

An Assessment of the Attitudes of Three Big Football Teams' Supporters in Turkey towards Fanaticism

Mehmet Yalcin Tasmektepligil

Yasar Dogu Faculty of Sports Sciences, Ondokuz Mayis University, Turkey

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Abstract The purpose of this study is to evaluate the attitudes of the spectators of the three big football teams in Turkey towards being a supporter. The study was conducted on a total of 429 individuals who were members of the supporters unions of Beşiktaş, Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe teams, current champions of Turkey's Spor Toto Super League, which have a past of longer than one hundred years, or who were just supporters of these teams. The sample was chosen through the random sampling method. The 'Football Supporter Fanaticism Scale' (FSFS) developed by Taşmektepligil et al., was used in the study. The results of the study showed that attitudes about being a supporter showed significant differences in terms of the variables of 'gender, marital status, occupation, income, being in a supporter group and stand in the stadium'. It can be said that fanatic attitudes differed significantly among male, single individuals who had low incomes, who watched games behind the goal posts and who were in a supporter group. It was found that very few of the individuals who were included in this study were fanatics (4.2%; n = 18), while a great majority were supporters (30.8%; n = 132) and spectators (65.0%; n = 279). Of fanatic supporters, 1.6% (n = 7) were Beşiktaş supporters, while 0.7% (n = 3) were Galatasaray supporters and 1.9% (n = 8) were Fenerbahçe supporters. As a conclusion, it can be said that there are marginal individuals among the supporters of the three big clubs although in low numbers. Thus, precautions should be taken to prevent these individuals from becoming active in supporters unions and they should be periodically educated about acceptable supporter behaviours.

Keywords Education, Fanatic, Football, Supporter

1. Introduction

Today, football stands out as one of the most demanded sports branches in the world with an economy of more than 150 billion euros and involving one billion people [1, 2]. Spectators are inevitable elements of football's existence. It

was reported that each game of EURO 2016 was watched on TV by 150 million people and by a total of 2.5 million people in stadiums [3]. Within this supply and demand balance, football teams need to create a devoted mass of supporters so that the teams can become a sustainable trademark and increase their incomes [4]. Thus, within the developing football market, clubs try to create values with characteristics that attract the attention of existing and potential supporters and spectators [5].

All of these can be assessed as efforts to make a great number of individuals the sympathisers of the club. Actually, these practices are activities done by all sports clubs, and they also develop the psychological and emotional connections of individuals with the team. However, at this point it is very important for individuals to stay within the legal limits of sympathising with a team and being committed to a team. Otherwise, the society can be faced with a pathological mass of spectators that can harm the social integrity instead of healthy sympathisers. As a matter of fact, this mass of spectators, commonly called fanatics, causes many threatening and disturbing events in sports activities as a result of their tendency for violence [6-8]. Thus, for sport scientists, the analysis of fanaticism in studies conducted on football spectators is always among the up-to-date subjects worth researching [9-12].

As is the case around the world, the aggressive behaviours of some of the spectators in football stadiums in Turkey are very important in terms of preventing social integrity. This condition is always on the agenda of football authorities; therefore, knowing the fanaticism levels of spectators of clubs who harm sportive activities is very important in terms of providing information to decision makers about the precautions to take before competitions. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the fanaticism levels of supporters of the three big football clubs (Beşiktaş, Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe) in Turkey, which have been participants of the Turkish football world for more than a century.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Population and Sample

The pool of this study consists of individuals who are members of the supporters unions of the three big clubs in Turkey's Spor Toto Super League or who are just supporters of these teams. One of the criteria in determining the sample size of a research is the number of parameters to be predicted by the model, being at least ten times bigger than the sample size. Some researchers have stated that in data sets that are normally distributed, it is enough for the sample size to be five times bigger than the number of items [13].

For this reason, the number of individuals included in the study (429) is more than the minimum number of samples (number of items*10, 13*10 = 130). Thus, the sample of the study consists of a total of 429 individuals chosen randomly among supporters of Beşiktaş (n = 160), Galatasaray (n = 118) and Fenerbahçe (n = 151), which made up the Turkey Spor Toto Super League during the 2014–2015 season. Of the participants, 38 (8.9%) were female, while 391 (91.1%) were male. The study was conducted not on normal spectator groups but on individuals, most of whom were members of supporters unions or who watched games next to these individuals in the same stands. While 62.2% (n = 267) of these individuals were members of a supporters union, 37.8% (n = 162) were not members of a supporters union.

2.2. Data Collection Tool

In order to determine the attitudes of the sample about being a supporter, the 'Football Supporter Fanaticism Scale' (FSFS) developed by Taşmektepligil was used [14]. The scale consisted of a total of 13 items prepared in a 4-point Likert-type scale (Strongly agree = 1, Agree = 2, Disagree = 3, Strongly disagree = 4). The first eight items of the scale, the first factor, express the supporters' 'thought and action tendencies of violence'. The last five items of the scale, the second factor, express the supporters' 'attitudes towards institutional belonging'.

The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of FSFS was found to be $\alpha = 0.852$. Factor analysis was conducted to test the construct validity of the scale. The factor loads of the items in the scale were found to be between 0.519 and 0.762. It was concluded from the results of KMO (0.846) and Bartlett's test (1504.49) that the factor

analysis was interpretable. According to fanaticism scale criteria, if the total scores of the individuals were between 13 and 21, they were concluded to be 'fans', if the scores were between 22 and 30, they were concluded to be 'supporters' and if the scores were found to be between 31 and 52, they were concluded to be 'spectators'. It can be said that as the scores of both dimensions and also total scores increased, individual teams' dependence decreased.

2.3. Data Analysis

After the descriptive statistics of research results were conducted according to FSFS criteria, differences between the participants' genders, marital status and the state of being in a supporter group were analysed by Mann-Whitney U test, while differences between education, occupation, income and stand in the stadium were analysed by Kruskal-Wallis H test. In addition, the distribution of the attitudes of participants about being a supporter in terms of all these characteristics was analysed by Chi-Squared (χ^2) test.

3. Results

In this study, participants' attitudes about being a supporter were statistically analysed in terms of gender, marital status, being a member of a supporter group, education, occupation, income and stand in the stadium and significant associations were determined. The subscale scores of Football Supporter Fanaticism Scale (FSFS) for the supporters in terms of gender, marital status, being member of a supporter group, occupational status, income, the place of stand in the stadium and teams were given as sample size (n), mean with standard deviation, median, interquartile range (IQR), minimum and maximum values in Table 1-7, respectively. The results of Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there were the significant differences among the subscale scores of Football Supporter Fanaticism Scale (FSFS) in terms of the examined social-demographic characteristics of the supporters (Table 1-7). Since an individual's attitudes about being supporters were not found to be significant in terms of level of education, their tables are not presented.

Table 1. Mann Whitney U test results of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of gender

Dimensions	Gender	n	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	Med	IQR	Min	Max	P
Institutional belonging	Male	391	11.37±4.26	11.00	8.00	6.00	24.00	0.017
	Female	38	14.29±3.25	14.00	4.25	8.00	21.00	
Thought and action tendencies of violence	Male	391	22.12±4.29	22.00	6.00	7.00	28.00	<0.001
	Female	38	23.87±4.36	26.00	6.25	14.00	28.00	
Total score	Male	391	33.49±7.32	34.00	11.00	13.00	52.00	<0.001
	Female	38	38.16±6.10	38.00	9.75	26.00	49.00	

In the study, spectators' attitudes about being a supporter showed statistically significant difference in terms of gender in both dimensions and in total score. According to results, it can be said that women's belonging is lower (Table 1).

Table 2. Mann Whitney U test results of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of marital status

Dimensions	Marital Status	n	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	Med	IQR	Min	Max	P
Institutional belonging	Married	231	13.18±3.77	14.00	6.00	6.00	24.00	<0.001
	Single	198	9.82±4.08	8.00	7.00	6.00	21.00	
Thought and action tendencies of violence	Married	231	23.25±4.22	24.00	6.00	7.00	28.00	<0.001
	Single	198	21.14±4.17	21.00	6.00	7.00	28.00	
Total score	Married	231	36.43±6.60	37.00	11.00	18.00	52.00	<0.001
	Single	198	30.95±7.05	30.00	10.00	13.00	49.00	

There is significant difference in spectators’ attitudes about being a supporter in terms of marital status. Single spectators show more belonging when compared with married viewers (Table 2).

Table 3. Mann Whitney U test results of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of being member of a supporter group

Dimensions	Being member of a supporter group	n	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	Med	IQR	Min	Max	P
Institutional belonging	Yes	267	10.60±3.96	10.00	7.00	6.00	23.00	<0.001
	No	162	13.33±4.20	14.00	6.00	6.00	24.00	
Thought and action tendencies of violence	Yes	267	21.64±4.14	22.00	6.00	7.00	28.00	<0.001
	No	162	23.32±4.28	24.00	6.00	7.00	28.00	
Total score	Yes	267	32.24±7.01	32.00	10.00	13.00	51.00	<0.001
	No	162	36.65±7.04	37.00	10.00	16.00	52.00	

As can be seen from Table 3, being member of a supporter group increases individuals’ belonging significantly.

Table 4. Kruskal Wallis H test results of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of occupation

Dimensions	Occupation	n	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	Med	IQR	Min.	Max.	P
Institutional belonging	Officer	124	13.55±3.79 ^a	14.00	5.75	6.00	24.00	<0.001
	Employee	83	12.30±4.06 ^a	13.00	6.00	6.00	23.00	
	Self-employed	125	12.22±3.89 ^a	13.00	6.00	6.00	23.00	
	Student	87	7.36±2.24 ^b	6.00	2.00	6.00	15.00	
	Others	10	12.10±4.75 ^a	12.00	8.50	6.00	21.00	
Thought and action tendencies of violence	Officer	124	23.80±4.03 ^a	25.00	6.00	12.00	28.00	<0.001
	Employee	83	22.66±4.12 ^{ab}	23.00	6.00	11.00	28.00	
	Self-employed	125	21.94±4.51 ^{ab}	22.00	4.00	7.00	28.00	
	Student	87	20.15±3.65 ^b	20.00	4.00	7.00	27.00	
	Others	10	23.10±5.00 ^a	25.50	7.75	13.00	28.00	
Total score	Officer	124	37.34±6.39 ^a	37.50	9.00	19.00	52.00	<0.001
	Employee	83	34.95±6.75 ^a	35.00	10.00	18.00	51.00	
	Self-employed	125	34.15±7.13 ^a	34.00	12.00	18.00	50.00	
	Student	87	27.51±4.10 ^b	27.00	6.00	13.0	41.00	
	Others	10	35.20±8.59 ^a	36.50	14.50	19.00	46.00	

The significant difference in participants’ FSFS scale is caused by student groups. No significance was found in other occupation groups (Table 4)

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis H test results of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of income

Dimensions	Income	n	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	Med	IQR	Min.	Max.	P
Institutional belonging	≥1000 TL	90	8.16±3.42 ^c	6.00	3.00	6.00	22.00	<0.001
	1001-2000 TL	171	11.64±3.98 ^b	11.00	7.00	6.00	21.00	
	≥2001 TL	168	13.48±3.76 ^a	14.00	5.00	6.00	24.00	
Thought and action tendencies of violence	≥1000 TL	90	19.94±3.73 ^b	20.00	4.00	7.00	28.00	<0.001
	1001-2000 TL	171	22.30±4.13 ^a	22.00	6.00	9.00	28.00	
	≥2001 TL	168	23.50±4.32 ^a	25.00	6.00	7.00	28.00	
Total score	≥1000 TL	90	28.10±6.18 ^c	27.00	6.25	13.00	48.00	<0.001
	1001-2000 TL	171	33.94±6.38 ^b	34.00	9.00	18.00	49.00	
	≥2001 TL	168	36.98±6.96 ^a	38.00	9.00	19.00	52.00	

TL= Turkish Lira

The results of the study show statistical difference between FSFS scores in terms of income. As the level of income decreases, FSFS scores also decrease (Table 5).

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis H test results of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of the place of stand in the stadium

Dimensions	The place of stand in the stadium	n	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	Med	IQR	Min.	Max.	P
Institutional belonging	Bleacher	115	12.36±3.73 ^a	13.00	6.00	6.00	22.00	<0.001
	Grandstand	149	13.05±4.28 ^a	14.00	6.50	6.00	24.00	
	Goal post back	165	9.84±3.96 ^b	8.00	7.00	6.00	19.00	
Thought and action tendencies of violence	Bleacher	115	22.39±4.01 ^{ab}	22.00	7.00	11.00	28.00	<0.001
	Grandstand	149	23.36±4.61 ^a	25.00	6.00	7.00	28.00	
	Goal post back	165	21.21±4.02 ^b	21.00	5.00	7.00	28.00	
Total score	Bleacher	115	34.75±6.41 ^a	35.00	10.00	18.00	49.00	<0.001
	Grandstand	149	36.42±7.60 ^a	37.00	13.00	19.00	52.00	
	Goal post back	165	31.05±6.73 ^b	31.00	10.00	13.00	46.00	

Statistically significant difference was found between participants' FSFS scale scores in terms of the place of stand in the stadium. The spectators at goal post back had lower scores than the others (Table 6). On the other hand, the results of the study showed that Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş supporters were more devoted to their teams (Table 7).

Table 7. Kruskal Wallis H test results in terms of supporters' scores from the scale

Teams	n	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	Med	IQR	Min	Max	P
Beşiktaş	160	33.26±7.44 _b	33.00	11.00	18.00	51.00	<0.001
Galatasaray	118	36.16±7.26 _a	37.00	11.00	18.00	52.00	
Fenerbahçe	151	32.80±6.92 _b	34.00	10.00	13.00	52.00	

The distributions of the social-demographic characteristics of the supporters in terms of gender, marital status, occupational status, income, the place of stand in the stadium, being member of a supporter group and teams were given as sample size (n) and percentage (%) in Table 8-14, respectively. The results of chi-square analyses showed that the status of audience statistically depends on the gender, marital status, occupational status, income, the place of stand in the stadium, being member of a supporter group and teams of the supporters (Table 8-14).

Table 8. Distribution of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of gender

Status of audience	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
Fanatic	18	4.6	0	0	18	4.2
Team supporter	128	32.7	4	10.5	132	30.8
Spectator	245	62.7	34	89.5	279	65.0
Total	391	91.1	38	8.9	429	100.0

 $\chi^2=11.131; P=0.004$

No fan groups were found among women. In addition, it was found that a great majority of women (85%) were only spectators (Table 8).

Table 9. Distribution of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of marital status

Status of audience	Marital status				Total	
	Married		Single		n	%
	n	%	N	%		
Fanatic	4	1.7	14	7.1	18	4.2
Team supporter	42	18.2	90	45.5	132	30.8
Spectator	185	80.1	94	47.5	279	65.0
Total	231	53.8	198	46.2	429	100.0

$\chi^2=50.451; P<0.001$

According to the results of the study, the single were more devoted to their teams (fans and team supporters) when compared with the married (Table 9).

Table 10. Distribution of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of occupational status

Status of audience	Occupational status										Total	
	Officer		Employee		Self-employed		Student		Others		n	%
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%		
Fanatic	1	0.8	3	3.6	6	4.8	7	8.0	1	10.0	18	4.2
Team supporter	17	13.7	19	22.9	33	26.4	61	70.1	2	20.0	132	30.8
Spectator	106	85.5	61	73.5	86	68.8	19	21.8	7	70.0	279	65.0
Total	124	28.9	83	19.3	125	29.1	87	20.3	10	2.3	429	100.0

$\chi^2=99.931; P<0.001$

Students' FSFS scored were lower than those of other occupations. In other words, it can be seen that fanaticism attitude dependent on the variable of being a student (Table 10)

Table 11. Distribution of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of income

Status of audience	Income status						Total	
	≥1000 TL		1001-2000 TL		≥2001 TL		n	%
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Fanatic	8	8.9	5	2.9	5	3.0	18	4.2
Team supporter	60	66.7	44	25.7	28	16.7	132	30.8
Spectator	22	24.4	122	71.3	135	80.4	279	65.0
Total	90	21.0	171	39.9	168	39.2	429	100.0

$\chi^2=85.853; P<0.001$

Similarly, there is a dependency between income and FSFS scale scores. As income decreases, fanatic attitudes increase (Table 11).

Table 12. Distribution of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of the place of stand in the stadium

Status of audience	The place of stand in the stadium						Total	
	Bleacher		Grandstand		Goal post back		n	%
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Fanatic	3	2.6	4	2.7	11	6.7	18	4.2
Team supporter	28	24.3	34	22.8	70	42.4	132	30.8
Spectator	84	73.0	111	74.5	84	50.9	279	65.0
Total	115	26.8	149	34.7	165	38.5	429	100.0

$\chi^2=24.036; P<0.001$

The place of stand causes a change in individuals' FSFS scores. The scores of spectators at the goal post back were found to be lower (Table 12).

Table 13. Distribution of attitudes about being a supporter in terms of being member of a supporter group

Status of audience	Being member of a supporter group				Total	
	Yes		No		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
Fanatic	13	4.9	5	3.1	18	4.2
Team supporter	107	40.1	25	15.4	132	30.8
Spectator	147	55.1	132	81.5	279	65.0
Total	267	62.2	162	37.8	429	100.0

$$\chi^2=31.488; P<0.001$$

Table 14. Distribution of spectators in teams in terms of their status

Teams	Status of audience							
	Fanatic (13-21 point)		Supporter (22-30)		Spectator (31-52)		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Beşiktaş	7	4,4	57	35,6	96	60,0	160	37,3
Galatasaray	3	2,5	24	20,3	91	77,1	118	27,5
Fenerbahçe	8	5,3	51	33,8	92	60,9	151	35,2
Total	18	4,2	132	30,8	279	65,0	429	100,0

$$\chi^2=10.725; P<0.030 \text{ dependency rate } \%15,62 \text{ status of audience varies depending on the teams.}$$

In the study, another variable that determines individuals' attitudes about being a supporter is being member of a supporter group. According to these results, being member of a supporter group strengthens belonging to a team (Table 13).

In the study, changes were found in three big clubs' spectators' feelings of devotion to the team. Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş supporters were found to have lower scores than Galatasaray supporters (Table 14).

4. Discussion

Spectators are inevitable elements of football's existence. Spectators of football are both the guarantee of the economic presence of football companies with their supporter activities and they also increase the possibility of the realisation of their purposes within the television and advertisement industries. Thus, while football viewers are psychologically satisfied, discharged, relaxed, rested and amused through the help of their supporter activities, they also contribute to the development of the football sector [15].

While the rules of economics apply during the process, sometimes uncontrolled and detrimental rivalries develop and spectators play a basic role in the emergence of many negative events. In fact, supporters are born and raised in an atmosphere imposed upon them by the place and the time in which they live. If these conditions can be sufficiently controlled, marginal supporter behaviours can be relatively prevented. In order to be able to prevent aggressive behaviours of supporters, primarily media and referees, footballers, supporters, unions and club/federation authorities and the state need to work together [8].

If being a supporter means supporting a team within

acceptable limits with no extremism, it can be seen as a necessary aspect of socialising and it should even be encouraged. However, if the feelings of being a supporter reach the level of fanaticism and begin to hurt other people, this should be taken as a sign that sports has become not a tool but a purpose in the development of individuals and the society [16]. In this respect, when being devoted to a sports club becomes fanaticism, this may cause serious behavioural disorders and social problems. Although researchers analyse many different aspects of supporters, one of the predominant topics of interest remains supporter aggression. Thus, sport scientists have focused on the aggressiveness and violent reactions of supporters [17, 18].

In this study, while no statistical difference was found in the state of being a supporter in terms of the variable of education, significant difference was found in both dimension scores and total score in terms of the variables of gender and marital status (Table 1, Table 2). It can be said that the state of being a supporter varies in terms of gender and marital status (Table 8, Table 9). Here it can be said that men are more devoted to their teams than women while married men are more devoted than single men. Likewise, the average scores of spectators in a supporter group are significantly lower when compared with others. While this result does not mean that being a member of a supporter group causes individuals to become fanatics, it reinforces the idea that in time it can lead individuals to develop fanatical attitudes (Table 3). Thus, attitudes of individuals about being a supporter can differ significantly based on the variable of being a member of a supporter group (Table 13).

At the same time, it was found that attitudes about being a supporter showed statistically significant differences in terms of the variables of occupation and income. In the

occupation group, the students with the lowest score are significantly different in the sub dimension of ‘action tendencies of violence’ except for the employee and self-employed group (Table 4). Here, it can be understood that fanatic groups are mostly students, followed by the self-employed group (Table 10). Thus, fanaticism shows a significant change in terms of the state of being a student. Similarly, spectators’ attitudes about being a supporter also differ according to the status of income. Individuals with the lowest income were found to get the lowest score from the scale (Table 5). This means that as the levels of income decrease, spectators begin to tend to move towards fanaticism from being a supporter (Table 11). Some researchers have reported significant increases in the tendencies of participating in events as individuals’ economic levels decreased [19-22].

According to the study, another parameter that influences the attitudes of individuals about being a supporter is the place of the stand in the stadium (Table 6). Fanaticism differs according to the place from which the game is viewed (Table 12). In fact, individuals usually comply with commonly accepted standards; however, they do not behave in that manner when they are in a group [23]. In this respect, the behaviours of supporters in a group are of primary importance, and it is important to educate these supporters so that they can adopt acceptable behaviour patterns.

This study determined the statistical differences between the attitudes of spectators from three long-established clubs (Table 7). Here, it can be stated that Beşiktaş and Fenerbahçe supporters are more devoted to their teams when compared with Galatasaray supporters. Thus, the characteristics of spectators differ according to teams and they contain a 15% level of devotion (Table 14).

In conclusion, it is well known that football is one of the most common and most popular sports in Turkey; also, in comparison with other sports, it has the largest number of fans and spectators. Very few spectators from three respectable, long-established clubs can be defined as being fanatics. However, these rates can always increase due to interaction between groups. The condition of fanaticism could be attributed to the social learning theory that values the environmental factor in the cognitive process of aggression. The presented results may be of help to football teams’ administrators to control the incidence of fanaticism.

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