Does Psychological Commitment to Team Enhance Self-esteem? An Easy Way to Raise Self-esteem

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Abstract

Considering the relevant literature, it could be proposed that psychological commitment to team could contribute to life satisfaction and self-esteem. The aim of this research is to find out the relationship between psychological commitment to team, life satisfaction and self-esteem in sports fans of Turkey. 903 sports fans from 32 different departments of 8 universities participated in the study. The Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) Scale, Life Satisfaction Scale and Life Satisfaction Scale were used. Resistance to changing team, loyalty to team and questioning loyalty which are the three subscales of overall commitment to team explained approximately 9% variance of self-esteem. This is the first study dealing with the mentioned topic in Turkey.

Key Words: Psychological commitment to team, self-esteem, life satisfaction, sports fan.

Introduction

Need to belong is a need to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of interpersonal relationships among human beings. Thus, unlike Freud's view (1930) that regarded sexuality and aggression as the major driving psychological forces, human being was depicted as naturally driven toward establishing and sustaining belongingness (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Baumeister and Leary concluded that the need to belong is thus be found to some degree in all humans in all cultures, although individual differences in strength and intensity might naturally be seen.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, human needs are 1) physiological needs 2) safety needs, 3) love and belongingness needs, 4) esteem needs5) self-actualization needs. These needs are shown in a pyramid with the more basic needs at the bottom. Belongingness and love is placed in the middle of Maslow's hierarchy pyramid (Maslow, 1970). Another theory of need is Murray's Theory of Psychogenic Needs. In his theory Murray (1938) described personality and stated that humans have all basic needs and a specific need is more important to some people than to others. Some of the needs that Murray put forward are categorized as affection Needs which shows people's need for belongingness and attachment. Moreover, attachment theory also suggests that human beings has propensity to make strong affectional bonds to particular others (Bowlby, 1977). Çelikkaleli (2005) pointed out that people's behaviors occur in accordance with their needs. In this respect, it could be concluded that people have some basic needs which should be satisfied and one of these basic needs is need to belong

In addition to the theories of human needs which were previously mentioned, Self Determination Theory (SDT) also tries to explain peoples' needs. SDT proposed the three basic psychological needs which are need for competence, need for autonomy and need for relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Ryan & Williams, 1996; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2002). Need for relatedness stands for feeling close to and accepted by important others, it is similar to the need to belong which is explained above (Sheldon & Gunz, 2009). Sport environment is also important for examining feeling of belongingness. Examining feeling of belongingness requires a clear definition and understanding of the term of fan. The term of fan is defined as being a part of something, opinion, belief or a group. The term of fan is defined as an enthusiastic devotion of some particular sports consumptive object. The term devotion is used to mean that the fan has some level of attachment with an object related to sports. Fans manifest their attachment through specific behavior toward the object.

Further, that a fan is an enthusiastic consumer and they are motivated to engage in behaviors related to sports. The sports consumptive object can be a sport in general, or a specific league, or team (Hunt et al., 1999). Organizational identification is related to feeling of belongingness. It is defined as a perceived consensus with an organization and the experience of the organization's successes and failures as one's own (Mael & Ashford, 1992). Sport differs from other sources of entertainment and it evokes high levels of emotional attachment and identification (Sutton et al., 1997). Moreover, it was also suggested that reactions of sport fans are proposed to be a function of their level of identification with and commitment to the team (Wann & Pierce, 2003).

The emotional attachment that an individual develops with a sport team spans not only the duration of games, but infiltrates everyday life. . For some fans of sports, their level of involvement is relatively low key, whereas for other sports fans, they seem to live and breathe for their favorite team (Dietz-Uhler & Lanter, 2008). The way individuals identify with sport teams has generated significant research interest (Lock, 2009). For example, Funk (1998) stated that loyalty in sports context would likely represent a strong attachment, allegiance and faithfulness to a sports team and reflect the degree and extent to which certain attitude properties are held.

Furthermore, life satisfaction refers to a global cognitive judgment of one's life (Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Harry, 1998). Judgments of satisfaction depends on a comparison of one's circumstances with what they think is an appropriate standard, therefore life satisfaction is individual and differ depending on the events in one's life (see Lucas et al, 204). It is also important to state that the judgment of how satisfied people are with their life is based on a comparison with a standard which each individual sets. Moreover it is also about overall life satisfaction and it cannot be evaluated by satisfaction of a specific domain (Baştemur, 2006, Diener et al, 1985). Life satisfaction has been widely researched by researchers. Many psychological components were examined to see to what extent they affect life satisfaction (Dost, 2010; Sarı et al., 2010; Soyer et al., 2010; Özdevecioğlu & Aktaş 2007).

Examining the general body of the relevant literature on self-esteem, it is evident that most of the literature deals with global self-esteem, that is, the individual's positive or negative attitude toward the self as a totality (Rosenber et al., 1995). Baumeister et al. (2003) stated that self-esteem refers to how much value people place on themselves. Higher self-esteem stands for positive evaluation of the self and lower self-esteem means an unfavorable opinion of the self. Self-esteem is suggested to be essential for high quality of life (Branden, 1990) and it is proposed to be related to belongingness (Gailliot & Baumeister, 2007), life satisfaction (Biddle, Fox & Boutcher, 2000), perception of being accepted (Cramer, 2003), loneliness (Karahan et al., (2004), physical activities (Kolayiş et al., 2010), submissive acts (Özkan & Özen, 2008), hopelessness (Özmen, et al., 2008), obesity (Strauss, 2000), body image (Oktan & Şahin, 2010), athletic participation (Davis, 2004), stressful events and academic achievement (Emil, 2003). Since, self-esteem is suggested to be related to and influenced from many factors discussed above; it might also be affected by psychological commitment to team for sports fans.
Considering the relevant literature, it could be proposed that psychological commitment to team could contribute to life satisfaction and self-esteem. Therefore, the aim of this research was to find out the relationship between psychological commitment to team, life satisfaction and self-esteem in sports fans.

Method

Participants
Participants were 903 sports fans from 32 different departments of 8 universities participated in the study. Participants consisted of 446 male (% 49,4) and 457 female (% 50,6), mean age was 20,92. Some demographic characteristics of the participants can be seen on table 1.

Measures

The Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) Scale" was used to assess loyalty to a team. PCT has 14 items rated on 7 point Likert scale from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (7). (Mahony et al., 2000). PCT scale was based on works of Churchill (1979) and Pritchard et al., (1999) and developed by Mahony et al., (2000). Cronbach's alpha of the 14-item PCT scale was reported to be 0.88. Language adaptation of PCT was made by Eskiler et al., (2011). Test-retest correlation of Turkish version of the scale was found to be 0,54 and Cronbach's alpha of all items was reported to be 0,80 (Eskiler et al., 2011). The scale has 3 subscales which are resistance to changing team, loyalty to team and questioning loyalty. Higher scores on resistance to changing team represent a will and devotion to stick to favorite team. Loyalty to team stands for attachment to answerers' teams, higher scores on this subscale means higher loyalty. Subscales of questioning loyalty measures the extent to which individuals question their faith. It represents the probability of individuals to change their favorite teams or to lower their loyalty to their teams.

Life satisfaction was assessed by *Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS)* that is developed by Diener et al., (1985). Language adaptation of the scale into Turkish was made by Köker (1991). The scale measures general life satisfaction with 5 items which are scored on 7 point Likert scale from completely disagree (1) to completely agree. Low scores obtained from the scale suggest that life satisfaction is low. Self-esteem is measured by *Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale* which is a self-report scale that consists of 63 questions (Rosenberg, 1965). Language adaptation of the scale into Turkish was made by Çuhadaroğlu (1986).

The scale is composed of 12 sub-scales. However, it was stated by Rosenberg that each of these sub-scales can be used in researches as measurement tools. Especially sub-scale of self-esteem was used in many researches. In accordance with the aim of the current study, self-esteem sub-scale of Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale was used in order to measure self-esteem. The scale consists of 10 items and the answers are rated from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (4).

Data Collection

Sports fans from different departments of universities were contacted by the researchers in face to face interactions. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and all information gathered would be kept confidential.

Analysis of the data

The data obtained from this study were analyzed by using SPSS 17.0 package program. Descriptive statistics techniques, t-test and Pearson's correlation test were used in the analysis of the data. Level of significance was determined to be 0.05.

Results

Table 1. Demographics of the participants

Gender	N	%
Male	446	49.4
Female	457	50.6
Age	**N**	**%**
17-19	183	20.3
20-22	518	57.4
23-25	159	17.6
26-29	17	1.9
Income Level	**N**	**%**
0-1000 TL*	398	44.1
1001-1500 TL	195	21.6
1501-2000 TL	89	9.9
2001-2500 TL	65	7.2
2501 TL and over	59	6.5
Missing	97	10.7
Team	**N**	**%**
Beşiktaş	147	16.3
Fenerbahçe	267	29.6
Galatasaray	391	43.3
Other	86	9.5
Missing	12	1.3

*TL: Turkish Lira

Participants were 446 male % 49.4 and 457 female % 50.6. Number of participants were 183 (%20.3) for the age group of 17-19, 518 (%57.4) for the age group of 20-22, 159 (%17.6) for the age group of 23-25 and 17 for the age group of 26-29 (%1.9). 398 participants (%44.1) reported their monthly income to be between 0-1000TL, monthly income was 1001-1500TL. for 195 (%21.6) participants, 1501-2000TL. for 89 participants, 2001-2500TL. for 65 (%7.2) participants and over 2501 for 59 participants. 147 participants (%16.3) were fan of Beşiktaş, 267 (%29.6) of them reported their team to be Fenerbahçe, 391 people (%43.3) reported that they were fan of Galatasaray, 86 people (%9.5) reported different teams as their favorite team which were grouped all together as "other."

Table 2. Min, max, mean and SD of variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Life Satisfaction	903	5.00	35.00	21.36	6.12
Self-esteem	903	13.00	40.00	31.23	4.78
Resistance to Changing Team	903	6.00	42.00	34.79	7.96
Loyalty to Team	903	5.00	35.00	23.68	7.61
Questioning Loyalty	903	3.00	21.00	15.89	4.34
Overall Commitment to Team	903	21.00	98.00	74.36	15.20

Table 3. The difference of variables between males and females

	Gender	N	M	SD	p
Life Satisfaction	Male	446	21.0015	6.35756	.085
	Female	457	21.7039	5.87388	
Self-esteem	Male	446	31.3845	4.97653	.340
	Female	457	31.0809	4.58203	
Resistance to Changing Team	Male	446	35.8164	7.73347	**.000***
	Female	457	33.7888	8.04867	
Loyalty to Team	Male	446	25.3294	7.74041	**.000***
	Female	457	22.0697	7.13355	
Questioning Loyalty	Male	446	16.2623	4.36260	**.011***
	Female	457	15.5317	4.29754	
Overall Commitment to Team	Male	446	77.4081	15.39036	**.000***
	Female	457	71.3902	14.42553	

*p<0.05

According to t-test results there were no difference between males and females for life satisfaction [$t_{(901)}=1.72$, p>0.05] and self-esteem scores $t_{(901)}=0.95$, p>0.05]. Significant differences were observed between males and females for resistance to changing team [$t_{(901)}=3.85$, p<0.05], loyalty to team [$t_{(901)}=6.58$, p<0.05] questioning loyalty [$t_{(901)}=2.35$, p<0.05] and overall commitment to team [$t_{(901)}=6.06$, p<0.05].

Table 4. ANOVA result according to age groups

	Age Groups	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Life Satisfaction	17-19	183	21.37	6.53	.622	.601
	20-22	518	21.27	5.91		
	23-25	159	21.13	6.26		
	26-29	17	23.24	5.96		
Self-esteem	17-19	183	31.46	4.58	1.509	.211
	20-22	518	30.96	4.82		
	23-25	159	31.47	4.78		
	26-29	17	32.88	4.61		
Resistance to Changing Team	17-19	183	34.84	8.50	1.437	.230
	20-22	518	34.61	7.88		
	23-25	159	35.11	7.59		
	26-29	17	38.53	3.18		
Loyalty to Team	17-19	183	23.31	7.99	.188	.904
	20-22	518	23.80	7.53		
	23-25	159	23.76	7.57		
	26-29	17	23.71	6.80		
Questioning Loyalty	17-19	183	15.91	4.29	.141	.935
	20-22	518	15.92	4.24		
	23-25	159	16.04	4.44		
	26-29	17	15.35	4.82		
Overall Commitment to Team	17-19	183	74.07	15.82	.141	.793
	20-22	518	74.33	14.96		
	23-25	159	74.91	15.17		
	26-29	17	77.59	12.53		

ANOVA analysis revealed that there were no difference among age groups for life satisfaction [$F_{(3-873)}=0.62$, p>0.05], self-esteem [$F_{(3-873)}=1.50$, p>0.05], resistance to changing team [$F_{(3-873)}=1.43$, p>0.05], loyalty to team [$F_{(3-873)}=0.18$, p>0.05], questioning loyalty [$F_{(3-873)}=0.14$, p>0.05], overall commitment to team [$F_{(3-873)}=0.34$, p>0.05].

Table 5. ANOVA result according to income

	Income Groups	N	Mean	SD	F	p	Significant difference
Life Satisfaction	Up to 1000 TL.	398	20.48	5.95	4.453	**.001**	b-a, e-a**
	1001-1500 TL.	195	22.05	5.32			
	1501-2000 TL.	89	21.66	6.77			
	2001-2500 TL.	65	22.38	6.71			
	2501 TL. and over	59	23.11	7.24			
Self-esteem	Up to 1000 TL.	398	30.83	4.65	4.083	**.003***	d-a**
	1001-1500 TL.	195	30.80	4.65			
	1501-2000 TL.	89	32.14	5.10			
	2001-2500 TL.	65	32.54	4.64			
	2501 TL. and over	59	32.40	5.17			
Resistance to Changing Team	Up to 1000 TL.	398	34.45	7.83	2.623	**.034***	c-a**
	1001-1500 TL.	195	34.59	8.26			
	1501-2000 TL.	89	37.25	6.03			
	2001-2500 TL.	65	35.59	7.61			
	2501 TL. and over	59	35.32	7.95			
Loyalty to Team	Up to 1000 TL.	398	23.41	7.58	1.877	.112	
	1001-1500 TL.	195	23.09	7.45			
	1501-2000 TL.	89	25.17	6.71			
	2001-2500 TL.	65	23.73	7.85			
	2501 TL. and over	59	25.17	8.28			
Questioning Loyalty	Up to 1000 TL.	398	15.88	4.40	.400	.809	
	1001-1500 TL.	195	16.03	4.28			
	1501-2000 TL.	89	16.42	3.93			
	2001-2500 TL.	65	16.04	4.07			
	2501 TL. and over	59	15.61	4.40			
Overall Commitment to Team	Up to 1000 TL.	398	73.74	14.90	2.502	**.041***	c-a**
	1001-1500 TL.	195	73.71	15.87			
	1501-2000 TL.	89	78.84	12.04			
	2001-2500 TL.	65	75.35	14.68			
	2501 TL. and over	59	76.10	15.72			

*p<0.05
**Up to 1000 TL = a
1001-1500 TL. = b
1501-2000 TL.= c
2001-2500 TL. = d
2501 TL. and over = e.

ANOVA analysis according to income groups showed that there were significant differences among income groups for life satisfaction [$F_{(4-801)}=4.45$, $p<0.05$], self-esteem [$F_{(4-801)}=4.08$, $p<0.05$], resistance to changing team [$F_{(4-801)}=2.62$, $p<0.05$] and overall commitment to team scores [$F_{(4-801)}=2.50$, $p>0.05$]. There were not any significant difference in income groups for loyalty to team [$F_{(4-801)}=1.87$, $p>0.05$] and questioning loyalty scores [$F_{(4-801)}=0.40$, $p>0.05$].

Table 6. ANOVA result according to sport team

	Sport Team	N	Mean	SD	F	p	
Life Satisfaction	Beşiktaş	147	20.71	6.57	1.367	.255	
	Galatasaray	391	21.25	6.03			
	Fenerbahçe	267	21.73	5.72			
Self-esteem	Beşiktaş	147	31.47	4.54	.113	.894	
	Galatasaray	391	31.30	4.90			
	Fenerbahçe	267	31.24	4.76			
Resistance to Changing Team	Beşiktaş	147	35.15	7.77	.704	.495	
	Galatasaray	391	34.57	7.88			
	Fenerbahçe	267	35.27	7.83			
Loyalty to Team	Beşiktaş	147	23.20	7.67	2.944	.053	
	Galatasaray	391	23.08	7.40			
	Fenerbahçe	267	24.48	7.61			
Questioning Loyalty	Beşiktaş	147	16.17	4.30	3.682	**.026***	Fenerbahçe-Galatasaray**
	Galatasaray	391	15.43	4.50			
	Fenerbahçe	267	16.31	4.12			
Overall Commitment to Team	Beşiktaş	147	74.52	15.21	3.116	**.045***	Fenerbahçe-Galatasaray**
	Galatasaray	391	73.08	14.90			
	Fenerbahçe	267	76.05	15.03			

*p<0.05

** Variables which there is a significant difference between

It was found by ANOVA analysis that there was not a significant difference among participants favorite sports team for life satisfaction [$F_{(2-802)}$=1.36, p>0.05], self-esteem [$F_{(2-802)}$=0.11, p>0.05], resistance to changing team [$F_{(2-802)}$=0.70, p>0.05] and loyalty to team scores [$F_{(2-802)}$=2.94, p>0.05]. A significant difference was found among participants favorite sports team for questioning loyalty [$F_{(2-802)}$=3.68, p<0.05] and overall commitment to team scores [$F_{(2-802)}$=3.11, p<0.05].

Table 7. Correlation among variables

		Income	Age	Life Satisfaction	Self-esteem	Resistance to Changing Team	Loyalty to Team	Questioning Loyalty	Overall Commitment to Team
Income		1							
Age	r	.028	1						
	p	.436							
Life Satisfaction	r	.132*	.009	1					
	p	.000	.780						
Self-esteem	r	.128*	.028	.308*	1				
	p	**.000**	.415	**.000**					
Resistance to Changing Team	r	.070*	.041	.075*	.260*	1			
	p	**.047**	.225	**.025**	**.000**				
Loyalty to Team	r	.067	.021	.053	.205*	.549*	1		
	p	.058	.532	.113	**.000**	**.000**			
Questioning Loyalty	r	.005	.009	.000	.190*	.215*	.146*	1	
	p	.890	.790	.997	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**		
Overall Commitment to Team	r	.071*	.035	.065*	.293*	.860*	.830*	.471*	1
	p	**.042**	.305	**.049**	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**	

*p<0.05

Pearson's correlation test disclosed a positive correlation between income and life satisfaction (r=0.132, p<0.05). income and self-esteem (r=0.128, p<0.05), income and resistance to changing team (r=0.70, p<0.05), income and overall commitment to team (r=0.071, p<0.05), life satisfaction and self-esteem (r=0.308, p<0.05), life satisfaction and resistance to changing team (r=0.075, p<0.05), life satisfaction and overall commitment to team (r=0.65, p<0.05), self-esteem and resistance to changing team (r=0.260, p<0.05), self-esteem and loyalty to team (r=0.205, p<0.05), self-esteem and questioning loyalty (r=0.190, p<0.05), self-esteem and overall commitment to team (r=0.293, p<0.05), resistance to changing team and loyalty to team (r=0.549, p<0.05), resistance to changing team and questioning loyalty (r=0.215, p<0.05), resistance to changing team and overall commitment to team (r=0.860, p<0.05), loyalty to team and questioning loyalty (r=0.146, p<0.05), loyalty to team and overall commitment to team (r=0.830, p<0.05), questioning loyalty and overall commitment to team (r=0.471, p<0.05).

Table 8. Regression analysis for self-esteem

	B	SE B	β	P
Resistance to Changing Team	0.11	0.23	0.18	**.000***
Loyalty to Team	0.53	0.24	0.08	**.027***
Questioning Loyalty	0.15	0.37	0.14	**.000***

*p<0.05
Dependent variable: Self-esteem.

Using the enter method, a significant model emerged: F (3.900) = 30.122, p<0.001. The model explains 8.8% of the variance (Adjusted R^2 = .088. Table 8 gives information for the predictor variables of entered into model. All three variables which are subscales of psychological commitment to team were significant predictors. When inspecting β values to see the importance of the variables to explain self-esteem, it can be seen that resistance to changing team makes the most important contribution the model (β= 0.18), then questioning loyalty makes the second most important contribution to self esteem (β= 0.14) and least important variable to explain self-esteem was loyalty to team (β= 0.08).

Discussion

Analyzing the data according to demographic characteristic of the participants resulted in some significant results. Life satisfaction and self-esteem level of male and females did not significantly differ according to gender, however it was found that males scored significantly higher in resistance to changing team, loyalty to team, questioning loyalty and overall commitment to team (table 3). Similar to Giray and Salman (2008), this result suggested that males are more attached to their sport teams than women. Supporting this gender differences, Gantz and Wenner (1995) reported that men generally were more involved in televised sports than women. Moreover Dietz-Uhler et al. (2000) and Carvalho (2008) reported that men and women consider themselves to be sports fans, however men identify more strongly with being sports fans than do women. We initially thought that men and women will not differ according to their score on psychological commitment to team. Because fanship is universal and does not depend on gender, but the results did not imply what initially was thought. Life satisfaction and self-esteem of participants were found to be significantly higher in some higher level income groups than some lower levels of income groups. Considering the fact that higher income is possibly associated with better quality of life and spending power, it is not surprising that income is positively related to life satisfaction and self-esteem. Significant correlation between self-esteem and income (table 7) also strengthens this proposition.

t-test analysis according to income, further, gave meaningful results. Resistance to changing team and overall commitment to team were found to be significantly different among income groups. Tukey's post hoc analysis revealed that this difference occurred due to the fact that middle income group was significantly higher than the lowest income group (for resistance to changing team) and the highest income groups was significantly higher than the lowest income group (for overall commitment to team). Fans who reported to be from the lowest income group are expected to have lower spending power. Economic reasons might result in the fact that they are not concern with their favorite teams. Moreover, Maslow's suggests in his hierarchy of needs that people give attention to their social needs which involve feelings of belongingness only after their physiological and safety needs are fulfilled. Possibly, participants from the lowest income group had not completely met their safety and physiological needs. Therefore, it had been actually expected that they would be low in commitment to team score. In addition, although the difference was not significant, the score of middle income group on overall commitment to team appeared to be higher than participants who reported having the maximal income.

It was thought that this result was due to fact that participants with maximal income prefer a different life style which does not involve a very high level of commitment to their sports teams. Spending power that they have might enable them to have alternative actives. Psychological commitment to team of people who have high income might be examined in further research. ANOVA analysis according to sport team showed that fans of Fenerbahçe scored higher on all subscales of psychological commitment to team and overall commitment to team. These differences were significant on questioning loyalty and overall commitment to team scores (table 6). Giray and Salman (2008) also reported very high psychological commitment scores of Fenerbahçe which are similar to our results. High scores of Fenerbahçe's fans might be due to their leadership in the league and their recent good performance in the league. Moreover, Fenerbahçe has appeared to have the best performance in the last 10 years compared to other sport teams (Statto, 2011). Galatasaray and Beşiktaş have not been as successful as they were before; this might be the reason of their fans scoring lower.

When examining the correlation results, it was found that self-esteem positively correlated with overall commitment to team and the three subscales of overall commitment to team. Moreover, life satisfaction was found to be positively correlating with resistance to changing team and overall commitment to team. In addition to the correlation analysis, regression analysis was run to find a further relationship. It was found that resistance to changing team, loyalty to team and questioning loyalty which are the three subscales of overall commitment to team explained approximately %9 variance of self-esteem (see table 8). Life satisfaction and self-esteem which are the two important factors of quality of life are related to commitment to a sport team. Considering the fact that there are various personal development books that are written to increase life satisfaction and self-esteem of people (Branden 1988; Branden, 1992; Branden, 1994; Mruk, 2006), these results are worth to be taken into account. Because, according to our results people will enhance their self-esteem by simply increasing their psychological commitment to a team. Our results also match with the previous research. Branscombe and Wann (1991) reported that traditional social and community ties have declined due to increased geographic mobility, industrialization, and the like. On the contrary, sports spectatorship has continued to flourish. They argued that strong identification with a specific sports team provides a buffer from feelings of depression and alienation, and it fosters feelings of belongingness and self-worth. In effect, sports team identification replaces more traditional family and community-based attachments to the larger social structure (Branscombe and Wann, 1991).

Similarly, Social Identity Theory suggests that people derive a sense of self-worth and social belongingness that result from their memberships in groups, and in this way they are motivated to draw favorable comparisons between their own group and other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Demirtaş, 2003; Trepte, 2006). When people devote themselves to a sports team, they make a contact with their team and with the other fans of the same team in which they feel respected and worthy. As a result people possess their social identity. Feeling worthy, valued and respected by other people who are in the same group will result in higher commitment to the group. These results come from sports' cohesive effect on society (Smith, 1988). All of these will result in higher respect to people's own identity and higher self-esteem (İkizler & Tekin, 2008). There are many researches supporting our result and proposing a relationship between commitment to a sport team and self-esteem. Kerr (2009) reported that support for Liverpool F.C. enhanced self-esteem of satellite supporters. Wann (1994) found a positive correlation between team identification and self-esteem and Wann (2006) proposed that team identification facilitates well-being by increasing social connections for the fan. Furthermore, Wann (2011) indicated that team identification was positively related to well-being.

There are many researches which were previously conducted on commitment to a sport team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann et al., 1999; Kwon & Armstrong, 2004; Gau et al., 2009; Carvalho, 2008). However, studies on psychological commitment or team identification in Turkey are limited (e.g. Günay &Tiryaki, 2003; Aycan et al., 2009). Moreover, there has not been any research examining the effect of psychological commitment on self-esteem and life satisfaction in Turkey. Therefore, this is the first study dealing with the mentioned topic in Turkey. In addition, one would not expect that a significant variance of self-esteem would be explained by psychological commitment to team in Turkey. In Countries where sport is very popular and there is a sport culture in society (e.g., America, England, Germany, France, Canada), it is an inevitable result that psychological commitment would have an effect on self-esteem. But, Turkey is a developing country which has had many economical problems for years and for these reasons it was initially thought that psychological commitment to a sport team would not explain any significant variance of self-esteem in the current study. Therefore, the relationship between self-esteem and psychological commitment to team which was discovered in this research is a considerable finding for the relevant literature.

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