Investigating The Influence of Conformity and Fanaticism on Bullying Dynamics

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Abstract. Bullying is a pervasive social issue within the Indonesian context, manifesting in various situations, including sports, where the behavior can occur between fellow athletes and supporters at a sporting event. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate the influence of conformity and fanaticism on incidents of bullying among supporters of the Persib Bandung football team. A quantitative causality approach was used, with data analysis executed through multiple regression to obtain 349 respondents. The results showed that conformity and fanaticism influenced bullying by Persib Bandung supporters. Specifically, the combined influence of the variables accounted for 3.3% of the observed incidents. Conformity had a partial influence of 15.8% on bullying ,while fanaticism did not show any statistically significant influence.

Keywords: Conformity, fanaticism, bullying

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Introduction

Bullying is a phenomenon of violent actions (Febriyani & Indrawati, 2016), ranging from the mildest form of oppression, such as intimidation or verbal terror, to cyberbullying and physical torture (Febriyani & Indrawati, 2016).

According to Levianti (2008), bullying is the act of hurting others, physically, verbally, or emotionally, and the conduct is carried out by individuals or groups. Olweus (1997) stated that the conduct was a harmful behavior towards others or another group, causing the victim to feel hurt and uncomfortable with the behavior. Bullying typically occurs continuously and is characterized by an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. Olweus (1997) provided examples of bullying behavior, including mocking, spreading gossip, inciting, isolating, intimidating, threatening, oppressing, extorting, or physically attacking, such as pushing, slapping, or hitting. According to Tumon (2014), bullying can occur in various places, including sports (Abduh, 2020; Aziz et al., 2022; Vveinhardt et al., 2019).

Football is a sport with significant popularity and widespread admiration, within Indonesia and globally (Lucky, 2013). Effendy and Indrawati (2020) explained that the sport is enjoyed by almost all groups

and segments of society. Furthermore, the sport does not discriminate based on gender, age, or socioeconomic status. Rahmat (2016) explained that football spectators were divided into two groups. First, some spectators only watch and enjoy the match without supporting or favoring any particular team. Second, a group known as supporters provides enthusiasm to the team in the match (Rahmat, 2016). Negative behaviors shown by supporters include mockery, taunting, racism, and chanting jeering slogans (Effendy & Indrawati, 2020; Rahmat, 2016).

The substantial impact of football on society becomes apparent through the influence on the behaviors shown by supporters of a particular team (Gumusgul & Acet, 2016). The attitude of someone with excessive love, to the extent of being willing to do anything for a deeply held belief, is referred to as fanaticism (Putri, 2018). According to Goddard (cited in Handoko & Ali, 2021), fanaticism is a belief system that renders an individual blind to reason, compelling one to take extreme measures to uphold principles.

Fanaticism towards a football club leads supporters to perceive the team as the best. Conversely, fanatical supporters solely concentrate on the shortcomings of teams that are not their favorites and the expression manifests as aggressive behavior (Anam

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& Supriyadi, 2018). The pronounced fanaticism shown by the 'bobotoh' in supporting Persib's team during matches extends beyond the pursuit of victory, leading to bullying. These actions include insulting the opposing team, mocking opposing supporters or players, and resorting to throwing bottles at opposing players. The behavior constitutes one of the forms of bullying, as described by Olweus (1997).

According to Agriawan (2016), conflicts or clashes between football supporter groups originate from trivial issues, such as mutual taunting, racist chants against the opposing team's supporter group, or banners and flags with insulting and degrading words. Another trigger is a provocation by a few individuals, leading the group to be provoked and resulting in largescale disturbances. Supporter groups feeling intimidated or pressured typically respond by resorting to violent actions. Widhy and Sartika (2018) stated that a football club where clashes often occur is the Persib supporters known as 'bobotoh,' who frequently clash with the supporters of the Persija football club, known as 'The Jackmania'. The bobotoh are also considered the most fanatical supporters in Indonesia (Widhy & Sartika, 2018).

Members officially registered as bobotoh' in the Viking Persib Club (VPC) reach 5 million individuals scattered across various regions. In reality, the actual number is unknown since some are not registered with the VPC. The clubs are recognized for having a sizable number of football supporters who frequently engage in bullying activities in the vicinity of the stadium.

The acts of bullying carried out by the bobotoh include verbal and physical actions (Widhy & Sartika, 2018). According to Manuaba and Supriyadi (2018), fanaticism can enhance an individual's motivation to support a group. Sears et al. (2009) stated that conformity refers to the behavior or attitudes shown by individuals in adhering to the rules and norms of a group. Levianti (2008) reported that conformity includes following the group's values and rules. The easiest way to adapt is by following the values and rules prevailing in the surrounding environment (Levianti, 2008).

Tumon (2014) shows that the conformity factor within peer groups influences adolescents to engage in bullying to gain acceptance within their group. According to Ajhuri (2019), changes do not only occur within adolescents but can also manifest in their environment, such as the attitudes of parents, teachers, peers, and society. This is because adolescents are expected to show behavior in line with their peers or relatives. These individuals are associated with bullying behavior due to the psychosocial development stage, characterized by the search for identity versus confusion (Santrock, 2007).

Erikson (in Santrock, 2007) explained that adolescent phase can be navigated through positive and negative avenues. Exploring new roles through healthy and positive means contributes to the formation of a positive identity. Conversely, a negative identity is developed when these individuals are perceived as incapable of meeting the diverse demands. This may manifest when adolescents are restricted from engaging in socially acceptable roles within the development (Erikson, in Santrock, 2007). Bullying, in its various forms, can serve as a means for adolescents to shape identity (Shidiqi & Suprapti, 2013).

Baron & Byrne (2005) explained that one aspect contributing to someone engaging in harmful behavior towards others was the existence of attraction within the group (in-group), leading individuals to feel a sense of similarity. Conversely, these individuals are perceived as different from members outside the group (out-group). This tendency often leads to violence against members outside their group in various forms.

In addition, bullying behavior in football is perpetrated by adults (Widhy & Sartika, 2018). Individuals who have reached adulthood are expected to show a more mature ability to manage emotions. Adults should possess the capability to handle emotions with maturity, particularly regarding the roles as supporters. These supporters should be adept at managing emotions and not easily succumbing to provocation by environmental conditions. However, a considerable number of adults also engage in bullying behavior (Widhy & Sartika, 2018).

Research conducted is mostly related to fanaticism or conformity associated with aggression in football supporters, for example, Agriawan (2016), Anam & Supriyadi (2018), Aziz, et al. (2022), Hapsari & Wibowo (2015), and Utomo & Kristianingsih (2023). However, aggressive behavior typically begins with bullying actions such as teasing, racist chants, and bottle-throwing (Agriawan, 2016).

Anam & Supriyadi (2018) found that fanaticism and conformity influenced verbal aggression among football supporters in Denpasar. Hapsari and Wibowo (2015) obtained results showing a significant relationship between fanaticism, and aggression in supporters of Persija Jakarta and Persib Bandung. Similar to previous results, Utomo and Kristianingsih (2023) discovered a significant positive relationship between fanaticism and verbally aggressive behavior among supporters. Research on bullying among supporters is more related to cyberbullying among supporters, as seen in Fadhilah (2021) and Pangestu (2023). Different analyses have been conducted on bullying within school contexts, as exemplified by Hopeman et al. (2020), Octavianto (2017), and Putri (2022). Therefore, this research aimed to fill a gap by

examining the impact of conformity and fanaticism on bullying among Persib Bandung football supporters.

Methods

A quantitative approach with a causal design is used in this research. The population consists of supporters of Persib Bandung, also known as bobotoh. Accidental sampling, resulting in a total of 349 respondents is used and data collection is conducted online by distributing questionnaires through Google Forms.

three This research uses measurement instruments, where the first is the conformity scale developed by Pujiastuti (2022). This measurement tool is an adaptation of the theory by Sears et al. (2009) and the scale consists of cohesiveness, consensus, and obedience. The instrument comprises 31 statements with a validity index range of .263 to .614 and a reliability value of .764. The instrument is assessed using a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Examples of items include "I follow whatever my group members do" and "I choose to ignore it when my group members need help."

The measurement tool for assessing fanaticism uses the scale developed by Agriawan (2016). This instrument is developed based on Goddard's theory (in Handoko & Ali, 2021) and consists of four aspects: 1) the level of interest in an activity, 2) having personal attitudes, 3) the duration of being part of a group, and 4) having motivation coming from the family. The tool comprises 30 statements with a validity index range of .307 to .722 and a reliability value of .917. The statements are assessed using a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Examples of items include "I have been a Persib supporter since childhood" and "My favorite football team easily changes.

To measure bullying, the measurement tool used is a modified scale from Zain (2021) developed from Olweus' theory (1997). This measurement tool consists of three aspects, namely verbal, indirect, and physical. Furthermore, the tool comprises 19 statements with a validity index range of .337 to .667 and a reliability value of .871. The respondents evaluate the questions using a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (often). Examples of items include "I laugh at opposing team supporters when few in number at the stadium" and "I say mocking things to players after losing a match."

Descriptive statistical and inferential analysis of multiple regression, namely the F-test and t-test, were conducted to analyze the data. In descriptive analysis, theoretical mean calculations were performed for each variable. The scores were divided into low and high categories. Inferential analysis was carried out by calculating multiple regression after passing the classical assumption tests, namely normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests.

Subsequently, the F-test (simultaneous), t-test (partial), and coefficient of determination were calculated.

Results and Discussion

Results

The respondents are Bolatoh Persib, consisting of 330 (94.6%) and 19 (5.4%) males and females. The majority were in the 20-22, 23-24, and under 19 years age range, namely 181 (51.9%), 92 (26.4%), and 76 (21.8%), respectively.

Based on the variable categories in Table 1, 229 and 120 individuals show high (65.62%) and low (34.38%) conformity. This shows that the majority of respondents have a high level of conformity. In terms of fanaticism, all 349 respondents (100%) report high fanaticism towards Persib Bandung football club.

In contrast to the previous variables, the level of bullying among respondents is more balanced. There are 177 (50.72%) and 172 (49.82%) respondents with low and high levels of bullying.

Before conducting data analysis, classical assumption tests were performed as a requirement for multiple linear regression. The classical assumption tests include tests for normality, multicollinearity, and heteroskedasticity. In this research, the normality test used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results show that the data is normally distributed due to a p-value of .069 (> .05). The next test is conducted to determine the level of multicollinearity in the research data. The results show no multicollinearity, with a tolerance value of .994 (> .10) and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value of 1.006 (< 10). Finally, the heteroskedasticity test is carried out using a scatterplot and the result shows no issue in the research data.

After fulfilling the classical assumption tests, hypothesis testing is performed using the F-test (simultaneous) and t-test (partial). The results of the F-test (simultaneous) calculation indicate that the conformity and fanaticism variables obtained a significant value of .003 < .05. Therefore, the conformity and fanaticism variables have a simultaneous influence on bullying.

The calculation result of the determination coefficient is .033 or 3.3%, meaning that conformity and fanaticism collectively have a 3.3% simultaneous influence, while 96.7% is influenced by external variables.

Table 1
Research Variable Categories

Variable	Category	
	Low(%)	High(%)
Conformity	120 (34.38)	229 (65.62)
Fanaticism	0 (0)	349 (100)
Bullying	177 (50.72)	172 (49.28)

The partial t-test results show that conformity obtained a significant value of .003 < .05, therefore the variable partially influences bullying among *bobotoh*. Conversely, the t-test for fanaticism obtained a significant value of .135 > .05, meaning the variable did not have a significant partial influence on bullying among adolescents *bobotoh*.

The results of the regression equation model are explained below. First, the constant value (β_0) is 17.567, indicating that when conformity and fanaticism have a value of 0, the level of bullying is 17.567. Second, the regression coefficient value for conformity (β_1) is positive, specifically .167. For every 1-unit increase in conformity, bullying rises by .167, assuming the values of other variables remain constant. Third, the regression coefficient value for fanaticism (β_2) is positive, specifically .057. Therefore, for every 1-unit increase in fanaticism, bullying rises by .057, assuming the values of other variables remain constant.

Discussion

Based on the categorization of the data, 65.62% of bobotoh fall into the high conformity group, while the rest are categorized as low. This indicates that the bobotoh subjects tend to have a high level of conformity. According to Sarwono (2010), high levels of conformity can be influenced by deindividuation, where an individual loses their identity for a certain period, such as in a crowd. This phenomenon results in individuals within the bobotoh crowd temporarily subsuming their identity while immersed in the group dynamics. During this period, identity is expressed in line with the collective actions of the group and conforming to the behaviors shown.

Based on the data, 100% of *bobotoh* falls into the high fanaticism group. The descriptive analysis showed that *bobotoh*, or supporters of Persib Bandung were considered to be among the famously fanatical supporters in Indonesia (Aziz et al., 2022; Widhy & Sartika, 2018).

Based on the data, *bobotoh* in this research who falls into the low bullying category has a percentage of 50.72%, and the rest fall into the high bullying category. From these results, there are more subjects in the low bullying category, although the percentage difference is insignificant. The calculations show that subjects have good abilities in managing emotions.

In conducting hypothesis testing, multiple linear regression was used with simultaneous (F-test) and partial (t-test) tests. The simultaneous test (F-test) through the SPSS application shows a significant role or influence of conformity and fanaticism on bullying, as reported by the significance value of .003 (p < .05). The determination coefficient has a value of .033, where conformity and fanaticism contribute to bullying among *bobotoh* by 3.3%. Therefore, the remaining

96.7% of bullying is influenced by other variables not examined in this research.

These findings provide an understanding that the behavior carried out is influenced by other variables. Despite being used in this research, the variables still influence bullying.

Groups can show increased aggression compared to individuals since the values often become more irrational and impulsive, specifically in a crowd. The phenomenon of deindividuation occurs when someone is in or around a crowd, leading to the loss of individual identity due to the influence of group norms. In these situations, individuals tend to excessively show their group identity (Sarwono, 2010). Therefore, someone who is a member of a specific group tends to have a more positive attitude toward engaging in bullying (Levianti, 2008). In the context of this research, a bobotoh member supporting Persib at the stadium tends to show a high level of conformity, including engaging in bullying behavior at the stadium.

Similarly, fanaticism is considered a factor that reinforces group behaviors, which can lead to harmful behaviors, such as aggression or bullying (Eliani et al., 2018). Individuals with high levels of fanaticism are more inclined to impose their beliefs on others, whether negative or positive emotions related to love for a particular object. Therefore, the suppression of negative and positive emotions can lead to aggression and prosocial actions, respectively (Eliani et al., 2018).

Excessive admiration or idolization can lead to aggressive behavior. The problem with fanaticism is the potential for harmful or injurious behavior towards an individual (Marimaa, 2011). According to Marimaa (2011), idolizing a figure is considered positive within normal limits. However, this transforms into a negative phenomenon when excessive fanaticism develops, leading to detrimental behaviors towards others, such as aggression and bullying.

A deep connection with the team is felt when a supporter shows a high level of fanaticism. These intense emotions can lead to actions that may harm others and are carried out by the associated group. Supporter groups naturally have expectations for their supported team to achieve victory. In addition, these groups often have demands regarding the quality of the referees in officiating matches. The development of detrimental behavior may be attributed to unfulfilled expectations of the team and dissatisfaction with the referee's performance in leading the match.

This research is consistent with Anam and Supriyadi (2018) which showed a significant negative relationship between fanaticism, conformity, and verbal aggression among football supporter communities. Fanaticism and conformity simultaneously showed a combined influence of 10.4%

on verbal aggression within the football supporter community in Bali.

Multiple regression analysis, using a partial t-test states that the conformity variable has Standardized Coefficient and Significance values of .158 and .003, which is smaller than the alpha value (.003 < .05). Therefore, conformity shows a 15.8% influence on bullying within the *bobotoh* community. These findings are consistent with Harris's viewpoint (2009) that peer or group conformity is a factor influencing bullying.

Levianti (2008) reported that conformity could contribute to an increase in bullying behavior. The results also show that the fanaticism variable does not have a separate or independent influence on bullying. Multiple regression analysis using the t-test shows that the standardized coefficient value for the fanaticism variable is .135, greater than the alpha value (> .05). Therefore, there is no statistically significant influence of the variable on bullying among the *bobotoh* community.

Manuaba and Supriyadi (2018) found no relationship between fanaticism and aggressive behavior. The data analysis shows that fanaticism does not influence bullying behavior. This is consistent with Marimaa (2011), where fanaticism is not a negative phenomenon and may be positive when within normal limits. The nature and attributes of fanaticism posing a direct threat to human well-being should be comprehended. This understanding enables the anticipation and prevention of adverse manifestations, including physical or mental violence, such as aggressive behavior or bullying.

According to Manuaba and Supriyadi (2018), this variable can drive an individual to increase efforts in supporting an organization or group. However, extreme or excessive fanaticism can lead to self-destructive behavior, such as aggression or bullying. In the context of football, fanaticism is when individuals intensify efforts to ensure that the team achieves victory. However, the level among the *bobotoh* is within reasonable limits and not excessive.

This research has limitations concerning the age distribution of respondents, predominantly in the early adulthood range of 20-22 years. A more diverse age distribution is expected to obtain varied results, specifically when analyzing developmental stages. Additionally, the research focuses solely on Persib Bandung supporters, presenting a limitation. The inclusion of supporters from various football clubs provided a more comprehensive perspective on the influence of conformity and fanaticism on bullying.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there was an influence of conformity and fanaticism on bullying among Persib Bandung

supporters. The manifestation of bullying among bobotoh (Persib Bandung supporters) stemmed from observing the behavior of the individuals and was driven by fanaticism for the supported football club. Furthermore, individuals were more likely to emulate the conduct when supporters showed bullying behavior. Conversely, supporters did not engage in bullying when the behavior was not initiated even with a high level of fanaticism.

The results showed that conformity in individuals played a more significant role in the occurrence of bullying than fanaticism. Therefore, bullying among football supporters did not occur unless the behavior was initiated.

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