

Do you prefer Messi or Ronaldo? Your answer can reveal your political views, scientists say

[msn.com/en-us/news/technology/do-you-prefer-messi-or-ronaldo-your-answer-can-reveal-your-political-views-scientists-say/ar-AA263WDw](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/do-you-prefer-messi-or-ronaldo-your-answer-can-reveal-your-political-views-scientists-say/ar-AA263WDw)

Shivali Best For Mailonline

January 21, 2026

According to a new study, your answer can reveal your political views.

Scientists from Nanyang Technological University in [Singapore](#) surveyed more than 10,000 people across 26 countries about their favourite footballer.

The results revealed that people who prefer Messi tend to be more liberal.

In contrast, those who favour Ronaldo tend to be more conservative.

'Messi and Ronaldo project markedly different public personas,' explained Dr Saifuddin Ahmed, who led the study.

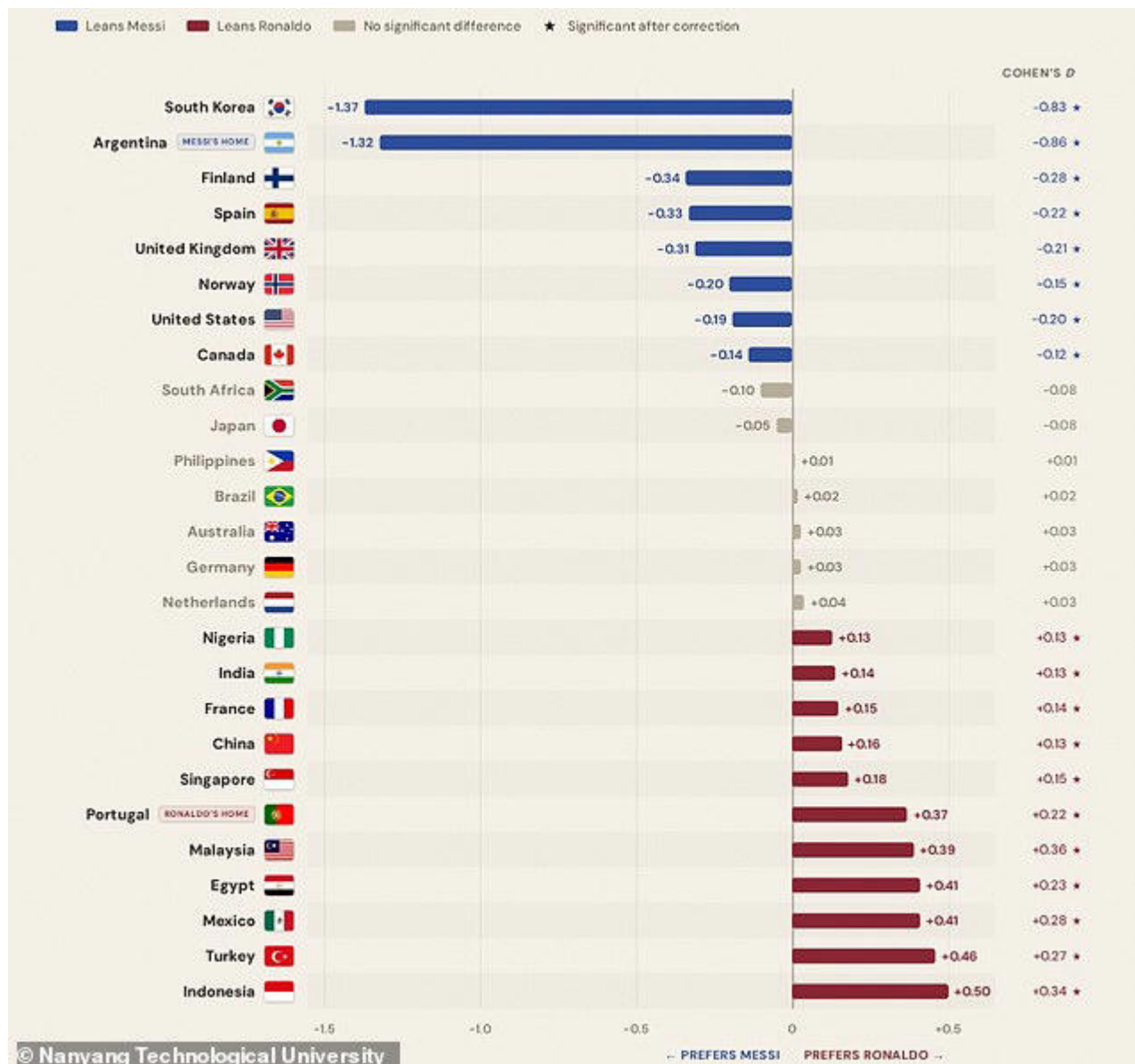
'Messi is commonly associated with a quieter, team-oriented image, while Ronaldo is known for openly expressing his ambition and celebrating individual achievement.'



People who prefer Messi tend to be more liberal



Those who favour Ronaldo tend to be more conservative



Scientists from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore surveyed more than 10,000 people across 26 countries about their favourite footballer

Ronaldo and Messi – who are currently competing at the World Cup for Portugal and Argentina, respectively – are hugely popular around the world.

However, until now, the link between player preference and political ideology has remained unclear.

To get to the bottom of it, the researchers surveyed 10,661 people across 26 countries about which player they prefer, and their political leanings.

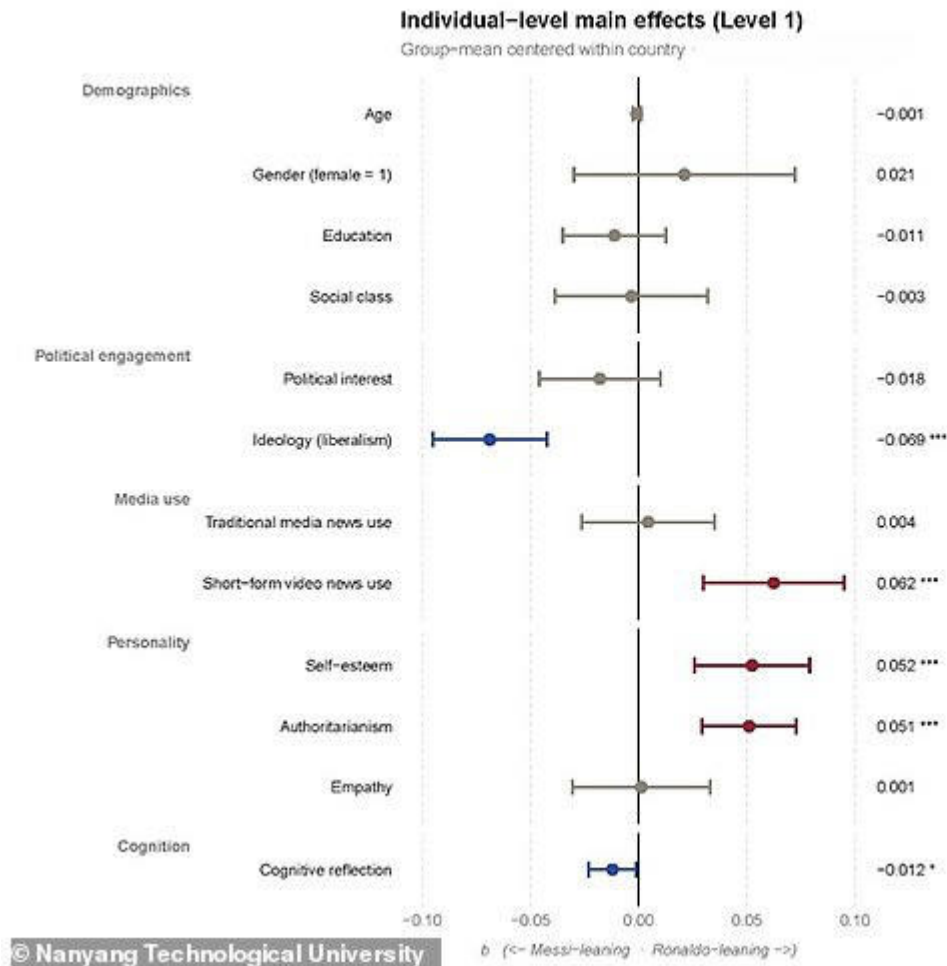
Overall, people in 11 countries rated Ronaldo more favourably on average, compared to people in eight countries for Messi.

The remaining seven countries showed no statistically clear preference between the two players.

Meanwhile, across the 26 countries, people who identified as more liberal tended to favour Messi, while those who identified as more conservative tended to favour Ronaldo.

This link is strongest among younger people, and weakens 'substantially' in older adulthood, according to the experts.

In addition, the researchers found links between player preference and self-esteem and media habits.



Respondents who obtained more of their news from TikTok and Instagram and had higher self-esteem tended to favour Ronaldo

Messi or Ronaldo? Player preferences by country

Prefer Ronaldo

1. Indonesia
2. Turkey
3. Mexico
4. Egypt
5. Malaysia
6. Portugal

7. Singapore
8. China
9. France
10. India
11. Nigeria

Prefer Messi

1. South Korea
2. Argentina
3. Finland
4. Spain
5. UK
6. Norway
7. US
8. Canada

No preference

1. Netherlands
2. Germany
3. Australia
4. Brazil
5. Philippines
6. Japan
7. South Africa

Respondents who obtained more of their news from TikTok and Instagram tended to favour Ronaldo.

According to the researchers, this may be linked to the footballer's strong presence on these platforms, where users may encounter his carefully cultivated public persona more frequently.

Participants with higher self-esteem were also more likely to favour Ronaldo.

Dr Saifuddin explained: 'People may want to present themselves as modest, but that does not mean they identify most strongly with modest public figures. Those with higher self-esteem may instead gravitate towards someone who embodies excellence, confidence and achievement – qualities they may see reflected in themselves.'

The researchers now plan to carry out further research to understand these links further.

The news comes shortly after a supercomputer revealed which nations are most likely to take home the trophy at the World Cup.

Built by scientists at the University of Liverpool, the supercomputer ran 1,000 simulations to predict every nation's chance of winning the tournament.

According to the results, [Spain](#) is most likely to win, with its probability of glory at 26.1 per cent.

England is next on the list (17 per cent), ahead of [France](#) (13.5 per cent), Argentina (12.4 per cent), and Portugal (10.6 per cent).

'Whilst our model agrees with the bookmakers in making Spain the favourites, Norway emerge as the standout dark horse, with a 3.6% chance of winning the trophy across our simulations,' said Dr Benjamin Holmes.

What's more, the supercomputer has also predicted who will claim the coveted Golden Boot.

It suggests that it will be Norway's [Erling Haaland](#) or Spain's Mikel Oyarzabal, who are both predicted to score 5.2 goals across the tournament.