Relationship Between the Level of Assertiveness and Self-Esteem in University Sport Spectators

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Abstract: In this research, the relationship between assertiveness level and self-esteem in university sport spectators was examined from the point of spectators of Ankaragücü and Gençlerbirliği sports clubs. Also, it was tested whether sport spectatorship exhibited a significant difference between doing-not doing sports and between first, second, third and fourth grade University students. From among the university students, sport spectators supporting Ankaragücü and Gençlerbirliği Sports Clubs, going to watch football matches in 2009-2010 season participated in the research by random sampling method. 416 sport spectators (211 supporting Ankaragücü Sports Club and 205 supporting Gençlerbirliği Sports Club) voluntarily participated in the research. Average age of participants is 20.0±3.90. Data were collected by applying Stanley Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) and Raths Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) on sport spectators. For the data analysis on the effect of independent variables on self-esteem and assertiveness levels, one-way ANOVA was applied in groups with more than two variables and t-test in groups with two variables and LSD (Least Significant Difference) analysis was applied as post-hoc test in cases where Variance analyses were significant to the level of 0.05 (p<0.05). According to research results, a significant difference was observed between the average self-esteem scores of the spectators of Ankaragücü Sports Club and Gençlerbirliği Sports Club (p<0.05). Also a significant difference was observed between the average self-esteem scores of spectators actively doing sports and spectators not doing sports (p<0.05). In conclusion, there are significant similarities in the development stages of football-related violence. Self-esteem, instead of assertiveness, is significant in sport spectatorship.

Key words: Sport spectator • Assertiveness • Self-esteem • University student • Football

INTRODUCTION

Researches in the field of sports psychology take an important place in sports sciences. With the increase of hooliganism in recent years, “Spectator and Fan Psychology” takes the lead in subjects which are mostly researched in sports psychology.

Football spectatorship is a complex, heterogeneous and dynamic phenomenon which needs to be examined in different social and historical contexts. Notwithstanding the vital importance of cultural, social and historical characteristics in comprehending the nature and dynamics of spectator violence in football matches, there are also certain international and intercultural similarities [1, 2].

In examining the football spectators, the first thing to do is to distinguish two important points which is the distinction between sport fans and sport spectators. These two terms are frequently substituted for each other, but they have quite different meanings. Sport fan is an individual who is interested or who watches a particular sports branch, sportsman or team. Sport spectator, however, is considered a consumer of sports, listening to or watching a sports event [3].

In addition to the conflicts they experience in the course of their education, university students also face certain problems in matches they go to watch caused by their environments and themselves. One of these problems is the football matches where an intense and stressfull atmosphere is present. Therefore, sports spectatorship creates stressfull individuals. New experiences, positive or negative, which they will have in this process may cause changes in the self-esteem of the sport spectator studying in the university. The university period can be described as a turning point in terms of the development of self-esteem [4-6]. Also supporting a football team, being the spectator of a football team and

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the experiences before, during and after the match increases the significance of self-esteem [7]. Because the university students coming to watch the match as spectators are motivated with their will to increase their self-esteem. Therefore, sport spectatorship helps most individuals form and maintain their own concepts of self-esteem [8]. When the team supported by a spectator succeeds, so does the spectator. Therefore some sport spectators associate themselves more with successful teams. In addition to this, the success of the team is not obligatory for developing the self-esteem of sport spectators. Further to that, being with and around a team can have a relationship with self-esteem to a high extent for it gives a sense of belonging regardless of associating with a team or winning or losing rates of a team. High self-esteem enables the person to be confident in life, to find success and happiness, to overcome disappointments in life and to change them. Researches dealing with the definition of spectator aggression from a different perspective in order to create a model for explaining the causes of spectator violence, named the model, spectator aggression self-esteem regulation model [9]. This model reflects the belief that spectator aggression is a function of the attempts of fans highly associated with the team to recover their self-esteem.

While fans who are defined in high and low association can be explained by basking in reflected glory, researches state that the strategy to cut off reflected failure is exercised by fans with low association with the team. Fans with a very high association with a team maintain their commitment to it, even if its performance is poor. They can not keep away from their teams because the role of a team spectator is at the center of their identity. While fans with low association with the team use the strategy to avoid failure to protect their self-esteem, those with high association do not use this strategy for fear that their self-esteem for fear that their self-esteem will decline [10].

In the university period, socializing and acquiring social skills are very important. University students can acquire different social skills in the process of socialization. This is interpreted in the way that some individuals in the society can have social skills of a timid, aggressive or an assertive person. We can not expect the people to behave in the same way at all times. The general behaviour expected from an individual behaving aggressively at one time and timidly at another is the assertive behaviour pattern. The assertive individual is defined as the person actually concerned with other people, but highly aware of his/her own rights [11]. In another definition, the assertiveness is stated as the ability of the individual to express his/her own positive and negative feelings, thoughts and desires without ignoring the rights of others and feeling anxious or guilty about it [12]. Assertiveness is a personality trait. Assertive behaviour is an interpersonal behaviour pattern involving the expression of personal feelings, thoughts and desires based on honesty. Assertiveness also involves the sport spectator sympathizing with the other while expressing himself/herself [13]. The concept of assertiveness basis of a very important skill in the interpersonal communication of sport spectators. Those who could not acquire assertive behavior may behave in a passive or aggressive manner to others [14].

Findings indicate that participation of sport spectators in sports environments as spectators contribute a lot in facilitating group work, ensuring mutual cooperation, building self-confidence, self-control and learning to respect other and play an important role in becoming assertive individuals. The traits exhibited by assertive sport spectators are described as “working independently, behaving openly and freely, being optimistic and flexible, enjoying living and struggling, encouraging others, participating in all aspects of life, preferring direct and open communication, embracing his/her own problems, feelings, instincts and passions, being tolerant to environmental negativities” [3].

The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between assertiveness level and self-esteem in university sport spectators from the point of spectators of Ankaragücü and Gençlerbirliği sports clubs. In conclusion of this research, the relationship between the self-esteem and assertiveness level which are considered very important for sport spectators will have been analyzed from the point of spectators of Ankaragücü and Gençlerbirliği Sports Clubs and one of its aspects which was very rarely dealt with in sports psychology will have been revealed.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Participants:** From among the university students, sport spectators supporting Ankaragücü and Gençlerbirliği Sports Clubs, going to watch football matches in 2009-2010 season participated in the research by random sampling method. 416 sport spectators (211 supporting Ankaragücü Sports Club and 205 supporting Gençlerbirliği Sports Club) voluntarily participated in the research. Average age of participants is 20.04±3.90.
Measures

Stanley Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI): In determining self-esteem scores of sport spectators, CSEI which was developed by Stanley Coopersmith (1986) and adapted to Turkish conducting validity-reliability studies by Turan and Tufan[15] was used. In their studies conducted with intervals of one year, Turan and Tufan determined the test-retest reliability of the inventory to be 0.65 and 0.76. The inventory consists of 25 items that can be marked as “like me” or “not like me”. These items have expressions relating to the view of life, family relations, social relations and endurance of the person. The score ranges from 0 to 100. The evaluation is made based on whether the self-esteem is lower or higher than average. Scoring lower than average points to low self-esteem and scoring higher than average points to high self-esteem.

Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS): Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS), developed by Rathus (1973) was used in order to determine the assertiveness levels of sport spectators. The validity-reliability study of the schedule in Turkey was made by Voltan [16]. Voltan determined the alpha consistency coefficient of the inventory to be 0.70 and test-retest reliability to be 0.92. The schedule that can be applied to adolescents and adults consists of 30 items. 17 of them were described as negative and 13 of them as positive. Those scoring below “+10” in the entire schedule are considered timid, those scoring above “+10” are considered assertive.

Data Analysis: In the analysis of data collected by the researcher, the effect of independent variables on self-esteem and assertiveness levels was analyzed by one-way ANOVA for groups with more than two variables and t-test for groups with two variables, the relationship between certain independent variables and scales were evaluated by correlation and descriptive characteristics were shown as percentage. In cases where variance analyses had a significance level of 0.05 (p<0.05), LSD (Least Significant Difference) analysis was conducted as post-hoc test.

RESULTS

According to research data, a significant difference was observed between the average self-esteem scores of the spectators of Ankaraşucu Sports Club and Gençlerbirliği Sports Club (p<0.05). This difference results from the fact that self-esteem levels of Gençlerbirliği Sports Club spectators are higher than those of Ankaraşucu Sports Club spectators.

According to research data, no significant difference was observed between the average assertiveness scores of the spectators of Ankaraşucu Sports Club and Gençlerbirliği Sports Club (p>0.05).

According to the research data, a significant difference was observed between the average self-esteem scores of spectators actively doing sports and spectators not doing sports (p<0.05). This difference results from

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the fact that self-esteem levels of spectators actively doing sports are higher than spectators not doing sports.

According to the research data, no significant difference was observed between the average assertiveness level scores of spectators actively doing sports and spectators not doing sports (p>0.05).

According to the research data, no significant difference was observed in average self-esteem score levels in terms of the year levels of sport spectators studying in the University (University 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year) (p>0.05).

According to the research data, no significant difference was observed in average assertiveness score levels in terms of the year levels of sport spectators studying in the University (University 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year) (p>0.05).

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between assertiveness level and self-esteem in university sport spectators from the point of spectators of Ankaragücü and Gençlerbirliği sports clubs.

According to research data, a significant difference was observed between the average self-esteem scores of the spectators of Ankaragücü Sports Club and Gençlerbirliği Sports Club. This difference results from the fact that self-esteem levels of Gençlerbirliği Sports Club spectators are higher than those of Ankaragücü Sports Club spectators. Also a significant difference was observed between the average self-esteem scores of spectators actively doing sports and spectators not doing sports. This difference results from the fact that self-esteem levels of spectators actively doing sports are higher than spectators not doing sports. Self-esteem is significant among other causes increasing self-esteem. Today, the desire of sport spectator to be socially appreciated increases the self-esteem [17]. The fact that the number of spectators who have high self-esteem and are assertive is low may make one think that more active training studies must be performed within this group. Self-esteem regulation theory is based on the fans’ will to maintain their self-esteem on a positive level. According to this model, fans use three self-esteem regulation strategies in order to maintain their self-esteem. The first strategy is Basking In Reflected Glory (BIRGing). Basking in reflected glory means the growing relationship of an individual with a successful individual or a successful group in order to improve his/her self-esteem. The second self-esteem regulation strategy is Cutting off Reflected Failure (CORFing). Cutting of reflected failure means the growing relationship of an individual with an
unsuccessful individual or an unsuccessful group in order to preserve his/her self-esteem. The third strategy is named blasting. This strategy includes conflict with an individual or group in order to recover the lost self-esteem. Individuals increase their self-esteem by contradicting the group members mostly [3, 9, 10]. According to spectator aggression self-esteem regulation model, what is expected from spectators with high and low association with team is that they go through different processes [18,19]. In basking in reflected glory, all spectators use this strategy to increase their self-esteem. Even if the association with the team is minimal, their togetherness will improve when the team performance is good. Nevertheless, the spectators must associate with the team at least minimally to bask in the reflected glory [10]. It is not reasonable to expect fans to bask in the reflected glory of a team which is considered completely insignificant or a rival. A research conducted to NBA spectators support our findings [20].

According to research data, no significant difference was observed between the average assertiveness scores of the spectators of Ankara Gençlik Sports Club and Gençlerbirliği Sports Club. In addition, no significant difference was observed between the average assertiveness score levels of spectators actively doing sports and spectators not doing sports.

According to the research data, no significant difference was observed in average self-esteem score levels in terms of the year levels of sport spectators studying in the University (University 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year). Also, no significant difference was observed in average assertiveness score levels in terms of the year levels of sport spectators studying in the University (University 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year). In certain researches, it is stated that the fact that sport spectatorship is a repressive and stressful experience has a negative effect on the self-esteem and assertiveness levels of students, that the higher the year level is, the lower the self-esteem and assertiveness level scores.

Also, it can be said that the training experiences of sport spectators, their accommodation to university life, advanced age, dealing with the spectators of the rival team during the match, dealing with stress and learning and applying communication techniques play a role in increasing assertiveness and self-esteem levels. The research shows a parallelism with the research on the behavior of sport spectators [21]. Although it is seen that the average self-esteem and assertiveness level scores of our students are higher when we compare the research results to those of the other study, it is consistent with the scores determined in other studies. Research findings are supported by other researches [22, 23].

Assertive behavior is a factor increasing the self-esteem of individuals [24-26]. Also, an individual with self-esteem not only expects respect for his/her rights but respects the rights of other to express their feelings, thoughts and desires in the same way. Therefore, high self-esteem may be a determinant in ensuring assertive behaviour.

There are significant intercultural similarities in the development stages of football-related violence. It is obvious that certain forms of inappropriate behavior occur in any country where football is played. It is impossible to say that certain football-related violence or disturbance have the same natures and are affected by the same causal factors ignoring the culture in which these events take place. What we need to know is that national characteristics reflecting different historical, social, political and cultural traditions have affected the nature and level of football-related violence in various European countries. It is clear that there is in-stadium violence in many countries, not just in ours. Also, football hooliganism is not actually an English disease, but the English have been accused of spreading this disease. The press plays an important role in public perspective on football hooliganism. The biggest problem is the provocative articles which have an extensive coverage in the press. Considering how the press forms the public opinion and how directly it affects the actions of the fans, the press needs to be more careful with these events. Because the notoriety and the low credit of hooligan groups mainly caused by the press.

In conclusion, the researches need to put forth the causes of spectator and fan behaviors clearly or the fan and spectator profiles of each sports branch must be determined. Then it will be possible to reveal the reasons behind these negative behaviors. In comparing the acquired results with similar research results, no sources that are directly related to the subject were found. Therefore, it is recommended that the researches to be made on the same subjects be approached in a more comprehensive and all-round manner.

REFERENCES


