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THE INTERACTION OF FANATICISM AND EFANGELISM IN FOOTBALL: STRUCTURAL MODEL REVIEW

VPLIV FANATIZMA IN EFANGELISMA V NOGOMETU: PREGLED STRUKTURNEGA MODELA

ABSTRACT

In football, the fans can be qualified as the tremendous power of teams that are thought to have a significant share in the success. The fans support their team both materially and morally by integrating with the team emotionally. Sometimes, the emotional bond possessed goes beyond the normal and results in the understanding of seeing one's team as superior to other teams. This research aims to examine the interaction between football fans' fanaticism and football team evangelism (eFANgelism). As part of the study group of the research, 448 football fans participated. Research data were collected with the football fanaticism scale and the sports eFANgelism scale. In the study, comparisons were made between fanaticism and eFANgelism in terms of the variables of the participants. Among the models created in the research, it was suggested that $Model_1$= football fans' eFANgelism levels had a positive effect on their fanaticism, $Model_2$= violence tendency and corporate affiliation had a positive effect on eFANgelism, and the hypothesis was tested. As a result of testing the hypotheses, H_1= eFANgelism has a two-way positive and significant effect on the violence tendency of football fans ($p<0.01*$). H_2= eFANgelism has a two-way positive and significant effect on the corporate affiliation of football fans ($p<0.01*$). As a result; While the eFANgelism status of the fans had a significant two-way interaction on the tendency to violence, a one-way positive and significant effect of eFANgelism on the corporate affiliation of football fans was found ($p<0.01$).

Keywords: Football fan, Fanaticism, Sports eFANgelism

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IZVLEČEK

V nogometu lahko navijače označimo kot ogromno moč ekip, ki naj bi imela pomemben delež pri uspehu. Navijači svojo ekipo podpirajo tako materialno kot moralno, saj se z njo čustveno povezujejo. Včasih čustvena vez, ki jo imajo, presega običajne okvire in povzroči razumevanje, da svojo ekipo vidijo kot boljšo od drugih ekip. Namen te raziskave je preučiti interakcijo med fanatizmom nogometnih navijačev in eFANgelismom nogometne ekipe. V raziskavi je sodelovalo 448 nogometnih navijačev, podatki so bili zbrani z lestvico nogometnega fanatizma in lestvico športnega eFANgelizma. V raziskavi so bile opravljene primerjave med fanatizmom in eFANgelizmom. Med modeli, ustvarjenimi v raziskavi, je bilo predlagano, da Model1= stopnja eFANgelizma nogometnih navijačev pozitivno vpliva na njihov fanatizem, Model2= nagnjenost k nasilju in pripadnost pozitivno vplivata na eFANgelizem,. Kot rezultat testiranja hipotez ima H2= eFANgelizem dvosmerno pozitiven in pomemben učinek na nagnjenost k nasilju nogometnih navijačev (p<0,01*). H1= eFANgelizem ima dvosmeren pozitiven in pomemben učinek na korporativno pripadnost nogometnih navijačev (p<0,01*). Medtem ko je imel status eFANgelizma navijačev pomembno dvosmerno interakcijo na nagnjenost k nasilju, je bil ugotovljen enosmeren pozitiven in pomemben učinek eFANgelizma na korporativno pripadnost nogometnih navijačev (p<0,01).

Ključne besede: Nogometni navijači, fanatizem, eFANgelism

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INTRODUCTION

Sports are one of the social phenomena with the most social reciprocity in the world. For this reason, almost all political powers around the world use sports today, as in history, as a tool to bring people together, remove some social barriers and to make people embrace their ideologies. In addition, sports also play an important role in improving the gap between people, thanks to its structure that attracts millions of people and eliminates cultural differences (Wiid and Cant, 2015). The information provided so far constitute some of the widely known sociological dimensions of sports. Also, another important aspect of sports, which is just as important and which has a very high social reciprocity, is the dimension of "club fans". Many obstacles that come out of the way with sports provide the formation of a social structure that emerges as "fans" with their appearance as having the same emotional feelings and team spirit and enabling people who love sports achieve social integration. This social structure has reached different dimensions in the process and emerged as a visual show by integrating into the aesthetic side of sports and emerged as a cultural space and an economic sector by adding a different meaning to sports. Likewise, with an increase in the audience potential of sports, it has become an important sector; After the 1970s fans' spending increased significantly in America, reaching up to 4.9 million $ until the '90s (Capella, 2002). Today these figures are unpredictable. With its different aspects, the concept of fans has brought a different dimension to the world of sports and as we mentioned above, it has become the subject of sociological research as a new social field.

In short, sports fans are people who are interested in and follow a sports team or an athlete. In other words, sports fans consist of people who reinforce their identity as fans by exhibiting supportive and repetitive consumption behaviours related to the sports team they are passionate about (Mastromartino, Chou and Zhang, 2018). However, the behaviour of the audience, i.e. sports fans, is very broad and it represents one of the most universal leisure time activities of the society. From buying tickets and buying products to tweeting about the performance of the team or subscribing to a TV package specific to sports, the relationship between a fan and his favourite team can lead to a wide range of behaviours (Dwyer, Lecrom and Greenhalgh, 2018). Sports fans engage in certain behaviours such as participating in competitions, cheering, learning and sharing information about the team they support and dressing according to the colours of the team they support. Fans with a higher level of loyalty are more likely to participate in competitions (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). A fan may follow a player, a team or a sport in particular. Researchers state that sports fans are categorised in different ways (such as

temporary fans, loyal fans, fanatic fans and hooligans). This different categorisation is based on motivational differences between fans (Hunt et al. 1999). Also, many sports fans call their favourite teams by different names due to the bond they have established. This is important in terms of identifying the level of the identity of sports fans' and determining the strength of their bond with the team (Dietz-Uhler and Lanter, 2008).

Among the fans participating in all kinds of sports activities, of course, it is necessary to open a separate parenthesis to sports fans. Soccer fans have a different look than other fan groups. Because the century we live in represents a period in which the influence and attraction power of the game of soccer reached the highest levels in the journey of the history of humankind. In addition to this, the entertainment civilization we live in turns soccer into a culture of entertainment, it also seems to be intertwined with many social sectors from social solidarity to violence, from ideological influences to economy. For this reason, soccer is an important indicator in understanding and evaluating today's people. In addition, people who become members of a social group under the name of "fans" for various reasons feel safe by getting rid of the psycho-social problems brought by modernity such as loneliness and alienation (Yüksekbilgili, 2017).

As can be seen from the information given above, the relationship between soccer and fans is a multifaceted discussion topic. Similarly, in Turkey as one of the most important elements of soccer, the issue of being a sports fan is an important area that needs to be explored in various contexts. In this regard, limiting the scope of this research, analysing the relationship between the levels of the fanaticism of a group of soccer fans in Turkey and the levels of soccer team efangelism are the objectives of this research.

Similar studies (Göktaş and Tarakçı, 2020; Atabaş Güven, 2019; Yaşar and Turğut, 2019), mentioned the relation of the concept of efangelism on purchasing or associated it with the concepts of being a fanatic or a supporter by bringing up the multifactorial structure of the scale. In this study, a relationship was established between the efangelism states of soccer team fans and the tendency to violence and a sense of institutional belonging. In addition, Brendan Dwyer, who developed the sports team efangelism scale, was contacted and asked whether the scale was aimed at assessing the sense of belonging towards the team or the sports consumer. After receiving the answer that the scale was suitable for use in terms of measuring both characteristics, unlike other studies, the current study was based on the assessment of the two-

way interaction between the sense of belonging to the team and the tendency of violence, which is one of the indicators related to fanaticism, and the sense of institutional belonging.

Fanaticism, in many fields from religion to politics, from entertainment to fashion, is the excessive emotion of a person and dedicating himself to the person or phenomenon in question. Today, this concept mostly refers to a situation where we encounter in the field of sports, especially in soccer. This is due to the emergence of soccer fans as a type of community that expresses a micro-economic representation of society, brought about by the popular soccer culture that has spread all over the world. For this group, there are two functions of being a fan. The first is that it evokes a sense of belonging to somewhere, a community or a group; the other is tolerating behaviours evoked by the word fanatic that would not be accepted by society when done in other environments, these ways of behaviour find a way out under the identity of being a fan (Eker, 2010).

The eFANgelism in sports is a concept used to remark sports fans' intention to keep their teams superior to other teams and to indicate their commitment to their teams (Dwyer, LeCrom, & Greenhalgh, 2015).

METHODS

Research Model

In this research, exploratory correlational design, one of the correlational research methods, was used. Exploratory correlation studies are used to try to understand a significant event by analyzing the relationships between variables (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017).

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1= eFANgelism has a positive and significant effect on the violence tendency of football fans ($p < 0.01^*$).

Hypothesis 2= eFANgelism has a two-way positive and significant effect on the corporate affiliation of football fans ($p < 0.01^*$).

Data Collection Tools

Football Fan Fanaticism Scale

The first of the data collection tools in this research is the football supporter fanaticism scale developed by Taşüstüpligil, Çankaya, and Tunç (2015). The scale is intended to evaluate the fanaticism of football fans. It consists of 13 items and two sub-factors. While the first sub-factor represents the tendency to think and act towards violence, which includes the first eight questions; the second sub-factor is defined as the corporate affiliation sub-factor consisting of the last five questions. The scale is a likert type scale. The scale is formed in four options: a) Strongly agree", "b) Agree", "c) Disagree", and "d) Strongly disagree. The Cronbach Alpha value obtained after the reliability analysis was found to be 0.875.

eFANgelism Scale

Another data collection tool used in the research is the sports fan efangelism scale, which was developed by Dwyer, Greenhalgh, and LeCrom (2015) and adapted into Turkish by Yüksekbilgili (2017). The scale has a total of 13 questions and 4 sub-factors. The scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale. Answers are formed as 1= strongly disagree 5= strongly disagree. The sub-factors of the scale were named as factor 1. advocate factor 2. advertising factor 3. provocation, and factor 4 as assimilation. After the factor analysis, it was adapted as 12 questions and a single factor. The reliability value of the scale was found to be .936.

Data Analysis

In the research, first of all, a normality test was performed. In the normality test, it was assumed that the data showed a normal distribution since the values of skewness and kurtosis took rates between -2 and +2 (George & Mallery, 2010). Another method applied for the analysis of normality is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method. The rates obtained as a result of both methods confirmed that the data showed normal distribution. Parametric analysis techniques were applied to the normally distributed data. Independent sample t-test was used for pairwise comparisons, and one-way ANOVA was used for multiple comparisons. The Pearson correlation analysis method was used to evaluate the relationship between variables. In terms of validity in the research, another method used for the analysis of the research data is the structural equation modeling method. Structural equation modeling (SEM), also known as path analysis, is a method regularly used to represent multivariate data (controversial "causal"

relationship) in behavioral and social sciences (Hoyle, 1995; McDonald & Ho, 2002; Ullman & Bentler, 2006).

Research Group

448 football fans participated in the research. It is seen that the supporters participating in the research (n=320 male 71.4%, n=128 female 28.6%) have the following characteristics: Being a member of a fan association (n= yes 120 26.8%, no n=328 73.2%), frequency of going to the matches (once a month or longer n=128 30.8%, every week n= 246 54% .9, every two or three weeks n=64 14.3%), purchasing products with the logo of their team (yes n=360 80.4%, no n=88 19.6%) sharing content about their team on social media (yes n=195 43.5%, sometimes n=159 35.5%, no n=62 13.8% and never n=32%7.1), the teams supported by the fans (Beşiktaş n=63 14.1%, Fenerbahçe n= 165 36.8%, Galatasaray n=140 31.3%, Trabzonspor n=46 10.3%, and Other teams n=34 7.6%). Since the structural equation modeling method was used in the study, N≥400 was taken as the reference sample number (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003). In addition, the number of 384 sports fans was reached as a result of the calculations according to the 95% confidence interval and 5% error rate for calculating the sample size.

RESULTS

Table 1. Validity Test Results Regarding Measurement Tools.

Scales	X^2/Df	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	CFI	IFI	NNFI
Fanaticism Scale	2,725	*,062*	,971	,936	,982	,982	,972
Efangelism Scale	2,156	,051	,974	,949	,987	,988	,977

According to the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the data collection tools used in the study in Table 1, the fit values of the football supporter fanaticism scale and the sports team efangelism scale are similar to the fit values in the literature. According to the results obtained, it is understood that the measurement tools are valid (Bayram, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2015).

Table 2. Reliability, Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis Values and Kolmogorov-Smirnov Values of Scales.

Scales Used in the Research	Reliability Coefficient	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
1.Efangelism	,916	3,05	1,210	-,120	-1,156	,949
2.Fanaticism	**,845**	**2,83**	**,718**	**-,447**	**-,381**	**,963**

In Table 2, the normality values of the scales used in the research are given. According to the results obtained, it is understood that the data have reliable values and the data show a normal distribution (Skewness and Kurtosis values are between +2 and -2 values). In addition, the value obtained according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test result shows that the data are suitable with the normal distribution ($p>0.05$).

Table 3. Correlation Analysis Results for Scales.

Scale and Sub-Factors Used in the Research	1	2	3	4
1.Efangelism	1			
2.Fanaticism	,128**	1		
3.Tendency to Violence	,116**	,801**	1	
4.Corporate Affiliation	**,090****	**,808****	**,294****	**1**

P<0,01*

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that there is a low-intensity positive and significant relationship between football fans' efangelism levels and fanaticism levels ($p<0.01$**).

Table 4. Comparison of the Levels of Efangelism and Fanaticism by the Gender of the Fans.

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	P
1.Efangelism	Female	128	2,99	1,133	-,62	,532
	Male	320	3,07	1,240		
2.Fanaticism	Female	128	3,13	,590	6,29	,000*
	Male	320	2,71	,731		
3.Tendency to Violence	Female	128	2,66	,768	5,79	,000*
	Male	320	2,14	,887		
4.Corporate Affiliation	Female	128	3,61	,792	3,62	,000*
	Male	**320**	**3,29**	**,927**		

As a result of the comparison of the efangelism and fanaticism levels of the fans participating in the research according to gender in Table 4, no significant differences were observed between the efangelism levels of the fans (p>0.05). However, significant differences were found in fanaticism and its sub-factors (p<0.05).

Table 5. Comparison of the Levels of Efangelism and Fanaticism according to the Fans' Frequency of Attending the Matches.

	Frequency of Attending the Matches	N	Mean	SD	f	P	Sig. Dif.
Efangelism	1.Once a month or longer	138	2,90	1,126			
	2.Every week	246	3,10	1,317	1,60	,203	
	3.Every two to three months	64	3,16	,898			
	Total	448	3,05	1,210			
Fanaticism	1.Once a month or longer	138	3,17	,667			
	2.Every week	246	2,61	,692	32,7	,00*	1-2
	3.Every two to three months	64	2,99	,601			2-3
	Total	448	2,83	,718			
Tendency to Violence	1.Once a month or longer	138	2,75	,795			
	2.Every week	246	1,97	,847	43,1	,00*	1-2
	3.Every two to three months	64	2,49	,703			2-3
	Total	448	2,29	,886			
Corporate Affiliation	1.Once a month or longer	138	3,58	,824			
	2.Every week	246	3,24	,938	7,11	,01*	1-2
	3.Every two to three months	64	3,50	,827			
	Total	**448**	**3,38**	**,901**			

As a result of the comparison of the levels of efangelism and fanaticism of the fans participating in the research in terms of the frequency of attending to the matches in Table 5, there were no significant differences between the levels of efangelism of the fans (p>0.05), while significant differences were found in fanaticism and its sub-factors (p<0.05).

Table 6. Comparison of the Fanaticism and Efangelism Levels of the Fans according to the Status of Being a Member of the Fan Association and Purchasing Products with the Team Logo.

			N	Mean	SD	t	P
Being a Member of the Fan Association	1.Efangelism	Yes	120	2,77	1,482	-2,55	,012*
		No	328	3,15	1,078		
	2.Fanaticism	Yes	120	2,31	,668	-10,22	,00*
		No	328	3,03	,636		
	3.Tendency to Violence	Yes	120	1,66	,784	-10,08	,00*
		No	328	2,52	,806		
	4.Corporate Affiliation	Yes	120	2,96	,924	-5,99	,00*
		No	328	3,54	,842		
Purchasing Products with the Team Logo	1.Efangelism	Yes	360	3,08	1,205	,968	,333
		No	88	2,94	1,228		
	2.Fanaticism	Yes	360	2,71	,662	-8,00	,00*
		No	88	3,35	,715		
	3.Tendency to Violence	Yes	360	2,08	,795	-11,35	,00*
		No	88	3,13	,719		
	4.Corporate Affiliation	Yes	360	3,34	,913	-2,23	,027*
		No	**88**	**3,56**	**,832**		

In Table 6, significant differences were determined as a result of the comparison made with efangelism, fanaticism, and sub-factors according to the status of being a member of the Fan Association and purchasing products with the logo of their team (p<0.05).

Table 7. Comparison of Fanaticism and Efangelism Levels According to the Teams supported by the Fans.

	Supported Team	N	Mean	SD	f	P	Sig.Dif
Efangelism	1.Beşiktaş	63	2,95	1,17			
	2.Fenerbahçe	165	3,05	1,24	,347	,846	
	3.Galatasaray	140	3,10	1,12			
	4.Others	34	2,98	1,45			
	5.Trabzonspor	46	3,13	1,19			
	Total	448	3,05	1,21			
Fanaticism	1.Beşiktaş	63	2,96	,754			1-4
	2.Fenerbahçe	165	2,66	,743	12,8	,000*	2-3
	3.Galatasaray	140	3,11	,607			3-4
	4.Others	34	2,38	,675			
	5.Trabzonspor	46	2,80	,571			
	Total	**448**	**2,83**	**,71897**			

As a result of the comparison of the levels of eFANgelism and fanaticism of the fans according to the teams they support in Table 7, there was no significant difference between the levels of eFANgelism (p>0.05), while there were significant differences between the levels of fanaticism (p<0.05).

Table 8. Evaluation of the Results Obtained from the Path Analysis.

Measurement Model	β 1	β 2	S.E	CR	P
Tendency to Violence <--- Efangelism	,083	,154	,030	2,793	,005*
Corporate Affiliation <--- Efangelism	,081	,103	,041	1,986	,047*
Efangelism <--- Tendency to Violence	,246	,133	,105	2,343	,019*
Efangelism <--- Corporate Affiliation	**,087**	**,068**	**,068**	**1,282**	**,200**

In Table 8, in the research, H_1= football fan eFANgelism has a positive effect on the level of violence of football fans (β 2= ,154 p=,005*), sports team eFANgelism has a positive effect on the corporate affiliation of the team (β 2=,103 p= ,047*). H_2= violent tendency has a positive effect on eFANgelism (β 2= .133 p=.019*), corporate affiliation has a positive effect on eFANgelism (β 2= .068 p=.200) hypotheses were accepted.

DISCUSSION

This research, which discusses the relationship between the fanaticism of soccer fans and the evangelism of soccer teams, seems to be an issue that can be regarded and discussed in many diverse ways. The current issue has a characteristic that can vary from different geographical regions to countries where soccer is considered the most important issue in the world; or from countries that lack sports culture to countries where sports are accepted as an entertainment culture. In this context, the subject of being a fan has been evaluated in some aspects of the related research and the findings of the research are discussed in light of the data obtained. This research was limited to 448 football team supporters and the data collection tools used.

According to the result of the comparison of efangelism and fanaticism levels of participants according to their gender in Table 4, no significant difference was found between genders in terms of efangelism levels (P>0,05). However, it was observed that female fans have higher

scores than male fans in levels of fanaticism and fanaticism sub-dimensions (tendency to violence and institutional belonging). When the relevant literature was examined, it was observed that studies on the issues of violence and fans in soccer have not widely assessed the relationship between the gender variable and tendency to violence (Mil and Şanlı, 2015; Polat and Sönmezoğlu, 2016; Bilir and Avgın, 2017). This is because, like playing soccer, being a soccer fan is also a gendered area dominated by men, and as a result, being a soccer fan is also considered to be under the control of men (Sarıkulak and Koca, 2019). From another point of view, there might have been a need to include the gender variable, as the tendency to violence is a concept commonly

attributed to men. Therefore, the data obtained in this research differ from the data obtained from the relevant literature, and the data obtained are very important in terms of the need to feel the presence of female fans.

As a result of the comparison of the levels of efangelism and fanaticism according to the fans' frequency of going to the match, presented in Table 5, there was no significant difference between the frequency of going to the match and the levels of efangelism (P>0,05).

The fact that fanaticism is high in favour of those who go to matches once a month or in a longer period of time may be due to differences between geography in which the sample group lives and the province where the teams they support are located. When the relevant literature is examined, it is observed that the results of the research are affected when the fans and the teams they support are located in the same city (Koçer, 2012; Tutkun et al. 2012).

As a result of the comparison of the levels of efangelism and fanaticism according to the fans' statuses of being a member of the fan union and buying products with their teams' logo on it, presented in Table 6, participants who were not members of the fans' union were found to have higher levels of efangelism. The result obtained is quite significant (P<0, 05). Because sports team efangelism is a concept that expresses passion and commitment (Küçükibiş, 2019). For this reason, it is thought that sports team efangelists see being a fan as an experience experienced internally, without the need for any indication. When the relevant literature is examined, it is stated that there is a relationship between fanaticism and fan groups (Koçer, 2012; Polat and Sönmezoğlu, 2016). In this context, the result obtained differs from the relevant literature.

According to the table where the comparison of the levels of efangelism and fanaticism of fans' are given, presented in Table 7, there is no significant difference between the efangelism levels

of fans and the teams they support (P>0,05). However, the scores of the participants who support the Galatasaray team appear to be higher than other teams in terms of fanaticism levels. According to the information published on the official website of GS Store, where the yellow and red team sold their licensed products during the 2019- 2020 season, Galatasaray has been the team that sold the most jerseys to its fans in the last season (Milli Gazate, 2020; Fanatik; 2020) If we associate the act of buying the jersey with fanaticism, the relevant results support the information given.

The fit index values of model$_1$ and model$_2$ are among the generally accepted fit values in the literature (Bayram, 2010).Accordingly, it can be concluded that the models created in the study are acceptable. Generated hypotheses; H$_1$= football fan efangelism has a positive effect on the level of violence tendency of football fans (β 2= ,154 p=,005) sports team efangelism has a positive effect on team corporate affiliation (β 2=,103 p=,047). The hypothesis that H$_2$= violence tendency has a positive effect on efangelism (β 2= .133 p=.019) was accepted according to the results.

CONCLUSION

As a result, it can be stated that sports team efangelism has the power to affect fan behaviors and has an effect on eFANgelism in some aspects of fanaticism. It is crucial to carry out similar research with more participation and in different regions in the matter of obtaining a piece of more understandable and in-depth information.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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