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The Role of Football Supporters Attachment to The Club

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Info Artikel	Abstract
Article History: Received 14 February 2022 Approved 22 June 2022 Published 24 July 2022 *Keywords*: Supporters of Football Clubs, Attachment, Loyalty, Commitment, Trust	The purpose of this study was to determine the behaviour of football supporters in terms of the trust, satisfaction, commitment and loyalty factors. This research uses the descriptive quantification method. The sample in this study were football club supporters in Surakarta and Yogyakarta. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire on a Likert scale. They were testing the relationship between variables in the hypothesis using Spearman correlation. The results showed that the five variables studied had a positive correlation value, and based on the results obtained were able to confirm that the seven hypotheses proposed based on the conceptual model in the study were accepted.

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INTRODUCTION

Sports are activities carried out individually or in groups to achieve health, recreational, and economic goals. Sport as a multidisciplinary field of science allows it to be an exciting study. One area now becoming important in the advancement of sports is the science of management. Management as science has several aspects inherent in it.

Marketing is one of the essential aspects of managerial duties in a sports institution.

The marketing process in sports is a combination resulting from a long process of expert research closely related to publication policy (Ratten, 2016). Sports marketing is an exciting thing because it is directly related to the behaviour of spectators and sports supporters (Ratten, 2018)

In this case, football is a sport that is the top nominee in terms of its relationship with

supporters because football is a sport that has complexities in it starting from social, cultural and economic aspects spread throughout the world. This phenomenon inspires researchers to conduct research that can contribute ideas for developing science, especially sports science.

The results of observations made by researchers through *the digilib* database or *thesis* state that universities with similar study programs in 3 (three) regions, namely East Java, Central Java, and West Java, have a comparison of relatively similar research topics, including exercise models, learning models, profiles, and physical needs analysis. No research models or themes have been found in research on sports management, particularly sports marketing.

Sports education as an institution that aims to produce sports personnel has a vital role in equipping students with scientific diversification that can benefit society. The demands of the modern sports system that cause all aspects of sports to become an industrial model require sports students to be able to take a strategic role.

They are adapting marketing theory to the field of sports studies. Engagement is a growing topic in the marketing literature (Heilbrunn, 2001). The concept of engagement aims to study supporting relationships with specific organizations/products. Attachment or Brand attachment can be defined as the degree of loyalty inherent in the supporter towards something in the future (Keller, 2003). When a football supporter is associated with a club/label, the supporter will tend to maintain and retain it. A solid attachment to the football club will keep the supporters loyal to the club even in dire circumstances, for example, the failure of the club to excel and lose. Even attachment can lead to a sense of constantly trying and doing the same.

According to (Park, MacInnis, and Priester 2006), attachment is the cognitive and emotional force connections between the wearer.

Research on the involvement of football clubs has a vital role in sports marketing. Some studies have linked attachment to concepts such as trust, satisfaction, commitment and loyalty (Belaid & Behi, 2011). By examining the correlation between these variables, a description of the critical role of the attachment of sports clubs to their supporters will be known.

This study aims to determine the relationship between sports clubs and variables such as satisfaction with, trust, commitment, and loyalty to football fans in Indonesia. With this research, it is hoped that evidence will be obtained that the involvement of football clubs is an essential variable in managing football clubs. In addition, this research is also relevant to the socio-demographic mapping of the profiles of football supporters.

Branding activities of a sports institution, such as a football club, are carried out through a process of interaction between supporters and clubs to form a relationship between the club and supporters. Authentic engagement is a process reinforced by the

user's bond resulting from memories, thoughts, and feelings, as well as his relationship with the self (Park et al., 2010), so most football fans in Indonesia have a high fanaticism toward their favourite clubs.

As a consideration, football was chosen in this study because mass football has good infectious power and can move and unite the masses in a team, thus creating a relationship of values and culture. Sport is not just a cultural phenomenon, but a potential economic commodity since its supporters are staunch supporters of companies managed by clubs. Therefore, academics need to pay attention to the concept of sports marketing in order to be able to explore challenges and identify the needs and behaviours of football supporters (Newman & Newman, 2017).

Efforts to develop and improve the overall performance of a massive football club is carried out by the club's management; one of the ways is to ensure that the marketing system runs well. This can be seen from the number of football clubs that actively form management in football organizations independently as a concrete effort to gain public recognition (Miragaia, Ferreira, and Ratten 2017).

To optimize revenue through purchases made by football supporters, a club needs to understand more deeply how supporters behave and what factors influence them (Jetten, Hogg, and Mullin 2000) because the purpose of marketing is to focus on the process of meeting needs and (Kotler &

Armstrong, 2007; Zarkada & Polydorou, 2014) the wishes of supporters.

According to (Stott, Pearson, & West 2020), sports advocates watching and attending sporting events have different reasons and motives. Identifying sports advocates' motivations is essential to understanding what satisfies a person.

Several studies have identified the main motivations of supporters to develop a scale to measure the motives of sports support (Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Kahle & Walkling, 1996; Tapp & Clowes, 2002; Theodorakis et al., 2009). In sports marketing, there are two general dimensions of service: core services and additional services (Van Leeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002). This is in line with the opinion (Jetten, Hogg, & Mullin, 2000) in sports marketing literature that states that the core service dimension in sports is the game itself, while the additional service dimension is all that includes non-gaming extras such as parking, public access, and entertainment presented in the middle of the time lag (Van Leeuwen, Fast, and Daniel 2002)

According to (Ratten, 2016), sports marketing researchers must have good intelligence to improve the ability to plan marketing which is the goal of a sports organization. This means that sports marketing should be actively engaged in activities that can bring the club closer to supporters for future business goals. Sports marketing experts must be able to select targets and apply different methods to demographic,

psychographic, social and cultural differences since segmentation will be able to identify the wants, needs, loyalty and commitment of fans (Casper, 2007)

The theoretical reference from this study will discuss attachment patterns and their backgrounds, resulting in an analysis of the behaviour of football fans in Indonesia. Football matches in Indonesia are a unique phenomenon. From these activities, it can be seen how enthusiastic the audience is about the club they like. Several studies have been carried out by experts investigating the motivation of the audience to attend and support their favourite team in person (Correia & Esteves, 2007). Research on the relationship between supporters and clubs initially arose due to psychological effects (Hapsari & Wibowo, 2015). Fanaticism and aggressiveness of football club supporters. (Safitri and Andrianto 2015). The relationship between cohesiveness and intention of aggressive behaviour in football supporters, but over time this concept has shifted to various contexts, for example, *merchandise*/accessories (de Medeiros & Rubinstein, 2016) and evolved again into supporting relationships (Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005).

Behaviours involving emotional support are increasingly in demand in the form of studies and research, as they can provide vital information for clubs regarding the loyalty of the club's brand, the willingness of supporters, and the willingness of supporters to buy products sold by the club even though they are expensive.

(Vlachos et al., 2010) has recognized that the company will not be able to establish effective relationships with supporters. This demonstrates the need for current research, especially when involved in a sector such as a football is not well studied. In this study, it was selected using the Belaid and (Belaid & Behi, 2011) models by exposing the relationship between different variables. This research model increases loyalty, commitment, trust and loyalty as attachment indicators. This shows that engagement, trust, satisfaction, and commitment are precursors of loyalty (Sousa & Ribeiro, 2018)

Loyalty is a buying behaviour carried out by supporters repeatedly over time (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). Integrated marketing communications play a role in convincing supporters to be loyal to their products (Seric & Gil Saura, 2012). Meanwhile (Admiral, 2018) argues that loyalty is the consistency of supporters in choosing and buying back the same.

Satisfaction is a positive evaluation of support for a particular thing over time (Batra & Sinha, 2000; Fullerton, 2005). meanwhile (Kim et al., 2008) explains that satisfaction is the customer's response to the actual quality of a product and the expectations that the customer wants. This definition includes the cognitive and emotional aspects of satisfaction. It contains a subjective assessment that lets the supporter know if the

selected product or service meets or exceeds expectations (Ahmed et al., 2014).

Trust is the ability to be trusted (brand reliability), which is based on the supporting belief that the product can meet the promised value and goodwill (brand intention), which is based on the supporting belief that the product can prioritize quality (Bastian, 2014). This is in line with opinions. Trust is an expectation that can produce positive or negative results. A positive result increases the supporter's confidence, and, on the other hand, a negative result will reduce the supporter's confidence.

Commitment is defined as an individual's desire over time to maintain relationships. In marketing, commitment is defined as the firm intention of the supporter to maintain a long-term relationship with (Dholakia, 1997). Furthermore, (Gurviez & Korchia 2002) define commitment from a

supporter's point of view as an explicit intention to keep the relationship forever.

Therefore, it is considered essential to examine the character of football supporters in Indonesia from the point of view of sports management and marketing. To bring up other perspectives on sports in Indonesia to be more comprehensive, not only focus on training theory and sports studies.

METHODS

This research is a quantitative study using a descriptive approach by trying to describe the behaviour of supporters in the context of sports marketing, especially football, namely by determining whether attachment influences other variables (trust, satisfaction, commitment and loyalty) based on the behaviour of football fans in Indonesia about supported clubs.
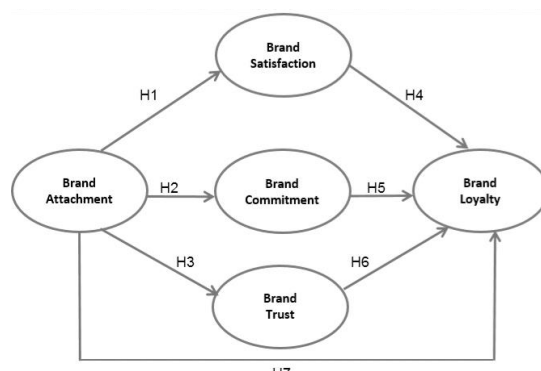
Figure 1. Conceptual model of research in sports marketing (Vieira & Sousa, 2020)

Sampling and data collection

The samples in this study were football fans who supported teams in the Indonesian league. In this study, sampling was carried out using a non-probability method because the

questionnaire was distributed through social media networks with Whatsapp broadcast messages, while the variables used to measure the socio-demographic profile of respondents

were: age, gender, and educational qualifications, and professional status.

The data were collected using a structured interview method through an online Likert scale questionnaire. The answer to this question is necessary to check whether supporters have a positive or negative, or relative influence on the attachment to the football club. The Likert scale used to measure variables in this study has a five-point scale that varies from (1) strongly disagreeing, (2) disagreeing, (3) somewhat agreeing, (4) agreeing, and (5) strongly agreeing. The samples in this study were football fans or supporters who supported teams in the Indonesian league 2, especially the Central Java region and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The sampling technique is non-probability because the questionnaire is distributed through social media networks with Whatsapp broadcast messages. The variables used to measure the socio-demographic profile of respondents are age, gender, region of origin, educational qualifications, and type of work.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the data that has been collected through the questionnaire, 100% of the supporters who filled out this questionnaire were men, with a job profile as a private employee totalling 27 people (40%), 24 students (66%), self-employed eight people (12%), three teachers (4.5%). The rest chose

not to mention their profession, as many as four people (6%).

While the majority of supporting domiciles live on Java Island, 19 people in Central Java (28.8%), Yogyakarta (24.2%), East Java 14 people (21%), West Java 5 people (7.5%), the rest come from areas outside java as many as 11 people (16.7%)

For the descriptive analysis of the study, since the variables are ordinal, we consider all the medians, modes and frequencies of each of the items that are scales that refer to the constructions present in this study and that are used in the questionnaire.

The confidence variables in this questionnaire were evaluated into four statements, with an average value of 3.48. Most respondents agreed with all the statements items, as evidenced by the percentage value 4 in this variable of 51.5%, with the lowest values of 1&2 having percentages of 3% and 12.1%, respectively. With the distribution of these data, it can be stated that supporters have high confidence in their favourite football club.

Meanwhile, the satisfaction variable in this study was shown by 8 points of statements. With an average value of 3.74. With a mode value of 4 of 60.6% and a median of 4. This indicates that the supporters who filled out the questionnaire argued that they were satisfied with how the management managed their favourite club. At the same time, 12.1% of respondents think that the club is perfect in its management.

The loyalty component related to the fan's attachment to the football club is evaluated by three statement indicators. The loyalty variable in this study showed an average value of 4.21. The absolute frequency is at its highest value, 5, with a percentage of 60.6%. This shows that the supporters are very loyal to the club they like. While the lowest statement values of 1 and 2 have percentages of 7.6% and 4.5%.

Then the attachment variables were evaluated through four items; the data in the study revealed that, through median and mode calculations, all items had a very positive impact on respondents after having a median value of 4 (I agree). Then from the results of calculating the value of the mode, it can be verified that the item referring to the connection and consideration that the respondent has for the club, most respondents give the maximum value of 5 (I strongly agree). In general, it can be said that the respondent feels or has a strong relationship with the club a.

Then to find out the relationship between the five variables in this study, namely attachment, satisfaction, commitment, trust and loyalty, *Spearman*. The purpose of this type of test is to evaluate whether two or more variables have a relationship with each other. The Spearman correlation coefficient is used to evaluate the strength and direction of associations that vary from +1 to -1. Correlation with the value of +1 means that there is a perfect positive correlation between the two variables; On the other hand, the correlation of -1 means that there is a negative correlation between the variables, while the correlation that presents the value of zero or very close to zero, means that there is no relationship between the variables studied. Based on the results of the reliability test with a scale *(alpha Cronbach)*, the reliability value of each variable can be verified as follows: trust (0.706), attachment (0.869), satisfaction (0.884), commitment (0.913) and loyalty (0.921). Association tests are performed between variables using a conceptual model, with the help of IBM SPSS software, so that the relationships between variables can be known.

The commitment variable evaluated in the 12 questions showed that the median of some items was at a value of 4 with an average value of 3.61. While the mode value in the commitment variable that most often appears is 4 (agree) at 56.1%, while the lowest values of 1 and 2 respectively have frequency percentages of 6.1% and 4.5%, this shows that the majority of supporters who were respondents in this study stated that they were committed to the club they supported.

Table 1. Length of Part Weight

	Commitment	Believe	Satisfy	Loyalty	Attachment
Commitment	1,000				
Believe	.539**	1,000			
Satidfaksi	.753**	.613**	1,000		

Loyalty	.646**	.509**	.611**	1,000	
Attachment	.611**	.676**	.677**	.781**	1,000

Discussion

Based on the correlation analysis presented in the table above, loyalty with attachment is the highest variable association value. It indicates the value of $rs = 0.781$ and p 0.001, where rs is Spearman and p corresponds to a predetermined degree of significance. So it can be stated that the attachment of supporters to the clubs they support is closely related to the loyalty of supporters to the clubs they support. However, the correlation value of the loyalty variable with trust is low, evidenced by the table value $rs = 0.503$, which means that the supporter's trust in the club has a moderate relationship with loyalty. Attachment is a strong emotional connection between supporters and the club, which will always result in the choice and purchase of that brand (Sierra & McQuitty, 2005).

In contrast to the various factors that contribute to the explanation of brand loyalty (perceived risk, perceived quality, satisfaction), brand attachment is explained between the consumer and brand relationship, regardless of instrumental and functional motives (Triandewo & YUSTINE, 2020). In this situation, it is possible to explain the intent of the behaviour of repeated purchases. Attachment to a brand can predict brand loyalty and brand commitment (Belaid & Behi, 2011)

Then the variable with the second highest association value is the satisfaction variable with the commitment variable with the value of $rs =$ 0.753 and p 0.001, where the value of rs indicates the Spearman correlation. In contrast, p is the degree of significance. The satisfaction of football fans with their favourite club positively affects the commitment of supporters to their favourite club. Next is the attachment to satisfaction variable, which has a correlation value of $rs = 0.677$ and p 0.001, which means that supporters' attachment to the club has a significant correlation value. This means that supporters will feel satisfied with the club's performance if the fans have a sense of belonging to the club they like. This also applies to the correlation value between the attachment and trust variables, which have table values $rs = 0.676$ and p 0.001, which means that the level of supporter confidence in the club is positively affected by the attachment variable, the more attached the supporter is to the club, the more trust the supporter has in the club. Club.

Regarding the variables of loyalty and commitment, he has rs table values of 0.646 and p 0.001; this means that the commitment of the supporter to the club he likes is closely related and has a positive relationship with loyalty; the higher the commitment of the supporters to the club, the more committed the supporters are to the club. The variables of loyalty and satisfaction also have a significant correlation. This is evidenced by the table values $rs = 0.611$ and p 0.001, which means that the more satisfied the supporter is with the performance of the club he likes, the stronger the loyalty. Meanwhile, the

commitment variable positively correlates with the engagement variable with a table value of rs = 0.611. This suggests that there is an interrelated relationship between the club's commitment to the attachment of supporters. The more the club's commitment to tying the supporters, the better the relationship generated by the two variables.

The satisfaction variable has a significant correlation with the trust variable with table values rs = 0.613 and p 0.001, which means that the more satisfied the supporter is with the performance of the club he likes, the higher the supporter's confidence in the club. The latter is the correlation between trust and commitment. The rs table values of confidence and commitment obtained values of 0.539 and p 0.001, indicating a positive correlation between the two variables.

The correlation between the five variables studied and the results obtained can explain and confirm that the seven hypotheses proposed based on the conceptual model are positively correlated. The correlation between the five variables presented is attachment, satisfaction, commitment, trust and loyalty through seven research hypotheses, using the Spearman correlation coefficient.

CONCLUSION

Today, the product brand is characterized by its ability to connect with supporters, which is also true in football. The relationship between the fans and the club is getting stronger, making it more loyal to a supporter. However, supporters are increasingly demanding, and, due to the wide range of sports products presented on the market, football clubs are forced to speculate on marketing tools that suit the needs and desires of supporters.

Through research using this quantitative approach, it can be concluded that attachment influences other variables (trust, satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty) based on the behaviour of football fans towards clubs in Central Java and Yogyakarta.

The overall objective of this study is to investigate the role of attachment in the relationship with supporters and to show the relationship between construct variables such as satisfaction, trust, commitment and loyalty of football supporters in Central Java and Yogyakarta. All the objectives of this study were achieved through the analysis of research hypotheses. All model hypotheses are tested and confirmed. Data analysis concluded that football fans in Central Java and Yogyakarta are very loyal to the club.

These findings point to the need for sports club managers to work on the level of attachment to supporters shown by the club as the greater the level of attachment of supporters to the club, the greater the trust, loyalty, commitment and satisfaction of supporters towards the club. The entanglement of football clubs positively affects all the variables that make up the study's conceptual model. Because the degree of attachment to the club positively affects other variables.

It also verifies that the variables of attachment, commitment, trust and satisfaction

affect loyalty positively. This means that a supporter with a high level of attachment tends to be more satisfied, trustworthy and committed to the club, and consequently, loyalty to the club is higher for the club.

This research contributed to analyzing a relatively recent field of study in sports literature. There are few studies relative to the subject, although not so many studies directly involve the study of sports support behaviour. These findings also contribute to an increase in research knowledge about exercise supporter attachments, which deserves further attention and exploration as the study has not been able to cover the discussion entirely.

The results of this study provide managers of sports clubs, especially football clubs in Central Java and Yogyakarta, with some valuable insights into the relationship between supporters and club consumption. Engagement can be a significant variable for developing a marketing strategy to improve or maintain the relationship between supporters and the club. In conclusion, it is expected that the results will motivate the development of works that improve the methods used and evaluate points that cannot be well explored by the field of sports science, providing an essential evolution for sports academics.

In case of limitations, probability samples are used, so the results are not generalized to the population. Since the methodology of quantitative studies uses structured questionnaires, respondents do not have the opportunity to justify answers, limiting the findings obtained to questions asked by the author numerically, which limits the interpretation of some data. All variables are measured at one time. With the insights from this research, it is hoped that it can contribute to developing empirical studies to answer the propositions developed in various fields. Future research is expected to explore the relationship between attachment, satisfaction and loyalty of football supporters in qualitative and quantitative studies. Future studies may develop questionnaires to apply to football supporters to capture the cross-section of the relationship between the constructs that measure their impact. In future research, we intend to show how these valid questions can be answered by introducing causal modelling and discussing one approach, structural equation modelling (SEM), a rigorous technique for building and testing such models. SEM is an improved statistical methodology that can provide models and results that are easy to understand to use. We intend to confirm that there is a causal relationship (that is, measurements over time must confirm that changes in one variable precede changes in another; a controlled trial is needed that changes one variable; the direction of causality must be correctly determined; the relationship must not disappear when a common cause is removed, and a logical causal effect is generated in the knowledge of the domain.

It would be interesting to try to overcome the above limitations. The study focused on sports clubs that have high emotional levels. It is recommended to

replicate the study using other types and categories of subjects, such as utilitarian products and to understand the differences between a. That is to say, in the context of sports and marketing, it is essential to include a methodological approach to the advancement of scientific research. For example, the study of supporter equality based on celebrity football players is presented as *a sequential example* that combines online sampling, recruitment of focus group participants, and quantitative data collection with traditional focus groups of attachment analyzed and measured. Future research may focus on antecedents of club attachment to determine other essential factors in understanding these variables, such as family, personality, and nostalgia. Replicate this research with different cultural patterns, as it can contribute to understanding cultural differences in the development of attachment.

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