

## Building Effective Mechanisms to Reduce Violence in Football Stadiums in the UAE

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### Abstract

The research aims to identify effective mechanisms to reduce violence in football stadiums in the United Arab Emirates through effective legal and administrative mechanisms and to take the necessary measures to curb violent actions that include assault on players, fireworks, riots, setting fire, and aggressive chants. As for the problem of the study, it is represented in the great role played by the United Arab Emirates in building an effective legal and administrative mechanism to reduce sports hooliganism in football stadiums through the establishment of many different mechanisms based on the desire to control the state of sports violence. 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 are: The United Arab Emirates is working hard to combat sports violence in football stadiums by establishing many mechanisms that effectively limit it, the results of which have been clearly evident. The study also recommended the spread of sport awareness, as it plays a role in the upbringing process from several angles and instills sport values and trends intentionally as is the case in the family, through various school sport activities.

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

### Introduction

Sport in general, and football in particular, is a means for the advancement of societies, through which health, material and psychological benefits are gained. So, it has become a social phenomenon that expands from day to day in terms of practice, and attracts a number of enthusiastic followers, including practitioners, fans, and spectators. It is the only outlet through which the countries of the world can compete with the major countries on the political and economic side, to sparkle at the sports level (Kamal & Miliana, 2011).

However, it may change its sport scope for various reasons, as this sport has witnessed many miserable setbacks, and today it has become the concern of most communities as a result of

the events surrounding it after the spread of the phenomenon of violence and its rootedness in sports stadiums, whether these stadiums are foreign or Arab. Several objective and subjective factors and forces, some of which lie in the sporting and promotional atmosphere experienced by the athletes and their fans, while others lie in the social structure, and the cultural and social environment to which the athletes and their fans belong and with which they interact.

Although hooliganism in sport stadiums is a global behaviour whose initiator is not known, it was associated with fans of English teams who are known as (hooligans), in what was known as the British disease. The origin of the word (holiman) is derived from the name of one of the Irish families who lived in London and became famous with its hooliganism and quarrels. The first phenomenon of violence occurred in a football stadium in (Eproxy) Garden in England in 1902, the people of British villages and cities took advantage of local football matches to settle accounts between them regarding the dispute over land ownership. Soon after that, the political factors, ethnic conflicts, and religious affiliations played a role in nurturing the feelings of players and fans alike.

In 1908, the Manchester Court issued a decision banning the practice of football, due to the violence and rioting that accompany those matches. In view of the number of accidents that led to the death of many people in football matches in Britain, the most famous of which was in Wemply (1923); Bolton (1946); Aprox Park (1971). Then the 1975 law was issued regarding security in sport stadiums, and the 1977 law that increased the penalties as an attempt to deter and control hooliganism in sport stadiums and beyond (Al-Khouli, 1996).

Thus, the phenomenon of violence committed in football stadiums or demonstrations has become one of the most dangerous phenomena that threaten the lives of individuals, and sport and non-sport institutions. This phenomenon is closely related to the nature of the human soul that tends to win and refuses to lose. This has become unacceptable in light of the emergence of strange behaviors that deviate from the framework of honest competition. However, it can use neuroscientific tools to study the consumer behaviour (i.e., violence) to identify the region that responsible for violence (Ahmed et al., 2021a; 2021b; Alsharif et al., 2021a; Alsharif et al., 2021). Additionally, neuroscientific tools such as EEG can be beneficial for that issue (Ahmed et al., 2022a; Alsharif et al., 2021b; Ahmed et al., 2022b; Alsharif et al., 2022). In recent times, these phenomena and behaviours exceeded the area of the stadiums, and extended to reach the cities, regions, and roads adjacent to or leading to the stadiums, where these behaviours resulted in vandalism at the level of buildings, public property, cars, setting fires, and attacks on people. It has even reached murder (Sarkouh, 2016).

### **Literature Review**

A study by Salam (2020) entitled: "The role of sport media in combating violence in sport stadiums: preventive measures and treatment mechanisms."

The study aimed to identify the role of sport media in combating the phenomenon of violence in sport stadiums. The study confirmed that sport media in its various means has a clear impact on the thought of society or the public through the huge number of television and radio channels, newspapers and sport magazines that aim to raise the level of sport culture of the public, increase sport awareness, and help the sport audience to absorb and respond to all that is new in this field. The researcher concluded that sport media is the supporter of developing sport awareness among fans and eliminating unsportsmanlike behaviour and violence in sport stadiums.

The study showed that some media professionals deviated from their media role using some phrases that lead to excitement, through the use of some headlines that fuel aggressive style, nervousness and violence in order to ensure an increase in the number of newspaper sales or ensure bias for some teams. Some of them use inappropriate terms such as revenge, brutality and other words charged with the values of hatred. The study recommends the importance of spreading awareness of the necessity of sportsmanship and highlighting the negative aspects of violence, publishing sport news without distortion and stating facts without bias.

A study by Radawi (2019) entitled: "Media, youth, and the phenomenon of violence in Algerian football stadiums."

The study aimed to identify hooliganism in sport stadiums as one of the forms of violence that has begun to spread in Arab and non-Arab societies in recent times. It also aimed to identify the phenomenon of violence and explained it in a detailed description from the psychological and social aspects. The researcher emphasized the role of media and communication in fuelling violence, the association of media and youth with the growing phenomenon of violence in the Algerian sport community, and the contribution to the analysis of the phenomenon of violence in Algerian football stadiums. The importance of the study lies in the fact that it looks at a problem that still poses a threat to Algerian society, as the dangers of the phenomenon of violence in Algerian football stadiums extend to other levels.

The study concluded that the phenomenon of violence in football stadiums is not a new one, but is old and increases day by day, and that violence is an energy among young people who need guidance and education. In the absence of this guidance and the large number of social and psychological problems, young people find nothing but sports as an outlet to unload this energy in a violent form. They use various means and media to communicate this in their communities.

A study by Al-Lawzi (2019) entitled: "The role of sport media in reducing the phenomenon of stadium hooliganism from the viewpoint of students of the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Jordan."

The study aimed to identify the role of sport media in reducing the phenomenon of hooliganism in stadiums from the point of view of students of the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Jordan. The study used the descriptive survey approach. The study sample consisted of 282 male and female students in the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Jordan. To achieve the objectives of the study, the study used the questionnaire to collect data from the study sample. The study reached a number of results, the most important of which is that there is a role for sport media in reducing the phenomenon of hooliganism in stadiums from the point of view of students of the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Jordan.

The study recommended the need to hold seminars and meetings between different groups in the sport field to get acquainted with the causes of the phenomenon of stadium hooliganism and ways to reduce it. It also recommended the need to intensify media efforts in the field of sport in order to program a sports media strategy at the level of the country. The general framework of this strategy aims to reduce the level of media hooliganism, especially in the most popular sports.

A study by Ostrowsky (2018) entitled: "Sports Fans, Alcohol Use, and Violent Behaviour: A Sociological Review."

This study presents several contributions to the social study of sport fans, alcohol abuse and violent behaviour. It aimed to identify the relationship between alcohol abuse and violent behaviour among sport fans. This social problem is global, but it is not fully studied. This study

relies on basic concepts from the literature review of alcohol and violence in wider society. This study found four broad groups of socio-cultural risk factors, namely: event, location, police, and crowd, that were closely associated with violent behaviour among sport fans. The study analysed the possible relationship between alcohol and violence among sports fans and concludes with proposals for future research.

### **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). 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.

### **Discussion**

#### **The Concept of Violence**

According to the sociological perspective, violence is defined as: "Every abuse by hand or tongue, in action or word, falls within the field of confrontation with the other. First, it is a case that is studied separately, but it is not independent of its causes, justifications, and historical paths. Second, it is a complex case in terms of its seriousness, dimensions, and interdependencies. It is a subjective state that has its subject (the ego in the face of the other). There is also a descriptive state that does not accept decline or superficial simplification. It is a case characterized by the characteristics of individual or collective performance based on the reaction or initiative of a person on a choice. Each case is a psychosocial experience of harming the other, but it is an experience that is inseparable from the changes of society and its political culture" (Ghatnab, 2012).

As for violence from a legal point of view, as defined by one of the experts of the General Secretariat of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, it is: the illegal use of means of material and physical coercion in order to achieve personal or social goals. The term violence in the Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice indicates that it is a group of behaviors, whether actual or

by means of threatening, that result in discrimination and destruction of property or harm to individuals. As for the dictionary of legal sciences, it indicates that violence is the use of pressure and force that is illegal or not in accordance with the law and that affects the will of the individual (Bouqern, 2015).

Islamic jurists indicate violence with a similar and close term, that is, “coercion”, which is one of the basic characteristics of the act of violence. Imam al-Rakhsi defined coercion as an act that a person does to others, so that it deprives a person from his choice and causes dissatisfaction. Imam al-Shafi’i defined it by saying that it occurs when a person is subject to and cannot protect himself from a person, whether he is a sultan, a thief, or any other person. In this case, the coerced person fears that if he refuses to accept what the other person commanded, he will be subjected to the painful beating or damage.

Islamic jurists consider that coercion is material when the threat is present and therefore it is considered violence if it causes material (physical) harm to the other. But if it stops at the limit of pressure on the will of the individual, then it is only coercion, and that includes preventing someone from food and drink, whether the intent of the prevention is to kill or torture. If the intention is to kill, the perpetrator shall be killed, otherwise the diya (blood money) shall be paid. This is why violence, from an Islamic perspective, is the use of material means that affect the body of the victim directly and cause him harm. It is also achieved by saying, threat, and prevention that ends with harming the body of the victim (Al-Qaisi, 2012) There are many verses in the Holy Qur’an that forbid assaulting oneself or others and call for honourable morals. The Almighty Allah said: “come not near to Al-Fawahish (shameful sins, illegal sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly, and kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause (according to Islamic law). This He has commanded you that you may understand” (Al-An’am, 151). There is also a call to care for the sanctity of honor and to forbid transgression, the Almighty Allah said, “And those who invoke not any other ilah (god) along with Allah, nor kill such life as Allah has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse and whoever does this shall receive the punishment.” (Al-Furqan, 68).

The Almighty Allah also said: “O you who believe! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former; nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad is it, to insult one’s brother after having Faith [i.e., to call your Muslim brother (a faithful believer) as: “O sinner”, or “O wicked”, etc.]. And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed Zalimun (wrong doers, etc.)” (Al-Hujurat/11). It is also a call to not ridicule others (Ayyash, 2009).

The Prophet of Allah, Mohammed, may Allah’s prayers and peace be upon him, said: “The first thing that will be judged between people on the Day of Resurrection is the blood.” It is clear that Islamic civilization is a revolution against injustice and tyranny, Islam is a religion of love and tolerance that combines all the values that humanity struggles for. Allah’s power is the guarantee for the believer that he will not be one of the wrongdoers, and it is what protects him from being wronged.

### **Patterns of Violence**

There are several patterns of violence, including

- Physical violence and moral violence.
- Individual violence and collective violence.
- Political violence and social violence.

- Manifest violence and latent violence
- Domestic violence:
- Legitimate and unlawful violence.
- Sport violence

### **Violence and Hooliganism in the Sport Field**

In the sports arena in previous years, several new concepts and terminologies increasingly appeared on the global sport community in general and our Arab sport community in particular, such as aggressive behaviour, violence, racial discrimination and fanaticism, which led to the emergence of a phenomenon that strongly threatens sport competitions. This deviates from its sparkling and well-known message; that it is a message of love, peace, and a space for acquaintance between individuals. The cause of this deviation is the phenomenon of hooliganism in stadiums (Awartani & Azazi, 2009).

Sport violence is the force that is used to irritate a crisis between the competing sport teams or between the sport team and the fans who support or oppose the team. Sport riot is a form of fabricated slander in sport stadiums for one reason or another in order to take revenge on a specific team, audience or referee. Sports riot has been defined as an attempt of sedition within the stadium or sport arena to offend the game, race or match and prevent it from achieving its basic goals (Elwes, 2016).

Riot is a state of temporary and sudden violence in some groups or assemblies, or one individual at times. It represents a breach of security and a departure from the system, and a challenge to the authority or its delegates, as what happens in the transformation of a peaceful demonstration, or an organized strike authorized by the authority into agitation and violence that leads to damage to lives and properties (Hajjaj, 2002).

Riot, as interpreted by some researchers in the field of the psychology of sport competitions, is the behaviour of an element or a group of elements that is contrary to the spirit of sport and good morals, or the performance of acts characterized by aggression or physical violence that is considered a violation of the civil laws and regulations in force in any country, such as hitting, burning, destroying, ripping, or committing a crime (Ali, 1985).

### **Contributing Factors for Sports Violence**

There are several factors that lead to sport violence, Including:

- Economic factors
- Social factors
- Psychological factors
- political and cultural factors

### **Sport Violence Preventive Measures and Treatment Mechanisms**

The phenomenon of violence in sports stadiums receives more attention at the present time than ever before. It is even one of intimate priorities of all sectors, whether research, social, political institutions, or families and educational institutions in our society. There is no society, whether rich or poor, civilized or developing, from the devastating consequences of this violence, which may take an epidemic form.

The Arab society has undergone many changes in the past decade, and some of these changes have affected a large area of the culture of this society. This change has been accompanied by a significant increase in the rates of violent crimes in general and violent crimes in sport stadiums in particular.

The social role plays an important role in preventing violence, it is a field that sociologists have always discussed. It is considered significant and essential in addressing sport violence, because social institutions play an effective role in curbing violence and its tendencies among individuals. Here are some treatment mechanisms suggested for the problem of sport hooliganism

### **First: Education and Development of Sport Awareness**

Sport, through its various means, plays a role that cannot be overlooked in shaping the behaviour of individuals and their feelings and attitudes towards higher and noble values that are intended to be the basis on which their actual lives are built in the society to which they belong. Education and sport awareness lead to curb the acts of violence in the stadiums and the intolerance of the fans, which is among the most sensitive issues (El Din, 2000).

Hence the importance of dealing with this phenomenon and finding effective ways and solutions to limit its spread, as education and sport awareness are among the reasons to confront the phenomenon of hooliganism in sport stadiums.

Education has an important role in developing this awareness among fans through its various official and unofficial means. Developing sport awareness is a responsibility upon society in all its various educational institutions.

### **Second: The Role of Family and School**

Family is considered the first cell for building society and the nucleus of its formation. In the family, values and principles related to sport and how to practice and encourage it are entrenched. The child is taught the ideal and disciplined behaviour on how to encourage sport without violence or intolerance (Abbas, 2015).

Family is also the natural source of behaviour in every society, it is a social institution. The family is one of the basic factors in building the educational entity and creating the process of social normalization. The family also contributes directly to the building of human civilization and the establishment of cooperative relations between people, and it is credited with the person's learning of the principles of society, the rules of etiquette and morals. It has a self-effect and psychological formation in correcting individual behavior, learning the language of communication, and acquiring some life-long values and attitudes, whether negative or positive. It is the first seed in the formation of individual growth and the building of personalities. This is why sociologists, jurists, criminal policy makers, and criminologists have taken it as the first rule that they resort to in order to confront crime in general to prevent the spread of negative social phenomena and practices (Ahmed, 2007).

As for the role of school: it is part of a general system with a structure and functions to perform within the community. Among the objectives that the school aims to achieve:

- It normalizes the individual according to normal models in society.
- It works to fulfill some of the emotional needs of individuals, in addition to developing the performance of their sensory, motor and cognitive functions in order to integrate them into society.
- It seeks to pursue Development and modification in behavior that leads to comprehensive and integrated growth, which is the ultimate objective of education.
- It increases sport awareness, as it plays a role in the upbringing process from several angles and instills sport values and trends intentionally as is the case in the family, through various school sport activities (Al Maaita, 2005).

### Third: Activating the role of sport clubs in preventing the phenomenon of violence in sport stadiums

The practical security vision in the stadiums lies in the participation of clubs, supporters, and collective movements in maintaining the security of the stadiums, ensuring the good conduct of sport matches, and respecting the regulations, organizations, and rules of the game. In the basics of sport, clubs are considered an educational sport institution that contributes to enriching social relations, teaches sports principles, and supports the process of communication and interaction between club members, supporters, and fans.

The roles of coaches, administrative staff, players, referees and legal advisors play a vital role in combating violence in sport. These roles contribute collectively to create an environment that supports fair play, respect and safety. By recognizing and fulfilling their respective responsibilities, these individuals and entities can work together to mitigate violence and promote a positive sport culture. Table 1 shows the stages of treatment and prevention of violence

Table 1

*Shows the stages of treatment and prevention of violence.*

Category	Repetition	Percentage
Planning and supervision	6	42.8 %
Implementation	5	35.7 %
Follow-up and enforcement of the law	3	21.5 %
Total	14	100 %

### Fourth: Activating the role of the police in securing stadiums

The role of the police in securing stadiums is divided into two parts

#### 1. The role of the police inside the stadium:

- The police department prevents the presence of street vendors inside the stadium.
- A police department monitors stadium buffets to prevent the sale and presence of soda bottles, glass cups, or metal juice containers that may be used in acts of violence.

#### 2. The role of the police outside the stadium:

The role of the Police Department outside the stadium is limited to carrying out the necessary campaigns to purify the stadium area from various riot indicators and vendors.

According to Al-Maaytah (2005), the police agencies in charge of traffic do the following:

- Designate the necessary services in the stadium area to ensure smooth traffic.
- Designate the necessary services in areas expected to be crowded in the city before and after the match to ensure traffic flow.
- Determine the cars allowed to be in the inner yard of the stadium.
- Contact the Public Transport Authority to determine the sufficient number of public transport vehicles to transport the fans to the stadium before the match from the important squares, as well as transporting them back from the stadium to the important squares after the match.
- Prevent the masses from moving in convoys at the club's headquarters in order to avoid the resulting traffic jams.
- Assign a service that facilities carrying players and referees to their headquarters to ensure their speedy arrival.



## Conclusion

This research underscored the UAE's proactive approach to mitigating violence in football stadiums by establishing effective legal and administrative mechanisms. It highlighted the significant results achieved through these efforts and emphasized the importance of promoting sports awareness to address the issue of violence. By implementing these recommendations, the United Arab Emirates can continue to enhance its efforts in curbing sports hooliganism and create a safer and more enjoyable experience for football spectators and participants. 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.

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