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The Phenomenon of Sports Violence in the Stadiums of the Kurdistan Region from the Perspective of Students of the Sports Institute in Akrê

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore the phenomenon of sports violence from the perspective of students at the Sports Institute in Akre, and to identify statistical differences based on the study variables (gender, academic year, and place of residence). The sample consisted of 79 male and female students from the institute, selected using the intentional method. The researchers adopted the descriptive approach in this study and employed a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The SPSS statistical software was used to analyze the data. The results showed that the overall level of sports violence was moderate. Statistically significant differences were found regarding the variable of place of residence, favoring students residing in urban areas. Additionally, there were significant differences related to the academic year, favoring third-year students. However, no statistically significant differences were found with respect to gender.

The researchers recommended holding conferences, seminars, and workshops aimed at addressing the phenomenon of sports violence in Akre and the Kurdistan Region.

Keywords: Violence in the Stadiums, Perspective, Sports Institute.

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1. Definition of the Study

1.1 Introduction and Significance of the Study

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in violent incidents caused by spectators at football matches—both official and unofficial—at the regional or local levels. This rise in violence has prompted the implementation of heightened stadium security, including inspection protocols, the use of detection devices, and the banning of weapons and sharp objects. However, ensuring safety at stadium entrances remains a routine matter, lacking systematic oversight in many regions.

No country or society today remains unaffected by violence and its associated issues. Violence has become a serious problem threatening the lives of people, and due to its widespread nature, some view it as a fundamental aspect of human reality that is difficult to contain or control. Violence is a complex issue with high sensitivity, involving numerous interrelated factors, making it challenging to address. It touches upon multifaceted matters connected to culture and ideology (Al-Sanea, 2011, 154).

The phenomenon of violence in stadiums has taken on dangerous dimensions in Kurdish society, as it has crossed all red lines in the history of stadium-related violence. It is no longer merely a form of aggression limited in scale, but rather one that parallels other types of violence present in society, such as domestic violence and school-related violence. The roots of this issue can be traced back to educational, familial, and institutional upbringing and socialization patterns.

This raises several pressing questions: What are the real causes behind the emergence of sports violence in the Kurdistan Region and the fan culture surrounding football? Is it due to fan fanaticism and hostility toward opposing teams? Or is it the result of a lack of support for sportsmanship and proper cheering culture? Could it stem from psychological and social pressures manifesting in the stadiums, potentially reaching the level of illness and criminal behavior?

This study attempts to provide a clear understanding of the phenomenon of stadium violence, to examine its history and current state both globally and locally, and to analyze how and why it occurs, along with psychological and social factors that influence it. Ultimately, the study seeks to propose a set of recommendations and solutions to limit its spread (Lili, 2016, 138).

The significance of this study lies in identifying the changes in students' motivations within sports programs, which may indicate their potential use of violent behaviors in future athletic participation. Understanding their tendencies toward violence, vandalism, and unacceptable conduct in stadiums—and raising awareness to avoid such risks—is essential in preventing violent outbursts among fans.

1.2 Research Problem:

The field of sports is considered one of the most esteemed domains globally and within the Kurdistan Region, particularly in football, which is characterized by continuous and frequent matches across various games. Each sport has its own fan base, and at times, certain fans may harbor rivalries against other teams, which can manifest during matches and lead to tension, hostility, and even violence between supporters of opposing teams. This phenomenon can escalate to the extent that it influences students and spreads to schools and among classmates.

The researchers observed this firsthand during their visits and interactions, noting that many students at the Sports Institute in Akre exhibit bias and favoritism toward certain cities or teams. This bias often leaves a negative impact, resulting in quarrels and violence. Hence, the researchers found it necessary to conduct this study to explore the perspectives of students on what drives acts of violence in its various forms throughout the Kurdistan Region—whether it stems from players, spectators, or external factors—and the consequences of such hostility. These effects may ultimately reflect negatively on both the local community and the broader sports environment.

1.3 Research Objectives:

1. To identify the phenomenon of sports violence from the perspective of students at the Sports Institute in Akre.
2. To examine the statistical differences in the perception of sports violence among students at the Sports Institute based on the study variables (gender, academic year, and place of residence).

1.4 Scope of the Study:

1. **Human Scope**: Students of the Physical Education Institute in Akre.
2. **Temporal Scope**: The study was conducted during the period from January 1, 2025, to April 30, 2025.
3. **Spatial Scope**: The Institute of Physical Education in Akre.

1.5 Research Terminology:

1. **Sports Violence**: A behavioral pattern that results from a state of frustration, accompanied by signs of tension and an intention to cause physical or psychological harm. It represents a response to an external stimulus in a violent manner, charged with emotions of anger and hostility. It is considered a result of general frustration or failure. (*Shukr, 1997, 32*)
2. **Sports Stadiums**: Facilities and spaces—whether dedicated permanently or temporarily—for the practice of sports activities. This includes athletic fields, race tracks, swimming pools, halls, and other venues and sports facilities. (*Fathi, 2000, 12*)

2.1 Research Methodology:

The researchers employed the descriptive method, as it suits the nature and objectives of the study.

2.2 Research Population:

The study population consisted of all students at the Sports Institute in Akre, totaling 267 male and female students, according to the most recent statistics from the Central Admissions Unit.

2.3 Research Sample:

The research sample was drawn from students in the fourth and fifth stages registered for the academic year 2024–2025, totaling 79 male and female students.

Table (1): Description of the Study Sample According to Its Variables

Variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Social Gender	Male	48	60.75%
	Female	31	39.25%
Place of Residence	Rural	22	27.85%
	Urban	57	72.15%

Academic Year	Fourth	35	44.30%
	Fifth	44	55.70%

2.4 Data Collection Tools:

A questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection. The researchers relied on a scale prepared by Shatnawi et al. (2022). The questionnaire was adapted and was reviewed by a group of experts and specialists in the field. It was then modified to suit the study sample, as detailed in Appendix (1), which lists the names of the experts and evaluators.

2.5 Study Variables:

- **Independent Variables**:
  - Gender: Male and Female
  - Academic Year: Fourth and Fifth
  - Cumulative GPA: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Acceptable
  - Place of Residence: Rural, Urban

2.6 Statistical Tools:

The researchers utilized the **SPSS** statistical software to analyze the results and conduct several statistical operations, including:
(percentages – Cronbach's alpha – arithmetic mean – standard deviation – t-test value).

2.7 Instrument Reliability:

To verify the reliability of the study instrument, the **Cronbach's alpha coefficient** was calculated at the overall level. Table (2) presents the results.

Table (2): Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Values for the Study Instrument at the Overall Level

Domain	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Sports Violence	0.909	20

Table (2) indicates that the perceived level of sports violence among students at the Sports Institute in Akre shows a high degree of internal consistency, as the reliability coefficient for the 20 items reached 0.909. All values are considered appropriate and sufficient for the purposes of this study. These results suggest a high level of instrument reliability, considering that the maximum value that can be achieved for perfect reliability is 1.00.

3.1 Presentation of Results:

3.1.1 Results of the First Research Question:

What is the level of sports violence from the perspective of students at the Sports Institute in Akre?

The following table presents a detailed breakdown of the level of sports violence from the perspective of students at the Institute of Physical Education in Akre.

Table (3): Mean and Standard Deviation of the Perceived Level of Sports Violence

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Level
1	Lack of a system to protect referees	4.77	0.384	High
2	Lack of awareness among fans	4.70	0.384	High
3	Lack of deterrent penalties for offenders	4.42	0.660	Moderate
4	Poor organization of matches	4.22	0.441	Moderate
5	Sports violence caused by media influence	4.44	0.635	Moderate
6	Poor management by clubs and federations	2.90	0.964	Low
7	Inability of referees to control players and enforce rules	1.78	0.629	Low
8	Sports violence due to the love of winning and dissatisfaction with loss	4.52	0.452	High

9	Sports violence caused by extremist fan loyalty	4.66	0.489	High
10	Poor stadium conditions	4.60	0.496	High
11	Sports violence caused by coaching staff in clubs	2.44	0.432	Low
12	Lack of attempts to rationalize fan behavior	4.34	0.455	High
13	Sports violence caused by psychological stress	4.22	0.392	High
14	Clubs' inability to control their fans	3.13	0.798	Moderate
15	Sports violence caused by poor management in sports organizations	2.31	0.470	Low
16	Sports violence resulting from attempts to display strength	1.78	0.771	Low
17	Sports violence caused by media exaggeration	4.07	0.607	High
18	Poor team performance in matches	4.22	0.392	High
19	Insufficient number of security personnel	3.32	0.466	Moderate
20	Use of drugs and banned substances among spectators	4.43	0.620	Moderate

Overall Mean: 3.636 – Moderate Level

Level Classification Scale: Less than 2.33 = Low, Between 2.33–3.66 = Moderate, Greater than 3.66 = High

Interpretation:

Table (3) shows that the overall mean of the perceived level of sports violence is 3.636, indicating a moderate level. The highest-rated items were:

- Item 5: *Sports violence caused by media influence* (M = 4.44)
- Item 20: *Use of drugs and banned substances among spectators* (M = 4.43)

While the lowest-rated items were:

- Item 1: *Lack of a system to protect referees* (M = 4.77)
- Item 7: *Inability of referees to enforce rules* (M = 1.78)

The researchers interpret this outcome as a reflection of increased awareness among Kurdish society regarding the importance of sports culture and the role of media in reducing the phenomenon. From the students' perspective, the institute's curriculum seems to promote avoidance of negative behaviors such as defamation and provoking the crowd.

They recommend that authorities:

- Strengthen regulations against drug and alcohol use in stadiums
- Deploy trained security forces to ensure referee and player safety
- Empower sports media to educate the public and promote respectful fan behavior

3.2 Results of the Second Research Question:

Are there statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level in the perceived level of sports violence among students at the Sports Institute in Akre based on the study variables (gender, academic year, and place of residence)?

To answer this question, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for the responses of the study sample for each domain and for the total level.

Gender Variable:

To answer the question regarding gender, the T-test was used to analyze the differences in mean scores of participants' responses regarding the perceived level of sports violence in Akre. The results are presented in Table (4).

Table (4): T-Test Results for Differences in the Perceived Level of Sports Violence According to Gender

Variable	Category	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T Value	Sig. Level
Gender	Male	48	4.21	0.28	1.98	0.01
	Female	31	3.55	0.43		

Table (4) shows that there are statistically significant differences at the 0.05 significance level between the means of students' responses regarding the level of sports violence according to the gender variable. This conclusion is based on the calculated T-value (1.98) and the significance level (0.01), which is less than 0.05.

This indicates that the differences are in favor of male students, as their mean score (4.21) is higher than that of female students (3.55).

Academic Year Variable:

To answer the research question regarding academic year, the **One-Way ANOVA** test was used to determine the differences in the mean responses of the participants regarding the level of sports violence according to this variable.

Table (5): Mean and Standard Deviation of Perceived Sports Violence Level According to Academic Year

Variable	Category	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Academic Year	Fourth	35	2.09	0.24
	Fifth	44	3.13	0.36

Table (5) indicates that there are apparent differences in the perceived level of sports violence between fourth- and fifth-year students. To determine whether these differences are statistically significant, a One-Way ANOVA test was conducted.

The results revealed statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level, in favor of fifth-year students, as they recorded a higher mean score (3.13) compared to fourth-year students (2.09). This result may be attributed to the fact that fifth-year students have been exposed to more advanced academic content related to violence, which may contribute to a heightened sensitivity and awareness of violent behavior and its manifestations—especially as they engage with more specialized coursework that could elevate their perception of violence to a higher level.

Place of Residence Variable:

To answer this research question, a T-test was used to analyze the differences in the mean scores of participants' responses regarding the level of sports violence based on the place of residence variable.

Table (6): T-Test Results for Differences in the Perceived Level of Sports Violence Based on Place of Residence

Variable	Category	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T Value	Sig. Level
Place of Residence	Rural	22	3.23	0.35	2.37	0.02
	Urban	57	4.21	0.48		

The results in Table (6) indicate the presence of statistically significant differences at the 0.05 significance level between the mean scores of students' perceptions regarding the level of sports violence in Akre, attributed to the place of residence variable.

This is evident from the T-value of 2.37 and a significance level of 0.02, which is less than 0.05. These results suggest that the differences are in favor of students residing in urban areas, as they had a higher mean score (4.21) compared to rural students (3.23).

The researchers attribute this outcome to the fact that urban students are more exposed to modern perspectives, technology, and social media platforms, which may influence their sensitivity to or awareness of sports violence. In contrast, rural students tend to live simpler lifestyles, distanced from aggressive behaviors and violent acts.

4.1 Conclusions:

In light of the study results and their discussion, the researchers concluded the following:

1. The level of sports violence, from the perspective of students at the Sports Institute in Akre, was moderate.
2. There were statistically significant differences in the perceived level of sports violence based on the gender variable, in favor of males, who recorded a higher average.
3. There were also statistically significant differences based on the place of residence variable, in favor of students from urban areas.
4. Additionally, differences were found based on academic year, in favor of fifth-year students.

4.2 Recommendations:

The researchers recommend the following:

1. The need to raise public awareness about violence and hooliganism in sports stadiums.
2. The need to enact deterrent legal penalties to limit and eliminate acts of violence.
3. The importance of organizing conferences, conducting scientific research and studies, and holding seminars and workshops focused on combating sports violence.

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