

Ideology as A Representation of The Meaning of Fanatisme Football Club Supporters

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Abstract

Arema football fans have a robust paradigm in fully supporting their favorite football club. The manifestation of this thought is reflected in the fanatical attitude of the supporters who mobilized support both physically and materially. This research aims to identify the extent of the fanatical behavior shown by the fans. The research method uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research type. The subjects in this study were eight supporters of the Arema football club with an age range of 22-45 years. The data analysis technique uses interpretive phenomenological analysis. The study results show that supporters' fanatical behavior forms an ideology represented through personal attitudes, lifestyle, loyalty, and loyalty, as well as personal and Family self-motivation.

Keywords: Fanaticism, Ideology, Personal Attitude, Lifestyle, Loyalty, Motivation

Introduction:

Football matches in Indonesia are one of the most prestigious sports and competitions. Interest in soccer in Indonesia is described in terms of games and the tradition of watching soccer matches, which also provides its own pleasure for the community. Almost every region throughout Indonesia has football teams and supporters who are interrelated with one another.

Football team supporters are also called football fans. The fans are usually not just symbols and formalities, but the fact is that the fans are one part of the game, apart from athletes, referees, executive committees, and all *stakeholders* in the sport of football. What differentiates a true football fan from an ordinary spectator is that a real fan is always interested, involved, and has the same passion; certain athletes or teams show the intensity and even sacrifice their daily activities for the team they

support. Meanwhile, their ordinary audience has no interest in it, only watching it directly or through the media (Miller & Benkwitz, 2016).

Supporters are definitively defined more broadly as one or more individuals who support one party or group in a match. On a national scale, we know various groups of individuals identified in a line of football team supporters. Each fan has their principles and ideology. Especially when it is noticed that the supporters come from various circles and different backgrounds, they can take various actions and attitudes, including maintaining their position in situations that are conducive or not. Supporters' support for their pride club or team sometimes leads to fanaticism.

There are various forms of fanaticism among supporters; in general, it is found that supporters usually join every member of their group. Then they buy football club attributes they are proud of

as an identity. For example, *merchandise*, t-shirts, jackets, posters, and attendance at every match to witness and support their proud club (Bagaskara & Putri, 2022). The role of supporters significantly affects the existence of a club. Research proves that the high fanaticism of the supporters influences the high potential for a team's victory. Vice versa, if the fans' fanaticism is low, then the possibility of losing the team will be even greater (Berument et al., 2009).

This relates to the manifestations described by Arema football fans, not only reflected in their presence directly watching football matches and the attributes they wear. However, it comes to the beliefs and ideologies in each of them. The ideology that the fans have formed is that football is not only a sport but has led to a lifestyle or *lifestyle*. Ideology is built from how supporters replicate their thoughts about the origins of football and community *circles* rather than just a seat during a soccer match. Thus creating the inevitability that naturally occurs for every supporter that the beliefs and ideology they already believe in make the love of the football club.

This study discusses the meaning of fanaticism in Arema Malang football fans with the nickname Aremania. Aremania is a support group for the Arema Malang team, established in 1990. Until now, many regional coordinators have been established and aim to coordinate Aremania members in smaller areas in the Malang area. Arema's supporters are not only in Malang but spread across several regions in Indonesia. Research activities involving Arema Malang supporters were carried out in December 2022 with 8 participants of different ages and backgrounds.

Fanaticism:

Fanaticism is when a person or group adheres to a political, religious, cultural, or whatever ideology that tends to be excessive (Lucky et al., 2013). Fanaticism is a belief that makes a person willing to do anything to defend the beliefs held (Goddard, 2001). Fanaticism is also known as a form or attitude of enthusiasm and excessive loyalty, or it can be said as extreme admiration for something. The enthusiasm in question implies the extent to which a person has emotional involvement and connection

and a feeling of love and commitment and is accompanied by behavior that shows this. It can be concluded that fanaticism is a person's interest in something he believes in. The existence of self-confidence can lead a person to excessive behavior so that he is willing to do anything that can manifest his love for the beliefs he adheres to.

The factors that encourage fanatic behavior include the amount of interest and love for one type of activity, personal and group attitudes, the length of time the individual is engaged in one type of activity, and motivation from the Family. Interest and love for an activity mean the intensity or level of individual tendencies related to showing effort in an activity or the things they love. Someone who has an extraordinary love for something will dedicate or devote himself to it. Then it will bring up efforts to advance or maintain the existence of something he loves (Goddard, 2001).

Supporters with high fanaticism will show behavior such as watching live matches wherever their clubs are playing, buying club attributes, and defending their clubs when insulted or ridiculed by other supporters. This illustrates the fanaticism factor related to the magnitude of an interest and love for one type of activity and personal and group attitudes towards that activity. Meanwhile, fans with low fanaticism can show behavior such as not often watching or not being present in person when their team is playing. They are more likely to be silent when opposing fans insult or ridicule their club. One form of behavior from fanaticism is that someone will defend what he believes in any way (Aziz & Sitasari, 2022).

Research Method:

Types of research:

This study uses a type of qualitative research that aims to collect data by understanding the experiences and attitudes of individuals toward certain situations. The research was conducted with a phenomenological design by describing the general meaning of some individuals for their various life experiences related to the concepts or phenomena they experienced. This type of

research can explain various phenomena and reveal participants' in-depth understanding of the events experienced.

Research Participants:

This research involved 8 participants who were supporters of the Arema football club, commonly known as Armenia. The criteria for participants in the study were the age range between 22-45 years, were native residents of Malang who were born and settled in Malang and had experience as supporters of the Arema football club. Of the eight participants, apart from being supporters, some also had roles as the KNPI (Indonesian Youth National Committee) team, regional support coordinators, and supporter guards.

Data collection technique:

Researchers conducted face-to-face and face-to-face interviews; each meeting lasted about 45-60 minutes. The interview guide consists of questions that explore the fanaticism of Arema supporters; aspects that reveal fanaticism include personal attitudes, loyalty and loyalty, interest, and love for the football club, and motivation from Family. The interview is semi-structured, then the researcher follows up on exciting things about the participants, which means that all participants have potential in research with a phenomenological approach design.

Data analysis technique:

The analysis uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, specifically designed to focus on existential idiographic elements by uncovering personal meanings about their experiences (Tindall, 2009). Phenomenological research reveals this phenomenon's pragmatic and phenomenological aspects, namely the experience of being a football supporter and the contributions made to football clubs that involve physical to financial. The research results will be written based on the exploration results (interviews) transcript regarding the experience of being an Arema supporter. Interview data were thoroughly analyzed one by one. Each transcript or interview data is then developed into themes related to the phenomena and experiences of the participants.

Research Result:

The fans' fanaticism for their favorite football club is shown through their enthusiasm for activities related to the Arema club and their willingness to attend and contribute fully. Some things that show the fanaticism of supporters Based on data collection through interviews, it was found that the meaning of fanaticism produces thoughts and beliefs that are already rooted in each individual. These thoughts and beliefs can be called ideology. Ideology considers the nature of cognition in each individual, manifested in several ways. The existence of supporters' ideology creates a personal attitude, lifestyle, or *lifestyle* of loyalty, which is built as a self-identity of supporters to produce life motivation. It is not surprising that the form of supporters' thoughts dramatically influences their behavior. The fanaticism of the fans in this study was not seen only when they became football fans on the field of play, but the results of these thoughts and beliefs were implemented in their daily lives.

Personal Attitude:

Their enthusiasm shows the personal attitude of Arema supporters being involved as supporters. This creates an ideology (ideas or ideas) starting from the ideology they build as a supporter, involvement in community activities, and willingness always to be present in activities carried out by the Arema football club. Personal attitude is also shown by the conceptualization of ideology, which functions as a force to regulate beliefs about how supporters think and behave towards their football club. Ideology creates personal attitudes, loyalty, and loyalty to motivation in individuals.

The themes of personal and group attitudes expressed by Arema supporters varied. Most of them depart from the background where they live, then various understandings or ideologies about football create their respective *circles or groups that suit them*. So the form of implementation of the actions they do as supporters also differs from one to another. As was done by almost all of the

participants, who were fanatical supporters of the football club, revealed that there was a need for reform, such as mass education, so that actions on the field could be appropriately conditioned. One participant said, "*It would be better if the supporters were gathered, or the coordinators were at least invited to be given education, meetings, anticipation if there was a riotous game on the field, what attitude should be taken.*" This statement is intended to give direction to supporters on what attitude each individual or supporter should take. Furthermore, the results of personal attitudes produce ideological conceptualization thoughts that lead to supporters' beliefs of *the values* football clubs possess. The supporters showed the results of this thought that it was essential to prioritize togetherness, help each other, and respect between supporters. Prioritizing common interests above personal interests. The participants revealed that the role of supporters has always been seen from the point of view inside and outside the stadium. When a football game takes place in the stadium, the viewpoint of the supporters is that this momentum is a competition, but the view is different when they are outside the stadium; the fans must collaborate to unite them when the match moment is over.

Lifestyle:

Supporters are drawn from communities or *circles* who think that the football they love is not just a sport but a manifestation of a lifestyle. Based on the statement of one participant expressed the attitude of supporters in his community, namely, "*The role of supporters is very much. They depart from their respective backgrounds with different ideologies. Some depart from an economic perspective; there are many accessories traders, Arema merchandise that then departs from the grassroots level, and those who buy their supporters. Then from a sporting point of view, the attitude is supporting the team, to support the Arema football team itself.*" The participants revealed that their community of supporters could not be separated from the lifestyle principles they held. Starting from the attributes they wear, the community associations they attend for several weeks every month, and a supporter association with coordinators of supporters or cross-

supporters representing their respective areas of residence.

This association activity is carried out as part of *the lifestyle* they hold to continue to survive with the identity of the supporters. Because by holding an association, they can coordinate with each other regarding the latest news about the club they support, plans for activities that will be and are being carried out, and how to behave appropriately as supporters. They are exerting all efforts and energy to support the Arema football club from time to time actively.

Loyalty:

The fanaticism of football fans is illustrated through their loyal and loyal attitude toward the football club. The experience of being present and being directly involved as a supporter was demonstrated by all participants in this study. Their presence started when they were teenagers, and some have even become fanatical supporters since childhood. This was confirmed by a supporter who said, "*Since I was born when I was one year old, I have been invited to the stadium to watch the match.*" This statement shows that the formation of loyalty and loyalty of supporters is through habits that form an ideology for supporters so that they will mobilize their strength and efforts to be present to watch matches and show that they are loyal to the club they are proud of. Conditions like this result from the supporters' thoughts, which are manifested in the ideology they create.

This loyalty is also manifested in how long they have contributed to the club they support. The representation of the loyalty carried out by Arema fans consists of how long they have been supporters and their contribution to the Arema football club. Each individual has their own experience and point of view regarding the definition of loyalty and loyalty itself—the old frequency of being a supporter to being present directly to support their proud football team.

Self-Motivation and Family Support:

The fanaticism of supporters can also be seen

from the closest environment, namely Family. Starting from the invitation of parents and other family members, this was why fans started to like football. Born and growing up in an environment that likes football and seeing the euphoria in the stadium makes them interested in football, especially being fans and supporters of the Arema club.

From the participants' explanations, it was obtained that the role of the Family was one of the factors that influenced the participants to become supporters. Born and raised in Malang and the environment where most of them are Arema supporters also motivated the participants to like Arema. As stated by one of the supporters that *"Arema may be due to an introduction from my parents and by chance, I am originally from Malang and was born in Malang, and my environment is also a football environment."* This statement confirms that the surrounding environment, Family, and friends, have formed an ideology for supporters and generate fanaticism in supporting the clubs they love.

The supporters' motivation is also illustrated through the cohesiveness between them and their penchant for ball sports. This made the participants willing to do many things to show their love for Arema. They are motivated to be willing to travel long distances to watch matches and pay for the feeling of togetherness between supporters to be maintained.

Discussion:

Based on researchers' findings, fanaticism is formed based on ideology owned by supporters. This is shown through enthusiastic supporters' attitudes to being directly involved in witnessing or always being present in activities carried out by the football club. A passion for football creates a view in the supporters in the form of owned lifestyle principles; this is shown through the attributes used, the community they follow, and cross-supporter associations outside the area.

In addition, the fanaticism embedded in the fans is reflected through the loyalty or loyalty of the supporters in attending every activity related to the football club they support. This loyalty is based on the willingness of supporters to be directly involved in supporting the club. This is also in line with

research results which show that participants' loyalty is reflected in the behavior of participating in attending every game and are willing to do anything to support their favorite team (Prakoso & Masykur, 2013).

Family support is one factor that shapes supporters' motivation as a good support experience they get. So that with the support of this Family, they can survive to become fanatical football fans. Family motivation produces a good component because participants feel understood and cared for through what they like (Brown et al., 2018)—also reviewed from previous research (Park et al., 2013). That the support of the closest people is very influential on football supporters, especially family figures who have more control over their life experiences, one of which is the experience of participating in being a football supporter (Hilmy, 2024).

Other findings (Howells et al., 2017) also support the cognitive perspective manifested in football supporters' ideology. When a form of deep-rooted belief about supporting others influences current thoughts and experiences, then this is an intense form of social support that creates fanaticism among the participants in this study. Solid experiences and expressions described by someone are forms of embodiment that occur continuously and grow into a new perspective and belief (Allen-Collinson, J, 2009). This is what is manifested by football club supporters in this study.

The fanaticism of the participants is in the form of personal attitudes, lifestyle, and loyalty to motivation because of the concept of the theory of mind (Fuchs, 2012). This theory of mind is known by referring to the most reasonable hypothesis about fans' reasons and behavioral motives to show their fanatical attitude towards the football club they support. This kind of conclusion is made based on meaningful observations from a third person's perspective by interacting with supporters who are participants in this study. To understand the concept of thought, and other people's ideologies, especially when they are passionate about something,

understanding other people means simulating their minds and behavior so that it creates a mental if and then has to be projected onto others (Goldman, 2006., Tietjen, 2023).

Conclusion:

Based on research conducted on eight participants, it was found that the fanaticism of fans towards the club they support is willing to spend time and pay money to be able to watch matches. All informants in this study admitted that they had loved Arema since childhood. Starting from the invitation of parents, older siblings, and other family members to see the euphoria at the stadium makes them always excited to watch Arema matches. Apart from that, as a native of Malang, it was a factor that influenced the informants to really like Arema.

Apart from that, the journey as Arema supporters is not only motivated by mere pleasure, but football is like a way of life *for them*. In addition, the Arema supporter community was formed starting from the *grassroots level*, where they do not just sit around supporting their proud team in the stadium. However, they echo the solidarity and loyalty in every role as a supporter. Almost all participants said that Arema was like a soul, and in their hearts, there was a slogan "Greeting one soul Arema." Thus, their form of fanaticism as supporters has become an ideology and an actual practice.

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