

## **Examining Fans' Levels of Respect for Opposing Opinions and Self-Control in Sports**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to examine the fans' levels of respect for opposing views and self-control in sports. Fans over the age of 18 who support Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş teams were included in the research. A 5-question information survey and the respect for opposing views and self-control scale in sports developed by Gülle (2018) were administered to fans who wanted to participate in the research. Surveys were collected using Google Forms. The survey link was shared on social media groups where Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş fans are active. Since the data showed normal distribution, independent t test was used for double groups and analysis of variance was used for more than two groups. As a result of the research, it was found that there is a significant difference in favor of the hatred towards the opponent of the fans who do not participate in recreational activities and the hatred towards the opponent of the fans who use licensed products. It was found that there was a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of respect for the opponent and hatred towards the opponent according to the educational level of the fans. In our research, it was found that as the educational level increases, respect for the opponent increases, and as the education level decreases, the fans' hatred towards the opponent increases.

**Keywords:** Opposing opinion, Sports, Self-control in sports, Respect in sports.

## Introduction

Sport has been a powerful social phenomenon that brings societies together and unites them around a common experience (Tanriverdi, 2012). Sport is a global medium through which people from different cultures and social backgrounds come together and unite around a common passion (Sunay and Saracaloğlu 2003). In today's society, sport has become more than just a stage where athletic skills are displayed, it has also become a reflection of cultural identities and social dynamics (Üçüncüoğlu, 2018).

Self-control is the ability of an individual to control their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Baumeister and Vohs, 2007) and plays a critical role in both personal and social success (Sinha et al., 2002). This skill facilitates the individual's achievement of goals, emotional balance, and social adaptation (Baumeister et al., 1998). In addition, it is known that lack of self-control can lead to negative consequences in academic, professional, and personal life (Ridder et al., 2012). Self-control in sports environments is important for athletes to optimize their performance and maintain a sense of fair play by controlling their behaviors in the face of stress, competition, and emotional pressure.

Sports competitions are areas where individuals form a strong sense of belonging through team and athlete loyalty and where these feelings are expressed in passionate manifestations (Arıkan and Yazıcı, 2022). However, this high level of emotional bonding can also bring negative side effects such as intolerance and even hostility towards different opinions and rival teams. Understanding the effect of fans' enthusiasm and competitive spirit in favor of their own teams on their level of respect for opposing views and self-control is of critical importance in order to evaluate the contribution of sports to social integration in a healthy way.

Team identification can be defined as the psychological bond that an individual establishes with a team (Aycan et al. 2009). Dilbaz and Karagün (2014) stated in their study that identification with a team or athlete causes people who are fans of that team or athletes to be psychologically interested in, admire and establish a psychological bond with that team or athlete. They also emphasized that this identification plays an important role in reflecting the personalities of the fans.

Fandom is an important dimension of sports culture (Akbal, 2014). Fans acquire a strong sense of identity and unity through the teams they support (Çakmak et al., 2021). Fans are an integral part of sporting events and show a strong commitment to the teams or athletes they support (Polat et al., 2019). However, the nature of sports competition can occasionally lead to conflicts and the emergence of opposing views among fans. It is clear that for sports competitions to take place in a peaceful and respectful environment, fans should respect opposing views and develop self-control skills (Gülle, 2018). The purpose of this study is to examine the levels of self-control and respect for opposing views of fans in sports. Examining the level of respect and self-control of fans in sports is important to prevent negative behaviors such as violence and discrimination by preserving the unifying power of sports.

## Material and Method

### Research Model

This study was conducted using the survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. Before the start of the research, approval necessary were obtained from Dicle University Social and Humanities Ethics Committee (decision dated 05/03/2024 and numbered 669694).

## Research Group

In this study, data was collected using Google Forms in order to reach a wider audience. The link to the survey prepared via Google Forms was shared on the social media accounts of football fans and participants were encouraged to participate in the survey voluntarily. The study included fans supporting Beşiktaş, Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe. A total of 139 male participants were included in the study; only male fans were evaluated due to the very small number of female fans. IP restrictions were applied to prevent the same person from responding more than once and the study included individuals aged 18 and over.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of the participants

Variables	F	%	
Age Status	18-24	58	41.7
	24-30	59	42.4
	31 and above	22	15.8
Educational Status	Middle school	12	8.6
	High School	76	54.7
	University	51	36.7
Participation in Recreational Activities Other than Sports	Yes	65	46.8
	No	74	53.2
The Team Fans Support	Galatasaray	49	35.3
	Fenerbahçe	62	44.6
	Beşiktaş	28	20.1
Use of Licensed Products by Fans	Yes	80	57.6
	No	59	42.4

Considering the socio-demographic characteristics of the fans participating in the research; Regarding the age variable, it was answered that 58 (41.7%) were 18-24 years old, 59 (42.4%) were 24-30 years old, and 22 (15.8%) were 31 years old and above. In terms of education, it was stated that 12 (8.6%) were secondary school graduates, 76 (54.7%) were high school graduates, and 51 (36.7%) were university graduates. It was stated that 65 (46.8%) responded yes and 74 (53.2%) responded no to participating in recreational activities other than sports. Among the team supported by the fans, 49 (35.3%) were Galatasaray fans, 62 (44.6%) were Fenerbahçe fans, and 28 (20.1%) were Beşiktaş fans. Regarding the use of licensed products, 80 (57.6%) of the fans answered yes and 59 (42.4%) answered no.

## Data Collection Tools

In the study, a 5-question survey questioning socio-demographic characteristics prepared by the researchers and a 15-item scale of respect for opposing views and self-control in sports developed by Gülle (2018) were used as data collection tools.

## Respect for Opposing Opinion and Self-Control Scale in Sport

In this study, the Respect for Opposing Opinions in Sport and Self-Control Scale, which was developed by Gülle (2015) and consists of 15 statements and two sub-dimensions, was used to evaluate the participants' attitudes towards respect for opposing views in sport. In this study, Gülle (2015) determined that the Hate Towards Opponent sub-dimension consists of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10, and the Respect Towards Opponent sub-dimension consists of items 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, and determined the total internal consistency coefficient of the scale as 0.80.

### Statistical Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed using SPSS 25.00 software. Skewness and kurtosis values were examined for normal distribution control and since these values were found to be between -1.5 and +1.5, it was concluded that the data were suitable for normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Due to the homogeneous distribution of the data, Independent Samples T Test was applied to compare two independent groups and ANOVA test was applied to compare more than two groups. Tukey test was used to determine the source of the differences between the groups. Descriptive statistics such as standard deviation, frequency and percentage were also used to analyze the data.

### Findings

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of respect for opposing opinions and self-control scores in sports of fans participating in the research

Sub-Dimensions	N	Min	Max	$\bar{x}$	Sd
Respect for the Opponent	139	11.00	45.00	31.38	6.96
Hatred towards the Opponent	139	6.00	30.00	15.94	5.26

When the average score of the participating fans in the sub-dimension towards the opponent was examined, it was found that it was  $31.38 \pm 6.96$ , while the sub-dimension of respect towards the opponent was  $15.94 \pm 5.26$ .

**Table 3.** Independent t-test results of the respect for opposing opinions and self-control scores of the fans participating in the research

Participation in Recreational Activities		N	$\bar{x}$	Sd	T	P
Respect for the Opponent	Yes	65	32.24	7.86	1,367	,174
	No	74	30.63	6.00		
Participation in Recreational Activities		N	X	SS	T	P
Hatred towards the Opponent	Yes	65	14.49	4.94	-3,137	,002
	No	74	17.21	5.24		
Use of Licensed Products by Fans		N	X	SS	T	P
Respect for the Opponent	Yes	80	30.52	7.09	-1,716	,088
	No	59	32.55	6.63		
Use of Licensed Products by Fans		N	X	SS	T	P
Hatred towards the Opponent	Yes	80	16.72	4.95	2,063	,041
	No	59	14.88	5.53		

\* $p < 0.05$

When Table 3. is examined, it is found that there is no significant difference in the sub-dimension of respect for the opponent according to the participation status of the individuals participating in the research in recreational activities ( $p > .05$ ). However, a significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of hatred towards the opponent in the case of participation in recreational activities ( $p = 0.002$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In this study, it was found that individuals who do not participate in recreational activities have higher scores of hatred towards their opponents than individuals who participate in recreational activities. There is no significant difference in the rivals sub-dimension according to the fans' use of licensed products ( $p > .05$ ). There is a significant difference in the sub-dimension of hatred towards the competitor according to the use of licensed products ( $p = 0.041$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In this research, it was concluded that the use of licensed products by fans increases their feelings of hatred towards the opposing team.

**Table 4.** Variance (ANOVA) analysis results of respect for opposing opinion and self-control scores of individuals participating in the research according to age and educational status

Age Status		N	$\bar{x}$	Sd	F	P	TUKEY
Respect for the Opponent	18-24	58	30.68	6.60	1,864	,159	
	24-30	59	32.66	6.83			
	31 and above	22	29.81	7.86			
Hatred towards the Opponent	18-24	58	16.70	4.89	1,296	,277	
	24-30	59	15.64	5.19			
	31 and above	22	14.72	6.29			
Educational Status		N	X	Ss	F	P	TUKEY
Respect for the Opponent	Middle school <sup>a</sup>	12	24.83	6.30	7,118	,001	A-b,
	High School <sup>b</sup>	76	31.40	6.68			
	University <sup>c</sup>	51	32.90	6.71			
Hatred towards the Opponent	Middle school <sup>a</sup>	12	20.33	4.45	7,460	,001	A-b,
	High School <sup>b</sup>	76	16.34	5.10			
	University <sup>c</sup>	51	14.31	5.05			

When the respect and hatred subscale scores of the fans participating in the research were examined, it was found that there was no significant difference in the age variable ( $p > .05$ ). However, when education status was examined, it was found that there was a significant difference in both the respect for the opponent ( $p = 0.001$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and the hatred towards the opponent ( $p = 0.001$ ,  $p < .05$ ) sub-dimension. In the Tukey test, which was conducted to find out which groups caused the significant difference in these two sub-dimensions, it was found that the average scores of the high school and university graduate fans who participated in the research in the education status in the respect towards the opponent sub-dimension were higher than the average scores of the secondary school graduate fans who participated in the research. When looking at the sub-dimension of hatred towards the opponent, it was found that the average scores of the fans who were secondary school graduates were higher than the fans who were high school and university graduates.

**Table 5.** Variance (ANOVA) analysis results of respect for opposing opinion and self-control scores according to the team supported by the fans participating in the research

The Team Fans Support		N	X	SS	F	P
Respect for the Opponent	Galatasaray	49	31.32	6.28	,030	,970
	Fenerbahçe	62	31.30	7.62		
	Beşiktaş	28	31.67	6.74		
Hatred towards the Opponent	Galatasaray	49	15.28	4.86	,733	,482
	Fenerbahçe	62	16.09	5.62		
	Beşiktaş	28	16.75	5.18		

When Table 5 is analyzed, no significant difference was found in the sub-dimensions of respect for the opponent and hatred towards the opponent ( $p > .05$ ). However, in our research, it was found that the average scores of the fans who support Beşiktaş in respect for the opponent and hatred towards the opponent were higher than the fans who support other teams.

## Discussion

It was found that there was no significant difference in the respect for the opponent sub-dimension according to the participation of the fans in recreational activities. However, it was found that there was a significant difference in the hatred towards the opponent sub-dimension according to the participation of the fans in recreational activities. In this study, it was found that the level of hatred towards the opponent was higher in fans who did not participate in recreational activities than in fans who participated in recreational activities. When the studies on the subject were examined, it was seen that there were studies finding that participation in recreational activities affected the hatred towards the opponent (Havard et al., 2018; Dalakas and Melankon, 2012). It has been reported that participation in recreational activities generally reduces people's stress levels (Altuntaş et al., 2022; Bedir, 2016), increases social ties (Emir, 2012; Gümüşboğa, 2023) and improves general mood (Akgönül et al., 2023). These effects can help reduce negative emotions such as hatred, anger and intolerance. In our study, it was concluded that fans who did not participate in recreational activities had higher average scores of hatred towards the opponent than fans who participated in recreational activities, and that the effect of not participating in recreational activities was effective in achieving this result.

No significant difference was found in the mean scores of the sub-dimension of respect for the opponent according to the fans' licensed product usage. When the sub-dimension of hatred towards the opponent was examined according to the fans' licensed product usage, a significant difference was found. In this study, it can be said that the fans who use licensed products have higher hate scores than the fans who do not use licensed products. Factors such as the fans' level of loyalty to their teams, their sense of identity, and the social dynamics created by competition may be responsible for this result. In a study, it was found that there is a statistically significant relationship between the fans' intention to purchase licensed sports team products and their hatred towards their arch-rival teams and their love for their own teams (Özsoy and Karlı, 2022). When the studies conducted on the subject are examined, it is stated that the tendency of the fans to purchase licensed products of the team they support increases as their love for their own team and their hatred towards the opposing team increases (Heere and Dickson 2008; Apostolopoulou et al., 2012; Çiftyıldız, 2015). When the studies on the subject are examined, it is seen that the use of licensed products affects the fans' hate scores towards the opponent and that it is important to address and research the subject in depth.

It was found that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the fans in the sub-dimensions of respect for the opponent and hatred for the opponent according to the age variable. However, it can be said that the hate scores in the sub-dimension of hatred for the opponent decreased as age increased. Göksel and Kul (2023) found in their study that the level of hatred for the opponents of people aged 41 and over was lower than in other age groups, while the level of respect for the opponents was higher in this age group than in all other age groups. In a study conducted by Roversi (1991) on Italian football fans, it was determined that young fans showed more hatred and aggression towards the opposing teams. Demir and Talimciler (2014) examined football and hate speech on social media. In their study, it was emphasized that young individuals use social media more intensively, hateful articles and images are frequently shared, and such content can reflect on daily life and become a social problem. Although there was no significant difference in the age variable in this study, when the studies conducted are examined, it is thought that age is important for the sub-dimensions of respect for the opponent and hatred for the opponent.



It was found that there was a significant difference in the sub-dimension scores of respect for the opponent and hatred for the opponent of the fans participating in the study according to their educational status. In this study, it was found that respect for the opponent increased with the increase in the level of education, while hatred for the opponent increased with the decrease in the level of education. Ayca et al. (2009) stated in their study with football fans that as the level of education decreased, interest in football increased and accordingly, the level of identification with the team and hatred for the opposing team increased. This result is parallel to our study. Topal et al. (2021), on the other hand, in their study titled "Examining the effect of high school and university students' identification levels with the team they support on respect for opposing views in sports", found that educational status had no effect on respect for opposing views in sports and identification in sports. However, the fact that there was a significant difference in both the sub-dimension of respect for the opponent and the sub-dimension of hatred for the opponent in our study reveals that educational status is important in terms of respect for opposing views and self-control in sports.

It was found that there was no significant difference in the sub-dimensions of hatred towards the opponent and respect towards the opponent according to the team the fans support.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

As a result of the research, it was seen that there was a significant difference between the points of hatred towards opponents of fans who do not participate in recreational activities and the points of hatred towards opponents of fans who use licensed products. In order to improve this situation, programs should be organized to increase the participation of fans in recreational activities and awareness-raising activities should be carried out to encourage the use of licensed products. It was observed that there was a significant difference in the subdivisions of respect for opponents and hatred towards opponents according to the level of education of the fans. In order to balance this difference, events, seminars and social responsibility projects emphasizing the ethical values and tolerance of sports should be implemented for fans with low education levels. It is seen that as the level of education increases, respect towards opponents increases, and as the level of education decreases, the hatred of fans towards opponents increases. Informative and educational activities should be organized for fans in order to improve the level of education in the sports environment; clubs should take the lead in this regard with social responsibility projects.

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