

Communication Patterns of The Persis Solo Boys 1923 Group Supporter Community (Qualitative Descriptive Study)

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Communication Patterns; Group
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Persis Solo is an Indonesian Liga 1 football club owned by Kaesang Pangarep, the son of Indonesia's seventh former president, Joko Widodo. Persis Solo has various supporter groups, one of which is Boys 1923. Boys 1923 is a supporter community that occupies the east stand, gate 8, of Manahan Stadium in Solo. This group embraces a casual ideology and holds the vision and mission of "no leader, just together." This study raises the question: what communication pattern is used by the Boys 1923 supporter community and how is this communication pattern implemented within the community. The purpose of this research is to identify the communication pattern used by the Boys 1923 community and understand how it is implemented. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Boys 1923 adopts a star communication pattern, where all members have equal standing and can influence one another, enabling optimal participation from every member. Strong interpersonal communication also plays a vital role in maintaining member relationships and building mutual trust. The principle of "from members, for members" forms the foundation of solidarity within the group. The applied communication pattern successfully enhances cohesion and cooperation among Boys 1923 members. This is reflected in their commitment to fully support Persis Solo, both at home and away matches, as well as their active participation in social activities. This study shows that an effective communication pattern is a key factor in fostering solidarity, loyalty, and cohesion within the Boys 1923 Persis Solo supporter community.

1. Introduction

One of the most popular sports in the world is football. Football is a game played by 11 people and has an exciting spectacle, making it popular (Hanifa & Sutopo, 2018). Football is a popular sport in Indonesia, as evidenced by the large number of clubs competing in the first, second, and third divisions. Each province has its own pride and joy, such as Persija Jakarta, Persib Bandung, Persebaya Surabaya, and Persis Solo. Persis Solo is a football club owned by Kaesang Pangarep, the son of Indonesia's seventh president, Joko Widodo, based in the city of Surakarta. Persis Solo was first established on 8 November 1923 under the name Vorstenlandsche Voetbal Bond (VVB). The purpose of establishing Persis Solo was to improve matches and compete with Dutch football clubs such as VBS (Widyatama, 2016). Persis Solo has loyal supporters who consistently support the team in Liga 1 matches.

One of the supporter groups supporting Persis Solo is Boys 1923. Boys 1923 is a supporter group located in the east stand, gate 8, lower corner. Boys 1923 has a casual ideology and a vision and mission of 'no leader, just together.' Boys 1923 also has the principle of 'from the people, for the people,' which is a form of solidarity from the Boys 1923 supporter group towards its members. The Boys 1923 supporter group is solid and united because they use effective communication. Good communication among members and the implementation of communication patterns ensure that communication among Boys 1923 members runs smoothly. Additionally, effective group communication is crucial for building strong interpersonal relationships (Hastasari et al., 2022). Effective group communication can also strengthen interpersonal communication by creating an environment where group members feel comfortable sharing ideas and information. This can increase mutual trust and a sense of belonging among group members, which are important elements in interpersonal communication (Hastasari et al., 2022). Communication patterns are a fixed structure, system, or way of working of the flow of communication that is generated. Therefore, communication patterns can be considered important because they will become a reference for everyone who wants to communicate (Rumangkang & Juwita, 2023). De Vito (2011) divides communication patterns into several patterns, such as the wheel pattern, chain pattern, circle pattern, and Y pattern (Wirasahidan & Fitriani, 2019).

The exchange of information, ideas, and feelings through symbols, signs, and behaviour, both verbal and nonverbal, is an important process in social life. Building understanding, changing attitudes, and influencing the actions of individuals or groups are the main objectives of communication (Maulana Chandra & Pardianto, 2019). Communication is an important way to interact intensively with others to achieve common goals, build group identity, and enhance solidarity among members (Cornelia Banunaek et al., 2021). Shaw defines group communication as a gathering of individuals who can influence, obtain satisfaction, and interact with one another through face-to-face communication (Vicenovie Oisina et al., 2021). Additionally, group communication has social, educational, and persuasive purposes. These functions can be measured through metrics such as communicative actions, communication frequency, and motivation (Dalimunthe et al., 2018). Patterns of relationships among members, such as wheel, chain, star, Y, and circle, significantly influence communication effectiveness as they indicate levels of participation and centralisation in interactions (Fitriawati & Sariwati, 2024). Conversely, interpersonal communication that occurs directly can observe the verbal and non-verbal reactions of the communicant (Purba et al., 2020:67). Additionally, through openness, empathy, and positive attitudes, interpersonal communication is crucial for building and maintaining significant social relationships (Zulfiani et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyse the dynamics of communication used by the Persis Solo supporter community, particularly the Boys 1923 group, to support the Persis Solo team. Unlike previous studies conducted by (Fitriawati & Sariwati, 2024) on members of Viking Persib Bandung, this study focuses on the communication dynamics of the Boys 1923 group, as how members interact with each other within the supporter community is very important for this study. This study also examines how this communication patterns enhance relationships among members and support Persis Solo. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to address two research questions: the communication patterns used by the Boys 1923 community and how these patterns are applied to support Persis Solo. The primary objective of this study is to uncover the communication patterns used and how these patterns are applied in their support for the team.

2. Method

The postpositivist paradigm, which views social reality as complex, dynamic, and meaningful, is the foundation of the descriptive qualitative approach used in this study (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021:5). This method was chosen to describe and understand the patterns of communication that have formed within the Persis Solo supporter community, particularly the Boys 1923 group, in the context of their support for the team. This study aims to comprehensively explain the process of interaction and communication between members of this community and the meanings contained therein.

The focus of this study is individuals who are active members of the Boys 1923 supporter community. They meet several criteria, including following the official social media accounts of Boys 1923 and Persis Solo also attending at least three Persis Solo matches at the Manahan Stadium. Purposive sampling the deliberate selection of participants based on specific criteria related to the research focus was used to select informants. This was done to ensure that the data collected truly originated from individuals actively involved in the supporter community's activities. The first informant BV is 28 years old and from Surakarta. The second informant AO is 29 years old and from Boyolali.

In this study, observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation were used to collect data. Observing the actions of the Boys 1923 group while supporting Persis Solo at the stadium was part of the observation process. This involved observing expressions, body language, and verbal and nonverbal communication (Muhammad et al., 2023:33). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow informants the freedom to express their opinions and experiences related to group communication. Meanwhile, notes, photos, and videos supporting field findings were used to complement the data.

Data analysis is conducted in three stages: collection, reduction, and presentation. In the collection stage, interview results are transcribed, and observation and documentation data are organised into a format that facilitates analysis. In the reduction stage, the researcher selects and filters data that is most relevant to the research subject (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2023:72). Finally, in the data presentation stage, the organised information is presented in a narrative form that can be clearly interpreted (Rohman et al., 2023:227).

Triangulation techniques, consisting of source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation, were used to increase the validity and credibility of the data (Muhammad et al., 2023:48). Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information from various informants who were members of Boys 1923. Technique triangulation uses a combination of interviews, observation, and documentation as data collection methods, while time triangulation collects data at different times to test the consistency of information. It is hoped that the data obtained using this method will be more accurate, up-to-date, and reliable in describing how the Boys 1923 supporter community communicates.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Presenting the Results

The Boys 1923 supporter group uses verbal, direct, and indirect communication more frequently in communicating with its members. Verbal and direct communication are used in forums held once a month, as stated by the first informant, BV, 'We hold our forums maybe once a month to discuss Boys 1923 activities' (interview on Tuesday, 4 March 2025). Meanwhile, indirect communication uses the WhatsApp social media platform, as stated by the second informant, AO: 'We also use WhatsApp groups to share information quickly and efficiently. Here, members can ask each other questions, share the latest news about matches, and remind each other about upcoming activities' (interview on Saturday, 15 February 2025). The Boys 1923 supporter group has a function in group communication in the form of social relationships with its members and the surrounding community outside of football, as stated by the first informant BV, 'We often hold events that involve all members, such as watching matches together, charity activities, and fundraising. All of this is aimed at strengthening the bonds between us and having a positive impact on the community' (interview on Saturday, 15 February 2025). In group communication, Boys 1923 often uses forums to discuss Boys 1923 activities and strengthen communication among members, as stated by the second informant, AO: 'This forum is a place for fans to interact, share information, and plan activities together.' *In the BOYS 1923 forum, communication takes place openly and inclusively, utilising various platforms such as social media groups to share information about match schedules and community activities. Within the group, members can discuss activity plans, and every member has the opportunity to provide input, so decisions are made through consensus. In addition to online communication, we also hold in-person meetings to strengthen bonds among members, such as watch*

parties and other social activities. The communication process within the BOYS 1923 forum is not limited to group aspects but also creates a warm and friendly atmosphere where we support each other, both in the context of football and in our daily lives. Thus, the formation of the BOYS 1923 forum and the communication process within it reflect a spirit of togetherness and strong support for Persis Solo, as well as our commitment to continue strengthening these bonds' (interview on Saturday, 15 February 2025).

The communication pattern used by the Boys 1923 supporter group is the star communication pattern. The star communication pattern is used because there is no leader in the Boys 1923 supporter group, so members have equal standing in expressing their opinions. Additionally, there is no seniority or juniority within the group, as stated by the first informant, BV: 'That's right, there is no leader in Boys 1923. 'To motivate members of Boys 1923 to communicate, we use a member forum that involves a discussion at the end. As for juniors and seniors, we don't have that at all; we are strongly against seniority within the community' (interview on Tuesday, 4 March 2025). The star communication pattern is used by the Boys 1923 supporter group in the form of two-way communication within the forum so that members can interact, gather, and discuss with equal standing among members. This makes members feel involved in the decisions of the Boys 1923 supporter group and fosters solid relationships among members, which carry over to when they support Persis Solo. This was stated by the second informant, AO: 'This forum serves as a platform for fans to interact, share information, and plan activities together. We often hold forums involving all members, where everyone can gather and discuss. In this forum, we encourage all members to actively participate, provide suggestions, and offer constructive criticism.' It's not just about conveying information, but also about creating an atmosphere where everyone feels heard and valued. We believe that by listening to the opinions of various members, we can make better decisions for the community' (interview on Saturday, 15 February 2025).

The Boys 1923 supporter group is very solid because of the good interpersonal relationships among its members. Boys 1923 strongly encourages its members to share information, suggestions, or criticism to improve the community and strengthen relationships among members. This was conveyed by the second informant, AO: 'We encourage all members to actively participate, give suggestions, and provide constructive criticism. It's not just about conveying information, but also about creating an atmosphere where everyone feels heard and valued.' We believe that by listening to the opinions of various members, we can make better decisions for the community' (interview on Saturday, 15 February 2025). Boys 1923 also upholds the principle of "from cah-cah to cah-cah," which means always being together in good times and bad and is a form of solidarity among Boys 1923 members. This principle is strongly felt by every member. This was expressed by the first informant, BV: 'Perhaps the meaning of "from the youth for the youth" can be realised as a form of solidarity towards every member, and as a way of showing that we are all owners of the community itself' (interview on Tuesday, 4 March 2025).

3.2 Create a Discussion

This study shows that the communication used by the Boys 1923 supporter group is in line with the definition of communication, which is a process whereby individuals or groups exchange information, ideas or feelings through symbols, signs or behaviour (van Ruler, 2018). As stated by the first informant BV, 'every member has the right to convey information about football, whether locally or internationally, and we have the right to disseminate social issues that may be related to football itself' (interview on Tuesday, 4 March 2025). What the first informant BV said also fulfils the factors that make the communication process popularised by Lasswell, namely who, says what, in which channel, to whom, with that effect (Zhao et al., 2024). In the Boys 1923 supporter group, information is conveyed by members through WhatsApp to other members of Boys 1923. New information can become new knowledge for other members and useful information. This was conveyed by the second informant, AO: 'In the BOYS 1923 forum, the communication process is open and inclusive, utilising various platforms such as social media groups to share information about match schedules and community activities. *Within the group, members can discuss activity plans, and every member has the opportunity to provide input, so decisions are made through consensus. In addition to online communication, we also hold in-person meetings to strengthen bonds among*

members, such as group watch parties and other social activities. The communication process within the BOYS 1923 forum is not only limited to group aspects, but also creates a warm and friendly atmosphere, where we support each other, both in the context of football and in everyday life (interview on Saturday, 15 February 2025). Fanaticism among supporters results in practices of support for football teams based on pride in something, one of which is the Persis Solo club (Wirawanda, 2018).

This study also shows that the communication patterns used by Boys 1923 align with Joseph De Vito's theory of group communication patterns, specifically the star pattern, which encourages members of Boys 1923 to participate actively, fostering equality and openness among members (Dwi Pratiwi W et al., 2024). This pattern also means that the Boys 1923 supporter group does not have a leader, and there are no seniors or juniors within the group. This was stated by the first informant, BV: 'That's right, there is no leader in Boys 1923. 'To motivate members of Boys 1923 to communicate, we use a member forum that ends with a discussion. As for juniors and seniors, we don't have any at all; we are strongly against seniority within the community' (interview on Tuesday, 4 March 2025). The star-shaped communication pattern, which lacks formal leadership, enables the Boys 1923 supporter group to operate with collectivity and togetherness, as stated by the second informant, AO: 'It is true that the BOYS 1923 supporter group prioritises the principles of collectivity and togetherness, where there is no dominant leader. Instead, we operate with a spirit of mutual support and cooperation' (interview on Saturday, 15 February 2025). Boys 1923 also has the principle of "from the members for the members" as a form of solidarity towards every member of the Boys 1923 supporter group and every member as an owner of the community, so that the status of members is equal within the Boys 1923 supporter group community. This was stated by the first informant BV: 'Perhaps the meaning of "from the youth for the youth" can be realised as a form of solidarity towards every member, and as a way of showing that we are all owners of the community itself' (interview on Tuesday, 4 March 2025). Effective and smooth communication among members of Boys 1923 can enhance support for Persis Solo. This was stated by the first informant BV: 'Yes, I feel that good communication can influence several things because it can build emotional bonds among members, the community, and the team. This can increase our support and loyalty' (interview on Tuesday, 4 March 2025).

Communication within the Boys 1923 supporter group does not face any major obstacles. The obstacles experienced by Boys 1923 are problems with member attendance in forums and reaching agreements that are acceptable to all Boys 1923 members. This was revealed by the first informant, BV: 'Over the years, there have been no significant obstacles, maybe just minor obstacles that are a little annoying regarding attendance at forums, where it's always the same people' (interview on Tuesday, 4 March 2025). Another obstacle was also revealed by the second informant, AO: 'One of the obstacles faced by BOYS 1923 due to the absence of a single leader is the difficulty in reaching an agreement among all members. Without a leader who can make decisions directly, we have to really adjust the results of the forums we hold so that they can be accepted by all members. This can be a challenge, especially when there are various opinions and ideas that arise.' *To overcome this, we usually give all members options when decisions need to be made. For example, if we are planning an activity or event, we will gather everyone's opinions and find out what they want. This way, every member can express their opinion, and we can discuss the available options. We strive to find a middle ground that is acceptable to the majority, so that everyone feels involved and has a voice in the community.* Although this process can be time-consuming and sometimes requires us to compromise, we believe that this approach actually strengthens the sense of togetherness and solidarity among members. So, even though there is no single leader, we still strive to maintain good communication and ensure that every decision made reflects the wishes and needs of the BOYS 1923 community as a whole' (interview on Saturday, 15 February 2025).

These findings align with previous research on supporter group communication, where open patterns and equality are key characteristics of solidarity groups. A study by Fitriawati and Sariwaty (2024) found similar patterns in the Viking Persib Bandung community. However, the values of 'from the people, for the people' and the principle of 'no leaders, only together' make Boys 1923 unique. They reject formal structures. This is both a strength and a challenge, especially when

resolving disagreements in forums. While this pattern helps people unite, the lengthy deliberation process becomes an issue when quick decisions are needed. To facilitate communication without compromising the principle of equality, there may be a role for informal facilitators or coordinators.

This study primarily focuses on providing an understanding of how a community without a formal leadership structure can communicate effectively using the principles of openness, equality, and solidarity. Further research is needed to determine how effective communication is in other supporter groups in Indonesia with more formal structures, so that the advantages and disadvantages of each pattern can be compared. This study also opens opportunities for long-term research to determine whether horizontal communication patterns can endure as the number of members increases over time. Overall, this study found that the communication methods of the Boys 1923 group were able to strengthen internal relationships and increase support for the Persis Solo team. However, they faced difficulties in collaborating without a formal leadership structure.

4. Conclusion

Communication within the Boys 1923 community runs smoothly and there are no significant obstacles. Through open and honest communication, members are able to express their opinions and share ideas and information with one another, creating a comfortable environment for all members. The communication pattern used by the Boys 1923 supporter community is a star structure/pattern, where there is no leader within the community, so that all members have the same status and there is no seniority, which makes communication open and supportive among members. Boys 1923 uses a forum as one of the implementations of the communication pattern, where members exchange information, opinions, or social issues related to society. Through the forum, Boys 1923 also has social activities such as gatherings or sports activities that strengthen the relationships among Boys 1923 members. This communication pattern is implemented by Boys 1923 and can increase cohesion and cooperation among members. In addition, the principle of 'from cah-cah for cah-cah' is the foundation of solidarity within this community. Effective communication within this community results in members becoming more united, able to resolve internal issues even without a leader, and building emotional connections among members, the community, and the team. This, in turn, boosts morale, support, and loyalty toward the Boys 1923 community.

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