavioral concept of moral suggests that people may behave reasonably or not depending on their morals. Lastly, emotion in moral suggests that emotion is the basis for cognition and if troubled, it can create problems. Inter-personal conflicts raise the personal stress which can only be controlled by the ability of stress management. Thus, implications (meditation,

breathing exercises etc.) towards managing emotions are necessities in moral education (Haste, 2009). People have feelings about the right or wrong and these may or may not suit his or her thoughts or behaviors (Gander and Gardiner, 1981). Fans attached to their teams with strong emotions may behave in ways that are unreasonable towards moral decision making. Thus, fan identification in soccer may affect moral disengagement. The ideas about match fixing and incentive payment subjects may change with the fans' team identification. This research focuses mainly on the question of whether

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fans decide subjectively on match fixing and incentive bonus subjects or not and the reasons lying underneath.

Although various researches (Bartoli et al., 2012; Hodge and Lonsdale, 2011; Boardley and Kavussanu, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011; Kavussanu and Roberts, 2001; Ntoumanis and Standage, 2008; Tractlet et al., 2011) have focused on moral corruption of athletes, studies focusing on the fans' concept and evaluation of the corruption in sports are not many. On and off the court behaviors of athletes may affect and drive fans into behaviors that may sometimes be violent. Thus, evaluations of moral disengagement in sports may provide useful feedback to literature.

Gilligan (1982) stated that moral judgments between men and women vary and gender is an important factor of decision making. Soccer is a sport followed by mostly male fans (New National Fan Survey, 2015; Orçun and Demirtas, 2015; Premier League Report, 2008). However, the number of women in the audience of the game who are the supporters of a soccer team increases. The success of Women Soccer in the last 20 years also plays a major role in this increase. The relation between team identity and moral disengagement and gender is also examined.

The incomes of football teams and players have risen significantly thanks to the commercial facet of sports. The managers, coaches and players of some sports teams have the desire to win matches no matter what in order to increase their incomes even more. Thus, corruption in sports such as match fixing and incentive payment (Maennig, 2005; Gorse and Chadwick, 2009) is encountered. Even though there are legal sanctions against corruption, the perception of fans on it could differ as they form identification with different teams. The concept of identification in sports encompasses commitment to any sports team or a player (Wann and Branscombe, 1993; Wann et al., 2001). Such commitment could manifest itself as attitudinal and/or behavioural level. Fans with high identification can deny or even approve of match fixing and incentive payment incidents, which are offences in legal terms and unethical, in case their own team plots these. The defense of the fair and truthful conduct may prove to be more challenging depending on the degree of identification. It is because fans with higher identification may believe that their team does not commit any offense, hence they may not want their team to be subject to any penalty. The objective of this study is to investigate the effects of team identification of fans on their perception of corruption (match fixing and incentive payment) their team gets involved in.

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Football is a sport that is a part of individuals of all ages and creates strong team-identity and voluntary participation. Researches on soccer fans show that the fans are mostly of the young population. Türksoy et al. (2003) stated in a research that 77% of the fan population is between the ages of 16 to 35. In another research about soccer fans, Orçun and Demirtaş (2015) showed that the 75% of soccer fans were between 18 and 33. A research by Commission of the European Communities (2005) on English Premier League Fans also stated that soccer fans were mostly male and between the ages 25 and 34. Another research exhibited the fact that the older fans became, the less they supported their team and attended the games (Orçun and Demirtaş, 2015). The relationship between the fan identification and the fan ages was also examined.

## LITERATURE

### Team identification

Team identification is defined as the extent to which a sports fan feels a psychological attachment to his/her favourite team (Wann et al., 2001). Parents and/or family, the area where one is born and/or raised, players, coaches, tailgating and party atmosphere play a role in how one becomes a fan (Greenwood et al., 2006). Psychological commitment to a sports team is one of the best hints of attendance (Kwon and Trail, 2001; Wann et al., 2001) and the money spent. According to Donavan et al. (2005), a sports fan that highly identifies with a team is very likely to nurture strong positive feelings for his/her team, thus supports the team both through spectatorship and the purchase of team-related or team-sponsored products.

As stated by Cialdini et al. (1976), the attitudes of fans pertaining to success or failure of their teams can be examined in two ways. The first of these attitudes is called Basking in Reflected Glory (BIRG) where fans associate themselves with the success of their team and the latter is termed as Cutting of Reflected Failure (CORF) where fans dissociate themselves from the failure of their team. These terms have also been accepted in some other scopes of research (Madrigal, 1995; Campbell et al., 2004; Trail et al., 2005; Kwon et al., 2008). Wann and Branscombe (1993) found that fans with higher team identification are engaged in more BIRGing and less CORFing whereas fans with little team identification do just the reverse. Fans with high identification levels were more

knowledgeable of their team, specific team players and team history compared to fans with moderate to low identification levels (Wann and Branscombe, 1995).

Team identification is more closely related to social well-being than personal well-being, temporary and enduring social connections are predicted to have remarkable repercussions on social psychological health (Wann, 2006). The postulation of Wann and Polk (2007) lays bare the fact that there is a positive relationship between sports team identification and belief in the trustworthiness of others. However, team identification is positively correlated with expressions of hostile and instrumental aggression (Wann et al., 1999). Highly identified fans show more willingness to partake in anonymous acts of aggression (Wann et al., 1999; Wann et al., 2003; Türksoy et al., 2003). In parallel to this, Wann et al. (2001) found a positive relationship between identification and readiness to consider cheating as acceptable. Individuals with a strong degree of identification to their team consider the success or failure of the team as their own. Such individuals support their teams persistently (Gencer, 2011).

### **Moral development**

Many theories explain moral development and behavior (Kavussanu, 2007). According to Freud (1923), moral development covers the balancing activities between id, ego and superego. Id consist of the basic biological motives, such as eating-drinking, evacuation, avoiding pain. Ego superintends the id and force the inharmonic activities of human's biological structure into sub-conscious. Superego decides the correctness or falsity of activities with respect to the values of society. Superego incorporates values and morals which are learned from parents and other people. According to Freud (1923), moral development is a function of superego and contributes to the conscience (Çam et al., 2012). Moral development is dependent on the accordance of id, ego and superego. Piaget (1932) evaluates moral development through cognitive development and claims that the maturation and environment have an effect on moral development. According to Piaget (1932), moral development can be separated into two stages; "heteronomous stage" and "autonomous stage". In the heteronomous stage, rules described by authority, are absolute and cannot be altered. It argues that breaking or changing the rules is false and compliance with the rules is correct. Individuals in the autonomous stage does not treat the rules as absolute and react differently according to situations. In order to adjudicate whether or not the activity is accurate, situational and personal factors are evaluated in addition to the essential intent of individual which is more crucial (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1999).

Kohlberg (1970) suggests that the cognitive skills do not

necessarily assist the development of morals. According to Kohlberg (1970), moral values have three levels, pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. Moral values varies by culture during the first and second levels. In the post-conventional level, individuals have similar ideas in judging what the accurate and valuable activities are (Kohlberg, 1970; Kohlberg and Hersch, 1977). Gilligan (1982) evaluates the moral development from the perspective of social learning and suggests that females are inclined to think different than males. The reason is that different norms are attributed to both gender by the society (Çam et al., 2012; Gilligan, 1982).

### **Moral education and moral disengagement**

Moral disengagement occurs when people sometimes abandon their moral values or responsibilities (Bandura, 1986). Due to the effects of social circumstances (Milgram, 1974; Bandura, 1991), people may not think that their conduct is unethical even if the conduct itself is of violent nature to others. What is regarded as ethical and moral is indeed to be decided upon by people. Still, the person committing acts of physical or psychological violence against others may not feel guilty. Moral disengagement which can stem from religious principles, righteous ideologies, nationalistic imperatives and ruthless social policies (Bandura, 2007) manifests itself as military and political violence in its most extreme form (Bandura, 2002).

Boardley and Kavussanu (2011) defines moral disengagement as a way for individuals to choose to morally disengage or not and suggests that education for discouraging moral disengagement may lead to coherent behavior. Moral education involves the teaching and learning of qualities consistent with the moral life. This involves not only acting in the right way, but also for the right reasons, and with the right attitude. Moral virtues are acquired, in sport and life in general, through both formal and informal educational means (Hochstetler, 2006).

### **Match fixing and incentive payment in sports**

Match fixing, illegal betting, bribery and doping allegations prove to be important problems for sports industry. These issues are not peculiar to one specific country or confined to sports only, but they constitute a global problem. Corruption in sports is not a new phenomenon (Gorse and Chadwick, 2009). The first recorded case of match fixing in history of sports occurred in 338 B.C during the Olympic Games. The boxer Eupolos of Thessaly bribed three of his opponents and became the champion (Maennig, 2005; Özen and Yılmaz, 2012). Another case of match fixing took place when the father of Olympic wrestler Polyktor bribed his son's rival to manipulate the

results (Maennig, 2005). There are also bribery allegations with regards to choosing the host city of the Olympic Games which is the greatest sporting event in the world (Mason et al., 2006). Billions of dollars is spent in football industry which has taken on more commercial value recently. Sports clubs are hailed as very precious investment instruments. Astronomical transfer fees and salaries are paid to football players. According to Gorse and Chadwick (2010), 57 match fixing cases (betting and non-betting related) were scrutinized and it was found that 52.63% of these occurred in Europe whereas 33.33% occurred in Asia. Most match fixing cases in Europe took place in football (70% of all in football).

According to Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) (2014), a soaring number of incidents has been confronted in football in Europe recently to manipulate the results (referred to as match fixing). UEFA has adopted a very sensitive approach to corruption in football across Europe. UEFA has been following a strict zero-tolerance policy and imposing severe sanctions (including lifetime bans from football) when it comes to match fixing. Football drawing the utmost attention of the society and the media is the most popular sports in Turkey (Berument and Yucel, 2005; Berument et al., 2009). The four football clubs dominating football league of Turkey are Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe, Galatasaray and Trabzonspor. As a result of an investigation which commenced in 2011 and concluded in 2013, Fenerbahçe Sports Club was banned from UEFA club competitions due to match fixing and incentive payment. So was Beşiktaş Sports Club because of match fixing.

Fenerbahçe was excluded from participating in the next three UEFA club competitions for which they would have qualified, including the 2013/14 UEFA Champions League. The ban for the third season is deferred for a probationary period of five years. Beşiktaş was not eligible to participate in the 2013/14 UEFA Europa League. However, the penalty for Fenerbahçe was affirmed as 2 years and as 1 year for Beşiktaş by Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

A convenience sampling method is employed in this study. 86% of the Turkish population are soccer fans. Amongst these, 36% supports Galatasaray (GS), 30% Fenerbahçe (FB), 17% Beşiktaş (BJK), 7% Trabzonspor (TS) and 10% is ratio for the total of fans for the remaining of the clubs (GENAR, 2004). Similar results have been found in other researches; a research by A&G (2009) exhibited the soccer team fans per population ratio as 35% GS fans, 34% FB fans, 21% BJK fans, 5% TS fans and 5% the remaining clubs' fans. As shown in the aforementioned researches, 4 teams (FB, GS, BJK and TS) hold nearly 90% of the fan population; thus are called the 4 biggest teams of Turkey. This research concentrates on the four football teams' fans, the emphasis being on the perspectives on match fixing, incentive payment and the fan identification. The study

group of this research is composed of 1024 fans who were students enrolled at Sports Education Departments of various Universities. The minimum and the maximum age of fans are found to be 18 is 30, respectively. The year of engagement with sports minimum, maximum and the average values are 1, 24 and 8, respectively. The males in the research correspond to 636 (62.1%) and females are 388 (37.9%). Of the fans examined, Galatasaray (41.3%), Fenerbahçe (27.3%), Beşiktaş (21.9%), Trabzonspor (3.9%) and other teams (5.46 %) prevailed.

### Data instruments

In this study, data is collected through a questionnaire encompassing a demographic form and two scales. Demographic variables described are gender, age, supported team and the number of years in sports. In order to measure fan identification, The Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) (Wann and Branscombe, 1993) was used. The seven-item Sport Spectator Identification Scale is a Likert-scale and measures the identification with a sport team. Example items on SSIS are "How important to you is it that your favorite team wins? (1 = Not important, 8 = Very important)", "How much do you dislike your favorite team's greatest rivals? (1 = Do not dislike, 8 = Dislike very much). SSIS which was originally developed by Wann and Branscombe (1993) and whose reliability and validity study in Turkish population was conducted by Günay and Tiryaki (2003) and is utilized in order to measure team identification. The Sport Spectator Identification Scale has a good internal consistency of Cronbach alpha coefficient of .91 (Wann and Branscombe, 1993). Günay and Tiryaki (2003) have found Cronbach alpha coefficient of .87 for the Turkish form of this scale. In this study, Cronbach alpha coefficient for SSIS is found as 0.91.

Moral Disengagement Scale in Sport-Short (MDSS-S) developed by Boardley and Kavussanu (2008) was used to measure the moral disengagement. MDSS-S is a Likert-scale measure which consists of eight items and couple of its example items are "It is okay for players to lie to officials if it helps their team" and "Players who are mistreated have usually done something to deserve it". MDSS has a good internal consistency of alpha coefficients of 0.80 and 0.85 for two different samples (Boardley and Kavussanu, 2008). In this study, Cronbach alpha coefficient for MDSS-S is found as 0.87.

Cronbach alpha coefficient of SPSS 20.0 was used to test the reliability of data collected via scales. The cut-off value for reliability was accepted as 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; De Vaus, 2002: p. 127-128). Both reliability and validity of the data was tested with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in Lisrel 8.80. CFA determines the reliability of the scales by calculating the composite reliability which is composed of average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability. Fornell and Larcker (1981) reported that the calculated AVE value should be greater than 0.50. Hair et al. (1998) and Hatcher (1994) proposed that construct reliability values should exceed 0.70 and AVE values should be more than 0.50. The fact that the relevant factor load of each scale item has a statistically meaningful t-value and that each of these factors loads is greater than the square of its own standard error attest to the achievement of convergent validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Hair et al. (1998) accentuated that factor loads of scale items should be more than 0.50 and above.

Frequency analysis was used to calculate the frequency, minimum, maximum and mean scores of data. Linear and logistic regression analysis was used to determine the effects between dependent and independent variables. Independent samples t-test was used in order to evaluate the difference between gender and fan identification. Independent samples t-test was also used between gender and moral disengagement. Linear regression analysis was used to determine the effect of fan identification on the

moral disengagement (dependent variable) and to determine the effect of age on the fan identification and moral disengagement (dependent variable). Logistic regression analysis was used to examine the effects of age, fan identification and moral disengagement on fan opinions (dependent variable).

As much as world football, there were also allegations in Turkish football concerning match-fixing and incentive payments. However, a concrete match-fixing and incentive payment case in 2011-2013 which was under investigation by the UEFA was completed. Two Turkish teams were found guilty. Despite accepting that there is match-fixing and incentive payment in Turkish football, some fans think these crimes are not executed by their team. In order to explain the differences in the moral values of fans, a three-item questionnaire was prepared with three academicians working in the field of sports and moral education. The three questions were about this specific case which was in the years between 2011 and 2013 and focused on fan identification and moral disengagement. The questions are as follows:

1. Do you think match fixing or incentive payment could have occurred in Turkish football?
2. Do you think that your team has ever got involved in match fixing or incentive payment?
3. Would you want your team to be penalized if it has got engaged in match fixing or incentive payment?

Answers to the questions are coded as 0 (Yes) and 1 (No).

## RESULTS

### Reliability and validity of SSIS in line with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

According to results of CFA performed for SSIS, the following has been found: RMSEA = 0.044, SRMR = 0.016,  $\chi^2/SD$  (10.53/7) = 1.50, CFI = 1.00, GFI = 0.99, AGFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.99, NNFI = 0.99. It can be put forward that the scale meets the criteria based on the findings (Schermelleh-Engel and Moosbrugger, 2003). As a result of CFA results carried out for SSIS, factor loadings of items are found to range between 0.58 and 0.91, the the average variance extracted (AVE) of the scale is 0.62 and the construct reliability (CR) is 0.92. These findings attest to the fact that the measurement tool is a reliable one (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 1998; Hatcher, 1994). Factor loadings exceeding 0.50 are deemed as pretty good for Hair et al. (1998: p 385). The factor loadings of all SSIS items are greater than 0.50 and their t-values are between 13.36 and 18.32, which warrant the validity of SSIS as a measurement instrument (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

### Reliability and validity of MDSS-S in the light of CFA

In the light of results obtained from confirmatory factor analysis conducted for MDSS-S, the following has been observed: RMSEA = 0.050, SRMR = 0.027,  $\chi^2/SD$ (34.71/18) = 1.50, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.98 AGFI = 0.95,

NFI = 0.98, NNFI = 0.99. It can be suggested that the scale fulfills all criteria depending on these findings (Schermelleh-Engel and Moosbrugger, 2003). As a result of CFA performed for MDSS-S as shown in Table 1, the factor loadings of items are found to range between 0.65 and 0.80, the AVE value of the scale is 0.53 and the construct reliability (CR) is 0.90, which testifies the reliability of the measurement tool (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 1998; Hatcher, 1994). Factor loadings greater than 0.50 are accepted as good for Hair et al. (1998: p 385). The factor loadings of MDSS-S are detected to vacillate between 0.65 and 0.80 in this research. The factor loadings of all SSIS items surpass 0.50 and their t-values are between 11.22 and 17.36. Therefore, MDSS-S can be said to be a valid measurement instrument according to the aforementioned findings (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

### Effects of age, team identification and moral disengagement

In relation to gender variable, male fans are found to foster higher levels of identification compared to female fans ( $t = -4.31$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). When it comes to moral disengagement, there is no statistically meaningful difference between males and females ( $t = -1.14$ ,  $p = 0.25$ ). Fan identification has been recognized to be positively correlated with moral disengagement ( $\beta = 0.27$ ,  $t = 8.93$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), which indicates that fans with higher team identification will have enhanced moral disengagement. The results of linear regression analysis confirm that the age of fans is negatively correlated with the level of identification and moral disengagement. As the age of fans increases, their level of identification drops substantially ( $\beta = -0.12$ ,  $t = -3.41$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). In a similar vein, as the age of fans soars, their degree of moral disengagement declines remarkably ( $\beta = -0.13$ ,  $t = -3.91$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). As the number of years fans are engaged with sports ascends, their identification level ( $\beta = 0.13$ ,  $t = 3.69$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) and moral disengagement level ( $\beta = 0.13$ ,  $t = 3.71$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) rise. The effects of variables such as gender, team identification and moral disengagement on the viewpoint of fans with respect to match fixing and incentive payment are depicted in Table 1.

In compliance with the findings of Table 1, gender and team identification affect views on match fixing/incentive payment in Turkish football, however moral disengagement has no impact on these. Male fans are more likely to think that there are occurrences of match fixing and incentive payments in Turkish football in comparison to female fans ( $\beta = 0.77$ ,  $\beta p = 2.16$ ). As the level of team identification rises, fans are more likely to think that there are match fixing and incentive payment incidents in Turkish football ( $\beta = 0.20$ ,  $\beta p = 1.22$ ).

Age, team identification and moral disengagement

**Table 1.** Logistic regression results for variables predicting fan opinions about match-fixing and incentive payments.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	$\beta$	Std. error	Wald	p	Exp( $\beta$ p)
Do you think match fixing or incentive payment could have occurred in Turkish football?	Gender	0.77	0.18	18.28	0.00	2.16
	Fan identification	0.20	0.06	12.06	0.00	1.22
	Moral disengagement	-0.03	0.07	0.22	0.64	0.97
Do you think that your team has ever got involved in match fixing or incentive payment?	Gender	0.99	0.15	43.13	0.00	2.70
	Fan identification	-0.22	0.04	23.80	0.00	0.80
	Moral disengagement	0.11	0.05	4.15	0.04	1.12
Would you want your team to be penalized if it has got engaged in match fixing or incentive payment?	Gender	0.52	0.15	11.66	0.00	1.68
	Fan identification	-0.34	0.05	37.09	0.00	0.71
	Moral disengagement	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.88	1.00

influence fans' thinking of match fixing and incentive payment of their favourite teams. Male fans are more likely to assume that match fixing and incentive payment take place compared to female fans ( $\beta= 0.99$ ,  $\beta p=2.70$ ). As the degree of team identification ascends, fans are less likely to think that their favourite team is involved in match fixing and incentive payment ( $\beta= -0.22$ ,  $\beta p=0.80$ ). Fans with high identification deny the match fixing and incentive payment of their teams even if these have been recorded. As the degree of moral disengagement of fans increases, fans tend to think that their teams resort to match fixing and incentive payment ( $\beta= 0.11$ ,  $\beta p= 1.12$ ).

Commensurate with the findings of this research, age and team identification have an impact on what fans think about the prospective penalties of their favourite teams. Male fans want their favourite team to be penalized more than female fans want if their team has undergone match fixing and incentive payment ( $\beta=0.52$   $\beta p=1.68$ ). A striking finding has been found in fans' identification with their teams. It has been observed that fans do not want their favourite team to get penalized as their extent of team identification increases ( $\beta= -0.34$ ,  $\beta p=0.71$ ). Fans with high identification do not want their team to be subject to any penalty even though the match fixing and incentive payment of their team are confirmed.

## DISCUSSION

The outcomes of the research have substantiated that male fans forge more team identification in comparison to female fans. In line with the global picture, male fans in Turkey show more interest in football and follow it more closely when compared to female fans. The fact that the most favourite sports in Turkey is football paves the way for developing team identification of fans. Although male fans tend to form more team identification, no difference

has been found between male and female fans in terms of moral disengagement.

This research also explains that the degree of team identification dwindles as the age of fans soars. It is because as fans age, they are less in need of adventure and excitement, allocate more time to social, cultural events and family time and shy away from crowded and risky atmospheres. Besides, as fans get older, they tend to cement more reasonable, realistic and fair sports spectatorship. Thus, their degree of moral disengagement falls. We can infer that when it comes to fans, moral disengagement plummets as age rises, but unsportsmanlike conducts enhance in line with age increase when it comes to players.

Another outcome of our research elucidates the fact that there is a positive correlation between fans' team identification and moral disengagement. The higher the identification of fans, the greater their moral disengagement. This finding reinforces the fact that fans with high identification are more conducive to accepting unethical conducts or conducts that violate rules. Based on these findings of the research, one can conclude that unethical conducts, deception and manipulation of referees can be acceptable for highly identified fans so as to win a match, tournament or a championship.

The research outcomes indicate that gender and fan identification affect opinions of fans with regards to match fixing and incentive payment in Turkish football. Male fans believe in the occurrence of match fixing and incentive payment in Turkish football 2.13 times more than female fans. Another outcome unearths the fact that the degree of identification results in a 1.12 increase in the belief that there occurs match fixing and incentive payment in Turkish football, which signifies that as fans get to be more identified, they follow their team and the league more closely and develop more concrete ideas on the current situation.

Highly identified fans do not accept their team's getting involved in any match fixing or incentive payment even if these cases have been proven and they do not want their team to be penalized because of these. As the level of identification increases, fans are less inclined to accept any penalty for their team, which arises out of an internal denial reaction to any sort of penalty. Such reaction of fans, even if it is unfair or untruthful in such circumstances, proves to be very significant in terms of demonstrating the commitment of fans to their team. Such an attitude of fans can be taken as their own internal reaction, but can also be interpreted as a result of the need to belong to a social group or to sustain relationship with other fans (Bandura, 2001). As mentioned earlier, fans do resort to BIRGing and CORFing when it comes to success and failure of their team (BIRGing-CORFing, Cialdini et al., 1976; Trail et al., 2012). It is a very important ethical issue in sports that fans with higher moral disengagement think that their team can deviate from ethical and moral rules in order to attain success. FIFA and UEFA arrange regulations so as to take precautions against corruption, unethical conducts and racism in football. Moreover, these institutions aim at reaching greater number of people via advertising with renowned players. They disseminate fair play and respect awards and strive to foreground ethical and humane behaviour in football. As for the situation in Turkey, there has been corruption for long years. There have been match fixing, incentive payments, unsportsmanlike conducts and acts of violent nature for many years, as well. Turkey's rank is 42 over 54 countries in football in UEFA Respect Fair Play Final Rankings 2014/2015 (UEFA, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

It is apparent that match fixing and incentive payment incidents are considered to be acceptable as team supporters get more and more identified with their teams. However, the fact that fans do not want their teams to be fined because of such incidents deserves attention as it breaches the ethics and fair play in sports. Compliance with the ethics and fair play understanding of sports by all stakeholders in football could contribute much to the development of football which has sociological, economic and cultural ramifications in the globe.

Sports, as an area for practicing moral values, plays a significant role in the moral development (Park, 2010) and the socialization (Long et al., 2008) of young people. Sport is a valued human practice (Arnold, 1994). Sport can play the important role in the formation and cultivation of moral character (Park, 2010). From the perspective of moral education, sport is evaluated as part of the curriculum. Moral education in sport provide for development of character and to the phenomenon of sportspersonship

(Arnold, 1994). Sport and physical education offer an effective area for the practicing of moral behavior (Park, 2010), such as fairness, impartiality, justice, honesty, compassion generosity and magnanimity (Arnold, 1997).

This research has clearly shown the importance of ethic and moral values on the physical education and sports. It must be recognized that athletes gain ethical behaviors by moral values, administered in circulum of sport education. Hence, it will be beneficial to plan more efficient and productive courses related to ethic and moral values on sport education.

## Conflict of interest

The author has not declared any conflict of interest

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