

Istanbul Bilgi University

Institute of Social Sciences

Media and Communication Systems Master's Degree Program

Affectivity Formation Among Fenerbahçe Fans on Twitter

Müge Demirel

115680009

Assoc. Prof. Erkan Saka

Istanbul

2018

AFFECTIVITY FORMATION AMONG FENERBAHÇE FANS ON TWITTER
FENERBAHÇE TARAFTARLARININ TWİTTER'DAKİ YAKINLIK İLİŞKİSİ

Müge Demirel

115680009

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Erkan Saka
İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi
Jüri Üyesi: Prof. Dr. Yonca Aslanbay
İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi
Jüri Üyesi: Doç. Dr. Çiğdem Bozdağ
Kadir Has Üniversitesi



Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih :

07/06/2018

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı:

62

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

1) Duygulanım Teorisi

1) Affectivity

2) Sosyal Paylaşım Siteleri

2) Social Networking Sites

3) Hayran Çalışmaları

3) Fan Studies

4) Fenerbahçe

4) Fenerbahçe

5) Yakınsama

5) Convergence

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to all those who helped me to complete this thesis. I shall personally thank Assoc. Prof. Erkan Saka due to his guidance. He has been there for me not only being an amazing advisor but also being there when I needed. In addition to Assoc. Prof. Saka, I feel the urge to be thankful to Dr Esra Ercan Bilgiç as the thesis course coordinator.

Furthermore, I must say that I would not be able to do this study without the interviewees and all the other Fenerbahçe fans who use Twitter. Their usage of Twitter and fandom performances lead me to conduct the research. Without the help of all these persons, it would never have been possible to finish this master's thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The fans right now are not only simple consumers. They produce content in various ways for their community. These productions are on the internet and available to anyone who uses the platforms. The shift from being a consumer to be an active participant in the community occurred for numerous reasons. One of these reasons is the social networking sites which fans create brand new contents for the fandoms. Through this production processes, people are now more connected to each other than before. The connection and the sharing the same interest makes them interact with each other with affection. The affection occurs in different forms. This study explores the ways of interaction and the affection which happened through the observed interactions. This study inspired by many different scholars but mostly from Henry Jenkins who both argued on the fan studies and new media studies. His concepts of fandom and convergence make this study more understandable. In order to conduct the research an observation on Twitter for 4 months, 8 interviews and a discourse analysis on Twitter were done. The observation allowed me to choose who to do interviews, the interviews helped me to point out the relationship they have among each other, finally the discourse analysis provided an understanding on first the current issues and affirmation of what interviewees said. All in all, the aim of this study was to explore the affectivity formation among Fenerbahçe fans through observation, in-depth interviews and discourse analysis.

ÖZET

Hayranlar günümüzde yalnızca tüketici değiller. İçinde bulundukları topluluk için farklı medya ürünleri üretiyorlar. Bu ürünler genellikle çevrim içi platformlarda yer alıyor. Bu içerikler platformda yer alan tüm diğer üyelere, yani hayranlara da açık. Hayranların, taraftarların basit tüketicilerden topluluk içerisinde aktif bir şekilde üretim yapma süreci bir süredir hayatımızda. Bu değişim nedenlerinden birisi de sosyal ağlarda yer alan platformlar. Hayranlar çok fazla uğraşmadan diledikleri konularda içerik üretip bunu dağıtabiliyorlar. Bu süreçler sayesinde insanlar hiç olmadıkları kadar birbiriyle etkileşim halindeler. Bu iletişim ve ortak ilgi alanları birbirleriyle duygusal yakınlık kurarak etkileşime giriyorlar. Bu yakınlık birçok şekilde gerçekleşiyor. Bu çalışmada ise belirtilen etkileşimi ve yakınsaklığı keşfetmeye odaklanıldı. Bu çalışmada bahsedilen konseptler Henry Jenkins'ten ilham alınarak kullanıldı. Özellikle yakınsama ve hayranlık çalışmaları bu çalışmayı daha anlamlı kıldı. Bilgi toplama sürecinde öncelikle Twitter'da 4 aylık bir gözlem süreci yapıldı. Bu süreç boyunca röportaj yapılacak potansiyel kişiler saptandı. Bunun ardından 8 kişiyle yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakatlar yapıldı. Ardından Twitter üzerinden bir söylem analizi yapıldı. Gözlemler ve derinlemesine mülakatlar sayesinde taraftarların aralarındaki iletişim ve yakınlık ilişkisi incelendi. Devamında yapılan analizler sayesinde de bir kontrol sağlandı. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma Fenerbahçe Basketbol Takımı taraftarları arasında yakınlık ilişkisini keşfetti.

INTRODUCTION

The social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. are the main media for people to socialize with each other. The socialization process may happen through various motivations. However, one can simply claim that one of the driving forces of socializing is the common interest. In this study, the common interest has studied through a sports club. This study was focused on how affectivity formation and community formation occurred by looking at the Fenerbahçe basketball team fans. The case for this will be the Fenerbahçe which is one of the most followed clubs in Turkey. Briefly, Fenerbahçe has numbers of teams competing in different branches. To make it simpler for the basketball team and its fandoms have been chosen to be studied. These fans have never met before their facing each other in an online setting. Therefore, they have no interaction with offline settings, until they connect through the online encounter. These people share a common interest on a particular topic which is the basketball team of Fenerbahçe. They have started to follow each other on Twitter in the first place. It is the claim of this thesis that a community can be formed through shared interests and feelings. The shared feelings and interests are understood as the affectivity formation for this study. As mentioned, the community that I deal with is formed through affection of fans, or fans affectivity. The meeting occurs as a consequence of their shared common interest in Twitter. As they create contents related to Fenerbahçe Basketball team, they have found each others' tweets. As the process reoccurs, they keep connected to each other on different levels. Selected fans from sample group have been interviewed to point out the interaction and relationship. In addition to the interviews, a discourse analysis on the tweets that have been shared on the Fenerbahçe Beşiktaş game was done.

1.1 Research Questions

R.Q: How do fans online reproduce their fandoms and interact through that fandom with each other on social networking sites such as Twitter?

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to explore and identify how and why do fans, who are sharing a particular interest, interact with each other to utilize their fandom on social media. The research aims to work on the affectivity theory, fan studies, new media studies and interpersonal communication.

1.3 Outline of the work

This study deals with a number of different approaches to studies such as Fan Studies, Digital Media Studies, Social Psychology, Social Networking Sites related studies and Affectivity Theory. All in all, these studies and research in the field show that a multidisciplinary approach can be used in my research. In this thesis, you will be having an introduction, a literature review on the fields, a methodological approach and used methods, an analysis of the fieldwork and finally a conclusion. It is hoped that this research will bring a new phase with the local research that is conducted for the thesis.

1.4 Background and Significance

The word fandom, fan+dom, used firstly in the late 19th or early

20th century. According to Online Etymology Dictionary¹, the word was firstly described in a dictionary in 1903 as “the realm of avid enthusiasts”. The data given by the Google Books Ngram Viewer the popularization of the word fandom occurs around 1950s.² Especially after 2000s the word fandom got more and more used in the books. Although there is a huge literature on the fan studies, the changing environment of media allows new research and studies take a part in the field. For example, Henry Jenkins’ studies show us that fan studies can still be done. People have been supporting sports teams, musical performers, writers etc. This support occurs through various platforms such as social networking sites, blogs. This study focuses on affectivity and how it is related to the community formation. As it has been said before, fans’s affectivity allows them to create and shape communities. The supporters, fans, on social media create content for their team, artist, series etc. This content 1) open to anyone who is on Twitter (if set up as this way), 2) enables the possibility to interact with each other 3) Reproducible by different users.

¹ <https://www.etymonline.com/word/fandom>

² https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=fandom&case_insensitive=on&year_start=1800&year_end=2008&corpus=15&smoothing=7&share=&direct_url=t4%3B%2Cfandom%3B%2Cc0%3B%2Cs0%3B%3Bfandom%3B%2Cc0%3B%3BFandom%3B%2Cc0%3B%3BFANDOM%3B%2Cc0

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study has been inspired by Henry Jenkin's works (1992, 2006, 2009) on participatory culture, fan and media studies. In *Textual Poachers* Jenkins looks at the fan types, characteristics, and the relationship between media and fans. The book offers a detailed ethnography on that relationship. As mentioned in the book, "'Get a life,' William Shatner told Star Trek fans. 'I already have a life,' the fans responded a life which was understood both in terms of its normality by the standards of middle-class culture and by its difference from that culture. This book maps some major dimensions of that 'life.'" If fans are often represented as antisocial, simple-minded, and obsessive, I wanted to show the complexity and diversity of fandom as a subcultural community." Although *Textual Poacher* provides us with a broad understanding of the concept and the relationship, his works on participatory media and convergence define a new way of understanding the media and the consumers. It can be said that the current position of the Internet allows users to participate in media as the content producers. Therefore, their content is out there open for others to reach. Not only to be seen also to interact with the shared interest.

Of course, it is not only some of their work inspired this study. There are few concepts which bring up my attention to this research. First of all, it is important to accept and elaborating the concept of participatory culture and content creations by users for users. Jenkins is one of the first scholars to point out this subject. For sure he is not the very first or the only one. The new media requires users to be knowledgeable on how to produce media outlets. The role of media in participatory culture, affordances of the media, can be argued in several different settings. However, my point is to find the suitable definitions of the participatory culture and relate it to the issue of how fans produce media outlets for their admired objects,

team, music band, etc. Before going in any further, it is crucial to refer to Jenkins on the needed media skills for creating content. The issue of how one defines the Internet was the first step. Jenkins quotes Sonia Livingstone as “While to adults the Internet primarily means the world wide web, for children, it means email, chat, games—and here they are already content producers.” (2003). This early claim proves itself during the last decades. The teens who have the most subscribers on YouTube or Twitch. For instance, well known young YouTubers in Turkey such as Enes Batur, Orkun Işıtmak, Jahrein. These people are in their early 20s and have a number of subscribers. As mentioned Enes Batur who is a 20 years old male have more than 7 million followers on YouTube.³ He also has a movie aired on the national movie theatres. Not to mention, Orkun Işıtmak another YouTuber in Turkey has more than 4.5 million followers.⁴

One of the most important concepts of Jenkins’ is the participatory culture. He defines the concept through several sentences.

- “ 1. relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement,
- 2. strong support for creating and sharing creations with others,
- 3. some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices,
- 4. members who believe that their contributions matter, and
- 5. members who feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least, they care what other people think about what they have created).” (2009)

³ <https://www.youtube.com/user/newdaynewgame/about>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/user/ThePersica/about>

Of course, not everybody in the community needs to contribute by producing content. However, it is expected for everyone to value the produced content. This affiliation between users or in other words relationship between producers and consumers has redefined by the nature of new media technologies. Jenkins clearly points out that a user can be both a producer and a consumer at the same time. For instance, on Twitter, many people are producing content while consuming some. The types of products may vary due to the affordances of the device or the technology. According to his explanation, people are now able to process their lives in the participatory culture through several procedures.

These step/procedures are listed as

Affiliations	Memberships, formal and informal, in online communities centred around various forms of media, such as Friendster, Facebook, MySpace, message boards, metagaming, or game clans.
Expressions	Producing new creative forms, such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan videos, fan fiction, zines, or mash-ups.

Collaborative problem-solving	Working together in teams—formal and informal—to complete tasks and develop new knowledge, such as through Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming, or spoiling.
Circulations	Shaping the flow of media, such as podcasting or blogging.

Table 1 (Jenkins, 2009)

After mentioning how people are part the participatory culture, one should also mention how people can contribute to their communities. In the upcoming part, communicative affordances have placed. Knowing the abilities, or being aware of affordances of the device, is the first step to create content. However, it is not the only matter. One should also be aware of the needs of the content consumers/fans. Therefore, he/she can produce better quality content. The foundations of the content and content consumption are quite similar to the traditional media. Here, we should be aware of the fact that new media technologies change the actors in the media field through various devices and applications, interfaces and/or softwares.

Coming back to the Textual Poachers, Jenkins gives a definition for fandoms. In the upcoming table, you can see the parts of Jenkins'

“Fandom involves a particular mode of reception. Fan viewers watch television texts with close and undivided attention, with a mixture of emotional proximity and critical distance. They view them multiple times, using their videotape players to scrutinize meaningful details and to bring more and more of the series

narrative under their control. They translate the reception process into social interaction with other fans.”

“Fandom involves a particular set of critical and interpretive practices. Part of the process of becoming a fan involves learning the community’s preferred reading practices. Fan criticism is playful, speculative, subjective. Fans are concerned with the particularity of textual detail and with the need for internal consistency across the program episodes. They create strong parallels between their own lives and the events of the series.”

“Fandom constitutes a base for consumer activism. Fans are viewers who speak back to the networks and the producers, who assert their right to make judgments and to express opinions about the development of favorite programs. Fans know how to organize to lobby on behalf of endangered series, be they Twin Peaks fans exploiting the computer networks to rally support for a show on the verge of cancellation.”

<p>“Fandom possesses particular forms of cultural production, aesthetic traditions and practices. Fan artists, writers, videomakers, and musicians create works that speak to the special interests of the fan community.”</p>
<p>“Fandom functions as an alternative social community. The song lyrics that open this chapter, like the filk songs discussed in the previous chapter, capture something essential about fandom, its status as a Utopian community. “Weekend-Only World expresses the fans’ recognition that fandom offers not so much as an escape from reality as an alternative reality whose values may be more humane and democratic than those held by mundane society.”</p>

Table 2, (Jenkins, 2006)

Convergence Culture is another book authored by Henry Jenkins where he deeply argues how convergence occur at different levels. Although the book generally focuses on the fandoms through television series, movies and political participation to some extent, it is possible to adapt his ideas on this study. The first chapter of the book focuses on the Survivor fans and how one fan spoiled the series by gaining knowledge and publishing them online, on the forums. After doing a participant observation online, he says, “As we have seen, the age of media convergence enables communal, rather than individualistic, modes of reception. Not every media consumer interacts within a virtual community yet; some simply discuss what they see with their friends, family members, and workmates. But few watch television in total silence and isolation.” (Jenkins, 2006). Along with references to his works, it should be understood that the narration in the traditional

media is done by the professional producers, people who earn their lives through making the narration for traditional media companies. What Jenkins mention about the convergence, simply he does not mention the collision of different devices but talks about how narration and production have changed. “Convergence is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes depending on who's speaking and what they think they are talking about. In the world of media convergence, every important story gets told, every brand gets sold, and every consumer gets courted across multiple media platforms. This circulation of media content—across different media systems, competing media economies, and national borders—depends heavily on consumers' active participation. I will argue here against the idea that convergence should be understood primarily as a technological process bringing together multiple media functions within the same devices. Instead, convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content. This book is about the work—and play—spectators perform in the new media system.” (2006, p. 2-3).

2.2 Main points of discussion

The Web 2.0 as its nature and mission allows users to create their own content. In other words, that process is called User Generated Content (UGC). However, as cited in Witkemper, Lim and Waldburger's research, the term social media and UGC were differentiated from each other. “Furthermore, social media does differ from the seemingly similar Web 2.0 and User Generated Content (UGC) (Kaplan & Haenlin, 2010) and is often referred to as new media. However, Kaplan and Haenlin (2010) explain that the era of social media actually began in the 1950s and that high-speed Internet access aided in the creation of social networking sites such as MySpace (2003), Facebook (2004), and Twitter (2006). These sites helped coin the term “social media” and contributed to the prominence it has today.”

Another definition was done by Botha and Mills (2012), as cited in THE article, “designed to facilitate the dissemination of content through social interaction between individuals, groups, and organizations using Internet and Web-based technologies to enable the transformation of broadcast monologues (one to many) into social dialogues (many to many)” (Botha & Mills, 2012, p. 85).”

Social networking sites (SNS) serve as a context for social media activities, wherein individuals debate ideas, contextualize news, and connect with like-minded individuals (Hung, Li, & Tse, 2011; Lefebvre, Tada, Hilfiker, & Bauer, 2010; Phillips, 2008; Shao, 2009; Voorveld, Niejens, & Smit, 2011). The use of social media tools is often used synonymously with the term “social media engagement,” but the two are conceptually distinct. Social media usage refers to the multiplicity of activities individuals may participate in online while social media engagement refers to the state of cognitive and emotional absorption in the use of social media tools.

“The Internet has profoundly changed the human experience” claims Correa, Hinsley and Zúñiga. The users have used the internet for the first time for anonymity purposes (McKenna & Bargh, 2000); yet, today it is one of the media for socializing (Jones, 2009). The concept of UGC has led to participatory media in which users interact with each other by the contents. Although some works claim that the personality traits play an undeniable role in how to socialize on social media, this study is focused on different aspects.

Correa, Hinsley and Zúñiga’s research defined “social media use as the particular consumption of digital media or Internet that has little to do with traditional informational media use. Rather, it provides a mechanism for the audience to connect, communicate, and interact with each other and their mutual friends through instant messaging or social networking sites. To our knowledge, the majority of research on social media use has solely focused on social networking sites (i.e. Ellison et al., 2007; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Ross et al., 2009;

Zywica & Danowski, 2008; Valenzuela et al., 2009).”

Clavio and Walsh have conducted a research on college sports fans and social media utilization. “As social media continue to grow, the need for sport entities in understanding the audiences present on social media becomes increasingly more important.” (2014). As they have mentioned in their text, “Although not a sport social media investigation, Smith (2010) evaluated Twitter and interactivity in post-earthquake Haiti from a public relations perspective, finding that the medium promotes decentralized message sharing and user interaction instead of organization-centric dissemination.” The characteristics of Twitter has emerged as decentralized message sharing and user interaction instead of organization-centric dissemination. Therefore, Twitter as a medium is more than a media outlet but a specific tool for people to interact with each other.

Stavros et al, studied the fan motivations for interacting on social media (2014), “Social media provide fans with an additional means to engage with their team and are a valuable forum for sport organizations to better understand fan motivations and strengthen fan relationships.” As cited in their work, “Sport fan motivation has been described as “a self-determined and volitional state that energizes a desire to engage in sport goal directed behaviour to acquire positive benefits” (Funk, Beaton, & Alexandris, 2012, p. 364).”

The community formation through affectivity is also handled by different scholars. Gruzdt et al said “The notion of ‘community’ has often been caught between concrete social relationships and imagined sets of people perceived to be similar.” (2015). The affectivity is also explained as the situation of being influenced by other emotionally or feeling. In this context, affectivity is a form of a relation that is dealt with community feeling. As Gruzdt et al mentioned “The Internet has enabled people who know each other to use social media, from e-mail to Facebook, to interact without meeting physically. Into this mix came Twitter, an asymmetric microblogging service: If you follow me, I do not have to follow you.

This means that connections on Twitter depend less on in-person contact, as many users have more followers than they know. Yet there is a possibility that Twitter can form the basis of interlinked personal communities—and even of a sense of community.” That shows us that a community can be formed in Twitter. It is also important as purposeful sampling says the similarity is the key to target a series of interviewees. Other scholars argued that the community has usually been associated with physical contact (Kuo et al, 1998; Southworth & Owens 1993; Wellman & Gulia 1999). However, after the web 2.0 technologies and affordances of the internet, the users could interact and form communities with each other. The work of Gruzd et al actually proves a point, “To begin, let us look at two of Wellman’s Twitter friends—“steve3034” and “cyberpsy.” Both have Twitter home pages that give their real names, but as we use pseudonyms here, they cannot be traced from this article. Steve3034 in Korea follow Wellman, whereas cyberpsy in England is a mutual with Wellman: They follow each other. Clicking on steve3034’s home page shows his place of work, that he is following more than 200 people (including Wellman), and that he has more than 1,000 followers himself. His Twitter page even gives his picture and his personal website. cyberpsy’s home page provides similar information. Both provide pictures, a common Twitter norm. Steve3034’s picture is a straightforward portrait, whereas cyberpsy’s is more metaphoric. Although Wellman and cyberpsy are colleagues and friends, Wellman and steve3034 have neither met nor corresponded. Steve3034 is a member of Wellman’s information-diffusion network. But is he a part of Wellman’s community, real or imagined? Wellman has 114 sources and has met about 50 other followers whom he only checks intermittently (he calls them “light sources”). Who else is in his set of 652 followers? He is talking to friends and colleagues who “reply” to or “retweet” him (so he knows they are reading him), addressing others he knows who do not reply or retweet (and so he is unsure about whether they are paying attention), and broadcasting to hundreds of strangers whom he has never met. Are they part of a community, real or imagined?” The introduction of the work and the questions that have been asked in the introduction is actually the starting point of the study. As their work stated, it is accepted that Twitter is a platform for

communities. However, the shape or the space where the community exists is another question that needs to be answered by other scholars. It is crucial to understand that this study does not directly argue what have been asked in the Gruzdt et al study. However, in order to understand the online community, their mention about Jones' paper (1997), "...argued that the prerequisite for an online community is the presence of a "virtual settlement" that meets four conditions:

- interactivity,
- more than two communicators,
- common-public-place where members can meet and interact, and
- sustained membership over time." (As cited in Gruzdt et al.)

In accordance to this claim the sample group for this study meets the conditions for being community online. As the other studies show us It is highly possible for people of the same interests to create communities whether the community is online or offline.

Sport fan culture literature also is an important part of this study. Yoshida et al claimed that "Understanding why sport fans socially interact with other fans, participate in team-related discussions, recruit new members, and retain membership in sport fan communities is an important issue for sport marketers." (2015). It is not only important for sport marketers but also important to scholars who study on, about, with communities. The usual meeting points for fans are stadiums, or in general where the sport games happen. However, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs, this started to change from offline to online. They also defined the sports fan community as "A sport fan community is a specific form of brand community in the sport context." Fiske deals with sport fandom in a more political economy perspective. "Fandom is a common feature of popular culture in industrial societies. It selects from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed entertainment certain performers, narratives or genres and takes them

into the culture of a self-selected fraction of the people.” (1992). According to his approach sport as an instrument of the capitalist societies.



3. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1 Methodology and the Used Methods

In the literature review, there have been various methodologies and methods used by scholars. However, this research tends to explore and identify the affectivity; thus, the interaction and the relationship of fans on social media. Although it is highly possible to conduct this research in a quantitative methodology and methods. However, this thesis is focused to identify the relationship. Therefore, it is more suitable to pursue a research with a qualitative approach to the field. It is important to mention that the measurability feature of social media and social networking sites made the distinction between the approaches more visible. That distinction may or may not lead up to a mixed use of the approaches. Yet, this study is mainly focused on the qualitative approach. That is not only about the doability of the study but also about the purpose of this research. Doing a qualitative research has been the ideal situation for this research because of various reasons. Firstly, the thesis is more about affect theory than relationship network. This means the research is not only done to map the relationship, also includes that, but to understand how people get to know each other on a social networking site through their shared interests and fandoms. It is possible to say that Henry Jenkins (1992, 2006, 2009) is one of the most important figures in the fan studies. His work, in general, encourages me to do a more ethnographic study in order to cover more aspects. His remarkable work, *Convergence Culture*, part 1 proves this point. Because he read all the forum entries and made it possible to do an ethnography on a cyber setup. Therefore, both the purposes of this study and the similar works in the field of fan studies on social networking sites allows me to be concentrate on the qualitative approach. To elaborate this, I have to mention the used methods for this research. The research has done two steps. The first step is to find out Fenerbahçe Basketball Team fans who interact with each other and obtain the data on Twitter. This mainly grants me the insight for who interacts with whom. In order to take cognizance on this, I have checked the tweets before/during/after the games

of Fenerbahçe Basketball Team through hashtags such as Fenerbahçe. This gave the main sample group. The process also validates my personal knowledge and insights for the study. The sample group has been chosen by both previous observations and on time Twitter search. The users who tweet about the game and the team were also the target group for in-depth interviews. The interviewees were chosen in accordance to the purposeful sampling method. Shortly, the method and strategies of choosing the interviewees allow me to find the best group of fans to point out the community formation through affectivity among each other. The second step of the research was to analyse the data from a perspective of discourse analysis. Here, Van Dijk's work (2008) and his models for discourse analysis was used to conduct the analysis. The primary motivation for the Dijk's method is to achieve different patterns for this work. The second step is not only the data analysis but also where the in-depth interviews are done. The interviews have been done in face to face settings with the consent of the interviewees. The interview questions include basic questions about who they are and how they are related to the team. Their personal stories and how their relationship started together have been also asked. The detailed versions of questions are also mentioned in the upcoming sections.

In order to enlarge the Dijk's approach to discourse analysis, it should be understood that discourse analysis must go beyond common sense. It is also important to acknowledge the fact that discourse studies/analysis are about talk, text and context (Dijk, 2008, p. 3). There is also a crucial point of his study that action and interaction are different components of *acts*. (Dijk, 2008). Some texts may call people to action which also ends up in interaction. These actions and interactions are parts of this study. Through conducting the research and the analysis section, it was important to be aware of this.

Of course, one could show more discourse studies-oriented approaches to the research. However, here I claim that both Jenkins and Dijk are the most suitable researchers.

3.2 Rationale for the Methods and Research Design

This research as mentioned before has used two different methods, discourse analysis and in-depth interview. The research was designed to find the most suitable sample group to conduct the research. The aim was to find a group of fans who interact with each other often for the matter of Fenerbahçe Basketball team. For that, firstly I have observed the Twitter users online during the games. I have had my first insight for the fans. After that, an important breakdown for fans and the team. In addition to my insight, it is important to mention about purposeful sampling. As argued by different scholars sampling is a complex problem for qualitative research. There are various sampling methods given in the literature. (Coyne, 1997). As cited in Palinkas et al. (2015) “This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell and Plano Clark 2011).” The table created by Palinkas et al. in their research paper, the most suitable strategy for purposeful sampling is “Criterion-I”. This was defined as “to identify and select all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance.” (Palinkas, 2015). As the potential interviewees were observed for a period of time, this strategy was very suitable to achieve the criterion. The games between Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş has created that. The breakdown occurred through the Football games but the reflections on the basketball games as well.⁵ On the 5th of May 2018, Fenerbahçe Basketball Team and Beşiktaş Basketball team had a game for the National Basketball League. During that day I have collected data on Twitter using the keywords such as Fenerbahçe, Fenerbahçe Basketball. Here I have also

⁵<https://www.fotomac.com.tr/galeri/besiktas/besiktas-fenerbahce-maclarinda-gerginlik-bitmiyor?page=2>

observed that the first group I observed during the season, starting from January, were also opinion leaders on Twitter. Therefore, I have both observed and learned through data that chosen group was efficient in terms of affectivity and user-generated content. After this occasion, I offered the chosen Twitter users/fans to join in an in-depth interview with me. The offer was to do a face to face interview. The data collection process on Twitter was done by two keywords and it was during the process of the Fenerbahçe Beşiktaş Basketball game. The search on Twitter was done by two steps. Firstly, I have done a search by using the word Fenerbahçe but excluding the term “basketbol”⁶. After gaining that data, I looked up to the tweets which include both Fenerbahçe and basketbol. By doing this, I was able to separate the tweets. The obtained data was created by users on 5th of May, to elaborate on this it was from the very first hour of the day until the last minute. After that one by one, the all tweets have been read and classified in relation to the game. Although the analysis took its part in the next section, I shall mention that the similar users/producer/fans came up to the front as the most interactive ones. The ones that came up has decided to be interviewed. The interviews were a semi-structured and occurred in the most comfortable places for the interviewees. The dates and places decided with interviewees. After that, the records have been transcribed and analyzed.

The interviewees were chosen through an observation process. For four months I have personally followed several keywords such as Fenerbahçe, Fenerbahçe+Basketbol, and specific accounts activities.

The tweets that made me decide on who to conduct interviews are listed below.

⁶ The turkish word basketball.



Zelimir HBK 🍷
@HBK_Obradovic

Takip et

Hep beraber geldik burdayız.
Durma savaş biz hep arkadayız.
Var bir hayalim herkes dinlesin.
Şampiyon olalım Belgrad inlesin...



01:33 - 27 Nis 2018

110 Retweet 1.684 Beğeni



Figure 1



Zelimir HBK 🍷
@HBK_Obradovic

Takip et

Dünyanın en tatlı sporcusu, OAKA Fatihi, NBA Allstar Rising Star MVP'si Bogdan Bogdanovic Ülker Arena'da.. 😍 @LeaderOfHorde



19:34 - 18 Nis 2018

384 Retweet 3.541 Beğeni



7

384

3541



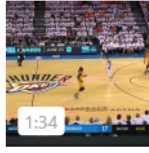
Figure 2



67 **Zelimir HBK**
@HBK_Obradovic

Takip et

Düşünsene sen müthiş basketbol dehanla
setler hazırla NBA takımları esinlenip o setleri
kullansın sonra 5 IQ'lu Semih Erden çıkıp
Obra NBA'de yapamaz desin. Güler misin
ağlar mısın...



61 **Half Court Hoops** @HalfCourtHoops
Utah Jazz "Horns Face"

A set Fenerbahce ran during their Euroleague Championship run:

14:00 - 19 Nis 2018

633 Retweet 3.678 Beğeni



51

633

3678



Figure 3



46 **Can**
@CanAndrea__

Takip et

Acaba Fenerbahce basketbol tarihinde
Bogdan ve Vesely kadar sevilecek baska bir
oyuncu olacak mi

20:03 - 18 Nis 2018

6 Retweet 83 Beğeni



8

6

83



Figure 4

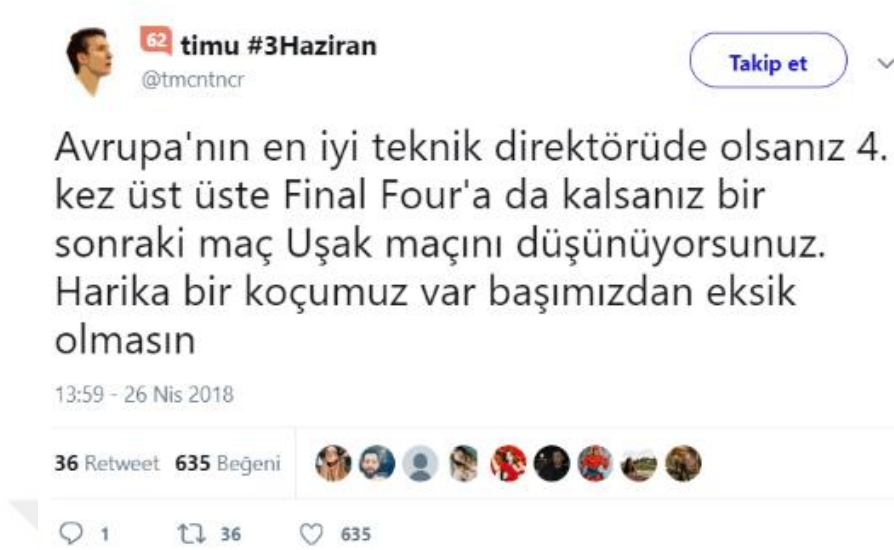


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

All these tweets that have come forward allowed me to who to conduct the interviews. The given examples of tweets show that these people whom chosen to be the interviewees who are the people actively using Twitter for their fandoms to Fenerbahçe. Therefore, the decision-making process was easier.

4. DATA, FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

There are two types of data which have been used for this study. The first data was obtained through interviewing 8 Fenerbahçe fans face to face. The in-depth interviews were done in several locations in accordance with the fans availability. As mentioned in the last section, the interviewees were selected through an observation process that took 4 months. The connected users/interacting users were offered to have the interview. 8 of them accepted and answered questions. 3 of the interviewees are female and the rest is male. The interview was designed as a semi-structured. In accordance with the interview flow, there were some other questions were added for more details. The first section of this part includes the interviews. The second part covers the discourse analysis.

4.1 Interviews

The standard questions that have been asked to everyone are listed in the table below. Interviews were done in Turkish then translated into English.

How would you define your relationship with Fenerbahçe? What does Fenerbahçe mean to you?
How long have you been using Twitter?
Is there any social media platform that you use daily, if so can you list?
What are the driving forces that motivate you to use Twitter?

You are producing content (tweets, pictures etc.). How does it feel to do this?
These contents are quite visible to others and they actually connect with you through these contents. What do you think about this? How do you feel when people interact with you through likes, retweets or replies?
Are there any people that you have met through these interactions, if so can you talk about your relationships. Follow-up question: Do you usually hang out on online or offline settings?
What do you talk about when you are having conversations and how often do you socialize with other fans?
Do you think Twitter affects fandom positively, if not what do you think about Twitter's effect?
Do you think tweets of fans support team and players or do you think does tweeting make them closer?

Table 3

The answers will be given in the five sections. The first question was designed to learn about their relationship with Fenerbahçe.

B.N.K. said “It is hard to define my relationship with Fenerbahçe, but the most suitable word would be passion. I am following Fenerbahçe since I was able

to understand what sport is. My biggest happiness or sadness relies on Fenerbahçe. There is a pure and unrequited love between me and Fenerbahçe. The definition of loving without any conditions is the most suitable part for me. It is probably the same for all the fans I guess.”

@CanAndrea__ points out his relationship with Fenerbahçe as “There is an unseen connection between me and Fenerbahçe like everyone else who is a fan. It is hard to explain but sometimes you embrace the team more than you embrace your family. It makes you do stuff you would say that you would never do. I can postpone many of my works or even simply deny them. I know I should although I know my priorities Fenerbahçe will always be the first one.”

@HBK_Obradovic who is one of the most followed account on Twitter, in Fenerbahçe context says, “It is all my life and my only preoccupation. My life is oriented around Fenerbahçe. I arrange all the plans in accordance with Fenerbahçe. I even miss many of my duties because of Fenerbahçe. I am planning to study for KPSS but I cannot. In short, Fenerbahçe is my life.”

@sensiblex clears his relation as “A passion with colours. We made a banner on this last year to open up in the saloon.”

M. İ. stated that “Fenerbahçe is the unrequited love for me since my childhood. Fenerbahçe is the definition of sudden happiness or sadness. You do not regret when you make self-sacrifice. You can be happy or sad, but you never regret. I have done many things for Fenerbahçe which I never regret. We were sad when we were defeated but never regretted.”

Nil Balta talks about her feelings as “Fenerbahçe is a close friend, a companion, a lover... Fenerbahçe is an important part of my life. It is even more

precious than many people. The people around me know that and they behave in accordance with that.”

@seliniremcetin said “The moment I realized that I am who I am, I also learned that I am a fan of Fenerbahçe. I am following the games since I was 5 years old. I had two symbols when I was a kid, Atatürk and Fenerbahçe. The games of Fenerbahçe have always been a part of ourselves. I arrange my life around the games. If there is a match of Fenerbahçe on a day I would cancel my plans. Whoever wants to meet me my response would be the same “We have a game today, let’s meet someday else.” I even skip classes for matches. Fenerbahçe has always been my priority and it will be.”

@tmcntncr refers to his affection to Fenerbahçe as “To me, Fenerbahçe is something like living or breathing. I am happy when Fenerbahçe wins, I am sad and having a bad day when Fenerbahçe loses. There is a saying which I love “Our lives are oriented to Fenerbahçe, if Fenerbahçe is doing well, we are too.” It is quite hard to explain what is Fenerbahçe to me by words. Let’s say I found those words and make a sense out of it, who is not Fenerbahçe supporter would not understand me at all.”

As all the interviewees stated they either approach to the Fenerbahçe Sports Team with either love, something that life is around. The level of commitment they make with Fenerbahçe is defined by their words. However, the important part is what words they are using. They clearly say that their mood is dependable to Fenerbahçe’s current situation or they even arrange their lives around the games. This level of affection cannot be only explained by a simple word. There are not many driving forces that a person would arrange his/her life in according to something voluntarily. This tells a lot about their fandom for Fenerbahçe. Along with their relationship, it had asked them about how long they have been using Twitter or what other platforms they are using.

B.N.K. said “Although I do not remember the exact date I would say that I have been using since 2009. I use Instagram and Facebook except for Twitter.”

@CanAndrea__ answered the question as “I have been using it since 2011. I am only using Instagram in addition to Twitter.”

@HBK_Obradovic also mentioned about an incident he had and talk about it. “As I remember I joined in 2010 or 2011. There was a club manager called Ömer Temelli and he was using Twitter. The reason was to hear about the transfers. During that time, there were not many users on Twitter. My story in Twitter starts in 2012. I have tweeted about many subjects but in 2014 I started to have an audience. Then I changed my Twitter username and profile picture. The profile picture was the Fenerbahçe Basketball team’s player Nemanja Bjelica. I was not planning all these at the time. I never thought of becoming anonymous in order to become an internet phenomenon. It was all coincidence. After gaining an audience, I felt more self-confidence because of the growing numbers of people following me on Twitter. I was not used to meeting with many people. Yet, Twitter made me meet with people. I also use YouTube and Instagram. I have a personal account on Instagram, but I am not active there. The last picture of mine there is a picture taken with Ersun Yanal when we became champion. I have a Facebook account which I do not use. The channel on YouTube starts to get more and more people who follow me. I have 43.000 subscribers on my channel right now. All in all, I am using Twitter and YouTube actively. My Twitter account has 66.000 followers. I should also mention that my account was suspended before. This is my 4th Twitter account. I would say that if it was not closed or suspended I would easily have 150.000 followers. But still, I have a skeleton crew on Twitter. The day my account was suspended, I opened a new one and got 10.000 followers in a day. I can say that the current followers are nice and loyal. Of course, I follow some of them as well as I do not follow at all. I also use YouTube and Instagram. I have a personal account

on Instagram but I am not active there. The last picture of mine there is a picture taken with Ersun Yanal when we became champion. I have a Facebook account which I do not use. The channel on YouTube starts to get more and more people who follow me. I have 43.000 subscribers on my channel right now. All in all, I am using Twitter and YouTube actively. My Twitter account has 66.000 followers. I should also mention that my account was suspended before. This is my 4th Twitter account. I would say that if it was not closed or suspended I would easily have 150.000 followers. But still, I have a skeleton crew on Twitter. The day my account was suspended, I opened a new one and got 10.000 followers in a day. I can say that the current followers are nice and loyal. Of course, I follow some of them as well as I do not follow at all.”

@sensiblex declared that “I guess it was 2009. I started to use in 2011 actively and it was the time that I got more followers. The more I produced pictures, videos, ideas on the tribune, my audience started to shape. Also, I saw that when I was doing an opposition on the club management people with similar ideas started to follow me. In addition to Twitter, I am also managing the Instagram account called “fenerbasket”. That is mostly focused on organisations rather than club or player communications. I am not using any other media platform. But of course, there are some who thinks that the account is official. After the realization of the truth, they may leave the account. I am using actively this account for last two seasons. After I started to use the account, the posts were regularized by time and content. That time basketball fans also started to follow. The ones who come to the basketball games are also on the social media. There are also followers of mine who are called Kalinic fangirls, Bogdan fan girls etc. In addition to these, I have a YouTube channel. All the video content there is about Fenerbahçe Basketball. I am producing all the content. Sometimes I even prepare subtitled videos.”

M. İ. said “I signed up in 2010 and using actively since 2014. I am using Instagram, Twitch and YouTube actively. I also opened up a Facebook account.”

Nil Balta reported that “I am on Twitter around 6-7 years. Mostly Instagram, and Facebook. Snapchat is also my favourite.”

@seliniremccetin answered the question as “I am using Twitter since May 2011 continuously and actively. I am using Facebook and Instagram actively too. I used to use Tumblr in the past.”

@tmentnecr stated that “I am using Twitter for 7 years now. My main motivation to signing up for Twitter was to support and advocate to Fenerbahçe. I used to use Facebook, but I lost my connection to it. Now I am mostly on Twitter and Instagram.”

All the answers were showing us that these people have been using Twitter for at least 6 to 7 years. The starting date has an importance because many Twitter users in Turkey had started to sign up during Gezi Parkı Protest. However, these profiles have been on Twitter longer than that. This provides me with an insight into their motivation for using social networking sites. As stated in some interviews, their main motivation was to get informed about Fenerbahçe. The process of gathering information led to the point of production later on. It is also important to see these people as early adaptors in Turkey. The notion of signing up to a website for collecting data is crucial for fans. Their fandom also makes them learn about their community at first but in next stages, they will start to produce knowledge and information for the community.

The next question was about what are the motivations that lead them to produce information/videos/pictures. This also has another importance for the study because it is expected that fans also will become content producers. Along with their motivations, how they feel when people follow/share their content is crucial.

B.N.K. stated that “There are various reasons why I use Twitter. It is usually to react on a subject. I also use for celebrating something that I love. Along with that, I am using to get information. You can follow the news agenda on your feed easily. I usually go to Twitter when I want to get information. Sometimes just to chill and have fun. There are many funny memes or videos here, I relax when I read them. It actually happens without an intention. While watching a game or just reading a news article on Fenerbahçe... You have an idea to express and you do it. The most powerful opinion of mine which I would like to share is the enthusiasm. When we win a game, or we achieve something, I cannot hold myself. I feel the urge to share this with the followers.”

@CanAndrea__ said “It is usually a habit. More accurately it is now a habit of mine. I started to use Twitter in order to get information in general. However, when I started to understand the content’s itself I began to connect with the audience. It is really enjoyable. I am still actively engaged in people. We cannot deny Twitter’s power. They organize there and act together. That is one of Twitter’s feature which makes me want to use it. You can organize a campaign and aid or march on Twitter. That is the reason why I am on Twitter. It is also the main reason why I am active here. I am enjoying doing this. That is the only joy, my only occupation. I even produce content when I am down. It helps me to keep off what bothers me.”

@HBK_Obradovic delivered that “In general, I would say that I am using Twitter in order to inform people and get informed on the occasions. For instance, I have not yet clicked on a sports website. Not only the sport related news but also I get news in general from Twitter. At this point, it is a mission for me to produce content for the audience. I constantly share links, videos and pictures. In addition to that, I am helping out many people. There are many people reaching me out on Twitter’s Direct Message. I help them and answer their questions. Actually, it is

sort of a full-time job which I do not earn money from. They are asking for a number of different things, including games or sometimes they ask for the links to online aired games. Some of them even ask for a ticket to the game, I help them too. Sometimes there would be someone who has an extra ticket. I retweet them, so they can find a good match for them. I reply back to them. I think that is why they like me.”

@sensiblex declared that “I have many friends who have lots of follower on Twitter whether from the tribune or other connections. We often collaborate on the subject which we want to announce more. I am usually using for organizations. I also record the basketball stadium and the ambience there to share it later on. I think I am contributing to the Fenerbahçe tribunes archives.”

M. İ. said “It is the concept of interacting with others and sharing what I know. The interaction makes me feel better. Distributing my idea on a game, player or a coach I feel like people know stuff through me which makes me feel really good. I want people who support Fenerbahçe and basketball to follow the news. I produce content by pure love only. I want my team to be on the top and I criticise and suggest achieving that. I also share my happiness and sorrow moments on Twitter. These are also memories for future. I sometimes go back to my tweets to see how I felt in the past.”

Nil Balta talked about “My motivation is usually getting information. Because when I can easily hear about the games I missed, injured players, new transfers etc. I can also get to know anything about Fenerbahçe easily. I can also get in the action if there is a celebration or react to a bad situation. When I am tweeting about Fenerbahçe, I reflect my inner ideas purely. Because I tweet usually when I am at the game. That is something special. Sincere, frankly...”

@seliniremcetin answered the questions as “I follow the news on Twitter. The political agenda is always in my feed. I often follow the news channels too. Personel accounts are also quite important to catch stuff. Not only local news but also international news is on Twitter. That helps me keep me update. It is also possible to be in touch with several topics at the same time. I used to be more active on Twitter. I am less active these days, but I always tweet something about the games, seasons, and new transfers etc. This way I feel like we as fans have a voice on Fenerbahçe. Compare to past, I now feel like I can interact and express myself better.”

@tmcntncr asserted that “I was using it to gather information about Fenerbahçe at first such as news, games, transfers etc. When we people liked me and followed I was convinced that I was a power on social media for Fenerbahçe. That’s why I am tweeting about what happens in the stadiums just to support Fenerbahçe. I share videos, pictures or breaking news about Fenerbahçe. I feel something missing when I do not share about Fenerbahçe. Almost like I am skipping a duty which I am supposed to do. Actually, it is not even producing content. It is something natural, I am just writing what I feel. I feel like I have to advocate for Fenerbahçe’s rights. Just tweeting what I feel at that particular moment whether it is a match or something else.”

As all the interviewees said, producing content, distributing what is there and what they produced is really important for sample group. They mention the other fans as their audiences. What we see here is that the relationship is not only a fan of a fan. The ones who are producing and shaping the community seems more important. Although having more power on shaping the community, the interviewees do not mention about it as a conflict but for sure they know they are more respected in many different ways. Especially what @seliniremcetin did for the player has inspired many people.

The upcoming part of the interview was about how does the interaction on Twitter affect their daily lives, whether they meet new people on Twitter just because they share a common interest and they tweet about the same topics.

B.N.K. said “It is good to know that there are people like you. I really enjoy this. There is also a possibility to meet with counter-arguments too. There are many of them. I am close friends with some. We usually see each other face to face every week not only the games though. There are some off game activities such as dinners, hanging outs, having drinks. My relationships with them are also online of course not just on Twitter but also Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat. It depends on the person. I met some people because of our shared love to Fenerbahçe but some of them we were not able to cross the line. We just talk about Fenerbahçe and basketball but also there are cases we really hit a note and we became really close friends.”

@CanAndrea__ mentioned that “We are living in the technology era. Interacting with each other is a necessity of this period of time. For example, I produce a video for Fenerbahçe or a text-based content, these get a good feedback. I really like it. It is a really good feeling when you know that your fellow fans appreciate your effort. Same goes for me too, I follow other fans posts and like and comment on it. It is good to reach out people who share the same interest as yours on a platform like Twitter which easy to reach anyone. Of course! I met people through Twitter went to see the games together, we meet for a coffee or dinner as a part of my daily routines. Especially there many people who I go to games together. These all happened through Twitter. We both keep our relationship on online settings and offline settings. We go places together and have some drinks. In our daily lives, we can talk about anything not only limited to Fenerbahçe. There are moments that we see a funny post and send it to each other. But of course, I generally talk about Fenerbahçe and basketball on the internet.”

@HBK_Obradovic told me that “I really like it, especially when I get positive feedback on them. That’s what makes me keep going. One can need or want attention. Before 2013 interactions were focused on retweets. Nobody would click on the favourite or like button. After 2013 the main focus shifted from retweets to likes. It is not the best case for accounts grow bigger... The number of Twitter users has gotten more and more. Also, the way of using Twitter has changed. I was not able to follow the change, but it happened. For instance, back in time if a tweet gets 900 retweets, it would get from 100-200 likes. Now if it gets 900 retweets, the number of likes will probably be around 20000. We are now able to see 70.000-80.000 liked tweets. There is a number of people who I met online due to Twitter interactions. The relationship usually starts with watching the games together. There are also people who I met online first then meet in person next. I have provided tickets to games in person. There are even some who wants to take a picture together. People often exaggerate users who have lots of followers. They think that these people are celebrities. For example, sometimes I am mistaken as one of the Fenerbahçe Sports Club employees. I have kept my relationship with people who I met online thanks to the interactions. I am kind of stuck between the school and the work. That stops me to go out often. I can only go to the games. Of course, I see these people during the games which makes me happy. Actually, I have watched the game with Cem Ağrak who is also a strong fan of Fenerbahçe Basketball team. I met him on Twitter and he is one of the first that I met. It was probably 2004 when we met. Watching the game together is really nice. My Twitter username is ‘Obradovic’ and it gets people’s attention. Back in time, there was not a crew for the basketball team on Twitter. There were only a few such Eray and Erdem. We used to misinform people for fun. We even had a fake İsmail Şenol account. It was fun. There, I started to meet people and have people around me. During that time I got more followers. Vine was an important factor for me to get more followers. I was not Vining myself but sharing the games and stuff. That made me more popular, in both Fenerbahçe fans rival teams’ fans. There are some people who ask for a ticket or want to buy a ticket. Some ask some questions like “How to get in the stadium?” or “Do I need a Passolig” or “Where to buy tickets?”. These

are all fair questions but sometimes they cross the line. There are some people who asked for money or a plane ticket. For example, I like a tweet which they see afterwards. A friend of mine joked around for an airplane ticket. I liked it. When I like a tweet, it goes to people's feed. Then one of the followers asked me to "arrange" something. They think that I am an important person, but I am not. I am not claiming to be though."

@sensiblex said "I am usually getting positive feedback from the fans who do not side with Aziz Yıldırım. Yet, Aziz Yıldırım supporters in the club often say that I am an antagonist. They think that I am producing content in a very negative way. I am usually receiving this kind of feedback. It is possible to reach me out by Direct Message, so they do. Our own fans have a point of view that focuses on negative sections. Firstly, the tribune is not good enough and although our tribune is not the best we are criticising others relentlessly and stuffily. I am a calm person by default, so I am taking it well. Because it is possible for me to benefit from a critique whether it is positive or negative. There are times that they are harsh on me or swearing but I do not care about the degree of superheat. Yes, there are people. Young people ask me "are you @sensiblex?" when they see me at the tribune. People can see me recording easily because I am next to them. They ask each other that 'Do you think it is him?' There are times that they ask for a picture. I take kindly to these matters. People that I met on Twitter, we see each other at the events or games. In addition to that, there are people saying, 'You are the king', I just say 'thanks' and move on. There is only one chance for us to meet which is seeing each other at the stadium. I meet regularly with the people who come to games regularly. The ones who come to every match start behaving like a union. We are talking about organizing stuff or something that we plan to announce or the details of an event. For example, if we are doing an organization on tribune how to start or what to do at that point. If we need to distribute something, we talk about these details."

M. İ. “There are of course sometimes that rival teams’ fans lynching me. All in all, there is a rivalry going on. The rival teams’ fans would generally not like the tweets about Fenerbahçe but would reply back which they drop a hint or make ironic statements. I would say that I am a calm person but when others use slang words it makes me upset. All in all, this is a game and the one who is on the top gets it. Yet, I get really positive feedbacks from Fenerbahçe fans. You know, the basketball fans are somehow better than football fans. Therefore, the mass in the football who swears all the time is not here. These fans of basketball are somehow more civilised and more open to critiques. I enjoy communicating people, analysing the games and chat about player’s performances. Again we celebrate together when the basketball team wins or achieve the dreams. I have met people through these interactions of course. There have been many people whom I met online and then moved our relationship to offline. It generally goes this way. You meet, if everything goes right you become closer online then if there is a chance you meet in the physical world. I am not meeting anyone alone but we meet as a group often. Not only the games though, we meet a lot except the games to chat or have a coffee. We talk about Fenerbahçe also other branches of Fenerbahçe. Of course, we are more focused on basketball because we love basketball but still it is not the only subject. Elections and interpersonal relationships are also hot topics.”

Nil Balta “I feel better when people interact with me either in a positive way or negative. Because it shows that they care about what I write. Sometimes even rival teams’ fans reply to my tweets. To me, it is important to talk to each other objectively without creating a tension. Because fans are usually having a hard time to be objective. Yet, as I say rival teams’ fan or Fenerbahçe fans can get in touch with me. It feels good. This interaction led me to meet with many people. Although the shared interest occurred through social media we always had a common point (Fenerbahçe). That’s why we have a good relationship. We like the same thing and we can talk about the same thing for hours. That’s why people, who I met through our fandoms to Fenerbahçe, are precious to me. These relationships have to be maintained online. Because if you are meeting through social media, people can

live in different places and getting together might be hard. But I would say that we meet face to face once or twice a year. What I speak about changes from person to person. Generally, Fenerbahçe and Fenerbahçe basketball team or new transfers. Sometimes career goals after graduation. It depends.”

@seliniremcetin “As I said, the more I distribute my opinions the more I feel like I am an expert on the field. Of course, not all the time people agree on what I say. This creates a conflict between me and other fans. When the other way around happens, I feel a better fan. Bogdan started the 2015-2016 season, not at his best. But when he kept getting better I felt the urge to motivate him. The important part was to make him feel special by a gift. I thought of a gift which would be suitable for a rising star. There was also a chance for him to go to NBA at the end of the season, I planned an early birthday gift. Before the playoffs, I prepared the video and the star certificate and gave that as the gift. The fans started value him more than before. Because of that I began to feel better and felt like I was doing the right thing for the right person. He decided to stay here one more season and did his best to support the team in Euroleague which Fenerbahçe became the champion. That year we have done another video which we thanked him for what he has done for the team. It was done by fans for him. We were appreciated by everyone. That feeling was amazing. In conclusion, he ended up in NBA and made us proud there too. I believe he will be successful all the time. Because he only does not do his job on the field but also interacts with people really well. Everybody loves him and supports him. I hope he will shine as a star and keep making us proud. Every time I watch the video my knees start shaking. After publishing the video, a business person reached me out on LinkedIn. We are still in touch, he asks me to produce videos for him too. İsmail Şenol sent me a message to thank me. That time of my life will always be different to me. It is on my CV already. There are hundreds of people. I met many people from my age or younger or older than me. I also became close friends with some of them. Some of my friends are not living Istanbul but we keep chatting online. We generally talk about stuff what made us meet with each other in the first place. Of course, not only about Fenerbahçe, through my other

interests I met with different people in the last 8 years. After becoming close friends, we started to share personal things. There are some people I listen to my future career-wise. That was the only positive side of social media. Sharing an interest then becoming friends and supporting each other on different levels.”

@tmcntncr “That is the best part of the social media. Interacting together not only with Fenerbahçe supporters but also interacting with rival teams’ fans too. Expressing opinions, ideas are amazing. Different people enhance your horizon easily too. Of course, there are sometimes I just argue with fans but that is fine. It feels good even when I just argue. Yes, I met a lot of people. I have a huge mess of people on online. I see some of them regularly like friends face to face. We get together to watch games. There are really close friends which I met thanks to Fenerbahçe and social media. We generally talk about Fenerbahçe but there are times that we speak about Turkey’s agenda or something else. Fenerbahçe is all around us. We have a heart-to-heart talk on Fenerbahçe, sometimes analysing the games too. As well as the current issues in the club.”

As many interviewees have said that the online interactions also become physical relationships. The important point here is that their common interests become easily a motivation to meet with each other.

The last section of interviews were done on how do online fan activities such as tweeting and sharing affects fandoms and the club. Although all of them active Twitter users, the results showed another point.

B.N.K. stated that “I think there are pros and cons but generally, I do not think that the fandom goes forward because of it. Since people who do not use social media also feel the same emotions. When it comes to communication I believe it does carry some stuff. You can distribute a campaign easily. Yes, totally.

Fenerbahçe Basketball Team's players are known for their active use of social media. They often interact with fans and they need the fan support not only in the stadium but also daily routines. It is probably a good feeling to have their support all the time.”

@CanAndrea__ also answered the question. “People of the same fan groups can meet and socialize with each other thanks to Twitter. There are many friendships and companions occurred through Twitter, but it also created a separation. Unfortunately, Twitter also brought the separation between fans. In the past people of different groups would not know each other but still would not like each other but it is now at a higher level. I observe that the unnecessary hatred on Twitter which includes swearings and insults. There is a dominant idea of opposition now. I like Twitter, it is my most used platform, but we cannot deny that fact. I think it goes that way. Because players get to fans tweets and motivate more. There is a leading opinion of “let's play for them”. They know there are fans who support them. People often think they can say anything on Twitter. Some people tweet without even thinking. But they should be more positive.”

@HBK_Obradovic talked about the situation and mentioned that “No, it goes worse. A simple example will be enough. One can watch the game anywhere, does not matter, we would enjoy when the team scores. However, while using Twitter you tweet about your enjoyment as everyone. This sometimes goes sour. You do not feel the same joy. I would say that it is not as enjoyable as before. I used to enjoy more when we score or win a game. The enthusiasm in the past does not exist anymore. We should feel joyful about the game where we are placed whether it is a home or a stadium or a cafe. We should not use Twitter while watching the game. We should live and enjoy the moment. I am most anxious because of that. In addition to that there are messages coming during the game. I want to reply them but it stops me too. I also cannot live in the moment and enjoy as much as in the past. It depends, but I think social media fanship will end. It also

affects the tribune. There is a weird group in the tribune. People criticise many things by the mob mentality. They do not have a precise idea, they change their minds all the time. This is actually related to Twitter. Everyone follows everyone. Most followed accounts also influence people as well. Yes, that person becomes the expert. Yet, in fact, they know nothing. Cannot know or learn because they are under the effect of others. For example, coffee shops (kırathaneler) are not the places where culturally enhanced people hang out but these people hanging out there are better for representing the more precise ideas. Twitter is not like that. Let's say there is a hot topic on Twitter, people think of "where to side". Before deciding they check out Twitter to gather point of views for assembling a new idea. They distribute that collected ideas like that views belong to them. Simply, it is not theirs. Twitter lost its spell when more people got in, approximately 3-4 years ago. But as I mentioned Twitter kills the concept of living in the moment. Of course, there are pros of using Twitter. It is important when it comes to organization. Fans have assembled a march which organized on Twitter or we are able to set up campaigns (with hashtags) for Twitter. It was established in the 2015-2016 season by the guys in the tribune. There was the playoff series against Real Madrid that triggered the establishing process. The second game of the series, everybody worn yellow clothes, I did not follow. The first try was disorderly done. The ambience was amazing that year. Of course, the rest of the fans are bit elite. However, they are the ones who come to national league games, not Sarı Tribün. They have to be a model in that matter. This is not the lands of the basketball, that is why."

In addition to HB_Obradovic, @sensiblex also says the same: "I believe that the fandom goes back. A personal view of a tribune person may differ. Yet a person who is not in the organization stages might like what is going on. But a person who knows the past may see that the current situation is not that good. The players who use the social media can get the positive or negative sides easily. Sometimes the negative parts affect them badly. The players who get negative feedbacks or insults may endure in silence. Also, they go under a pressure. There might be some who do not care about this stuff and there might be some who turns a blind eye to the

ongoing arguments. However, the ones who do not turn a blind eye often have a problem. Fenerbahçe Basketball team players have a good communication with the fans. Players like Datome and Kalinic use social media actively. Sinan Güler often shares social responsibility projects. We sometimes use them for our organization, but we do not have a direct contact with them usually. For example, there was a tension between Datome and fans. A fan criticised Datome. The fan stated that he was a mechatronics engineer in his profile. Datome replied his comment with “Do you wanna hear about my suggestions in the field of mechatronics engineering?”. If we did not know Nobran and his attitude to Turks and stuff, we could have said he was a rude person. However, Twitter helps on communication between the team and the fans are important in order to improve the sense of belonging. I generally work on the players and fans reaction, the number of scores that are produced in the games, etc. This reinforces the sense of belonging. Yet there is a situation in which fans overreact what players say online. It is not healthy for them to be pumped up all the time, it may harm them. Yes, I noticed. We made a banner which says, “You are the man”. The club management did not want to take it in the court because they thought it was an implication for Ali Koç. It still stays at the warehouse. Yes, I do. He thanks to fans and mentions about the fans in his posts. Yes, he shared a picture on Twitter on May 1st. He photoshopped a banner we had on the stadium and changed to “1 Mayıs Emek ve Dayanışma Bayramı Kutlu Olsun” and it was nice. I look at the clubs’ posts, I achieve the details of tribunes. Of course, I am trying my best to boost this kind of stuff. There is also @HBK_Obradovic who posts videos. He usually sits behind of the Fenerbahçe bench. He is closer to the field and players. That is the thing you would get by sitting there, close up and stuff.”

M. İ. refers to Twitter and said that “I do not believe actually. Twitter is only a medium for us to express ourselves. Yet, I believe that fandom is something which happens physically. It does not make you a good fan if you sit somewhere and tweet about the team. You have to make an effort for that. Yes, of course, you will support your team and express your opinions, but it is not only deal. There are people who just come to Istanbul for a match or come to the tribune to support until their last

breath. I think these are the real contributions for the team. The physical actions of the team are exclusive in my opinion. Tweeting itself is an important action to interact with people. Tweeting helps us to have a closer relationship with players. By tweeting it is possible to be in a closer relationship with each other. Yet, this close relationship, we can make players feel bad because of our bad comments. Here we notice that we should use social media in caution. We should express ourselves without demoralizing the players. It is unfortunate that the Turkish fans, not only Fenerbahçe fans, are quite cruel on this. I wish we could fix that.”

A more positive point was done by Nil Balta as “I totally agree. Social media is important in these matters. For sure, it is a support both to the team and to players. It makes them feel better. Although some people think that team or the players do not see the tweets, especially the players see what is going on Twitter and even reply. It is also highly possible for fans to have affinity through the social media contents. The value that is here by default is also causing the affectivity happens between fans.”

@seliniremccetin said “Being fans is enjoyable when we are united. Especially as women if you do not have many fans like you, you feel alone. Twitter helps us about this. We get to see other people like us. Do not get me wrong, I am one of the hardcore fans of Fenerbahçe but I am always trying to be away from hooligans though. Tweeting has two effects actually. When someone does not like a play of the player they might insult the player and I had a dispute with those people for years. A true fan should not do such things. On the contrast, they should tweet for motivating the players.”

Lastly @tmcntncr stated his ideas as “I would neither say yes or no to this question. Twitter, of course, had some impact on me but my fandom comes from my father, so I would say that it did not make me more fan than before. Everything goes the same. But of course, every day my love for Fenerbahçe goes bigger. We

learn many things about Fenerbahçe on Twitter. Twitter is really useful for that purpose. But I would not say that it affects my fandom. For sure it was because when the club needs we support it. We start hashtag campaigns. Our basketball team also uses Twitter very efficiently and this helps both our team and players. They easily see how the fans support them so their motivation gets higher. For example, a fan prepares a picture or a video for supporting the player/team. They tag the player which at the end makes them happy. They mention about this support all the time. Social media is all around us at the moment. I am trying my best to support my team under any conditions and trying to be the driving force for that support. I am doing most of this on Twitter. I personally believe that social media has a positive effect on players.”

A conclusion of the interviews must be placed here. Answers in general is in accordance with the expected affectivity formation. It was also noticed that the tweets lead the users to meet with new people. The people which have been met online also becomes a normal part of their lives. However, there are some arguments that Twitter is not helping fandoms to go forward in terms of unification. As @HBK_Obradovic and @sensiblex stated that being fan is about physical existence or it is sort of a legacy which comes from the family or at birth. Tweeting does not make you like your team more but allows you to show your love or passion. Especially the ones, like @HBK_Obradovic, who have many numbers of followers and became an opinion leader stated that they have never planned to be the persons they are right now. It occurred without intentions, the amateur spirit in the media products is also an indicator of this. Also, these people are not usually media professionals. The amateur spirit allows users to create content sincerely. Another point was that almost all the interviewees mentioned about Facebook as a platform they either use rarely or not at all. This might happen by various reasons. There was a solidarity among fans on Twitter. Especially finding ticket, sharing game links, etc. often happens in the community. @HBK_Obradovic also mentions about the importance of video products and says that Vine was an important factor for him to gain followers. In addition to him, @sensiblex is another video producer. Both of

them have YouTube channels that they often create content. The YouTube links are also shared on Twitter. Therefore, they are even channelling different platforms to each other. As mentioned in the interview, @seliniremcetin prepared a video for Bogdan Bogdanovic which many different fans tell their love for him. After the popularization of the video even Bogdanovic's himself tweeted to @seliniremcetin to thanking. This actually allowed Bogdanovic to socialize and integrated with fans.

4.2. Discourse Analysis on Twitter

The tweets that have been posted the game day was collected through Twitter's search. The search was done using two different methods. Firstly, one of the search was including the word Fenerbahçe while "basketbol" was excluded. The second search was conducted through Twitter again which both Fenerbahçe and Basketbol were together. The main reason of the double search is to see different tweets instead of seeing the same tweet in the both datasets. The data was analysed in two steps. The first step was to identify the theme of the tweets. After identifying the subjects and matters, then the tweets were deeply argued on what they mean in the context of Fenerbahçe and game.

Both keyword search pretty much gave us the same results. Although Fenerbahçe -basketbol gave more result on the Football Club, the tweets were usually pointing out the same issue. A group of fan were protesting what happened in the Fenerbahçe-Beşiktaş football game and they had jaconet around their heads.



Figure 8



Figure 9

The given tweet above includes the picture that have mentioned in many tweets. It is claimed that these fans were making fun of the BJK Football Club manager Şenol Güneş. Şenol Güneş claimed that a metal substance was thrown to his head and was hospitalized. There were several pictures of him while having a jaconet around his head.



Figure 10

These fans were criticized by many different groups including Beşiktaş fans. Although the acts of fans were understood as a joke and provocation, many Fenerbahçe fans needed to protect their fellow friends. As seen in the Figure 8, another fan tries to line up with his/her fellow fans. Figure 10 below shows another tweet by a fan.



Figure 11

Right after the game CarrefourSA which is a popular grocery store in Turkey made a press release about one of the fans who were having jaconet on his head. In according to CarrefourSA, one of the affiliated fan was working on the company for sometimes and the brand started to be mentioned with the fans action. The company made an announcement about the fan and company has no longer an affiliation. They meant that brand should not be mentioned anymore.

Fans started to react on the CarrefourSA's reaction. The tweet below explains the situation well.



Figure 12

Expect the current controversies Beşiktaş's manager, the teams are rivals to each other for so many years. @HBK_Obradovic tweeted this at the end of the game.



Figure 13

Another interviewee who had many interactions online was @tmcntncr also tweeted at the game day. Here the banner refers to the throwing incident on the Fenerbahçe-Beşiktaş football game. Although the banner is highly sexist and hurtful the fan decided to post it on Twitter.



62 timu #3Haziran
@tmcntnrcr

Takip et

:)



12:40 - 5 May 2018

57 Retweet 607 Beğeni



↻ 57

♡ 607



Figure 14

Another user and fan of Fenerbahçe just tweet a picture of him and his friends and said, “We are here” and got more than 100 likes.



Figure 15

All in all, most of the tweets were related to the tension between Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş game. Here we see there is an intersection between different branches of sports teams. The main discourse was about making fun of what happened to the other team’s manager. Therefore, one of the motivations could be understood as the feeling of rivalry. In addition to that, many people just enjoy supporting their teams. Especially the #NeverEnough shows that. Several tweets often use this hashtag to support Fenerbahçe Basketball team. They even decide to boycott a company just because of its relationship with their team, as in the CarrefourSA case.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion this study focuses on how the concept of fandom and social networking sites connects to each other. Fandom is accepted through community formation for this study. As stated in the introduction, the communities in general are the group of people who share the same or similar interests and feelings on a particular topic. The feeling part of the subject what makes this study understandable. Because it was accepted as the affection and affectivity formation was a given fact. Of course, affectivity itself cannot be examined without a phenomenon. The important part was to find a community that was shaped through the affection. In other words, the study was built on the affectivity formation of fans or communities on a social networking site. As mentioned a lot in this study, Jenkin's concept of participatory culture helped me to understand how and why fans reproduce their fandoms on online settings. Not only Jenkin's approach, but also the literature on professional sports fandom led me to the point of understanding the relationship between fans and teams. Of course, the motivations may differ from one person to another. However, the aim was to see how fans relate themselves to the team. That particular relationship could manifest itself through various ways. Since this study was done fans on Twitter, it was important to identify what could be done on Twitter. Twitter allows users to produce and present content as text and visual. The texts would be plain, hyperlink and/or searchable and visuals could be pictures, videos, emojis and/or gifs. The produced content on Twitter was analysed and observed during the period time. Another important point was how fans interact with each other. The interactions of fans as a community was also the key point of this study. The questions of were shaped in order to spot several important issues.

The ways of interactions were asked to the interviewees. Their answers allowed me to contribute to the knowledge on the field to some extent. As the influencers or the members who can represent the community what they said was important. The ways of meeting with the other members of community was

different from the conventional communities. The members of community usually meet (at least follow or interact with each other) on online, for this case the online space was Twitter. It is still important to mention about this is relatively new practice. It was understood that the affectivity forms itself in a community which is occurred around a professional basketball team. Still there were many arguments on several issues, some of the interviewees did not agree on positive relationship of Twitter and fandom. @HBK_Obradovic and @sensiblex mentioned on being fan as a physical life practice. These practices do not cover online activities, the online existences are understood as a “side job”. This statement is somehow challenging their online existence and fandom. Tweeting is understood as a way to express yourself on what you love but not as a tool for making you like your team more. @HBK_Obradovic, who is a persona on Twitter with numbers of followers and naturally became an opinion leader. His statement for not planning his current situation. The interviewees are thought as the community leaders. Their claims on their popularization was as it occurred without intentions. It was noticed that their first contents were produced without a professional care. The amateur spirit showed itself. The sincerity of the contents were important indicators. The question of what other social networking sites that they were using was also crucial. Because the community was formed in Twitter but as many others these people are also using other platforms. Facebook came out as the platform which is almost forgotten. The political and purposeful uses of Twitter is really common in Turkey. There is an undeniable solidarity between fans on Twitter.

Another important part was to notice how the video products are getting more and more important for the community. @HBK_Obradovic mentioned this. Also @sensiblex is another video producer for the community. They both have YouTube channels in which they create and publish contents for their community. The promotions of the videos are done on Twitter through hyperlinked tweets. The channelling of the different platforms is possible. As mentioned in the interview, @seliniremccetin prepared a video for Bogdan Bogdanovic which many different fans tell their love for him. After the popularization of the video even Bogdanovic's

himself tweeted to @seliniremcetin to thanking. This actually allowed Bogdanovic to socialize and integrated with fans. The interviews were planned before the the breakdown. In order to have a comprehensive understanding during Fenerbahçe vs Beşiktaş basketball game tweets were gathered. What happens show us that how fans can get motivated because of a rival team. Along with that this study showed us that people who share an interest can easily get connected on Twitter. All these interviewees were somehow accepted as people with power. It was also mentioned by @HBK_Obradovic that he is not different than other fans, but people often act if he has a power on the team and other fans. It is no doubt that these people are the opinion leaders and influencers. That is why they were chosen to study with. Also, the tweets and the analysis that was done showed us that an unexpected condition may change the users' content. Fenerbahçe fans supposed to support the team under various conditions. However, the support maintained itself. As mentioned in the analysis section, the interviews provided me different insights. Especially 1) the participatory culture also established itself in Fenerbahçe Basketball fans 2) amateur spirited users' contents are more valuable to other fans 3) The interaction occurs through Twitter, but fans also met at offline settings therefore, the socializing process happened 4) some of the fans work might help for players to integrate to team easily 5) finally the fans cannot only be explained as consumer but also active members of the community.

5.1 Future Studies

This research was done under limited time and resources. More comprehensive study could be done with a bigger sample group and discourse analysis could be supported by several analysis methods as well. However, the most important issue is that this thesis was written before Ali Koç was chosen as the new president of Fenerbahçe Sport Club. The change was also another breakdown because it directly shapes the affection. Some of the interviewees were known as Ali Koç supporters. Their relations with the club and fans might change. What is

more important that how Ali Koç will act as the president may lead to various unknown new results. Not only this but also his being a member of the one of the most powerful families in Turkey has also a crucial part. He is known as a business person and a member of Koç Family. His acts may lead to many new and unknown consequences. This would change the interviewees opinions thus the conclusion of the research. It is recommended that a new research should be done with larger number of interviewees and considering the current issues.



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