

# Examination of Separation-Individuation Characteristics on the Relationship between Fanaticism and Agression in Young Adults

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## Abstract

*This study addresses the effects of separation-individuation processes and fanaticism levels of young adults on the emergence of aggressive behavior. The sample group consists of 377 young adults between 18 and 22 of age. The participants are asked to respond to the Separation-Individuation Test of Adolescence (SITA), Fanaticism Scale for Football Fans (FSFFF), and the Buss-Perry Aggression Scale (BPAS). Chi-square, Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis, One-way ANOVA, and moderation analysis were used for the statistical analysis. The physical and verbal aggression scores of the males are higher than the female participants. The separation-individuation scores of female participants are higher than that of the male participants. The fanaticism levels and physical-verbal aggression, and anger of the participants are correlated positively. Finally, the separation-individuation level is observed to have moderating effect on the correlation between aggression and fanaticism. The findings show that the fanatical supporters carry their self-needs to the team-self due to the problems they experience in the process of separation from their parents while engaging in aggressive behaviors. Therefore, considering the separation processes of individuals with their parents in studies aimed at preventing aggressive behaviors due to fanaticism will increase the success of the studies.*

**Keywords:** Fanaticism, Separation-Individuation, Aggression, Young Adulthood.

## Öz

*Bu çalışma, genç yetişkinlerin ayrışma-bireyleşme ve fanatik davranışlarda bulunma seviyelerinin saldırgan davranışların gelişimine olan katkılarını araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Araştırmanın örneklemini 18-22 yaş aralığındaki 377 genç yetişkin katılımcı oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmanın veri toplama aşamasında katılımcılara Ergen Ayrılma-Bireyleşme Ölçeği (EABÖ), Futbol Taraftarı Fanatiklik Ölçeği (FTFÖ) ve Buss-Perry Saldırganlık Ölçeği (BPSÖ) sunulmuştur. Verilerin analizinde, ki-kare, Pearson Momentler Çarpımı korelasyon analizi, tek yönlü varyans analizi (One-way ANOVA) ve moderasyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Erkek katılımcıların fiziksel ve sözel saldırgan davranışta bulunma düzeyleri kadın katılımcılardan, kadınların ayrışma-bireyleşme puanları erkek katılımcılardan yüksek bulunmuştur. Çalışmada genç yetişkinlerin fanatiklik düzeyi ile fiziksel-sözel saldırganlık ve öfke duygusu arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişki bulunmuştur. Ek olarak, saldırgan ve fanatik davranışlar arasındaki ilişkide ayrışma-bireyleşme düzeyinin düzenleyicilik etkisine sahip olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları, fanatik taraftarların saldırgan eylemlerde bulunurken anne-babadan ayrışma süreçlerinde yaşadıkları sorunların etkisiyle benlik ihtiyaçlarını takım benliğine taşıdıklarını göstermektedir. Bu bulgulardan yola çıkarak, fanatikleğe bağlı saldırgan davranışların önlenmesine yönelik çalışmalarda, bireylerin anne-babaları ile ayrışma süreçlerini de göz önünde bulundurma çalışmaları başarıyı arttıracaktır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Fanatizm, Ayrışma-Bireyleşme, Saldırganlık, Genç Yetişkinlik.

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## Introduction

Football is one of the major sports with a great extent of influence on communities. It is embraced globally thanks to its unifying aspect, which is considered positive, whereas the enthusiasm of fans, such as fanaticism, may lead to incidents of violence. Fanaticism, and the aggression it causes, have devastating implications throughout the world. This study aims to analyze the correlation of fanatic individuals' tendency towards aggression to their individualization processes.

Aggression refers to behavior aimed at harming another living being that is trying to avoid a harmful behavior (Baron and Branscombe, 2012). According to Weinberg and Gold (2011) aggression requires action. It also refers to physical or psychological damage. Furthermore, aggression is not considered to be an emotion or thought but rather understood as an observable behavior. Aggressive cognitions and aggressive affect can serve as important precursors of aggressive behavior. Moreover, for a behavior to be considered as an aggressive, the act must be done with intention and must be aimed to harm another. These lead to the conclusion that accidental harm does not count as aggression (Allen and Anderson, 2017).

Although violence is sometimes discussed separately from aggression, most experts consider violence as a subset of aggression. Violence is an extreme form of aggression whose purpose is to cause serious physical harm (Bushman and Huesmann, 2010). As with aggression, a behavior need not cause real harm to be categorized as violence. For example, trying to injure someone with a knife but failing to achieve the goal is still considered an act of violence.

Fanaticism involves extreme, uncritical and intense effort for a particular idea or topic. Although the major consideration is with the religion, fanaticism and its implications, have recently been associated with new forms of human behavior such as sports, internet, video games, consumer behavior etc. Specifically, Young adults, driven by the independence from their families, and seeking identity, are vulnerable to many forms of fanaticism because of their intense desire to feel

unique and chosen, their limited self-awareness and their social satisfaction (Levesque (Ed.), 2011). Further, an ongoing brain development (Çelik et al., 2008), the inability to cope with uncertainty and anxiety, and the tendency to act impulsively, lead the young adults to consider fanatic beliefs an essential option to feel secure (Thielsch, Andor, & Ehring, 2015). Bessant (2008) reported that the increasing fear and unrest in modern societies, caused by factors such as wars, terrorist activities, and pandemics, which disturb the perception of security, also increase the tendency of young adults to seek shelter under fanaticism.

For young adults, sport fanaticism results from the link between the desire to be unique (through "premium" belongings), the actual status conflicting the self-perception, and peer influence (Chan and Wang, 2015). Further, unlike other domains of fanaticism (consumption, internet gaming, religion), sports fanaticism incorporates another factor. Sport fanaticism has been shown to be associated with family fanaticism inherited from one's parents, which is one of the only experimentally known forms of inherited fanaticism (Dwyer et al., 2016).

All forms of fanaticism tend to be cycles of feedback that work with teens' self-perceptions to reinforce their behavior, with an intense involvement, the satisfaction achieved through that involvement and sharing experiences (Zhang et al., 2015). Fans' interest in football can be categorized as: the fan group called "temporary fans" who support their teams only under favorable conditions; the second group is only the fan group supporting the national team in their geographical area. Another group is the dedicated fans, this group includes fans who support their team regardless of geographic distance. This group called fanatics are very loyal to their teams. The last fan group is called dysfunctional group. Such groups center their identity over any sense of attachment and they can easily engage in anti-social behaviors or acts of violence (Dalpian et al., 2014). In addition to fanaticism, the concept of hooliganism should also be considered in terms of violent and aggressive behaviors.

The term hooligan originated in England and by definition, it means physical violence or

damage to property (Bodin and Robene, 2014). As Oojen (2012) states, that although it is a more common notion to witness hooliganism and violence in soccer competitions, such tendencies are also seen in other professional sports branches as well. Within the context of including violence behaviors, hooliganism is considered as an important identity problem within the scope of individuation, loss of identification, de-identification and having a single identity. As a matter of fact, individuals and groups who do not have identities that represent them enough and who cannot express themselves enough freely in this context tend to violence and hooliganism (Spaaij, 2008).

Van Hiel et al. (2007), reported that fanaticism, which is the most extreme of the tendencies towards football, increases the possibility of individuals' showing aggressive behaviors and football fans do not hesitate to reveal violent, destructive and damaging behaviors for the sake of the team they support. Fanaticism refers to desensitization towards all other groups in order to focus only on group norms so that the individual can preserve their unique identity. In terms of fanaticism, individuals start to accept all of the values and norms of the group unconditionally and without criticizing, they do not doubt that any of the behaviors they do is correct, they despise the value judgments of other groups, and they start to approach the members of other groups without tolerance (Cieslik and Verkuyten, 2006).

Lock and Funk (2016) suggested that team identity affects many attitudes and behaviors. Grasping the concept of a team is imperative since it highlights the notion of the individuals' identification with a team and affects attitudes and behaviors (Lock and Heere, 2017). According to the theory of social identity, the individual is believed to derive a greater sense of self from the perceived awareness, value and emotional importance of belonging to a group (Tajfel et al., 1979). Social groups that individuals perceive themselves to belong to contribute to their self-image. This is accomplished by classifying themselves with group members on the one hand and distinguishing themselves from outgroup members on the other. When a social identity is unfavorable, individuals try to make the ingroup

positive or leave the group if possible (Delia and James, 2018). These various identities about the team (presence of a sport, family, friends, groups followed) develop individuals' sense of self.

### **Separation-Individuation**

Separation-individuation begins with the establishment of the perception of being an individual by separating from the mother, who is the primary love object. The process then moves on to the acquisition of a specific individuality (Mahler et al., 2003). Major developmental challenges in early childhood and adolescence/emerging adulthood are first and second stages of separation-individuation (Blos, 1967). In both stages, the child tries to stay connected to significant others while still trying to avoid dependency on them. Therefore, this process recommends unravelling a complex interaction between independence and relatedness (Allen et al., 1994; Grotevant and Cooper, 1986).

If individuals cannot successfully negotiate this developmental task, they may suffer from maladaptive developmental results such as increased levels of depression symptoms and indecision (Stey et al., 2014), higher externalizing problems (Delhaye et al., 2012) career (Downing and Nauta, 2010).

An inherent challenge for teenagers in dealing with separation-individuation is finding a balance between intimacy and distance in their relationship with their parents (Xiang et al., 2020). The distance to be established with parents is closely related to the identity development of adolescents. A healthy identity development is possible with a mental structure that has a good level of functioning. If separation does not occur, it means that self (ego) functions are also weak. Kernberg (2010) emphasizes the following three features while explaining the concept of self-weakness in the tables where personality development is not completed: 1- blurring of self-boundaries, 2- lack of impulse control and 3- impaired sublimation ability. The features that are indicative of this weak self (ego) functioning explain the ability of fans to draw a boundary between their teams and their own identities (1), their tendency to aggressive and destructive

behaviors due to failure in anger control (2) and their attributing divine qualities to people and objects in the outer world by exaggerating their good and bad qualities artificially and pathologically (3).

### **Correlation between separation-individuation and aggression in fanaticism**

Externalization problems stated by Delhaye et al. (2012), and the distance caused by a healthy closeness that cannot be established with parents facilitate the tendency of young people to fanatic groups. High levels of aggressive behavior in these groups also constitute another aspect of externalization problems. A healthy sense of identity indicates the formation of a balanced identity in which individuals will feel valuable, form satisfying attachments with others and won't need to overidealize the self and object representations (Blum, 2004). Reconvergence sub-period explained by Mahler in separation-individuation theory may provide a suitable perspective for describing aggression as a mechanism that fanatical supporters develop in order not to lose their ego boundaries.

The attachment of fanatics to their team like it is a motherly being, the fact that they index their low self-esteem to their team's success and their mastery of transferring unattended aggression to others in the outside world in case of failure and threat coincide with the mentioned reconciliation process (Mahler et al., 2003).

Eskiler et al. (2011), reported that fanatics of a team considered themselves as an extension of their team and the thought and expression of "I am a supporter of this team" is the center of their self-concept and they felt that they were better people than the supporters of opponent teams. Fanatics appreciate their self, which they consider as worthless, by coming into contact with or entering into the representation of their team. The primitive idealization defense mechanism used here means the supernatural glorification of a person, group or ideology that is unquestioned, blind and unrealistic (Freud, 1966). However, every primitive idealization is followed by devaluation mechanism. These supernatural qualities require

the ascribed person to be demoted from the level of perfection to the level of nothingness in case of showing the slightest human frailty (McWilliams, 2011).

Fanatics who add values to their self when their team is successful experience the state of goodness and worthiness which cannot be kept alive in the face of failures, as an absence or nothingness. This intolerable mood is quickly transferred to others (to the supporters of opponent teams and to people they have social relationship with) and others are experienced as individuals who deserve to be attacked.

On the grounds of these reviews asserting that aggressive behaviors may occur as a result of the failure of separation-individuation in fanatics, the hypothesis of the present study are as follows:

The level aggression is higher in males when compared to females.

Separation-Individuation scores of females are higher than that of males.

Aggression levels of fan groups differ significantly.

The level aggression increases as the level of fanaticism increases.

Separation anxiety decreases as the level of fanaticism increases.

The level of separation-individuation has a moderating effect on the correlation between aggression and fanaticism.

### **Method**

In this study, relational survey method was used to examine the relationship of fanaticism level with separation-individuation and aggressive behavior. Data were collected from participants who agreed to participate in the study voluntarily by using online form.

### **Sample**

Sample of the study consists of 377 young adults between the ages of 18 and 22 who were university students during the spring term of 2018-2019 academic year. The sample was determined with convenience sampling method. 53.8% (N=203) of the participants were female, while 46.2% (N=174)

were male. Table 1 shows the descriptive information of sample group.

### Data Collection Tools

Demographic information form, Fanaticism Scale for Football Fans (FSFF), Individuation-Separation Scale of Adolescence (ISSA) and Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) were used in the study as data collection tool.

**Demographic information form:** This form prepared by the researchers was created by including items on the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, the teams they supported and the participants' attitudes about this team

**Fanaticism Scale for Football Fans (FSFF):** Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale, which was developed by Taşmektepligil, Çankaya and Tunç (2015) to measure the fanaticism levels of individuals was found as .88. While high scores from the scale showed the participants were football spectators, low scores showed that fanaticism level increased. The scale consists of two subscales; tendency of thought and action oriented to violence (e.g., 'Most of the time, I cheer against the players of the opponent team or the referee from the tribune') and institutional belonging (e.g., 'I go to a game with outfits that show the symbols of my team'). In this study, scale scores were evaluated only on the total score. In compliance with the original study, the participants scoring between 13-21 were classified as "fanatics"; those scoring between 22-30 were classified as "fans", and those scoring between 31-52 points were classified as "football lovers". The scale is a four-point Likert and consists of a total of 13 items.

**Individuation-Separation Scale of Adolescence (ISSA):** Individuation-Separation Scale of Adolescence (ISSA) developed by Levine, Green and Millon (1986) to measure the individuation-separation capacity of individuals between the ages of 18 and 22 was created by considering Mahler's Individuation-Separation theory and making use of adolescence Dynamics. The scale

was adapted into Turkish by Aslan and Güven (2009). The scale consists of three subscales: separation anxiety (separation from significant others-mother, father, sibling, etc.; e.g., 'I frequently worry about being rejected by my friends'); engulfment anxiety (parents' controlling and limiting children's life; e.g., 'Sometimes, my parent are so overprotective, I feel smothered), and need denial (the feeling of not being wanted by mother, father, sibling, etc.; e.g., I don't really need anyone). Internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) coefficients of the subscales were found as .82 for need denial, .75 for separation anxiety and as .79 for engulfment anxiety. The scale is a 5-point Likert and consists of a total of 31 items.

**Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ):** This scale, which was developed to measure the aggression levels of individuals, was initially created as hostility inventory by Buss and Durkee (1957). Later, Buss and Perry (1992) updated the inventory and reintroduced as Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Madran (2012) and the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found as .85. The scale consists of four subscales as physical aggression (e.g., 'I have become so mad that I have broken things'), anger (e.g. 'Some of my friends think I'm a hothead'), hostility (e.g., 'I am suspicious of overly friendly strangers') and verbal aggression (e.g., I can't help getting into arguments when people disagree with me'). The scale is a 5-point Likert and consists of a total of 29 items.

### Data Analysis

In the analysis of study data, first normality assumptions were tested for data set and normality assumptions were found to be met. Descriptive statistics were then examined and Chi-square was used in the analysis of the relationship between categorical variables, Pearson Moments correlation analysis was used in the analysis of the relationship between continuous variables, independent samples t test and one-way Anova were used to compare means between groups. In addition, moderation analysis was used to test the moderator effect between the groups. The analyses

were conducted with IBM SPSS.24 and PROCESS MACRO statistical programs.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics:

Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants by gender, team supported, frequency of watching game in the stadium and level of fanaticism

**Table 1. Distribution of the participants by gender, team supported, frequency of watching game in the stadium and level of fanaticism**

		N	%
Gender	Female	203	53.8
	Male	174	46.2
Team supported	BJK	70	18.6
	FB	124	32.9
	GS	116	30.8
	TS	17	4.5
	Other	21	5.6
Frequency of watching game in the stadium	More than once a month	38	10.1
	Once a month	26	6.9
	Once every two-three months	56	14.9
	Once a year	75	19.9
	Never	181	48.0
Level of fanaticism	Football fan	327	86.7
	Supporter	32	8.5
	Fanatic	18	4.8
	Total	377	100

### Comparisons between groups

The comparison between the groups was completed using independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA). According to the results of independent sample t test, total aggression scores of male participants ( $M = 83.11$ ,  $SD = 20.33$ ) were found to be significantly higher than those of female participants ( $M = 74.70$ ,  $SD = 19.77$ ;  $t(375) = -4.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ). While physical ( $M = 25.17$ ,  $SD = 7.37$ ) and verbal aggression ( $M = 14.82$ ,  $SD = 4.15$ ) scores of male participants were found to be significantly higher than physical ( $M = 18.49$ ,  $SD = 7.06$ ;  $t(375) = -8.97$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and verbal aggression ( $M = 13.92$ ,  $SD = 3.58$ ;  $t(375) = -2.28$ ,  $p < .01$ ) scores of female participants, no significant difference was found between genders in terms of anger and hostility subscale scores ( $t(375) = -.567$ ,  $p > .05$ ). When the results of separation-individuation scores were examined in terms of the genders of participants, it

was found that women had significantly higher separation-individuation total scores ( $M = 81.20$ ,  $SD = 19.31$ ) than men ( $M = 72.52$ ,  $SD = 18.60$ ;  $t(375) = -4.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The aggressions scores of participants were compared in terms of the teams they supported (BJK, FB, GS, TS and others). According to the results of One-way ANOVA analysis, it was found that the participants in the "others" category had significantly higher fanaticism levels ( $F(4,343) = 5.491$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and physical aggression levels ( $F(4,343) = 4.099$ ,  $p < .01$ ). No significant difference was found in terms of total aggression level ( $F(4,343) = 2.029$ ,  $p > .05$ ). It was found that the participants who stated they would be very unhappy when they could not watch the game of the team they supported had significantly higher aggression total scores than the other participants ( $F(4,372) = 7.465$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

When the participants' aggression scores were compared in terms of their fanaticism levels (football spectator, team supporter, fanatic), it was found that physical aggression, anger and verbal aggression scores of the participants differed significantly in terms of their fanaticism levels ( $F(2,374) = 34.632$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $F(2,374) = 7.219$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $F(2,374) = 4.346$ ,  $p < .05$ , respectively).

**Table 2. Comparison of participants' aggression scores in terms of fanaticism levels**

	Levene p	Sum of Sq	df	MS	F	p
Physical aggression	.582	3.697.618	2	1.848.809	34.632	.000
Hostility	.353	101.143	2	50.572	1.106	.332
Anger	.809	572.165	2	286.082	7.219	.001
Verbal aggression	.396	128.385	2	64.193	4.346	.014

Sum of Sq: Sum of Squares; df: Degree of freedom; MS: Mean Square

Tukey HSD paired comparisons analysis was used to determine the source of differences and Bonferroni correction was used to prevent Type 1 error. As a result of the Tukey HSD paired comparisons analysis, it was found that the participants in football spectator category had significantly lower physical aggression scores ( $M = 20.35$ ,  $SD = 7.27$ ) than the participants in team supporter ( $M = 29.22$ ,  $SD = 7.05$ ) and fanatic ( $M = 30.20$ ,  $SD = 8.45$ ) categories ( $p < .0083$ ); anger scores of the participants in football spectator category ( $M = 19.16$ ,  $SD = 6.31$ ) were significantly lower than

those of the participants in team supporter ( $M = 22.86$ ,  $SD = 6.02$ ) and fanatic ( $M = 22.67$ ,  $SD = 6.45$ ) categories ( $p < .0083$ ); verbal aggression scores of the participants team supporter ( $M = 16.16$ ,  $SD = 4.53$ ) were significantly higher than those of the participants in football supporter ( $M = 14.12$ ,  $SD = 3.79$ ) and fanatic ( $M = 14.94$ ,  $SD = 3.49$ ) categories ( $p < .0083$ ); aggression total scores of the participants in football spectator category ( $M = 76.50$ ,  $SD = 19.54$ ) were significantly lower than those of the participants in team supporter ( $M = 92.97$ ,  $SD = 22.16$ ) and fanatic ( $M = 90.76$ ,  $SD = 19.77$ ) categories ( $p < .0083$ ).

### Correlation analysis

Correlations between the participants' fanaticism, separation-individuation and aggression scores were examined with Pearson Correlation Analysis (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Analysis of the correlation between fanaticism, separation-individuation and aggression scores**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. FSFF _total	-							
2. BPAQ Physical aggression	-.487**	-						
3. BPAQ Hostility	-.086	.465**	-					
4. BPAQ Anger	-.239**	.634**	.623**	-				
5. BPAQ Verbal aggression	-.201**	.501**	.495**	.564**	-			
6. ISSA Separation anxiety	.135**	-.012	.376**	.189**	.067	-		
7. ISSA Engulfment anxiety	-.053	.128*	.259**	.197**	.109*	.407**	-	
8. ISSA Need denial	.017	.180**	.503**	.383**	.146**	.466**	.426**	-

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; FSFF: Fanaticism Scale for Football Fans; BPAQ: Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire; ISSA: Individuation-Separation Scale of Adolescence

When

Table 3 is examined, a negative and significant correlation was found between FSFF and physical aggression, anger and verbal aggression, while a positive and significant correlation was found between fanaticism level and separation anxiety. Considering that higher FSFF scores indicate being a football spectator, it can be said that there is a

positive significant correlation between the participants' fanaticism and physical aggression, verbal aggression and anger score, while there is a negative and significant correlation between fanaticism and separation anxiety. On the other hand, there is positive significant correlation between separation anxiety and hostility and anger, between engulfment anxiety and need denial and physical aggression, hostility, anger and verbal aggression.

### Moderation Analysis

The moderating effect of separation-individuation in the relationship between fanaticism and aggression was examined with moderation analysis. Bootstrap method was used to analyze whether the moderating effect was significant. Bootstrap analysis was carried out with 5000 samples. It was found that the model including FSFF, ISSA and FSFF\*ISSA interaction predicted the aggression levels of the model significantly  $F(3,373)=45.8580$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .2694$ .

It was found that all of the ISSA, FSFF and ISSA\*FSFF variables included in the model contributed significantly to the model (see Table.4).

**Table 4. Contributions of the variables included in the model**

	b	SH	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Fixed	78.4126	.9043	86.7153	.0000	76.6346	80.1907
ISSA	.3997	.0468	8.5349	.0000	.3076	.4918
FSFF	-.6939	.0951	-7.2969	.0000	-.8809	-.5069
ISSA*FSFF	.0176	.0045	3.8799	.0001	.0087	.0264

When

Table 4 is examined, it can be seen that ISSA\*FSFF interaction is significant  $t(373)=3.8799$ ,  $p < .001$ . This result shows that the moderating effect is significant. It can be seen that the ISSA moderator had a low contribution to the predicted variance,  $F(1,373)=15.0533$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2$  change=.0295. However, a single regression equation was obtained with this analysis. Pick-a-point approach and centralized percentile division method were used to analyze this effect in depth. With Pick-a-point approach, it was examined how GZO variable predicted YIBT variable at .10, .25, .50, .75 and .90 percentiles. The results regarding FSFF variable predicting ISSA variable for 5

different percentiles of ISSA variable with Pick-a-point percentile method are shown in

Table 5.

*Table 5. FSFF predicting BPAQ variable according to ISSA percentiles with Pick-a-point approach*

ISSA	b	SH	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-25,1962	-1.1361	.1384	-8.2115	.0000	-1.4082	-.8641
-12,1962	-.9079	.1034	-8.7829	.0000	-1.1112	-.7047
-1,1962	-.7149	.0945	-7.5630	.0000	-.9007	-.5290
12,8038	-.4691	.1178	-3.9838	.0001	-.7007	-.2376
24,8038	-.2585	.1565	-1.6522	.0993	-.5662	.0492

## Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, examining the separation-individuation characteristics on the relationship between fanaticism and aggression in young adults, 53.8% of the participants were female, while 46.2% were male. In terms of the level of emotional investments of the participants in the team they supported, it was found that 4.8% of the participants fanatics, 8.5% were team supporters and 86.7% were football spectators. While physical and verbal aggression levels of male participants were higher than those of female participants, no significant difference was found between the genders in terms of the levels of anger and hostility. These results are in parallel with the results in literature which reported physical and verbal aggression to be higher in men when compared with women (Palmer-Hague, 2020; Split, Koomen, Thijs, Stoel and van der Leij, 2010; Czech and Kemp, 2010). It is a generally accepted fact that the aggressive tendency of male existence is determined evolutionarily. It is known that since hunting societies, men are more desirous than women in terms of competition, superiority and dominance (Harris, 1996). In addition, there are also studies which reported that rather than performing direct aggression like men, women perform mostly indirect aggression behaviors (such as spreading rumours, defaming and preventing friendships) (Martin and Ford, 2018)

In the study, separation anxiety, engulfment anxiety and need denial levels of female participants were found to be significantly higher than those of male participants. There are studies

which report separation anxiety in females is significantly different from males, while there is no difference in terms of engulfment anxiety and need denial (Güven and Aslan, 2010; Parmaksız and Kılıçarslan, 2020). Xiang, Liu, Lu, Bai and Xu (2020) did not find any difference between genders in terms of separation anxiety, engulfment anxiety and need denial; in Doğru-Çabuker and Balcı-Çelik (2019)'s study engulfment anxiety did not differ significantly in terms of gender while separation anxiety and need denial showed a significant difference in terms of gender.

While existing studies show that women experience more problems in separation-individuation processes, they show that individuation processes of changing social roles in the modern world have a less obvious structure. It is a well-known truth that anxiety-based mental problems are more common in women when compared with men. This has both cultural and universal causes. In the modern world, women have to carry the roles of modern life as well as their traditional roles, and women notice a problem more quickly than men and take action for treatment (Bandelow et al, 2015). While Kağıtçıbaşı (2010) reported that boys experienced more separation problems than girls in eastern regions, with a more universal approach, Chodorow (cited from: Appelrouth and Edles, 2010) stated that in addition to separation from the mother, who is the primary attachment object of girls, girls are born with the developmental task of identifying. For this reason, while girls who do not get the appropriate emotional reactions cannot identify with their mothers, they have to separate from show disorders with excessive attachment characteristics (depression, masochism), boys are born with the developmental task of separating from their mothers who is the primary attachment object but identifying with their fathers. However, when boys cannot separate from their mothers, they are more inclined to disorders that show extreme isolation (psychopathy, schizoid states).

In the assessment made on the aggression level in terms of the team participants supported, it was found that fanaticism levels and physical aggression levels of the participants who chose the option "others" which were teams other than the

teams most supported in the country were significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ). As cited by Gültekin (2007) from Simmel, individuals know each other more closely in small groups and they have similar thoughts. For this reason, members of small groups are more likely to advocate radical thoughts than large groups. While the perception of danger caused by not being in the majority causes members to adopt a more grandiose and defensive attitude, the lack of diversity in small groups can also prevent a realistic evaluation (Singh and Rukta, 2018).

Aggression, anger and total aggression levels of football spectators were found to be lower than those of team supporters and fanatics. This is consistent with the literature which states that individuals with a high emotional investment in the team they support are more generous in displaying aggressive behaviors (Milojevic, Simonovic, Jankovic, Otasevic and Turanjanin 2013; Koçer, 2012). In addition, another interesting data is that verbal aggression scores of team supporters were significantly higher than those of football spectators and fanatics. This shows that football spectators who do not include the issues related with the team they support in a personal area do not develop any anger reactions, while team supporters cannot be indifferent to issues about their teams. However, although team supporters react to issues related to their teams with anger, they cannot turn this into behavioral violence such as fanatics (Haidt, Seder and Kesebir, 2008). In this respect, it can be said that team supporters have healthier separation-individuation processes than fanatics.

Interestingly, it was found that participants with high level of fanaticism have decreased rates of separation anxiety. Although this is a low level of correlation, this situation is consistent with the hypothesis establishment between separation-individuation anxiety and fanaticism levels. As stated by Swann and Buhrmester (2015), the decrease in separation anxiety in fanaticism can be explained with the phenomenon of identity fusion. When the individual is aligned with the group, he/she is in, group category exceeds the individual self and the individual can have extremist pro-group actions more easily. Fanatics who are strongly fused with group identity are more likely

to approve of pro-group actions when psychological arousal is high and group members' basic characteristics are shared, along with a sense of group-related immunity. Group and individual identity, which start to develop in an intertwined way starting from the individual's birth, remain in a way that cannot experience the expected separation after adolescence (Côté, 2018). Since fanatics still have a sense of inner unity with the group they are in, they are protected from experiencing separation anxiety.

It can be argued that individuals with ongoing conflicts in separation-individuation processes cannot develop a subjective self, and therefore, cope with the pain of being separated through engaging in aggressive behaviours. In this way, the emotions that are unbearable in one's inner world can be quickly projected to the available others in the outside world. The fanatics, on the other hand, do not feel separation anxiety because they are fused with the group identity. The reason why fanatics do not feel the anxiety of restriction is that the fanatics exhibiting extreme behaviour do not feel the existence of a power that limits them within the group, and they assume that sense of personal responsibility is that of the group's (Reichner, 1996). The anxiety of rejection is ignored through the denial mechanism and the feelings of loneliness such anxiety may result in, are reflected to the opposing team's fans. Thus, it can be argued that people believing to be a member of a group feel that they are in a proper relational domain to cope with the anxiety posed by separation and individualization.

When the relationships between separation-individuation processes and aggression are examined, it can be seen that participants with high level of separation anxiety and engulfment anxiety have more hostility and feelings of anger, while those who have higher need denial have high levels of physical and verbal aggression levels in addition to hostility and feeling of anger. While the state of being separated from significant others and having lives controlled and limited triggers the feelings of anger and hostility, they do not reach a level that includes behavioral violence. On the other hand, need denial, which creates the anxiety of not being wanted by significant others is an experience more difficult to cope with and it

causes aggressive behaviors. As stated by Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder and Huesmann (2013), the most important trigger of aggressive behaviors is the experience of frustration. Separation and engulfment anxiety in young people still places parental relations at the center. The young adults, either want not to be separated from or not to be overprotected by them. Rejection anxiety, on the other hand, beyond being separated from parents, refers to the feeling of being undesirable and alone on earth. In this respect, the feeling of rejection by the parent, which is considered more destructive emotionally, underlies many aggressive behaviors and psychopathology (Rohner et al, 2012). It can be seen that individuals whose conflicts continue regarding the experience of separation-individuation and thinking that they are not wanted by significant others become more open to angry emotions and have the potential to conduct aggressive behaviors. In their study conducted on 416 high school students, Güven and Aslan (2010) reported that adolescents with high separation-individual anxiety had higher level of showing peer bullying.

It was found that the effect power of separation-individuation level in the relationship between aggression and fanaticism was at a significant level. From this point of view, it can be seen that individuals who cannot complete their separation-individuation processes in a healthy way have difficulty in coping with sources of anxiety such as being separated from others, being controlled and not being wanted by others. The existence of separation-individuation concerns in issues such as regulating and mentalization of aggressive tendencies, impulse control and behavioral control presents as a mental area in which individuals feel their selves valuable and themselves as a whole. Stone, Otten, Soenens, Engels and Janssens (2015) reported that in the intimacy phase, the infant's narcissism (self-worth) confronted obstacles and this frustration had to cope with feelings of helplessness and disappointment and the fact that the world was not a place they wanted it to be. Blos (1967) described adolescence as second birth and the stage he called second individuation ran in parallel with the reconvergence phase. The obstacles of the outside world, failures and

unwanted emotions invade the supporters' self. This occupation is quickly directed to the outside world and projected onto others so that the good feelings and images in the self can be preserved.

Volkan (2012) reported that differentiating the group with fanatics from other groups was necessary to keep the good and the bad separate and one group reflected the images, feelings, thoughts and attitudes they did not want to see in themselves to another group. Thus, the difference between the group's we identity and the other group's identity is clarified. In addition, this differentiation also helps to remove the blurring of the self-boundaries and functions as a psychological border for the team-self/we-self. Considering the outside world and other groups as bad also raises the possibility of attacks from them. For this reason, members of the group believe that they have the right to act aggressively in self-defense.

The reason why supporters who have we-I relationship with their team act more reactive is to protect this identity and most extreme reactions are expected from these supporters, for supporters who do not establish we-I relationship, the team's role is less associated with their social identities and the results obtained are not worth being considered significant. The team's success gives a feeling of trust and pride to protect the undefined self and it is protective against vulnerability (Polat and Sönmezoğlu, 2016). In a study they conducted on delinquent adolescents, Sarraf, Singh and Dubey (2009) and identified impulsive characteristics of delinquent adolescents as an indicator of serious self-defects.

Çiçek and Aslan (2019) found that the development and satisfaction of adolescents' peer relationships depend on the negative structure in separation-individuation processes. Fanatics need to find harmony with their peers in the process of belonging to a group. The ability of this relationship to take a healthy direction in which the boundaries of the self are preserved will be related to a healthy process in separation-individuation processes. Adolescents, who are not supported to develop an autonomous identity within the family are included in peer groups in the form of a "fusion or replacement relationship".

An adolescent who has clear boundaries and who feels independent does not only redefine himself/herself, but also reviews the relationship between the self and others (Lapsley and Stey, 2010). The present study which aimed to find out the factors why fanatics tend to aggressive behaviors examined the regulatory effects of separation-individuation processes. It seems that young people who have not progressed in the process of separation-individuation enter into a kind of fusion with the team they support when they face with the difficulties of developing an individual self. This fusion is responding to the difficulty of existing in the maturing and painful process of individuation with the option of substituting one's self into the team's self. It has been found that young people who reflect the features they do not want to see in themselves to their teams by merging instead of dividing and then expected attack from these groups assigned legitimacy to themselves in tending to aggressive behaviors.

These findings may contribute in revealing how aggression and offensive behavior emerge as well as preventing violence incidents, such as violence in sports, which have impact on communities. They may also provide answers to what potential behaviors a negative separation-individuation process may lead to in the later periods of development of young people, from the perspective of fanaticism and aggression.

The analysis of the correlation between the variables indicates that there are significant correlations between aggressive behaviors and fanaticism and problems in the separation-individuation processes. Further, separation-individuation processes have a significant moderating effect on correlation between aggressive behaviors and fanaticism.

The present study is limited to young adults between 18-22, residing in Istanbul. Designing studies that focus on individuals in their early adolescence, which is a critical period in separation, and those in their other developmental periods, would be useful. Further, implementing the present study, which is limited to Istanbul only, in other cities would contribute to the literature. Finally, new studies employing different variables and involving specifically designated

groups, would also be useful to better understand reasons underlying such overridealized attitudes, considering that fanatic tendencies and aggression are increasing recently, not just in football but in other domains.

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