
Journal Management of Sport

Volume 4 Number 2 (2022)

E-ISSN: 2963 – 8003

available online at <https://jurnal.stokbinaguna.ac.id/index.php/JSSB>

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE INDONESIAN NATIONAL TEAM'S NATURALIZATION POLICY

Fathan Baharudin Mead ^{1 *}, Asep Ramdan Afriyuandi ²

¹ Universitas Suryakencana, West Java, Indonesia

² Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, West Java, Indonesia

* Corresponding Author: baharfathan03@mail.com

Information	Abstract
History: Submitted; January 2026 Revised; February 2026 Accepted; March 2026 Keywords: Public; Perception; Indonesia; National; Team; Naturalization; Policy.	This study analyzes public perception of the Indonesian national football player naturalization policy based on a survey of 101 respondents. The analysis was conducted using three indicators: cognitive (understanding of goals), affective (positive attitudes), and conative (tangible support). The results show a very positive public perception: 69% strongly agree, 21% agree, 3% disagree, and 7% strongly disagree. This high level of acceptance indicates that naturalization is seen as a strategic step by the PSSI and the government to increase the national team's competitiveness on the international stage. This policy has succeeded in building public trust in the commitment to national sporting achievements. The public also views naturalization as an ideal long-term strategy when integrated with the development of local athletes. This is in line with the SPLISS framework (De Bosscher et al., 2006) that international achievement requires structured policy support. Overall, the naturalization policy is considered effective and well-received by the public as an instrument for improving Indonesian football achievements.

Copyright © 2026

Fathan Baharudin Mead – Asep Ramdan Afriyuandi

INTRODUCTION

Sport has become an integral part of the social and cultural life of every human being. It is more than just a competition or physical activity. Sport is a strategic tool for shaping national character, strengthening unity, and expressing national identity in Indonesia. Sports such as soccer are highly popular among the Indonesian people. They are also often used to express and demonstrate national pride on a global level. According to (Jihad & Annas, 2021), sport provides a platform for people to explore their movement experiences and can improve individual health. Sport is also a barometer of a nation's progress. Good sporting achievements are a source of pride for a nation. Therefore, the development of quality human resources (HR) in the field of sport should begin at an early age. Therefore, preparation must be carried out as early as possible so that they can develop and achieve optimal performance through development programs and achievement coaching from an early age.

In Indonesia, soccer is a sport that is widely enjoyed by the community. According to (Ghozali et al., 2017), football is a very popular sport worldwide. Almost every corner of the globe has professional and amateur football leagues. Football clubs compete to recruit top players to compete in professional leagues. These clubs also operate football academies to develop top players. Football has long been the most popular sport in Indonesia, not only as entertainment but also as an integral part of national identity. Public support for the national team is immense, often transcending mere sport and becoming a symbol of national pride. In recent years, the policy of naturalizing foreign players to strengthen the Indonesian national team has come under public scrutiny. The Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) and the government adopted this strategy in the hope of improving the quality and competitiveness of the Garuda team at the international level.

This phenomenon has generated mixed responses within the public. Some welcomed the naturalization policy, seeing it as a strategic step to accelerate the national team's progress. The presence of players like Jordi Amat, Sandy Walsh, or Rafael Struick, for example, is seen as bringing new color to the team's game. However, many people question the essence of nationalism in sports, especially when naturalized players lack emotional, cultural, or blood ties to Indonesia.

This phenomenon has given rise to numerous public perceptions. Public perceptions are conversations and discussions ranging from individuals, from the lowest to the highest, from the educated to the uneducated, from the prominent to the unknown (Sahlan, 2023). The numerous assumptions surrounding naturalization have generated both pros and cons. Some groups view naturalization as a positive outcome, as having players play for scrutiny and can influence the legitimacy, acceptance, and public support of the national team. Social media also contributes to shaping public opinion, with various comments, memes, and open discussions reflecting the diversity of societal views.

Naturalization is the process of making someone a citizen of a particular country. A person previously held citizenship X and changed to citizenship Y after undergoing a naturalization process with various predetermined requirements (Ahmad Muhamad Mustain Nasoha et al., 2024). However, a person must follow the applicable policy procedures of the chosen country. In line with what Hasibuan et al., 2024 stated, after fulfilling the requirements and passing the naturalization procedure, non-native (foreign) individuals are granted citizenship. Each country has a different policy regarding the transfer of citizenship status, depending on the interests and goals of that country.

The Indonesian National Football Team (TNI) is a football team originating from Indonesia and is often nicknamed the Garuda Team. The Indonesian National Team, often nicknamed "TNI Garuda," has experienced various ups and downs in its history. While often showing promising potential, its performance at the international level has been inconsistent. Various efforts have been made by the national football federation (PSSI) and the government to improve the team's quality, ranging from reforming the league system and youth training to more controversial policies such as the naturalization of foreign players. This research aims to learn more about how

the public views Indonesia's football naturalization policy and the factors that may influence these perceptions. Therefore, the findings are expected to contribute to policymaking that better considers public opinion and national principles.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach focused on the measurement and analysis of numerical data (Diva Ingriani et al., 2025). The aim is to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of the studied variable, namely public perception of the naturalization of Indonesian national team players, without examining the relationships between variables.

Public perception is the sole variable studied. This variable is defined as the public's reaction to the policy of naturalizing foreign players for the Indonesian national team, encompassing knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies. This variable is broken down into three main dimensions: cognitive, affective, and conative.

The population of this study is all people interested in national football. Practically, this population is limited to individuals who are at least 17 years old, have access to football information, and are aware of the naturalization policy.

Participants selected were those who met the population criteria. The study sample consisted of 101 respondents, drawn using purposive sampling, a sampling technique based on specific considerations and criteria relevant to the research objectives.

The research instrument was a questionnaire developed based on three dimensions of perception (cognitive, affective, and conative). This questionnaire used a Likert scale with four response options (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). This instrument consisted of a total of 30 items, with each dimension having 10 items.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Results

Respondent Characteristics Analysis by Gender

This study successfully recruited a total of 101 respondents to map public perceptions of the national football player naturalization policy. Based on the data collected, the respondents' gender characteristics showed a significant male predominance. Male respondents accounted for 68% of the total, representing 69 individuals. Meanwhile, female respondents comprised 32% of the sample, representing 32 individuals. This demographic imbalance is understandable, given that football still has a stronger cultural base and exposure among men. Nevertheless, the presence of nearly one-third of female respondents provides a balanced gender perspective on this phenomenon.

Age Distribution and Dominance of the Productive Age Group

In terms of age, respondents in this study were dominated by young, productive age groups who are highly digitally literate. The largest percentage was in the 21–25 age range, reaching 54%, with a total of 55 respondents. In second place, the late teen and early adult age group (17–20 years old) recorded a percentage of 34%, equivalent to 34 people. Meanwhile, the established age group showed a much smaller but balanced figure, with the 26–30 age group and the over-30 age group each contributing only 6%, with 6 respondents each. This dominance of the 17–25 age group indicates that issues regarding the national team and naturalization are highly sought after by Generation Z, who are active on social media.

Respondents' Educational Level Profile

Respondent characteristics based on their educational level show that most of the sample had a high school education background. The highest percentage was held by high school/vocational high school/Islamic high school/equivalent graduates, accounting for 75% of the total respondents, with 76 respondents. Furthermore, the highly educated group with a bachelor's degree came in second, representing 22%, with 22 respondents. Diploma graduates

accounted for 2%, representing only 2 respondents. The smallest number of respondents was represented by those with primary education, namely junior high school (SMP/MTs/equivalent), which represented only 1% of the respondents, representing one respondent. This diversity in educational levels suggests that this sports policy issue is closely monitored by people from various academic backgrounds.

Overview of Respondents' Occupational Backgrounds

The professional or employment backgrounds of the respondents closely align with the age and education levels outlined previously. Students and college students constituted the largest professional group in this survey, representing 54%, or 55 respondents. Next in line were civil servants and private sector employees, contributing a significant 30%, representing a total of 30 respondents. The self-employed or independent business owners accounted for 11%, representing 11 respondents. Finally, the remaining 5% were respondents with occupations outside the sectors, representing five respondents. This data demonstrates that the perspectives taken largely represent the voices of young academics and productive workers.

Geographic Distribution and Regions of Respondent Origin

This study also mapped the geographic distribution of respondents, who were predominantly concentrated in West Java and Jakarta. Cianjur Regency/City was the largest region of origin, accounting for 52% of the respondents, represented by 53 respondents. Sukabumi followed in second place with 16% (16 respondents), followed by Bogor with 13% (13 respondents). Buffered areas and other major cities had smaller distributions, such as Bandung with 8% (8 respondents) and the capital city of Jakarta with 6% (6 respondents). Meanwhile, Purwakarta recorded 2% (2 respondents), while Bekasi, Tangerang, and Karawang each contributed a minimal 1%, each represented by one respondent. This concentration indicates that the dynamics of perception are heavily influenced by the suburban and urban landscapes within the West Java-Jakarta corridor.

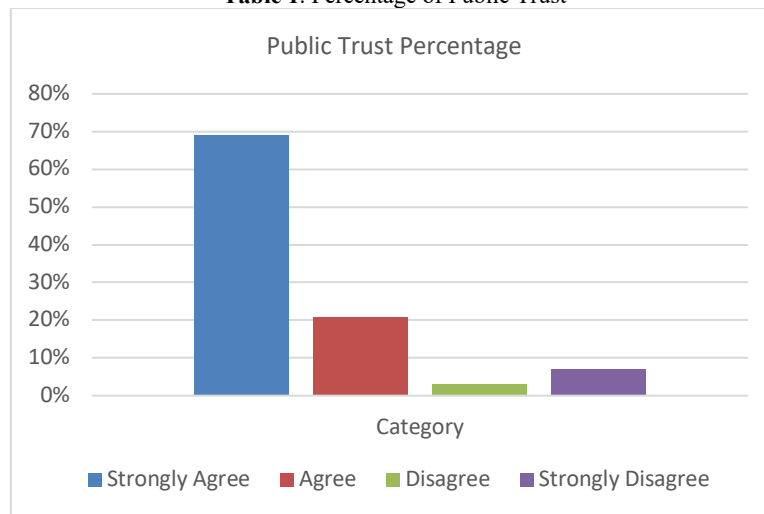
Experience and Intensity of Watching National Team Matches

To measure the emotional closeness and validity of respondents' opinions towards the research object, their involvement in watching the national team is a crucial indicator. The data analysis results show a very significant number, with most respondents having a direct connection to the national team. A total of 91% of the total respondents, or 92 people, stated that they had watched an Indonesian national team match, either live or on television. On the other hand, the group that claimed to have never watched a Garuda squad match at all constituted only 9%, or 9 respondents. This data demonstrates that the sample used in this study represents a relevant audience, as most of them are active viewers or supporters of national football.

Public Literacy Level Regarding the Naturalization Policy Issue

The final paragraph highlights the extent of respondents' understanding and exposure to discussions regarding the player naturalization policy. Based on the data collected, most of the public has a fairly good level of literacy regarding the dynamics of the national team player restructuring. 77% of respondents, or 78 people, confirmed that they are aware of and follow the ongoing developments in the naturalization issue. Conversely, approximately 23% of respondents (23 people) admitted to being unaware of or unfamiliar with the athlete citizenship transfer policy. The high number of respondents (77%) who were aware of this issue strengthens the validity of the perception survey results in the following chapter, as their opinions were based on knowledge of the current phenomenon.

Table 1. Percentage of Public Trust



Based on the data analysis, the total number of respondents was 101. It was found that most respondents strongly agreed (69%), with 21% agreeing, 3% disagreeing, and 7% strongly disagreeing.

These results indicate that the naturalization policy is well-received by the public, especially if it is perceived as improving the quality and competitiveness of the Indonesian national team on the international stage. The recruitment of foreign players by the PSSI and the government can increase public trust in their efforts to improve national sporting performance. A high level of public perception can also be seen as evidence of their efforts. Furthermore, this positive perception indicates that most people are beginning to recognize that naturalization is part of a broader development plan, especially when combined with the development of local talent. These results align with the statement (De Bosscher et al., 2006) within the SPLISS framework that, to achieve international success, the government and sports organizations require organized policy support.

Public perception on cognitive indicators indicates that most respondents understand the goals and benefits of the naturalization policy. Therefore, the public cognitively recognizes the importance of naturalization for improving the performance of the Indonesian national team, especially in the context of international competition. Regarding affective indicators, the results indicate that respondents tend to have a positive attitude toward the naturalization policy. This indicates that emotionally, most of the public supports the policy, although some still have reservations, particularly regarding issues of nationalism and player identity. Meanwhile, the conative indicator reflects how public perception is directed toward concrete actions or support for naturalization policies. The analysis above suggests that the public tends to support naturalization policies directly, for example through support for naturalized players during matches or positive opinions expressed on social media.

Discussions

Overall, this study successfully analyzed public perception of the national football player naturalization policy through an analysis of three main indicators. These three indicators encompass cognitive, affective, and conative aspects, providing a comprehensive picture of how the public thinks, feels, and acts toward this policy. Overall, the data analysis revealed a very positive trend across all assessments. Most respondents provided consistent responses, indicating that the policy adopted by the Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) and the government has received widespread attention and acceptance. This comprehensive understanding among the

public is a crucial foundation for the sustainability of the national team's performance improvement program.

Regarding the cognitive indicator, this study found that the public's level of knowledge is very high. This cognitive aspect measures the extent to which the public knows, understands, and assimilates fundamental information about the naturalization program. A high score on this indicator confirms that the issue of naturalization is no longer merely superficial discussion among Indonesian football fans. The public is not only focused on the results on the field but also has a critical awareness of the background of the policy. This solid knowledge is a crucial starting point to prevent the public from being easily provoked by unfounded negative sentiments.

More specifically, in terms of cognitive aspects, the high level of respondents' understanding refers to the clarity of the goals and benefits of naturalization itself. Most of the public is considered to have a very good understanding that this acceleration is being implemented to boost the national team's performance and competitiveness on the international stage. They recognize that catching up at the global level requires an instant injection of quality from players with international experience. This strategic context is accepted as a rational necessity in the modern football industry, which demands real achievements. Therefore, this policy is seen as a logical step, not simply an emotional or spur-of-the-moment decision without a clear direction.

Respondents' cognitive knowledge also includes a deep technical understanding of the applicable regulations and their impact on the local ecosystem. The public is noted to have a good awareness of this process's compliance with official FIFA regulations regarding the transfer of player associations. Furthermore, they understand that the contribution of these players of mixed descent is a short-term strategy that runs concurrently with long-term development. Public expectations are not blind; they understand that naturalization serves as a stimulant or trigger for quality standards within the team. This collective awareness demonstrates that the Indonesian football community is increasingly educated and able to see the roadmap for sport development at a macro level.

On the emotional dimension, public attitudes and feelings toward the naturalization policy. Based on survey results, this indicator also ranks high, reflecting the positive emotional bond between the public and the current national team. Public acceptance is characterized by soaring optimism for the future of Indonesian football. The public senses a sense of change and renewed enthusiasm every time the Garuda squad competes with a more solid team composition. Public confidence is also boosted by the improving quality of the national team's play, which is considered increasingly competitive.

Although the affective indicators were generally high, this study detected an interesting emotional dynamic among a minority of respondents. A small ripple emerged, a concern that the massive wave of naturalization could potentially erode playing opportunities for local talent. This concern signals that romantic nationalism and concern for early childhood development in the country remain very strong. The fear of marginalizing indigenous products from domestic competitions is a critical note for policymakers. This dynamic indicates that public acceptance remains accompanied by a cautious attitude, ensuring that this policy does not kill the dreams of the nation's children.

Meanwhile, regarding the conative indicator, which measures behavioral tendencies or concrete support from the public, the analysis shows that most respondents ranked high in their commitment to action. This indicates that positive public perception goes beyond mere thoughts and feelings. The public demonstrates a strong readiness to transform their theoretical support into concrete actions that can be directly felt by the team. This high conative score guarantees that the naturalization policy has a militant mass base ready to oversee the transition to achievement. The high level of conative indicators is clear in several practical actions taken by respondents daily. This tangible support is demonstrated through their presence and cheering at the stadium during national team matches, regardless of the players' backgrounds. In the digital realm, the public actively builds positive narratives, provides appreciation, and protects the players from

bullying on various social media platforms. Furthermore, this form of conative action is also reflected in the public's willingness to continue voicing support for the program's sustainability. This behavioral commitment creates a conducive and supportive environment for the players' competitive mentality on the field.

Overall, the convergence of these three indicators suggests a significant conclusion: the naturalization policy has a very solid foundation of public acceptance. The alignment between intelligent cognitive aspects, optimistic affective aspects, and supportive conative aspects creates strong social legitimacy for the PSSI. This policy has proven theoretically successful in satisfying public reason, while also practically successful in mobilizing mass support. The government must leverage this strong social capital to continue boosting football achievements. With the harmony between federation policies and public approval, the steps towards the international stage are guaranteed to be on the right track.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of 101 respondents, it can be concluded that public perception of the player naturalization policy in the context of national football is very positive. Most respondents, 69%, stated that they strongly agreed with this policy, while 21% agreed. Only a small proportion expressed disagreement, with 3% disagreeing and 7% strongly disagreeing. These findings indicate that the naturalization policy is seen as an appropriate step in improving the performance and competitiveness of the Indonesian national team at the international level. The policy, which involves cooperation between the PSSI and the government in recruiting foreign players, appears to have succeeded in building public trust in the serious commitment to developing national sporting achievements. Furthermore, this high level of acceptance indicates a public understanding that naturalization is part of a long-term development strategy, particularly when integrated with the development of local athletes. This is in line with the views of (De Bosscher et al., 2006) within the SPLISS framework, which emphasizes the importance of structured policy support from the government and sports institutions to achieve success on the international stage. Based on the results of research on public perception of the naturalization policy in sports, especially football, it can be concluded that the public generally has a positive perception of this policy. This is demonstrated through three main indicators: Cognitive: The public demonstrates a good understanding of the goals and benefits of naturalization. Affective: The public has a positive attitude towards the naturalization policy, although a small portion is skeptical about its impact on local players. Conative: The public not only supports it theoretically but also demonstrates concrete support through behavior and opinions. Overall, the naturalization policy is well received by the public and is considered a strategy to improve the performance of the Indonesian national team.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad Muhamad Mustain Nasoha, Ashfiya Nur Atqiya, A'izzatul Ifada, Bagas Eka Syahputra, & Meylin Yunda Safira. (2024). Hak Kewarganegaraan dan Kebijakan Pemerintah: Evaluasi Peraturan Perundang-Undangan di Indonesia. *Konsensus: Jurnal Ilmu Pertahanan, Hukum Dan Ilmu Komunikasi*, 1(6), 01–10. <https://doi.org/10.62383/konsensus.v1i6.437>
- Allport, G. W. (1935). Attitudes. In C. Murchison (Ed.), *A handbook of social psychology* (pp. 798–844). Clark University Press. (Rujukan babon untuk teori komponen sikap/persepsi: Kognitif, Afektif, Konatif).
- Campbell, C. (2021). The legalities and ethics of athletic naturalization in international football. *International Sports Law Journal*, 21(3), 112–128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40318-021-00184-5>

- De Bosscher, V., De Knop, P., Van Bottenburg, M., & Shibli, S. (2006). A Conceptual Framework for Analysing Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 6(2), 185–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184740600955087>
- De Bosscher, V., Shibli, S., Westerbeek, H., & van Bottenburg, M. (2015). Successful elite sport policies: An international comparison of the Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS 2.0) in 15 nations. Meyer & Meyer Verlag.
- Digel, H. (2002). A comparison of elite sport systems. *New Studies in Athletics*, 17(1), 37–50.
- Diva Ingriani, Aulia Aisha Nadhirah, Hanisa Azura, & Syahidah Alifia. (2025). Studi Deskriptif Kuantitatif tentang Kualitas Tidur Pecandu Rokok. *Observasi: Jurnal Publikasi Ilmu Psikologi*, 3(2), 122–131. <https://doi.org/10.61132/observasi.v3i2.1077>
- Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Ghozali, P., Sulaiman, & Pramono, H. (2017). Pembinaan Olahraga Sepakbola di Klub Indonesia Muda Purwokerto Kabupaten Banyumas. *Journal of Physical Education and Sports*, 6(7), 76–82.
- Goldblatt, D. (2020). *The ball is round: A global history of football*. Penguin Books.
- Hasibuan, M. A., Budiono, B., & Perbawati, C. (2024). Perbandingan Pengaturan Hukum Naturalisasi Indonesia Dengan Korea Selatan. *Simbur Cahaya*, XXXI(1), 107–128. <https://doi.org/10.28946/sc.v31i1.3169>
- Houlihan, B., & Green, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Comparative elite sport development: Systems, structures and public policy*. Routledge.
- Hugaerts, I., & Schandevyl, J. (2021). Foreign talent vs. youth academy: Public perception of athletic migration in contemporary football. *Journal of Sports and Social Issues*, 45(4), 389–410. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01937235211012345>
- Jihad, M., & Annas, M. (2021). Pembinaan Prestasi Olahraga Sepak Bola pada SSB 18 di Kabupaten Jepara Tahun 2021. *Indonesian Journal for Physical Education and Sport*, 2(2), 46–53.
- Ma'mun, A. (2019). Menakar arah pembinaan sepak bola usia dini di Indonesia di tengah arus globalisasi industri olahraga. *Jurnal Pendidikan Jasmani dan Olahraga*, 4(2), 210–222. <https://doi.org/10.17509/jpjo.v4i2.18901>
- Pramono, H., & Ghozali, P. (2019). Harmonisasi pembinaan atlet usia dini dan adopsi talenta global dalam sepak bola nasional. *Jurnal Prestasi Olahraga Indonesia*, 5(1), 12–25.
- Pratama, A. R., & Barkah, K. (2023). Analisis yuridis kebijakan naturalisasi pemain sepak bola dalam mewujudkan prestasi tim nasional Indonesia. *Jurnal Hukum Olahraga Indonesia*, 3(1), 45–60.
- Sahlan, S. (2023). Studi Masyarakat Sosial Dalam Perspektif Kelompok Sosial Dan Stratifikasi Sosial. *JUPSI: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Indonesia*, 1(1), 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.62238/jupsijurnalpendidikansosialindonesia.v1i1.8>
- Sihombing, E. N. (2022). Eksistensi aturan naturalisasi dalam sistem hukum kewarganegaraan Indonesia: Perspektif hukum tata negara. *Jurnal Konstitusi*, 19(2), 312–335. <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk1923>
- Slameto. (2010). Belajar dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhinya. Rineka Cipta. (Sering digunakan di Indonesia untuk membedah indikator persepsi publik).
- Suryadi, D., & Sugiyanto, S. (2020). Analisis kebijakan pembinaan prestasi olahraga sepak bola nasional: Tantangan dan peluang. *Jurnal Keolahragaan*, 8(2), 145–155. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jk.v8i2.32145>
- Vink, M. P. (2017). *Comparing citizenship laws*. Oxford University Press.