

The Dark Side of Passion: Fanaticism, Identity, and Collective Behavior Among Indonesian Football Supporters

Sisi Gelap Passion: Fanatisme, Identitas, dan Dinamika Perilaku Kolektif Suporter Sepak Bola di Indonesia

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Abstract

Fanaticism is characterized by excessive emotional attachment to a particular object or group. This study aimed to identify the dominant aspects of football supporter fanaticism and describe the demographic characteristics and club preferences of football supporters in Indonesia. A descriptive-analytical quantitative study with a cross-sectional survey design was conducted involving 314 football supporters. Data were collected using an online questionnaire based on Goddard's theory of fanaticism, modified by Prahesti et al (2019), with good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.807$). Descriptive statistical analysis was performed. The results showed that interest and love for the club (39.44%) and personal and group attitudes (38.07%) were the dominant aspects of fanaticism, whereas family support (10.60%) contributed the least. Most respondents were male (78.98%), teenagers aged 15–25 years (65.61%), and demonstrated a high level of fanaticism (62.74%). Inferential analyses further revealed that male supporters demonstrated significantly higher scores on interest and love for the club and length of engagement compared to female supporters, whereas fanaticism aspects were largely stable across age groups. International football clubs were more widely supported than Indonesian clubs, with Manchester United emerging as the most supported club. These findings indicate that football supporter fanaticism in Indonesia is primarily driven by emotional attachment and social identification within supporter communities, whereas globalization and football club branding influence supporters' club preferences.

Keywords: Fanaticism; Football Supporter; Social Identity; Supporter Community; Football Club

Abstrak

Fanatisme merupakan keterikatan emosional yang berlebihan terhadap suatu objek atau kelompok. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi aspek-aspek dominan yang membentuk fanatisme suporter sepak bola serta mendeskripsikan karakteristik demografis dan preferensi klub suporter sepak bola di Indonesia. Penelitian menggunakan metode kuantitatif deskriptif-analitik dengan desain survei *cross-sectional* yang melibatkan 314 suporter sepak bola. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner daring berdasarkan teori fanatisme Goddard yang dimodifikasi oleh Prahesti et al (2019) dengan reliabilitas yang baik (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0,807$). Analisis dilakukan menggunakan statistik deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa minat dan rasa cinta terhadap klub (39,44%) serta sikap pribadi dan kelompok (38,07%) merupakan aspek dominan pembentuk fanatisme, sedangkan dukungan keluarga (10,60%) memberikan kontribusi paling rendah. Sebagian besar responden berjenis kelamin laki-laki (78,98%), berusia remaja 15–25 tahun (65,61%), dan memiliki tingkat fanatisme yang tinggi (62,74%). Analisis inferensial lebih lanjut mengungkapkan bahwa pendukung pria menunjukkan skor yang jauh lebih tinggi dalam minat dan kecintaan pada klub serta lamanya keterlibatan dibandingkan pendukung wanita, sementara aspek fanatisme sebagian besar stabil di berbagai kelompok usia. Klub sepak bola internasional lebih banyak didukung dibandingkan klub Indonesia, dengan Manchester United sebagai klub yang paling banyak didukung. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa fanatisme suporter sepak bola di Indonesia terutama dipengaruhi oleh keterikatan emosional dan identitas sosial dalam komunitas suporter, sementara globalisasi dan kekuatan merek klub membentuk preferensi terhadap klub yang didukung.

Kata Kunci: Fanatisme; Suporter Sepak Bola; Identitas Sosial; Komunitas Suporter; Klub Sepak Bola

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INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the most popular sports and is loved by people from all walks of life around the world (Fothergill et al., 2023; Karim et al., 2024). Beyond just a sport, football also serves as a means of unifying communities on a large scale, from die-hard fans who consistently support their favorite teams on the pitch to fans who only support them through digital screens (Tiscini & Strologo, 2016). Indonesia is the third largest football fan-base in the world with 165.48 million fans. This massive number is not only reflects the popularity of football, but also also the strong emotional attachment that fans develop toward their clubs. Such as emotional involvement often manifests in the form of fanaticism, which can shape supporter identity, loyalty, and collective behavior (Anggraini et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, almost every football club has a community of supporters who generally come from the area where the club is based. Football fans who have a sense of fanaticism tend to be loyal and have a deep emotional attachment to the club they support, especially when faced with a decisive match (García et al., 2017; Ohlander, 2020). Football supporters in Indonesia often engage in inappropriate behaviour, such as riots between supporters and the destruction of stadium facilities. This has led the public to believe that football fans cause more problems than positive impacts.

Besides negative fanaticism, the facts prove that there are supporters who exhibit positive fanaticism. Case study from Hendrawan (2023), the Ambarketawang Sleman Fans community is known for its strong loyalty to its favorite team. They regularly attend matches, both home and away, even willingly traveling long distances outside Java to provide direct support. Not only they supported on the field, they also channel their love through creativity by actively creating murals, banners, songs or chants, logos, and tattoos, that are characteristic of Sleman. Furthermore, they actively purchase official club merchandise as a form of appreciation and a tangible contribution to supporting the financial sustainability of the club and its officials (Ciechan-kujawa & Górniewicz, 2020). The purchase of official merchandise is closely related to the emotional attachment and sense of affection supporters feel toward the club, which encourages them to express loyalty through tangible forms of support (Georgievski et al., 2019).

Fanaticism in the world of football has become a social issue in the wider community because this issue not only influences the behavior of supporters but also affects their emotional condition (Kural & Özbek, 2019). Fanaticism is a condition in which a person or group has excessive belief in an object, accompanied by excessive commitment and affinity (Hayati et al., 2022; Mu'afiqoh & Mariyati, 2024). Study by Bond & Addesa (2020), matches between rival teams influence attendance and create competitive emotions, thus creating expectations among the audience (Scholz & Vespalec, 2019). These expectations naturally create increased euphoria, heating the stands, and potentially provoking the audience.

Although previous studies have shown that football supporter fanaticism is associated with emotional attachment, supporter identity, attendance, and consumer behaviour (García et al., 2017; Bond & Addesa, 2020; Georgievski et al., 2019), most studies have focused on specific aspects of supporter behaviour, particularly violence, emotional attachment, or merchandise purchasing. Limited research has comprehensively described both the positive and negative manifestations of football supporter fanaticism in the Indonesian football context. Given Indonesia's position as one of the world's largest football fan bases, understanding these behavioural expressions is important for developing healthier supporter cultures and assisting football clubs and governing bodies in designing more effective supporter management strategies.

Therefore, understanding football supporter fanaticism is essential for promoting constructive supporter engagement and minimizing destructive behaviour. This study aims to identify the dominant aspects of football supporter fanaticism and describe the demographic characteristics and club preferences of Indonesian football supporters. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of healthier supporter cultures and provide practical recommendations for football clubs and governing bodies in promoting positive supporter engagement. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: What are the dominant aspects of football supporter fanaticism, and how are they reflected in the demographic characteristics and club preferences of Indonesian football supporters?

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-analytic research design using a cross-sectional survey approach. The goal was to clearly visualize the overall picture of fanaticism through analysis and elaboration of the issues emerging among the research subjects based on the data collection conducted (Creswell, 2007; Guetterman & Creswell, 2015).

The population in this study comprised football supporters across Indonesia, defined as individuals or groups who have an emotional connection, commitment, and solidarity with their chosen football club. These characteristics indicate a high level of supporter loyalty. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, in which participants were deliberately chosen to meet the research objectives. A total of 314 football supporters ($n = 314$) participated in this study by completing an online questionnaire. Based on age distribution, 206 respondents were aged 15–25 years, 82 respondents were aged 26–45 years, and 26 respondents were over 46 years old, indicating that adolescents and young adults constituted the majority of participants in this research.

The instrument used in this study refers to the theory of fanaticism proposed by Goddard (2001) (Prahesti et al., 2019). According by Goddard, fanaticism is the behavior of an individual or group based on excessive belief in an object, even though it is deviant, they still maintain that belief

(Prahesti et al., 2019). The instrument demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.807.

Data were collected by distributing an online questionnaire through the Google Forms platform. This method was used because it is more efficient, easily accessible, and can be widely distributed to reach respondents from various football supporter communities across different regions of Indonesia. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were provided with an explanation of the research objectives and an informed consent form to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality of their identities and responses. In this study, the questionnaire employed a Likert scale to measure respondents' levels of agreement or preference toward the statements presented.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and describe the level of football supporter fanaticism. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to provide a comprehensive overview of the respondents' characteristics.

In addition to descriptive statistics, inferential statistical analyses were conducted to examine whether fanaticism aspects differed significantly across demographic groups. Prior to inferential testing, the normality of the data distribution was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results indicated that the data did not meet the assumption of normality; therefore, non-parametric statistical tests were employed for group comparisons. To examine differences in fanaticism aspects between male and female supporters, the Mann-Whitney U test was applied as a non-parametric alternative to the independent samples t-test. This test was selected because it does not assume a normal distribution and is appropriate for comparing two independent groups on ordinal or non-normally distributed continuous data (Field, 2018). To examine differences in fanaticism aspects across three age groups — teenagers (15–25 years), adults (26–45 years), and elderly (≥46 years) — the Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted as a non-parametric alternative to one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). When the Kruskal-Wallis test yielded a statistically significant result, post hoc pairwise comparisons were performed with Bonferroni correction to control for Type I error inflation resulting from multiple comparisons (Corder & Foreman, 2014). The significance threshold was set at $p < .05$ for all analyses. All inferential analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Classification of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Total	Percentage
Male	248	78.98%
Female	66	21.02%

Table 1 presents the gender distribution of the respondents. Of the 314 football supporters who participated in this study, 248 respondents (78.98%) were male, while 66 respondents (21.02%) were female. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents in this study were male.

Table 2. Classification of Respondents by Age

Classification	Age	Total	Percentage
Teenagers	15 – 25 Years	206	65.61%
Adults	26 - 45 Years	82	26.11%
Elderly	≥ 46 Years	26	8.28%
Total		314	100%

Table 2 presents the age distribution of the respondents. Of the 314 football supporters who participated in this study, the majority were teenagers aged 15–25 years (206 respondents; 65.61%). This was followed by adults aged 26–45 years (82 respondents; 26.11%), while only 26 respondents (8.28%) were aged 46 years and above. These findings indicate that the respondents in this study were predominantly adolescents and young adults, suggesting that younger individuals constituted the largest proportion of football supporters participating in the survey.

Table 3. Distribution of Football Supporter Fanaticism Levels

Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	197	62.74%
Moderate	100	31.85%
Low	17	5.41%
Total	314	100%

The results show that the majority of respondents (197 individuals; 62.74%) were classified as having a high level of fanaticism, followed by 100 respondents (31.85%) with a moderate level of fanaticism. Only 17 respondents (5.41%) were categorized as having a low level of fanaticism. Overall, these findings indicate that most football supporters participating in this study demonstrated a high level of fanaticism toward the clubs they support.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Football Supporter Fanaticism

Statistics Descriptive	Fanaticism
Mean	68.46
Median	71.00
Observed min	31
Observed max	87
Standard deviation	11.303
Excess kurtosis	2.879
Skewness	-1.574
Number of observation used	314.000

The results show that the mean fanaticism score was 68.46, while the median was 71.00, indicating that respondents generally reported relatively high levels of fanaticism. The observed scores ranged from 31 to 87, suggesting considerable variation in fanaticism levels among respondents. The standard deviation of 11.303 indicates a

moderate dispersion of scores around the mean. Furthermore, the skewness value of -1.574 shows that the distribution was negatively skewed, indicating that respondents with higher fanaticism scores were more prevalent than those with lower scores. The kurtosis value of 2.879 indicates a leptokurtic distribution, suggesting that the scores were more concentrated around the center with relatively heavier tails than a normal distribution. These descriptive statistics are consistent with the distribution presented in Table 3, where most respondents were classified as having a high level of football supporter fanaticism.

Table 5. Type of football Club Supported

Type of Football Club	Frequency	Percentage
Indonesian Clubs	103	32.80%
International Clubs	211	67.20%
Total	314	100%

Table 5 shows that the majority of respondents supported international football clubs (211 respondents; 67.20%), while 103 respondents (32.80%) supported Indonesian football clubs. These findings indicate that a greater proportion of respondents supported international football clubs than Indonesian football clubs. To provide a more detailed overview of supporter preferences, Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents according to the specific football clubs they support.

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents by Supported Football Club

Club	Total	Percentage
AC Milan	11	3.50%
AREMA	9	2.87%
Arsenal	5	1.59%
Barcelona FC	36	11.46%
Bayern Munchen	5	1.59%
Chelsea	11	3.50%
Juventus	4	1.27%
Liverpool	15	4.78%
Manchester City	8	2.55%
Manchester United	63	20.06%
Persebaya Surabaya	5	1.59%
Persib Bandung	21	6.69%

Table 8. Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Gender Differences Across Football Supporter Fanaticism Aspects

Aspects	Mean Rank (Male)	Mean Rank (Female)	Z	Sig.	Conclusion
The magnitude of interest and love	164.99	129.35	-2.847	.004	Significant – males scored higher
Personal and group attitudes	161.50	142.45	-1.522	.128	Not significant
The length of time an individual engages in a particular type of activity	164.22	132.25	-2.603	.009	Significant – males scored higher
Family support	154.25	169.72	-1.246	.213	Not significant

Persija Jakarta	17	5.41%
PSG	7	2.23%
PSM Makassar	3	0.96%
Real Madrid	46	14.65%
Semen Padang FC	5	1.59%
Sriwijaya FC	43	13.69%
TOTAL	314	100%

Manchester United has the most extensive fan base with 63 fans (20.06%), followed by Real Madrid 46 fans (14.65%), Sriwijaya FC 43 fans (13.69%), and Barcelona FC 36 fans (11.46%). These four clubs account for more than 10% of the total number of supporters. Clubs with a moderate fan base include Persib Bandung with 21 fans (6.69%), Persija Jakarta 17 fans (5.41%), Liverpool 15 fans (4.78%), AC Milan 11 fans (3.50%), and Chelsea with 11 fans (3.50%). In clubs with a small supporter base that only has supporters of less than 3%, there are several clubs including AREMA with 9 fans (2.87%), Manchester City 8 fans (2.55%), PSG 7 fans (2.23%), Arsenal 5 fans (1.59%), Bayer Munchen 5 fans (1.59%), Juventus 4 fans (1.27%), Persebaya Surabaya 5 fans (1.59%), PSM Makasar 3 fans (0.96%), and Semen Padang FC with 5 fans (1.59%).

Table 7. Distribution of Football Supporter Fanaticism Across Aspects

Aspect Of Fanaticism	
The magnitude of interest and love	39.44%
Personal and group attitudes	38.07%
The length of time an individual engages in a particular type of activity	11.89%
Family support	10.60%

The analysis results indicate that the aspect of interest and love accounted for the largest proportion of football supporter fanaticism (39.44%), followed by personal and group attitudes (38.07%). In contrast, the aspect of the length of time an individual engages in a particular type of activity (11.89%) and family support (10.60%) represented relatively smaller proportions. These findings suggest that interest and love and personal and group attitudes were the most prominent aspects of football supporter fanaticism among the respondents.

Table 9. Kruskal-Wallis and Post Hoc Test Results for Age Group Differences Across Football Supporter Fanaticism Aspects

Aspects	Sig. Kruskal-Wallis	Conclusion
The magnitude of interest and love	.495	Not significant
Personal and group attitudes	.038	Significant (omnibus), but pairwise after Bonferroni nothing significant
The length of time an individual engages in a particular type of activity	.443	Not significant
Family support	.643	Not significant

DISCUSSION

The demographic profile of this study also showed that most respondents were male (78.98%). This finding is consistent with previous studies reporting that football spectatorship and supporter participation continue to be dominated by men in many countries, including Indonesia (Karim et al., 2024; Kossakowski & Besta, 2023). From the perspective of gender role theory, football has historically been constructed as a masculine sport, in which competition, physicality, and group solidarity are socially associated with male identity (Connell, 2005). Consequently, men are generally more likely to participate in supporter communities, attend matches, and engage in football-related activities than women. However, the presence of female supporters in this study also indicates that football fandom is becoming increasingly inclusive, reflecting the growing participation of women in supporter culture alongside the continued dominance of male supporters.

The Mann-Whitney U test revealed statistically significant gender differences in two aspects of football supporter fanaticism. Male supporters demonstrated significantly higher scores on the interest and love for the club aspect ($Z = -2.847$, $p = .004$) and the length of engagement aspect ($Z = -2.603$, $p = .009$) compared to female supporters. In contrast, no significant differences were found between male and female supporters in personal and group attitudes ($Z = -1.522$, $p = .128$) or family support ($Z = -1.246$, $p = .213$). These findings suggest that while both male and female supporters share similar levels of group-oriented commitment and family-related motivations toward football fandom, male supporters tend to exhibit more intense emotional attachment to their clubs and longer duration of engagement. This pattern is consistent with gender role socialization theory, which posits that men are more likely to internalize sport-related identities as a central component of their self-concept (Connell, 2005). Furthermore, football has historically been constructed as a masculine domain, in which emotional investment, long-term loyalty, and active participation are socially encouraged among men (Kossakowski & Besta, 2023). The absence of gender differences in personal and group attitudes may indicate that supporter community dynamics and collective belonging are equally meaningful for both male and female supporters, reflecting the increasingly inclusive nature of football fandom in Indonesia.

The research also shows that most football supporters are teenagers. Adolescence is a transitional period between late childhood and early adulthood, characterized by biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes (Eker & Akdeniz, 2022; Ulumudin & Nastiti, 2022). Adolescents generally experience unstable emotions, often experiencing extreme emotions and feeling under pressure due to their identity-searching phase (Hayya & Savitri, 2023). This condition often leads adolescents to do what they like as a way to demonstrate their independence without relying on their parents. Positive emotional maturity in adolescents can protect them from negative stimuli (El-musavira et al., 2023); those with emotional maturity will avoid clashes between supporters. Meanwhile, adolescents with negative emotional maturity are easily provoked, leading to actions that cause harm to themselves and others. It was found that teenagers with high levels of fanaticism will usually do anything for the club they are proud of, such as watching matches live at the stadium, buying club attributes, and defending their club when insulted (Maderer et al., 2018; Velicia Martín et al., 2020).

The predominance of teenagers and young adult supporters in this study may also be explained by Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory, particularly the stage of Identity versus Role Confusion, which suggests that individuals aged approximately 12–18 years, and continuing into emerging adulthood, actively seek a stable sense of identity through affiliation with meaningful social groups (Erikson, 1968). Football supporter communities provide adolescents with opportunities to express themselves, develop a sense of belonging, and gain social recognition through shared values, symbols, and collective activities. As a result, identification with a football club becomes an important component of personal and social identity during this developmental stage. Previous studies have similarly shown that younger supporters tend to exhibit stronger emotional attachment, higher levels of team identification, and greater participation in supporter-related activities than older age groups because they are more actively involved in identity formation and peer-group interactions (Madriral, 2003; Wann & James, 2019).

The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that age group differences were statistically significant only for the personal and group attitudes aspect of fanaticism ($p = .038$). However, subsequent pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni correction

revealed no significant differences between any specific age group pairs namely teenagers (15–25 years), adults (26–45 years), and older adults (≥ 46 years) suggesting that the omnibus significance may reflect a general trend rather than a distinct contrast between particular age categories. The remaining three aspects interest and love for the club ($p = .495$), length of engagement ($p = .443$), and family support ($p = .643$) showed no significant differences across age groups. These findings imply that the core emotional and relational dimensions of football supporter fanaticism are relatively stable across different life stages, from adolescence through adulthood and into older age. This result is noteworthy, as it suggests that once an individual develops a fanatic attachment to a football club, the fundamental nature of that attachment characterized by emotional love, family influence, and duration of support does not substantially vary with age. The marginally significant trend in personal and group attitudes may reflect subtle generational differences in how supporters engage with peer groups and collective supporter identities, potentially shaped by varying degrees of social media use, peer influence, and community participation across age cohorts (Kaya et al., 2024; Wann & James, 2019). Overall, these findings reinforce the argument that football supporter fanaticism in Indonesia is a cross-generational phenomenon, driven more by shared emotional and social identification than by age-specific characteristics.

Research results show that 39.44% of fanaticism experienced by football supporters stems from their interest and love for the club. Furthermore, personal and group attitudes also play a crucial role, amounting to 38.07%. These results suggest that fanaticism among Indonesian football supporters stems not only from emotional ties to the club but is also influenced by the social dynamics within the supporter community (Collin & Setyawati, 2026; Usman et al., 2022). Individuals tend to build and shape their identity by joining a community, this means that a football supporter is not only proud of their love for the club but also influenced by the strong sense of togetherness and identity validation that comes from being part of a supporter group (García et al., 2017; Supriyanto et al., 2023). This statement states that a person's attitude in a group will be influenced by the group's acceptance and the person's intention to establish social relations.

The length of time an individual has supported a club is not the primary cause of fanaticism among Indonesian football supporters, as this aspect only contributes 11.89%. The loyalty, determination, and long-term commitment to continue supporting the club are the main factors in forming fanaticism in an individual or group (Wibowo, 2018) and many individuals who have just joined already demonstrate high levels of fanaticism due to strong exposure to the community, social media, supporter culture, and emotional experiences (Gray et al., 2013; Setyawati et al., 2023; Wicaksono et al., 2024).

Family support emerged as the aspect with the lowest contribution, only 10.60%. This phenomenon clearly illustrates the characteristics of football supporters in Indonesia, who tend to build social identity through

togetherness and interaction within groups or supporter communities, rather than through family factors or length of club support (Collin & Setyawati, 2026; Kaya et al., 2024). The Indonesian people's love for football has made this sport more than just entertainment; it has developed into a culture that is distinctive in each region. Supporters not only express their love for their club, but also a sense of solidarity and togetherness within the group (Verdyana & Tjahjoanggoro, 2021). Social interaction and environmental influences in shaping individual attitudes and behavior and the important role of fanaticism as a form of expression of cultural identity makes football supporters feel like they are a vital part of the club's success (Adnan, 2023; Aswan et al., 2023; Kahar & Kasim, 2026; Permana, 2017). This is what makes the support given by supporters not only an expression of love but also a demonstration of loyalty and a sense of togetherness within the group (Gray et al., 2013; Scholz & Vespalec, 2019).

This finding may also be interpreted through Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which proposes that individuals develop part of their self-concept through membership in meaningful social groups. Within the context of football supporter communities, identification with fellow supporters often provides a stronger sense of belonging, shared values, and collective identity than family relationships. Through collective activities such as attending matches, chanting, creating choreographies, and participating in supporter community events, individuals strengthen their emotional attachment to both the club and the supporter group. Consequently, the relatively small contribution of the family support aspect in this study may reflect that football supporter fanaticism among Indonesian supporters is more strongly associated with social identification within supporter communities than with family influence. This interpretation is consistent with previous studies reporting that group identity and collective experiences play a central role in shaping supporter loyalty and fan behaviour (García et al., 2017; Kaya et al., 2024).

Another interesting finding is that the majority of respondents supported international football clubs rather than Indonesian clubs. This pattern reflects the increasing globalization of football, where international leagues such as the English Premier League and La Liga receive extensive media coverage and are more accessible through television broadcasting, streaming platforms, and social media (Penn & Penn, 2021). Consequently, Indonesian supporters are continuously exposed to international clubs, players, and football culture, facilitating stronger emotional attachment to overseas teams. Previous studies have similarly reported that media exposure and globalization have significantly influenced football supporter preferences, particularly among younger generations who actively consume digital football content (Grainger et al., 2025).

The dominance of Manchester United supporters in this study may be explained through the perspective of Brand Equity Theory, which emphasizes that strong brand awareness, positive brand associations, and emotional attachment contribute to the development of consumer loyalty toward a brand (Aaker, 1991). In the context of

football, clubs with strong historical achievements, global recognition, and continuous interaction with supporters are more likely to establish strong identification among fans across geographical boundaries. Manchester United has built a powerful global football brand through its long history, international success, extensive media exposure, and digital engagement strategies, which have enabled supporters outside England, including Indonesia, to develop emotional connections with the club. Recent studies indicate that digital platforms, social media interaction, and global branding strategies significantly influence football supporter identification and loyalty, particularly among fans who support clubs beyond their local regions (Kaya et al., 2024; Gasparetto & Lyukmanova, 2026). Therefore, the high proportion of Manchester United supporters in this study may reflect the influence of global football commercialization and media accessibility in shaping supporter preferences in Indonesia.

Another important finding of this study is that the majority of respondents (62.74%) were classified as having a high level of football supporter fanaticism. This finding indicates that football supporters in Indonesia generally demonstrate strong emotional commitment toward the clubs they support. According to Goddard (2001), fanaticism is characterized by intense belief, emotional attachment, and persistent loyalty toward a particular object, leading individuals to maintain their commitment even when facing criticism or unfavorable situations (Prahesti et al., 2019). In the context of football, such commitment is reflected in supporters' willingness to consistently follow matches, purchase official merchandise, actively participate in supporter communities, and continue supporting their clubs regardless of their competitive performance (Merten et al., 2024). Therefore, the predominance of highly fanatic supporters in this study suggests that football clubs have become an important part of supporters' emotional and psychological lives rather than merely sports organizations.

This finding is consistent with recent studies showing that football supporter fanaticism is closely associated with emotional attachment, team identification, and behavioural loyalty. Supporters with higher levels of fanaticism tend to exhibit stronger commitment to their clubs by engaging in both online and offline supporter activities, maintaining long-term loyalty, and actively expressing their support through various forms of participation (Karim et al., 2024; Lima & Soares, 2025; Vollero et al., 2025). These findings reinforce the argument that football supporter fanaticism in Indonesia is primarily driven by emotional commitment and identification with the club, rather than by temporary interest in sporting success alone.

Fanaticism can make someone willing to do anything to maintain their belief in the football club they are proud of (Yilmaz, 2023). This pattern of excessive attachment cannot be separated from the global popularity of football, which has positioned the sport as one of the most influential cultural phenomena in Indonesia (Anam & Supriyadi, 2018; Permana, 2017). Watching football matches provides

emotional satisfaction and a sense of enjoyment for supporters. Many supporters follow their favorite clubs both online and offline as a means of expressing loyalty and sharing emotional bonds with their teams.

The support provided by supporters influences the team's mental state and fighting spirit (Gray et al., 2013). This is the basis for researchers to examine the crucial role of supporters in matches. The closeness between teenage supporters is influenced by emotional bonds that grow from shared goals, enjoyment, and interests. This finding is also supported by research conducted by Krismana et al (2023), which similarly indicates that excessive admiration toward idols can contribute to unrealistic perceptions and irrational attitudes among individuals. From the above phenomenon, it can be interpreted that fanaticism is formed in various forms, for example, the great interest and love for a favorite football club, in addition to a personal attitude that will be loyal to the group, which will have an impact on purchasing merchandise as a symbol of loyalty (Putri & Paryontri, 2024).

Fanaticism among football fans in Indonesia has become a multidimensional phenomenon, it is not merely a symbol of love for the sport but also serves as a means of forming social identity, group solidarity, and shared pride. However, considering the potential positive and negative aspects of this fanaticism, an appropriate strategy for managing supporter communities is needed so that supporters have a platform to channel their love and pride into healthy, creative, and sporting activities, thereby making football both a form of entertainment and a social cohesive force.

CONCLUSION

Fanaticism among football supporters in Indonesia reflects a multidimensional social and psychological phenomenon shaped by emotional attachment, social interaction, and group identification. Most respondents demonstrated a high level of football supporter fanaticism, indicating that strong emotional commitment toward football clubs is a common characteristic among Indonesian supporters. Interest and love for the club, together with personal and group attitudes, were the dominant aspects of fanaticism, whereas family support and the length of time supporting a club contributed relatively little, suggesting that supporter communities play a more influential role than family in shaping supporter identity. The findings also showed that football supporters were predominantly male and belonged to the teenager age group, while international football clubs, particularly Manchester United, attracted the largest proportion of supporters. These findings highlight the influence of identity formation, globalization, media exposure, and football club branding on supporter preferences. Overall, football supporter fanaticism represents not only loyalty toward a football club but also an expression of social identity and collective belonging. Therefore, fostering positive supporter culture is essential to encourage healthy fan engagement while minimizing the potential negative consequences of excessive fanaticism.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies are recommended to include more diverse samples representing different regions and supporter communities across Indonesia to improve the generalizability of the findings. In addition, future research should examine other psychological and social variables, such as team identification, social media engagement, collective identity, emotional regulation, and peer influence, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape football supporter fanaticism. Employing longitudinal or mixed-methods designs is also recommended to better explain how supporter fanaticism develops and changes over time.

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INFORMED CONCENT

This study did not require formal approval from an institutional ethics committee, as it involved anonymous questionnaire-based data collection with no physical or psychological intervention to participants. Nevertheless, the author adhered to ethical research principles by obtaining informed consent from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the research objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time before agreeing to complete the questionnaire, and their responses were treated confidentially.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

TRANSPARENCY OF DATA

All data generated and analyzed during this study have been included in this article. Additional contextual information may be available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, in accordance with ethical considerations and participant confidentiality.

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AI USAGE STATEMENT

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted tools were used solely to support language refinement, grammar checking, and editorial improvements during the manuscript preparation process. AI tools were not used to generate original research data, conduct data

analysis, interpret findings, or formulate the study's conclusions. All intellectual content, research design, analysis, arguments, and final decisions regarding the manuscript remain the sole responsibility of the authors. The authors carefully reviewed, verified, and edited all AI-assisted outputs to ensure accuracy, originality, and compliance with academic integrity standards.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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