

Observational study of spectator behaviour



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- Tan Li Huan

Spectators Behavior in Petaling Jaya Stadium

Football is the most popular sports in Europe which has attracted attention of the European psychologists and also sociologists in studying about aggression in sport (Mummendey & Mummendey, 1983). Football fans nowadays show many aggressive behaviors. Aggressive behavior can be separated to instrumental aggression and emotional aggression or emotional aggression (Mummendey & Mummendey, 1983). Instrumental aggression refers to a calculated behavior that are aimed to achieve personal goal to harm another person while emotional aggression is impulsive that can be said as the reaction from anger with the purpose of harming another person (Aronson, 1992; Hartup, 1974 as cited in Wei & Williams, 2009). In supporting to emotional aggression, past research done by Carlson, Daniel, Michael, Schradar & Wann, 1999, states that the participants confessed that they acted verbal aggressively towards the officials of the match including the opposition spectators which the participants consider it as emotional rather than instrumental. In addition, the findings by Ramirez and Andreu (2006) using correlation study found that anger (anger towards a certain people or a situation) and impulsiveness are positively correlated with emotional aggression but not the instrumental aggression. These findings may indicate that most of the aggressions shown by people are emotional rather than instrumental aggression leading to the questions of “ why do the spectators watching a live football match in a stadium shows certain behaviors and what makes them do it?” Therefore the purpose of this observational study was to assess the behavior shown by the fans that

present for the football match in Petaling Jaya Stadium, Malaysia with the central research question for this study of “ What are the behaviors shown by a sport fan watching football live in the stadium in Malaysia and the probable reason behind it?”

Observational approach is used in the study. Observation is a fundamental way to find out about the world around us and it can provide rich qualitative data or “ thick description” (University of Strathclyde, n. d.). There are several advantages of this approach. The first advantage of using observational approach is being direct. The meaning of direct in observational study is that it does not need much on asking people for information. In addition, using observation appears to be an appropriate method for observing “ real life” in the real world setting while removing artificial constraints imposed by the laboratory which is in controlled settings (Creswell, 2013). This approach was necessary in studying the behavior of spectator in the stadium because it deals with real-life field settings so to see the natural behavior without any disruption or manipulation of behavior by the subjects in the study.

Method

Settings

The observations for this observational study were conducted at the multi-purpose Petaling Jaya Stadium located in Kelana Jaya, Malaysia. This stadium is mostly used for football matches and it was the home stadium to the Selangor MPPJ football team. The name of this stadium was changed twice from Majlis Perbandaran Petaling Jaya (MPPJ) Stadium to Majlis Bandaraya <https://assignbuster.com/observational-study-of-spectator-behaviour/>

Petaling Jaya (MBPJ) before being named as Petaling Jaya Stadium. This stadium was opened in the year 1996 with the capacity of 25, 000 people which was built in time to host the Commonwealth Games in 1998 where the rugby matches was being played.

The observation was conducted on Tuesday, 28th January 2014 for about 2 hours. The participants shadowed are the football fans presents at the stadium for the match between Selangor and Pahang football club. The participant's ratio of female and male is 10: 1 with no special characteristic but as football game spectators in the stadium with age ranges from 20 to 35.

Procedure/Data Collection

The location of the observational study was chosen based on the availability of game of football match held in the Petaling Jaya Stadium. The location that the researcher chose from the stadium to observe is at the end of the spectator stand to enable a wider view of the particular view of stadium while noting down the behaviors and emotions shown by the spectators. Besides that, another reason the location was chosen by the researcher to observe is to minimize the attention from the spectators/fans to prevent any distractions by the fans since the researcher have to record down the behaviors and actions shown by the spectators.

The extent of participation of the observer is marginal participant whereby the observer is adopting the role of passive participant. Passive participant involves the observer to only play marginal role in the observation site during the observation.

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Validity and Reliability

The researcher limits the observational biases by minimizing the frequency of the action in noting down the behavior shown by the spectators to minimize the chance of a change in behavior by the spectators. Recording down the behavior was done by remembering a few actions before writing them in one time.

To ensure the validity of the observational study, the researcher adopted the strategy of prolonged engagement and persistent observation whereby spending sufficient amount of time in the field. This was practiced by always being at the observation site from the beginning until the end. The other strategy that was adopted is triangulation. The strategy of triangulation is observing from multiple perspectives rather than by just looking from a single perspective (Neuman, 2011). The third strategy that is being adopted is rich and thick description. This strategy emphasize on the richness of data collected. The researcher collects the data to a point where all of the behaviors are observed and recorded until no new behavior is seen.

On the other hand, to ensure the reliability of the study, the researcher adopted the measure of intercoder reliability. This measure is applied by having another researcher to compare the collected data to see if they are mirror to each other.

Results

The purpose of this study was to assess the behavior shown by the spectator at the Petaling Jaya stadium with the total number of about 80 people being

observed by the researcher. The themes that were formed after the observation and also categorization are emotional aggression, motivation and also social interaction.

The first common theme was formed which is the theme of emotional aggression after the researcher noted several similar and reoccurring behaviors showing emotional aggression in the form of anger by the spectator during an aggressive play by the opponent team, jeering when the opponent team player were playing roughly and committed a foul towards their team, and also shouting out loud when their team missed a big opportunity of scoring. From these few behaviors, it can be explained by team identification theory. Team identification theory is defined as “ the level of psychological attachment felt by a sport fan toward his or her favorite team” (Kim & Kim, 2009; Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Peace, 2001 as cited in Absten, 2011). Two reasons that highly identified fans are much more likely to display emotional aggression. The first reason is that highly identified fans are easily aroused and became uneasy when watching their team in competition (Branscombe & Wann, 1992a; Wann, Schrader, & Adamson 1998 as cited in Carlson, Daniel, Michael, Schrader & Wann, 1999). The second reason is because the performance by the team’s are closely related to the self-worth of the fans. This leads to emotional aggression when they see their team did poorly since these poor performances will threaten their self-image (Wann, Royalty, & Roberts, 1999 as cited in Carlson, Daniel, Michael, Schrader & Wann, 1999). From the past research done, it shows that arousal and anxiety are both related to emotional aggression whereby highly identified fans are more likely leading

to emotional aggression (Carlson, Daniel, Michael, Schradar & Wann, 1999). In another study done by Clarkson and Hirt, 2011 shows that group identification constitutes a state where the actions of a group are significant to the spectators. Besides that, the fans who really identifies strongly with their team and responding towards the performance by the team will perceive the success of their team as their personal success and failure by the team is also their personal failure (Hirt, Zillmann, Kennedy, & Erickson, 1992)

The second theme is motivation. This theme is evaluating more on the motivation of an individual in becoming a sports fan and also the drives that made them watch football live in the stadium instead of watching it at their cozy home. There are actually total of 9 different motives that drive them. They are vicarious achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, social interaction, excitement, escape, family, physical attractiveness of the sportsman and also the quality of physical skills of the sportsman. However, the main focus here in explaining the behavior shown by the spectators that are present in the Petaling Jaya Stadium is the motivation due to social relationship. The things that were noted by the observer on the spectator were that the fans present were mostly male supporters and most of them are youngster coming together in a group. In addition to that, spectators who came either in pairs or in groups quite often made interaction with one another and also taking pictures together which can be explained by social relationship. In order to explain the behavior shown by the fans, past study found that many fans brought their relatives and friends to the stadium in meeting other fans in establishing and maintaining their social relationships

(Woratchek, Horbel, Popp, & Roth, 2007). These social relationships are highly valued by the fans whereby it can be even the main reason to watch a game. Besides that, family bonding is also established through football because it enables both parents who are working and the young people doing their own things coming together during their leisure time. Going to the stadium once in a while with the family members enhances the bonding between the family members and also strengthen their social relationships (Lowrey & Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research, 2002).

Table 1

Behaviors noted throughout the observation study and the frequency occurred for each of the behaviors.

Category of Behaviour	Actions	Frequency occurred
Emotional Aggression	Anger shown by the fans during aggressive play by opponent players on the field	8
	negative reaction of “ boo-ing” when opponent thing committed a foul	5
	Jeering when there is a rough play by the opponent team	5
	Shout of disappointment when the	3

	chance missed/opportunity missed	
	Big reaction when own side player (Selangor) had a chance and was pushed down but no foul was given	2
	Scolding when opponent players did an aggressive move	5
	Showing of middle finger when opponent fouls	2
	Fans become more aggressive (standing and shouting) after a few attempts by the player (clear chance)	1
	Schadenfreude was shown (foul and punished by referee)	1
	people starts to smoke after the announcement of players	3
Disappointment	holding head when disappointed	3
	Fans “ Sighs” when missing the pass by own team	4

Table 2

Below shows the behaviors noted throughout the observation study and the estimation number of people showing the behavior

Category of Behaviour	Actions	Estim number of people
Motivation	more of male supporters	50
	mostly are youngsters	38
	people starts to buy food and drinks	20
	much more people starts to smoke again during half time	20
	Waving of towel	50
	Talking and interacting with one another	15
	Taking photos together	
Others	raising of hands according to the	35

side of the field	
people starts to take pictures (a few of them)	5
cheering and shouting once the match starts	40
crowd are focusing once the match starts	45
Selangor supporters are more excited and lively	35
Smiling and shouting while standing when a goal is scored	40

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this observational study is to observe the natural behavior of the spectators in the Petaling Jaya Stadium whereby the “real life” in real world setting is not disrupted. After the prolonged period of observation on the participants, it was discovered that many behavior and action shown by the spectator come under the category of emotional aggression. Emotional aggression is the aggression involving the reaction from anger with the purpose of doing harm to another person while instrumental aggression refers to the behavior that aimed to achieve personal goal to harm others (Aronson, 1992; Hartup, 1974 as cited in Wei & Williams, 2009). In terms of the possible reason why the spectator shows

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more of emotional aggression in the Petaling Jaya Stadium is due to team identification. Team identification made the spectators to be a part of the team and become totally into it whether it is during a chance shot by their own team or when their team got fouled by the opponent team. This immersion made them easily aroused and anxious leading to the behavior of emotional aggression. Finally, the second common theme of motivation also explains why social interaction is the reason that the fans would want to watch the football game live in the stadium instead of watching at home is to establish and maintain their social relationship and also strengthen the family relationship (Lowrey & Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research, 2002). The practical implication of the result from this observational study of aggression is increasing awareness of aggressive behavior in a match while educating people moral values and respecting people around us even under pressure. Another implication that can be drawn from this study is that family bonding is important to maintain a harmonious family and this kind of event or activities can be a good opportunity for bonding time and build a better relationship.

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