

The Effect of Rumors in Sports on the Organizational Commitment of Amateur Football Players

Sporda Söylentilerin Amatör Futbolcuların Örgütsel Bağlılıkları Üzerindeki Etkisi

Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi

 Uğur ALEMDAR¹

 Zeki TAŐ¹

¹ Sakarya University of Applied Sciences,
SAKARYA

Corresponding Author / Sorumlu Yazar
Research Assistant Uğur ALEMDAR
uguralemdar@subu.edu.tr

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to determine the effect of rumor in sports on the organizational commitment of amateur football players. The sample group of the research, in which the relational screening model is used, consists of 357 amateur male football players selected by convenience sampling method. The data is collected with the Personal Information Form, whose data are developed by the researcher, and the "Rumor Impact Scale in Sports" developed by Üzüm et al. (2020), "Organizational Commitment Scale" developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), its Turkish version is developed by Dağlı et al. (2018). In the analysis of the collected data; While a low level positive relationship is found between motivation scores and organizational commitment scores, no significant relationship is found between other sub-dimensions of rumor in sports and organizational commitment score averages. As a result of simple linear regression analysis, it is seen that the regression model is statistically significant. When the t-test results regarding the significance of the regression coefficients are examined, it is found that motivation scores have a significant predictive power on emotional commitment.

Keywords: Rumor, Organizational commitment, Football, Management

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı sporda söylentinin amatör futbolcuların örgütsel bağlılıklarına etkisini tespit etmektir. İlişkisel tarama modelinin kullanıldığı araştırmanın örneklem grubu, kolayda örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilen 357 amatör erkek futbolcudan oluşmaktadır. Verileri araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Üzüm ve diğ. (2020) tarafından geliştirilen "Sporda Söylenti Etki Ölçeği" ve Meyer ve Allen (1997) tarafından geliştirilen, Türkçe uyarlaması Dağlı ve diğ. (2018) tarafından yapılan "Örgütsel Bağlılık Ölçeği" ile toplanmıştır. Toplanan verilerin analizinde; motivasyon puanları ile örgütsel bağlılık puanları arasında pozitif yönde düşük düzeyde bir ilişki tespit edilirken sporda söylentinin diğ. alt boyutları ile örgütsel bağlılık skor ortalamaları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki tespit edilememiştir. Basit doğrusal regresyon analizi sonucunda regresyon modelinin istatistiksel açıdan anlamlı olduğu görülmektedir. Regresyon katsayılarının anlamlılığına ilişkin t-testi sonuçları incelendiğinde ise motivasyon skorlarının duygusal bağlılığı üzerinde anlamlı yordayıcı güce sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Söylenti, Örgütsel bağlılık, Futbol, Yönetim

Introduction

People have used three basic ways of communication until today: written, verbal and non-verbal communication. By their nature, they have made efforts to communicate with each other in order to get along. Communication has continued to exist in every time period, in every environment and place, and people have used many types of communication until today. In addition, while people use interpersonal communication channels with each other, they continue in formal and informal ways. While formal communication expresses the continuation of the determined rules in our organization and normal business life, informal communication is the fact that the rules are not based on any form, pattern or obligation (Osai, 2021). Informal communication appears in different forms in all organizations. The fact that people in the organization want to satisfy a curiosity or make comments about discourses prepares the ground for creating a rumor environment. The rumor that exists in every organization has continued its existence in a continuous way.

Rumor is a type of communication that people commonly use in daily life. Rumor spread, which is an important part of people's lives, can shape and direct public opinion (Galani, 2003) and then cause social panic and differentiation in thoughts (Kimmel, 2004; Kosfeld, 2005).

The way rumors spread has changed dramatically over the last 150 years: initially by word of mouth and then, with the advancement of technology, to the telephone, text messages (SMS), emails, blogs, podcasts, microblogs, and social networks (Kesten & Sidoravicius, 2005; Kostka, Oswald, & Wadenhofer, 2008) appear to have evolved. Today, rumors reach everyone thanks to the surprising speed of social media and the internet (Kostka et al., 2008).

Although rumor and gossip are used as the same terms in some ways in the literature, they differ from each other on two points. These; a) Individuals question the accuracy of gossip less than rumors, b) While gossip is about individuals, rumor is about events (Farley, Timme & Hard, 2010). Although rumor and gossip are clearly separated, there may be cases where they are not clearly separated because they have some similar aspects (Han, 2020). These common aspects are; a) Both of them obtain information from second or third parties, b) The source of both is unclear, c) Both are developed to save people from suspicion (Michelson & Mouly, 2004). Rumors are generally defined as unverified statements or interpretations of events or issues of public interest (Helbing, Farkas & Vicsek, 2000; Helbing, Farkas, Molnar & Vicsek, 2002; Zhao, Cui, Oju, Wang & Wang, 2013). Gossip, casual or idle talk between friends (Rosnow, 2001); malicious information can be described with negative expressions as the dissemination of information that does not have a reliable source or is inaccurate (Dodig-Crnkovic & Anokhina, 2008). Rumors play an important role in various aspects of human life; in social relations, politics, economy, diplo-

macy, marketing, sports etc. (Lebensztayn, 2015). Rumors sometimes contain confidential information about people who have been involved in the public, economy, politics and sports and can also manipulate the public (Kosfeld, 2005). Rumors are seen in all segments of society. This can be in politics, in magazines or in an educational institution. In addition to these, it is possible to come across rumors in the sports world as sports appeal to large audiences. The fact that sports appeal to large masses causes rumors to continue their existence in various forms in the sports environment. These rumors can be rumors with positive and negative intentions in the sports environment. Negative rumors can cause good communication between the coach and the athlete, the environment of trust, the decrease in the performance of the athlete, and the negative attitude of the coach towards the athlete, as well as spoiling the positive atmosphere in the team. At the same time, negative rumors weaken the bond between the athlete, coach and the club, and cover a long process such as leaving the team as a result of the employees losing their sense of belonging to the club. On the contrary, well-intentioned rumors create a positive atmosphere for the athlete, coach and club. Positive rumors play an important role in the better performance and belonging of the athlete, the motivation of the coach and the integration of the club. A club that integrates positively, together with all its employees, forms a unity from the highest level to the lowest level. Negative rumors about the transfer or private life about the athlete performing well cause the athlete to perform poorly in the next competitions and as a result, these rumors are believed by the fans. Because a good bond between the athlete and the supporter can result in a good performance of the athlete in the competitions. As a result of the poor performance of the athlete, it may become inevitable for the fans to take a negative attitude towards the player by believing the rumors.

Rumors can also be deliberately made by the media during transfer periods. Because in every transfer period, fans will want to see star athletes in their teams that will excite them. Based on this request, the media deliberately makes transfer rumors against various teams about star players in every transfer period. Although these conscious rumors made by the media increase the number of reads and clicks in the print or electronic media, it is not important for some media organs whether the transfer rumors are true or not. Fans do not hold the media accountable when their team fails to make a star or sensational transfer. The fans hold the sports clubs responsible for these transfers not to happen.

Although there are negative rumors in the literature, there are also positive rumors. These positive rumors can also function as an early warning system about the inner workings of the club that need priority attention (Michelson, Van Iterson, & Waddington, 2010). Rumors that spread rapidly are used in a preventive position among people (Usta, Kaya & Özyurt, 2018).

This is used as an early warning mechanism in both clubs and organizations. According to Schneider and Baker (2006), it is important for the coaches to have information about the motivational status of the athletes, and the methods that will increase the motivation they will predetermine against them, and these preliminary preparations can be supported by rumors. Rumors about athletes may lead the coach to take action against the athlete's poor performance. At the same time, the rumor about the undisciplined movements of the athlete in the media can activate the early warning systems of the club against the athlete. It may not only be between the athlete, the club and the technical staff. If this is also a sports club, which is a joint stock company whose shares are in demand to the public, rumors may also activate the club's economic early warning systems.

Rumor seems to be a fairly common concept in the sports world. These rumors; We can list the transfer processes of the athletes, their magazine and private lives, about the coaches, referees, managers and fans. Positive and negative rumors in sports make their effects felt on parameters such as success, performance, motivation, sponsorship and communication (Üzüm, Karlı, Ünlü & Solakumur, 2020). For example; As a result of the rumors made during the transfer periods, the excitement of the athletes towards the clubs they will transfer to and the positive view of the fans towards the athletes in the same result constitute the positive side of the rumor, and the negative side of the rumor among the fans whose contract is still on going.

In today's sports world, many factors can affect the relationship between football players, coaches and club management (Kılıçaslan & Çelik, 2021). One of these factors, which is important for the organizational commitment of the club, is rumor. It is known that rumors have changed many things between the players themselves and also between the club. This research was carried out by considering how the rumor had an effect on football players, what the factors affecting them were, and their commitment levels might differ according to these factors.

When the literature on the subject is examined, it is seen that the studies on organizational commitment and sports are numerous and on various sample groups (Adiloğulları, 2011; Alev, 2016; Arı, 2015; Bal, 2018; Becker & Billings, 1993; Belli, 2012; Beltekin, 2015; Büyükbasmacı, 2019; Ermiş, 2019; Geri, 2010; Gündoğan, 2017; Kartal, 2019; Kul, 2010; Malkoç, 2018; Okudan, 2018; Öz, 2018; Öztürk, 2013; Sancar, 2017; Soyer, Can, & Akbulut, 2010; Togo, 2018; Ulukan, 2006; Yıldırım, 2019). Among these studies, the studies that determined the football players as the sample group (Adiloğulları, 2011; Adiloğulları, Görgülü and Ulucan, 2017; Aktürk et al., 2014; Kelecek and Koruç, 2018; Kelecek and Göktürk, 2017; Ulukan, 2006; Üzüm, 2010) was found to be small. When these studies on football players are examined, the fact that such a study on the organizational commitment of the rumored football players has not been carried out before, constitutes the original value of the research.

Method

In this study, relational screening model is used to determine the effect of rumor in sports on the organizational commitment of amateur football players. The screening model provides a quantitative description of the universe through research on the sample selected from the determined population (Cresswell, 2012: 376). According to Karasar (2018: 114), the relational screening model is expressed as "research models aiming to determine the existence and/or degree of variation between two or more variables".

Population and Sample of the Research

The universe of the research consists of football players actively playing in the Regional Amateur League (RAL) in Kocaeli, Sakarya, Düzce and Bolu provinces in the Eastern Marmara Region of Turkey. The sample consists of 358 amateur male football players (age 21.75 ± 5.51 years; sport age 9.02 ± 5.35 years) selected by convenience sampling method from the mentioned universe.

Data Collection Tools

In the study, data are collected using the "Rumor impact scale in sports" and "Organizational commitment scale". Detailed information about the measurement tools is given below.

Personal Information Form: The "Personal Information Form" created by the researchers is used to determine information such as the age and branch age of amateur football players.

Rumor Impact Scale in Sports: In order to measure the effect of rumor in sports on the organizational commitment of amateur football players, the "Rumor Impact Scale in Sports" developed by Üzüm et al. (2020) is used. The rumor scale in sports consists of a 5-point Likert type, 28 items and 5 sub-dimensions. The lowest 28 and the highest 140 points are obtained from the measurement tool. In the scale development study, the first sub-dimension ($\alpha=0.86$ for the Individual Engagement Dimension), the second sub-dimension ($\alpha=0.80$ for the Communication Dimension), the third sub-dimension ($\alpha=0.71$ for the Motivation Dimension), the fourth sub-dimension ($\alpha=0.63$ for Advertisement dimension) and the fifth sub-dimension ($\alpha=0.53$ for Intra-Organizational Diffusion Dimension). The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency values of the total scale are found to be ($\alpha=0.90$) (Üzüm et al., 2020).

In this study, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency values of the total scale and sub-dimensions are given in the Table 1.

Organizational Commitment Scale: In the study, Organizational Commitment Scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), the Turkish adaptation developed by Dağlı et al. (2018) is used. The "Organizational Commitment Scale" is a 5-point Likert type and consists of 3 dimensions: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Items 3,4,5 and 13 of the scale, which consists of 18 items in total, are reverse

items. In the adaptation study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale is found as $\alpha=.90$. In this study, the internal consistency coefficient is determined as $\alpha=.84$.

Table 1. Cronbach Alpha values for the scale

| Dimension | Number of Items | Cronbach Alpha |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Individual Engagement | 13 | .86 |
| Communication | 6 | .75 |
| Motivation | 3 | .77 |
| Advertisement | 2 | .54 |
| Intra-Organizational Diffusion | 4 | .55 |
| Rumor Impact in Sports | 28 | .87 |

Data Collection

The research questions are transferred to Google Form and made ready for data collection. At the beginning of the form, written instructions are given to the participating football players about why the research is conducted and its content, and a voluntary participation consent form is attached. Data are collected online from football players who read the information about the research and agreed to participate in the research.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the football players in the online environment are made ready for analysis in the SPSS program. The conformity of the data to normality is calculated by taking into account the skewness and kurtosis values. It has been determined that the obtained values are $-1...+1$. According to George and Mallery (2001), these results can be accepted as suitable for normal distribution. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and Regression analyzes are used in the analysis of the data.

Ethics Statement

Ethics committee approval was obtained for the study according to the decision of Ethics Committee of the Sakarya University of Applied Sciences, with dated 02.01.2023 and numbered E.70864.

Results

The relationship between the rumor scores and organizational commitment scores of the football players are given in Table 2.

According to Table 3, as a result of the simple linear regression analysis, it is seen that the regression model is statistically significant. When the t-test results regarding the significance of the regression coefficients are analyzed, it is determined that motivation scores ($\beta=.159$; $t=2.772$; $p=.01$) have a significant predictive power on emotional commitment. 2% of the total variance in emotional commitment can be explained by motivation.

Table 2. The relationship between the rumor scores and organizational commitment scores of the football players

| Sub-dimensions | SD1 | SD2 | SD3 | SD4 | SD5 | SD6 |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-----|
| Individual Engagement (SD1) | 1 | | | | | |
| Communication (SD2) | ,374** | 1 | | | | |
| Motivation (SD3) | ,248** | ,239** | 1 | | | |
| Advertisement (SD4) | ,442** | ,389** | ,388* | 1 | | |
| Intra-Organizational Diffusion (SD5) | ,230** | ,195** | ,171* | ,240** | 1 | |
| Organizational Commitment (SD6) | -.052 | -.086 | .125* | .017 | -.034 | 1 |

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

Table 3. Regression analysis results on predicting organizational commitment of football players

| Variable | B | SD | β | t | p |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|---------|--------|-------|
| Stabil | 3,384 | ,190 | | 17,785 | ,000 |
| Individual Engagement | -,045 | ,048 | -,057 | -,944 | ,346 |
| Communication | -,084 | ,046 | -,107 | -1,819 | ,070 |
| Motivation | ,101 | ,036 | ,159 | 2,772 | ,006* |
| Advertisement | ,018 | ,037 | ,031 | ,484 | ,629 |
| Intra-Organizational Diffusion | -,028 | ,045 | -,035 | -,634 | ,526 |

R= .034; $R^2_{adj}=.020$; $F_{(5, 352)} = 2.47$; $p=.01$

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this research was to determine the effect of rumor in sports on the organizational commitment of amateur football players. For this purpose, it was tried to determine the effect of rumor on the loyalty levels of amateur football players.

In this study on the effect of rumor on organizational commitment, only a low level of positive correlation is found between motivation and organizational commitment, one of the sub-dimensions of rumor. In the regression analysis performed for the effect, it is seen that only motivation have a significant effect on organizational commitment. It is determined that 2% of the total variance is explained by motivation.

Basically, when the orientations suitable for the sportive goals are formed, the sportsman's commitment to the sport is positively affected (Uluç & Akçakoyun, 2021). As the commitment of the athlete at this point increases, it leads him to a motivation to aim for more excellence in the sportive activity he performs (Kangotan, 2020). Bakeman and Helmreich (1975) similarly showed that good performance is among the reasons for commitment to the organization in their research with underwater teams. Considering its many different disciplines, individuals within the structure of all sports-related institutions and organizations develop their motivation and commitment to their organizations in parallel (Zengin, 2022). It is seen that the motivation levels of the football players increase accordingly,

especially in cases where the personal goals of the football players for the level of unity and togetherness intersect with the goals of the organization. At this point, Soyer et al. (2010)'s research reveals that amateur football players have higher motivation levels than professional football players. Zengin (2022), in his study investigating commitment in sports organizations, emphasizes that an important factor affecting this result is the Turkish cultural structure.

Considering the general environment of sports organizations, it is seen that apart from the athlete, the technical team, sports managers and fans constitute an important part of this structure. Rumors emerging in these structures, which can be described as an organic structure, have some effects on the internal and external motivations of all organizational personnel, especially athletes, in terms of commitment to the organization. Abdurrezzak and Üstüner (2020) found similar results in their study and found that intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment are positively and moderately correlated ($r=0.33$). In addition, it is observed that intrinsic motivation have a significant effect on organizational commitment. In this respect, this study overlaps with studies supporting that motivation and organizational commitment are positively related (Ağca & Ertan, 2008; Buluç, 2009; Kalay, 2017; Kuavaas, 2006; Memişoğlu & Moon, 2000). Also, Imran, Allil and Mahmoud (2017) found that motivation affects organizational commitment; Rahim and Jam'an (2018) stated that motivation has a positive effect on organizational commitment; Qi and Wang (2018) revealed in their studies that public service motivation has a positive and direct effect on organizational commitment. Chiang and Jang (2008) found that the intrinsic motivation factors of hotel employees are more effective than the extrinsic motivation factors, Bilge, Bal & Gönülğür (2015) determined that extrinsic motivation has a positive effect on the continuance, emotional and normative dimensions of organizational commitment, while intrinsic motivation has a negative effect on the continuance, emotional and normative dimensions. Kerse (2016) concluded that the most effective motivation on organizational commitment is extrinsic motivation, and the result he found is consistent with the findings of the current study. Choong, Lau and Wong (2011) concluded that there is a positive relationship between affective, continuance and normative commitment and intrinsic motivation. ArunKumar (2014) stated that the job motivation of the employees benefits job satisfaction and leads to organizational commitment. Kalhor, Jhatial and Khokhar (2017) determined that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation tools have a positive effect on performance and organizational commitment. AlSada et al. (2017) found that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction, job motivation and organizational commitment. Sihombing, Supartha, Subudi and Dewi (2017), on the other hand, found that work motivation does not have an obvious positive effect on organizational commitment.

This research on the effect of rumor in sports on the organizational commitment of amateur football players is limited to

amateur football players. Future research can be done more comprehensively in different categories of amateur leagues, different categories of professional leagues, and different age categories in junior leagues. Comparative research can be done by including different sports branches in order to contribute to the literature and fill the gap in the field. In addition, this research is limited to a quantitative approach; therefore, examining the rumor in sports with a qualitative approach that includes participant views on how to improve the organizational commitment of the athletes can be expected to help a deeper understanding of the rumor and organizational commitment.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors regarding the publication of this article.

Author Contributions

Research Idea: UA; Research Design: UA; Analysis of Data: ZT; Writing: UA, ZT; Critical Review: ZT.

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