

Examining Antecedents of Patronage Behaviour among European Football Fans in Indonesia

Sports Management

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1. Introduction

Patronage is financial support from paying guests (Liu et al., 2019), measured by repeat ticket purchases, merchandise consumption, media consumption, and word of mouth (Morrison et al., 2020). Fans have been supporting their favourite teams, and more than 70% support international teams in Indonesia (Irianto & Kartikasari, 2020). However, the domestic football industry is not as massive as the European one. This fact leads to the question: How do Indonesian people show enthusiasm for European teams? What is the pull factor, the push factor, or the supporting factor? Bauer et al. (2008) conceptualise sports teams' brand image comprising brand attributes and benefits. However, acknowledging the role of fans has more significant potential (Bull & Whittam, 2020) since the brand community depends on member loyalty (Guimaraes et al., 2016) and team identification is in advance (Park et al., 2018). However, team identification is physiological arousal affected by the degree of role identification (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). Eventually, satellite fan isolation may trigger different responses (Mazodier et al., 2018). To connect fans and teams, the role of other entities is necessary as globalisation and technological advances have driven satellite television and broadband Internet (Kerr & Emery, 2011). Role identification has been under fans' control. Next, brand image and media coverage are to be shifted to use fans'

perspectives. To understand Indonesian football fans, the purchasing power is at a low level. Thus, this study has the purpose of examining antecedents of Indonesian European football fans' patronage behaviour, which are affected by (1) perceived brand image, (2) role identification, (3) perceived media coverage, and (4) moderation of income.

2. Theoretical Background

Attribution theory (Kelley, 1973) and previous findings were utilised to propose hypotheses regarding positive effects of perceived brand image (H1-3) and role identification (H4-6) on patronage behaviour. Based on previous studies, Bauer et al. (2008) conceptualised brand image that is offered by the team, other scholars agreed that brand image is using customer's perception instead. Bianchi et al. (2018) summarised that into six items: strong personality, image power, goodness, niceness, attractiveness, and sympathy. Then, role identification offers a general perspective of points of attachment (Branscombe & Wann, 1992; Trail & James, 2001; Robinson et al., 2004). Trail and James (2001) measured through self-assessments whether they were real fans, experienced loss to stop being a fan, and the importance of being a fan. Then, Hypodermic needle theory (Schramm, 1971) and previous studies' findings were used to propose hypotheses regarding the positive effect of perceived media coverage on patronage behaviour. Media wields power over societies in

various contexts, for example, marketing management (Nie et al., 2023). As the media broadcast the Indonesian league, European football leagues were stopped from being broadcast on free TV Channels in 2007. These contradictory phenomena indicate the difference between the types of media. Also, conflict theory (Marx, 1848) proposes a hypothesis regarding the moderation effect of income (H10). Income dominates consumption patterns (Mihic & Culina, 2006). Even though, for certain products, the economy hierarchy cannot determine consumption behaviour (Duan et al., 2023; Lowe et al., 2023).

3. Methodology

The survey was conducted through a cross-sectional design using a questionnaire that was distributed to Indonesian satellite fans of the Top 10 UEFA coefficients rank as of May 2023. The distribution was conducted offline and online since some supporter groups have not yet been holding events due to COVID-19. The number of returned responses was 397. Descriptive statistics and reliability and validity tests were performed. The hypotheses were tested through SEM data analysis for the direct effects and Multigroup analysis, consisting of two groups for the moderation effect.

4. Results

The number of responses accepted for data analysis was reduced from missing values on monthly income, and 390 responses were used for data analysis. The total samples of the High-Income Group were 238, and the Low-Income Group were 152. The validity and reliability test was conducted twice. Perceived brand image affects media consumption. Role identification affects all patronage behaviour. Perceived TV media coverage has no significant effect on patronage behaviour. However, perceived online media coverage affects media consumption, and

perceived radio coverage affects merchandise consumption. The multigroup analysis obtains no moderation effect of income.

5. Discussion and Research Implications

This study has presented how attribution may help to increase the broadcast revenue of football teams. However, to gain brand acceptance, they should pass the stage of brand attractiveness through media (Ilyina et al., 2023), and that involves another entity. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explains how brand image does not affect merchandise consumption and word-of-mouth. Previous studies indicated a mediation effect regarding brand image and behaviours. Also, by acknowledging the role of fans, teams may gain fans' role identification and affect patronage. As samples took European football team fans, it is relevant to the current situation where The UEFA established a program named "SD Europe" to support fans in the running of European football with eight pillars. As the number of matches is multiplied to leverage the revenue stream (Pache, 2020), football team marketing through TV depends on the leagues or tournaments and cannot predict patronage. Also, Social Identity Theory is suitable to explain that media consumption behaviour was predicted by the availability of online platforms to socialize among football fans. Previous studies supported that radio listening affected the purchase behaviour of urban communities for retailing products (Rajagopal, 2011). Conflict theory may not be applicable to the sports industry, where fans are considered to control the product (Gray & McEvoy, 2005). The current study implied the uniqueness of the sports industry. Role identification can be a push factor for patronage activities. As a point of attachment, it may be helpful in other industries as the main factor in maintaining relationships.