

# A Comparative Look at Aggression and Self-esteem among Turkish versus International Super and Premier League Soccer Players Playing in Turkey

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**Abstract** This study comparatively examines aggression and self-esteem among Turkish versus international (foreign) male super and premier league soccer players playing for the Turkish Football Federation. A sample population of one hundred twelve (112) out of all possible athletes of the above description has been featured in this study. Both Coopersmith's *Self-Esteem Inventory* (1974) (adapted into Turkish by Turan & Tufan (1987)), as well as an aggression inventory developed by İpek İlter Kiper[1]—and which include reactive-expressive, reactive-inexpressive, and proactive-relational aggression — were used as data collection tools. T-tests, alongside single direction variance analysis were used for data analysis. Accordingly, meaningful correlations were found among super versus premier league soccer players when it came both to inexpressive and expressive aggression as well as self-esteem. However, no meaningful correlation had appeared to emerge upon comparing the point scores between international versus Turkish soccer players for all three sub-types of aggression, for aggression on whole, and for self-esteem. On the contrary, a sound correlation was found between expressive aggression and the marital status of all of the players in question. Two further meaningful correlations had been identified with respect to self-esteem and the age of all of the players, as well as with respect to expressive aggression and players' education levels. In contrast, no meaningful correlation had emerged out of the total point scores for all three subtypes of aggression, for aggression on whole, and for self-esteem on whole versus players' hand and foot dexterities. Nevertheless, one final correlation had been established between players' sense of expressive aggression versus what position they played on.

**Keywords** Self-esteem, Aggression, Football, Soccer Players

## 1. Introduction

Soccer, in being the world's most popular sport both in terms of fan base as well as in terms of economic value, has gradually become an indispensable part of our lives. This degree of popularity and economic strength hence has an influence over both the sport itself as well as over in a number of ways, not the least of which include self-esteem and aggression.

Esteem, which broadly encompasses how an individual perceives and what they believe about themselves, also includes how one defines what an individual is; including how one feels an individual needs to as well as ought to be. The term 'personal esteem', which under the umbrella of esteem summarizes the given traits of an individual, and moreover includes 'social esteem' and 'ideal esteem', which respectively refer to how an individual is perceived within a given society, and how an individual wishes to project themselves [2]. Self-esteem, on the other hand, refers to an individual's viewing themselves as being valued, positive, accepted, and loved, as well as their accepting of themselves as they are, and hence has emotional, mental, societal, and (thus) physical dimensions there within [3].

Aggression refers to an individual's hostile or violent behavior or attitudes towards another/ others [4]. Aggression can be further split into three subcategories: proactive-relational, reactive-expressive, and reactive-inexpressive aggression. Proactive-relational aggression generally emerges when an individual's expectations and/ or desires have been shattered, and thus leads them harming both themselves and others. Reactive-expressive aggression refers to an individual's lashing out on impulse when they are either sad or angry. Reactive-inexpressive aggression denotes an individual's engaging in indirect hostility towards others through subtle actions [5].

Unfortunately, aggression is a critical and ever-growing problem across all aspects of social life, spanning work to

family. Hence, scientifically examined and tested strategies and solutions are needed in order to address this issue both at the societal level and within the realm of organized sports.

Similar studies have been done which investigate the relationship between professional soccer players' aggression levels versus how they exhibit their aggression. What these studies conclude is that there is a statistically significant negative relationship (point wise) between passive and disruptive aggression. Contrarily, these studies also indicate that a statistically significant positive relationship exists between players' overall state anger and brash aggressiveness levels [6].

Another study examining the relationship between the communication skills and aggression levels of female volleyball versus soccer players revealed that female volleyball players are more adept communicators than their soccer playing peers, whilst female soccer players displayed higher levels of aggression. It was also revealed that the passive and brash aggression point scores of the volleyball players had appeared to increase as their level of education decreased. On the other hand, as soccer players' communication skills increased, so did their degree of outspoken boldness. A similar correspondence was observed between brash and passive aggression—this time both for soccer and volleyball players alike [7].

One study probing the aggression levels of 'super amateur' division soccer players put forth that players' had relatively mild aggression levels, and moreover that as their age and income levels increased, so did their degree of boldness on the field [8].

Yet another study examining the aggression levels of amateur soccer players found that players were generally mildly aggressive, and that there was meaningful variation in terms of their point scores in relation to variables such as their age, what positions they played on, their level of education, and their families' income levels, and moreover that this variation remained meaningful as they continued to play soccer throughout their high school years [9].

One last paper comparing self-esteem among high school students who played sports versus those who did not revealed that self-esteem levels were higher among the former as opposed to the latter [10].

This particular study focuses on Turkish super and premier league soccer teams| however is open to further examination, and has the potential to be applied to other sports as well. It is believed that such research will only serve as a positive contribution to the development of both athletes and national sports alike.

## 2. Data Collection Tools

Coopersmith's *Self-Esteem Inventory* (1974) (adapted into Turkish by Turan & Tufan (1987)) was used as one of two data collection tools, and features twenty-five (25)

statements—each of which containing two possible choices for answers: 'yes' (this describes me) and 'no' (this does not describe me). Respondents who had predictably selected 'yes' for statements 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 19, and 20, and 'no' for statements 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 had received one point, whilst those who had provided responses to the reverse had not received any point. The results were then multiplied by four, upon which the total point score was obtained—this could be anywhere within the range of 0 to 100 points. The Coopersmith Inventory evaluates a point score between 0 and 30 as being low-level, a point score between 30 and 60 as being medium-level, and a point score between 70 and 100 as being high-level self-esteem. As the number of points increases, so does the degree of self-esteem. Statements that were either left blank or in which were double-filled were also did not receive any point. A high point score corresponds with a high level of respect, whilst a low point score corresponds with a low level of self-respect [11].

A aggression inventory developed by İpek İlter Kiper in 1984, containing thirty (30) items and three (3) sub tests (proactive-relational, reactive-expressive, and reactive-inexpressive aggression) was used as a second data collection tool. Each sub test contains ten (10) questions. Those items that correspond with proactive-relational aggression include questions 1, 2, 3, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, and 29. Those that correspond with reactive-expressive aggression include questions 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 19, 20, 21, 28, and 33; while those that correspond with relative-inexpressive aggression include questions 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 25, 26, 27, and 30. This inventory made up of a question and an answer form. Possible answers from which the respondent can select include: -3 (strongly disagree), -2 (somewhat disagree), -1 (disagree), 0 (neither agree nor disagree), +1 (agree), +2 (somewhat agree), and +3 (strongly agree)—all seven of which coincide with the Likert-type scale. Theoretically speaking, subjects who respond with 'strongly agree' to every question are to receive +30 points; whereas subjects who respond with 'strongly disagree' to every question are to receive -30 points. However, thirty-one (31) is added to each total point score, given the assumption that negative points will not be used, and given that the number zero (0) is likely to cause problems during statistical analysis. Therefore, the highest possible score is therefore 61, out of every one point obtained from each subtest. Moreover, an overall aggression score is also obtained for each respondent/subject upon assessing the results of the inventory as a whole [1].

The subjects featured in this study include 2017 – 2018 season Super League soccer players playing for Malatyaspor and Osmanlıspor, as well as Premier League soccer players playing for Giresunspor and Gaziantepspor.

### 3. Findings

According to the data obtained, a meaningful correlation between reactive-expressive aggression and super versus premier league players point scores was found ( $t = 4.08$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), whereby super league player's scores ( $X = 562.02$ ) were higher than those of their premier league counterparts ( $X = 494.54$ ). Another meaningful correlation was also found between reactive-inexpressive aggression and super

versus premier league players ( $t = 2.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); however, this time, it was premier league players' scores ( $X = 315.71$ ) that were higher than that of their super league counterparts ( $X = 260.64$ ). With regards to self-esteem, a meaningful correlation had also been identified between super and premier league players ( $t = 3.14$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), whereby premier league players' scores ( $X = 76.43$ ) were higher than that of their super league colleagues ( $X = 69.79$ ).

**Table 1.** The Mean Aggression and Self-esteem Averages, Standard Deviations, and t Values of Super versus Premier Male Soccer Players According to League Status

DEĞİŞKEN	FAKTÖR	N	Ort	Ss	t	p
Devastating Aggression	Süper Lig	56	370.14	143.88	1.06	.292
	1.Lig	56	398.73	141.84		
Aggressive Aggression	Süper Lig	56	565.02	47.58	4.08	.000*
	1.Lig	56	494.54	120.22		
Passive Aggressiveness	Süper Lig	56	260.64	124.95	2.10	.038*
	1.Lig	56	315.71	151.23		
Aggression	Süper Lig	56	1195.80	253.70	.240	.808
	1.Lig	56	1208.98	316.54		
Self Esteem	Süper Lig	56	76.43	10.17	3.14	.002*
	1.Lig	56	69.79	12.13		

P<.05

**Table 2.** The Mean Aggression and Self-esteem Averages, Standard Deviations, and t Values of Super versus Premier Male Soccer Players According to Nationality

DEĞİŞKEN	FAKTÖR	N	Ort	Ss	t	p
Devastating Aggression	Türk	71	385.48	149.40	.100	.920
	Yabancı	41	382.63	132.78		
Aggressive Aggression	Türk	71	522.08	104.44	1.10	.275
	Yabancı	41	543.10	84.18		
Passive Aggressiveness	Türk	71	291.14	152.48	.292	.771
	Yabancı	41	283.05	119.60		
Aggression	Türk	71	1198.70	292.82	.179	.858
	Yabancı	41	1208.78	276.18		
Self Esteem	Türk	71	73.30	12.39	.225	.822
	Yabancı	41	72.79	10.32		

P<.05

The results obtained show that no meaningful correlation was found between Turkish and international soccer players when it comes to any of the three subtypes of aggression, overall aggression, and overall self-esteem.

**Table 3.** The Mean Aggression and Self-esteem Averages, Standard Deviations, and t Values of Super versus Premier Male Soccer Players According to Marital Status

DEĞİŞKEN	FAKTÖR	N	Ort	Ss	t	p
Devastating Aggression	Evli	54	377.13	151.18	.520	.604
	Bekar	58	391.24	135.79		
Aggressive Aggression	Evli	54	554.52	83.98	2.66	.009*
	Bekar	58	506.74	104.37		
Passive Aggressiveness	Evli	54	270.87	147.92	1.26	.211
	Bekar	58	304.29	133.15		
Aggression	Evli	54	1202.52	295.86	.004	.996
	Bekar	58	1202.28	278.35		
Self Esteem	Evli	54	73.11	11.61	.003	.997
	Bekar	58	73.10	11.75		

P<.05

Here, the data shows that there a meaningful correlation was found between married versus non-married players when it comes to reactive-expressive aggression ( $t = 2.66, p < 0.05$ ), whereby the aggression point scores of married soccer players ( $X = 554.54$ ) were higher than that of their non-married counterparts ( $X = 554.54$ ).

**Table 4.** Variance Analysis of Aggression and Self-esteem Levels Among Male Super versus Premier League Soccer Players According to Age

DEĞİŞKEN	KAYNAK	KT	Sd	KO	F	P
Devastating Aggression	Gruplar Arası	35171.331	3	11723.777	.567	.638
	Grup İçi	2232712.231	108	20673.261		
	Toplam	22678883.563	111			
Aggressive Aggression	Gruplar Arası	29376.495	3	9792.165	1.028	.338
	Grup İçi	1029112.924	108	9528.823		
	Toplam	1058489.420	111			
Passive Aggressiveness	Gruplar Arası	37048.442	3	12349.481	.616	.606
	Grup İçi	2164431.986	108	20041.037		
	Toplam	2201480.429	111			
Aggression	Gruplar Arası	42550.864	3	14183.621	.170	.916
	Grup İçi	9013205.850	108	83455.610		
	Toplam	9055756.714	111			
Self Esteem	Gruplar Arası	1232.647	3	410.882	3.220	.026*
	Grup İçi	13782.068	108	127.612		
	Toplam	15014.714	111			

P<.05 KT: Kareler Toplamı, Sd: Serbestlik Derecesi, KO: Kareler Ortalaması,

The results of the variance analysis, here, reveal that there is a meaningful correlation among football players when it comes to self-esteem in correlation with age  $F(3,108) = 3.22, p < 0.05$ , whereupon the point scores of players above the age of 31 ( $X = 79.05$ ) were higher than that of players who were between 21 and 25 years of age ( $X = 68.20$ ).

**Table 5.** Variance Analysis of Aggression and Self-esteem Levels Among Male Super versus Premier League Soccer Players According to Level of Education

DEĞİŞKEN	KAYNAK	KT	Sd	KO	F	P
Devastating Aggression	Gruplar Arası	37059.837	3	12353.279	.598	.618
	Grup İçi	2230823.725	108	20655.775		
	Toplam	22678883.563	111			
Aggressive Aggression	Gruplar Arası	83064.167	3	27688.056	3.066	.031*
	Grup İçi	975425.235	108	9031.715		
	Toplam	1058489.420	111			
Passive Aggressiveness	Gruplar Arası	3971.593	3	1323.864	.065	.978
	Grup İçi	2197508.835	108	20347.304		
	Toplam	2201480.429	111			
Aggression	Gruplar Arası	148568.017	3	49522.672	.600	.616
	Grup İçi	8907188.697	108	82473.969		
	Toplam	9055756.714	111			
Self Esteem	Gruplar Arası	94.525	3	31.508	.228	.877
	Grup İçi	14920.190	108	138.150		
	Toplam	15014.714	111			

P<.05 KT: Kareler Toplamı, Sd: Serbestlik Derecesi, KO: Kareler Ortalaması,

The results of this part of variance analysis suggest that there is a meaningful correlation among football players when it comes to reactive-expressive aggression levels in correlation with level of education ( $F(3,10) = 3.10, p < 0.05$ ), whereby the point scores of middle school-educated players ( $X = 576.11$ ) were higher than that of their high school-educated counterparts ( $X = 510.52$ ).

**Table 6.** Variance Analysis of Aggression and Self-esteem Levels Among Male Super versus Premier League Soccer Players According to Hand Dexterity

DEĞİŞKEN	KAYNAK	KT	Sd	KO	F	P
Devastating Aggression	Gruplar Arası	41592.697	3	20796.349	1.018	.365
	Grup İçi	2226290.865	108	20424.687		
	Toplam	22678883.562	111			
Aggressive Aggression	Gruplar Arası	12512.788	3	6256.394	.652	.523
	Grup İçi	1045976.632	108	9596.116		
	Toplam	1058489.420	111			
Passive Aggressiveness	Gruplar Arası	24734.959	3	12367.480	.619	.540
	Grup İçi	2176745.469	108	19970.142		
	Toplam	2201480.429	111			
Aggression	Gruplar Arası	161526.411	3	80763.206	.990	.375
	Grup İçi	8894260.303	108	81598.443		
	Toplam	9055756.714	111			
Self Esteem	Gruplar Arası	472.505	3	236.252	1.771	.175
	Grup İçi	14542.209	108	133.415		
	Toplam	15014.714	111			

P<.05 KT: Kareler Toplamı, Sd: Serbestlik Derecesi, KO: Kareler Ortalaması,

No statistically meaningful correlation was found between players' hand dexterity versus either any of the three aggression subtypes, overall level of aggression, or overall level of self-esteem.

**Table 7.** Variance Analysis of Aggression and Self-esteem Levels Among Male Super versus Premier League Soccer Players According to Foot Dexterity

DEĞİŞKEN	KAYNAK	KT	Sd	KO	F	P
Devastating Aggression	Gruplar Arası	128276.349	3	42758.783	2.158	.097
	Grup İçi	2139607.214	108	19811.178		
	Toplam	22678883.563	111			
Aggressive Aggression	Gruplar Arası	6702.586	3	2234.195	.229	.876
	Grup İçi	1051786.834	108	9738.767		
	Toplam	1058489.420	111			
Passive Aggressiveness	Gruplar Arası	54171.704	3	18057.235	.908	.440
	Grup İçi	2147308.724	108	19882.488		
	Toplam	2201480.429	111			
Aggression	Gruplar Arası	318591.072	3	106197.024	1.313	.274
	Grup İçi	8737165.642	108	80899.682		
	Toplam	9055756.714	111			
Self Esteem	Gruplar Arası	64.385	3	21.462	.155	.926
	Grup İçi	14950.329	108	138.429		
	Toplam	15014.714	111			

P<.05 KT: Kareler Toplamı, Sd: Serbestlik Derecesi, KO: Kareler Ortalaması,

No statistically meaningful correlation was found between players' foot dexterity versus either any of the three aggression subtypes, overall level of aggression, or overall level of self-esteem.

**Table 8.** Variance Analysis of Aggression and Self-esteem Levels among Male Super versus Premier League Soccer Players According to Position Played

DEĞİŞKEN	KAYNAK	KT	Sd	KO	F	P
Devastating Aggression	Gruplar Arası	34174.525	3	11391.508	.551	.649
	Grup İçi	2233709.038	108	20682.491		
	Toplam	2267883.563	111			
Aggressive Aggression	Gruplar Arası	145753.994	3	48584.665	5.749	.001*
	Grup İçi	912735.426	108	8451.254		
	Toplam	1058489.420	111			
Passive Aggressiveness	Gruplar Arası	129838.512	3	43279.504	2.256	.086
	Grup İçi	2071641.917	108	19181.870		
	Toplam	2201480.429	111			
Aggression	Gruplar Arası	328344.155	3	109448.052	1.354	.261
	Grup İçi	8727412.559	108	80809.376		
	Toplam	9055756.714	111			
Self Esteem	Gruplar Arası	559.311	3	186.437	1.393	.249
	Grup İçi	14455.404	108	133.846		
	Toplam	15014.714	111			

P<.05 KT: Kareler Toplamı, Sd: Serbestlik Derecesi, KO: Kareler Ortalaması,

Here, the results shows that there exists a meaningful correlation between reactive-expressive aggression and the positions in which players play on ( $F(3,108) = 5.75, p < 0.05$ ). In terms of further breakdown, the point scores of those playing in striker position ( $X = 562.00$ ) were higher than that of their defense counterparts ( $X = 478.81$ ). Moreover, the point scores of those playing in midfield position ( $X = 549.58$ ) were also higher than their defense counterparts.

According to the data, broadly speaking, there are statistically meaningful differences between the score points of both Super and Premier League players in terms of brash as well as passive aggression, marital status, education level, and team position. A further correlation was also found between players' sense of self-respect versus their age.

No statistically meaningful correlation was found between Turkish versus international (foreign) players' either hand or foot dexterity versus either any of the three aggression subtypes, overall level of aggression, or overall level of self-esteem.

#### 4. Conclusions

1. A statistically meaningful correlation was found in the point scores of super versus premier league players in terms of reactive-expressive aggression, and which is tied to the point scores of super league players being higher than their premier league counterparts. Similarly, a meaningful correlation was also found among super versus premier league players in terms of reactive-inexpressive aggression,

whereby the point scores of premier league players were higher than that of their super league counterparts. The same can be concluded about self-esteem, whereupon the point scores of premier league players were markedly higher than that of their super league counterparts.

2. No statistically meaningful correlation was found between Turkish and international soccer players when it comes to any of the three subtypes of aggression, overall aggression, and overall self-esteem.
3. A meaningful correlation was observed between soccer players' marital status and reactive-expressive aggression, stemming from the fact that the point scores of married players were higher than their non-married counterparts.
4. A significant correlation was observed between players' levels of self-esteem and their age. Here, the point scores were higher among players who were 31 years of age and older, versus their 21 – 25 year old counterparts.
5. A statistically significant correlation was observed between players' level of education and reactive-expression aggression. Hence, the point scores were higher among middle-school educated players versus their high-school educated counterparts.
6. There was no statistically meaningful correlation found between players' hand dexterity versus either any of the three aggression subtypes, overall level of aggression, or overall level of self-esteem.
7. There was no statistically meaningful correlation found between players' foot dexterity versus either

any of the three aggression subtypes, overall level of aggression, or overall level of self-esteem.

8. There was a meaningful correlation found between reactive-expressive aggression and the positions in which players play on, whereby the point scores of those playing in striker position as well as those playing in midfield position were both higher than that of their defense counterparts.

Turkey in Super League and Premier League teams built a comprehensive study would lead to other work because it was thought to be. On their self-esteem, studies on Aktaş [3], Koçak [12], Çalık [13], Yöyen [14], Canpolat [15], Çınar [2]and Tüğen [16] the same on the different fields on Gültekin[17], Duyar [18], Dilekmen, Ada ve Alver[19], Hasta ve Güler[20], Gökçiçek[21], Beşkat[22], Fidan[23], Yurttaş[24]ve Okyaz'ın[25] there are separate works on these issues.

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