

Social Responsibility of Media in Combating the Phenomenon of Sports Fanaticism and Promoting Sportsmanship: A Critical Perspective

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Abstract

This study examines the social responsibility of the media in combating sports fanaticism and promoting sportsmanship, focusing on its role in shaping public awareness. Football, as a globally popular sport, attracts passionate fans, whose safety and security are crucial. The research highlights that sports fanaticism poses a threat to societal security. While media can play an essential role in addressing this issue, it can also contribute to spreading fanaticism. The study underscores the need for regulations on media coverage and emphasizes the importance of raising awareness about the media's role in promoting socialization and education.

Keywords: Sports, Media, Sports Fanaticism, Sportsmanship

Le rôle des médias dans la lutte contre le fanatisme sportif et la promotion de l'esprit sportif : une analyse critique

Résumé

Cette étude examine la responsabilité sociale des médias dans la lutte contre le fanatisme sportif et la promotion de l'esprit sportif, en se concentrant sur leur rôle dans la formation de la conscience publique. Le football, en tant que sport populaire à l'échelle mondiale, attire des fans passionnés, dont la sécurité est primordiale. La recherche souligne que le fanatisme sportif constitue une menace pour la sécurité sociétale. Bien que les médias puissent jouer un rôle essentiel dans la résolution de ce problème, ils peuvent également contribuer à la propagation du fanatisme. L'étude met en avant la nécessité de réglementer la couverture médiatique et insiste sur l'importance de sensibiliser au rôle des médias dans la promotion de la socialisation et de l'éducation.

Mots-clés : Sport, Médias, Fanatisme sportif, Esprit sportif.

Introduction

Sports, in all its forms, is currently one of the most prominent fields that captures the interest of people worldwide, serving as an outlet for individuals amidst the pressures of life. Football, in particular, stands out as one of the most popular sports globally, whether at the level of national teams or local clubs, with fans supporting it in various ways, especially through the crowd support in stadiums. This necessitates the protection of fans and the provision of security in these venues, making this issue a priority for countries and security agencies responsible for overseeing sporting events.

Concerns and fears increase in this context, especially if the attachment of fans to their clubs intensifies and transforms into sports fanaticism, violence, and riots, which can lead to material and human losses during sporting encounters. This transformation can turn sports from a blessing into a curse for citizens. Moreover, media in all its forms also pays significant attention to sports, particularly football, due to its popularity and widespread appeal. This results in media coverage that is comparatively more extensive than for other topics, especially during major sporting events.

Historically, media has been viewed as a double-edged sword in the hands of those who own and manage it, as it can contribute to building societies through awareness and peaceful socialization of individuals, enabling them to distinguish between what is beneficial and what is harmful.

The significance of this research paper lies in addressing the social responsibility of media and its role in combating sports fanaticism and promoting sportsmanship. This topic is crucial in the field of sports, as media has become a powerful tool that influences the formation of public awareness and directs their behaviors. Furthermore, this paper aims to provide a critical understanding of the role of media in shaping sports perceptions and fulfilling its responsibilities in delivering content that fosters constructive dialogue and mutual respect based on sportsmanship, contributing to the creation of a more positive and less tense sporting environment.

From this perspective, we raise the following question: How can media be a double-edged sword between promoting sports fanaticism and combating it (promoting sportsmanship) in society?

This study presents three main hypotheses. First, media coverage of sports is likely to have a direct impact on fan behaviors, as positive coverage can enhance sportsmanship and reduce fanaticism, while negative or emotionally charged coverage may exacerbate the

phenomenon of sports fanaticism. Second, an increase in sports fanaticism among fans could lead to a rise in violence and riots in stadiums, posing a threat to community safety, thus requiring a response from the state and security agencies to ensure public safety. Finally, the media may play an effective role in shaping fans' awareness of the importance of sportsmanship and combating fanaticism, thereby enhancing their ability to guide social behaviors towards values of respect and mutual understanding in the sports field.

1- Methods

The method used in the text appears to be a literature review. This approach involves synthesizing and summarizing existing studies, reports, and scholarly articles on a topic to provide an overview of the current knowledge and perspectives within a field. Here, the focus is on analyzing various dimensions of sports as a soft power in society, the phenomenon of sports fanaticism, its impact on community security and unity, the influence of sensationalism in the media on fanaticism, and the educational role of media in promoting sportsmanship.

Through referencing and discussing previous research, this section develops a comprehensive understanding of sports' socio-economic, cultural, and psychological effects, as well as the media's role in either mitigating or exacerbating fanaticism. The method is mainly descriptive and analytical, aimed at synthesizing findings to outline key factors and consequences associated with sports as a societal influence.

2- Results

2.1. The Importance of Sports as a Soft Power in Society

Studies and literature consistently highlight the significance of sports diversity, encompassing sectors such as health, education, tourism, and the economy. Developed countries have placed great importance on the development of this sector, as it is considered a significant source of revenue for some nations due to the earnings, profits, and taxes imposed on clubs and players. Additionally, the sports market includes various fields such as the production of clothing and equipment, sponsorship, revenues from sporting events, media rights, and advertising that invest in broadcasting sports events. "All of this makes countries rely on sports to improve the economy and provide the necessary resources to enhance and develop athletes" (W. Mazen 2020).

Sports are considered one of the most important means to achieve social maturity and instill a sense of community among individuals, as their fields and activities provide opportunities for acquaintance, brotherhood, and healthy competition. Additionally, their

systems and laws contribute to establishing social foundations and values, such as working for the common good, respecting others, and the ability to control emotions during high-stakes sporting situations. Furthermore, sports are a social phenomenon that occupies a significant space in the media and represent a social organization whose effects intersect with political, economic, and cultural phenomena (Mahmoud, 2020, p. 624).

Given its role in engaging youth and preventing negative behaviors, official institutions in the fields of crime prevention and treatment have focused on the positive impact of sports in protecting youth from drugs and crime. The issue of harmful behaviors, especially among young people, has become one of the biggest challenges facing countries worldwide for years. “The effects of these harmful behaviors on societies are evident through their complexities and the human behaviors associated with them” (R. Bilal, 2017).

Since the emergence of sports as an organized human activity, the media has become one of the most important means relied upon by sports in its historical journey filled with achievements, championships, and talents. Consequently, the media has transformed into a crucial link in the chain of sports communication in many countries around the world. This has caused the relationship between sports and the media to gain extensive dimensions of connection and interaction, as it is impossible to follow sporting events without media coverage. Thus, “the relationship between sports events and the media has become prominent in the global sports narrative” (W. M. Shaheen 2017, p. 35).

2.2. Sports Fanaticism and Its Impact on Community Security and Unity

Fanaticism represents a global phenomenon in sports, particularly in football, which has transformed in recent years from just a game into one of the most widely broadcast television programs worldwide. “The history of the game is filled with incidents that indicate the occurrence of violence and riots resulting from fan fanaticism, prompting researchers in social and psychological sciences to focus on the relationship between national identity and support for football, alongside the impact of ethnic identity politics in reinforcing this phenomenon” (S. S. Ibrahim 2021).

This social phenomenon has notably emerged since football gained its popularity. In its essence, sports fanaticism refers to the extremism of opinions in favor of a particular sports club or a group of clubs against another club from the same country or region. “This fanaticism is often accompanied by abuse, mockery, and ridicule, in addition to baseless accusations and insults” (M. Nabil & Q. Salem 2022, p. 118).

It is also defined as an individual's sense of belonging and support for a particular sports team, along with a clear bias towards that team, characterized by an antagonistic attitude towards the officials and fans of other teams, emotional instability, relative rigidity towards others, and forming prejudgments about their own team and other teams without justification. This often leads to a difficulty in changing one's opinions and ideas, as well as a tendency to constantly justify their team's mistakes in the face of intense competition. The feeling of defeat can lead to frustration, which for "some transforms into a form of sports fanaticism resulting from the collective excitement in sports venues" (S. M. Mahmoud 2020, p. 618).

The causes of sports fanaticism are often linked to several factors, including a lack of awareness and sports culture, as well as an inadequate understanding of the true meaning of fair competition. Additionally, the individual's national identity plays a role in explicitly or implicitly influencing their behavior, which shapes their biased attitudes. Individuals tend to lean towards extremism in their opinions and prefer black-and-white solutions, which further intensifies their fanaticism. They are also quickly influenced by unconstructive media messages from biased commentators, which reinforces this fanaticism. Furthermore, selfishness and self-love contribute to this fanaticism, leading to a rejection of criticism and the opinions of others. Finally, "rapid social changes and the resulting disruptions in values and social systems drive individuals towards fanaticism as a way to cope with anxiety" (A. M. Hafez 2015, pp. 243-244).

Several parties can be associated with the phenomenon of sports fanaticism in society, including: fans, whose behaviors are considered one of the main causes that provoke fanaticism. Administrators and players also play a role in this context, as management statements and their actions during instances of victory or defeat contribute to stirring up fanaticism and disputes among fans. Additionally, referees contribute to increasing fanaticism among fans through the incorrect decisions they make. Finally, "media outlets, whether visual or audio, exacerbate the issue of fanaticism through their harsh coverage of sports clubs" (A. Murtada 2021, p. 2165).

Since the phenomenon of sports fanaticism arises from psychological, social, economic, and cultural factors, it has multiple negative impacts. These effects include unethical practices such as foul language and the insult of competing teams, as well as the exacerbation of conflicts, resulting in riots and violence in stadiums and streets, which negatively affects the safety of society.

Socially, sports fanaticism poses a significant danger to individuals and society, as it creates a disruption that hinders the community from performing its essential social, educational, and cultural functions. The spread of this unacceptable behavior, which contradicts

the rules of social control and moral values, leads to the emergence of unhealthy patterns of relationships among individuals. Additionally, “the consequences of fanaticism have serious implications for both social and security aspects, as well as its health effects” (R. A. Hegazy 2018, p.200).

Moreover, sports fanaticism causes verbal and moral harm to individuals and sports organizations, creating a state of animosity between different parties. This negatively affects the discussion of sports issues and events, where controversy prevails, reflecting the relationship between sports entities.

2.3. Sensationalism in Media and the Development of Sports Fanaticism in Society

The phenomenon of sports fanaticism is closely linked to the media. It experienced rapid development during the era of traditional media when fanaticism was limited. However, it began to rise with the advent of radio and television broadcasting, and significantly increased with the emergence of satellite broadcasting and the proliferation of sports channels. “The advent of the Internet has also transformed the media landscape into a multi-directional platform, contributing to the spread of fanaticism” (R. A. Hegazy 2018, p. 215).

With television networks relying on sports content to generate revenue, sports programs have provided all means of attraction to engage audiences and advertisers. Sports media has been accused of becoming a profit-driven entity that prioritizes advertisements over quality content, especially by featuring football celebrities who lack adequate media training. This often leads to inciting fans before and after matches through irresponsible media discourse and escalating crises among club supporters (S. S. Ibrahim 2021).

Media plays an indirect role in spreading a culture of fanaticism among fans by highlighting negative behaviors of players that violate the rules of the game, which in turn can lead to violent actions from the crowd. Moreover, media outlets frequently showcase these incidents, impacting younger players and encouraging them to imitate inappropriate behaviors by watching interviews, reading newspapers and magazines, or even through auditory descriptions of aggressive conduct (A. Murtada 2021, p. 2159).

Recently, criticism has been directed at sports media for deviating from its fundamental role and becoming a major driver of fanaticism and tension. Biased media personnel and sensationalist websites contribute to the reinforcement of this phenomenon, negatively impacting audiences, particularly the youth. Moreover, sports programs often exaggerate excitement and accusations, while social media platforms and YouTube channels have intensified football-related discord (S. S. Ibrahim 2021).

With the rise of the internet, the phenomenon of fanaticism has transitioned into the digital realm, where various forms of fanaticism are promoted by some sports websites. These manifestations can be summarized as follows: promoting ideas that encourage fanaticism through these websites, and focusing on personalities that incite fanaticism, leading to intense reactions that may escalate to violence.

Other manifestations include superficial coverage of events, which can sometimes become provocative with unfounded accusations. Additionally, the promotional aspect often overshadows the objective dimension, lacking accurate information.

It is also noted that there is extensive news coverage of events that reflect specific fanatical tendencies, providing them with broad media exposure, as well as a non-objective approach to issues through bias toward one sports entity over another.

Finally, media hype among audiences before and during sports events contributes to fanaticism. Some websites focus on highlighting tensions between clubs and fans, creating a readiness among certain individuals to embrace fanaticism, reject others, and foster hatred, which leads to the acceptance of extremist ideas and behaviors in sports (S. M. Mahmoud 2020, pp. 625-626).

2.4. The educational role assigned to the media in confronting fanatical behavior and promoting sportsmanship

Sports have come to reflect the economic, social, cultural, and moral aspects of society at certain historical stages. It has also become a complex and multifaceted activity in all countries around the world. Regarding the role of sports media, there is a consensus on its significant impact on the audience, as it addresses a wide segment of people. Therefore, sports media should play an important role in reducing violence and fanaticism among fans in the sports environment (A. Murtada 2021, p. 2159).

Additionally, sports media plays a crucial role in promoting sportsmanship, as it can redirect the sports community towards the right approach through purposeful programs and constructive criticism. Furthermore, it is essential to discuss sports-related problems and find solutions while emphasizing that sports involve both winning and losing and accepting the outcomes. There should also be efforts to improve performance according to regulations and laws, along with correcting inappropriate behaviors associated with fanatical behavior in an educational manner (S. S. Ibrahim 2021).

Media must work to promote sportsmanship, as it is one of the most important characteristics of refined sports that contributes to its elevation. Sports should be a means of

enjoyment, not fanaticism. Furthermore, sports should convey a message of love that unites nations. The spirit of sportsmanship requires athletes to show resilience and engage with their audience in a positive manner while avoiding insults to others, thus enhancing the enjoyment of the game by making athletes aware of the impact of their behaviors on others (F. A. Ahmed & S. S. Dawood 2021, p. 01).

Moreover, the responsibilities of sports media are no longer limited to professional and social duties; they have expanded to include security responsibilities as well. Media seeks to address riots and crimes in sports competitions. Ensuring security in stadiums is a collective responsibility that requires joint efforts between the media and security institutions. When media is used effectively, it helps promote a culture of fair play and reduce disturbances (W. M. Shaheen 2017, p. 36).

With the increasing demands to reject intolerance in alignment with what international organizations and treaties advocate for combating all forms of intolerance, including sports intolerance, a number of regulations must be adhered to. First, the issue of intolerance should be reconsidered so that it is not viewed merely as a problem of violence and riots in stadiums, but rather addressed through the concerted efforts of all state institutions (S. S. Ibrahim 2021).

Second, adherence to the media ethical charter must be emphasized, and its practical implementation activated through a set of regulations that define media performance standards and impose penalties on violators, whether they are journalists, satellite channels, or websites.

Third, there should be a reorganization of sports media work to be limited to specialists, alongside the return of football stars as analysts and guests, ensuring adherence to professional standards, including objectivity and neutrality, and avoiding the display of allegiance to one club over another, except for private channels.

Finally, it is essential to correct sports systems to ensure the presence of strong federations capable of organizing local competitions and planning for the future of sports in Egypt. Young people should be directed towards healthy sports encouragement, enhancing the concept of sportsmanship and fair competition among clubs, and promoting a spirit of tolerance among fans.

3. Discussion

Sports are influential in several areas such as health, education, tourism, and the economy. They contribute to improving the national economy through revenues and taxes, provide job opportunities, and help develop social values such as respect, discipline, and emotional control.

Sports also play an important role in preventing crime and drug use among youth, offering them a positive alternative.

Sports fanaticism, especially in football, is a global phenomenon that leads to violence, riots, and social unrest. This extremism is reflected in excessive loyalty to a particular team and hostility towards rival teams, creating social tensions that threaten community security. This behavior exacerbates violence and arguments between fans, damaging social relationships and contributing to escalating conflicts.

The media plays a significant role in enhancing the phenomenon of sports fanaticism through sensational and exaggerated coverage of matches and conflicts between teams. With the spread of television channels and the internet, this phenomenon has noticeably increased, as the media contributes to escalating violence among fans by focusing on exciting events and unconstructive arguments.

The media bears a significant responsibility in educating the public about sportsmanship through purposeful programs and constructive criticism. Media outlets should promote values of fair competition and mutual respect, and work to minimize the effects of sports fanaticism. Collaboration between the media, security, and sports institutions is essential to ensure the safety of fans and athletes.

Despite the importance of sports in society, the media can either enhance or reduce the phenomenon of sports fanaticism. The media must adopt a responsible approach that promotes sportsmanship, encourages social unity, and reduces violence and extremism. Through this role, the media can help make sports a positive force that enhances social cohesion and constructive change.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we find that the phenomenon of sports intolerance represents a significant issue with serious implications for the security and stability of society. Despite the crucial role of media in rejecting and confronting this phenomenon and limiting its spread among fans, these media outlets can also become a dangerous tool for disseminating and fostering intolerance within the community. This occurs when their messages are employed to create sensationalism and exaggeration to increase viewership ratings. Therefore, it is essential for media authorities in any country to enact laws, regulations, and ethical charters that govern the media coverage of sports-related topics, especially concerning sports intolerance. There is a

pressing need to enhance awareness of the importance of media as a means for socialization and proper education in addressing this issue.

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