

## FACTORS AFFECTING BRAND LOYALTY IN FOOTBALL: AN APPLICATION ON “THE BIG FOUR” FOOTBALL CLUBS IN TURKISH SUPER LEAGUE<sup>†</sup>

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### Abstract

The research aims to investigate the factors affecting brand loyalty in football industry. In order to achieve this aim, the loyalty of the supporters of Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe, Galatasaray, and Trabzonspor called as “The Big Four” since they have the highest brand value in Turkish Super League were investigated. By using quota sampling method, 662 students of the faculty of economics and administrative sciences of Bulent Ecevit University in 2013-2014 spring period were reached and questionnaire technique was applied to the sample. The students who were supporters of another football clubs except from The Big Four, and who were non supporters were eliminated and 557 students were found to be the supporters of The Big Four. In the research, the variables were tested via Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. As a result of the research, benefits variable from brand associations and identification variable were found to be the most effective variables on psychological commitment towards the football clubs. The other result indicated that psychological commitment variable and benefits variable from brand associations were found to be the most effective variables on behavioral loyalty towards the football clubs.

**Keywords:** Brand Loyalty, Brand Associations, Identification, Football.

**JEL Classification:** M31, M37, M39.

**Jel Codes:** M31.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Football is one of the industries in which the concept of brand and brand loyalty are fundamental. In football industry, not only the football club, but also individual footballers, the coach, and the league that the football club performs can be considered as brands. The football players, the coach, the uniforms, the stadiums, and brand associations such as functional or social benefits provided by the football club are important for a football supporter to develop loyalty towards the football club. Managing these tools effectively brings a strong brand image to the football clubs. As Bauer et al. (2005) stated that brand image is an important factor that affects brand loyalty, therefore the football clubs should decrease the effect of physical and humane factors that can negatively affect the brand image of the clubs, or the clubs should develop these factors to improve the clubs' brand images.

In order to survive in the industrialized football sector, the football clubs should alter their consumers' psychological commitment to behavioral loyalty so that they can gain material earnings from these consumers. Thus, it becomes fundamental for a football club to obtain brand loyalty of its consumers. In the research, it was aimed to reveal the factors affecting brand loyalty towards football clubs. Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe, Galatasaray, and Trabzonspor named as the "Big Four" in Turkish Super League were specified as research field for the research. The results indicate that especially the intangible factors such as identification with the football club and psychological commitment to the football club are effective variables on behavioral loyalty of the supporters.

## **II. LITERATUR REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES**

### **II.I. Football As a Product and Brand**

Football as a sport product can be defined as a service activity that provides benefits to its spectators, attendees, and the sponsors. Football as a product has tangible and intangible features as each sport products do have. The tangible features of football include the football itself, the footballers, the coaches, the football team itself, the rival football teams, and the league such as Turkey Super League and La Liga. On the other hand, the intangible features of football include the feeling of victory and pride, the excitement and pleasure reviving from being champion or winning the match. The tangible and intangible features of football are the most important components that affect the brand value of a football club (Brooks, 1994).

According to Deloitte report (2014), Real Madrid F.C. has the highest brand value which means the highest sum of financial entities. The report also indicates that Real Madrid has the highest

number of followers in social media. This also indicates that Real Madrid F.C. has the highest brand awareness. In some circumstances, brand equity exceeds brand value. For instance; according to the subject Deloitte report (2014), although Barcelona F.C. has lower brand value than Real Madrid has, the club has higher brand awareness in social media increasing the brand equity of Barcelona. Deloitte report (2014) indicates that even if the sum of the both Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe football clubs' brand values are lower than the brand values of Bayern Munich F.C. and Manchester United F.C., the social media awarenesses of Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe are threatening for the mentioned football clubs. Besides, Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe are important as they are the first Turkish football clubs from outside the Europe that entered to the list since the season 2005-2006. In this success of Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe, the development of the country, the passions and the brand loyalty of the supporters towards the football clubs, and the development of the infrastructure of football in the country play important roles. For instance; Turk Telekom Arena is one of the best stadiums in Europe which increases the brand value of Galatasaray.

## **II.II. Brand Loyalty in Football**

Brand loyalty is described in two manners including psychological and behavioral points of views. Behavioral brand loyalty means that a customer repetitively and consistently purchase a brand and it is supposed that this purchasing behavior of the customer incrementally strenghtens the relationship between the brand and the customer (Assael, 1998). According to this point of view supporters, the customers who systematically purchase the same brand, become loyal customers of the mentioned brand (Odin et al., 2001:76). On the other hand, psychological brand loyalty consists of an internal tendency to the brand in addition to iterative purchasing behavior of the customers towards brand (Gounaris and Stathakopoulos, 2004:284).

When a sport team is evaluated as a product to be marketed, team loyalty stands for a maintaining loyalty to a definite team (Salman, 2008:100). In that vein, the loyalty to a football club can be defined as a maintanining loyalty to a definite football club. To constitute a brand loyalty in football is difficult to manage since football as a product is intangible and inconsistent. The main reason why the football product is inconsistent is that human factor showing changeable features is intensive in football product. The inconsistency in football product which means the performance of a football team is not constant may result in weakening the brand image which may also result in weakening brand loyalty towards the mentioned football club.

### ***II.II.I. Psychological Commitment-Behavioral Loyalty Relationship in Football***

Dick and Basu (1994) indicate that commitment attitude is a precessor of loyalty. Another similar point of view indicates that loyalty appears in a consequence of commitment attitude (Jacoby

and Chesnut, 1978). Psychological commitment can be evaluated as a process where a customer firstly becomes loyal to a brand in a cognitive manner, and then he/she subsequently becomes loyal to the brand in a sensitive and intentional manners (Back, 2005). Oliver (1999) indicates that after the mentioned three phases completed, behavioral loyalty occurs as the forth phase. Oliver (1999) also indicates that the loyalty concept originated from the commitment attitude constitutes a resistance on consumers' behaviors shifting against the rival brands' marketing activities. For instance; the supporter who has a strong attitude towards the football club has a robust resistance against changing loyalty behaviors. This also increases psychological commitment of the supporter towards his/her football club. Within this context, Bee and Havitz (2010) examined the relationship between psychological commitment and behavioral loyalty in football, and concluded that psychological commitment and resistance to change mediated the effect of fan attraction and involvement on behavioral loyalty. Tachis and Tzetzis (2015) discriminated the concepts of psychological commitment and attitudinal loyalty and found out that both psychological commitment and attitudinal loyalty affect behavioral loyalty of the sport fans to the soccer teams. With the support of these results, it can be considered that psychological commitment is the precessor and reason of behavioral loyalty in football. The hypothesis indicating this statement was described below:

H1: Psychological commitment has a statistically meaningful effect on behavioral loyalty.

### ***II.II.II. Identification-Brand Loyalty Relationship in Football***

Sport Spectator Identification Index is often used in the researches which are conducted to measure brand loyalty in football. For a person identified with the football team that he/she supports, the football team becomes one of the components constituting his/her identity (Belk, 1988; Madrigal, 2000). The identified person embraces the football team's success and then he/she becomes proud of it. Identification does not only occur in the case of success. The identified person also embraces the failure of the football team as well. For instance; the research conducted by Genar (2004) indicates that the number of identified people who do not prefer to meet with his/her friends when the football team that they support fails is remarkably high. This result indicates that the identified people feel ashamed because of the team's failure. This is also an indicator of identification with the team.

The identification level makes differentiation between the concepts of favourableness typologies such as spectatorship and fanaticism among football consumers. This distinction can be performed by the Sport Spectator Identification Index as long as this index makes a distinction that differs the supporters for the level of their favourableness (Wann and Branscombe, 1995).

Identification makes people voluntarily struggle for the brand they identified with, attract with the other brand community members, and psychologically loyal to the brand (Bhattacharya ve Sen, 2003). A person who identifies with the brand community, tend to exaggerate the similarities with the community members, and decrease the discrepancies with the people who are outside the community (Arkonaç, 2001). This may explain why the supporters of the same football club have the same synergy, and consider other football clubs' supporters as enemies; since identification with a football club stands for psychological connection between a supporter and a football club (Wann and Wiggins, 1999).

Football spectators are guarantees for their football clubs' economic entities as they go and watch their football clubs' matches at the stadium or by using some media channels (Erdoğan, 2008). In that vein, it can be said that identification level with a football club also fundamental for the football club to maintain its economic entity, since the identification level of a supporter alters from spectatorship to fanaticism (Trail and James, 2001).

Çiftyıldız (2015) investigated the relationship among the identification of the supporters with the football clubs, psychological commitment and purchasing intentions and determined that there were a positive relationship among the variables. Enginkaya (2014) investigated the relationship among the attitudes and purchasing intentions of the supporters toward the sponsor brands, and identification with the football clubs and determined that there was a relationship between the identification with the football clubs and attitudes toward the sponsor brand. In addition, Torlak et al. (2014) investigated the relationship among the identification level of the supporters with the football clubs, quality perception toward the licenced products of the clubs and purchasing intentions, and determined that identification level was more effective on purchasing intention than it was on quality perception of the supporters. On the other hand, Wu et al. (2012) seperated identification in two parts which were identification as a fan-team level and identification as a fan-player level and determined that team identification was the major determinant of fans' loyalty intentions, however, player identification had an indirect effect on fans' loyalty intentions. In addition, Stevens and Rosenberger (2012) determined that fan identification, following sport and involvement positively influenced fan loyalty.

As the literature supports that identification with the football clubs affects loyalty, the hypotheses were established below:

H2<sub>a</sub>: Identification has a statistically meaningful effect on psychological commitment.

H2<sub>b</sub>: Identification has a statistically meaningful effect on behavioral loyalty.

***II.II.III. Demographical Factors-Brand Loyalty Relationship in Football***

There are limited researches directly indicating the relationship between demographical factors and brand loyalty. For instance; Kurtuldu and Çilingir (2009) found in their research conducted in cigarette sector that gender, marital status and age variables of the consumers created no differences on the tendency and behaviors of the consumers towards brand loyalty while occupation status, income level and education level created statistically meaningful differences on the level of brand loyalty. The researches made in football industry indicating whether demographical factors create any differences on brand loyalty provide that men are more identified and psychologically committed to the football clubs than women are, as the income level decreases, the psychological commitment increases, and the psychological commitment of the group in the age of 55 and above and in the age of 18 and below is found to be higher than the other age groups (Salman and Giray, 2010; Demirel et al., 2007). The hypotheses established in that vein are indicated below:

H3<sub>a</sub>: Demographical factors have a statistically meaningful effect on psychological commitment.

H3<sub>b</sub>: Demographical factors have a statistically meaningful effect on behavioral loyalty.

***II.II.IV. Brand Associations-Brand Loyalty Relationship in Football***

Everything about brand come to the consumers' minds constitutes brand connotations (Aaker, 1991:109). According to Keller (1993:5), brand connotations constituting brand image comprise of the factors related to the product, factors unrelated to the product, benefits, and attitudes. In this research, the effects of the factors related to the product, factors unrelated to the product and benefits on brand loyalty are investigated.

The perceived benefit of a brand is divided into three categories including functional, experimental, and symbolic benefits. Functional benefits are about internal features of the brand and satisfy physical and security needs of the customers. Experimental benefits are mostly related to the unrelated features of the product and satisfy the intangible needs such as amusement of the consumers (Keller, 1993:4). On the other hand, symbolic benefits are also related to the unrelated features of the product just as the experimental benefits, they are also related to some other motives of the customers such as self-expression, social acceptance, and self-trust (Odabaşı, 2006:130). The mentioned benefits revive from the satisfaction of the consumers and psychological needs of the consumers which brings brand loyalty.

Factors related to the product stand for the sum of the features that the customers are in expect from the product (Keller, 1993). Factors related to the product increase the product's performance

and satisfy the customer's expectations from the product in this way. In this point of view, it can be said that factors related to the product for a football club are the factors that increase the football club's performance (Gladden ve Funk, 2002:57). In that vein, the factors related to the product for a football club are determined as individual footballer, game of the team, staff of the team, the coach, and the management of the football club (Gladden ve Funk, 2002:57; Bauer vd., 2005). These factors can also be counted as tangible and intangible motivational factors of a football club. Funk et al. (2012) determined that sport consumer motivational factors explained 60% of the variance in loyalty towards the football club in some aspects such as game attendance, media usage, wearing team related clothing and purchasing team related merchandise. Dependent on these results, the following hypotheses were established:

H4a<sub>1</sub>: Factors related to the product have a statistically meaningful effect on psychological commitment.

H4a<sub>2</sub>: Factors related to the product have a statistically meaningful effect on behavioral loyalty.

Factors unrelated to the product are described as the factors which have no effect on the product performance; but have an effect on the purchasing and consuming of the product (Keller, 1993). Factors unrelated to the products comprise of the external factors about consumption and purchasing. For a football club, the factors unrelated to the product are determined as the logo, the colours of the club, the stadium, the old success of the club, the organisational culture and values, and the supporters of the club (Gladden ve Funk, 2002; Koç, 2008). Aycan et al. (2009) determined that some tangible and intangible motivational factors such as the event attraction, the program convenience and physical environmental factors had significant effect on identification with the team affecting brand loyalty.

H4b<sub>1</sub>: Factors unrelated to the product a have statistically meaningful effect on psychological commitment.

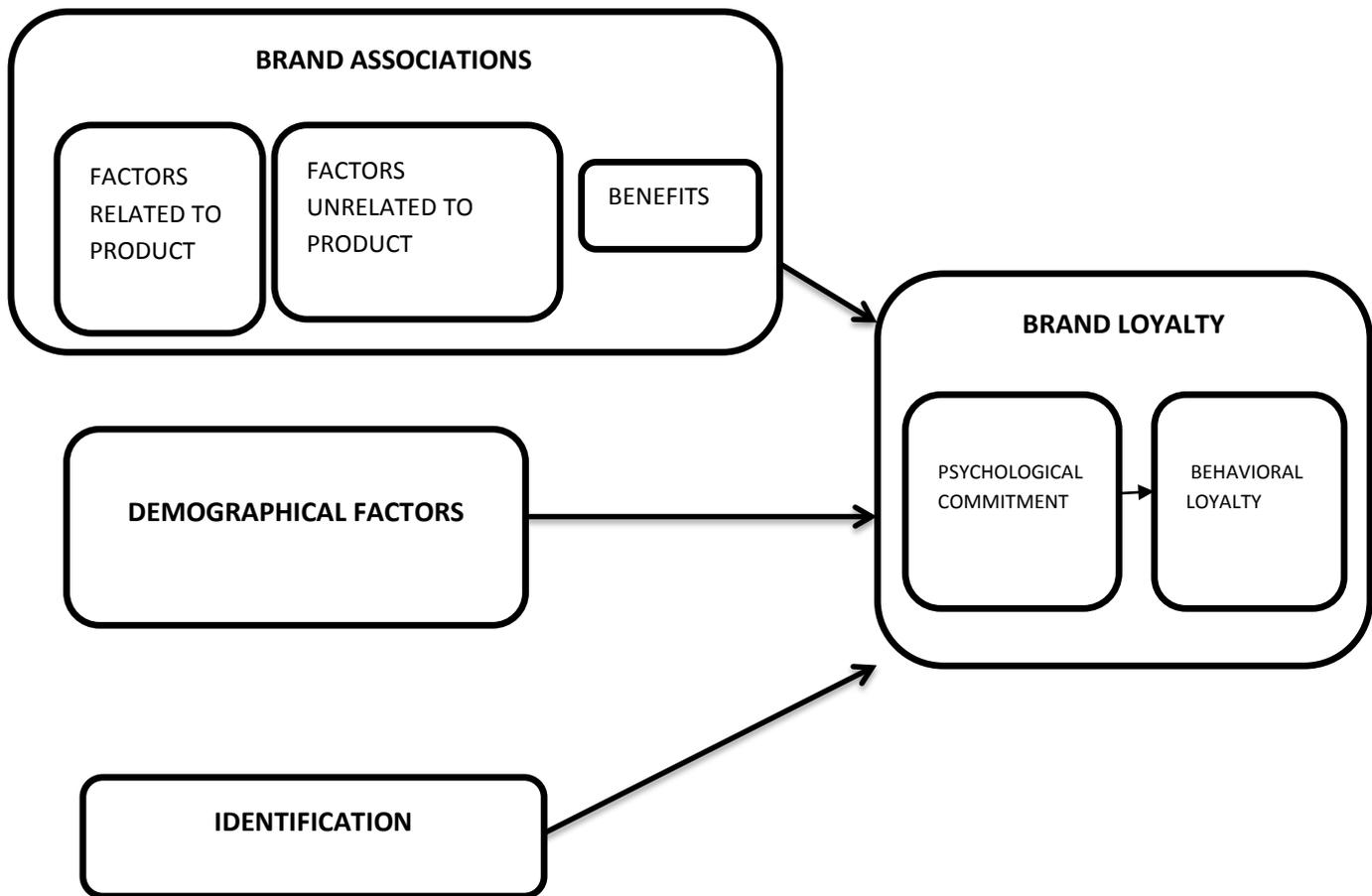
H4b<sub>2</sub>: Factors unrelated to the product have a statistically meaningful effect on behavioral loyalty.

The researches in the literature indicate that the factors related to the product and the factors unrelated to the product have effect on the perceived benefits, psychological commitment and behavioral loyalty. Perceived benefits comprise of some factors including group acceptance, escape, socialization, amusement and nostalgia. For instance; Bauer et al. (2005) came to the conclusion that the factors unrelated to the product had more effects on the perceived benefits, psychological commitment and behavioral loyalty than the factors related to the product did. Gençer et al. (2012) determined that social interaction motive which means socialization benefit had a significant effect

on sport consumption. Salman and Giray (2010) determined the effects of the perceived benefit factors such as excitement sharing, taking pleasure, aesthetic, and amusement on loyalty towards football team. The hypotheses established in that vein are described below:

H4c1: Perceived benefits have a statistically meaningful effect on psychological commitment.

H4c2: Perceived benefits have a statistically meaningful effect on behavioral loyalty.



**Figure I: Model of The Research**

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **III.I. Research Design and Data Collection**

The population of this research comprises of 3537 students studying at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration enrolling in the spring period of 2013-2014 in Bülent Ecevit University. Considering that brand loyalty towards the football clubs may alter according to gender and education level, quota sampling method is applied in this research. To calculate the size of the sample, the below formula indicated by Özdamar (2003:116-118) which is used in case the population is definite is applied:

$$n=(N.P.Q.Z^2\alpha)/((N-1).d^2) \quad (1)$$

According to the information derived from the formula, although the minimum size of the sample must include 384 participants, to increase the reliability and validity of the research by decreasing type i error, it is aimed to reach to the participants as many as possible. In that vein, 662 participants were reached for this research and 105 participants were eliminated as they were not supporters of The Big Four. In this way, 557 students were found to be the supporters of The Big Four.

### III.II. Measures

In this research, questionnaire technique was conducted in data collection. In the questionnaire form, to measure brand loyalty, psychological commitment scale and behavioral loyalty scale were used. To measure brand connotations, benefits scale, the factors related to product scale and factors unrelated to product scale were also used. In addition to these scales, to measure the identification of the supporters with the football clubs, Sport Spectator Identification Index was also used. The statements of each scales were adjusted by considering football as a product. The statements of the brand loyalty scales and brand connotations scales were prepared by making compilation from the researches of Bauer et al. (2005), Gladden and Funk (2002), and Koç (2008). To measure the identification with the mentioned football clubs, the Sport Spectator Identification Index developed by Wann and Branscombe (1993) and of which reliability and validity were proved by Günay and Tiryaki (2003) was used in this research.

### III.III. Measurement Model and Analysis

First of all, to determine the internal reliability of the scales' statements, the reliability analysis was applied for each scales. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of each scales were determined in between 0,898-0,953, which means that each scales are highly reliable. Then the exploratory factor analysis of the scale statements was applied and the factors derived from the analysis were used for the research's variables\*\*. Finally, Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was applied to find out the factors considered to effect the dependent variable, brand loyalty, by using SPSS 22 packet program.

## IV. FINDINGS

The results indicate that 45,5% of the participants are Galatasaray F.C. supporters, 31,9% of the participants are Fenerbahçe F.C. supporters, 15,4% of the participants are Beşiktaş F.C. supporters, 2% of the participants are Trabzonspor F.C. supporters, 16% of the participants are non

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\*\* The reliability analyses and exploratory factor analyses tables for each scales were shown in Appendix A and APPENDIX B.

supporters, and 2,9% of the participants are the supporters of the other football clubs except from the “Big Four”. Due to the fact that only the Big Four supporters were taken into account for the research, the non supporters and the supporters of the other football clubs except from the Big Four were eliminated.

The results also show that 55,1% of the participants are women while 44,9% of the participants are men. In addition, 38,5% of the participants are freshmen, 21% of the participants are sophomores, 16,8% of the participants are sophisters, and 23,7% of the participants are seniors. It is seen that 52,3% of the participants come from the big cities while 35,8% of the participants come from the cities, and 11,9% of the participants come from the countryside. The data about the monthly spending of the participants indicate that 19,6% of the participants spend 300 TL or below, 39,6% of the participants spend in between 301 TL-500 TL, 37,2% of the participants spend in between 501 TL-1000 TL, and 3,5% of the participants spend above 1000 TL.

Due to the fact that brand loyalty was measured in both psychological and behavioral dimensions, the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was applied for both psychological commitment and behavioral loyalty.

**Table I**

**The Effects of the Variables on Psychological Commitment**

Hypotheses	Independent Variables	Standard Beta	Correlations	Std. Error	t	p	Result
H2 <sub>a</sub>	Identification	0,384	0,721	0,027	13,997	0,000	Accept
H3 <sub>a1</sub>	Football Club	0,004	0,159	0,021	-,178	0,859	Reject
H3 <sub>a2</sub>	Gender	0,107	0,343	0,045	4,787	0,000	Accept
H3 <sub>a3</sub>	Education Level	0,016	0,005	0,018	,744	0,457	Reject
H3 <sub>a4</sub>	Place of Living	0,033	0,175	0,031	-1,557	0,120	Accept
H3 <sub>a5</sub>	Monthly Spending	0,052	0,129	0,026	2,491	0,013	Accept
H4 <sub>a1</sub>	Factors Related to Product	0,142	0,611	0,035	4,080	0,000	Accept
H4 <sub>b1</sub>	Factors Unrelated to Product	0,126	0,633	0,037	3,388	0,001	Accept
H4 <sub>c1</sub>	Benefits	0,309	0,770	0,033	9,271	0,000	Accept

It is seen that in Table I, standard beta coefficients were used. This is due to the fact that the multiple linear regression analysis was applied on the factors derived from the factor analysis. It is seen that “identification” variable has the highest coefficient which is 0,384; and the “benefits” variable has the second highest coefficient which is 0,309. These scores indicate that identification and benefits variables are the most effective variables on psychological commitment. On the other hand the statistically effective variables on psychological commitment are found as “benefits” variable ( $p=,000$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “factors related to product” variable ( $p=,000$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “factors unrelated to product” variable ( $p=,001$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “identification” variable ( $p=,000$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “gender” variable ( $p=,000$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “monthly spending” variable ( $p=,013$ ;  $p<,05$ ).

**Table II**

**The Effects of the Variables on Behavioral Loyalty**

Hypotheses	Independent Variables	Standard Beta	Correlations	Std. Error	t	p	Result
H1	Psychological Commitment	0,269	0,815	0,030	8,884	0,000	Accept
H2 <sub>b</sub>	Identification	0,064	0,668	0,024	2,641	0,008	Accept
H3 <sub>b1</sub>	Football Club	0,009	-,155	0,016	-,569	0,570	Reject
H3 <sub>b2</sub>	Gender	0,078	0,365	0,035	4,396	0,000	Accept
H3 <sub>b3</sub>	Education Level	0,046	0,057	0,014	2,802	0,005	Accept
H3 <sub>b4</sub>	Place of Living	0,009	-,111	0,024	,565	0,573	Reject
H3 <sub>b5</sub>	Monthly Spending	0,050	0,136	0,020	3,034	0,003	Accept
H4 <sub>a2</sub>	Factors Related to Product	0,094	0,608	0,027	3,427	0,001	Accept
H4 <sub>b2</sub>	Factors Unrelated to Product	0,084	0,594	0,029	-2,912	0,004	Accept
H4 <sub>c2</sub>	Benefits	0,602	0,884	0,027	21,916	0,000	Accept

It can be seen in Table II that “benefits” variable has the highest coefficient which is 0,602; and the “psychological commitment” variable has the second highest coefficient which is 0,269. In other words, the most effective variables on behavioral loyalty are found as “benefits” variable and “psychological commitment” variable. On the other hand the statistically effective variables on behavioral loyalty are found as “benefits” variable ( $p=,000$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “factors related to product” variable ( $p=,001$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “factors unrelated to product” variable ( $p=,004$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “identification” variable ( $p=,008$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “gender” variable ( $p=,000$ ;  $p<,05$ ), “education level” variable ( $p=,05$ ;  $p\leq,05$ ), “monthly spending” variable ( $p=,003$ ;  $p<,05$ ), and “psychological commitment” variable ( $p=,00$ ;  $p<,05$ ).

## **V. DISCUSSION**

### **V.I. Summary of Findings**

As a result of the multiple regression analysis, it was found that brand associations, identification, gender and monthly spending variables are statistically effective variables on psychological commitment while football club, education level and place of living variables are not statistically effective variables on psychological commitment. “Benefits” variable and “identification” variable were found to be the most effective variables on psychological commitment. On the other hand, it was found that brand associations, identification, gender, education level, monthly spending and psychological commitment are statistically effective variables on behavioral loyalty while football club and place of living variables are not statistically effective variables on behavioral loyalty. “Benefits” variable and “psychological commitment” variable were found to be the most effective variables on behavioral loyalty.

### **V.II. Managerial Implications**

Research results indicate that the mentioned football clubs should emphasize on brand associations and identification to develop brand loyalty since the factors related to product, the factors unrelated to product, and benefits variables are remarkably effective in the way of brand loyalty development towards the football clubs. In order to improve the functional and social benefits received by the supporters, the football clubs should improve the physical conditions of the clubs such as stadiums, and facilities that will provide the supporters feeling of socialisation and sense of belonging resulting psychological satisfaction and brand loyalty among the supporters towards the football clubs. Besides, football clubs should not consider the supporters only as one of the material resources of the clubs. In that vein, the football clubs’ factors related to product such as the coach, the managers, and the footballers should develop a strong psychological relationship with the supporters. The football clubs should realise the brand promise which stands for winning the matches and becoming champion as much as possible in order not to disappoint the supporters who are loyal to the clubs from the heart. In this way, it becomes easier for the clubs to maintain the brand image of the clubs in the eyes of the supporters which will also bring and maintain brand loyalty. The behavioral loyalty towards the football clubs also increases the material gain of the clubs since the behaviorally loyal supporters are tend to purchase the licenced products of the clubs and/or watch the match at the stadiums. The management of the club becomes able to realise the brand promise inside the clubs such as paying the wages on time which will also increase the motivation of the footballers. The motivated footballers are tend to increase their performances which will increase the perceived

benefits of the supporters. In this way both the internal customers and the external customers of the football clubs simultaneously win.

It is obvious that Turkish football and Turkish league have not become a brand yet even they have a high level of brand loyalty inside. The factors related to product and the factors unrelated to product are also very effective in building a strong brand image for the mentioned football clubs. In that vein, to conduct an organizational social responsibility projects may increase the brand awareness of the football clubs which will bring brand loyalty as well in both national and international contents. Besides, managing the football clubs by depending on transparency principle may also strengthen the brand image of the football clubs which will also provide a strong brand loyalty.

### **V.III. Theoretical Implications**

The research results indicate that psychological commitment has a statistically meaningful effect on behavioral loyalty. So H1 is accepted for this research. In other words, the psychological commitment of The Big Four's supporters affects their behavioral loyalty such as buying from the football clubs' stores, watching the football clubs' channels, buying ticket to watch the match in the stadiums, etc. This result supports the literature (Oliver, 1999; Dick ve Basu, 1994) indicating that psychological commitment is a precursor of behavioral loyalty which means that attitudes are also precursors of behaviors. The results are also compatible with the results of Bee and Havitz (2010) and Tzetzis and Tachis (2013) indicating that psychological commitment of the football fans to the team affect behavioral loyalty of the fans. On the other hand, identification also has a statistically meaningful effect on both psychological commitment and behavioral loyalty. So, both H2<sub>a</sub> and H2<sub>b</sub> are accepted for this research. This result is also parallel to the result indicated in the literature that identified supporters become more loyal to the football clubs (Bhattacharya ve Sen, 2003). The result is also compatible with the results of Çiftyıldız (2015), Enginkaya (2014), Torlak et al. (2014), and Stevens and Rosenberger (2012) indicating that identification with the team affects both psychological commitment and behavioral loyalty towards football clubs.

The result showing that identification is the major determinant of psychological commitment is also compatible with the result of Wu et al. (2012) indicating that team identification is the major determinant of fans' loyalty intentions. In the research, demographic variables' effects on brand loyalty were also investigated, and it was found that education level did not have statistically meaningful effect on psychological commitment which is in contrast to the results revealed by Kurtuldu and Çilingir (2009). Gender and monthly spending of the supporters were found to be effective variables on both psychological commitment and behavioral loyalty. This result is

compatible with the results of Salman and Giray (2010) indicating that men are more loyal than women to the football clubs, and the results of Demirel et al. (2007) indicating that as income of the fans decreases psychological commitment with the football clubs increases. Besides, the place of living of the participants and the supported football clubs variables were also found to have no statistically meaningful effect on behavioral loyalty. Due to the fact that there are only a few researches that can be compared with this result, this result can be considered as a contribution to the literature. On the other hand, brand associations variables are found to have statistically meaningful effects on both psychological commitment and behavioral loyalty which support the results revealed by Bauer et al. (2005). So, H3 and H4 were accepted. In other words, the football clubs' tangible factors such as stadiums, logos, uniforms; intangible factors such as game, success and values of the clubs, and benefits perceived by the supporters from the football clubs are effective on both psychological commitment and behavioral loyalty of the supporters. This result is also compatible with the results of Funk et al. (2012), Aycan et al. (2009), Gencer et al. (2012), and Salman and Giray (2010) indicating that tangible motivational factors, intangible motivational factors and benefits have effect on loyalty to the football clubs.

#### **V.IV. Limitations and Future Research**

This research was only conducted with the “Big Four” supporters studying at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences in Bülent Ecevit University. Due to the fact that the participants in the research sample had almost the same years of age and marital status, the effect of age and marital status on brand loyalty could not be evaluated for this research. To generalise the results, this research should be conducted in the other cities and should not be limited to the students. In this research, a model was constituted by including brand connotations, identification, and demographic factors thought to be effective on brand loyalty. For future researches, the model can be developed by researching the effects of the elements of brand equity such as brand awareness, brand image, and perceived quality on brand loyalty which will reveal more comprehensive and generalizable results.

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APPENDIX A

**Table I: Reliability Analysis for Identification Scale (After Omitting X<sub>3</sub> From the Scale)**

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Items	<b>0,909</b> Cronbach's Alpha If Items Deleted
X <sub>1</sub>	0,903
X <sub>2</sub>	0,906
X <sub>4</sub>	0,899
X <sub>5</sub>	0,893
X <sub>6</sub>	0,897
X <sub>7</sub>	0,892
X <sub>8</sub>	0,888
X <sub>9</sub>	0,904

**Table II: Reliability Analysis for Factors Related to Product Scale**

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Items	<b>0,898</b> Cronbach's Alpha If Items Deleted
U1 <sub>a</sub>	0,880
U2 <sub>a</sub>	0,854
U3 <sub>a</sub>	0,860
U4 <sub>a</sub>	0,895
U5 <sub>a</sub>	0,888

**Table III: Reliability Analysis for Factors Unrelated to Product Scale**

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Items	<b>0,898</b> Cronbach's Alpha If Items Deleted
U1 <sub>b</sub>	0,944
U2 <sub>b</sub>	0,936
U3 <sub>b</sub>	0,931
U4 <sub>b</sub>	0,932
U5 <sub>b</sub>	0,935
U6 <sub>b</sub>	0,939

**Table IV: Reliability Analysis for Benefits Scale**

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Items	<b>0,898</b> Cronbach's Alpha If Items Deleted
B1	0,915
B2	0,925
B3	0,913
B4	0,911
B5	0,915
B6	0,912

## APPENDIX A-Cont'd

**Table V: Reliability Analysis for Psychological Commitment Scale**

<b>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Items</b>	<b>0,898 Cronbach's Alpha If Items Deleted</b>
P1	0,946
P2	0,943
P3	0,945
P4	0,944
P5	0,947
P6	0,948
P7	0,949
P8	0,950

**Table VI: Reliability Analysis for Behavioral Loyalty Scale**

<b>Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Items</b>	<b>0,898 Cronbach's Alpha If Items Deleted</b>
D1	0,927
D2	0,921
D3	0,922
D4	0,918
D5	0,921
D6	0,919
D7	0,919
D8	0,924

APPENDIX B

Table VII: Identification Scale Exploratory Factor Analysis

KMO				0,907		
X <sup>2</sup> Statistics (Significance)				3365,895 [0.000]		
Initial Eigenvalues				Derived Squared Weight Sum		
Component	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	5,210	57,893	57,893	5,210	57,893	57,893
2	,801	8,899	66,793			
3	,654	7,262	74,055			
4	,572	6,356	80,411			
5	,541	6,008	86,419			
6	,458	5,092	91,511			
7	,317	3,519	95,030			
8	,260	2,886	97,917			
9	,188	2,083	100,00			

Table VIIa: Correlations for Identification Scale

Items	Component 1
X1	0,740
X2	0,698
X3	0,578
X4	0,764
X5	0,820
X6	0,784
X7	0,833
X8	0,866
X9	0,726

Table VIII: Factors Related to Product Scale Factor Analysis

KMO				0,851		
X <sup>2</sup> Statistics (Significance)				2228,485 [0.000]		
Initial Eigenvalues				Derived Squared Weight Sum		
Component	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	3,580	71,606	71,606	3,580	71,606	71,606
2	0,662	13,248	84,854			
3	0,354	7,078	91,932			
4	0,219	4,372	96,304			
5	0,185	3,696	100,000			

## APPENDIX B-Cont'd

Table VIII<sub>a</sub>: Correlations for Factors Related to Product Scale

Items	Component 1
U1 <sub>A</sub>	0,838
U2 <sub>A</sub>	0,915
U3 <sub>A</sub>	0,899
U4 <sub>A</sub>	0,773
U5 <sub>A</sub>	0,797

Table IX: Factors Unrelated to Product Factor Analysis

KMO X <sup>2</sup> Statistics (Significance) Initial Eigenvalues				0,925 3663,553 [0.000] Derived Squared Weight Sum		
Component	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	4,738	78,966	78,966	4,738	78,966	78,966
2	0,400	6,668	85,634			
3	0,271	4,525	90,159			
4	0,220	3,659	93,818			
5	0,209	3,481	97,299			
6	0,162	2,701	100,00			

Table IX<sub>a</sub>: Correlations for Factors Unrelated to Product Scale

Items	Component 1
U1 <sub>B</sub>	0,837
U2 <sub>B</sub>	0,892
U3 <sub>B</sub>	0,920
U4 <sub>B</sub>	0,913
U5 <sub>B</sub>	0,894
U6 <sub>B</sub>	0,874

Table X: Benefits Scale Factor Analysis

KMO X <sup>2</sup> Statistics (Significance) Initial Eigenvalues				0,878 3138,663 [0.000] Derived Squared Weight Sum		
Component	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	4,433	73,890	73,890	4,433	73,890	73,890
2	0,539	8,979	82,870			
3	0,329	5,479	88,349			
4	0,291	4,844	93,193			
5	0,271	4,522	97,714			
6	0,137	2,286	100,00			

**APPENDIX B-Cont'd**

**Table X<sub>a</sub>: Correlations for Benefits Scale**

Items	Component 1
B1	0,863
B2	0,800
B3	0,868
B4	0,884
B5	0,865
B6	0,874

**Table XI: Psychological Commitment Scale Factor Analysis**

Component	KMO			0,924		
	X <sup>2</sup> Statistics (Significance)			5305,372 [0.000]		
	Initial Eigenvalues			Derived Squared Weight Sum		
	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	6,033	75,410	75,410	6,033	75,410	75,410
2	,620	7,748	83,158			
3	,374	4,680	87,838			
4	,289	3,615	91,453			
5	,223	2,787	94,240			
6	,185	2,314	96,554			
7	,154	1,926	98,481			
8	,122	1,519	100,000			

**Table XI<sub>a</sub>: Correlations for Psychological Commitment Scale**

Items	Component 1
P1	,873
P2	,914
P3	,889
P4	,902
P5	,865
P6	,850
P7	,827
P8	,824

## APPENDIX B-Cont'd

Table XII: Behavioral Loyalty Scale Factor Analysis

Component	KMO			0,908		
	X <sup>2</sup> Statistics (Significance)			3996.706 [0.000]		
	Initial Eigenvalues			Derived Squared Weight Sum		
	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Sum	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	5,402	67,521	67,521	5,402	67,521	67,521
2	,787	9,833	77,353			
3	,471	5,886	83,239			
4	,403	5,037	88,276			
5	,282	3,531	91,807			
6	,251	3,139	94,946			
7	,230	2,881	97,827			
8	,174	2,173	100,000			

Table XII<sub>a</sub>: Correlations for Behavioral Loyalty Scale

Items	Component 1
D1	,748
D2	,822
D3	,823
D4	,863
D5	,831
D6	,849
D7	,842
D8	,789