

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN SPORTS AND USING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR SPORTS FAN ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Background: Social media is one of the most frequently utilized platforms to share all news and information nowadays. Therefore, it remains an effectual method towards approaching the target people by using social media so it is becoming most popular for supporting fan engagement and marketing through social media. Illustration content like videos is an effectual method for conveying messages and engaging with fans. Therefore the research is aimed at examining and finding the effectiveness of the using social media platforms for fan engagement.

Methods: The standard questionnaire was adapted from past researches and a cross-sectional survey method was conducted. The sample size was 384 out of these sample size, there were 225 males and 161 females. Data about this research was collected and then analyzed by using SPSS version 23.

Results: The research showed that the majority of the sample population prefers to watch a video. They present the explanations such as it presents an obvious message as well as eliminates all confusions. It remains time saving as well as attracting for the watchers. Majority of the responses agree that social media platforms enable a better communication and connection with the teams. Facebook and Instagram are the most used social media platforms.

Conclusion: From this current research we can conclude that social media marketing by using social media platforms (mostly Facebook and Instagram) can attract people toward more engagement with their sports team. One cause is that Facebook as well as Instagram are almost effortless to have access to and also very frequently utilized nowadays. Furthermore, social media platforms are easier to convey the ideas visibly eliminating the misunderstandings also the major cause is that it saves the time of people as well as it may efficiently convey the message than any other social media platforms. All of these showings can help sport managers to better understand the wants of the fans and there increase engagement through these platforms.

Key words: Social media; Sports; Fan engagement; Social media marketing; videos; cross-sectional survey; Facebook; Instagram

INTRODUCTION

The increasing of cell phone consumers as well as social media has transformed the manner we see at array stuffs in nowadays culture, containing our engagement in the sports. There are numerous diverse social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube as well as Twitter etc, individuals be able to use these social media platforms really easily in their everyday lives. Social media has turn out to be an essential platform for dealing out contents as well as magnetizing present day readers, also making extra involvement. The social media platforms have affected the sports from various diverse manners, like as communications as well as the sports marketing.

Social media remain transforming the way sports celebrities; fans as well as clubs are interacting among each other. Since live-tweeting sports, making snarky memes as well as cheerleading from the webosphere, viewers are no longer only watching the sport; also people could frequently get reports, insights as well as commentary directly from the main source (Hilton and Rague, 2015).

In the very last years there has been a most important change from usual media. The subsequent generation of the Internetbased apps or applications (i.e. "Web 2.0") and what Shih (2019) labels the fourth rebellion, into which consumers make as well as manage communication, grasps immense guarantee toward considerably increase marketing endeavors through viral marketing movements (Thackeray., et al, 2018). This tool gives chances for

connection making, not merely fellow to fellow but too among marketers as well as their users (Harridge and Quinton, 2019).

Social media remain one of the mainly significant platforms for sports, the followers as well as the team members. Initially of all, as we distinguish, the people of social media consumers have raised significantly more than the past years. Individuals are able to connect into the sports, chase their favorite teams as well as athletes, plus obtain the nearly all updated sports contents immediately. Subsequently, for sports businesses, the benefits of utilizing the social media are that it could assist sports businesses to construct connections among the public, to decrease their marketing prices as well as to raise sales etc. Businesses are able to use social media to support two-way discussions among the public also construct a society underneath their task. Third, social media has acquired attraction as an important platform for attaching among sports admirers. For person sports supporters, social media remain a very significant platform for them to interrelate as well as share news with other persons, to connect within two-way communication among sports businesses. Lastly, team members could advantage from utilizing social media to attach with their supporters, to construct an individual brand also to support them etc. Contrasted with the usual media, the social media these days charges less but influences more powerfully as well as more constantly. Only one post per day can create the sports person active in his/her followers' views, which would bring communicating financial advantages. Further, the sports person himself/herself might take pleasure in more even as sharing their sports related news, which would surely direct toward a sustainable progress (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007).

Social media remain still at its immaturity and would persist to rise; also the engagement of social media in sports remains one of the mainly considerable matters within the sports business. The sports athletes as well as fans, also sports businesses are griping social media as the mainly vital platforms to support, to interact as well as to communicate.

Social media is mainly frequently utilized platform to share news, updates and information these days. Therefore, it remains an effectual technique toward approach the target people. Much visual content such as telecasting and videos are an effectual approach for conveying messages. The aim of the study is evaluate how social media platforms can affect fan engagement. Thus, we will fill this gap in the literature review on how social media can affect fan engagement.

Aim of the study:

Evaluate how social media platforms can affect fan engagement

Objectives of the study:

1. Explain social media effectiveness.
2. Introduce social media marketing peculiarities in sport sector.
3. Research how social media platforms can people/fans to engage with sports teams.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media marketing peculiarities in sport sector

At the present time sports players as well as teams are normally using Social media as a channel toward interacting among fans (Pedersen, Quarterman, and Thibauh, 2018). There are diverse sorts of social media currently being utilized through sports clubs to promote their players. Facebook is a platform to share news, upload photos and videos, plus promote forthcoming events. Identifying particular desires for encouraging sports followers is a disputing mission, different investigations as well as researchers have studied the representatives to encourage the followers and currently, however, numerous efforts have been made to study the impact of social media marketing on responses of followers for sports. Investigators have formerly examined following aspects: performance, a fan's emotion of relationship toward a team or club which remain identified as "fellowship"; the ability toward interact with different followers also evading the sense of violate (Guttman, 2016).

Social media marketing remains of major significance for sports as well as games clubs and is of most importance for schools worrying their ventures for teams' member (Miloch, 2010). Currently a variety of sports allotments have performed social media marketing to increase the eagerness of supporters. For example, the sports allotment of Mississippi State University, they created a social media marketing aimed to increase the fan engagement which increased community awareness, throughout the year 2012, the Egg Bowl game, performed every year at Mississippi State University, moreover the squad got the top position through the hash tag #HailState. This occurred for the first time that a college or university arranged a social-media marketing idea for a real sport (Laird, 2011). Social media remain a significant platform as it could communicate regarding the opponents and partnerships of a players or a sports society utilizing diverse looms adding up visual contents in social-media (e.g. photos or videos). Therefore, the application of visual contents in social-media for instance, Instagram and Facebook offer the club as well as teams a medium for promoting team recognition using visual approaches. The employ of visual contents such as videos remain significant for supporting a sports team and team associations also consequently team rights (Oeldorf-Hirsch and Sundar, 2015).

In addition, the club as well as team managers must have to begin a well-described team picture that wraps different team associations as well as thoughts to develop team performance. It has been observed by utilizing social media team managers could increase connections also could communicate through shareholders (Watkins and Lewis, 2014). Although the increased reputation of this visual based conversation through social media has prompted the investigators for examining the impact of these platforms. On the other hand, examining sport or efficiency of visual content particularly videos for social media marketing remain the slightest examined part so far, apart from a little who examined the self-advertisement on the social media (Smith and Sanderson, 2014). Therefore, the current research is intended at assessing that how social media marketing using social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram can attract people toward watch more sports.

Many people feel like to watch their preferred sports on social media sites like Facebook, but based on previous occurrence, it might acquire some additional attempt to encourage promoters that social remain a feasible platform meant for live streaming.

Consider it or not, the majority people turn toward social media for everything from updates to the newest plays from last night's game. Making those accessible on social media lets your followers attach with the players as well as interact among each other. But it furthermore provides you data and information on top of your target market. You will observe what kinds of content they are fond of in actual time as well as could even observe what other teams and brands they follow online.

Sports bring individuals collectively also give everybody common ground. Sports social media pages remain no dissimilar. They provide their followers a place to interact among each other also rejoice their team's successes as well as look for console throughout beats. However that's not the entire. The social media pages also provide your team's member a way toward come together among the followers. Allowing a team member get over a social media account as element of their sports marketing strategy remains an immense manner to enthuse faithfulness with their fans.

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as latest marketing interaction platforms that could be used by sport organizations in the direction of grow connections with their followers as well as shareholders. Keller (2017) observed that the ever-raising amount of marketing also conversation techniques provides as an exclusive marketing confront to organizations, also Macnamara and Zerfass (2012) enlightened that as of the freshness of social media, it remain frequently utilized empirically through organizations that have no obvious evaluation or objectives criterion for it.

Other researches have also emphasized the significance of association constructing throughout the usage of social media. For instance, Garcia (2011) interrogated senior managers from the Real Madrid Football Club, and discovered that the organization relied seriously on top of follower comment when growing its online marketing interaction policies. The researcher wrapped up that Real Madrid constructed its powerful status fairly through promoting these positive associations among its followers or fan base, which facilitated the product or brand name remain powerful yet when the players did not achieve well.

An additional part of the social media marketing interactions that has been tackled through a few sport marketing as well as management researchers' support. Dees (2011) posted, "sports teams as well as subsidizes advantage from the social networking because it reinforces and strengthens follower connection as well as offers direct marketing occasions".

The participatory types of TV viewing remain not a completely new civilizing as well as scientific trend as Deery (2013) previously analyzed the condition of art in participatory inspecting on the Web. The present type of social examining, conversely, is exclusive. Users' interactions as well as conversation are taking place on the small cell phone applications. Their interaction is increasingly developing, as technology remain incessantly enlarging the capacity of user communication throughout backchannel conversation. For instance, present applications of TV programs permit users to directly send their feedback as well as comments to the program and also to interrelate with other audiences throughout the applications. In other terms, social TV consumers these days remain experiencing completely synchronous interactivity; also their social media relationship via backchannel conversation has turn out to be more common than practical.

Social media and fan engagement

The participation and engagement experience through social television is finest examined throughout the sports viewing as sporting occasions have a lot of drama as well as downtime, which inspires viewers of broadcasted sporting occasion to explore for additional information, share their emotions also to attach with other sports followers (Proulx and Shepatin, 2012).

The subsequent approach toward social television participation and engagement elucidates the poignant emotions a viewer or spectator has with the reporters also with other watchers or viewers on the social media rationalize. Whereas observing and watching and the mega sporting occasions, fans are often prejudiced to convey their own excitement as well as joy, or disappointment even frustration when viewing or watching the sport games (Johns, 2012). Logically, viewers or watcher of sporting games and events want to share their emotions with lots of other fans, which remain the

most essential feature of people' poignant engagement. People or viewers are also expressively connected when they experience animosity or amity toward other spectators' posts and views or else when they like or dislike the statements and comments from either the announcers or commentators (Hull and Lewis, 2014).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION

Research sample contingent

The sample size of this research was 384 for data collection, according to the Morgan table if the population is about 1 million then the sample size would be 384. The data was collected by both genders, which are male and female of the age of 15 to 50+.

Research Methods

The method of this research to collect data was first to adapt standard questionnaire from past researches. Developed Google forms and circulate among people with the help of known social media groups that are Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. It was the convenient sampling.

Statistical methods of data processing

The data was handled through descriptive analysis with the help of SPSS version 23. All components were tested from descriptive analysis. All results were analyzed through their frequencies and percentages.

Study Design

This study is quantitative in nature which was based on primary data. A well standard questionnaire was designed to gather the data.

Data Collection

The data was gathered from standard questionnaire and analyzed through SPSS V22.

Summary of Research Instrument

Well-structured questionnaires were taken from (Gadiraju, 2016) "Impact of Social Media in Sports Marketing", (Claybaugh, 2020) "The Use of Social Media to Advance Sports Marketing: The Atlantic Hockey Conference" and (Leonor Vale and Teresa Fernandes, 2018) "Social media and sports: driving fan engagement with football clubs on Face book

RESULTS

Table 1: Gender statistics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	25	7.7	8.3	8.3
	Female	61	11.3	11.7	20.0
	Total	86	19.0	20.0	
Missing	System	.	.0		
Total		90	100.0		

Table 2: Age statistics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15-20	6	6.9	7.1	7.1
	21-30	105	21.6	31.1	38.2
	31-40	66	19.5	29.7	67.9
	41-50	99	21.4	31.5	99.4
	50+	10	11.6	11.6	100.0
	Total	86	19.0	20.0	
Missing	System	.	.0		
Total		90	100.0		

The targeted respondents that were selected for this questionnaire is about 15 years and over. As observed in the table below, the greater parts of the selected samples are aged between 21 to 30 years and 31 to 40 years reporting for 52.6% and 19.5% correspondingly. As noticed in the table below, 16.9% of participants are aged between 15 to 20 years. Aged of 41 to 50 shows 7.4% and more than 50 aged respondents shows 2.6%.

Table 3: Account on social networks?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	65	3.6	5.3	5.3
	No	8	.6	.7	00.0
	Total	83	8.2	00.0	
Missing	System		.8		
Total		90	00.0		

As the result of the table below shows, we can evidently examine that 93.6% of the participants have an account on any of the social media platforms i.e. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat or Facebook. This remains a massive amount as well as it really explains the interest that people have in social media also it remains nearly impracticable to disregard its attractiveness.

Table 4: How many times a day do you look at social media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10+ times a day	12	4.4	4.5	4.5
	5-10 times a day	3	3.8	3.9	8.4
	1-5 times a day	5	4.1	4.1	12.5
	once a day	1	.4	.4	17.9
	not everyday	5	.1	.1	00.0
	Total	89	9.7	00.0	
Missing	System		.3		
Total		90	00.0		

Evaluating the table above as well as bar chart below, the greater part of respondents in the sample spend and look 10+ times a day at social media every day, showing 54.4% of the sample. Through the advancement of smart phones, people appear to look more time at the social media nowadays than ever before.

Table 5: How much time do you spend on social media per day?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 30 minutes	9	9.9	9.9	9.9
	30-60 minutes	11	12.2	12.3	22.3
	1 - 2 hours	11	12.2	12.3	34.6
	2-3 hours	11	12.2	12.3	46.9
	3+ hours	45	49.2	47.5	94.4
	Total	87	92	100.0	
Missing	System		3		
Total		90	100.0		

Examining the table above as well as bar chart below, the greater part of respondents in the sample spend 3+ hours on social media per day, showing 37.2% of the sample. Through the advancement of smart phones, people appear to spend extra time on the social media nowadays than ever before.

Table 6: Primary social media platform?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Facebook	10	11.1	11.5	11.5
	Instagram	40	44.4	46.6	58.1
	Twitter	15	16.7	17.3	75.4
	Snapchat	4	4.4	4.6	80.0
	Whatsapp	5	5.6	5.9	85.9
	YouTube	3	3.3	3.5	89.4
	Team website	3	3.3	3.5	92.9
	All of the above	5	5.6	5.9	98.8
	Total	86	90	100.0	
Missing	System		0		
Total		90	100.0		

Evaluating the table above also the bar chart below, it is clear that Instagram has continued to be the most primary social media platform to utilize by most of the people, 46.2% to be defined. Facebook shows 28.2% and Twitter with 15.1%. Whereas whatsapp shows 3.8%, snapchat with 3.6%, YouTube and Team websites shows 0.8% respectively.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	45	88.5	99.8	99.8
	No	1	1.0	0.2	100.0
	Total	46	89.5	100.0	
Missing	System	0	0.0		
Total		46	100.0		

Examining the table above as well as bar chart below, 88.5% of the sample respondents follows their favorite sports athletes on social media whereas only 1.0% selected not to. This remains nearly an equivalent divide among the two also it represents that not every person is involved and interested to follow games or sports athletes on the social media.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	42	87.7	99.3	99.3
	No	1	1.5	0.7	100.0
	Total	43	89.2	100.0	
Missing	System	0	0.0		
Total		43	100.0		

The respondents were asked either they can get increased as well as valuable information about games or players by sports videos uploaded on the social media i.e. Facebook and Instagram. The majority of the respondents (87.7%) responded 'Yes' whereas only 1.5% responded with 'No' which represents that by watching sports videos for social media marketing is a necessary aspect to attract the people towards more sports as well as games. Since when people have information regarding something they eventually find interested toward know more about that specific topic as in this occurrence the sports as well as games.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	35	85.9	96.1	96.1
	No	4	13.8	3.9	100.0
	Total	39	89.7	100.0	
Missing	System	0	0.0		
Total		39	100.0		

Examining the table above as well as bar chart below, 85.9% of the respondents is active on the social media platforms throughout the major live sporting occasions or events. In addition to, only 13.8% are not. Throughout live sports occasions or events, people are likely to demonstrate more involve or interest on conveying their views on the occasion with their family as well as friends. Sports confine the feeling of people also most interconnection on social media happens throughout live events of the sports.

Table 10: Are you more likely to check the team's website or social media for updates?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	social media	42	77.7	99.1	99.1
	team website	2	10.8	0.9	100.0
	Total	44	88.5	100.0	
Missing	system		11.5		
Total		44	100.0		

Above table and below figure shows that 87.7% people are likely to check social media platforms for updates. Only 10.8% people are using team's website to check updates.

DISCUSSION

The results of the research demonstrate that using social media for social media marketing is a vital aspect to engage with fans and also to attract more people towards games.

Everyone does not have plenty of information regarding everything, though by watching videos from social media they might increase at least a little of news and information which they would definitely share by which a network of message and communication might create directing toward attract more and more people towards games and sports (Thackeray et al., 2008).

Earlier, it was extremely daring for the sports society to proficiently interact among members. Through the progress of the social media, nowadays it is doable for the team managers for communicating as well as updating toward the athletes to give important information every day also to engage in a private as well as efficient communication.

Using social media natively assists the dealers to proficiently allow marketers to efficiently engage also attract fans to energetically share in concretion of the goods as well as facilities that therefore increases brand range (Miller & Lammas, 2010). Equally, these opportunities allow dealers to generate the emotion of fulfillment in fans such that they suppose themselves as a part of that particular finally maintains faith in their product and brand (Miller & Lammas, 2010).

This results demonstrates to us that a video based content on social media more than one sport and game may be more attractive than a video including only one sport and game as the previous might attract more people whereas the later would attract merely a small group. Additionally, it also explains that a video content being uploaded on social media soon after prior one is too vital to attract the viewers. It remains extremely significant to keep the fans updated. These outcomes are consistent with the past researches.

Sports fans dedication as well as commitment are significantly vigorous than the loyalty of fans of other parts (Waters, & Buning, 2010). Sports team followers and fans constantly as well as eagerly demand new, progressing as well as off-the-ground updates or news about their team they like. Through this opinion, social media remain becoming a most important platform to directly interact with the team supporters and fans to keep them informed and updated (Williams & Chinn, 2010). Social media remain an efficient and active platform to communicate also interact with plus permit the followers to convey their sloppy reactions (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). It develops the value of communication also makes it simple to contact the fan and team quickly (Thurau et al., 2010).

The research explained that the majority of the people prefer watching a video on social media than written text whether in print media just like newspaper and magazine or on the Facebook or Instagram. The mainly general cause provided by the respondents was that the social media whether Facebook or Instagram are simply reachable for them as contrasted to that of newspaper or magazines and the watching a video on social media is greatly more expedient than reading a story from magazine and newspaper. Furthermore, they declared that the video on social media creates the ideas obvious also eliminates the misunderstandings which remain generally connected with the written texts which completely devoid of expression as well as emotions. In addition, watching a video don't take a lot time also its interval is already concluded, hence it also saves the time. These results represent that social media is pretty effective as well as efficient than any other platform to attract more people towards the sports.

Our outcomes are in line among previous researches. For instance, one of the researches conducted previously recommended that the spectator's prefer strongly to watch a video on social media than a written text including exactly the similar updates and content. As video reaction helps the fans and viewers to grow a person association with the organization and brand also it assists to increase their interest for the games and sports the brand is intended to promote (Hilton & Rague, 2015).

The use of the social media based on video or visual contents like as photos as well as videos is raising swiftly on social media platforms (McNely, 2012). Among the raising illustration of these platforms is Instagram, an images and video uploading place that allows an individual to upload videos and images, also to converse as well as like videos and images of diverse people. Pew Research Center recognized that the Instagram consumption improved extraordinarily in from year 2015 among all main demographic communities (Duggan & Madden, 2015). About percentage of grown person internet consumers (18-29 years) are consuming Instagram (Duggan et al., 2015). Instagram remain one of the majority expansively used social media platforms among university researchers, frequently larger than those of Facebook as well as Twitter (Clavio& Walsh, 2013).

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

It is easy to see that social media marketing is a key and effective element for success in marketing and many marketers realize the potential for business growth using the platforms. This is no different in regards to sports teams as they see the same potential in the growth of their teams by using these social media platforms.

People and fans are paying out more time on the online stuff or internet nowadays. However, there is still a portion of fans who utilize the conventional methods like newspapers and magazines for updates and engagement with teams. Therefore, conventional methods should not be ignored but should be utilized extra prudently as there remains still a fan for it. The base line is that the social media marketing ought to be an effectual addition of the usual marketing for games and sports products or brands although not a substitute of it.

From this research we might end and conclude that using social media platforms is an effective way to build relationships with fans /customers that lead to greater satisfaction and loyalty over time. Social media platforms(especially Instagram and Facebook) especially through video content as seen from this research is a massive tool which can be used to facilitate engagement with fans. This therefore gives sport managers a sense of the kind of content to utilize of these platforms to effectively build fan engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The answers to the research and the analysis of the data gathered have directed to numerous suggestions as well as recommendations. Through the help of this research, the subsequent suggestions as well as recommendations could be prepared:

1. For advanced examination as well as exploration on this subject, the quantitative methods may be pertained at an extensive stage. Also, various statistical techniques could be applied to the outcomes of the adapted survey questionnaire as well as other variables can be incorporated.
2. Examine the particular impact of the social media marketing on monetary expands. Look into particular big businesses that are presently using social media towards supporting their businesses and also connection among their customers/fans.

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