Revealing Fanaticism of Football Supporters: Mass Psychology Perspective

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Abstract

Introduction: Football has been transformed into a "new religion," which has implications beyond the mere physical exercise. The behavior of football supporters is a crucial study conducted because supporters have an essential role in the achievements and existence of a football club.

Objective: This study aims to determine the level of fanaticism of football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region (Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, Banyumas, Cilacap, and Kebumen); secondly, analyzing the behavior of football supporters using the perspective of mass psychology.

Method: The research method used is a combination of quantitative research and qualitative research. Quantitative research was conducted to measure the level of fanaticism and aggressiveness of football supporters by using a questionnaire. The respondents were supporters of football clubs in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region with an age range of 17-30 years using the Random Sampling technique. The research instrument used a questionnaire about fanaticism and aggressiveness in sports provided online to research respondents—data analysis using correlation techniques with the guidance of SPSS applications. Qualitative research was conducted to analyze football supporters' behavior by using a literature review with mass psychology as a theoretical framework.

Results: The results showed that football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region had a high level of fanaticism and aggressiveness. A person's personality can change when in a crowd because of group conformity and adrenaline-triggered biological factors. This condition triggers aggressive actions and involvement in destructive anarchist actions. The aggressive behavior of football supporters also impacted the high level of unrest and the potential for disunity among football supporters.

Keywords: Aggressiveness; Fanaticism; Football; Mass Psychology; Supporters

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INTRODUCTION

Football is a team sport with attractive characteristics and demands high skills, making it the most popular game globally. Sophisticated and exciting techniques make football the most popular sport in society (1–3). The high popularity of football impacts the high number of spectators and supporters in each match. Football has many enthusiastic spectators and supporters (4–7).
The results of a survey reported by FIFA at the 2006 to 2018 World Cup soccer championships showed the number of spectators who watched live matches in the stadium reached an average of 3 million spectators and even FIFA claimed that half the world's population had attended the 2018 world cup (8). Spectators and supporters in football are an essential part of making soccer matches more exciting. The presence of spectators and supporters in a football match presents another competitive game (9,10). Spectators and supporters in football matches are the twelfth players for each team that can increase motivation to compete(11,12).

The term spectators and supporters in football have a slightly different meaning. An audience is a person who aims only to watch the game, without supporting one of the teams. In comparison, supporters are supporters of one of the organizations with a high level of fanaticism in a particular football club. Spectators tend to be passive in the match, while supporters have an active attitude in supporting the team (5,7,13,14).

The stubborn behavior possessed by most football supporters can positively be interpreted as moral support for the football team to be able to show their best performance in a match. Every football club has fanatic supporters because of the ties of kinship, regionalism, and nationalism to support the club's achievements (15). The extreme behavior of football fans and having a decisive role for the club also harms the club and even the community. Excessive fanatic behavior will lead to extreme fanaticism, which has the potential to lead to anarchism.

Fanaticism is a feeling of excessive pride and admiration for a matter without considering the effects caused (16–19). Extreme fanaticism from football supporters at a later stage will lead to insanity and can develop into violence between supporters. Previous studies indicate that excessive militancy in supporting football clubs leads supporters to over-behave, which causes rifts between supporters (17,20–22).

Fanaticism towards football clubs occurs both at international clubs, national and regional clubs. This research specifically took a sample from a local soccer club in the former Banyumas Residence area known as BARLINGMASCAKEB. The BARLINGMASCAKEB region is an acronym for the name of 5 Regencies that collaborate consisting of Regencies. Banjarnegara, Purbalingga Regency, Banyumas Regency, Cilacap Regency, and Kebumen Regency, which subsequently became the Regional Management Cooperation Agency's designation in the Southwest Central Java region. The naming of BARLINGMASCAKEB is based on a joint decree of the Regent of Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, Banyumas, Cilacap, and Kebumen Number 130A in 2003, Number 4 in 2003, Number 36 in 2003, Number 48 in 2003, Number 16 in 2003.

The BARLINGMASCAKEB region has football clubs in each region with a large enough mass base of supporters of the club. Banyumas Regency and surrounding areas have football clubs with supporters or supporters who are very passionate about supporting football clubs in their respective regions. Regional football clubs in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region include PERSIBAS Banyumas; PERSIBANGGA Purbalingga; PERSIBARA Banjarnegara; Cilacap PSCS; and PERSAK Kebumen. The five local football clubs have a long and exciting competition history. Inter-club competition occurs at the level of achievement and performance competition at junior and senior levels, financial support from various institutions, and includes the rivalry of football supporters.

Starting from a contest of creativity in supporting regional soccer clubs in the match, the loyalty of supporters then led to excessive fanaticism. It ended with friction and riots between supporters of regional football clubs. Cases of violence and riots between supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region are recorded every year by involving local football clubs such as PERSIBAS, PSCS, PERSIBANGGA, and other clubs in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region (23).

Fanaticism towards football clubs can encourage adverse aggressive behavior. Violent acts of football supporters are also known as hooliganism (12). To some extent, football has been transformed into a "new religion," which has
implications beyond the mere physical exercise. Football has a broad spectrum of studies because football is not just a sport but has involvement with various science branches. Psychological studies are needed to explain things related to psychiatric, behavioral, and their implications in sports. Psychological studies are crucial studies conducted because psychological factors are determinants of sports performance (24). Follow-up on research on fanaticism and aggressive behavior of football supporters in the mental sphere of the masses is a reference in policy recommendations to prevent a situation of national security vulnerability due to destructive, aggressive behavior.

This study aims to find out the level of fanaticism of football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region (Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, Banyumas, Cilacap, and Kebumen); secondly, analyzing the behavior of football supporters using the perspective of mass psychology.

**METHOD**

**Procedure**
The method used in this research is a quantitative research using a questionnaire. This research instrument uses the Fanatism questionnaire developed by Goddard (2001) using four variables, namely: 1) The amount of interest in a type of activity; 2) Personal and group attitudes towards the event; 3) The length of time an individual has pursued a specific kind of; 4) Family motivational. Fanatism questionnaire has a validity level of 0.722 and a reliability of 0.915. As for the instruments of aggressive behavior of football supporters arranged by Baron (In Dayaksini, 2012) The indicators used are forms of aggression, according to Medinus and Jonhson (in Dayaksini, 2012), namely: (1) Physical aggression; (2) Verbal aggression; (3) object aggression; (4) Violations of other people's property rights. Aggressiveness questionnaire has validity and reliability of 0.867. The statement in the survey was measured using a Likert scale of scores 1-4 with the provisions of SS (Strongly Agree), S (Agree), TS (Disagree), and STS (Strongly Disagree) (27).

**Participant**
The population in this study was all football club supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region. The research sample was football supporters in the area of BARLINGMASCAKEB with the age of 17-30 years as many as 105 people obtained through the Random Sampling technique. Data analysis using correlation techniques with the SPSS application help includes the Normality Test, Linearity Test, and Correlational Test.

**RESULT**
Based on the results of the research questionnaire, the research data shows the profile characteristics of the research subjects in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region, as presented in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>68.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-21 (Teenagers)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-40 (Early Adulthood)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banyumas (Persibas)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purbalingga (Persibanga)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banjarnegara (Persibara)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cilacap (PSCS)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kebumen (Persak)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The identification based on the data above shows that football supporters' research subjects in BARLINGMASCAKEB consisted of 72 men (68.57%) and 335 women (31.43%) female supporters. The age of football supporters at BARLINGMASCAKEB has adolescents' characteristics amounting to 50 people (47.62%) and early adulthood, numbering 55 people (52.38%). The distribution of the number of football supporters consisted of Banyumas District 27 supporters (25.71%), Purbalingga 22 supporters (20.95%), Banjarnegara 22 supporters (20.95%), Cilacap 17 supporters (16.19%) and Kebumen as many as 17 supporters (16.19%). Based on the characteristics of the research subjects, it shows that football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region have symptoms following the provisions of the research procedure.

Data on fanaticism and aggressiveness of football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region based on data from research subjects shows in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fanaticism</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>73.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressiveness</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data on the fanaticism and aggressiveness of football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region above shows that football supporters' level of fanaticism with a high category was 77 people (73.33%). In contrast, the low fanaticism category was 28 supporters (26.67%). The aggressiveness data of football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region showed 69 people (65.71%) have a high aggressiveness category, while 36 people (34.29%) in a low aggressiveness category. Based on these data, it was identified that football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region had a high level of fanaticism and aggressiveness in supporting their respective regional soccer teams.

Data Normality Test

Data normality test is used to determine whether the research data has a normal distribution or not. Data requirements are normally distributed if Sig. > 0.05. The normality test results show in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test of Normality</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fanaticism</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressiveness</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
Based on the results of the normality test, values obtained Sig. The Fanaticism aspect is 0.87, and the Aggressiveness aspect is 0.121. Based on these data, it shows that the distribution of research data is normal because of the Sig. Fanaticism and Aggressiveness have values > 0.05.

**Linearity Test**

The linearity test stage is used to determine the significance of the relationship between the variables of Fanaticism and Aggressiveness. If the Sig value > 0.05, then the data is declared linear. The linearity test results of Fanaticism and Aggressiveness of football supporters show in table 4 below.

![Table 4]

Based on the ANOVA calculation table above shows that the linearity test between Fanaticism variables and the Aggressiveness of football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region in the Deviation from Linearity column has a Sig. .498. Based on these calculations, the research data shows a linear relationship between fanaticism and the high Aggressiveness of football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region because it meets the deviation requirement > 0.05.

**Correlational Test**

The correlational test was conducted to determine the relationship between fanaticism and the level of Aggressiveness possessed by football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region. Data was stated to have a strong relationship if the Sig. (2-tailed) <0.05. The correlation test results of fanaticism with football fans' Aggressiveness can show in Table 5 below.

![Table 5]

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**
Based on the table above shows that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) Fanaticism and Aggressiveness of 0.000. This number fulfills the requirements of correlational significance because it has a value <0.05, so it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the high level of fanaticism of football supporters and the level of aggressiveness of supporters in supporting regional football clubs in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region.

DISCUSSION

Fanaticism in supporting supporters of football clubs can make local football matches more attractive. The presence of supporters in the stadium, the attributes used, and the chants of each fan yell make the football match has a principal historical value. Football supporters will always be present in every game to support each club (28). The enthusiasm of football fanaticism in supporting club teams at the regional level can be a benchmark for national football sports' sustainability and progress.

The results showed that the level of fanaticism of football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region showed high results, it means that football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region have a high sense of pride in their regional football club. The high level of fanaticism of football supporters based on research results is evidenced by the majority of supporters always watching football matches at the stadium, always buying and wearing the eleven attributes, singing chants and choreography and willing to travel outside the city or even the island to support regional soccer clubs when competing.

Previous studies show that fanatical football fans are shown by their high motivation to support directly in the stadium and use the attributes of a proud club (17, 18, 29). Other supporting data that can strengthen football fans' high fanaticism in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region is the average age of respondents who are at the age of 17-30 years. Previous studies have shown that high fanaticism and followed by aggressive attitudes towards football supporters occur at the age of 17-28 years (12, 30, 31). The respondent's age shows at the level of adolescence and early adulthood that psychologically have personality characteristics with high motivation for love of something, in this case, that is having a high enthusiasm for supporting regional soccer clubs.

The results of research conducted on football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region showed high aggressiveness rates due to the high level of fanaticism of football supporters. These results support previous research, which shows that fanaticism is closely related to football supporters' aggressive attitude (21). Research data shows that the high level of aggressiveness of football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region is indicated by the fact that most supporters commit various violence both physically, verbally, objectively, and in the control of the area.

Physical violence is done by pushing and fighting between supporters both before and after the match. Most supporters carried out verbal violence by means of insulting and humiliating players, supporters of the opposing team's football, even to the referee if it is considered unfair in leading the match. Supporters do object violence by throwing players or supporters of opponents with dangerous objects. Territorial control takes place inside the stadium when the match is shown with supporters reluctant to share space with supporters supporting other football clubs. Various aggressive actions appropriately controlled will trigger various violence and clashes between football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region.

Aggressive behavior in football supporters arises because of competition between clubs and provocation from each supporter because of racist words and leads to throwing dangerous objects by supporters (9, 32). The results of other studies also show that aggressive behavior arises because the results of football matches are considered unfair, and there is much cheating committed by referees (Meij et al., 2015). Based on the study results, the aggressive attitude of the supporters comes from within and external factors, such as referee leadership who is unsportsmanlike in leading the match.
The presence of supporters shows a sense of togetherness, even when riots occur. When entering the stadium, sports supporters are not in an aggressive state, but the situation during the match often triggers an aggressive response. Members of a club’s supporters grew up with a high spirit of togetherness so that when there was a riot, the spirit of togetherness became more displayed (12). In the study of mass psychology, a group of people’s behavior will be very different when they are in the crowd. In a crowded situation, they consider themselves to be part of a group so that coping behavior appears so that the group can accept it. Supporters create communities that have unique behaviors that create distinctive patterns of social interaction in supporting regional soccer clubs. They create group rules and require members to obey so that in the possibility of aggressive behavior, it is likely that other group members will follow it (coping) as a form of conformity and be accepted in the group (10, 11). The conformity of a group of football supporters who are members of a fan club starts with an interest in the group and the members, followed by social interaction and personal goals that demand interdependence. Social interaction that occurs, in the end, requires adjusting the standard of group behavior so that other group members can accept it.

In the atmosphere of the match, the supporters supported the team that was overused so that sometimes causing chaos in the match by destroying public facilities. Clashes between supporters arise from a sense of disappointment, frustration, pleasure (34). Football supporters who are members of the fan club will conform to the group by following what they expect behavior. In many cases, we encounter supporters acting anarchist and brutal when, together with their groups, even though the behavior displayed is very different in daily life.

Aggressiveness behavior shown by a supporter of football in the BARLINGMASCAKEB region stems from high fanaticism in supporting regional football clubs that are not well managed. Cooperation between regional soccer club officials, community leaders, and regulatory agencies is needed to minimize supporters' aggressive behavior that can cause riots and disintegration between supporters in the area. Education and advocacy on the importance of tolerance and mutual respect between football supporters are essential to avoid the high level of violence and clashes of football supporters. Hopefully it can support the progress of soccer in the region and nationally.

CONCLUSION
Research and discussion results show that football supporters in the BARLINGMASCAKEB area have a high fanaticism level in supporting football clubs in the area. The high fanaticism of football supporters is closely related to aggressiveness in the personality of supporters who trigger riots and violence between football supporters. This research's recommendation is to provide education and proper moral cultivation in society to football fans in the regions so that the high interest of supporters in supporting football clubs in the regions does not lead to conflicts and divisions among supporters and the public.

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