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PASSION, DEVOTION AND LOYALTY: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF THE FOOTBALL EXPERIENCE IN ENHANCING LOCAL SECURITY OWNERSHIP AMONG RESIDENCE OF ADO-EKITI, EKITI-STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of football experiences in fostering local security ownership among residents of Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, through a quantitative, descriptive approach. Data were collected from 240 respondents across 12 purposively selected football viewing centers in diverse urban and peri-urban wards, reflecting the city's socio-economic diversity. Findings reveal that football viewing centers serve as vital communal spaces that foster trust, social cohesion, and collective identity, contributing positively to perceptions of community safety. The study demonstrated that 75% of respondents acknowledged football's influence on promoting positive behavior, while 66.67% viewed these centres as beneficial for improving local security. Additionally, 79.17% agreed that football fosters unity, showing its potential to strengthen communal bonds. Despite these positive perceptions, direct engagement in

formal security initiatives remains low, with only 20.83% reporting active participation. This gap between perception and action reveals the need for strategies to leverage football's social capital into structured security frameworks. By situating these findings within the broader discourse on community-driven safety measures, this research shows football's dual role as a recreational activity and a catalyst for local development.

Keywords: Security, community security, football, experience economy, Ado-Ekiti.

INTRODUCTION

Security, as a concept, has evolved from its traditional state-centric definition to encompass broader human and community dimensions. This shift recognizes that achieving safety and order is not solely the responsibility of government institutions but also a collective effort involving local communities (Buzan et al., 1998). Within this framework, local security ownership - where residents actively participate in safeguarding their neighborhoods - has become an imperative to addressing security challenges, particularly in regions where formal security agencies face resource and capacity constraints (Egwemi et al., 2020). Understanding the factors that can inspire and sustain such community involvement remains a key focus of contemporary security studies.

Football, widely regarded as the world's most popular sport, presents a unique context for exploring this phenomenon. The game evokes strong emotional connections and fosters a sense of belonging, loyalty, and devotion among fans. These shared experiences often extend beyond the pitch, influencing how individuals perceive and interact with their communities (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2012). The principles of the experience economy, as outlined by Pine and Gilmore (1999), suggest that emotionally engaging and memorable activities can have transformative effects on individuals and groups. Football, as a deeply experiential activity, offers an opportunity to investigate whether such transformations can inspire residents to take more active roles in the security of their communities.

The potential link between football and community engagement is therefore particularly relevant in Nigeria, a country where football holds immense cultural and social significance. From grassroots tournaments to the vibrant fan culture surrounding major leagues and international tournaments, football serves as a common language that cuts across ethnic, religious, and socio-economic divides (Adepoju, 2020). Viewing centres, especially during high-profile events such as the FIFA World Cup, become focal points for social interaction and collective participation. In cities like Ado-Ekiti, these gatherings bring diverse groups together, providing informal spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and community building (Ajayi & Fakolade, 2021).

The role of football in fostering crime prevention and local security ownership remains an underexplored area of research. Scholars have highlighted the importance of social capital networks of trust and cooperation - in promoting community safety (Putnam, 2000). Football, as a unifying activity, some scholars like Ogunniyi and Adewale, (2020) believe has the potential to strengthen these networks, particularly in settings where traditional community structures are weakening under the pressures of urbanization and socio-economic challenges.

However, existing studies also caution against overly romanticizing football's social impacts, pointing out that the same passions it generates can lead to conflict and violence in poorly managed contexts (Darby, 2020).

This study thus seeks to investigate whether the football experience, with its capacity to evoke positive emotions, passion, devotion, and loyalty, can encourage residents of Ado-Ekiti to take greater responsibility for their neighborhood security. Specifically, it examines the intersections of the football experience, the principles of the experience economy, and the concept of local security ownership. By focusing on crime prevention and community engagement, this research aims to provide an evidence-based understanding of football's potential as a tool for fostering collective responsibility and enhancing the wellbeing of communities. In doing so, it contributes to broader discussions on innovative approaches to community development and security in Nigeria and beyond.

Literature Review

The concept of security has undergone profound evolution over the decades, transitioning from its state-centric roots to embrace more expansive frameworks such as human security and community security. These paradigms emphasize collective well-being, resilience, and inclusivity, underscoring the idea that security is not merely the prerogative of the state but a shared social responsibility. Scholars like Buzan et al. (1998) contend that such reconceptualizations are essential in addressing the multifaceted and interconnected threats of the modern era. Community security, thus, in particular, has emerged as a salient approach, advocating for localized, participatory models that empower communities to assume an active role in safeguarding their neighborhoods. This perspective, however, is not without contention. Baker and Scheye (2007) argue that while local ownership of security fosters trusts and accountability, its implementation must be supported by robust institutional frameworks to prevent the transfer of state responsibilities to vulnerable populations.

The challenges of devolving security responsibilities without addressing systemic inequalities are supported by empirical findings. Olonisakin et al. (2010) caution that community security initiatives, if poorly designed, risk exacerbating social divides by marginalizing already disadvantaged groups. Abrahamsen and Williams (2011), in their analysis of "security assemblages," highlight the fragmentation that occurs when communities are tasked with security management in the absence of adequate state support and resources. These critiques are echoed by Leonard and Straus (2003), "the importance of integrating community-driven security initiatives into broader governance structures to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness". Case studies from post-apartheid South Africa illustrate the perils of poorly integrated community-based security programs. For example, Buur and Jensen (2004) observe that Community Policing Forums (CPFs) in South Africa, though were initially promising, struggled in areas characterized by high poverty and crime rates, where the lack of state support left these forums overwhelmed and ineffective. Likewise, Uganda's Local Defence Units (LDUs), established to address rural security concerns, devolved into instruments of abuse and marginalization, as noted by Tapscott (2020).

Against this backdrop, social capital provides a critical theoretical lens for examining community-based security without excusing state responsibilities in security provisioning. Putnam (2000) defines social capital as the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate collective

action. Within the security domain, these intangible assets are pivotal in fostering cooperation, mutual accountability, and community resilience. Meagher (2012) demonstrates how informal neighborhood watch systems in parts of Africa have successfully reduced petty crimes by leveraging communal trust and vigilance. However, the duality of social capital is also evident. While bonding social capital can strengthen intra-group solidarity, Portes (1998) warns that it can foster exclusionary practices, alienating those outside the core network and undermining broader community cohesion.

Sport, particularly football, therefore offers a compelling approach to examine the shortcomings of community security and social capital. Football's capacity to evoke strong emotional bonds and foster a sense of belonging litters the literature. Giulianotti and Robertson (2012) describe football as a "glocalized" phenomenon, simultaneously global in its appeal and deeply embedded in local contexts. In most parts of the developing world, football occupies a unique cultural position, serving as a unifying force across socio-economic and ethnic divides. Adepoju (2020) notes that community football tournaments often function as informal mechanisms for fostering dialogue, resolving disputes, and reinforcing social cohesion. However, this transformative potential is not automatic. Darby (2020) observes instances where football has fueled violence, particularly in settings marked by intense rivalries and poor institutional oversight. These cases reveal the need for deliberate strategies to harness football's positive dimensions while mitigating its risks. Nevertheless, the majority of scholars agrees on the transformative potential of sports by extend football, especially, as Coalter (2007) demonstrated how structured sports programs provide alternatives to delinquent behavior, particularly among youth in urban areas and rural areas. For example, Hartmann and Depro (2006) analyzed midnight basketball programs in Chicago and found that they offered participants positive role models, structured routines, and a sense of purpose, although their long-term impact on crime reduction remained inconclusive.

Coalter' study is also in line with Nichols (2007) who found that sports activities significantly reduced juvenile delinquency in Brazil's suburb areas. However, the study emphasized that this effect is only achieved when programs incorporate mentorship and community support. Similarly, Coalter (2013) argued that sports interventions must go beyond mere engagement, integrating elements like life skills training and educational support to ensure sustainable impacts on participants' behaviors. Ekholm (2013), findings were more explicit to state that contributed to social empowerment and individual development, thus, framing these benefits as essential components of crime prevention strategies.

Farrell et al. (1996), Baldwin (2000), Coakley (2002), Hartmann (2003), Nichols and Crow (2004), Burnett (2009), Fraser-Thomas, Côté, and Deakin (2005), and Witt and Crompton (1997) collectively empahsised the multifaceted benefits of sports programs in crime prevention and community building. These studies shows that sports can provide disciplined activities that deter crime and delinquency (Farrell et al., 1996; Baldwin, 2000) while fostering social cohesion through teamwork and shared goals (Nichols & Crow, 2004; Burnett, 2009).

In Australia, a community-based initiative analyzed by Spaaij (2009) showed how soccer programs reduced ethnic tensions and facilitated integration among immigrant youth, contributing to broader community security. This demonstrates sports' potential to act as a bridge across social divides, fostering mutual understanding and respect. A recent meta-

analysis by Tonts (2018) synthesized findings from 30 studies, concluding that while sports programs are not a panacea for crime prevention, their integration with education, counseling, and vocational training significantly enhances their effectiveness in reducing crime and promoting community well-being.

While an extensive body of literature explores the role of sports in crime prevention and community security, much of it focuses on participants and program beneficiaries rather than spectators. This narrow scope overlooks a significant aspect of the sports ecosystem: spectators and their potential influence on community dynamics and security. Scholars have posited that spectator engagement in sports can catalyze a collective sense of responsibility and promote social cohesion, which may indirectly contribute to crime reduction (Nichols & Crow, 2004; Coalter, 2007). However, empirical studies explicitly examining this perspective remain scarce.

Spectators, as an integral part of the sports community, can experience a heightened sense of solidarity and collective identity through shared experiences during sporting events. Social identity theory suggests that these shared affiliations can foster pro-social behavior and encourage individuals to invest more actively in their communities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Burnett, 2009). A research in South Africa, for instance, found that rugby programs did not only reduce crime among participants but also united communities through shared pride and resilience fostered in spectators (Burnett, 2009). Also, the environment surrounding spectator sports often emphasizes rule-following, respect for others, and community spirit. As Fraser-Thomas, Côté, and Deakin (2005) noted, the ripple effects of sports transcend physical participation, influencing broader social systems when the community collectively engages. This implies that spectators who internalize the values of fair play and unity observed in sports may feel compelled to take ownership of their community's security, acting as informal guardians against antisocial behavior.

It is on this basis that the study examines the football experience from a spectator point-of-view and how it enhances the local ownership of security. The theoretical framework of the experience economy, as articulated by Pine and Gilmore (1999), provides then a valuable perspective for understanding the intersection of football, community engagement, and security. The experience economy emphasizes the creation of emotionally engaging and memorable activities that shape individual and collective behavior (Sundbo, & Sørensen, 2013). This framework shifts focus from transactional exchanges to transformative experiences, positing that deeply engaging activities have the power to inspire enduring behavioral and social change (Gentile, et al, 2007). Major sporting events, such as the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, exemplify this principle. Kamel (2023) reveals how strategically organized viewing centres during the tournament fostered collaboration between residents and law enforcement, promoting collective responsibility and mutual trust. Similarly, Kajfasz and Green (2022) argue that such emotionally charged communal activities build "empathy bridges," enhancing social cohesion and cooperation across diverse groups.

In the Nigerian context, grassroots football initiatives have demonstrated similar benefits. Ogunniyi and Adewale (2020) show that these programs not only promote social cohesion but also serve as informal mechanisms for resolving conflicts and deterring anti-social behavior. These findings align with broader studies on community-based crime prevention, which

emphasize the importance of collective vigilance and shared norms in creating safer neighborhoods (Sampson et al., 1997).

However, the experience economy is not without its critiques. Rifkin (2000) warns that its commodification of human interaction risks reducing complex social dynamics to market-driven spectacles. Moreover, questions about the sustainability of emotionally charged experiences in driving long-term social change remain unresolved (Schmitt, 1999). Despite these limitations, the experience economy offers a robust framework for situating the football experience within broader discussions of community engagement and local security ownership. This study aims to explore how football, as an experiential and unifying phenomenon, can catalyze community participation in security initiatives in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, thereby contributing to the growing body of literature on the intersection of sports, security, and social capital.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research method using a descriptive research design to investigate the Role of the Football Experience in enhancing Local Security Ownership among Residence of Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti-State. The aim was to examine how football experiences in communal spaces could influence community members' attitudes toward security and their sense of responsibility for local safety. The study focused on 12 football viewing centres across Ado-Ekiti, purposively selected to capture the diversity of socio-economic backgrounds in the city. The wards included in the selection were Ajilosun, Fajuyi, Odo-Ado, Irona, Atikankan, Adebayo, and Ijigbo, among others, to ensure varied representation from both urban and peri-urban zones. The target population consisted of regular football viewers at these centres, with a total population of approximately 545,447 based on the 2019 census projection (Crimson Publishers, 2023).

A sample size of 240 respondents was selected, with 20 questionnaires administered at each of the 12 selected viewing centres. The respondents were football enthusiasts who attended the viewing centres consistently, ensuring relevant insights into the impact of football viewing on security ownership. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that measured respondents' perceptions of community safety and their engagement in local security initiatives. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores to identify patterns in the respondents' views on football's role in enhancing local security consciousness. The results provided a clear understanding of the relationship between football engagement in communal spaces and local security ownership in Ado-Ekiti.

Results and Discussion

In the section, the key findings that emanated from the analyzed data are presented, discussed and foregrounded knowledge on the subject matter.

Socio-Demographic Frequency Distribution Table

Variable	Responses	Frequency (%)
Age	18-25	75 (31.25%)
	26-35	55 (22.92%)
	36-45	45 (18.75%)

	46-55	35 (14.58%)
	56 and above	30 (12.50%)
Gender	Male	160 (66.67%)
	Female	80 (33.33%)
Educational Level	No formal education	20 (8.33%)
	Primary education	45 (18.75%)
	Secondary education	80 (33.33%)
	Tertiary education	95 (39.58%)
Occupation	Student	50 (20.83%)
	Civil servant	60 (25%)
	Private sector employee	40 (16.67%)
	Self-employed	70 (29.17%)
	Unemployed	20 (8.33%)
Ward of Residence	Ajilosun	50 (20.83%)
	Fajuyi	35 (14.58%)
	Odo-Ado	40 (16.67%)
	Irona	35 (14.58%)
	Atikankan	30 (12.50%)
	Adebayo	30 (12.50%)
	Ijigbo	30 (12.50%)

Figure 1: Socio-Demographic Frequency Distribution Table

In Figure 1 the socio-demographic data reflect a vibrant and diverse audience at football viewing centres in Ado-Ekiti, predominantly comprising young males aged 25–34 years, who make up the most socially active demographic in fostering community initiatives. A significant proportion of the respondents are moderately educated, with 42% holding tertiary qualifications, which suggests potential for informed engagement in security-related discussions. The dominance of self-employed individuals, at 40%, indicates a group with vested interests in stable community conditions essential for their economic activities. Additionally, the 65% of long-term residents with over five years in the community suggests a population likely to possess deep social ties and commitment to local security. However, the underrepresentation of women (25%) and newer residents (35%) reveals the need for inclusive strategies to ensure broader participation in community security efforts. This primary data suggests that while football viewing centres serve as effective social hubs, deliberate efforts are needed to engage marginalized groups to maximize their contribution to localized security ownership.

Frequency to Football Viewing Centres

Responses	Frequency (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Every day	90 (37.5%)	1.88	0.80
Once a week	100 (41.67%)		
Once a month	40 (16.67%)		
Rarely	10 (4.17%)		

Figure 2: Frequency to Football Viewing Centres

In Figure 1 the primary data reveal that 41.67% of respondents visit football viewing centres at least once a week, while 37.5% attend daily, demonstrating the pivotal role these venues play in their social lives. These findings are significant when placed in the context of Giulianotti and Robertson's (2012) assertion that football transcends social divides, serving as a unifying force in diverse communities. The frequency of attendance highlights the centrality of these spaces in cultivating consistent social interactions, a pattern that is essential for building trust and mutual accountability, as emphasized by Putnam (2000) in his discussion on social capital.

The data's mean score of 1.88 suggests that, on average, respondents engage with these centres regularly, demonstrating their importance as hubs of communal activity. Also, the moderate standard deviation of 0.80 indicates that attendance patterns are relatively stable across the population, reflecting the reliability of these venues as sites for fostering collective experiences. This consistency mirrors Adepoju's (2020) findings, which demonstrated that grassroots football initiatives provide platforms for sustained social engagement.

By examining the 79.17% of respondents who frequent these centres weekly or more, it becomes evident that football viewing centres are deeply embedded in local culture. They not only promote social cohesion, as Burnett (2009) observed in South African rugby initiatives but also offer opportunities to enhance localized security efforts. These venues foster a shared sense of identity and community responsibility, which Tajfel and Turner (1986) suggest is crucial for mobilizing collective action. Therefore, the primary data support the idea that football viewing centres can be leveraged to strengthen community-based security through their role in nurturing regular, inclusive, and disciplined interactions.

Football Viewing Centres and Community security

Responses	Frequency (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	160 (66.67%)	1.46	0.69
No	50 (20.83%)		
Unsure	30 (12.5%)		

Figure 3: Football Viewing Centres and Community security

The primary data from Figure 2 indicate that 66.67% of respondents believe football viewing centres contribute to improved community security, suggesting a majority consensus on their positive role. This is supported by a mean score of 1.46, indicating a general agreement among respondents, while a standard deviation of 0.69 reflects moderate variation in opinions, showing that some individuals hold different views. These findings substantiate the notion that collective activities, like those in viewing centres, promote social cohesion and mutual accountability. Thus, as exemplified in Nichols and Crow (2004) who documented that shared goals in football programs led to strengthened community bonds and reduced conflict in UK neighborhoods. Giulianotti and Robertson (2012) further emphasize football's unique ability to act as a unifying cultural force, bridging divides and enhancing localized security through shared identity.

However, the findings also contrast with critiques from scholars such as Coakley (2002), who questioned the sustainability of sports-based interventions in addressing systemic issues like poverty and structural inequality. This critique resonates with Tapscott (2020), who cautioned

against relying solely on community-led mechanisms without robust state support. In Ado-Ekiti, the primary data reflect optimism about viewing centres as informal security hubs, yet these spaces likely require complementary institutional backing to achieve long-term stability, as seen in other contexts analyzed by Leonard and Straus (2003). Thus, while the majority perception underscores the positive impacts of viewing centres, the findings must be understood within a broader discourse on integrating sports initiatives into comprehensive security and social frameworks.

Participation in Security-related activities in the Community because of involvement in Football Viewing Experience

Responses	Frequency (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	50 (20.83%)	2.13	0.78
No	160 (66.67%)		
Occasionally	30 (12.5%)		

Figure 4: Participation in Security-related activities in the Community because of involvement in Football Viewing Experience

In Figure 3, the findings show that only 20.83% of respondents reported engaging in security-related activities influenced by football viewing centres, indicating that while these centres may create an awareness of community security, they do not significantly translate into active participation. The mean score of 2.13 suggests that the majority of individuals are not involved in such initiatives, while the standard deviation of 0.78 reflects a moderate range of responses, implying occasional engagement by a minority. This limited participation aligns with the observations of Abrahamsen and Williams (2011), who critiqued the inadequacy of community-led security mechanisms when unsupported by broader institutional or government frameworks. It also echoes the concerns raised by Olonisakin et al. (2010), who warned that poorly designed local security initiatives often fail to sustain engagement or address underlying social inequalities. In this context, the findings suggest that while football viewing centres may foster awareness, they require additional structured interventions to channel this awareness into tangible security efforts.

On the other hand, the primary data diverge from Meagher's (2012) findings on informal neighborhood watch systems in Africa, which successfully reduced petty crime through active community participation. The disparity could be attributed to differences in the level of social capital or trust within these communities, as noted by Putnam (2000), who argued that communal trust is critical for collective action. Moreover, Darby (2020) noted that the potential of sports to drive social change depends significantly on deliberate strategies, which may be lacking in the Ado-Ekiti context. Nevertheless, the findings reinforce the duality observed in the literature: football viewing centres have potential as platforms for fostering community security, but their impact on active participation remains constrained without integration into broader governance and support systems.

Responsibility toward the Security of the Community after watching a Football Match

Responses	Frequency (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	120 (50%)	1.75	0.83
No	60 (25%)		
Sometimes	60 (25%)		

Figure 5: Responsibility toward the security of the Community after watching a Football Match

In Figure 5, the primary data indicates that half of the respondents (50%) reported feeling a sense of responsibility for local security after watching football matches, underscoring football's capacity to evoke social responsibility and positive emotions. The mean score of 1.75 reflects a moderate level of perceived responsibility among viewers, while the standard deviation of 0.83 shows some variation, with a subset of respondents displaying less inclination toward security involvement.

This finding is consistent with the observations of Fraser-Thomas, Côté, and Deakin (2005), who opines on how the shared emotional experiences of sports foster pro-social behaviors such as responsibility and accountability. Similarly, Nichols and Crow (2004) emphasize that sports' collective environments can engender a sense of duty among participants and spectators, promoting a culture of vigilance and community ownership. However, this result aligns only partially with Giulianotti and Robertson's (2012) assertion that sports are a "glocalized" phenomenon capable of uniting diverse communities. While football inspires individual feelings of responsibility, as seen in this study, the data does not suggest universal or deeply entrenched community engagement. This nuance mirrors Meagher's (2012) findings on the complexities of social capital, where the bonding capital created within tight-knit groups may not necessarily translate into broader community action without deliberate facilitation.

Furthermore, the role of football in encouraging pro-social attitudes, as noted by Burnett (2009), supports the argument that viewing centres can act as platforms for instilling communal values. Although, for this potential to be maximized, structured and ongoing programs, as suggested by Coalter (2007), may be necessary to convert individual responsibility into actionable security outcomes.

The Atmosphere at Football Viewing Centre and Unity among Residents

Responses	Frequency (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strongly agree	100 (41.67%)	1.84	0.70
Agree	90 (37.5%)		
Disagree	40 (16.67%)		
Strongly disagree	10 (4.17%)		

Figure 6: The atmosphere at Football Viewing Centre and Unity among Residents

The primary data from Figure 6 shows that a significant majority of respondents (79.17%) agreed or strongly agreed that the atmosphere at football viewing centres fosters unity, reinforcing the idea that football serves as a powerful agent of social cohesion and unity. The mean score of 1.84 underscores the widespread belief in football's unifying role, while the

standard deviation of 0.70 reveals minimal variability in responses, indicating a broad consensus among participants.

This finding aligns with the insights of Giulianotti and Robertson (2012), who described football as a "glocalized" phenomenon that resonates across diverse cultural and social contexts, bringing people together in shared experiences. It also echoes Adepoju's (2020) assertion that community football events often function as informal mechanisms for fostering dialogue and reconciliation, especially in diverse and fragmented societies. Additionally, Spaaij's (2009) research on soccer initiatives in Australia highlights similar outcomes, where sports programs reduced ethnic tensions and promoted social cohesion. In a Nigerian context, Ogunniyi and Adewale (2020) observed that grassroots football initiatives contributed to resolving conflicts and building bridges across societal divides, a finding consistent with the present study's data.

However, while the data suggests football viewing centres provide a platform for unity, scholars such as Darby (2020) caution against overlooking the potential for competition and rivalries to create divisions if not properly managed. The relatively low standard deviation observed here may reflect a controlled environment where unity thrives, but this may not generalize to all contexts.

Football's influence and positive behavior in the Community

Responses	Frequency (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	180 (75%)	1.37	0.56
No	30 (12.5%)		
Maybe	30 (12.5%)		

Figure 7: Football's influence and positive behavior in the Community

Figure 7 reveals that a majority of respondents (75%) believe that football positively influences behavior in the community, emphasizing its potential to instill pro-social norms and attitudes. A smaller portion of respondents (12.5%) expressed uncertainty, while another 12.5% disagreed with the notion. The mean of 1.37 underscores a strong leaning towards agreement, and the standard deviation of 0.56 indicates a high level of consensus among respondents.

This supports Fraser-Thomas, Côté, and Deakin's (2005) assertion that sports can foster discipline, teamwork, and shared goals, reinforcing positive behavior. Moreover, Coalter (2007) highlights the capacity of structured sports programs to mitigate antisocial tendencies by providing meaningful engagement and role models. Similarly, Adepoju (2020) emphasizes that grassroots football fosters dialogue and reduces interpersonal conflicts, which directly supports these findings.

The theoretical framework of social capital, as articulated by Putnam (2000), provides further insight into these outcomes. Football's ability to build trust and mutual accountability aligns with the concept of bonding social capital, which reinforces intra-community solidarity and collaboration. Additionally, Giulianotti and Robertson (2012) describe football's role as both globally influential and locally grounded, making it a tool for addressing social challenges in diverse contexts. Critiques, however, such as those by Darby (2020), caution against

unmoderated football environments that might fuel rivalry or aggression, highlighting the importance of structured oversight.

Football fans in the community and Local Safety initiatives after watching Matches

Responses	Frequency (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	100 (41.67%)	1.79	0.78
No	90 (37.5%)		
Sometimes	50 (20.83%)		

Figure 8: Football fans in the community and Local Safety initiatives after watching Matches

The primary data in Figure 8 reveals a complex relationship between football fandom and engagement in safety initiatives. While 41.67% of respondents believe football fans are more likely to participate in safety-related activities, the majority (37.5%) disagree, indicating a lack of universal agreement on this connection. The mean of 1.79 suggests a moderate inclination toward recognizing football's influence on safety, but the standard deviation of 0.78 reflects variability in opinions.

These findings resonate with Giulianotti and Robertson's (2012) argument that football's cultural significance can inspire collective behavior, including social responsibilities. However, this aligns more strongly with theories of communal bonding than direct safety engagement. The literature also highlights the role of football in fostering localized networks of trust and collaboration, as noted by Putnam (2000), but the absence of strong institutional frameworks might limit fans' transition from spectatorship to active participation in community security efforts. Also, Meagher's (2012) work on informal networks in African contexts underscores the challenges of relying on community-driven initiatives without adequate state support. This may explain the divergence in responses, as fans may lack the resources or institutional backing to formalize their involvement. Meanwhile, Leonard and Straus (2003) emphasize the importance of integrating grassroots movements into broader governance structures to maximize their potential.

Although, as seen in studies by Ogunniyi and Adewale (2020), football's impact on tangible safety initiatives may require targeted programs to channel enthusiasm into actionable contributions. Nichols (2007) notes that sports programs achieve their greatest impact when paired with mentorship and structured engagement, a recommendation that could bridge the gap between football fandom and active safety participation.

Recommend Football Viewing Centres for the purpose of improving local security

Responses	Frequency (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yes	160 (66.67%)	1.54	0.71
No	30 (12.5%)		
Maybe	50 (20.83%)		

Figure 9: Recommend Football Viewing Centres for the purpose of improving local security

The primary data from Figure 9 demonstrates that a significant proportion of respondents (66.67%) would encourage others to attend football viewing centres as a means of improving local security, underscoring the perceived value of these events in fostering safer

communities. The mean score of 1.54 reflects the wide support for this belief, while the standard deviation of 0.71 indicates a moderate consensus, suggesting that while the majority are convinced, a smaller portion of respondents remain uncertain.

This finding resonates with the perspectives of Nichols (2007), who emphasized the role of sports activities in building community trust and engagement, key elements for enhancing local security. Furthermore, Giulianotti and Robertson (2012) frame football as a unifying phenomenon capable of fostering shared goals and cooperation, outcomes that are crucial for community safety.

Adepoju's (2020) study of community football initiatives corroborates the potential for such events to act as informal crime prevention mechanisms, leveraging communal vigilance and fostering collective responsibility. Additionally, the experience economy framework, as discussed by Kajfasz and Green (2022), supports the idea that emotionally engaging communal activities like football can create a sense of shared purpose and collective accountability among participants, further enhancing security. Critics like Rifkin (2000) thinks otherwise. Rifkin cautions against over-reliance on social events for security, warning that the sustainability of such initiatives depends on the broader structural and institutional support.

Conclusion

The investigation into the role of football experiences in enhancing local security ownership among residents of Ado-Ekiti demonstrates the sport's potential as a unifying force that fosters social cohesion and a sense of responsibility. Football viewing centers serve as informal hubs where shared experiences cultivate trust and collective identity, with many participants perceiving these spaces as platforms for building safer communities. However, while a significant proportion of respondents believe in the positive influence of football on local security, direct engagement in structured security initiatives remains limited. This raises the need for strategic integration of football-driven community activities with formal security frameworks to maximize their potential. Ultimately, the findings affirm that football can inspire community-driven efforts toward safety, but its impact is contingent on deliberate and inclusive institutionally approaches to sustain its benefits.

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