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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARAFMS/v13-i2/17715> DOI:10.6007/IJARAFMS /v13-i2/17715

Received: 18 April 2023, **Revised:** 21 May 2023, **Accepted:** 12 June 2023

Published Online: 24 June 2023

In-Text Citation: (Kindi & Bayoumi, 2023)

To Cite this Article: Kindi, F. S. Al, & Bayoumi, K. A. (2023). Reasons for the Growing Phenomenon of Violence in Stadiums in the UAE. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting Finance and Management Sciences*, 13(2), 530–539.

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Vol. 13, No. 2, 2023, Pg. 530 - 539

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Reasons for the Growing Phenomenon of Violence in Stadiums in the UAE

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Abstract

The research aims to identify the reasons for the growing phenomenon of violence in stadiums in the United Arab Emirates to take the necessary measures to curb violent actions. As for the problem of the study, it is represented in the several reasons that cause football hooliganism in stadiums in the United Arab Emirates. The study uses many approaches to highlight the problem of the study, among them are the descriptive and analytical approach and the inductive approach to clarify some of the measures concerned with the research problem. The study reached several results, the most important of which is that there are several reasons that cause hooliganism in football stadiums, the most recurring reason is the players themselves, and that Islamic Sharia and international laws prohibit any kind of violence inside and outside football stadiums. The study reached several recommendations, the most important of which is that the UAE government shall pass more laws that take into consideration the emerging problems and reasons for football hooliganism. It also recommended the need to increase people awareness about football hooliganism in several possible ways. In addition, it recommended that football players, as the main reason for hooliganism, shall pass a preparatory course before the match, in which they learn how to deal with other players and fans.

Keywords: Football, Hooliganism, Sport, Stadium, United Arab Emirates

Introduction

Violence is one of the features and characteristics of human nature until it has become a specific social phenomenon. It evolved and exceeded its limits as a phenomenon over time. From this perspective, the spread of violence has become a common behaviour in all societies to be a threat to the human lives, money and freedom of individuals. Sport is a way to unite people, spread peace, bring people closer together and abandon racism. However, it can deviate from its goals and become a tool to achieve other goals, whether from people inside or outside the sport's environment (Bralley, 2007. P. 53).

Sport, as an important socio-cultural phenomenon, fascinates many people at times. Violence and bad behaviour in sports are falsely understood as an effective way to achieve victory (Al-Araj, 2014. P 1).

Islam prohibits all kinds of illegal violence that relates to the individual, family, society, or the state. Violence is an unjust assault, oppression, intimidation, or any other practice that is considered a sin and is punished by Allah. Allah said “Because of that, we decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors” (Surah Al-Ma’idah, 32). This verse shows that the sanctity of blood transcends all religions or other frameworks. Islamic texts contain strong warnings against bloodshed, belittling life and aiding in crime, even half the word of the Prophet, may Allah’s prayers and peace be upon him, said: “The extinction of the whole world is less significant before Allah than killing a Muslim man” (Bukhari: 1423-2002). This demonstrates how Islam strives to preserve people’s lives and enhance their conditions.

A study by Ramazanoglu (2013), indicates a high number of individuals who involve in violent behaviour during interactions in protests and football events respectively, the following chart illustrates this:

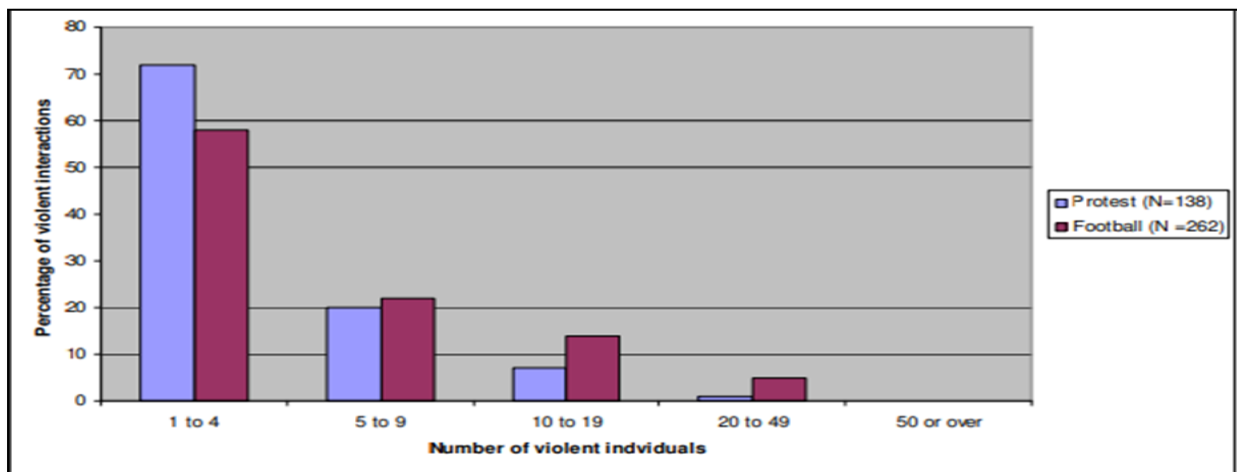


Figure 1. Shows the Number of Violent of Individuals.

The UAE strives to achieve the objectives of its vision for development, including maintaining human rights such as the right of freedom in a safe environment, especially that the UAE welcomes people from different cultures and nationalities to live there. Therefore, it is highly important that the policies in this country be taken into consideration to reach the best outcomes and to positively influence other countries around the world by the development and progress made by the UAE government. This makes it essential for this country to enhance criminal protection for all people against football hooliganism, especially that it is an Islamic country and Islam supports human rights and calls for its protection against any violation. Therefore, this research is theoretically and practically important for the discussion of this issue and other related issues and topics.

This research deals with a very sensitive, yet rarely analysed topic not only to the UAE, but also in all countries around the world, especially that it links football games, it’s reasons, and UAE law, all of which are prominent topics in the 21st century. Publishing this research will enrich the data of the field and will pave the way for more researchers to take the variables of this study into their consideration. This study also has a practical importance as

it is expected to affect the behaviour and practices of the UAE government and its people who read or discuss it.

Literature Review

Pedzisai et al (2019) study entitled "Football Spectator Violence During Matches at the Zimbabwe Football Association Division One Level in Gweru District" aimed to investigate spectators' violence among football spectators in the Gweru region in Zimbabwe. The study was conducted in the Gweru region in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. The study relied on a quantitative research method using a descriptive survey design and using questionnaires to collect data from twenty football players. The first is from four first-class football clubs in Gweru, twenty spectators, six football referees, and four coaches. The researcher used a simple random sampling method (goldfish bowl procedure) to select twenty players and six referees. A purposive sampling method was used to select the twenty-four football spectators' coaches, the study analysed the data statistically using simple frequency tables. The study found that spectators' violence during football matches at the first-class level in Gweru is mainly caused by hooliganism, controversial refereeing, lack of fair play by football players, match results, club rivalry and ecstasy. The study showed that factors such as the reputation sought by spectators, and the report of violence by the media to be secondary contributors to spectator violence during football matches in Gweru district. The police of the Republic of Zimbabwe, for example, strived to enhance security during these violent matches by tightening security measures in football matches through comprehensively searching for dangerous weapons and alcohol at the entry points of stadiums. Therefore, study consumer behaviour is significant for this process (Alsharif et al., 2021a; 2021b; 2022; 2023). Also, it is significant to study the emotional of individuals (Ahmed et al., 2021a; 2021b; 2022, 2023a; 2023b). The researcher suggested that ZIFA and PSL educate all football clubs about the negative effects of violence and punish the violating teams Strongly. The researcher also suggested that sponsors include money in their sponsorship packages for the purposes of educating fans about violence.

Muqran (2020) argued that the reason for this is the player himself, or may be the sport fans, or may be other reasons such as the desire to win. Some consequences of the decisions of the referees may be multiplied by the reactions of the fans, leading to unexpected results for society. The phenomenon of violence in the field is not a product of today, but rather a daily obsolescence. Violence is the energy that young people shall direct, shape, and educate. With this framework, guidance, and many social and psychological issues, young people find no space for energy except football matches as an outlet to unleash this energy in the form of violence. In a report presented by Rand Europe (Strang and Lucy, 2018. P 3) on the factors that may lead to violent and antisocial behaviours of fans, the data indicated that alcohol may contribute to such behaviours, although the relationship between alcohol and hooliganism is not clear.

Mountjoy & other (2016) study entitled "Worldwide Olympic Committee agreement explanation: badgering and misuse (non-coincidental savagery) in sport" aimed to identify violence, harassment, and abuse in sports. The researcher confirmed that there are negative effects on health, well-being, and safety of athletes due to non-accidental violence through harassment, abuse, and all forms of non-accidental violence against athletes. The researcher asserted that these issues represent a blind spot for many sports organizations through fear of reputational damage, ignorance, silence or complicity.

The study documents the 2007 International Olympic Committee Consensus Statement on Harassment and Sexual Abuse in Sport. The statement provides additional evidence of several other types of harassment, psychological and physical abuse, and neglect. The researcher emphasized that all ages and types of athletes are vulnerable to these problems, and that psychological abuse is at the core of all forms.

A study by Pikora (2012) entitled "Islam and the phenomenon of violence" argued that most of the texts of Islamic law support the prevention and banishment of all kinds of harm, whether material or moral. This is represented in the harm that befalls a person in himself, his honor, his money, or other matters that are respected by Sharia. This study asserted that a person has the right to defend himself, his honour, and his money whenever he is able to do so. Islam rejects violence directed without a legitimate right and does not approve assaulting others. Violence has been defined as: lack of kindness, it is the rebuke, censure, and blame. It is also a human behaviour that is intertwined with cruelty, oppression, and aggression. Violence is also defined politically as: deliberate civil disobedience to the law for religious, moral, or political reasons. The rulings of Islam call for brotherhood, compassion, and the use of good words in persuasion of others without resorting to force, except in special cases that are almost the last in the record of penalties. Jurists defined the types of aggression, how to confront and control them, and the mechanisms of dealing with them. The purpose of Islam is to ward off harm from oneself or from others, not to respond with violence, because it generates grudges, vengeance, and woes.

Methodology

Based on the nature of the study, the type of research is social, it is based on the study of a social phenomenon. The researcher used the analytical descriptive approach, and therefore follows the following steps: analysis and interpretation of a social case, through which criticism will be made by delving into the aspects that deal with the phenomenon through the pros, cons, and shortcomings that prevail in communities. It also studies the effectiveness and efficiency of the remedies.

Three questionnaires will be designed and prepared, the first questionnaire is directed towards players, administrative managers, technical directors. The second questionnaire is directed towards referees and doctors specializing in physical and sport education. The third questionnaire addresses the public, for the purpose of implementing the study and developing it with the help of previous literature.

The analytical descriptive approach is based on careful monitoring and follow-up of a specific phenomenon or event in a quantitative or qualitative way in a specific period of time or several periods in order to identify the content and details of the phenomenon or event and to reach results and generalizations that help in understanding and developing reality. (Elayan, 2001: 48). The descriptive approach is suitable for all types of studies, such as social studies, field studies, case studies, and other various studies. It enables the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data of similar studies (BTS Academy, 2020).

The study population is all the elements and individuals subject to the problem of the study, as the research community is from all football fields in the United Arab Emirates. A sample will be selected according to the subject of the study, and it will include players, administrative managers, technical managers, fans, referees, specialized doctors in physical and sport education.

Result and Discussion***Historical Overview of sport hooliganism***

There were many famous incidents of hooliganism in stadiums around the world. For example, the Protestant People's Action group of Glasgow Rangers, who developed animosity with the fans of their rivals Celtic, who were themselves Catholic, and the two teams fought frequently in the streets before and after the two teams played. In 1985, UEFA Cup Final between Liverpool and Juventus at Heysel Stadium in Brussels, 39 fans were killed, including 38 Italians and Belgians, in a stampede of angry Liverpool fans and other fans. More than 400 people were injured, causing the stadium wall to collapse. In a match between Nepal and in Bangladesh, a riot broke out among the masses, which led to 93 deaths and 100 injuries. The same thing was repeated in October 1996 (Mirror, 2012).

In April 1989, in a match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest in the FA Cup, 96 people died in massive riots. In 1995, a major crisis occurred between England and Belgium due to riots in one of the Belgian stadiums, where the English government accused the Belgian security forces of arbitrarily attacking their fans in the match that brought together Borussia Dortmund of England and Club Brugge of Belgium (Tikkanem, 2022). In February 1995, the Italian fans mourned the stabbing of one of the fans with a knife during a quarrel between fans of the Genoa team and Milan, which led to his immediate death, and he was buried in a large funeral procession. Football matches were suspended for a week in mourning across Italy (Howler, 2017).

In 1999, it was a great shock to the Tunisian public, following the fall of (10) deaths in the semi-finals of the cup that took place between Esperance and the Olympic team of Beji, and the Accra stadium accident in 2000 in a match between the Tunisian Esperance and the Ghanaian team, in which 6 people were killed, and the Esperance players were brutally attacked (Hisham, 2018. P 239).

In the riots that followed a match between Yugoslavia and Switzerland in 2001, after the Yugoslav fans broke the stadium stands after the Swiss goal, the European Union then imposed a fine of (7,500) euros on them. In Africa, specifically in a match between Malawi and Cote d'Ivoire, 12 people were killed during the match in the World Cup qualifiers (Fallon, 2009). Likewise, there is the incident of the friendly football match between the Algerian team and the French team in Paris in 2001, which was stopped by the referee before its official date after a violation by the supporters of the visiting team (Osoken, 2015. P. 11). Table 1 shows the percentage of injuries by Age.

Table 1

The Percentage of Injuries by Age.

Percent of injuries by age						
Year	Injuries	0-4	4-14	15-24	25-64	65 and over
2007	455,193	0.3	47.1	42.4	10.1	0.1
2009	451,961	0.4	47.5	41.7	10.4	0.1
2010	489,676	0.3	49.2	40.7	9.7	0.1
2012	466,492	0.2	51.6	38.9	9.2	0.1
2013	420,581	0.3	51.2	39.5	8.9	0.1
2014	396,457	0.4	50.6	40.0	8.9	0.1
2015	399,873	0.2	51.2	39.6	8.8	0.1
2017	341,150	0.3	50.3	39.9	9.4	0.1
2019	292,306	0.1	51.0	40.0	8.6	0.2

Sport hooliganism from a legal perspective

Several laws have been passed to punish thugs and acts of violence, not to mention that these criminal acts are unacceptable sport, religious and social behaviors that destroy the competitive values of education and honor and destroy the sport that is provided for the fun of the individuals (Alzyoud, 2014. P 6). It also leads to the destruction of the honorable educational and competitive values that sport works to impart to the individual (Al-Lawzi 2019. p. 29). Therefore, many countries have developed laws and legislations to limit and eliminate violence and intolerance between clubs and the fans and all the elements that relate to the game of football. Sport legislation works in various countries of the world to refine the behavior of individuals and is based on regulating sports activity in order to guarantee the rights and duties of all elements of the football game. Legislation is the immune shield for legal texts, rules, and regulations that govern the game away from randomness, confusion, and chaos.

Therefore, there is no doubt that without sport legislation, the match becomes chaos and lacks discipline. In addition, force and power will be used in all sport activities. This means that football games will not be interesting. This is because football is one of the sports that has become the focus of everyone's attention, attracted people's eyes, and gained a popular status in the hearts of the masses who follow this game (Zawaq, et al. 2019).

Several articles in the laws that are related to the organization and development of sport activities strive for the preparation and highlighting of the most important programs, goals, and conditions for their implementation, as they relate to physical and sport education, school, university and military sports. Thus, visions dealing with the issue of sports violence differ from a psychological, social and legal point of view, but they all agree that violence in sports circles has become a topic that shall be researched to highlight its most important causes and identify positive solutions to prevent this violence and control the behaviour of the players (Zakaria 2018. p. 70).

Reasons for the growth of the phenomenon of violence

The reasons for the growth of the phenomenon of violence varied, as the highest cause was the player with a percentage of 35% of the total causes, then followed by the sensitivity of the matches as well as the pressure of the matches at an equal percentage of 20%. The third reason is the technological development and openness at a percentage of 10%, followed by other reasons, all of which at a percentage of 3%. These reasons are the entry of behaviours into society, challenges between players, overcharging, financial allocation, and the media.

This indicates that the main reason for the growth of violence is attributed to the players themselves, and also indicates that the sensitivity and pressure associated with matches contribute to the growth of violence. Sensitivity refers to the emotional intensity or importance of matches, while pressure stems from various factors such as high stakes, expectations, or rivalry.

It also suggests that technological development and increased openness may be contributing factors. Technological development includes aspects such as social media, online platforms, or video analysis, while openness refers to increased access or exposure to sporting events.

The "entry of behaviour into society" refers to the impact of certain behaviours or attitudes that are becoming more prevalent in society, thus affecting the sporting environment.

"Challenges between players" refers to instances where players engage in confrontations or aggressive behaviour towards each other, potentially fuelled by rivalry or interpersonal conflicts.

"Overcharging" refers to situations where players or teams display excessive aggression or intensity, possibly due to factors such as emotional reactions or a desire to win at any cost.

Financial allocation indicates that issues related to financial incentives, distribution, or disparities can contribute to an environment that encourages violence or immoral behaviour.

"Media" refers to the role played by media coverage, such as sensationalism, biased reporting, or highlighting controversial events that may influence the perception and behaviour of players and fans alike.

Table 2

Reasons for the growth of violence in football matches.

Reason	Percentage
Players	35%
Sensitivity	20%
Pressure	20%
Technological development and openness	10%
Other reasons	15%
Total	100%

This table shows the percentage of each reason. However, this does mean that these are the only reasons. Rather, there are other reasons that cannot be included here as this research is concerned with the most popular reasons for violence in football matches.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research is hoped to be a part of taking more steps to reduce sport violence in the UAE by identifying the original sport objectives and highlighting the mechanisms for treating sport violence. It sheds a light on the crime of violence against people and identifies security and preventive measures to secure stadiums. This study reached several results, including:

1. There are several reasons that cause hooliganism in football stadiums, the most recurring reason is the players themselves.
2. Islamic Sharia and international laws prohibit any kind of violence inside and outside football stadiums.
3. UAE government is keen to preserve stability and eliminate violence.

This study reached several recommendations, including:

1. The UAE government shall pass more laws that take into consideration the emerging problems and reasons for football hooliganism.
2. There is a persistent need to increase people awareness about football hooliganism in several possible ways.
3. Football players, as the main reason for hooliganism, shall pass a preparatory course before the match, in which they learn how to deal with other players and fans.

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