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## Investigating the impact of social media on the development of sports businesses

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### Abstract

Sports organizations use social media to create opportunities to increase productivity, market share, market value and profitability. Mass media, especially cyberspace, play a major role in the field of social change in the present era. One of the best features of cyberspace marketing for today's businesses and job creation in the field of sports is that there is not much barrier to entering and using their facilities. Therefore, the present study focuses on the role of social media in the revenue development of sports businesses. The study population in this study is PhD students in sports management and sports media experts in Iran in this field. Samples were identified purposefully using random sampling. Data collection tools were interviews, and data analysis tools were customary content analysis and paradigmatic grounded theory. Based on the findings of interviews with participants, there are a number of factors in sports that act as requirements or barriers to the use of social media in the revenue development of the sports industry. Factors such as; Experiences in the field of using social media, scientific view on the use of social media, paying attention to the interests and standards of common professions in the world and activities in the virtual world and social media play an important role in generating revenue through the use of social media in industry. They have exercise. The results of the present study showed that the development of appropriate cultural programs can increase knowledge and awareness, improve the intellectual and cultural level of the audience. Also, based on the analysis of the results, marketing through social media has potentials that can enable economic development in the sports industry. Social media marketing through revenue generation and cost reduction can be an effective step towards improving financial problems and the sports industry.

**Keywords:** marketing, social media, sports management.

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## Introduction

The present age has been called the “age of communication”, that is, in this age due to the use of mass media, the extent, influence and effects of which are very large, mass communication has taken a new form and has overshadowed the developments of human society. Whereas the development of sport is a step towards the development of the country, and sport is considered by the people and the government because of its impact on individual and social life; On the other hand, trying to sell products in sports, which is the future of marketing is necessary and appropriate. Communication networks are important tools for the development, creation and prosperity of marketing to sports that are effective in achieving many of the goals of selling goods to sports (Serban, 2017).

Today, sport has gone beyond mere physical activity and has developed a lot in different countries and as an economic sector of different dimensions, has played a key role in the production and consumption of sports goods and services and economic development of different societies; To the extent that sport is considered an important trade and industry in most countries, and the authorities in developed countries consider sport as an important trade and industry along with other industries (Bahrami & Kiani, 2021).

In the last decade, there has been a lot of buzz on social media around the world. There are many elements in social networks that sometimes make it very difficult to understand the whole text (Mason, 2019) online marketing in a simple definition, it is to communicate with customers through online tools. In general, online marketing pursues the same goals as more traditional forms of marketing: increasing brand awareness, generating leads, and finding new customers (Kotler et al., 2014). The media in the new age is one of the inseparable factors of daily life. The press, radio, television, the Internet, and websites are among the media that are always used by people in the community and attract their own audiences in proportion to their efficiency (Shahbazi et al., 2019). With the advent of the Internet and online computer networks in today’s world, the organization’s website is the first point of contact between users and the organization and services. (Ameri et al., 2020).

In fact, the sports industry as an economic sector plays a key role in the production and consumption of sports goods and services and the economic development of various societies and is now one of the main factors influencing the growth of the national economy and one of the most lucrative industries in the 21st century (Niromand et al., 2020).

“Sports marketing is a social and managerial process that individuals and groups acquire through the creation and exchange of products

and value for each other.” Advertising, social media, digital operating systems, ticket sales and social relationships (Kotler et al., 2014). The main thing in online marketing is to use internet tools to introduce business and products to potential customers and persuade them to buy products. Sports marketing is divided into three parts: The first advertisement of sports advertisements and sports associations such as the Olympics, Spanish Football League and NFL, As well as sports teams such as Real Madrid and the New York Yankees. The second category is used by sporting events, sports teams and individual athletes to promote various products. The third category is the promotion of sports to the public to increase participation (Shaw, 2017). In the field of sports, sports marketing is about Fry Social and managerial networks that fans, sports organizations and other sports-related companies, for example media and technology companies, create and exchange products and services with each other, increasingly through digital media such as box setting Top, internet, mobile devices and social media, as well as live sporting events. The main sources of income from sports markets are ticket sales, sponsorship and broadcasting rights management. One of the distinctive features of the industry in the sports industry, according to the organization of sports markets, is a multilevel structure (Mason, 2019), and each level has a different role in the business and marketing of sports. Shaw (2017) views the sports industry as a network that typically focuses on a sports club or major league (Anttiroiko, 2010).

Customer ownership, increasing competition, rapid technological change, and globalization are new concepts that have greatly affected the world today and distinguished it from the old world in such a way that it can no longer compete or even live with old ideas in the new world. In such circumstances, the winning centers are that if they want to survive in today’s world, they must move towards customer orientation and customer satisfaction. Centers that ignore the needs of their customers and adopt a product-oriented approach will be eliminated from the competition. Therefore, customer service has been identified as the cornerstone of modern marketing management theories (Ghaffari & Darabi, 2017). In the last two decades, with the emergence of new technologies and everyone’s access to the communication network or the Internet, there have been changes in the capabilities of industrial units, production and distribution methods, and the industrial structure of the country; So that small, industrial and commercial units are known as a complementary and basic part of the economy of any country. These units play an effective role in many developing countries while achieving basic goals such as creating employment, eradicating poverty, improving

income distribution and estimating the basic needs of developing countries (Hosseinzadeh & Nosrati, 2018). Today, social media is an integral part of modern society, and social networking is a huge industry. Over time, the answers have become faster and in every place and time, the reactions have become very smooth. With just one click, a door opens to the possibilities, which creates a deep understanding of the questions. Social media marketing involves trying to use social media to convince a company's consumers to use valuable products or services. The main purpose of social media marketing is to create a business based on customer orientation and a company's reputation for business development and management. The main problem in social media marketing is the business perspective. Social media marketing is extremely time consuming. Competition in social media marketing is expanding and developing over time (Aghili & Qasemzadeh Iraqi, 2021). Terms such as "e-commerce", "e-banking" and "e-government" have been used for many years in many countries of the world and have high returns, and in addition to huge capital returns, they bring significant savings in various resources and capacities. It seems that the efforts of many governments to control the electronic world, the existence of traditional management in the political bureaucracy and the disregard of the masses for new ways of interacting with the government, are the most important reasons for not increasing macro-electronic activities (Gholamifar, 2016). In this regard, many people confuse Internet business (E-buSineSS) with e-commerce (E-coMMeRce) while the two topics are different. E-commerce means the production, marketing, sales and delivery of goods and services using electronic tools such as the Internet, mobile and other tools in this field. In e-commerce, money must be exchanged between the two parties to reach the concept of business, but in Internet business, there is no need to exchange money.

All over the world, economic exchanges based on cyberspace have a very fast trend and the possibility of using cyberspace and the Internet in the development of international exchanges and trade and the expansion of financial and economic activities, as well as the production of income and economic resources. The sports industry has grown steadily over the past decade. Billions of dollars are spent each year on promotions, sporting events, and sports-related equipment and clothing. Long-term customer relationships are the key to stability in highly dynamic markets. Today, the traditional marketing approach can no longer meet the needs of the Internet age, especially in the field of sports (Zakerian et al., 2017). Understanding the shopping style of sports products by online shoppers and virtual networks can enable

e-commerce companies to better understand the needs of consumers and help retailers to tailor and localize their marketing strategies. There is no doubt that the world today is intertwined with the Internet and the virtual world and companies they are doomed to accept this. Any business that realizes the need for this sooner and enters the field will be one step ahead of businesses that still think traditionally and resist this change. In addition, individuals in a society need to coordinate themselves with e-commerce, online and online shopping to do social, scientific, cultural, etc., and the ability of customers to use the website is a necessary condition for the survival of companies (Dehdashti & Mobrahan, 2017).

Alwan et al. (2017) in their research on the role of social media in marketing found that cyberspace helps social role, media advertising, viral advertising, word of mouth, customer relationship management, corporate brand improvement. Billings et al. (2017) in their study entitled Social Media and Sports Motivation of Sports Fans found that team fans communicate the most with sports teams through SnapChat software. Facebook and Twitter are next in line. Sports organizations use social media to create opportunities to increase productivity, market share, market value and profitability (Nikpol Motlagh et al., 2021). Making money from social media has recently become a vital issue in the survival of a business. The most commonly used way for businesses to make money is through online advertising. However, potential revenue streams have not been fully addressed. On the other hand, a good business model is recognized as an important success factor for a company. The core of the business model is revenue generation. Therefore, if social media sites find the right business model, monetization can be done better and the financial management process improved (Azadfada et al., 2020). Today new methods have been developed in sports revenue generation, which are related to mass media and cyberspace. Since the 1960s, economics and sports have interacted with each other through the expansion of the media, and the process of commercializing sports has taken on a new form. This interaction had reciprocal benefits for each institution of sport and economic (Islami & Ghaderi, 2021). Sport creates the necessary ground for the development of entrepreneurship by creating a demand for services and sports goods and creating attractiveness for communities, and entrepreneurship helps develop sports. In general, it can be said that today professional sports and advanced sports industry cannot survive without income generation, and one of the key strategies in generating income in the sports industry is the appropriate and optimal use of cyberspace and social media. Mass

communication media, especially cyberspace, play a major role in the field of social change and transformation in the present era, and these tools are the source of many contemporary developments, guiding and controlling the currents and developments in the world. One of the best features of cyberspace marketing for today's businesses and job creation in the field of sports is that there is not much barrier to entering and using their facilities.

### **Research purposes**

- Conditions for the development of sports business revenue in the context of social media
- To what extent does culture influence the development of income through social networks
- Interventional conditions for the development of sports businesses in the context of social media
- Consequences of revenue development of sports businesses in the context of social media
- Sports business revenue development strategies on social media

### **Research methodology**

This research is applied in terms of qualitative paradigm and according to the purpose. The study population in this study is PhD students in sports management and sports media experts in Iran in this field. Identification of samples was done purposefully using random sampling. Identification of samples was done purposefully using random sampling. Data collection tools were interviews, and data analysis tools were customary content analysis and paradigm model of grounded theory (Figure 1). Credibility and trust of the research was done using member control and triangulation techniques.

Due to the exploratory nature of the research, the qualitative research approach was selected as the appropriate approach and due to the need for deep knowledge of the subject, one of the strategies for conducting qualitative research, grounded theory study was considered as the research method. In a similar definition, (Chen et al., 2012) defined grounded theory in this way. Grounded theory is a general research method for producing theory. Theory refers to the theory derived from data that have been systematically collected and analyzed during the research process. In this strategy, data collection and analysis and theories that are ultimately deduced from the data are closely related. Instead of beginning his study with a preconceived theory, the researcher begins with a specific field of study, allowing the theory to

emerge from the heart of the data. A theory derived from data is more likely to represent reality than a theory that results from the sum of a series of concepts based on experience or mere reflection, and since underlying theories are inferred from data, they can provide insight. And deeper perceptions are reliable guidelines for action. Grounded theory in the simplest possible form is the process of constructing a codified theory through organized data collection and inductive data analysis to answer new questions of those qualitative studies that do not have sufficient theoretical foundations in the field of study. Are, can be used (Castells, 2007).

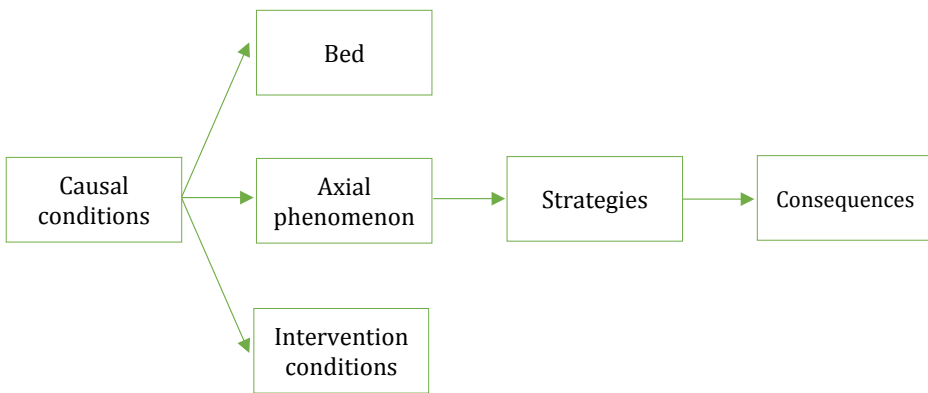


Figure 1. Paradigm model of grounded theory

### Research findings

According to the process of research and data analysis and the formation of a paradigm model, in the findings section, the components and elements of this model are examined, which is discussed below. Opportunity for perception and development of members through participation in the social network, amount Knowledge sharing activities in the organization, the existence of a culture of knowledge sharing in the network, the specificity of social network goals for participants, the high level of education of the organization's employees, the existence of social network organizational training, network data mining capability.

### *Axial phenomenon*

Axial phenomenon is the main conceptual label and is the basis of axial coding. Since in this study, the role of social media in the development of income in the sports industry has been studied, so social media is considered as a central phenomenon.



***Causal factors***

Findings from the study showed that several categories have led to the creation or development of the use of social media in the sports industry, including the following:

***Management factors***

Management is one of the factors that affects the role of social media in sports companies. In other words, managers' performance, managers' expertise and economic knowledge, managerial stability, managers' risk-taking, managers' political exploitation of sports brands, managers' and coaches' support for players' presence in cyberspace, and managers' familiarity with social media are among the management factors. Which are effective in the emergence of the central phenomenon of the use of social media in the economic development of the sports industry.

***Exercise position***

According to the participants in the study, another factor that affects the need to use social media is the characteristics of the sport. In fact, sport due to its characteristics such as; the marginalization, competitiveness of the sports industry, the attractiveness and the large number of audiences reveal the need to use social media in economic development.

***Professional factors***

Based on the findings of interviews with participants, there are a number of factors in sports that act as requirements or barriers to the use of social media in the revenue development of the sports industry. Factors such as; Experiences in the field of using social media, scientific view on the use of social media, paying attention to the interests and standards of common professions in the world and working in the virtual world and social media play an important role in generating revenue through the use of media. They have a social presence in the sports industry.

***Social media related factors***

Social media with its special features affects the economic development of the sports industry. Features such as; the newness of making money through social media, the possibility of abusing virtual media, The attractiveness of the social media space, the opportunities and threats facing social media and easy access to social media are among these factors.

### ***Underlying factors***

The contextual conditions that were identified in this study as influential contexts on the income development of the sports industry through the use of social media included several categories, which are:

#### ***Information and Communication Technology***

Economic development in the sports industry takes place in the context of technological and technological advances. Factors Such as; Existence of appropriate Internet infrastructure, emergence of new media, multiplicity of media, globalization of social media use, high change in social media and the upward trend of customer presence on social media are among these factors.

#### ***Socio-cultural factors***

Socio-cultural factors are among the factors influencing the economic development of the sports industry through the use of social media. These factors create conditions that require their own actions and strategies to improve, and outside of that, any strategy may have undesirable consequences. These factors include: the culture of sports users, the dominance of community culture over communication and media knowledge of sports audiences.

#### ***Economic factors***

Based on the findings of the research, there is a set of economic factors that can pave the way for the use of social media in the economic development of the sports industry. These factors include; the structure of the state economy, the sports budget in the province and the financial problems of sports companies are among these factors.

#### ***Interfering factors***

##### ***Legal factors***

Based on the findings of interviews with research participants, there are a number of legal factors that underlie the negative effects on the process of using social media. These factors include; Enforcement of rules on social media, use of non-digital rules for digital space, multiplicity of decision-making centers in the field of social media, performance of media regulators, monopoly of radio and television, transparent rules in the field of social media, rules to support the company brand and customers in social media and social media filtering.

### ***Government policy***

Based on the findings of the study, the political views of governments affect the economic development of the sports sector. Government policies create conditions that can limit the activities of the sports industry in the field of social media space. These views include the government's concern about leading political movements, the immorality of social media content due to ideological issues, and political interference in sports.

### ***Strategies***

Achieving the desired status of social media in the economic development of the sports sector requires the use of strategies and measures that are technological and technological strategies (providing basic infrastructure, software and hardware for companies to use cyberspace and the development of e-government); Socio-cultural strategies (increasing media knowledge and creating a culture of using social media); Legal strategies (formulating explicit and transparent rules on the use of social media and familiarizing sports departments with social media rules); Economic strategies (utilizing the sports industry from different methods of income generation and investment in various fields); Marketing strategies (market segmentation, operational planning tailored to the target market, use of all social media capabilities in marketing, use of digital marketing firms and design of advertising campaigns by companies); Strategies related to social media (the need to use social media in sports, taking advantage of successful world experiences in the sports industry, gaining customers' trust through content, developing educational programs on social media, providing a variety of services, advertising and advertising from Through social media, efficient use of social media) is one of these strategies and actions.

### ***Discussion and conclusion***

Sport as one of the social phenomena in recent years is one of the most fascinating topics in the world. This phenomenon has played an important role in the lives of many people in the world in various social, economic and political dimensions and is one of the important human activities that almost no human society can be found in which there is no sport (Mahmoudian et al., 2021). The Web is defined as a traditional, simple content based on an Internet streaming model that has little or no interaction with fans or user-generated content. Social media technology is an organization. Start with a social media strategy, perhaps for a specific event, or start using well-known social media platforms.

This involves the development of some expertise in the technical aspects of the web as well as typically affecting information management and communication strategy. Social media and internal systems using social media and communities that focus on the club or federation website (Bahrami et al., 2021). This indicates a relatively high complexity in terms of technical strategy, as well as beginning to move towards a more advanced approach to information and communication management. For example, selected content that was previously inaccessible to fans may be available on social media platforms. New marketing plans also include media content and social initiatives. To achieve the ecosystem, the extent and depth of communication between the focal point and the sports marketing ecosystem begins to focus and achieve a shared user experience across different operating systems, including smart TV (King & Marks, 2008). Personal computers and mobile devices such as tablets and phones. This step represents an increase in the technical complexity that new marketing opportunities create for integrated communications to promote and broadcast sports programs. The result is the development of a multifocal marketing strategy that uses both individual channels for specific purposes. It also uses channels to collaborate with integrated campaigns and broadcasts (Hsu et al., 2007). The most important channels in the sports market are the Internet and social media and television, but other channels such as email, press and outdoor advertising still play an important role in promoting events. Therefore, the ability to coordinate and track marketing activities across multiple channels is important. This stage represents a high degree of complexity in both technology and marketing integration. Also, sports ecosystems mean the development of social media solutions in sports. It goes beyond a single organizational perspective to apply a network perspective that uses the collaboration of multiple partners based on collaboration and trust. In other industries, supply chain or network vision has become a strategically important concept based on the interdependence between individual organizations involved in the design, production, distribution and retail of a product or service.

Introduction Today, the existence of a competitive market and diverse products has caused a fundamental change in the business world. In the past, businesses were run more traditionally and no new concepts of marketing and advertising were observed, but in the present era, new concepts have emerged in this area and consider the customer as the center of business activities and It is of great value to him. Businesses have realized that if they continue their old-fashioned tradition and are indifferent to customer issues, they will soon falter and be eliminated from

the competition. Will give new and capable actors in the field of business. One of the most important and vital concepts that has been seriously considered by marketing science and marketers today is the concept of customer experience. An empirical perspective on marketing has been introduced by Holbrooke and Hirschman's studies, which acknowledge that the behavior of people in general and consumers in particular is an attractive and endlessly complex result of a multiple interaction between the organism and the environment (Pourhossein et al., 2020).

The results of the present study showed that the culture of sports users is one of the factors affecting the use of social media in the sports sector. The rapidly evolving ICT is not culture independent. Therefore, the socio-cultural characteristics of the society can influence marketing techniques in the media space. Today, inappropriate culture is more prevalent in cyberspace. Cases such as insults, extreme suspicions, interference in matters other than sports, etc. are clear examples of the low culture of sports users in cyberspace. This may be due to the non-native nature of most social media because unfortunately, like other new technologies, the culture of using it has not been described to many people in the community, especially the sports community. The sports industry, with its features such as marginalization, competitiveness, attractiveness and a large number of audiences, has established its presence in various media, including new media. But the analysis of the view of the research participants showed that some features of social media, such as the possibility of cyberspace abuse and the difficulty of full control and control of content, have provided conditions for sports businesses to take advantage of opportunities in these media, government policies are one of the effective factors in the role of social media in the economic development of the sports industry. Political interference, the monopoly of radio and television, the failure to enact laws to protect broadcasting rights, are legal loopholes in sports that limit the sports industry's revenue streams and make them more dependent on the government. Research participants believe that improving the current state of media space marketing and achieving the desired situation cannot be done without government action in the field of legislation and information technology. Therefore, providing infrastructure, explaining comprehensive media laws and improving the enforcement of these laws have been reported as the main actions of the government in this regard. In addition to the above, measures should also be taken for cultural and social development. Therefore, the need to train and promote media knowledge in the use of new media is vital. Gholamifar (2016) states that the efforts of many governments

to control the e-world, the existence of traditional management in the political bureaucracy and the disregard of the masses for new ways of interacting with the government, are the main reasons for not increasing macro-e-activities.

Today, social media is considered as one of the necessities and an integral part of human life. This phenomenon, like any other social matter, can have its own positive and negative effects. The results of the present study showed that the development of appropriate cultural programs can increase knowledge and awareness, improve the intellectual and cultural level of the audience. Also, based on the analysis of the results, marketing through social media has potentials that can enable economic development in the sports industry. Social media marketing through revenue generation and cost reduction can be an effective step towards improving financial problems and the sports industry.

Overall, solving the problems associated with social media marketing in the sports industry requires lengthy and tedious decision-making processes. In addition, the complexity of government, sociological and management issues have made it difficult for sport and marketing to keep pace with global professional trends. Meanwhile, due to the excessive dependence of sports activities on the government and the existence of legal problems in the field of sports and media, solving the problem of economic development of the sports industry through the media also requires cooperation between the government, media and sports industry.

Given the research findings on the existence of governmental and legal barriers to economic development through social media, it is recommended that basic measures should be taken to remove these restrictions by the responsible institutions.

Considering the research findings on the importance of educating the audience, it is recommended that while continuing education in the field of culture and promoting media literacy of sports users, by using the common cultural contexts of sports customers such as language, geography, customs, Efforts to produce attractive and favorite content for the audience.

### **Ethical considerations**

The authors have completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc.

### **Conflicts of interests**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

## Data availability

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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