



Comfort or Conflict?: Investigating the Attitude and Experiences of European Football Fans in Television Viewing Centers in Nigeria

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Abstract

Evidence has shown that there is a considerable number of studies conducted on European football viewership in viewing centers in developing countries, yet, studies that focused on the social and psychological implication of European football viewership, especially on the aspect of peace and conflict, are still in their developing stage. In this view, this present study fills this gap by exploring the attitudes and experiences of European football fans in Television (TV) viewing centers in Nigeria, to establish if these acts provide leisure, escapism, comfort, integration of diverse people, or a source of conflict among fans and the society. A Qualitative research approach based on participant observation and in-depth interview were adopted in this study. Three viewing centers were observed within 10th September to 1st October 2016 during the English, Spanish and UEFA Champions League matches involving Manchester United, Arsenal, Chelsea, Real Madrid and Barcelona football clubs. Six (6) European football fans and three managers of football viewing centres were interviewed. Findings revealed that European football has the ability to break religious, language, ethnic and political barriers prevalent among Nigerians and bring people together, but it could also lead to argument and conflicts if not properly managed. It was also established that fans in viewing centers attached with beer parlors exhibit more violent tendencies in their argument than those in non-beer parlor centers. Interestingly, arguments among fans in the selected viewing centers do not often lead to physical confrontation; however, fans suffer from intra-personal conflicts, such as bitterness due to defeats of their clubs and mockery from other fans.

Keywords: European football followership; Intra-conflict; Nigeria; Peace and conflict; Television (TV) viewing centers

Introduction

Substantial research evidence has shown that the world is now a global village, and this is characterized by the speed and sophistication in the flow of information through powerful technologies [1]. Intrinsically, business, economy, education, politics, medicine, sport and other aspects of human life are shared among people of different countries irrespective of distance. The internet, World Wide Web (WWW) and satellite television are the backbones of this interconnection, often called globalization [2]. These technological advancements are now prevalent even in developing countries. This opinion is consistent with research assertion which affirmed that the Nigerian media reform that started in the 1980s paved the path for a more diversified media landscape. This condition has empowered transnational media corporations and their affiliate satellite and cable television companies such as DSTV, Sky sport, CNN which now hold sway in Nigeria. Therefore, foreign programmes, particularly football broadcasting, have become pervasive [3]. This phenomenon is part of what scholars termed cultural imperialism, electronic colonialism or communication imperialism [4-6].

In this view, Boyle and Haynes [7] postulate that globalization has reshaped the landscape of football, the way in which football is watched and how football clubs are supported have changed. Football is the most popular and globalized sporting activity in the world. Among global televised football competitions and leagues around the world, European leagues such as English Premier League, Spanish La-Liga, Italia Seria A, German Bundesliga, French League 1, and the UEFA Champions League are at the top of quality organization and coverage. In fact, it has been the dream of most local football players in Africa to play in these leagues and/or tournaments. Local players in developing countries are constantly making ways to reach Europe; therefore, they contact football agents to facilitate their movement to Europe [3].

On the other hand, non- footballers (fans) in Africa engage in massive support for European football clubs and tournaments. Thus, broadcast of live football matches of

European Leagues is generating a massive base of fans of European football clubs across developing countries and Nigeria in particular. This notion is consistent with a nationwide survey which found that only a mere 30% of Nigerians still support the Nigerian Premier League (NPL) as against a massive 70% that claim to be fans of the English premier league (EPL) clubs. The same survey further divulged that most of the followers of European leagues often watch live matches in commercial viewing centres [8]. Similarly, a study by Adetunji [9] found that ever since the proliferation and increasing affordability of Satellite Television or Pay TV broadcast in Nigeria, watching English Premier League [European League] matches has caught the fancy of most Nigerian youths (especially males). On days when games are to be played (usually weekends and sometimes Wednesdays) fans make their way to viewing centres (halls, mostly makeshift, where matches from foreign football leagues are shown live at affordable rates) in their neighborhoods to support their favorite teams or watch the games of rival teams. This implies that youths in Nigeria have developed more fondness for watching European football [3,8-11] This notion is in harmony with Majaro-Majesty [10] who remarked that European football fellowship is a new "religion", another kind of "ethnicity", and other form of "ritual". This suggests that in viewing centres, fans categorically display this "religion" or "ethnicity" by knowledge of the clubs' history and player profiles. Intrinsically, fans have put in place "associations of supporters", with slogans such as Manchester United - the kings of England or One love, Arsenal - Gunners for life, Chelsea - the Blues, Real Madrid - home of wealth, Barcelona - home of football among others.

Furthermore, research has discovered that when supporters of the same club meet the first time on match days, the chanting of their club's slogan serves as the introductory greeting. In some places, supporters hold meetings to discuss matters concerning their team and communicate decisions arrived at to their clubs in Europe via E-mail or social media like Twitter [9]. In addition, they organized parties at the end of football season to celebrate success. Remarkably, Fans also go spiritually by organizing prayer sessions before matches they consider important. Importantly, Fans usually identify with their teams by dress signification, wearing the teams' jerseys, hand-bands, and mufflers to viewing centres [9]. Supporting this notion, a considerable amount of research has likewise established that fans from different clubs engage in teasing, joking, nicknaming, argument, and even in brawls as veritable tactics of identity and loyalty to their clubs [3,12,13].

In addition, past studies by Sloan [14] stressed the reward fans get for the fanaticism toward foreign clubs such as

- (i) A sense of belonging;
- (ii) Leisure or break from routine;
- (iii) Stimulation;
- (iv) Therapeutic relief from tension and aggression; and
- (v) Entertainment.

This notion is in concurrence with a study which suggests that sport like football can reinforce the interaction between communities, peoples and societies. It plays a part in maintaining open channels of communication among people of different backgrounds, as well as contributing to managing trauma after natural disasters or violence [15].

However, this is not always the case, as ample evidence from research has reported incidences of hooliganism, civil disturbances, and physical clashes between fans of rival European clubs, which even led to murder in some football venues and or viewing centres in Nigeria and other countries [16]. Consequently, the role and impact of European football leagues viewership in the Nigerian society has been a subject of debate for almost a decade now. For many, European football followership is a source of leisure, escapism and comfort while others see it as a social malady and a threat to the fragile peace and unity of Nigeria.

These situations have attracted an array of investigation into the European football followership and viewership in Nigeria. For instance, a research has investigated the interplay between transnational football broadcasting and football viewing centres with a view to identifying the spatial, economic and socio-cultural correlates of the rising incidence of the so-called 'electronic' fandom in urban Nigeria [8]. Similar research has also demonstrated the significance of satellite Television Viewing Centres in Nigeria [17]. Furthermore, there has also been a research into the correlation between football fans exposure to TV live matches of EPL and violence [18], as well as the influence of football fanaticism/support in bringing together youths and non-youths alike [10]. Yet, despite this growing body of literature and the rising phenomenon of European football followership in Nigeria, it is evident that there is however little focus or research into the social and psychological implication of European football fellowship and viewership in our society, especially on the aspect of peace and conflict. Hence, this present study fills this gap by exploring the attitudes and experiences of European football fans in TV viewing centres in Nigeria, to ascertain if these acts provide leisure, escapism, comfort, integration of diverse people, or a source of conflict among fans and the society.

Statement of the Problem

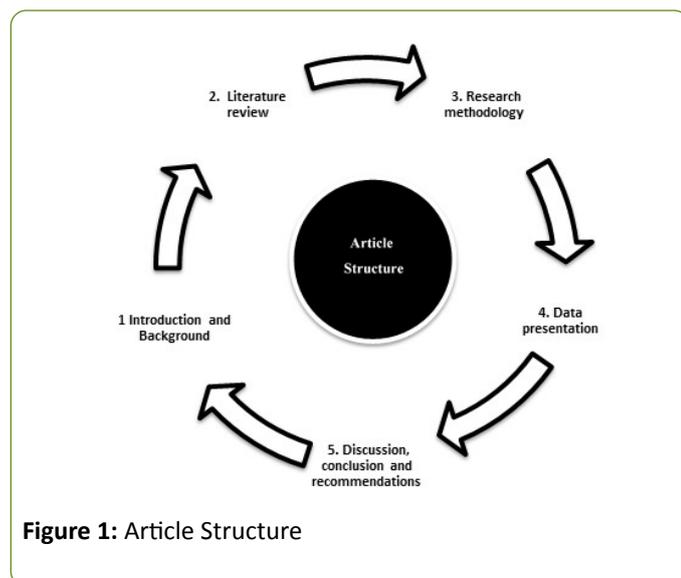
Thousands of people follow live matches of European football leagues through satellite TV in viewing centres across urban and rural areas in Nigeria. Thus, Satellite television in Nigeria is no longer an elitist phenomenon as poor individual can now pay a token to satellite TV centres in order to watch live football matches between European elite clubs like Manchester United, Arsenal, Real Madrid, Barcelona and others. However, the number of people and some of the attitudes exhibited in TV viewing centres across Nigeria raise pertinent questions in the minds of many observers. There is worry that this newly found "religion" called European league with diverse "sects" is destroying our local football league. Aside that, bitter arguments, fighting and murder cases have been associated with football viewing centres and European

football fanaticism among Nigerians. This situation has raised concerns which suggest that watching European football in viewing centres might have gone beyond comfort or entertainment and has now become centres of conflicts and commotion. This view is consistent with Orwell [19] who submits that “serious sport has nothing to do with fair play, but hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure”. In view of this, this study examines the attitude of European football fans in Nigeria.

Aim, Objectives and Article structure

This work aims at investigating the attitude and experiences of European football fans in TV viewing centres in Nigeria, with a view to draw inference on whether European football viewing is a source of pleasure and escapism as explained by functional theory of mass media or a source of conflict among fans as advocated by proponents of media violence or aggressive theorists. Specifically, the work was guided by the following objectives:

- To study attitudes and behavior of European football fans in TV viewing centres.
- To ascertain the nature of conflict and conflict tendencies prevalent among European football fans in TV viewing centres.
- To divulge the perception of European football fans as it regards to the followership of European football leagues.
- As set out in **Figure 1**, this paper is divided into five main sections describing the introduction and background; literature reviewed; research methodology; data presentation; and discussion, conclusion, recommendation (Figure 1).



Literature Review

Contextualizing comfort

The term comfort is used to describe a sense of physical or psychological ease often characterized by a lack of hardship.

Nevertheless, comfort in this context is associated with entertainment, relaxation, escapism from boredom and other life issues. Supporting this view, a growing body of research suggests that the provision of comfort is one of the basic functional objectives of the mass media, and television, in particular, provides comfort [1,20,21]. This implies that viewers of TV use the medium for relaxation purposes, to ease tension, relief from the tedium of day-to-day existence and lessen the stress emanating from the rapidly changing world. Hence, Television achieves that, through the broadcast of live sporting activities like the world cup, Olympics, showing of soap operas, movies and video musicals among others.

Concept of Conflict

The concept of conflict has received an array of descriptions; based on the context it is applied. In a simple term, conflict pertains to the incompatibility of goals, ideas among people. Conflict is synonymous with dispute, quarrel, disagreement and clash [22]. This implies that “conflict is an inevitable part of life” because very often, individuals have differences in opinions, needs, ideas and sets of beliefs, and once such differences clashes, conflict occurs. It is important to note that conflict can include physical attack relating to the use of arms, or it can be just harsh words. Nevertheless, one unique thing about conflict is that it causes physical or psychological harm to the parties involved.

In the context of this study, conflict is categorized into three (3) to include, intra-personal conflict, interpersonal conflict and group conflict. Intra-personal conflict occurs within an individual. It is a psychological and physiological phenomenon involving individual’s thoughts, values, feelings and emotions in a particular time. Interpersonal conflict may come in different manners such as indecision, worry, restlessness, uneasiness, loss of interest in something, illness and depression. The second type of conflict is the interpersonal conflict. This denotes a conflict between two individuals due to incompatible choices and opinions. The third type of conflict is group conflict. This type of conflict occurs between groups; for instance, Arsenal fans against Manchester United fans, Muslims against Christians among others.

Overview of European Club Football

European football includes football leagues and continental championships; which Europe elite football clubs take part. Under European club football, all sovereign states located entirely within Europe are members. Eight states partially or entirely outside Europe is also members: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Israel, Cyprus and Turkey [8]. The Faroe Islands, an autonomous country of the Kingdom of Denmark is also under European football [23]. Each country has its own football league system and management body. The most popular and followed European league in the world is the English Premier League (EPL) of England, where clubs like Manchester United, Arsenal, and Chelsea are found, and then the Spanish league where clubs like Real Madrid and Barcelona are found [23]. In each European league, clubs compete for

the title as the country's club champions. Champions and top Clubs across Europe further compete in continental competitions known as UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League.

Television Viewing Centres

Television viewing centres also known as Pay TV are places where people pay an admittance fee and are allowed entry for the purpose of viewing programmes on selected satellite television stations [17]. Before now, TV viewing centres are not popular in Nigeria. The few once were showing American movies using videotape players. They served as local cinemas for people, especially those who could not afford TV set and videotape player. As technology and Nigerian film industry developed rapidly, TV viewing centres started showing Nollywood movies using Video Compact Disc (VCD) and subsequently Digital Video Disc (DVD). However, development in technology and globalization led to the adoption of satellite TV in viewing centres across Nigeria. Satellite television is a type of signal transmission whereby broadcasting stations on earth send signals into space to satellites, which are orbiting the earth. According to Nice and Harris [24], these satellites then retransmit the signal back to the earth, so that people in any part of the world can pick up the signal with appropriate equipment. Satellite broadcasting is in stages. First, programmes are broadcast from the satellite stations like DSTV, Hi-TV, My-TV to satellites in orbit from there to receivers who receive the signals with the aid of an antenna/dish and decoder set, when viewed through the television set. TV viewing centres in Nigeria are one of the largest receivers of satellite signals from satellite stations and their corresponding stations like Sky Sport, SuperSport among others.

Currently, viewing centres are in most nooks and crannies of Nigeria. TV viewing centres have become virtual stadium where fans of European clubs like Manchester United, Real Madrid among others troop regularly watch matches of their beloved clubs. As earlier noted by Kombol and Kombol, entry to TV viewing centres is not free, owners and managers often charge between N50 to N100 Naira (Nigerian currency) depending on the quality of facilities such as TV set, and chairs in the centre. However, free viewing centres are also emerging in places like beer parlour, food restaurants and eateries. This latest innovation is a marketing strategy adopted to lure customers to these places.

Studies Conducted on European Football Followership in Nigeria

Evidence has shown that there is a considerable amount of studies conducted on European football followership in Nigeria. For example, Onyebueke [8] investigated the interplay between transnational football broadcasting and football viewing centres with a view to identifying the spatial, economic and socio-cultural correlates of the rising incidence of the so-called 'electronic' fandom in urban Nigeria. The study adopted mixed method design, involving observation, enumeration and focus group conducted between 18th

October 2014 and 5th January 2015 in Enugu, Southeast Nigeria. Findings revealed that ritualised television spectating within the confines of various viewing centres in the city creates the social contexts that positively reinforce fan behaviours, values, and attitudes. Employing the emergent notion of sports fans as consumers, the same work found that, there is an expanding television-mediated fan base in the city, which has become a veritable target market for many Nigerian companies.

In a similar study, Kombol and Kombol [17] examined the significance of satellite Television viewing centres in Makurdi, Nigeria. Using a survey of two hundred and twenty (220) respondents who patronize satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi, the study found, among other things, that: satellite television viewing centres are used to advance sporting interests; however, they are abused when criminals use these centres as meeting places and hideouts. The researchers recommended that proprietors of viewing centres should regulate entry and the police force should step up monitoring of these centres to ensure order and rule of law. Though the focus of the study is more on viewing centre than European football fanaticism among Nigerians, yet the work concurs with this present study based on the fact that viewing centres are "stadium" that attract a huge gathering of youth for comfort, however, such gatherings have the potential of causing conflict or breakdown of law.

Furthermore, Anyianuka [18] examined fellowship and support for the English premier league (EPL) football in Nigeria with the aim to determine the correlation between football fans exposure to TV live matches of EPL and violence. The study tested the Cultivation analysis, which traditionally formed the theoretical framework for researchers on television influence and effects on audiences. Findings from the mixed methods of research employed show that fans assume multiple identities as spectators, audiences, consumers, supporters and users. They do not only spend long hours at TV viewing centres for live English Premiership matches only, but they form gangs or associations of four EPL clubs. This is to promote and maintain club identities and engage bizarre religious and social rituals aimed at realizing good fortunes for the clubs they support. The work relates to this current study because both are interested in examining the correlation between European football and socialization among people of different background. However, the current study expands to issues of conflict inherent in such socialization.

Another closely related study is by Majaro-Majesty [10]. The author used participant observation to study the influence of football fanaticism/support in bringing together youths and non-youths alike in Ibadan city, the Oyo State of Nigeria to develop a new sense of identity different from those based on primordial factors of common descent, language, religion, and cultural heritage, which create growing concern for violent conflict. The investigator found that football's capacity to integrate people was high, but could, if not controlled, produce another form of ethnic conflict based on club identity. To a large extent, this work relates to the current study in that

both works examined the capability of football fanaticism to unite people and tear people. However, the reviewed study focuses only on EPL using subjects in Ibadan while the current work goes beyond EPL to include Spanish league and UEFA Champions league using subjects in Awka. Despite the rising phenomenon of European football followership in Nigeria, it is evident from the works available and reviewed that there is dearth literature that examines the social implication of European football in our society especially on the aspect of peace and conflict. Therefore, this present work is an attempt to fill this gap.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories. Aggressive Cues (AC) theory and the Argumentativeness, Aggressiveness and Verbal Assertiveness (AA&VA) theory. Aggressive Cue (AC) theory is a theory of Television and violence propounded by Leonard Berkowitz in 1965 [25]. The major assumption of the theory is that exposure to aggression on TV can raise the level of excitement in the viewer and can trigger violent acts. For instance, seeing violent boxing match can stimulate emotional arousal leading to aggressive behavior on part of the TV audience [26]. Likewise, violent encounters such as the use of weapons and threats, which the audience sees on TV screens as in war films and wrestling, excite the audience physically and emotionally to embark on aggressive responses to real life.

It is easier for one to say that the AC theory only focuses on make-real movies or video shows such as wrestling and not real-life sports like football. However, football and European club football, in particular, have become very competitive with serious and "bitter" rivalry between coaches, players and "real" fans. This rivalry manifests in the aggressive manner players tackle one another in the field; verbal attacks among coaches during press briefings and physical attacks among fans in live stadiums across Europe. All these demonstrations are seen by "Electronic" fans in Nigeria, not just only on TV, but also via social media and newspapers. Thus, it is assumed that too much exposure to these rivalries may stimulate local fans to partake in the rivalry and aggression. Indeed, the Aggressive Cues theory is relevant to this study.

The second theory adopted in this work is Argumentativeness, Aggressiveness and Verbal Assertiveness (AA&VA) theory. Professor Dominic Infante of Kent State University propounded the theory. The theory is concerned with the message-sending and message-receiving behaviour of individuals, especially in face-to-face communication. Infante [27] opines that highly argumentative individuals enjoy arguing and will eagerly and readily attack others' position and defend their own position on issues. While, people low in the argument often feel uncomfortable about arguing because of lack of motivation, desire and skill to argue. Furthermore, the theory holds that verbal aggressive individuals often do not provide as much evidence to support their argument [28]. In many cases, these individuals possess verbally aggressive traits because they lack the skill to argue rationally and effectively, and therefore use verbal aggressive messages as their defence

mechanism. It has been elucidated that "there are numerous types of verbally aggressive messages: character attacks, competence attacks, insults, maledictions, teasing, ridicule, profanity, and non-verbal emblems" [29].

All the tenets of AA&VA theory as stated above are typical of Nigerian based European football fans, especially while watching live matches in viewing centres. Fans well vast in the knowledge of football and skilled in the argument often argue about players and coaches' quality, officiating and other related matters of football. Those who are not vast, however, exhibits a high sense of aggression in their arguments and resort to name-calling, insults, put-downs, character attacks, ridicule, racial epithets, against the players of the rival club as well as rival fans in the viewing centre. These activities can lead to conflict among the fans. It is based on this insight that; the AA&VA theory is seen relevant to this study.

Research Methodology

This investigation was conducted between 10th September-1st October of the 2016/2017 European football season. A total of twenty-five (25) matches involving Manchester United, Arsenal, Chelsea, Real Madrid and Barcelona in domestic and Champions League was monitored. The research adopted the descriptive qualitative approach. The population comprised of all the fans/followers of European football clubs patronizing viewing centres in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. The sampled (participants) were fans in three viewing centres, purposely selected based on the ethnic heterogeneous nature of the areas the centres are located. These areas are Amansea, Ifite and Amawbia.

Participatory observational techniques and in-depth interview were used to collect data. Additionally, Notebook and smart-phones were likewise used for recording. The use of these two approaches was informed by the need to compliment the likely lacuna of a single approach. Hence, in-depth interviews were considered the best method to obtain the data, as the participants could describe their feelings in their own words and new themes could be followed up as they emerged [30], while observation was considered as the best way to complement the interviews [31] because it divulges the true nature of a phenomenon.

Furthermore, three research assistants that are, one from each area were recruited and trained to observe fans' behaviour within the selected viewing centres before, during and after a match. Specifically, the research assistants were asked to observe and record causes of conflicts, forms of conflicts, among others (**Appendices A and B**). On the other hand, the investigators conducted the interviews with nine interviewees made up of six fans (one female and five males) and three managers of viewing centres. A consent form was signed by each participant before the investigation (i.e. answering of the questions) was carried out. Thus, the interview session lasted from seven to forty minutes for each participant. The questions that formed the interview guide were informed by past studies [8-10,17], nevertheless, the authors modified the questions so as to fit into this present

study's objective. The questions in the interview guide were then scrutinized by four experts, two each in the field of communication and sports analysis. This was done in order to validate the questions in the guide, as such; the questions that were not completely relevant to the research objectives were expunged by the experts.

In addition, the football fans were chosen based on convenience (i.e. those willing to partake in the study) while managers were chosen purposively - based on their position as people that have been managing these centres for a couple of years. Thus, it is presumed that they have first-hand information and knowledge of fans attitudes in viewing centres. The fans were asked about gratifications they get from supporting or following European clubs/football, what often leads to an argument among them, how they feel when their club won or is defeated (**Appendix C1**). On the other hand, the managers of viewing centres were asked about what often cause arguments and conflict among their customers (fans) and if they have recorded cases of physical confrontation among fans (**Appendix C2**). The interview data were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively, while the presentation was carried out thematically and narratively.

Data Presentation

In order to manage data from both observation and in-depth interview effectively, the study adopted a thematic analysis. Furthermore, a narrative approach was also used where direct quotes of interviewees were brought to fore to enhance clarity. The presentation started with the demographic description of fans/followers of European clubs, forms and causes of conflict in football viewing centres and fans' perception of European football followership.

Demographic description of European football fans in TV viewing centres across Awka

The data gathered to demonstrate that most of the people that patronize TV viewing centres in Awka are young people from the ages of 18 to late 30s, and this consists of different ethnic and religious groups. Interestingly, it was discovered that there are two types of fans. The "die-hard" and "non-die-hard" fans. The die-hard fans are more passionate about their clubs; they can spend many resources such as time, money and energy to support their clubs. Conversely, non-die hard fans also support their clubs, but they are not emotionally attached to the club and have control or limit on their fanaticism. Additionally, it was observed that most European football fans in Awka are students of tertiary institutions, business people, mechanics, butchers, artisans, Okada riders (tricycle riders), Shuttle drivers and the likes. Thus, there seems to be a correlation between nature of work and patronage of football viewing centres. This is because civil servants are not often seen in the investigated viewing centres like private businesspersons. Additionally, most of the European football followers/fans are males. In two (Amansea and Amawbia centres) out of the three viewing centres studied, there was no any female fan or viewer. Moreover, it

was observed that the women selling drinks and food in the centres while the matches were going on did not show any interest or passion for the matches. This implies that there is a relationship between sex and European football followership in Awka.

The behavior of fans in TV viewing centres across Awka

On match days, it was noticed that some fans, especially the die-hard arrived viewing centres thirty minutes to the commencement of the match. They ensured that they have a good sitting position as well as booked sits for their colleagues mostly people from the same club. It is easier to identify fans of a particular club because they often show their identity by T-shirt (jersey) of their club and the kind of recognition or greetings they engage themselves as soon as they enter the viewing centre. For example, on September 10, 2016, at Amansea centre, before the match between Manchester United and Manchester City football clubs, a fan coming into the centre shouted: Up Man U! While some fans inside the centre responded: United we stand! and then they offered a plastic chair to him. This shows that these fans are Manchester United fans and there is solidarity among them.

One interesting thing for fans in the viewing centre is that before the match starts, they share pleasantries with one another irrespective of the club. In some instances, they give out a cigarette and buy beer among themselves. However, soft argument and betting start when the analysts are given predictions or analysis of each team; as fans follow such analysis and highlights with keenness. Fans also express their views about players' abilities, selection and strategy they wish their coaches adopted. This often leads to disagreement even among fans of the same club due to the observed fact that each fan has players' preferences and more so, some players are disliked by their fans due to their past poor performances.

Once the match starts, attention is shifted to the screen, but that does not stop noise or arguments among fans. As the match continues, fans insult their players as well as players of other clubs that are not performing well. Words like "idiot", "pig", "waste of money", "shorten one" and hosts of others are used to describe under-performing players. On the other hand, some players attract applause and cause a thunderous shout because of skills or dribbles they display. Once such happened, fans of rival clubs often go mute and show displeasure on their faces. It was observed that once clubs score, there is always enormous jubilation among their fans to the point that they hug and shake themselves even if they do not know each other. In addition, once their club is losing they expressed displeasure and wish that the first half ends and their coach makes the necessary adjustment or substitutions.

A time that generates high argument among fans is the second-half (break) where players go to rest to receive instruction from their coaches. At this time, fans in viewing centres engage in ample analysis, criticism and argument about the game and players, nevertheless, most of these fans never give up on their clubs. Before the match resumes, fans

talk about the changes they expect, and the winning side continues to mock the losing side, but there is often no tension as the fans from the losing side always feel there is time or opportunity to turn around the situation.

The second half of the match is not different, insult, criticism, commendations continues among fans toward the players and coaches. However, the argument at this point seems to tranquil a bit until the end of the game. The end of the game is the high point of argument and mockery among fans in viewing centres. Fans from winning side often dominate such argument while those from the losing side often keep quiet and gradually disappear from the centre, but some die-hard fans stay around to argue in defence of their clubs despite the poor result. It has been observed that when such arguments and mockeries reach bitter level some fans point fingers at one another especially in centres with beer parlour. Interestingly, in all the centres studied, there was no case of physical fights despite severe mockery and name-calling among fans. In the same way, managers of viewing centres interviewed concurred that they rarely record cases of the physical fight due to an argument and mockery among fans. However, they revealed that many fans often leave viewing centres very bitter due to the argument, the defeat of their clubs and mockery. One manager of the studied viewing centres, states the following in Nigerian Pidgin English:

Bros, make I tell you wetin I know from this football people [fans]. They fi argue about ball here but they no go fight....like I dey now, I no fi tell you the last time wey these guys fight because of the ball but the thing be say they sabi argue, drink, smoke and mock one another to the point that some guys go vex well well... (Obi, manager, Amansea Viewing centre).

The above statement means that people in viewing centres can argue for a longer period of time, but do not engage in physical battle. However, while watching the matches the fans argue, smoke, and make a mockery of one another, and this affects the psychological well-being of the fans, due to the bitterness of losing a match.

Nature and causes of conflict among fans in TV Viewing Centres

It has been established in this work from the literature reviewed that there are three forms of conflict (i.e. intra-personal, interpersonal and group conflict). Data from this study confirmed that the intrapersonal conflict is the most prevalent form of conflict among European football fans in viewing centres across Awka. Intra-personal conflict is a nature of the conflict that exists within an individual; it is a feeling of bitterness, confusion, unhappiness among others. From the interview, it was discovered that football followership causes serious intra-personal conflict among fans. Most of the interviewees explained that they feel very painful, sad, disorganized, have sleeplessness night, weakness of body, demoralized and unwilling to do anything whenever their beloved club lost a match. This happens especially when their club is bitten by bitter city rivals in a derby game, or in the

hands of title challengers. Some of the interviewees have this to say:

I feel miserable whenever Manchester beat Arsenal...times when such happened, I don't want people to talk about football around me...it makes me just unhappy...(Chime, Arsenal fan, in Ifite).

I no go fi eat well anytime Barca defeat Madrid...I go just they vex with everybody around... (Ebuka, Real Madrid fan, in Amawbia) (translated as I don't eat well whenever Barcelona defeats Real Madrid).

A poor result like losing derby just like what happened yesterday [10th/9/2016] is painful. Seeing Manchester United losing to Manchester City is always my worst moment. It makes me unable to work after such match... (Ola, Manchester United fan, Amansea).

In the same vein, the data revealed that what causes this conflict aside from defeat is mockery and sometimes direct insult. A fan in Ifite Centre who simply identified himself as Jude states thus:

...What often makes me angry in football centers is the insult and unnecessary mockery. There are times people will tell you something that will annoy you just because their team beat yours. I remember a time one Manchester United fan used to call us [Arsenal fans] prostitutes simply because for some time his club often wins against Arsenal...this kind of negative words sincerely, stir anger in one and I believe it can cause physical fights one day.

Additionally, it was observed that fans who engaged in continues drinking throughout the game tend to be more aggressive in their arguments and choice of words.

Perceptions of fans in TV viewing centres

It was discovered that entertainment, pleasure or escapism is the major reason fans follow European football. However, others revealed that they follow the leagues because it is the trend, thus, the need to feel among or in tune with the times is their main motivation. Additionally, factors like peer pressure/friends and family also contribute to European football followership among Nigerians. A jubilant fan that identified herself as Chidimma at Ifite viewing centre during a match between Liverpool and Arsenal said:

I am a Liverpool fan; I support Liverpool because my boyfriend supports the club. In fact, he was the one that introduced me into watching football. In the beginning, it was boring, but because I love my guy [laughs] I kept following him to the point that I developed a likeness for European football and Liverpool football club. To me, European football is just a source of fun nothing else. I cannot fight for any club because they don't give me anything worth fighting for...there are times I see people arguing bitterly to the point of using harsh words against themselves...I always pity those chaps...to me just watch, if Liverpool wins celebrates and if Liverpool loses, so be it...

In another view, a fan called Musa at Amansea centre said:

European football has become part of my life, it is more than just a source of entertainment but it's like my second religion. I see fellow Manchester United fans as my brethren. I cannot stay away from it, especially when my club, the "almighty Manchester United" is playing. See, even though I don't like this aspect of fighting among fans because of football, I cannot be quite if anyone is insulting my club. I believe, as a die-hard fan, I should protect the integrity of my club. Those people who do not protect their club's reputation are not true fans. They are just passing time through football because they don't have a place or things to do...What actually causes a fight among fans is argument, hatred and jealousy of one's club due to its successes...there are fans from clubs that don't normally win the title or trophies. These fans will just come here and be insulting your club, saying some things without facts just to discredit your team and ridicule your achievements...all these things are provoking to any die-hard fan.

To another fan in Amawbia centre who called himself George, watching European football has many benefits, according to him, apart from the entertainment derives from it, one can make money from it through betting. He states thus:

...European football is my major way of passing time. I am a Chelsea fan because the club has Nigeria players like Victor Moses...I love coming to the viewing centre because, when you come here, you will meet people, argue, talk, drink and enjoy yourself instead of being at home alone or always working. Do you know that people also make money through watching football? In "Nairabet" and other companies, you can engage in betting... On the issue of fighting among fans, I believe such fans already have fighting intention before coming to viewing centres or because of too much beer. They just use football as reason...I know if they beat Chelsea I always finds it difficult to sleep or work because it pains me and my friends use to mock me but I can't fight because I also mock them whenever they are defeated, that's the fun of it all...I don't see fans from other clubs as enemies.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Satellite television viewing centres are very rowdy places attractive to young men often students, business persons and 'Okada riders' (Tricycle riders) whose economic status is low. These fans are divided into die-hard and non-die hard fans. Die-hard fans are often male fans that are more passionate and more fanatical about European football and their clubs. They do not miss matches unnecessary; they have a fact about their clubs and players. Primarily, all fans follow European football for entertainment purposes, but die-hard fans go further to "religiosity", "tribalism" and "ethnicity". Argument is the order of the day among fans in football viewing centres. The argument often arises in football viewing centres due to the rivalry between clubs, players' ability and wages, club antecedent and referee's decision or officiating. Arguments among fans in viewing centres are often tense and sometimes involve name-calling and other forms of verbal attacks capable

of causing unhappiness and physical confrontation. Thus, the findings in this study support the postulation of the theoretical framework adopted in this study, which is the (AC and AA & VA).

Furthermore, the findings of this present study conform to the findings of previous investigations [8,17,32] which suggest that European football and TV viewing centres are effective points of socialization among Nigerians but with high risks of conflicts and crime. Moreover, the findings of this study indicate that another kind of tribalism or religion is fast emerging among Nigerian youth based on European football club followership and support. Yet, European football helps to break differences in areas like religion, politics, tribe and geopolitical zone that exist among Nigerians. Nevertheless, the study discovered that European football fanaticism like religion and other fanaticism can generate physical conflict in the society if not checked. These results support Majaro-Majesty [10] findings, which suggest that the EPL (European football) has indeed encouraged ethnicity among Nigerians. This indicates that it has the binding force for bringing diverse people together based on same club side support which may result in lasting friendships; nevertheless, it also has the prospect of causing inter-group conflict.

One interesting finding in this study is that arguments and other verbal exchanges among European club fans in Awka do not translate to a physical confrontation or group conflict which involves the use of arms. These findings are in contrast with some previous studies and reports [18,32] that affirm that European football fanaticism often leads to physical and armed attacks among fans. Therefore, this present study discovered that football fanaticism often leads to intra-personal conflict which is a state of bitterness, unhappiness, sleeplessness and psychological instability in individual fans, rather than the physical confrontation and conflict. This feeling has been described as a conditional effect [33], and the effectiveness and the affection effect of mass media or TV viewing [34].

Conclusively, it can be inferred that European football followership in Awka is for leisure, pleasure and entertainment. Physical or group conflict is not evident in viewing centres across Awka but the nature and prevalence of arguments, rough talks, mockery, and negative statements coupled with impatience and lack of spirit of sportsmanship among overzealous (die-hard) fans might be a great source of physical conflict among fans in viewing centres in the city. This situation can lead to physical conflict which may have a ripple effect on the overall society if not controlled. Hence, the following recommendations are made:

There is a need to educate fans about the importance of tolerance, mutual consideration, self-control, speech control, human rights, and social orders as they watch and show support to their clubs. This can be championed by mass media, especially TV stations. Furthermore, TV Football analysts on satellite stations like SuperSport should not just talk about matches and player's skills but should also stress the need for peace among electronic fans.

Local sports journalists should also brace up to the challenge. They should go beyond broadcasting players transfer news and scores of matches, to robust agenda setting tilted toward peace in viewing centres as well as providing knowledge that will help the fans to developed spirit of sportsmanship. This will enable them (fans) show friendship and caution while celebrating victories and to endure defeat. This can be achieved through various sports programmes on local radio and TV stations, sports magazines and newspapers like Soccer Star.

Owners of viewing centres should prohibit fighting and any act such as the use of vulgar language against others. They should ensure that people of questionable characters or troublemakers are not welcomed into their centres. They should also be in touch with the police in order to report any form of violence before it escalates.

Security agencies specifically the Nigerian Police and Civil Defence Corps should constantly monitor satellite television viewing centres, especially during match days and matches that are likely to attract viewers. Thus, these agencies should have an understanding of timetable of European football matches and locations of all viewing centres in the town.

Viewing centres should be mandated to register and or get permission from the government (security agencies) before they commence business. Thus, some laws that will promote peace and security consciousness should be designed to guide their (viewing centre) operation.

Additionally, viewing centres that have continued to pose security challenges through fighting and other illegal activities such as selling of India hemp and drugs should be suspended or shut down

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