

Football as the Formation of Adolescent Character and Preventive Program to Overcome Juvenile Delinquency: A Perspective from Sport Psychology

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Abstract Adolescence is a crucial age at which juvenile delinquents commonly appear. Therefore, analyzing the juvenile delinquency prevention strategy at this age is crucial. One known preventive strategy for juvenile delinquents is sports activity. Therefore, this study aims to obtain in-depth information about the role and use of football as an effort to form a positive adolescent personality as well as a way to overcome the problem of juvenile delinquency. This study uses qualitative methods with a grounded theory approach. A total of 10 youth coaches licensed with a minimum of 5 years of experience in football coaching and five parents of children athletes participated in this research. This research uses data triangulation, namely open-ended semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis, as data collection procedures. The collected information is then analyzed using themes. The results of the study revealed that football is a medium that is able to shape teenagers' character, which leads to juvenile delinquency prevention by intensifying independence, responsibility, emotional management, a good attitude, respect for others, courage, alertness, and increased decision-making. Based on the

results of the current research, researchers advise families and the government to provide for and involve more children in physical activities such as football. It is because football could shape the children's character, minimizing the occurrence of delinquency in the future.

Keywords Football activities, Character, Adolescence, Delinquency, Sport, Psychology

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. At this age, children experience puberty, followed by an unstable psyche. Therefore, teenagers who cannot control themselves might fall into negative actions, which are often referred to as juvenile delinquency [1]. Juvenile delinquency is very dangerous because it could lead to crime. Numerous examples of juvenile delinquency occurred, such as sharp brandishing of weapons in Sukabumi, a group of teenagers committing drug abuse,

and a gang of Klitih in Yogyakarta. Reducing juvenile delinquency is necessary since it threatens the social values and norms [2] that exist to control the social balance of the community. Therefore, finding a prevention strategy for juvenile delinquency is necessary. According to Refnandes et al [3], juvenile delinquency happens through a weakened sense of self-control or a reduction in one's positive behavior. It means that juvenile delinquency is correlated with adolescent psychological character problems, so one of the preventive strategies was to escalate and maintain the positive manner that leads to positive character development.

In addition, relationships with family, society, and individual psychological conditions play an essential role in juvenile delinquency [4]. Some adolescents think telling their parents about their personal lives is shameful. They perceive that their parents cannot understand the unique needs of their age and think that their friends are more important than their parents [47]. It is the reason they are easily influenced by their friends, even in negative behaviors such as drug use, smoking, and getting to know the opposite sex [5]. Other than that, the negative influence of the children is perceived through their environment. The advancement of globalization or non-selective use of the internet is also a consequence of receiving and using various unfavorable information [6]. The negative influence of globalization has resulted in teenagers imitating the wrong model from various shows on television, the internet, and other online media. Thus, it is necessary to make preventive efforts involving parents, teachers, and society.

As stated earlier, character development is one of the preventive measures against juvenile delinquency. According to Gonzales et al [7], the character education approach is one example that has been proven to contribute to reducing crime and encouraging development because character is fundamentally essential to improving one's behavior. One of the activities correlated with character development is sports. Sport is a place for character development, especially for those who are still in adolescence [52]. Values in sports are not limited to physical improvement but are also related to improving the athlete's character and behavior; as stated by Angel et al [8], socialization and moral development are essential elements in sports. Sports can effectively mobilize physical functions. Several benefits of sports include improving physical health, helping students release negative emotions, reducing anxiety, accelerating development, and preventing juvenile delinquency and drug use [9], [10], [11]. Teenagers' participation in sports activities can develop good morality towards themselves because they are indirectly involved in implementing real character education [12] [50]. One of the most popular sports in the world and in Indonesia is football.

Football is a sport played in groups, so many values and benefits can be gained from it. The psychological impact of playing football was the formation of an adolescent

personality to protect adolescents from harmful pressures and habits [13]. The football academy is a place for the young generation to focus on practicing football so they can become a healthy and better generation, as well as a way to reduce the problem of juvenile delinquency [14]. Football is a way to form individual values and personalities that lead to positive behaviors such as increasing self-confidence and emotional management [15]. It can be stated that football, as one of the physical activities, is necessary for a better life. Therefore, this study aims to obtain in-depth information about the role and use of football as an effort to form an upbeat adolescent personality as well as a way to overcome the problem of juvenile delinquency so that the empowerment of football schools is expected as a method of diverting negative behavior in a more positive direction.

In regard to the importance of sports programs in reducing adolescent crime, several studies have been conducted on this topic. Jugl et al [16] conducted a systematic review regarding the effectiveness of sports programs to prevent crime and reduce reoffending. The research concludes that participants showed a significant decrease in outcomes such as aggressiveness or anti-social behavior and psychological outcomes such as self-esteem or mental well-being, which also significantly improved when participating in sports programs. More specific research was conducted by Spruit et al [17], who examined for whom, how, and under which conditions sports-based crime prevention programs are most effective. Quantitative analysis examining the pre-test and post-test was conducted in this research. The research revealed that the youths showed significant improvements over the course of the intervention. Various youth, coach, and context factors (e.g., the type of education of youth and the sociomoral climate at the sports club) were associated with changes in the outcome variables. Both studies are essential in discussing the positive correlation of sports programs to reducing crime among adolescents. However, research by Mutz et al [18], who conducted empirical analysis, gives the contrary argument, concluding that sports activities do not automatically prevent violence. Using logistic regression analysis, they found that sex, education, social background, immigrant background, family violence, media violence, and peer-group attitudes all had a significant effect on violent behavior, while sports club activities were shown to be nonsignificant in this model. It means that research on this topic is still in debate regarding whether sports activities are related to overcoming juvenile delinquency. Therefore, analyzing the correlation from the coach's perspective as a sport expert and actor is necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

Gauging the effectiveness of the sports program as a preventive program to overcome juvenile delinquency from the perspective of sports psychology is necessary. This approach will enhance the discussion based on the expert perspective, so the necessary facts on this topic

could be sharpened. Other than that, according to Jugl et al [16], while many theories advance the benefit of sports in reducing crime, the effects of sports on delinquency and psychological variables remain unclear. Moreover, in the context of sports psychology, several studies examining whether sports-based interventions can be effective in preventing delinquent behaviors in youth have been conducted [19], [20], and [21]. However, none of the research explored the perspective of sports psychology, namely coaches, to prevail on this topic. Therefore, the aim of the current study was to explore the sports psychology perspective regarding football as the formation of adolescent character and a preventive program to overcome juvenile delinquency.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Design

The purpose of the current study was to examine the perspective of sport psychology. Therefore, the qualitative research method was utilized. Qualitative methods are familiar and have long been practiced by researchers in sports, especially sports psychology. Qualitative research is a way to explore and understand the meaning given by individuals or groups to social or human problems, so it is able to explain the experiences of individuals under study using their language and expressions [22]. Qualitative research helps researchers prepare intensive descriptive reports to deeply analyze a phenomenon [23]. For this reason, this study will use qualitative methods with a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory (GT) is an inductive process for finding a theory from data [24]. GT is a qualitative research methodology based on the premise that theory is indispensable for generating in-depth knowledge about social phenomena [25]. The phenomenon being studied in this research was the impact of sports programs on reducing juvenile delinquency. Therefore, the use of GT is sufficient for the current research. This research will be conducted using a grounded theory approach as proposed by Strauss and Corbin [26], [27], namely Evolved Grounded Theory (EGT), which emphasizes the development of theory.

2.2. Procedure

The main data collection procedure for the current research was the interview, which was complemented by observation and document analysis. The purpose was to be able to obtain information from several sources and triangulate the findings. The interview question for the current research was tested for validity and reliability. In this regard, face validity and content validity were conducted. On content validity, the interview question was examined by ten panels of experts in qualitative research and experts in football. The panels were asked to rate the

interview question, and then the results were analyzed by the researcher. In this regard, the Cohen Kappa index analysis is used to assess the suitability of the unit of analysis for the theme studied. This expert's validity and reliability values were obtained using the Cohen Kappa formula [28]. The result of the Cohen Kappa analysis was 0.894, indicating the instruments are valid and reliable to be used in the research.

For the current research, the participants were determined through the purposive sampling method. Therefore, the participants were chosen deliberately and aimed to answer relevant questions on a research topic [29]. The subjects in this study were ten youth sports psychologists with the characteristics of holding a coaching license and having a minimum of 5 years of experience in football coaching. Other than that, the participants were five parents whose children trained at a football academy.

2.3. Data Analysis

The current research used several data collection methods, namely interview, observation, and document analysis, in order to triangulate the data, so the result can be valid and reliable. In this research, the triangulation was carried out by comparing different methods of data collection to confirm the findings. Triangulation refers to a combination of methods or data sources in a study, which occurs when researchers confirm evidence from different sources to clarify themes or perspectives that occurred in the study [22]. A combination of discussion, observation, and documentation is a source of data to obtain related findings [30]. Data analysis in this study will use open coding, axial coding, and selective coding strategies [27]. Coding is an idea that is often reduced to words to describe data; it is also an analytical technique that analyzes facts about events or experiences line by line or paragraph by paragraph. This study follows the principles of Evolved Grounded Theory [26], [27], so data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. Integrating various methods in the data collection process is considered to cover up the weaknesses of the findings. It provides reinforcement and confidence to researchers in an invention and allows them to obtain more comprehensive data.

3. Results

3.1. Interview

In the interview section, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used. In-depth, semi-structured interviews are suitable for the current research. It is because the interview method used open-ended questions, which were determined beforehand, and the answers were recorded in more detail [31]. Other than that, the answer can also be

developed [32]. An in-depth, semi-structured interview is an oral exchange in which one person, the interviewer, tries to get information from the other person by asking questions. For the current research, the results of the interview will be analyzed and coded through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding is used to take the textual data and break it up into discrete parts; axial coding is used to draw connections between the codes; and selective coding is used to select one central category that connects all the codes from the analysis and captures the essence of the research. The result of the coding displayed in the discussion below is:

3.1.1. Question 1

What is the primary purpose of establishing a football academy?

Ten youth football coaches answered this question. The coding emerged from several themes, such as the purpose of establishing the football academy, which was to make the children in the academy independent and responsible and prevent their exposure to the internet and children's addiction to cell phones. The one code leading to the prevention of juvenile delinquency was the addiction to cell phones. According to interviewees, the addiction to cell phones could provoke children to become addicted to bullying, sexual harassment, and online gambling. It is because the content the adolescent perceived on the internet was negative and insufficient for positive character development; moreover, if the adolescent received less supervision, the theory behind this was that the addiction to cell phones could teach, provoke, and inspire adolescents to commit crimes. In this regard, according to interviewees, a sports program such as football can be a physical activity to channel aggression and maintain positive emotional management. Other than that, sports activity could shield adolescents from negative influences and dodge the intention to commit crime.

Other themes that emerged in this section were to intensify adolescent independence and responsibility. According to the interviewee, this could lead to better self-confidence and a positive mental attitude. It is because through independence and responsibility, adolescents in the football academy are aware of their social conditions, such as keeping their football equipment or soccer kit. They were taught to keep the equipment in good condition, restore the equipment after the exercise, and repair broken equipment. This is in accordance with what is being studied in the current research, namely football as the formation of adolescent character.

3.1.2. Question 2

What is the purpose of parents sending their children to a football academy?

Based on the coaches' perspective throughout their experience in handling the football academy and the

perspective of parents being interviewed, the result revealed several reasons that became themes of the current research as the reason for parents sending their children into a football academy. Interestingly, the reason parents sent their children to the football academy was not to make the children become professional players but more to develop their psychological and character skills. It was shown through the themes that emerged in the current research: the parents want to prevent the children from developing smartphone addiction, and the parents think that sending their children to a football academy is the best form of parental support in order to maintain a positive attitude in the children. Furthermore, the parents think that the football academy means providing positive activities that prevent the children from having negative attitudes. The parents believed that the football academy would make the student behave strangely because the academy provides the student with soccer practice, fatigue, and a positive activity that reduces the intensity of playing smartphones.

3.1.3. Question 3

Based on your opinion, what is the difference between teenagers who play soccer and those who do not?

The main theme emerged in the current question, which is associated with the current research topic: how the football academy could develop students' positive manners. It means that the difference between those who joined and those who did not join the football academy was in their manner or attitude. According to the interviewee, football is a complex sport that consists of many players, so many lessons should be mastered by athletes, such as team coordination, respect, and helping each other. Furthermore, according to the coach, children who join football from an early age are considered to be more polite and able to respect other people because, in football, they are taught how to have an attitude in speaking, give a positive response during a match, and behave towards coaches, opponents, friends, and seniors in the team. In regard to the difference between children who joined and did not join football, the coaches stated that the players had more courage and behavior than children who were not players. Other than that, the level of independence of children who play football is higher than that of children who do not, because children who join football clubs or academies are used to being responsible and preparing their equipment. It can be concluded that there are three themes for this question, namely developing the student's positive manner, football players having more courage than those who are not players, and football players having more responsibilities than those who are not football players. This is in accordance with the current research topic, which is football as the formation of adolescent character and a preventive program to overcome juvenile delinquency.

3.1.4. Question 4

What is the coach's target for youth football players in

the football academy?

For the current question, two themes emerged: the first is that the coach wants the player to become a professional player, and the second is that the coach wants the player to have a balanced life in terms of physical and psychological characteristics. It means that despite pushing the player physically as preparation to become a skilled player, the coaches also emphasized the student's character through the development of positive psychological traits such as emotion, knowledge, and thinking skills. In this case, the coaches believe that a talented player should also be supported by positive values, which could prevent them from engaging in harmful activities. The coaches understand that the involvement of the player in the crime in the future could cut the players' career, so developing a positive attitude in the player from the early stages is important.

3.1.5. Question 5

What values are trained and instilled in a football academy?

For the current question, according to the coaches, the most important value taught in the football academy was respect. Based on the coach's perspective, respect is the most important value for the player. It is because football is a team game that requires all players to understand each other. All players should coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate to win a game. Therefore, a player should respect other players, coaches, and the team. Other than that, the coaches stated that the player was taught to respect the opponents and accept the result gracefully. It is to respect their hard work and the opponents hard work throughout the game. Furthermore, the values taught to the players were responsibility, making the right decision, self-confidence, and friendship. These constructs are important for the player in order to win a game. The construct also helps students develop their character and become human beings with a balanced physical and psychological life.

3.2. Observation

Another data collection technique in qualitative research is observation. Observations in qualitative research occur when the researcher makes field notes about the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site [22]. Researchers made observations at five football academies in Indonesia and Malaysia, where the coaches were interviewed. An interview was carried out during the exercise and training conducted. Researchers observe the activities from the start to the end of the training.

The result of the observation confirmed the interview result. For example, first, the players were punished if they were late, which confirms that the football academy taught discipline and respect to the players. The player should

respect the time settled for the training; the player also should respect and feel ashamed for their coaches and other players who were on time to come to the training section. Second, if the player does not bring a drinking bottle for training, then they are not allowed to take part in the practice. It confirms that the football academy taught the discipline and responsibilities to the players. The player should be disciplined to bring their own personal items throughout the training. They should also be responsible for keeping their personal equipment. Third, the players were given a book as a guideline through the training, which confirmed that the players were taught to be professional players who possess the theoretical knowledge necessary to back up their professional football careers. The coaches, as in sports psychology, understand that the player's behavior in training will affect their performance in the future or in the game. Therefore, in the training section, the player is given the necessary training with discipline in preparation for the game.

3.3. Document Analysis

The third method of data collection is to analyze the various documents collected, referring to various written or typed materials. The gathering of such documents helps add evidence from other sources, confirms new research questions that arise, and creates new categories [31]. During the research process, researchers can collect documents that can support player research; some of the documents that researchers get are several training programs provided by each coach and a book that is a reference for players provide knowledge to players about football itself, including documents that contain the proper form of support from parents to players.

From the analysis conducted by the researcher, the document originated from the sports academy and supported the findings of the purpose of the football academy and the perspective of the coaches regarding the psychological traits educated in the athletes. It is because of the material stated or given in the guidebook used in the football academy. Other than that, general documents such as other research findings confirmed the finding of the correlation of the football academy mainly about the sports activities on the development of athletes' psychological trait, namely character.

4. Discussion

Sports activities as the efforts to shape children's character in preventing juvenile delinquency are the right preventive strategy [46]. It is because the sports activities could foster the character and behavior of teenagers. It was proved through the current research findings. This research confirmed that sports academies could intensify the positive psychological character of adolescents. Firstly, according to the coaches, the aim of conducting sports

activities was to escalate adolescent independence, responsibilities, and prevention toward juvenile delinquency among teenagers. It was also the intention of the parent when they decided to register their children at a sports academy. Secondly, based on the observation and acknowledgement of the coaches, the football academy in the current research educated the teenagers with positive behaviors and manners such as respect, discipline, and responsibilities. It means that the football academy intended to constitute the teenage character. It was emphasized through the difference between teenagers who join sports academies and those who do not, where teenagers who join football academies claimed to have a more positive manner and character [51].

The current research findings are in accordance with the literature. According to Maha et al [33], the regeneration process through football is one of the most efficient means of character development for adolescents. The football academy is the right place to suppress negative behavior in the area. Studies on sports participation have found that sports positively influence the formation of one's character [34][48]. Through football, teenagers are taught to be disciplined, responsible, and respectful of each other. It was achieved because the football coach is a figure who helps educate youth to have even better behavior. Other than that, the coach does not only play a role in training but also as the one who supervises the development of the athlete physically and mentally. Therefore, the coach must be the one who is able to act as a leader who is authoritative, firm, wise, democratic, creative, innovative, and clever in processing training situations that can motivate athletes to behave well [35].

Players of adolescent age generally respect their coaches more than their parents, so many teenage athletes are more obedient to their coaches' orders. Players assume that a coach is an expert in everything and is skilled at playing various roles; therefore, many athletes want to achieve what their coaches have achieved [36]. A competent coach can regulate his own emotions, feel high confidence in his players' success, and motivate and build the character of his athletes [37]. Positive character development through the sport of football can be a way of instilling fair play, upholding sportsmanship, rejecting cheating, respecting opponents, ignoring provocations, and avoiding things that lead to violence [38]. Sports teach athletes techniques to reduce negative emotional frequencies, especially in football, which is known for the aggressiveness of the supporters [39]. Mature emotions will guide individuals to direct their behavior firmly, ultimately leading to positive consequences, so that individuals avoid aggressiveness that does not follow the norms prevailing in society [40].

Emotional intelligence has a positive effect on character building [41]. Through reasonable emotional control, a teenager can control himself not to do bad things or take actions that violate societal norms. Adolescents with delinquency problems often lack the knowledge to determine whether their actions are right or wrong [42].

The most significant cause of juvenile delinquency is their lack of moral education [43]. So it is hoped that the existence of football academies in the regions can shape children's character so that they can become a forum for reducing juvenile delinquency rates [49].

Other research has similar results to the current research. Interviews, observations, and document analysis were conducted by Juntti [44] in the football academy in Panama. They found that the coaches believe the football academy was significant in raising individual belonging, and the coaches have a central role in maintaining positive teenage behavior. Other than that, Ng [45] in their policy analysis suggests that the Hong Kong government utilizes sports activities as a preventive strategy for juvenile delinquency based on a theoretical perspective. They stated that, based on the personality theories, sports activities can fulfill the personality traits needed by individuals, which alleviates juvenile delinquency. Based on play theories, play is a fundamental part of human development because it is closely tied to the development of cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical behavior, which could prevent juvenile delinquency activities.

5. Conclusions

The development of a football academy is one of the efforts to form a positive adolescent personality as well as a way to deal with the problem of juvenile delinquency. Football is a complex physical sport with psychological aspects that can help form the character of the youth generation. In football, they are taught to respect other people, opponents, discipline, responsibility, courage, and other values that can be provisions for living in society. All coaches agree that there are differences in the attitudes of teenagers with football backgrounds and teenagers who do not have a sports background, so it is necessary to instill this positive value in our children by giving them space to join this team sport. In addition, football can also be a preventive measure for juvenile delinquency in this modernization era. Physical activities are tiring and time-consuming for teenagers, so minimize activities that can harm them. Parents also agree that their children who are members of the football academy have more positive activities, have long rest periods due to fatigue after soccer practice, and become more responsible. Answer, at least with the equipment that Peacock has for the next exercise.

6. Limitations

This research is limited to knowing and seeing the public knowledge and awareness of the role of sports in general and football in particular in shaping children's character and being a preventive measure for juvenile delinquency in this modernization era. So there are still some problems that also arise as a result of this research. The researcher

did not examine in depth with the police how the role of football, in general, can reduce crime rates in an area and did not examine how the rate of juvenile delinquency was based on the number of football academies in that area.

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