

FOOTBALL FANS' EXPECTATIONS IN INTERPRETING INFORMATION ON TVRI AS THE BROADCASTING RIGHTS HOLDER FOR THE 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP IN THE CONTEXT OF INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

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Receive : 13 May 2026
Accepted : 08 Jul 2026
Published: 08 Jul 2026
DOI : 10.30829/jipi.v10i2.29634

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the characteristics of football fans in Medan City, the views of football fans toward TVRI before obtaining the FIFA World Cup 2026 broadcasting rights, and the expectations of football fans toward TVRI as the holder of the FIFA World Cup 2026 broadcasting rights in the context of intrapersonal communication. This study employed a qualitative method with a constructivist paradigm and a descriptive exploratory approach. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving football fans in Medan City selected using purposive sampling. The results show that football fans in Medan City access football content more frequently through social media, streaming platforms, and collective watching activities rather than conventional television. Before obtaining the FIFA World Cup 2026 broadcasting rights, TVRI was perceived as less modern, less attractive, and lagging behind private television stations and digital media. However, TVRI was still considered to have advantages in providing free access and broad coverage for the public. The expectations of football fans toward TVRI were formed through intrapersonal communication processes influenced by media experiences, personal perceptions, and hopes for improving broadcast quality. Football fans expect TVRI to provide modern, stable, easily accessible broadcasts and to compete with other media platforms in broadcasting the FIFA World Cup 2026.

Keywords: Expectations, Football Fans, TVRI, FIFA World Cup 2026, Intrapersonal Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, developments in digital communication technology have transformed the way people consume media. Audiences have become increasingly accustomed to digital media, social media, and internet-based platforms that offer flexibility in time, personalized content, and easy access anytime. Several studies have shown that audience fragmentation and the dominance of digital platforms have shifted television from the center of the shared viewing experience to just one option among many other media (Van Dijck et al., 2021; Lotz, 2022).

These changes have left television, both public and private, facing a structural crisis of relevance. Declining viewership, the shift in advertising spending to digital platforms, and rising quality standards set by global media outlets are putting television under increasing pressure. The challenges facing television today are not only technological, but also involve changes in viewing culture and how audiences interpret the viewing experience itself (Enli, 2021; Syvertsen et al., 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2025).

TVRI does not operate according to the same logic as commercial television. As a public broadcaster, TVRI has a different mandate. Its primary focus is not profit-making, but rather ensuring widespread and equitable public access to information and entertainment. In this context, acquiring broadcasting rights is not solely determined by capital investment, but also by the social value the broadcaster can provide. Several studies of public broadcasting show that global broadcasting rights holders, under certain conditions, open up space for public media, particularly when public access and national reach are key considerations (Iosifidis, 2021; Lowe & Martin, 2022).

One of the main reasons explaining TVRI's position is its distribution capabilities. TVRI has a network of transmitters that reaches areas not always served by the internet and digital platforms. In the context of Indonesia's vast geography and uneven infrastructure, the ability to ensure broadcasts are received by people in remote areas is crucial. For global broadcast rights holders, ensuring that the World Cup can be watched by the widest possible audience, not just urban audiences or pay-per-view subscribers, has strategic and reputational significance (Humaizi et al., 2024; Purba et al., 2025; Ritonga et al., 2024).

As a state-owned public television station, TVRI also plays a role in the process of acquiring broadcast rights. TVRI is within the framework of the national communications policy that positions public media as a means of public service. In certain contexts, the state has an interest in ensuring that global events with high social value, such as the World Cup, are accessible to the public without economic barriers. Therefore, TVRI's ownership of broadcast rights can be understood as part of an effort to maintain public access, not merely a result of business competition between media outlets (Harianto et al., 2023; Ohorella et al., 2023).

TVRI has a distinct advantage compared to commercial media. Its value lies not in the size of its financial investment, but in its ability to present the World Cup as a spectacle that can be enjoyed collectively by the wider community. Within this framework, World Cup broadcasting rights are understood not only as an economic commodity, but also as a social event of public interest.

Owning these broadcasting rights also places a new burden on TVRI. Free access alone is no longer sufficient. Audiences come with high expectations for picture quality, broadcast stability, and production professionalism, especially since they have become accustomed to watching the World Cup on private television and high-standard global platforms. This is where budget constraints once again become a significant issue. This is no longer merely a structural factor, but a factor that will significantly determine how TVRI's performance is assessed and debated by the public in broadcasting the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

TVRI's acquisition of the World Cup broadcasting rights actually marks a shift in how sports broadcasting is viewed. The World Cup is no longer viewed solely as a commercial product contested for economic gain, but as a global event with social and cultural value for the wider community. At this point, public media outlets like TVRI play a crucial role in ensuring that an event as significant as the World Cup is accessible to everyone, regardless of economic constraints or technological access. Several studies have shown that when public media engages

in global sports broadcasting, sports can be reinterpreted as a shared viewing experience, rather than simply a market spectacle (Iosifidis, 2021; Lowe & Martin, 2022).

This shift in perspective also carries significant consequences. When TVRI secured the World Cup broadcasting rights, public scrutiny intensified. The World Cup has long been associated with high-quality and professional broadcasting. Audiences come with clear expectations: clear images, stable broadcasts, competent commentators, and a comfortable viewing experience. These expectations are shaped by previous viewing experiences on private television and global platforms. Research shows that when public media fails to meet these expectations, audience trust and institutional image can be affected (Enli, 2021; Syvertsen et al., 2022). In other words, the World Cup broadcasting rights provide a real test for TVRI to prove its capabilities.

Viewing TVRI, as the holder of the 2026 FIFA World Cup broadcasting rights, from the perspective of football fans is crucial. This approach helps understand how audience expectations are shaped by their previous viewing experiences. From this perspective, we can also see how TVRI's strengths, such as free access and extensive coverage, and its limitations, such as technological, infrastructure, and budgetary issues, are understood and valued by an audience accustomed to world-class broadcasting standards.

Thus, TVRI's ownership of the World Cup broadcasting rights is not simply a matter of who broadcasts the matches, but also a gateway to reassessing the role of public television amidst major changes in the media ecosystem. This event opens up space to examine how public television adapts amidst the crisis of conventional television, the acceleration of technology, and changes in how audiences interpret the viewing experience in the digital age

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm. This approach was chosen because the study seeks to understand how football fans in Medan construct their perceptions, experiences, and expectations of TVRI as the official broadcaster of the FIFA World Cup 2026. From a constructivist perspective, audience expectations are not viewed as fixed or objective realities, but as meanings shaped through personal viewing experiences, social interaction, media exposure, and local cultural contexts. The study used a descriptive-exploratory design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Clarke, 2023). The descriptive aspect was used to explain how football fans perceive TVRI, including their views on broadcast quality, public broadcasting functions, and access to global sports content. Meanwhile, the exploratory aspect was used to identify emerging meanings and expectations that may not have been widely discussed in previous studies, particularly in the local context of Medan. The object of this study was the expectations of football fans toward TVRI as the broadcaster of the FIFA World Cup 2026. The research subjects were football fans in Medan who actively follow football broadcasts and are aware of TVRI's role as the broadcasting rights holder. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on several criteria: knowing TVRI as the FIFA World Cup 2026 rights holder, regularly following football-related activities, and having watched or followed previous FIFA World Cup tournaments. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore informants' viewing experiences, perceptions of TVRI, and expectations regarding the quality of World Cup broadcasts. Observation was carried out in football fan gathering spaces, such as coffee shops and public viewing locations, to capture spontaneous responses, interaction

patterns, and audience discussions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2023). Documentation was used to examine news articles, social media posts, broadcast-related materials, and public information concerning TVRI and the FIFA World Cup 2026. The data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The data were coded into several main themes, including perceptions of TVRI, broadcast quality, viewing experience, audience expectations, and the meaning of TVRI as a public broadcaster. To ensure data credibility, this study applied source, technique, and time triangulation by comparing interview data, observation findings, and supporting documents from different sources (Miles et al., 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Football Fans' Perception on TVRI Before Obtaining the 2026 FIFA World Cup Broadcasting Rights

Football fans' perceptions of broadcasting media are inextricably linked to historical experience, the development of media technology, and changes in audience consumption patterns in the digital era. Football fans are a highly engaged audience, both emotionally and cognitively. They not only watch matches but also develop broadcast quality standards based on cross-media experiences. Therefore, before TVRI secured the broadcasting rights for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, football fans' perceptions of TVRI had been formed through a long process involving viewing experiences, social interactions, and the construction of intrapersonal meaning (Fauzan et al., 2023; Indainanto et al., 2023).

Based on the research findings in Chapter IV, it was found that football fans in Medan predominantly viewed TVRI as a less engaging, less competitive medium, and unable to meet modern football broadcasting standards. This perception stems from various aspects, ranging from program content, visual quality, presentation style, to TVRI's institutional image as a public television station. In this context, TVRI is not positioned as the primary medium for accessing football broadcasts, but rather as an alternative that tends to be less prioritized compared to private television stations and digital platforms.

One aspect most frequently highlighted by football fans is the low level of appeal of the content presented by TVRI. Informants in this study assessed that the programs tended to be monotonous and lacked strong entertainment value. This statement indicates that, from the audience's perspective, TVRI has not been able to present engaging content that aligns with the preferences of football fans, who desire dynamic, informative, and entertaining programming. Content appeal is a crucial factor in determining the level of audience engagement. Media that can present information in an engaging manner will more easily retain audience attention. Content that is perceived as bland and lacking in variety tends to be abandoned. This weakness in content is a major factor in shaping negative perceptions among football fans.

Visual quality is also crucial in shaping audience perceptions. Football fans in Medan demonstrate a high sensitivity to image quality, graphic design, and screen display. This is inextricably linked to their experience accessing football broadcasts from other media outlets that maintain high production standards. Visual aspects are seen not only as a complement but also as a key element determining the quality of the viewing experience. Visual quality is part of symbolic communication that conveys a message about the media's professionalism and credibility. Unmodern graphics or suboptimal picture quality can create the impression that the

media is incompetent or out of touch with technological developments. This then impacts the audience's overall perception of TVRI.

Football fans' views of TVRI are also influenced by a long-held image. TVRI is often associated with "old-fashioned" television, lacking innovation, and not keeping up with the times. This perception stems not only from current viewing experiences but also from past experiences that persist into the present. From an intrapersonal communication perspective, this image functions as a cognitive schema that influences how individuals interpret media messages. When audiences already have a negative initial perception, every broadcast tends to be judged through that lens. This leads to biased judgment, where minor flaws are magnified, while existing strengths are understated. Thus, image was a significant factor reinforcing negative perceptions of TVRI before it secured the World Cup broadcasting rights.

This view is also inextricably linked to football fans' comparisons with other media. Football fans in Medan are accustomed to accessing football broadcasts from private television stations and digital platforms that offer high quality. This experience creates a certain standard of quality in their minds, so TVRI is automatically compared to that media. In the process of intrapersonal communication, this comparison forms the basis for forming an assessment of TVRI.

Football fans' views are also influenced by the dynamics of social communication within their environment. Discussions among football fans, both in person and through social media, contribute to shaping collective opinions about TVRI. Opinions developed within these social groups can reinforce individual perceptions, resulting in a relatively unified view. In this regard, interpersonal and group communication processes play a role in reinforcing the outcomes of intrapersonal communication.

Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action perspective, negative attitudes toward TVRI formed through social experiences and discussions can influence audience behavioral intentions. Football fans with negative perceptions tend to choose other media as their primary source for watching football. This demonstrates that perceptions are not limited to the cognitive realm but also impact actual behavior in media selection.

Football fans' views of TVRI before it secured the broadcast rights for the 2026 FIFA World Cup can be understood as the result of the interaction of three main factors: media experience, audience expectations, and institutional image. Media experience shapes quality standards, expectations determine the benchmark for evaluation, and image influences the interpretation of media messages. These three factors interact, resulting in complex perceptions of TVRI.

This research's findings also demonstrate that in a competitive media ecosystem, public television stations like TVRI face challenges that are not only technical, but also psychological and symbolic. TVRI must not only improve broadcast quality but also change long-held perceptions and images within the public. Without changes in perception, technical improvements alone may not be enough to shift audience perceptions.

It was concluded that before securing the broadcasting rights for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, football fans in Medan tended to view TVRI negatively, characterized by the perception that TVRI was less engaging, less modern, and less competitive than other media outlets. This perception was formed through viewing experiences, comparisons with other media outlets, and the inherent image of the public. However, beneath these perceptions, there is still recognition of TVRI's role as a public media outlet with advantages in terms of access and reach.

Football fans' views of TVRI are ambivalent, shifting between criticism of its quality and recognition of its social function. This condition is an important basis for understanding how football fans' expectations were formed when TVRI was appointed as the broadcasting rights holder for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, as well as how the media is expected to be able to answer doubts, meet expectations, and rebuild audience trust amidst increasingly fierce media competition.

Football Fans' Expectations in Viewing TVRI as the Holder of Broadcasting Rights for the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the Context of the Meaning of Intrapersonal Communication in Medan City

Expectations are the result of a complex mental process involving perception, past experience, memory, knowledge, and an individual's cognitive and emotional evaluation of an object in the study of intrapersonal communication. Expectations are not merely hopes, but psychological constructs formed through the interaction of empirical experience and subjective interpretation. Football fans in Medan City formed expectations about TVRI, the holder of the 2026 FIFA World Cup broadcasting rights, through a lengthy process of internal reflection, influenced by previous experiences, media imagery, and the development of global football broadcasting standards.

Based on the research findings in Chapter IV, it is understood that football fans' expectations of TVRI stem from past experiences that tended to be less than satisfactory. These experiences included broadcast quality perceived as suboptimal, unattractive visuals, and content deemed lacking in variety. In the intrapersonal communication process, these experiences are stored in memory as the primary reference in shaping perceptions. When individuals receive new information that TVRI holds the 2026 FIFA World Cup broadcasting rights, these memories are automatically activated and serve as the basis for evaluating potential future changes.

In the initial stage, the perception stage, football fans receive information about TVRI's position as the official broadcaster of the World Cup. This information is then processed through pre-established cognitive schemas. During this stage, individuals do not immediately form positive expectations, but instead engage in a process of questioning, such as: whether TVRI is capable of improving broadcast quality, whether the viewing experience will be different from before, and whether TVRI can compete with other media outlets previously considered superior. This stage demonstrates that expectations are not formed linearly, but through a process of critical reflection.

In the interpretation stage, football fans compare past experiences with the standards of football broadcasts they receive from other media outlets. This process demonstrates the existence of an internal mechanism called benchmarking, where individuals set quality standards based on their best experiences. In this context, private television and digital platforms are the primary references, as they are perceived to offer higher quality and more modern broadcasts.

The momentum of the 2026 FIFA World Cup also triggers cognitive reconstruction within football fans. In an intrapersonal process, individuals begin to open up to the possibility that TVRI will undergo significant transformation. The World Cup, as a global event, demands high broadcasting standards, so it is logical that TVRI should adapt to these standards. This process produces ambivalent expectations, a combination of hope for change and lingering doubts from previous experiences.

Football fans' expectations of TVRI are highly focused on technical and substantive improvements in broadcast quality. They expect visual enhancements, such as the use of high resolution (HD or 4K), stable, uninterrupted broadcasts, and clear, synchronized audio. Furthermore, graphical displays are a key consideration, with fans seeking modern, dynamic, and informative designs, such as interactive digital scoreboards, real-time statistics, and easy-to-understand data visualizations.

These cognitive expectations also extend to overall production quality. Football fans expect the use of more sophisticated technology, such as multi-angle cameras, detailed slow-motion replays, and the integration of augmented reality or data analytics into broadcasts. This demonstrates that expectations are not merely basic but also reflect a demand for technological innovation that can significantly enhance the viewing experience.

Football fans' expectations also include the development of more varied and in-depth content. They want supporting programming that enhances the viewing experience, such as pre-match shows discussing match predictions, post-match analysis providing in-depth evaluations, and feature content highlighting the stories behind the teams and players. This expectation demonstrates that football fans view World Cup broadcasts as a holistic experience, focusing not only on the matches but also on the narrative and information that accompanies them.

Football fans' expectations relate to the emotional experience they desire while watching a broadcast. Football, as a sport, has a high emotional appeal, so a good broadcast must be able to fully convey the atmosphere of the match. Football fans expect commentators who are not only informative but also expressive, able to build tension, and convey emotions appropriate to the match.

These affective expectations also include the desire for an immersive experience, a viewing experience that feels like it transports the viewer into the stadium. This relates to the quality of the crowd sound, dynamic visuals, and presentation that realistically creates a match atmosphere. Intrapersonally, this emotional experience is a key indicator in assessing whether the broadcast successfully meets audience expectations.

Football fans' expectations relate to behavioral tendencies in media selection. Intrapersonally, individuals consider various factors before deciding to watch on TVRI, such as broadcast quality, ease of access, and previous experience. High expectations can drive the intention to try watching on TVRI, but the final decision depends heavily on the actual experience gained during the broadcast.

If TVRI is able to meet these expectations, significant behavioral changes will occur, with football fans beginning to make TVRI their primary media outlet. However, if expectations are not met, individuals tend to return to other media outlets perceived as higher quality. In this context, expectations serve as a mediator between perception and behavior, determining whether audiences will remain or switch to other media outlets.

Football fans' expectations are also influenced by their awareness of TVRI's role as a public media outlet. In an intrapersonal process, a negotiation occurs between the desire for high quality and an understanding of TVRI's limitations as a public broadcaster. Football fans recognize that TVRI offers advantages in terms of free access and broad reach, so their expectations are not entirely idealistic but also consider TVRI's social function.

This negotiation process results in realistic and contextual expectations. Football fans still desire significant quality improvements, but do not completely equate TVRI with premium media outlets. They place greater emphasis on "appropriate" and "competitive" improvements, so that TVRI can continue to fulfill its role as an inclusive public media outlet.

Football fans' expectations are also influenced by the social communication that occurs within their environment. Discussions among football fans, both in person and through social media, form part of the input in the intrapersonal process. Opinions developing within social groups can strengthen individual expectations and even shape collective expectations. In this regard, intrapersonal communication does not stand alone but interacts with interpersonal and group communication in shaping perceptions and expectations about the media.

Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action perspective, formed expectations will influence individual attitudes and behavioral intentions. A positive attitude toward TVRI will increase the likelihood of using TVRI as a primary media outlet, while a negative attitude will strengthen the tendency to avoid TVRI. Therefore, expectations are a key factor in determining TVRI's success in attracting back its football fan audience.

Football fans' expectations of TVRI as the holder of the 2026 FIFA World Cup broadcasting rights are the result of a highly complex and multi-layered intrapersonal communication process. These expectations are formed from the interaction of past experiences, pre-existing perceptions, and hopes for future change. These expectations are multidimensional, encompassing cognitive, affective, and conative aspects, and are influenced by both internal and external factors.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that football fans in Medan are an active, critical audience with extensive media experience in assessing the quality of football broadcasts. They not only watch but also compare, evaluate, and interpret broadcasts based on their experiences on private television and digital platforms. Prior to acquiring the broadcast rights for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, TVRI tended to be perceived as less modern, less engaging, and unable to compete with other media, although it was still recognized as having advantages as a free public media outlet that reaches a wide audience. Expectations of TVRI were formed through intrapersonal communication involving past experiences, negative perceptions, and hopes for change. These expectations included improvements in visual quality, audio, content, presentation, and a more engaging and emotional viewing experience. Therefore, the 2026 FIFA World Cup is a crucial opportunity for TVRI to improve broadcast quality, strengthen its image as a public media outlet, and rebuild the trust of football fans in Medan

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of this study, TVRI is suggested to use the 2026 FIFA World Cup broadcasting rights as a strategic momentum to rebuild public trust and strengthen its relevance as a public broadcaster in the digital media era. TVRI needs to improve the technical quality of its broadcasts, particularly in terms of visual resolution, audio clarity, broadcast stability, and accessibility across various regions. In addition, TVRI should develop more attractive football-related programs, such as pre-match discussions, post-match analysis, highlight segments, and interactive digital content that can engage football fans beyond conventional television viewing. The selection of competent and expressive commentators is also important to create a more emotional and immersive viewing experience. Furthermore, TVRI should optimize multiplatform distribution through television, streaming services, and social media so that audiences who are accustomed to digital platforms can access World Cup content more easily. As a public broadcaster, TVRI should maintain its strength in providing free and inclusive access

while continuously improving professionalism, innovation, and audience-oriented programming.

THANK YOU-NOTE

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (KOMDIGI) for supporting and funding this research. The authors also extend their deepest appreciation to KOMDIGI for the educational scholarship support provided during their postgraduate study at Universitas Sumatera Utara. This support has greatly contributed to the completion of this research and the authors' academic development. Finally, the authors would also like to thank all informants and parties who contributed to this study.

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