

Exploring the search trends: Inter Milan's triumph in Indonesia

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Received: 12 May 2024; Revised: 11 Juni 2024; Accepted: 1 July 2024

Abstract: This article explores the popularity of Inter Milan in Indonesia through an in-depth analysis of Google search trends. Employing a rigorous qualitative methodology with a netnographic approach, data from Google Trends between May 2023 and May 2024 was collected and analyzed. The study focuses on two main metrics: interest over time and regional distribution per province. The results show that Inter Milan's search volume and regional interest fluctuate, with a notable peak during the UEFA Champions League final against Manchester City on June 11, 2023. The research illuminates the multifaceted and enthusiastic fan base of Inter Milan, as well as the club's dedication to social initiatives and community engagement.

Keywords: Football; Google Trends; Fan Base; Community

How to Cite: Laksana, E., Fajaruddin, S., Andi, T., & Hudha, M. (2024). Exploring the search trends: Inter Milan's triumph in Indonesia. *Sepakbola*, 4(1), 37-42. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.33292/sepakbola.v4i1.287>



INTRODUCTION

Internazionale Milano, better known as Inter Milan, is one of the most renowned and successful football clubs globally (Foot, 2007). It has a long and distinguished history, as well as a dedicated and passionate fan base. The club is based in Milan, Italy, and has consistently demonstrated its strength and competitiveness in Serie A, Italy's top-flight league. Additionally, it has achieved notable success on the European stage (Schuller, 2023).

Italian football presents a paradox: while it has produced some of Europe's most talented and victorious teams, it has also grappled with financial instability and scandals (Agnew, 2012; Baroncelli & Lago, 2006; Boeri & Severgnini, 2014; Di Ronco & Lavorgna, 2015; Gould & Williams, 2011; Hamil et al., 2010; Rossi et al., 2013). Inter Milan mirrors this trend, navigating its way through financial challenges and controversies. Despite these hurdles, the club has upheld its reputation as one of the world's most esteemed teams (Zhang, 2023). As a prominent Serie A entity, Inter Milan's renown and triumphs have transcended geographical confines, captivating football enthusiasts globally (Beretta, 2021). It is noteworthy that in Indonesia, the name Inter Milan is widely recognised. Furthermore, Inter Milan was previously owned by Erick Thohir, an Indonesian figure currently serving as Minister of State-Owned Enterprises and Chairman of the Indonesian Football Association.

The vast expanse of football literature offers a wealth of insights into the history and culture of the sport. Among the many clubs that have made their mark on the game, Inter Milan stands out as a particularly noteworthy example. The rich history and significant impact of the club in Serie A and Italian football make it a compelling subject for in-depth academic investigation.

This study seeks to explore Google search trends in Indonesia concerning Inter Milan. Leveraging the Google Trends tool, which has been effective in tracking trends in various domains, the goal is to better grasp Inter Milan's popularity within Indonesian society. By analyzing data from Google Trends, the research aims to uncover the patterns of public interest in international

football clubs in Indonesia. It is hoped that these findings will contribute to a better understanding of the Indonesian football scene and its relationship with global football culture.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative methodology with an ethnographic strategy, aimed at understanding online phenomena in their natural digital context. The ethnographic approach is particularly suitable for analyzing cultural and behavioral patterns in digital spaces, as it enables the researcher to observe interactions and trends over time with the aid of online informants (Sarwoprasodjo & Lubis, 2021; Suyanto, 2015).

Data Collection

Data were collected using Google Trends, an online tool that measures search interest over time and across regions, from June 2023 to May 2024. The study focuses on a national scope, capturing search trends from all provinces in Indonesia. The keywords for data collection were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives and were refined iteratively to ensure precision.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a comparative approach based on two key metrics provided by Google Trends: (1) Interest Over Time: This metric evaluates the popularity of search terms across the specified time frame, providing insights into temporal variations in search behavior; (2) Regional Distribution Per Province: This metric identifies geographic areas with the highest search interest, offering spatial analysis of the data.

The data were then analyzed using a comparative analysis method, allowing the identification of patterns and variations in search trends. The analysis focused on significant events, such as the UEFA Champions League final against Manchester City on June 11, 2023, which resulted in a notable peak in search volume. This event was compared to other periods to examine how specific events or milestones impacted the search behavior.

Additionally, the study employed thematic analysis to interpret the findings, looking at the fluctuations in search interest as indicators of fan engagement and public sentiment. The regional distribution of searches provided insights into the geographic concentration of Inter Milan's fan base and their engagement with the club's digital presence, which includes social media activities and community outreach programs.

The study ensures data validity by cross-referencing the Google Trends data with other available online sources, such as social media sentiment analysis, to triangulate the findings and provide a richer, more accurate understanding of the club's online popularity in Indonesia.

Ethical Considerations

Given the use of publicly available online data, ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to. All data were anonymized, and no personal information from individual users was accessed or utilized in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, Google Trends was employed to observe Inter Milan. The keywords "Inter Milan" were used to identify the level of interest among the Indonesian population in this football club. This approach enabled the examination of fluctuations in search volume and regional interest for Inter Milan over the specified period, thereby providing valuable insights into the club's popularity and online engagement within Indonesia.

The Google Trends results, indicating the average search trends on Google regarding Inter Milan from May 2023 to May 2024, are presented in Figure 1. As depicted in Figure 1, it is evident that the peak search interest among the Indonesian population for Inter Milan occurred during the period of 4 June to 10 June 2023. During this period, Inter Milan participated in a significant

match, namely the final of the UEFA Champions League. The match took place on 11 June 2023, where Inter Milan faced Manchester City.

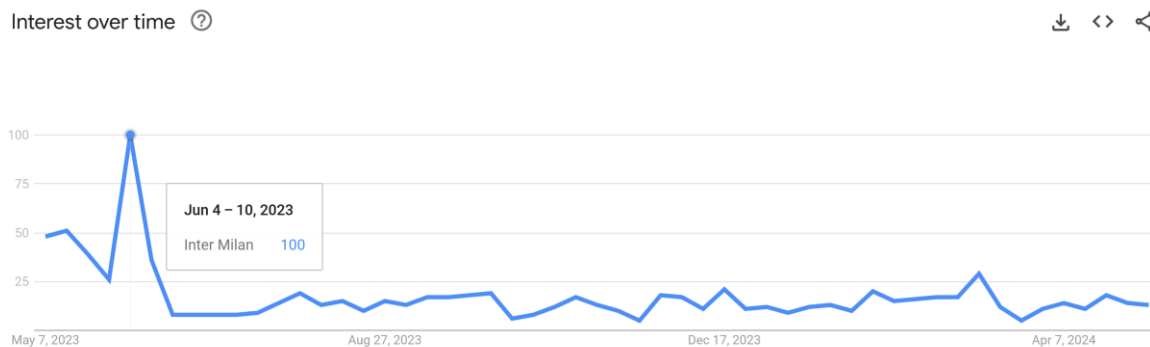


Figure 1. Inter Milan's Average search trends on Google from June 2023 to May 2024

Even though Inter Milan lost the match, The UEFA Champions League final between Inter Milan and Manchester City is clash of titans, with both teams vying for European glory on football's grandest stage (Bate, 2023). Inter Milan, steeped in history and tradition, brings to the final their rich legacy of success in both domestic and international competitions. The team is led by a formidable squad of seasoned veterans and emerging talents, and has demonstrated resilience and tactical prowess throughout the tournament. It has been able to overcome formidable opponents with skillful gameplay and unwavering determination.

In the 2009-2010 season, Inter Milan achieved a historic milestone by clinching the treble, etching their name into footballing folklore (Heng & Syriac, 2023). Led by the charismatic manager José Mourinho, Inter Milan embarked on a remarkable journey, dominating Italy, Europe, and the world. Domestically, they secured the Serie A title with an impressive display of consistency, while also claiming the Coppa Italia. This triumphant period of success helped cement Inter Milan's global reputation, particularly among their fanbase in Indonesia. Interestingly, this legacy of success may have contributed to the significant spike in search interest for Inter Milan in Indonesia during the period of June 4 to June 10, 2023. During this time, searches for the club surged, likely fueled by renewed excitement surrounding their recent achievements and ongoing relevance in international football, particularly during the UEFA Champions League final against Manchester City.

Nevertheless, it was in the UEFA Champions League where Inter Milan demonstrated their capabilities. Despite facing considerable challenges in the knockout stages, they managed to overcome formidable opponents and reached the pinnacle of European football. In a historic final against Bayern Munich, Inter Milan delivered a masterclass performance, emerging victorious with a 2-0 win and securing the coveted Champions League trophy (Lyon, 2010). This triumph, coupled with their success in Serie A and the Coppa Italia, constituted the treble, a feat celebrated by fans and revered in the annals of football history as a testament to Inter Milan's greatness.

The search popularity of Inter Milan reached half of its total on the dates between 14 and 20 May 2023. During this period, Inter Milan had a crucial match, the Milan Derby, which occurred in the semi-final of the Champions League. After beat AC Milan 2-0 in the first leg (Matar, 2023), Inter Milan secured a convincing 3-0 aggregate victory.

The UEFA Champions League semi-final encounter between Inter Milan and AC Milan in 2023 exemplified the essence of the Milan Derby, arousing passions and rivalries on the grandest stage of football. As long-standing rivals steeped in history and tradition (Ravichandra, 2024), the clash between these two iconic clubs captured the imagination of football enthusiasts worldwide. With a berth in the Champions League final at stake, both Inter Milan and AC Milan approached the semi-final fixtures with unwavering determination and tactical acumen.

Inter Milan and AC Milan are fierce rivals (Williams, 2018). The semi-final tie between Inter Milan and AC Milan was not merely a contest between two teams vying for supremacy in Milan, but also a clash between two contrasting football philosophies. Inter Milan, renowned for their defensive solidity and tactical pragmatism, faced off against AC Milan's dynamic and attacking

style of play. The matchups between these two historic clubs showcased the intensity and drama typical of the Milan Derby, with each moment carrying the weight of decades of rivalry and history.

Supporting this narrative, data from Google Trends revealed a significant surge in search interest for both clubs, particularly during the UEFA Champions League semi-final. From April 2023 to May 2023, the search volume for Inter Milan saw a notable spike in regions across Indonesia, reflecting the heightened excitement surrounding the derby. Interestingly, the search volume for AC Milan also peaked, illustrating the shared national interest in this iconic rivalry. These findings underscore the lasting appeal of the Milan Derby, where the fierce competition on the pitch is mirrored by the passionate engagement of global fans. Ultimately, the UEFA Champions League semi-final between Inter Milan and AC Milan served as a testament to the enduring allure of football's greatest rivalries, with fans treated to a spectacle of skill, passion, and drama, as reflected in the online search activity.

The trend of searching for Inter Milan in Indonesia, as illustrated in Figure 2, reveals interesting geographical patterns that can shed light on the club's fan distribution and engagement across the country. North Sulawesi emerges as the province with the highest search interest, followed by North Maluku, East Nusa Tenggara, Gorontalo, and Maluku. These rankings not only highlight the regions where Inter Milan has a strong fan base but also suggest possible regional preferences for European football, with Inter Milan's popularity particularly resonating in the eastern parts of Indonesia.

This data is significant for understanding the spatial dynamics of fan engagement with Inter Milan. The high search volume in these provinces could reflect regional factors such as local football culture, access to media coverage, or even the influence of local football communities that support European clubs. The findings also indicate a potential correlation between the club's performance in major international tournaments, such as the UEFA Champions League, and the heightened interest in specific regions.

Furthermore, these regional trends are valuable for future marketing and fan engagement strategies. By recognizing where Inter Milan has the most traction, the club could focus its outreach efforts, such as fan events, merchandise distribution, or digital content, to strengthen its presence in these high-interest areas. This insight also contributes to the broader understanding of how football fandom can vary across different parts of a nation, helping to contextualize the club's overall popularity in Indonesia. Data presented in Figure 2 emphasizes the importance of regional fan engagement and provides key insights into the specific provinces that exhibit the highest levels of interest in Inter Milan, which is crucial for understanding the club's online presence and its appeal in Indonesia.

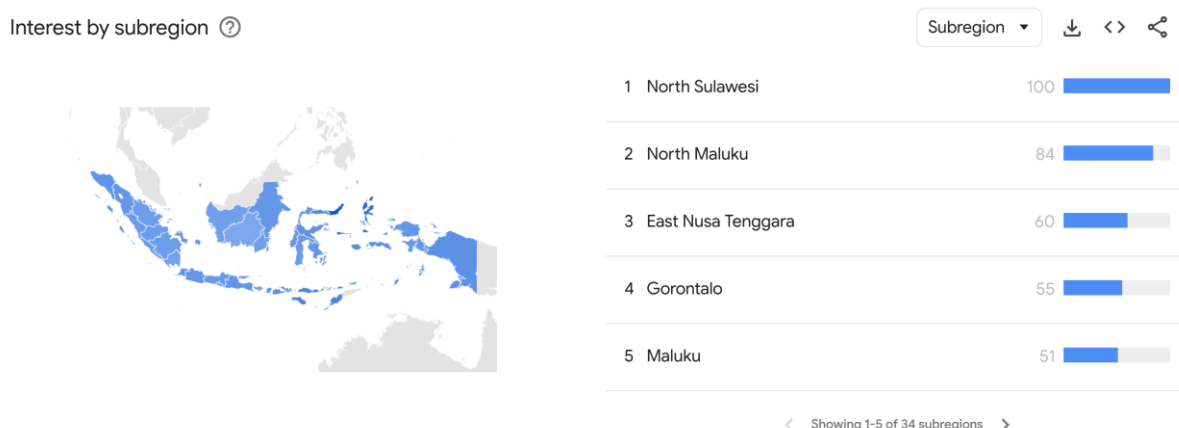


Figure 2. Ranking of Provinces That Search for Inter Milan the Most

In X(Twitter), Inter Milan is dominate the tweet relate to Serie A (Kuzma et al., 2014). The fan base of Inter Milan is diverse and passionate, encompassing supporters from a range of demographic and geographical backgrounds. These supporters are located both domestically and internationally, with a significant presence in Milan and a more dispersed global following. The

shared love for the club and its rich history unites these supporters, regardless of their geographical location.

Inter Milan engages with its supporters through various channels, including social media, official club events, and interactive platforms (Beretta, 2021). These channels facilitate the cultivation of a sense of belonging and community among the supporters. Whether attending matches at the iconic San Siro Stadium or participating in virtual fan forums, Inter Milan fans are actively involved in the shaping of the club's identity and narrative. This involvement contributes to the vibrant and dynamic football culture that transcends borders.

Inter Milan demonstrates a strong commitment to social initiatives and community involvement, leveraging its platform and resources to make a positive impact beyond the football pitch. Through various programmes and partnerships, the club addresses social issues such as education, health, and inclusion, aiming to uplift and empower disadvantaged communities. Inter Milan's "Inter Campus" project, for instance, focuses on providing access to sports and education for children in underserved areas, promoting values of teamwork, respect, and solidarity (Hyndman & Liguori, 2024). Furthermore, the club collaborates with local organisations and charities to support initiatives related to youth development, environmental sustainability, and humanitarian aid. By actively engaging with communities and championing social causes, Inter Milan exemplifies the ethos of football as a force for good, fostering positive change and leaving a lasting legacy beyond the realm of sports.

The Italian football club Inter Milan exerts a significant influence on both local and global football culture. It serves as a beacon of excellence and tradition in the sport. Domestically, the club's rich history and storied rivalries, particularly with city rivals AC Milan, contribute to the vibrant tapestry of Italian football culture. The Milan Derby, one of the most fiercely contested matches in world football, captures the imagination of fans and embodies the passion and intensity synonymous with the city of Milan. Moreover, Inter Milan's achievements on the international stage, including victories in esteemed competitions such as the UEFA Champions League, enhance the club's reputation and extend its influence beyond Italy's borders. As a global footballing powerhouse, Inter Milan's iconic blue and black stripes and renowned players have become emblematic of excellence, inspiring generations of football enthusiasts and influencing the evolution of global football culture.

CONCLUSION

Inter Milan's history in the realm of football, both domestically and internationally, reflects its enduring legacy as one of the sport's most iconic and successful clubs. From its distinguished history to its passionate fan base, Inter Milan's influence extends far beyond the confines of the pitch. The club's triumphs in prestigious competitions such as the UEFA Champions League and its commitment to social initiatives and community involvement exemplify the ethos of football as a unifying force and a platform for positive change. Furthermore, the club's role in shaping local and global football culture underscores its significance in the broader sporting landscape. As Inter Milan continues to write new chapters in its storied history, its impact on the world of football remains indelible and far-reaching.

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