

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Examination of Turkish Football Fans' Brand Evangelism (Efangelism) Levels and Intention to Purchase

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ABSTRACT

Background: Sport consumers display a different set of values, attitudes and behaviors. Not all football consumers are equally passionate and fanatical. The purpose of this research is to examine the evangelistic attitudes of Turkish football fans towards the team brand and their intention to purchase the licensed sports products of the club.

Method: The study group of the research consists of 633 volunteers who are supporters of Fenerbahçe, Galatasaray and Beşiktaş and live in various parts of Turkey. We used the Sports Team Evangelism (eFangelism) Scale-STES as a data collection tool in the research. STES was developed by Dwyer, Greenhalgh, and LeCrom (2015). Its Turkish validation and reliability tests were done by Yüksekbilgili (2017). We also used the "Purchase Intention Scale" developed by Kazançoğlu and Baybars (2015) based on the research of Kwon et al., (2007). Descriptive statistics, Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis test were used in the analysis of the data. The sources of significant differences in the Kruskal-Wallis test results were distinguished using the Mann-Whitney U Test.

Results: The level of evangelism and intention to purchase varied according to the gender of individuals, the team they support, and the amount of spending on licensed products.

Conclusion: Our research shows that individuals with a high level of brand evangelism and intention to purchase buy the licensed products of their favorite team more than individuals with a low level of brand evangelism and intention to purchase. In addition, the level of efangelism and intention to purchase of male participants are higher than women. The level of efangelism and intention to purchase of Beşiktaş fans are higher than Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe fans.

Keywords: Efangelism, intention to purchase, football fan

INTRODUCTION

Sport consumers display a surprising array of values, attitudes, and behaviors (Westerbeek & Smith, 2003). A significant portion of sport consumers are fans of sports teams. Not all fans are equally passionate and fanatical about their team (Redden & Steiner, 2000). Some attend the games regularly, while others attend only on special occasions. While some fans spend most of their time chatting about sports and surfing the Internet, others show their fanaticism by subscribing to paid channels, watching television. They all experience sports in different ways, and use their relationship with the team to meet a variety of needs (Wann et al., 2000). This complexity challenges the view that sports consumption can be reduced to a set of narrowed homogeneous features. It also underpins the desire to create models of sports consumption that make sense of these diverse behaviors and provides the basis for models of market segmentation that link behaviors to different demographics, social and cultural groups. Thus, effective segmentation can reveal different preferences and needs, identify sources of loyalty and commitment, and detect differences in sports consumers' spending patterns (Shilbury et al., 1998).

The 21st century is the period when the popularity of football reached its peak in human history. Researches show that sports are intertwined with many fields and concepts from revisionist approaches to nationalism, from leisure time sociology to entertainment culture, from social solidarity to violence, from ideological effects to economy, and it is an important indicator in understanding and

evaluating the paradox of today's people who regard modernity as an icon (Eker Öğüt, 2010). Fans appear as an expression attributed to individuals who have a sense of loyalty to a certain team or teams and who purchase the services of the club by paying a certain fee (Aycan et al., 2009). Fans are the sports consumer group that requires sports clubs to focus their marketing efforts on as their target audience (Orçun & Demirtaş, 2015). Especially recently, football team support has become an industry in itself. Moreover, football has even reached a size that can surpass the pharmaceutical industry. At this point, it is important for sports clubs and businesses that produce sports products for the supporters of these clubs to understand the behavior of the fans and determine their purchasing intentions (Kazançoğlu & Baybars, 2016).

Intention, an important part of the relationship between attitude and behavior, means planning to do something by desiring it in advance. It appears as a significant part of the actual will to perform any behavior (Mutlu et al., 2011). Intention to purchase, which is intertwined with the decision stage in the consumer purchasing process, is frequently used in estimating the sales of existing and new products. Businesses regularly collect data on intention to purchase, create demand forecasts with this data and make some strategic decisions based on them (Mutlu et al., 2011). To develop these strategies, the term brand Evangelism is suggested to describe a more active and determined way of spreading positive views (Matzler et al., 2007). Brand Evangelists are considered as consumers who actively promote a brand to

positively influence the purchasing behavior of others, contribute to the dissemination of good news about the brand, and make this contribution without any expectation (Matzler et al., 2007). In this context, it is important for sports clubs and businesses producing licensed sports products to be able to understand the purchasing behaviors of fans and to determine their marketing strategies accordingly (Yüksekbilgili, 2017). In this respect, the Evangelism levels of the fans should also be taken into account and considered when explaining the intention to purchase licensed products. Based on this information, this research aims to examine the Evangelism levels and purchasing intentions of Galatasaray, Beşiktaş and Fenerbahçe football fans.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Population and Sample of the Research: A total of 633 people, 443 (70%) men and 190 (30%) women voluntarily participated in the research, who support Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş sports clubs selected by the purposeful sampling method.

Table 1: Distribution of participants by variables such as "gender", "supported team", "spending on licensed products", "place of purchase", "preferred product"

Variables		N	%
Gender	Female	212	32,2
	Male	447	67,8
Supported Team	20 and below	72	16
	21-30	198	44
	31-40	149	33,1
	41 and above	31	6,9
Spending on licensed products	Highschool and earlier	220	48,9
	Graduate and postgraduate	230	51,1
The place where licensed products are purchased	1-2 days	62	13,8
	3-4 days	338	75,1
	5 days or more	50	11,1
Preferred licensed product	1 hour or less	106	23,6
	2 hours	262	58,2
	3 hours or more	82	18,0

70% of the participants were male and 30% were female. 26% of them were Galatasaray fans, 52% were Beşiktaş fans, and 21% were Fenerbahçe fans. We can see that 35% buy licensed products from the store, 39% wear jerseys, and 55% spend 250 TL or less on licensed products.

Data Collection Tool: The Sports Team Evangelism (eFangelism) Scale-STES was used as a data collection tool in the research. It was developed by Dwyer, Greenhalgh, and LeCrom (2015) and its Turkish validity and reliability were done by Yüksekbiçgili (2017). The scale consists of 12 items and one dimension, and it is a 5-point Likert scale (1: Strongly disagree, 5: Strongly agree). The "Purchase Intention Scale" was also used in the research, which Kazançoğlu and Baybars (2015) developed based on the research of Kwon et al., (2007). The scale consists of 4 items and one dimension and is 7-point Likert (1: Absolutely Inappropriate, 7: Totally Appropriate).

Data Collection Method and Analysis: The supporters in the research group were reached via forum pages and

social networks (Çarşı supporter groups, Unibjk, Unifb and Ultraslanuni university officials). The scales were sent to the volunteers over the internet via Google Forms. Data were collected for Spor Toto Super League 2018-2019 season. Descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency, etc.), Mann Whitney U test, and Kruskal Wallis test were used for data analysis. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine which groups caused the differences obtained as a result of the Kruskal Wallis test.

RESULT

Table 2: Average and standard deviation values showing the sports team efangelism attitude and intention to purchase of the participants

Scales	N	Avg	Sd
Efangelism	633	40,76	10,56
Intention to Purchase	633	20,82	6,18

The average score of the participants' (n=633) Sports Team Efangelism was calculated as 41 out of 60 points (sd=10.56) and the average intention to purchase score was calculated as 21 out of 28 points (sd=6.18).

Table 3: Mann-Whitney U Test results of STES and Intention to Purchase scores in terms of "Gender"

Scales	Gender	n	Mean Rank	Total Rank	U	p
Efangelism	Male	447	347,91	155514,50	39377	,000
	Female	212	292,24	61955,50	,500	
Intention to Purchase	Male	443	341,19	152512,00	42380	,028
	Female	190	306,41	64958,00	,000	

Table 3 shows that the mean rank of men is significantly higher than that of women in the Efangelism Scale (U=39377,500; p<.05) and Intention to Purchase (U=42380,000; p>.05).

Table 4: Kruskal Wallis Test Results of STES and Intention to Purchase Scores in terms of "Supported Team"

Scales	Supported Team	N	Mean Rank	Sd	X ²	p
Efangelism	Galatasaray	244	317,47	2	9,595	,019
	Fenerbahçe	211	311,53			
	Beşiktaş	204	364,09			
Intention to Purchase	Galatasaray	244	325,12	2	7,893	,008
	Fenerbahçe	211	307,56			
	Beşiktaş	204	359,04			

Table 4 shows that the mean rank of Beşiktaş team is significantly higher than that of other teams in Efangelism Scale (χ²(2) =9.595; p<.05) and Intention to Purchase (χ²(2) =7.893; p>.05).

The Efangelism Inventory (χ²(5)=142,934; p<.05) shows that the mean ranks of those who spend 50-100, 101-150, 151-200, 201-250, 251 and more are significantly higher than those who do not spend at all. The mean ranks of those who spend 201-250, 251 and more are significantly higher than those who spend 50-100 TL and 101-150 TL. The mean rank of those who spend 251 and more is significantly higher than those who spend 151-200 TL. Examining the Intent to Purchase (χ²(5)= 173,463; p<.05), the mean ranks of those who spend 50-100, 101-150, 151-200, 201-250, 251 and more are significantly

higher than those who do not spend at all. The mean ranks of those who spend 151-200, 201-250, 251 and more are significantly higher than those who spend 50-100 TL. The mean rank of those who spend 251 and more is significantly higher than those who spend 101-150, 151-200, 201-250 TL.

Table 5: Kruskal Wallis Test Results of STES and Intention to Purchase Scores in terms of "Spending on Licensed Products"

Scales	Spending on licensed products	N	Mean Ranks	Sd	X ²	p
Efangelism	None	205	212,78	5	14 2,9 34	,00 0
	50-100 TL	120	333,35			
	101-150 TL	85	345,31			
	151-200 TL	85	371,49			
	201-250 TL	45	420,91			
	251 TL	119	453,61			
	AND MORE					
Intention to Purchase	None	205	200,71	5	17 3,4 63	,00 0
	50-100 TL	120	324,14			
	101-150 TL	85	365,21			
	151-200 TL	85	387,75			
	201-250 TL	45	398,46			
	251 TL	119	466,34			
	AND MORE					

DISCUSSION

The participants' (n=633) Sports Team Efangelism average score was calculated as 41 out of 60 points, and the intention to purchase average score was calculated as 21 out of 28 points. Based on this finding, we can say that the efangelism attitudes and purchasing intentions of the fans towards the sports team brand are high.

Our study shows that the mean rank of men is significantly higher than that of women in Sports Team Efangelism Scale and Intent to Purchase. It can be interpreted as the fact that men in our country have more knowledge about sports than women and are more interested in sports and especially in football (Honça, 2016).

The Sports Team Efangelism Scale and Intention to Purchase results shows that the mean rank of Beşiktaş fans is significantly higher than the mean ranks of Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe fans.

The Sports Team Efangelism Inventory shows that those who spend 50-100, 101-150, 151-200, 201-250, 251 and more have significantly higher mean ranks than those who do not spend at all. The mean ranks of those who spend 201-250, 251 and more are significantly higher than those who spend 50-100 TL and 101-150 TL. The mean rank of those who spend 251 and more is significantly higher than those who spend 151-200 TL. Results of the Intent to Purchase shows that the mean ranks of those who spend 151-200, 201-250, 251 and more are significantly higher than those who spend 50-100 TL. The mean rank of those who spend 251 and more is significantly higher than those who spend 101-150, 151-200, 201-250 TL. The fact that the fans who spend more on their team's licensed products have higher brand efangelism attitudes than the fans who spend less can be explained by the high loyalty of the fans who spend more on their team. Because the fans

who establish a high level of identification with their team allocate much time and resources for their teams (Shapiro et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

We can say that the fans' efangelism attitudes and purchasing intentions are high by looking at the mean scores of the fans' brand efangelism and purchase intention. Individuals with high brand evangelism attitude purchase more licensed products of their team and spend more than individuals with low brand evangelism attitude. In addition, it is possible to say that male participants' efangelism attitudes and purchasing intentions are higher than females. Also, Beşiktaş supporters have higher Efangelism attitudes and purchasing intentions than Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe fans. In addition, our study revealed that participants who spent more on licensed products have higher Efangelism attitudes and purchase intentions than those who spent less.

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