



## The Impact of Social Media (SM) on Sport Marketing Strategy Development: A Case Study of Football Teams in Iraq

Ali Ismael Obaid<sup>1</sup>, Kishore Kumar C K<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Research Scholar Mangalor University, India

<sup>2</sup>Register of Mangalor University Research Guide, India

Corresponding Author: Ali Ismael Obaid

Email: [ali-ismael@esraa.edu.iq](mailto:ali-ismael@esraa.edu.iq)



### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 11 July 2022

Received in revised form 7

August 2022

Accepted 10 August 2022

#### Keywords:

Social-Media

Sport Marketing Strategy

Football & Iraq

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to look into the impact of SM on the development of sport marketing strategies by football teams in Iraq. This study employed a quantitative approach, with data collected by a questionnaire. Questionnaire was sent to 200 people, and they were all contacted for responses. The findings of this study show that approximately 97.5% of respondents using SM, especially Facebook (32.5%) as the favorite over traditional media. Most of the SM users are of below 30 years of age (youngsters) and likely to spend roughly spending 2-5 hours on SM every day and remain active in posting messages to each other, pay attention to the advertisement of sports products and like to watch them too. Thus, developing SM tools is critical for football teams to succeed in their sports marketing strategy (MS) and build professional relationships with their fans. The football team must use SM as a powerful tool for developing its sports MS and capturing fans as an essential product. They should be able to use a variety of SM platforms.

## Introduction

In today's competitive environment, to meet their customer need, every company focus on the development of their marketing strategies to do their business more effectively (Thompson & Martin, 2010). The best MS is either to provide best service or item in their business or provide similar benefits but at low cost what their competitors give to customers (Schwarz & Hunter, 2017). If marketers or marketing professionals of every field understood these concepts then they could adopt a more capable and resourceful MS (Schwarz & Hunter, 2017). Thus, it is critical to comprehend the significance of a MS because it encourages businesses to ask critical questions about how they want to achieve their marketing goals and how they intend to do so. Furthermore, the way of developing MS has a critical role to play in promoting key concerns and assisting businesses and events in focusing on their problems (Crowther, 2010; Jackson, 2013).

Nowadays, digital marketing is undergoing a transformation, particularly in terms of selling and advertising a product or service (Jackson & Ahuja, 2016). Furthermore, the arrival of cutting-edge communication technology has created a slew of new opportunities and challenges for traditional media too (Horst & Miller, 2020). In reality, the growth of online media or networking, as well as the web, has put traditional media, notably the printed newspaper, to the test (Kalombe & Phiri, 2019). Furthermore, SM has had an impact on traditional platforms (newspapers, television, news Web sites, and radio) because SM websites provide better communication and connection opportunities, allowing for immediate engagement with the target audience (Tuten, 2008).

A significant distinction between the traditional media and the SM is the ability to change a one-way conversation into a multi-way dialogue that can be established only through SM (Tuten, 2008). As the internet becomes more important, the balance shifts away from traditional media and toward a variety of online communication channels like SM (Tuten, 2008). This change in marketing communications for industrial as well as service sectors has a significant impact on sports marketing due to which all marketing-related activities that occur in the sports organisation or administration of professional sport clubs are referred to as sports marketing (Irwin et al., 2008). Sport marketing includes all interactions with fans and also other shareholders who serve as customers, and it focuses both on the promotion of sporting events as well as teams as well as the advertising of a variety of other products and services through sporting events and teams (Irwin et al., 2008).

The internet is now so crucial for supporters or fans and even individuals who wish to seek something (Holland, 2015). Many organisations who want to use the greatest strategy in their business are turning to social networks (Qualman, 2012). Users of the SM platform have access to a variety of open areas and tools for discussion and engagement (Mount & Martinez, 2014). When supporters are attempting to connect with their favorite clubs via SM (Jarvie, 2013), the many uses of sport marketing are quite beneficial in MS approach of sports teams. Facebook, in particular, is the preferred SM to mobilise as well as occupy with a large fan-base (Tang & Cooper, 2018). The introduction of SM tools has generated a new dynamic in sports marketing, and SM has given football teams a leadership role in engaging supporters, particularly through the Facebook tool.

In recent years, Iraq has contributed to the growth of technology in a number of different ways. The sports industry in Iraq, as well as the population of Iraq, is rapidly adopting new forms of sports marketing, such as social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, amongst others. Social media is used by a significant number of young people in Iraq as a means of establishing connections with the media, firms, managers, and enterprises (Aljuboori et al., 2020). The vast majority of Iraqis participate in social media, using websites and apps like as Facebook, Yahoo, YouTube, Google, and others (Kemp, 2021). However, it is essential to place a strong emphasis on the efficient use of social media as a strategy for promoting football teams in Iraq. This information might be helpful to football clubs in understanding how to increase their relationships with fans by adopting a well-thought-out MS. The purpose of this study was to discover whether or not social media is effective in the marketing efforts that football clubs make, notably in Iraq.

## Methods

During the course of this inquiry, a quantitative approach was used. The purpose of using a quantitative approach is to achieve the collection of numerical data from participants on the basis of the alternatives they have been given. The method of quantitative research is helpful in gaining a knowledge of the ways in which football sports club teams and players in Iraq make use of social media platforms to enhance the quality of their connections with fans, ultimately leading to an improved MS.

The purpose of this survey, which consists of both open-ended and closed-ended questions, is to learn about the participants' opinions about the effectiveness of sports marketing in assisting football teams in Iraq in the development of marketing strategy. The questionnaire was sent to approximately 200 individuals, and each of those individuals was contacted individually to get their responses. Table 1 includes the respondent's occupation as well as the number of times they participated. When surveys were received from respondents, they were analyzed

statistically, summed up, and the respondents' total replies were shown in a graph, list, ratio, and percentage.

Table 1. Represent the frequency distribution of the respondents according to profession

<b>Profession of respondents</b>	<b>Respondent Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Coach	20	10.0
Other	15	7.5
Player	60	30.0
SM Journalist	30	15.0
Sports Commission Member	22	11.0
Sports Industry Worker	53	26.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents, 195 out of 200, consider social media to be their preferred form of media above conventional media. This provides evidence that social media has a greater effect on the daily lives of Iraqi citizens than do conventional forms of media. The vast majority of respondents like using Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp; yet, the majority of respondents (about 32.5%) select Facebook as their preferred social networking platform (Table 3).

The majority of social media users are under the age of 30 (Table 5), which suggests that most young people spend the majority of their time using social media, and the majority of them prefer to use Facebook. Approximately 41 percent of respondents have only been using social media for the past two to five years (Table 4). Aside from this, respondents are likely to spend anywhere between two and five hours per day on social media, continue to be active in writing messages to one another, pay attention to advertisements for sporting goods, and enjoy to watch them as well (Table 6).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of the Favorite Media

<b>Favorite media</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Social	195
Traditional	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>

Table 3. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of the Favourite Social Network

<b>Favorite Social Network</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Facebook	65	32.5
YouTube	50	25.0
Instagram	49	24.5
WhatsApp	31	15.5
Others	5	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Using SM

<b>How long have you been using SM?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
2-5 Years	82	41.0
3 to 5 years	3	1.5
6 to 10 Years	59	29.5
7 to 10 Years	1	.5

Less than or equal to 1 year	55	27.5
Total	200	100

Table 5. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Respondents According to Age

Age of Respondent	Frequency	Percent
30-40	29	14.5
40-50	71	35.5
50-60	10	5.0
Below 30	90	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6. Frequency of Response Receive from Respondent for Different Questions from Respondent

No.	Question	Response "Yes"	Response "No"
1	Are you roughly spending 2-5 hrs. on SM everyday	151	49
2	Are you active on posting message	200	0
3	Do you pay attention to the ads of sports products	200	0
4	Do you watch the ads on SM	124	76
5	Do you feel that SM helps you to get more information than traditional media	200	0
6	Do you feel more connected to the brand sponsoring football teams/players	200	0
7	Do inspiring SM campaigns of sponsoring football teams/players	200	0

The vast majority of respondents believe that social media makes it easier for them to get more information than conventional media does, and that it also makes them feel more connected to the company that sponsors football teams or players. The fact that almost all of the 200 respondents were motivated to run SM campaigns by the idea of sponsoring football teams or players provides some indication of the amount of influence that SM had on the responder.

## Conclusion

The findings revealed that SM is a powerful marketing channel because it reveals a number of key features, such as empowering internet users to organise and specify all types of information, and it is a powerful opportunity for football teams to develop their MS, as evidenced by the relevant literature. Many marketers include SM in their MS since it is acknowledged as an important aspect of interactive marketing communications. According to the findings, football teams in Iraq use SM as a powerful avenue for building sports marketing strategies and campaigns. This study discovered the impact of SM tools, particularly Facebook, on the football team in Iraq's sports MS to thrive in order to boost their relationships with their associates or fans, and that football teams should strengthen their SM networks in a professional manner.

## References

- Aljuboori, A. F., Fashakh, A. M., & Bayat, O. (2020). The impacts of social media on University students in Iraq. *Egyptian Informatics Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eij.2019.12.003>

- Crowther, P. (2010). Marketing space: a conceptual framework for marketing events. *The Marketing Review*, 10(4), 369–383. <https://doi.org/10.1362/146934710x541339>
- Holland, C. (2015). *Internet and Social Media Strategy in Sports Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.18151/7217357>
- Horst, H. A., & Miller, D. (2020). *Digital Anthropology* (Heather A. Horst & D. Miller, Eds.). Retrieved from <https://books.google.at/books?id=-zLpDwAAQBAJ>
- Irwin, R., Sutton, W., & McCarthy, L. M. (2008). *Sport Promotion and Sales Management* (2nd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Jackson, G., & Ahuja, V. (2016). Dawn of the digital age and the evolution of the marketing mix. *Journal of Direct Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 17(3), 170–186. <https://doi.org/10.1057/dddmp.2016.3>
- Jackson, N. (2013). *Promoting and marketing events: Theory and practice*. London, England: Routledge.
- Jarvie, G. (2013). *Sport, Culture and Society: An Introduction, second edition* (2nd ed.). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203883808>
- Kalombe, C., & Phiri, J. (2019). Impact of online media on print media in developing countries. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 07(04), 1983–1998. doi:10.4236/ojbm.2019.74136
- Kemp, S. (2021, February 11). Digital in Iraq: All the statistics you need in 2021 — DataReportal – global digital insights. Retrieved April 11, 2022, from DataReportal – Global Digital Insights website: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-iraq>
- Mount, M., & Martinez, M. G. (2014). Social media: A tool for open innovation. *California Management Review*, 56(4), 124–143. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2014.56.4.124>
- Qualman, E. (2012). *Socialnomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business* (2nd ed.). Nashville, TN: John Wiley & Sons.
- Schwarz, E. C., & Hunter, J. D. (2017). *Advanced theory and practice in sport marketing* (3rd ed.). Third Edition. | New York : Routledge, 2018.: Routledge.
- Tang, T., & Cooper, R. (2018). The most social games: Predictors of social media uses during the 2016 Rio Olympics. *Communication & Sport*, 6(3), 308–330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479516688438>
- Thompson, J. L., & Martin, F. (2010). *Strategic management : awareness & change*. Andover, England: South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Tuten, T. L. (2008). *Advertising 2.0: Social Media Marketing in a Web 2.0 World*. Retrieved from <https://books.google.at/books?id=F7BzCgAAQBAJ>