

How Fanatic? Examining the Relationship between Sports Team Evangelism and Media Fanaticism

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between sports team evangelism and media fanaticism levels of Atatürk University Faculty of Sports Sciences students. The research was conducted with a total of 320 students studying Faculty of Sports Sciences at Atatürk University. In the study, Sports Team Evangelism (eFANgelism) Scale and Fans' Motivation to Follow Their Teams on Social Media Scale were applied by using the relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. Independent Sample T-Test and One-Way Analysis of Variance were used to analyze the data. In cases where a significant difference was observed as a result of One-Way Analysis of Variance, Post Hoc (Tukey) test was applied to find the source of the difference. In order to determine the relationship between the scales, "Pearson Correlation" analyzes were performed and evaluated at the $p < .05$ significance level. A significant difference was found in the gender variable in the participants' sports team evangelism levels ($p < .05$). Significant difference wasn't found in the variables of age, sports license status, income level, department, and favorite team. Significant differences were detected in the participants' motivation to follow their teams on social media in terms of gender, sports license status, department and favorite team variables. No significant difference was found in age and income level variables. It was concluded that there was a highly positive relationship between the participants' sports team evangelism levels and their motivation to follow their teams on social media. It can be said that as the participants' level of sports team evangelism increases, their motivation to follow their teams on social media also increases; as the level of sports team evangelism decreases, their motivation to follow their teams on social media also decreases.

Keywords: Fanaticism, Evangelism, Social media

Ne Kadar Fanatik? Spor Takımı Evangelizmi ile Medya Fanatizmi Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Atatürk Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi öğrencilerinin spor takımı evangelizmi ile medya fanatizmi düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesidir. Araştırma, Atatürk Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi'nde öğrenim gören toplam 320 öğrenci ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmada nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılarak Spor Takımı Evangelizmi (eFANgelizm) Ölçeği ile Taraftarların Sosyal Medyada Takımlarını Takip Etme Motivasyonları Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde Bağımsız Örneklem T-Testi ve Tek Yönlü Varyans Analizi yapılmıştır. Tek Yönlü Varyans Analizi sonucunda anlamlı farklılık gözlenen durumlarda farkın kaynağını bulmak için Post Hoc (Tukey) testi uygulanmıştır. Ölçekler arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek amacıyla "Pearson korelasyon" analizleri yapılarak, $p < .05$ anlamlılık düzeyinde değerlendirilmiştir. Katılımcıların spor takımı evangelizmi düzeylerinde cinsiyet değişkeninde anlamlı farklılık saptanırken ($p < .05$); yaş, lisans durumu, gelir durumu, bölüm, taraftarı olunan takım değişkenlerinde anlamlı farklılık saptanmamıştır. Katılımcıların sosyal medyada takımlarını takip etme motivasyonlarında cinsiyet, lisans durumu, bölüm, taraftarı olunan takım değişkenlerinde anlamlı farklılıklar saptanırken ($p < .05$); yaş ve gelir durumu değişkenlerinde anlamlı farklılık saptanmamıştır. Katılımcıların spor takımı evangelizmi düzeyleri ile sosyal medyada takımlarını takip etme motivasyonları arasında yüksek düzeyde pozitif yönlü bir ilişki olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Katılımcıların spor takımı evangelizmi düzeyleri arttıkça sosyal medyada takımlarını takip etme motivasyonlarının da artacağı; spor takımı evangelizmi düzeyleri azaldıkça sosyal medyada takımlarını takip etme motivasyonlarının da azalacağı söylenebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Fanatizm, Evangelizm, Sosyal medya

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INTRODUCTION

Media, which progressed with the emergence of verbal communication, developed further with the invention of writing and the written form of media came into being (Özçağlayan, 2008). With the emergence of writing, news and information began to spread among the masses in the form of large texts (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023). Initially, news was transmitted by handwritten copying, but the media underwent significant development with the emergence of a new technological invention, the printing press, in the mid-15th century. The advent of the printing press made it possible to replicate written texts and disseminate them to the masses (Carroll, 2023; Irwin, 2024).

In the 18th century, industrialization accelerated, leading to significant developments in media and communication tools as they were influenced by and evolved alongside industrialization (Kivinen & Piironen, 2023). The coming together of modern media with large communities began in the late 18th century and the formation of modern media began during this time period (Friedman & Díaz, 2023). The intellectual movements that emerged in 18th century Europe significantly influenced the media, and the media that facilitated communication between communities gained importance (Kongar, 1995; Özçağlayan, 2008). In the 20th century, media was used as a word that encompassed mass communication tools such as printing, post, telegraph, radio, television, etc. In the 20th century, technological advances accelerated and led to changes in many things. The importance of mass has increased, media tools have allowed societies to defend their ideas and create a discussion environment (Balbi, 2024; Luther et al., 2024).

Sports has gained an important dimension with its development day by day and has had a significant impact on the emergence of sports media (Nuriddinov, 2023). Sports media in particular has been effective in the advancement and popularization of sports (Tamir & Lehman-Wilzig, 2023). With the developments in the 19th century, media and sports have shown a related development. The historical inclusion of sports-related activities in the media occurred when sports activities were transformed into nationwide festivals by the British Publishers Association (Hong & Li, 2023). In the first press area in the Turkish media, sports articles were included in the *Servet-i Fünun* magazine (Özsoy, 2009).

The increase in sports news in the European press also affected the Turkish press, and in 1911, news about sports such as football, athletics, boxing and horse racing began to appear in the *Tasvir-i Efkâr* newspaper (Kılıç, 2019). In the 20th century, the relationship between media and football has increased. Football, which has a large number of fans, has also become a sport that creates its own media with the media that allows it to reach a large number of people instantly (Erol, 2012). With the expansion and advancement of mass media, football has become a serious economic gain for the media. The broadcasting of football by television channels has led to an increase in viewing rates and also in newspaper sales. With the development of the internet, sports content on websites has begun to provide economic benefits to the internet area (Orunbayev, 2023).

When the current Turkish sports media is examined, sports news in newspapers and television are mostly football based (Apsar, 2014). Football, which has a large number of fan groups, has

become attractive in the media due to its appeal to a wide community and rich content. Football news, which has a feature of interest rather than importance, is included in the soft news group (Deveci et al., 2023). New media tools that emerged with technological developments are seen as a very effective means of communication in organizing and bringing together the masses. Compared to traditional media, new media applications, which have a very high interaction rate, have a feature that can be provoked and distracted from its real purpose. Due to this structure, a movement that emerged with a correct and legal purpose can be distracted from its real purpose due to this ground of new media (Ergen & Aydeniz, 2020; Griffin, 2023).

Media language and discourses used in sports areas are gaining importance. Media is a communication tool that makes things that are different ordinary, normal and spreadable. New media tools, which are an environment where interaction is very fast, can be effective in sharing and spreading hate speech quickly (Apsar, 2014). It is known that the media, club managers and sports news anchors, who also have an impact on the violence in football, use expressions to normalize violence and ignore the incidents. The football language created among the public reaches large communities through the media and causes it to become widely used words (Fenton et al., 2023; Talimciler, 2014).

Evangelism, unlike a suggestion, is expressed as an effort to persuade and spread an idea or thought to other people (Green, 1984). In the Bible, it is a concept that has different meanings such as arousing curiosity in non-believers, encouraging them, convincing them and conveying good news. Evangelism is a term that is associated not only with written expressions but also with actions in the Bible and aims to convey these actions to society. Evangelism, which initially had a religious meaning, has started to be used in different areas over time. Especially in the context of marketing, it is defined as a concept that triggers a strong attachment to a brand and a desire to share this attachment with the people around them. In this context, evangelism refers to brands offering experiences to their users and encouraging them to share this experience with the people around them (Anggraini, 2018). Another area where the concept of evangelism comes into play is sports. The commitment to sports teams is not limited to just supporting them; it can also be defined as sports team evangelism, which includes promoting these teams, directing others to the teams they support, and introducing these teams (Aydın & Aydın, 2024).

Evangelism also conveys the meanings of promoting or encouraging an idea (Choudhury et al., 2019; Williams & Krisjanous, 2023). Martin Lindstrom found the concept of evangelism to be related to “the power to reach many places and find new followers”. When Google first launched Gmail, it influenced its users using cunning methods. Gmail, which made it possible to provide a service only through invitations, actively created a religious identity in the virtual environment. A Gmail user who sends a participation invitation to his friends will feel that he has contributed to the formation of a community that has continued for many years. Gmail initially reached 10 million users using this method and started to provide a service for everyone. Brands and religions act in a similar way by making people feel a sense of belonging and honor while accepting their customers (Lindstrom, 2009). When looking at the TDK, it is possible to see that the concept of fanaticism is evaluated within the framework of the meaning of "bigotry" (TDK, 2022). It is known that the roots of this word come from the Latin word “fanum”. In Latin, the word fanaticism is defined as “temple, sacred place of worship”. The

origin story of the word was inspired by people who devoted themselves to the temple to the point of madness and evolved into the concept of “fanaticus” by adjective. The English equivalent of the word fanatic is “fanatic” and its meaning expresses connotations such as being imaginative, irrational, following one’s passions, and religiously crazy (Fuschillo, 2020; Koç, 2010; Miller, 2023).

Content shared in the media fuels fanaticism. The aim of the derby matches, which are called the eternal rivalry of two different teams in the same city, is to prepare the fanatic fans with a strong fan base for action with the broadcasts and content created before them (Jack, 2024; Önal & Aydın, 2024). The teams referred to as the big three in Istanbul, the statements of the managers who have a strict language between the managers of the teams before the matches in which they will compete against each other are frequently given in the media and they constantly make headlines with mutual challenges (Budak, 2004).

Fan accounts are one of the most important things that feed the phenomenon of fanaticism on social media. With the emergence of social media, people who are members of a team; by creating fan accounts, they display their support and loyalty to their team with the sharing feature that provides socialization opportunities on social media platforms. When examined in terms of its usage, the word fan represents a great deal of love and loyalty (Sveinson & Hoerber, 2023). Fan pages are also present in the fields of art and politics, apart from the field of sports. Fan pages formed on social media applications such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook make their posts in a way that increases their followers and fans. Fan pages can be created by both ordinary people and official people. These groups formed under the name of fan are used to convey and spread hatred felt towards people or communities, in addition to showing admiration for something (Aydın & Belli, 2022; Sanderson & Truax, 2014; Yıkılmaz & Öçalan, 2021).

The enthusiastic ceremonial shows in football have the characteristics of an organization that provides an entertainment environment. Organizations are made not only by the parties but also by the clubs. Through organizations, fans have the opportunity to feel a sense of loyalty and belonging to their teams to a serious extent (Alver, 2008). Another element that fuels the sense of belonging among fans is the sharing of hatred towards the opposing formation through social media (Metin & Akkoyunlu, 2023). Fan page formations on social media use funny images and derogatory expressions, causing the formation of hate to accelerate. Fans create hate speech through fan accounts (Kearns et al., 2023; Miranda et al, 2024; Tokmak, 2022).

With the development of social media day by day, increasing social media platforms contribute to the development of social media fanaticism. Social media, where interaction is a very fast environment, plays an active role in the spread of fanatic discourses (Belli et al., 2020; Yıkılmaz & Öçalan, 2021). The social media environment, where shares circulate quickly, fuels the phenomenon of fanaticism with the increase of competitive discourses. Fan accounts created on social media are important in increasing the levels of fanaticism by bringing people belonging to the same group together (Archer & Wojtowicz, 2023).

It is important to understand the attitudes and behaviors of fans of a team in their social media usage (Steiner et al., 2023). In this context, examining the evangelistic attitude levels of individuals towards the team they support in their social media use emerges as another

important issue. It can be said that by revealing this relationship, it may be possible to make some inferences about the fanaticism levels of individuals. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between sports team evangelism and media fanaticism levels of Atatürk University Faculty of Sports Sciences students.

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, a quantitative research method, the scanning method, was used to answer the research questions or test its hypotheses. Scanning methods are a type of approach that aims to describe a current situation, occurring today or in the past, as it is (Karasar, 2012). In this context, a one-time measurement (questionnaire/scale) was taken from the participants. In this respect, the study was conducted as a “cross-sectional study”, which is one of the temporal scanning approaches.

Participants

In this study, the targeted sample size was reached by choosing the convenience sampling method and volunteering participants. Convenience sampling is a non-random sampling method that provides convenience to the researcher in terms of time and cost and allows the researcher to determine the sample from the universe according to their own opinion (Aaker et al., 2007; Malhotra, 2004). The universe of the research consists of undergraduate students registered in Atatürk University Faculty of Sports Sciences in the 2023-2024 academic year. The research process was carried out by reaching the sample group with the convenience sampling method from the universe in question, taking into account the principle of volunteering.

Data Collection Tools

In the study, the “Sports Team Evangelism Scale” (STES) developed by Dwyer et al. (2015) and adapted to Turkish after a reliability and validity study was conducted by Yüksekbiçgili (2017) to determine the evangelistic attitudes of sports science faculty students towards their favorite teams; and the “Scale of Fans’ Motivation to Follow Their Teams on Social Media” (SFMFTTSM) developed by Çelik (2022) was used to determine their motivation to follow their favorite teams on social media platforms. Both scales are in a 5-point Likert structure and are evaluated as “1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree”. Both scales are calculated according to the average score. STES consists of 4 sub-dimensions (Lawyer, Advertisement, Provocation and Assimilation) and 12 items; SFMFTTSM consists of 5 sub-dimensions (News and Information, Advocacy, Promotion, Interaction and Entertainment) and 36 items.

Table 1. STES reliability Cronbach's alpha values

STES	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Advocate	.68	3
Advertise	.83	4
Antagonize	.85	3
Assimilate	.71	2
STES TOTAL	.90	12

Cronbach's Alpha reliability values for each of the STES sub-dimensions and the total (all items) are shown in Table 1. Accordingly, Cronbach's Alpha values for the STES sub-dimensions were determined as .68 for the Lawyer sub-dimension; .83 for the Advertisement sub-dimension; .85 for the Provocation sub-dimension and .71 for the Assimilation sub-dimension, respectively. The total Cronbach's Alpha value of all STES items was calculated as .90.

Table 2. SFMFTTSM reliability Cronbach's alpha values

SFMFTTSM	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
News and Information	.97	13
Fandom	.95	6
Promotion	.93	6
Interaction	.95	8
Entertainment	.90	3
SFMFTTSM TOTAL	.98	36

Cronbach's Alpha reliability values for each of the SFMFTTSM factors and the total (all items) are shown in Table 2. Accordingly, Cronbach's Alpha values for the SFMFTTSM sub-dimensions were determined as .97 for the News and Information sub-dimension; .95 for the Fandom sub-dimension; .93 for the Promotion sub-dimension; .95 for the Interaction sub-dimension and .90 for the Entertainment sub-dimension, respectively. The total Cronbach's Alpha value of all items belonging to SFMFTTSM was calculated as .98.

Ethical Approval

Ethical rule approval was obtained for the research with the decision numbered 150 dated 02.10.2023 of Atatürk University Faculty of Sports Sciences Ethics Committee.

Data Collection

Before starting the data collection process, the necessary legal permissions were obtained and then the data collection process was started. As a data collection tool, the “Personal Information Form”, “Sports Team Effangelism Scale” and “Fans’ Motivation to Follow Their Teams on Social Media Scale” were shared with the participants online via Google forms and the data collection process was carried out. The participants in the study were included in the study on a completely voluntary basis and were informed about the purpose of the study and the scales used in the study before the relevant scales were applied.

Analysis of Data

Before the students filled out the survey forms, it was particularly emphasized that the forms were filled out completely, without errors and correctly. Since all data were obtained via Google Forms, it was ensured that each question was filled out completely. A total of 320 survey forms that were considered valid were included in the study. In order to analyze the data obtained within the scope of the study, these data were first transferred to the SPSS database. The SPSS v25 package program was used. When the data analysis phase was started, descriptive statistical analyses were first performed. Following these analyses, mode, median and mean values as well as Skewness and Kurtosis criteria were evaluated in order to determine whether the data showed a normal distribution.

FINDINGS

Table 3. Distribution of participants according to demographic characteristics

Variables		n	%
Gender	Male	219	68.4
	Female	101	31.6
Age	18 years	53	16.6
	19 years	51	15.9
	20 years	27	8.4
	21 years	55	17.2
	22 years	43	13.4
	23 years and above	91	28.5
Department	Coaching Education	135	42.1
	Physical Edu. and Sports Teach.	62	19.4
	Sports Management	78	24.4
	Recreation	45	14.1
Licensed Athlete	Yes	210	65.6
	No	110	34.4
Supported Team	Beşiktaş	49	15.3
	Fenerbahçe	98	30.6
	Galatasaray	136	42.5
	Other Teams	37	11.6
Most Frequently Used Social Media Platform	Facebook	8	2.5
	Instagram	272	85.0
	TikTok	8	2.5
	Twitter	22	6.9
	Youtube	3	0.9
	Others	7	2.2
TOTAL		320	100

When the distribution of the participants in the study according to the gender variable is examined in Table 3, it is seen that 219 (68.4%) are male and 101 (31.6%) are female. When the distribution of age variable is examined, it is seen that 18-year-old participants consist of 53 (16.6%), 19-year-old participants consist of 51 (15.9%), 20-year-old participants consist of 27 (8.4%), 21-year-old participants consist of 55 (17.2%), 22-year-old participants consist of 43 (13.4%), and 23-year-old and above participants consist of 91 (28.5%). Another variable is the department. When the distribution of the department variable is examined, it is seen that 135 people (42.1%) are students studying in the Coach Education department, 62 people (19.4%) are students studying in the Physical Education and Sports Teaching department, 78 people (24.4%) are students studying in the Sports Management department, and 45 people (14.1%) are students studying in the Recreation department. In addition, it can be said that 210 participants (65.6%) are licensed athletes and 110 participants (34.4%) are non-licensed athletes. When the distribution of the team they support is examined, it is seen that 49 people (15.3%) are Beşiktaş fans, 98 people (30.6%) are Fenerbahçe fans, 136 people (42.5%) are Galatasaray fans, 37 people (11.6%) are one of the other teams. The last variable is the most frequently used social media platform. According to Table 3, 8 people (2.5%) prefer Facebook, 272 people (85%) prefer Instagram, 8 people (2.5%) prefer TikTok, 22 people (6.9%) prefer Twitter, 3 people (0.9%) prefer other social media platforms, and 7 people (2.2%) prefer other social media platforms.

Tablo 4. T-test results on the gender-based differentiation of sports team evangelism

Factors	Gender	n	\bar{x}	Ss	t	p
Advocate	Male	219	3.61	1.02	4.76	.000**
	Female	101	2.99	1.17		
Advertise	Male	219	3.02	1.28	4.15	.000**
	Female	101	2.38	1.26		
Antagonize	Male	219	3.12	1.25	2.83	.005**
	Female	101	2.68	1.35		
Assimilate	Male	219	3.48	1.27	3.45	.001**
	Female	101	2.94	1.32		
STES TOTAL	Male	219	3.27	1.00	4.54	.000**
	Female	101	2.70	1.10		

****p< .01**

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that there are significant differences at the $p < .01$ level in the participants' sports team evangelism average scores according to the gender variable. According to Table 4, it is possible to say that male participants have a higher average score than female participants in the total and all sub-dimensions of the STES (Lawyer, Advertisement, Provocation, Assimilation).

Tablo 5. T-test results regarding the differences in the motivation of fans to follow their teams on social media according to gender

Factors	Gender	n	\bar{x}	Ss	t	p
News and Information	Male	219	3.87	1.21	4.39	.000**
	Female	101	3.22	1.25		
Fandom	Male	219	3.64	1.29	3.29	.001**
	Female	101	3.12	1.35		
Promotion	Male	219	3.32	1.22	3.44	.001**
	Female	101	2.80	1.26		
Interaction	Male	219	3.54	1.19	3.92	.001**
	Female	101	2.97	1.25		
Entertainment	Male	219	3.20	1.30	4.06	.000**
	Female	101	2.56	1.32		
SFMFTTSM TOTAL	Male	219	3.61	1.10	4.33	.000**
	Female	101	3.02	1.17		

****p< .01**

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that there are significant differences at the $p < .01$ level in the average scores of the participants' motivation to follow their teams on social media according to the gender variable. According to Table 5, it is possible to say that male participants have a higher average score than female participants in the total of SFMFTTSM and all its sub-dimensions (News and Information, Fandom, Promotion, Interaction, Entertainment).

Tablo 6. T-test results regarding the difference in the motivation of fans to follow their teams on social media according to the license status variable

Factors	License Status	n	\bar{x}	Ss	t	p
News and Information	Yes	210	3.57	1.26	-1.83	.068
	No	110	3.84	1.23		
Fandom	Yes	210	3.38	1.34	-1.79	.073
	No	110	3.66	1.30		
Promotion	Yes	210	3.09	1.24	-1.34	.181
	No	110	3.28	1.27		
Interaction	Yes	210	3.30	1.21	-1.19	.233
	No	110	3.47	1.28		
Entertainment	Yes	210	2.84	1.28	-3.03	.003*
	No	110	3.31	1.39		
SFMFTTSM TOTAL	Yes	210	3.33	1.13	-1.92	.055
	No	110	3.59	1.18		

*p< .05; **p< .01

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference in the total average score of the participants according to the license status variable. Among all the sub-dimensions of the SFMFTTSM, a statistically significant difference was found only in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension. It was seen that the non-licensed participants had a higher average score in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension than the licensed participants.

Tablo 7. Anova test for differences between fans' motivation to follow their teams on social media and department variables

	Department	n	\bar{x}	Ss	F	p	Post Hoc
News and Information	Coaching	135	3.59	1.20	.689	.559	
	Physical Education	62	3.78	1.19			
	Sports Management	78	3.59	1.44			
	Recreation	45	3.83	1.17			
Fandom	Coaching	135	3.34	1.35	1.858	.137	
	Physical Education	62	3.69	1.22			
	Sports Management	78	3.38	1.41			
	Recreation	45	3.77	1.22			
Promotion	Coaching	135	3.06	1.22	.463	.708	
	Physical Education	62	3.20	1.37			
	Sports Management	78	3.20	1.26			
	Recreation	45	3.28	1.21			
Interaction	Coaching	135	3.29	1.22	1.016	.386	
	Physical Education	62	3.46	1.27			
	Sports Management	78	3.26	1.24			
	Recreation	45	3.60	1.22			
Entertainment	¹ Coaching	135	2.83	1.30	2.646	.049*	4>1
	² Physical Education	62	3.10	1.47			
	³ Sports Management	78	2.95	1.29			
	⁴ Recreation	45	3.45	1.24			
SFMFTTSM TOTAL	Coaching	135	3.33	1.12	1.167	.322	
	Physical Education	62	3.54	1.18			
	Sports Management	78	3.36	1.22			
	Recreation	45	3.65	1.11			

*p< .05

When Table 7 is examined, it is determined that there is a significant difference in the participants' motivation to follow their teams on social media in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension according to the department variable. According to Table 7, it is seen that the students of the Recreation department have a higher average score than the students of the Coaching department in the entertainment sub-dimension.

Tablo 8. Anova test for differences between the motivation of fans to follow their teams on social media and the variable of the team they support

	Supported Team	n	\bar{x}	Ss	F	p	Post Hoc Tukey
News and Information	Galatasaray	136	3.77	1.16	1.964	.119	
	Fenerbahçe	98	3.76	1.23			
	Beşiktaş	49	3.43	1.38			
	Other Teams	37	3.33	1.45			
Fandom	Galatasaray	136	3.54	1.27	.924	.429	
	Fenerbahçe	98	3.54	1.30			
	Beşiktaş	49	3.43	1.36			
	Other Teams	37	3.15	1.55			
Promotion	Galatasaray	136	3.22	1.20	.373	.773	
	Fenerbahçe	98	3.12	1.18			
	Beşiktaş	49	3.15	1.33			
	Other Teams	37	2.99	1.56			
Interaction	Galatasaray	136	3.37	1.20	.353	.787	
	Fenerbahçe	98	3.43	1.16			
	Beşiktaş	49	3.29	1.26			
	Other Teams	37	3.20	1.51			
Entertainment	¹ Galatasaray	136	3.10	1.31	2.762	.042*	1,2>4
	² Fenerbahçe	98	3.14	1.36			
	³ Beşiktaş	49	2.83	1.34			
	⁴ Other Teams	37	2.48	1.24			
SFMFTTSM TOTAL	Galatasaray	136	3.50	1.09	1.208	.307	
	Fenerbahçe	98	3.49	1.09			
	Beşiktaş	49	3.30	1.24			
	Other Teams	37	3.14	1.40			

*p< .05

When Table 8 is examined, it is determined that there is a significant difference in the participants' motivation to follow their teams on social media in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension according to the team variable. According to Table 8, it is seen that students who are Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe fans have higher average scores than students who are fans of other teams in the entertainment sub-dimension.

Table 9. The relationship between the STES and its sub-dimensions and the SFMFTTSM and its sub-dimensions

		STES TOTAL	Advocate	Advertise	Antagonize	Assimilate
SFMFTTSM TOTAL	r	.797**	.719**	.676**	.587**	.745**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
News and Information	r	.740**	.710**	.578**	.568**	.706**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Fandom	r	.711**	.657**	.613**	.486**	.686**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Promotion	r	.693**	.566**	.626**	.536**	.612**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Interaction	r	.760**	.663**	.666**	.549**	.712**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Entertainment	r	.638**	.543**	.604**	.431**	.574**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	n			320		

**p< .01

Table 9 shows the correlation matrix examining the relationship between the STES and its sub-dimensions and the SFMFTTSM and its sub-dimensions. According to the table, it was determined that there were statistically significant relationships between the STES and its sub-dimensions and the SFMFTTSM and all of its sub-dimensions. When Table 9 is examined, it is seen that there is a high level positive relationship between the STES and the SFMFTTSM ($r = .797$; $p < .01$). There is a high level positive relationship between the STES and the SFMFTTSM sub-dimensions in the News and Information sub dimension ($r = .740$; $p < .01$); a high level positive relationship in the Fandom sub-dimension ($r = .711$; $p < .01$); a moderate level positive relationship in the Promotion sub-dimension ($r = .693$; $p < .01$); It was determined that there was a high level positive relationship in the Interaction sub-dimension ($r = .760$; $p < .01$) and a moderate level positive relationship in the Entertainment sub-dimension ($r = .638$; $p < .01$). It was determined that there was a high level positive relationship in the Advocacy sub-dimension ($r = .719$; $p < .01$); a moderate level positive relationship in the Advertising sub-dimension ($r = .676$; $p < .01$); a moderate level positive relationship in the Provocation sub-dimension ($r = .587$; $p < .01$) and a high level positive relationship in the Assimilation sub-dimension ($r = .745$; $p < .01$) between the SFMFTTSM and the STES sub-dimensions, respectively.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

This study was carried out with the voluntary participation of 320 students studying at Atatürk University Faculty of Sports Sciences. In this study, it is aimed to examine the relationship between the students' sports team evangelism levels and the motivation levels of following their teams on social media.

The students participating in the study had significant differences between genders in the total STES and all sub-dimensions. It was determined that male participants had a higher average

score than female participants in the total STES and all sub-dimensions. In parallel with the results of this study, in a study conducted by Atabaş-Güven (2019) on the fans of the three major teams (Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe, Beşiktaş), a statistically significant difference was found between genders in the total STES and the average scores of the Lawyer and Advertisement sub-dimensions of the STES. It was stated that male participants had a higher average score than female participants in the total STES and Lawyer and Advertisement sub-dimensions. Similarly, in a study conducted by Degirmencioğlu (2022) on students studying in Sports Management departments at universities in Turkey, significant differences were found between genders in the total STES and all sub-dimensions. It has been emphasized that male participants have a higher average score than female participants in the total STES and the Lawyer and Advertisement sub-dimensions. It is stated that similar results are found in many studies conducted on different sample groups in the literature, and that male participants exhibit a higher evangelistic attitude than female participants (Kandaz-Gelen et al., 2022; Pepur et al., 2023). There are also studies in which no statistically significant difference was observed in the total STES and sub-dimensions according to the gender variable (Göktaş & Tarakçı, 2020). In the study conducted by Karafil and Akgül (2022) on football fans, no statistically significant difference was found in the total STES and sub-dimensions according to the gender variable. In another study conducted by Park et al. (2023), no statistically significant difference was found in the total participants' evangelism levels according to the gender variable. When the results of this study and other studies conducted in the literature are considered in general, it is reported that the differentiation of sports team evangelism according to gender is higher in favor of male participants. The fact that men follow football more than women can be considered as one of the main reasons for the higher average scores of sports team evangelism (Walsh et al., 2021).

Similar to the STES results, significant differences were found between genders in the total and all sub-dimensions of SFMFTTSM. It was determined that male participants had a higher average score than female participants in the total and all sub-dimensions of SFMFTTSM. In the "Validity-Reliability Study of the Scale of Motivation of Sports Followers to Interact with Sports Clubs on Facebook and Instagram" conducted by Gönkek et al. (2023), it was observed that there was a significant difference in the average scores of sports followers' motivation to interact with sports teams on social media according to the gender variable. In the reward sub-dimension, it was found that male participants had a higher average score than female participants. In the study conducted by Şahin (2021), no statistically significant difference was found in the average scores of Demir Grup Sivasspor Club fans' motivation to follow the club's social media accounts according to the gender variable. It is natural that men follow football more than women and that their motivation to follow football teams is high in social media use.

It was concluded that there was no significant difference in the participants' total SFMFTTSM average score according to the license status variable. A statistically significant difference was found in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension of SFMFTTSM. It was concluded that the non-licensed participants had a higher average score in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension than the licensed participants. It is thought that the main reason for this situation may be that those who do sports under license are more meticulous, especially in their posts on social media. In this context, it is natural that those who are not licensed have a higher average score in the entertainment sub-dimension than those who are licensed.

It was concluded that there was no significant difference in the participants' total SFMFTTSM average score according to the department variable. Among all the sub-dimensions of SFMFTTSM, a statistically significant difference was found only in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension. It was concluded that the students of the Recreation department had a higher average score in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension than the students of the Coaching department. The main reason for this situation may be that the students of the Coaching department are more careful in their posts on social media platforms, especially since they are more elite athletes. The fact that the students of the Recreation department have fewer elite athletes compared to other departments may be attributed to the fact that these students share posts on social media for entertainment or use social media more for entertainment purposes at this point. In the study conducted by Şahin (2021), a statistically significant difference was found in the "Club Licensed Product Preference Tendency" and "Time Spending" sub-dimensions of the motivations for following Demir Grup Sivasspor Club's social media accounts according to the participants' educational background. It was stated that secondary school graduates had a higher average score in both of these sub-dimensions compared to university graduates.

It was concluded that there was no significant difference in the participants' total SFMFTTSM average score according to the team they support. Among all the sub-dimensions of SFMFTTSM, a statistically significant difference was found only in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension. It was concluded that students who were Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe fans had a higher average score in the "Entertainment" sub-dimension than students who were fans of other teams (except Beşiktaş). This situation may be due to the fact that Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe fans, who have been in eternal rivalry from past to present, share more content on social media due to this rivalry and that these contents are mostly based on angering and provoking the other party and entertaining themselves. Şahin (2021) found a statistically significant difference in all sub-dimensions of the "Social Media Usage Motivation Scale" in his study in which he tested whether the participants' social media motivations differed according to the duration they followed the social media accounts of Demir Grup Sivasspor Club. In the relevant study, it was stated that participants who had been following Demir Grup Sivasspor Club's social media accounts for less than 1 year had a lower average score in all of the sub-dimensions of "Club Licensed Product Preference Tendency, Perception of Supportership, Communication, Sharing, Obtaining Information and Spending Time" compared to participants who had been following for 1-2 years, 3-4 years, 5 years and more.

In the correlation analysis conducted between the participants' total and sub-dimensions of the STES and the mean scores of the total and sub-dimensions of the SFMFTTSM, it was concluded that there was a high level of positive relationship between the total of the STES and the total of the SFMFTTSM. It was concluded that there was a high level of positive relationship between the total of the STES and the News and Information, Fandom and Interaction sub-dimensions of the SFMFTTSM; and a moderate level of positive relationship in the Promotion and Entertainment sub-dimension. In the study conducted by Degirmencioğlu (2022) on the relationship between sports team evangelism and purchasing addiction, a high level of positive relationship was found between sports team evangelism and purchasing addiction. In the study conducted by Altın et al. (2020) on members of fan groups between the ages of 18-35 residing in Çorum, it was stated that there was a positive relationship between sports team evangelism and purchase intention and between sports team evangelism and the

level of identification of the fans with the team. Erdoğan et al. (2021) In the study examining the relationship between sports team evangelism and the spectator, fan and fanatic attitudes of football spectators, it was concluded that there is a positive relationship between sports team evangelism and the spectator attitude and football fan fanaticism sub-dimensions. In the study conducted by Göktaş and Tarakçı (2020), it was stated that there is a high level of positive relationship between sports team evangelism and purchase addiction, purchase intention and recommendation. In the study conducted by Dwyer et al. (2015), it was concluded that there is a positive relationship between sports team evangelism and purchasing products, increasing match attendance intentions and fans recommending match attendance to others. In the literature review conducted on sports team evangelism and fans' motivations to follow their teams on social media, it is seen that the relevant topics have increased as of 2020. This situation can be evaluated as an indicator that the study topics are being addressed up-to-date. It is seen that the concept of sports team evangelism was originally introduced to the literature based on the concept of evangelism (Coalter, 2021). Since the concept of evangelism is attributed to sports team evangelism in the sense of "conservatism at the level of bigotry", it is important at this point to reveal the degree of loyalty of sports team fans to their teams. It has been emphasized in many studies that there is a positive relationship between sports team evangelism and individuals' fanaticism levels (Dwyer et al., 2018; Erdoğan & Şirin, 2021; Genç & Yıldırım, 2022; Şirin, 2023). It is thought that sports team evangelism is effective in the motivation of individuals to follow their teams on social media according to their fanaticism levels (Green, 2023). Within the scope of this study, based on the result that there is a high-level positive relationship between sports team evangelism and the motivation of fans to follow their teams on social media; it can be said that as the level of sports team evangelism increases, the motivation of individuals to follow their teams on social media also increases, and as the level of sports team evangelism decreases, the motivation to follow their teams on social media decreases; similarly, as the motivation of fans to follow their teams on social media increases, their level of sports team evangelism also increases, and as the motivation of fans to follow their teams on social media decreases, their level of sports team evangelism also decreases. It is known that individuals with high levels of sports team evangelism have a very high level of commitment to the team they support (Dwyer et al., 2015). Therefore, these sports team evangelists follow and support their teams intensively in the stadium, on television and on social media. Considering today's fast-paced lifestyle, it may not always be possible to support their teams in the stadium. Similarly, since the matches broadcast on television are broadcast on paid channels or digital platforms, it is likely that sports team evangelists are more motivated to follow their teams on social media. The fact that they can follow their teams' current match results, pre-match and post-match interviews and comments, and current developments about their teams such as transfer news via social media and share these developments with their friends on social media allows sports team evangelists to see social media as a platform that fosters evangelistic attitudes. The aim of spreading, advertising and persuading an idea, which is at the root of evangelism, creates an opportunity for sports team evangelists to display their evangelistic attitudes thanks to social media being a platform that provides interaction. The results of this study show that sports team evangelists consider social media as an important platform for following their teams.

Recommendations

New studies can be designed to examine the relationship between the concept of sports team evangelism and other concepts such as fanaticism and hooliganism. New models can be created with other variables that can mediate the relationship between individuals' sports team evangelism and their motivation to follow their teams on social media. This study design can be re-applied to different sample groups and the results obtained can be interpreted comparatively. New marketing strategies can be created by sports clubs by considering the evangelistic attitudes of fan groups and their motivation to follow their teams on social media. Especially the official websites and social media accounts of sports teams should be managed professionally. Since it is assumed that sports team fans and evangelists use these channels quite actively, importance should be given to the design of these accounts and e-stores. In this way, both the increase in the income items of the teams and the satisfaction of the sports team fans and evangelists can be achieved.

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Authors' Contribution: Research Design- MAK; GA, Data Collection- GA, Statistical Analysis- MAK; GA, Preparation of the Article- MAK; GA.

Ethical Approval

Ethics Committee: Sub-Ethics Committee of Atatürk University Faculty of Sports Sciences

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