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Social Media in Sports Industry- Impacts, Trends and Future: A Review

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ABSTRACT

With the increasing use of smartphones and easy access to internet services worldwide, social media is playing a crucial role in modern communication. Today, most of the global population is highly inclined towards social media platforms, making them a part of their day-to-day lives. It has become an exceedingly interactive tool that has resulted in effective communication and a platform where one can put forward their own opinion. Associating with various social media platforms, numerous organizations are branding their own houses seamlessly. In the world of sporting ventures, social media has become a pathway for global outreach. Various sports houses employ social media platforms to interact with their fans and embarking on their global presence. In this review paper, an in-depth study has been carried out to review the impact of social networking usage in the world of the sporting industry, along with its recent global trends and future aspects.

INTRODUCTION

Sport has become increasingly globalized in the current world. Sporting teams professionally have grown in popularity, attracting fans, supporters, and media attention from all around the world with diverse broadcast contracts that have given them greater worldwide recognition. The major reason for the sports industry's continued internationalization in recent years has been the substantial integration of new digital media technologies (Parganas *et al.*, 2017). Social platforms have developed into crucial elements of branding and advertising and can be timely and accurate platforms. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, in particular, are the most popular channels for brand recognition and following, and several fans have made it a tradition to follow professional sports teams' online broadcasts.

The rise in popularity of social media users has produced an atmosphere in which reporters frequently use private accounts to share data generated by their employers' companies. Despite the fact that journalists own this comparatively recent private space, the data they broadcast on these sites is subject to company regulations. In this context, it's critical to look at how correspondents as guardians act as online community account owners, building personal labels while simultaneously representing their news agencies (English & English, 2017).

Because of their sense of obligation and cultural consequences, social media has received much interest from academia and practice. Consumers can employ social media for a variety of reasons, including data gathering, policy-making, and the purchase, usage, and scrapping of goods and services. For Internet users, using social media is becoming extremely prevalent. Sport brands invest a large number of resources and time in engaging on social media due to its popularity. Professional clubs and brands devote significant resources to adopting social media methods in their branding plans. Such institutions confront problems in creating social-media rules that maximize the benefits of new technologies while minimizing the risks related to athlete and consumer use of social media. (Filo *et al.*, 2014)

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Background Study

Professional athletes represent their country and serve as role models for youngsters. Although many children have been involved in sports since childhood, the majority of the population still regards sports as a hobby or a kind of physical activity. Traditional advertising, such as TV ads, billboards, and newspaper ads, was the only way to market sports before digital marketing. It has altered the sports sector and assisted businesses in reaching out to a diverse and targeted audience. Fans' experiences have been transformed by watching sports information on social media and on any digital platform (Singh, 2022). With the help of social media, sports companies can now advertise themselves, their products, and their players much more easily. They develop handles for their organizations so that they may identify who consumes their information and prepare similar advertising trends for the target demographic. This database brings Sports Company marketing to a whole new level. AI systems, which connect with fans via Instagram, Skype, WhatsApp, and Facebook, are also an intriguing kind of marketing strategy.

A huge portion of the world's population uses social media. Facebook is the most well-known social media platform, with nearly 2500 million active users, ahead of YouTube with 2000 million users, Instagram with 1000 million users, and other platforms with comparable numbers. Owners of social networking sites succeed in engaging with supporters, which improves brand loyalty and attraction among prospects and followers. Additionally, a large number of athletes use social media to communicate with their followers and promote their brands.

Through interactive tools, social media has evolved and assisted sports companies in interacting with customers and maximizing profits. Social networking has taken on a separate role from traditional marketing tactics. People's engagement habits have changed due to this online social community. Social media has become so integral to any sports marketing strategy that it can no longer be ignored. Entrepreneurs can benefit from social media initiatives in terms of planning, strategizing, and executing.

Impact of Social Media in Sports

Instagram is being extensively used by top clubs in Poland to interact with their supporters and fans worldwide (Ochoa et al., 2017). In this work, three-fold research has been executed and in-depth data has been analysed. The data analysis was carried out in 2014, 2015, and 2016, respectively. Most of the information was gathered mainly from a literature review and extensive data gathering from webpages. In this work, in-depth research on Instagram was executed along with all its attributes. Spearman's rank-coefficient test and Wilcoxon signed-rank test were employed, and a mathematical model was created to govern the interdependence of different factors and differences among various factors, respectively.
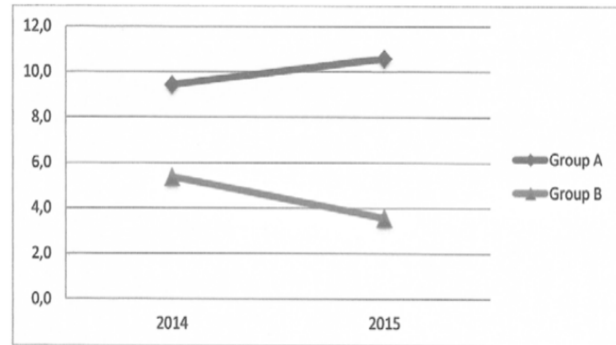
Figure 1: Average Likes in Instagram for two Club Groups from August 2014 to March 2015 [5].
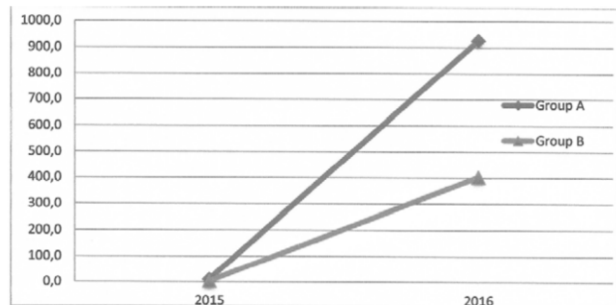
Figure 2: Average Likes in Instagram for two Club Groups from August 2015 to March 2016 [5].

In his research, Peter English has demonstrated that journalists who have used social media to represent their media organizations may confront a conflict between their personal contributions and their work roles. With the arrival of one more publication platform, the reporter's function as gatekeeper has altered more, with judgments to be made about branding options on traditional, online, and social platforms. The research compares gatekeeping impact at the personal and organizational zones among sports correspondents in Australia and India. It combines in-depth conversations with 22 journalists of sports backgrounds with an analysis of 2085 tweets from sports media, personalities, etc. The findings established multi-media gatekeeping as a factor for today's writers in sports reporting in both countries (English & English, 2017).

In a nation like India, non-cricketing sports are quickly growing. Various sports marketing houses are utilizing social media platforms to promote the sports leagues due to the availability of Web 2.0. More research is required, however, to have knowledge of how to use online communication platforms in sports branding. The Pro-Kabaddi League has become one of the most fruitful non-cricket sports leagues in India. The effect of communications on social media in promoting supporters' sports engagement, resulting in greater game viewership, is examined in this study. The study was performed using a definitive research methodology, with data collected from 444 respondents. A structural model was used to
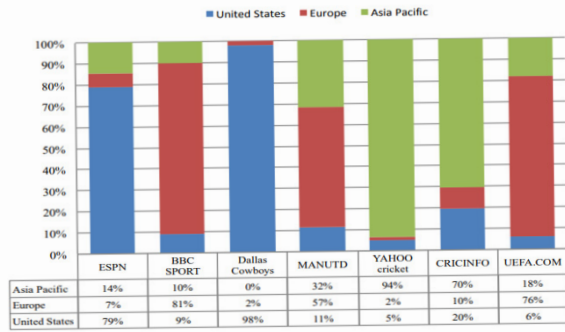
Figure 3: Exclusive spectators and visitors to sports websites and their division(Holland, 2015).
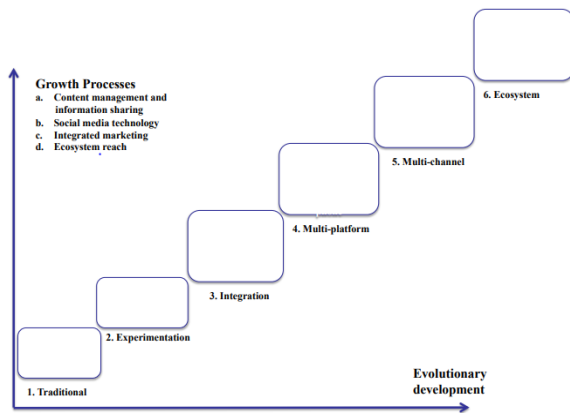

Figure 4: Growth model for Sports Marketing (Holland, 2015).

examine the hypotheses. The research found that online social platform communications have a greater impact on fan online community participation, which leads to increased viewership and sponsor-based product purchase intent (Trivedi *et al.*, 2020).

Sports marketing is shifting as a result of the Internet and social communication media. Historically, major sports clubs, leagues, and organizations relied heavily on television coverage for revenue. This will emerge as the Internet opens up new avenues for producing sporting tournaments and events. Social media is allowing fans, athletes, teams, and sponsors to connect in new and unexpected ways. Fans' intake of sports content in general, as well as at live events, is altering as a result of communication devices. Many strategic problems and opportunities arise as a result of these shifts.

The ecosystem of sports-based model, event branding, star campaigning, and worldwide variances in viewership for certain sports are among the theories and ideas presented in this case study. Sports branding information from various sources are used to demonstrate these ideas. A framework for developing a strategy for social media is presented, which can be used to assess a sports organization's current situation as well as to aid in the evolution of a social-media plan. A set of questions is presented to help outline the discussion of the tactics

and technological problems that a big sports team's commercial director faces (Holland, 2015) .

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In his study, Holly Thorpe demonstrated that participants in action sports have long been active consumers and producers of specialized cultural media. On the other hand, the procreation of new media advancements is gaining importance in the on-going development of expertise among athletes and in imparting a sense of association among audiences in international, national, and local contexts. Such communication is leading to new partnerships among companies, action athletic organizations, and communities rather than simply reproducing existing patterns. The article shows a research methodology for understanding action sports' new media directions in a better way. Researchers explain how athletes, individuals, and companies are using digital platforms to transform networking and relationships within action sports. This article provides a set of crucial challenges and questions for scholars passionate about contributing to new perceptions of the current technologies in the sector of action-sport cultures, in addition to revealing upcoming difficulties (Thorpe, 2016).

Philip C. Rothschild's research aimed to learn how sports and entertainment venue (SEV) managers manage, utilize and identify social media. While there is evidence that Top 500 firms have successfully used social media, little is known about how administrators of event venues administer and perceive social media. Researchers used tools to survey 383 professionals in venue management, all members of the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM). In the findings, many venue managers consider their social media efforts excellent and a tactic for social media (Rothschild, 2013).

Researchers analyzed to provide insight into the use of social media as an online marketing device by various associations of sports. The goal of the study is to figure out how the use of social media enhances viewer engagement and audience attraction. Website and social-media interactions of the football clubs in the 2014–15 European Champions Club were analyzed by two integrated approaches, including one novel scale. The scale consisted of six, seven-point items measuring a person's belief that a website allowed unrestricted information. The strength

Table 1: Statistics showing reliability in webpage interaction(Nisar et al., 2018)

Reliability statistics for website interactivity (Item-Total Statistics).

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
The Website facilitates two-way communication	28.500	43.391	.688	.883
The website facilitates concurrent communication	27.250	45.935	.775	.897
The Website gives me the opportunity to talk back	28.666	49.014	.478	.892
The Website enables conversation	27.291	45.868	.783	.885
The Website does not encourage visitors to talk back	27.125	73.940	−.298	.891
The site is effective in gathering visitors' feedback	28.250	43.674	.743	.898

Table 2: Table showing overall website interaction(Nisar et al., 2018)

Total website interactivity.

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
1	29.500	3.696	24	32
2	17.500	12.369	10	36
3	30.500	7.141	20	35
4	28.750	10.996	13	38
5	35.000	4.830	28	39
6	31.750	4.349	28	38
7	28.833	8.981	10	39
8	30.750	11.865	24	33
Total	29.500	10.576	14	38

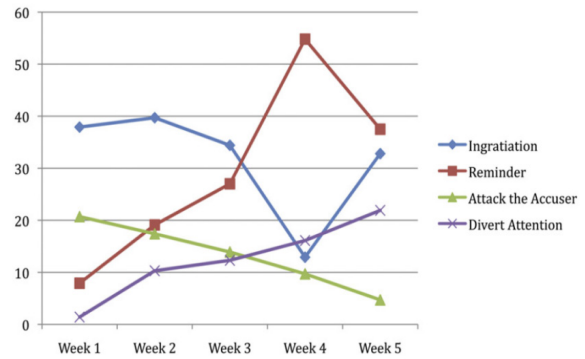**Table 5:** Table showing reputation control strategies(Brown & Billings, 2013)

Reputation repair strategies used.

	Frequency	Percentage
Ingratiation	147	34.6
Reminder	98	23.1
Attack the accuser	64	15.1
Divert attention	43	10.1
Denial	30	7.1
Justification	20	4.7
Scapegoat	12	2.8
Excuse	9	2.1
Apology	2	.5

Figure 5: Changes in strategy percentage over time (Brown & Billings, 2013).

According to the study's findings, the expansion of social media has significantly impacted how sports are presented and appreciated by viewers. In the current evaluation, researchers assessed the existing body of knowledge regarding social media in the sports authority sector from a service-dominating perspective, with a focus on relationship marketing. Researchers looked at articles on management in English-language sports journals that looked at new media technologies that allow for creating and distributing user-generated material. There was a need for conceptual, practical, and user-centered social media research. The findings of the paper suggest that social media perception research in sport management is consistent with service-based thinking and highlights the role of social media in developing affiliations within and between enterprises and entities. Interaction and engagement are required to cultivate these partnerships. Each topic is reviewed, as is the possibility for future research and recommendations for the best methodologies, context, and research design.

Sada Reed has a study in which he works. The rise of social media has provided new avenues for sports journalists to collect information. This practice raises ethical considerations in an industry that is already undergoing technological transition. Journalists from Minnesota were interviewed about their use of social media, the impact of Twitter and Facebook on their news clusters, the ethics of obtaining quotes from social media platforms, and how these platforms have blurred the traditional lines between personal and professional relationships in the lead study.

Researchers investigated what characteristics influence sport Twitter consumption (STC) when it comes to following sportsmen on Twitter in the study. Furthermore, the study attempted to build a realistic and valid technique for academics and practitioners to examine Twitter consumption-related motives and constraints. The suggested combination model included twelve items with four incentive measures (information, amusement, pass time, and fandom) and twelve with four constraint measures (accessibility, economics, skills, and social). The
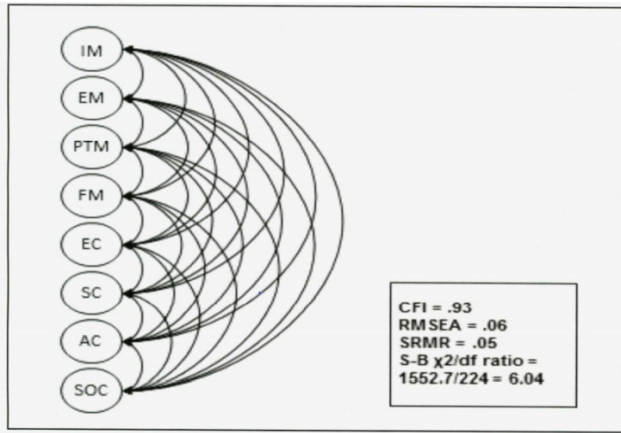
of the association between two variables was investigated using a correlation by Pearson of social platform pages, which was utilized to analyze spectator interactivity. It was discovered that increased client interaction via social media might be appealing and can improve spectatorship. The research also discovered that a football club's level of website interactivity is unrelated to their performance in the competition (Nisar *et al.*, 2018)

The researcher noted that previous research has looked at how businesses react publicly in times of crisis. The findings use a dilemma in sports, the NCAA's investigation into the University of Miami, as an example of how supporters might act as backup for organizational responses to crises using the social media platform Twitter. Scrutiny of 75 important identifiable Miami supporters with numerous Twitter followers using reputation repair strategies showed that fans' engagement in ingratiation, reminder, and redirect contemplation were key strategies to endure the affair (Brown & Billings, 2013).

The study discovered different ideas for reputation rehabilitation, with ramifications for businesses, sports research, crisis communication theory, and academic institutions (Brown & Billings, 2013).

Figure 6: Diagram showing all the variable in the study(Waldburger *et al.*, n.d.)

structural equation modeling (SEM) method was used to examine the conceptual framework and properties of the scale [14].

The respondents' motivations for STC were favorably and significantly associated with their Twitter use in terms of following athletes, whereas their restrictions were negatively and significantly related. The findings and their implications for future practical and theoretical sport marketing research are reviewed (Waldburger *et al.*, n.d.).

Conclusion

This study shows the correlation between the application of social media in the world of sports and its acceptance among the public. It has been noticed that various researchers have employed different strategies to carry out some in-depth research on establishing a link between the use of social networking platforms and the branding of the sports industry. As mentioned in the introduction, the use of these platforms is constantly growing among the masses, which the sports houses are exploiting in a very creative and innovative way to promote their content. Yet, there are certain challenges. To date, it has been observed that organizations are using these online platforms for some limited applications, like fan interaction and promotion of businesses. In the upcoming times, a road lies in front of these organizations to utilize and manipulate the technology in achieving all means of communication beyond promotional and interactional purposes.

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