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Utilization of Social Media Platforms on the Organization of Sports

Authors' contribution:
A. Conception and design of the study
B. Acquisition of data
C. Analysis and interpretation of data
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Abstract. This study investigated utilization of social media platform on organization of sports in North-central zone, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of survey type was used for this study. The population for this study comprises of officials of sports council in the study area. Purposive, stratified and random sampling technique were used to select 806 respondents. Researcher structured questionnaire was used for the study. The instrument was validated by lecturers in the Department of Human Kinetics Education. The reliability level of the instrument was established through test re-test method using Pearson Product Moment Correlation PPMC with 0.86r result. The administration of instrument was done by the researcher and three trained research assistants. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the hypotheses formulated for the study at 0.05 alpha level. The result revealed that digital media are effective to organization of sports, uses of blog and microblogs play a vital role in the organization of sports. The study recommends that the management staff, coaches, association secretaries and clerks of the state sports council in the North Central zone should be encouraged to acquire skills in the use of mobile application tools for their administrative operations.

Keywords: utilization; social media platform; organization; blogs; microblogs

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are concerned with making a profit for those in the public sector. Nevertheless, every sports organization must have a boundary that helps distinguish members from non-members, but also must have a various communication method to disseminate their messages these boundaries are not fixed and may change over time (Akintunde, 2001). According to Micheal (2007), the goals of the company are to produce athletic footwear and to sell it at a profit. As Nike has grown and more people have been hired, activity systems have consciously structured to effectively and efficiently achieve the goals of the organization. The people hired identified themselves as employees and managers of Nike, which creates for them an identifiable boundary to differentiate their company from its competitors in the athletic footwear industry.

Sport is a multibillion dollar industry and several countries around the world are devising means to utilize this powerful tool for economic prosperity. It has been documented in different literatures the potency of sports in social cohesion, political re-engineering, economic development and at recreational level, the health outcome of participation among other benefits inherent in sports. Given the benefits associated with sports participation, organizing/organization of sports should be given adequate planning, to ensure the purpose for which sporting event is realized. Part of the key components of sport organization is information and communication channels. The present era is witnessing a rapid advances in information and communication technology as there are so many platforms available for utilization to disseminate information and also communicate with stakeholders of the sporting event. Among those platforms are; Digital media and Micro blogs.

Thibault, and Babiak, (2005) viewed the structural characteristics of sport organization and considered various kinds of organizations among those existing in the world of sport; but stressed most of them can be classified as dedicated to the promotion and development of sport, e.g., federation, national associations, leagues, clubs or local department of sporting bodies. All these sport organization are associated to sport activity and, though different in their goals and means, they all respond to the superior mission of promoting and developing sport in the society. Caya and Bourdon (2016) asserted that the sports industry is also going through the waves of digitalization. Recent advances in digital technologies have prompted massive change to the sports industry, one which has traditionally been labelled as conservative (Deuze, 2006).

The onset of social media can be traced back to the telephone, which allowed people to connect on a one-to-one basis. Following the telephone, broadcast media allowed media companies to connect with groups on a one-to-many basis by broadcasting or pushing content. Consequently, the Internet started a new form of media that empowered people to produce and consume media on a many-to-many basis. Although the Internet was started by Tim Burner Lee in 1989, the use of Internet technology for a form of popular media coined social media did not really take off until the creation of social networking sites MySpacein 2003 and Facebook in 2004.As the term social media is heavily associated with platforms like MySpace, Facebook, and YouTube, some may consider it to be tantamount to the term social network sites.

Sport development through the use of social media is defined as the process whereby the use of electronic media as a system or structure to enable and encourage provision of sports facilities, personnel development funding of sports, sports awareness, participation and sports sponsorship in a particular group or area to improve their performance, the role of social media is significant in achieving the objectives of sports development in Nigeria (Sports Development Policy, 2009). This new medium called social media has proved to be a game-changer in the way that people communicate with other people. It has given organisations

some unique opportunities to enhance and extend positive customer engagement (Manish, 2012).

According to Zarrella (2010), social media is best defined in the context of the previous industrial media paradigm. Traditional media, such as television, newspapers, radio, and magazines, are one-way static broadcast technologies and the use of social media has changed the narrative of traditional media. Coyle and Vaughn (2008), pointed out that the increased in use of digital media is changing people's everyday lives and the way they connect and collaborate in the broader societal context, at work and in civil society. A significant part of the effect of this increased use is helpful to both people and society. The creators further expressed that empowering exceptional dimensions of correspondence, social communication and network working crosswise over limits of time, spot and social setting. It is empowering people and accelerating the democratization of information. Accordingly, the effects of expanded utilization of advanced media are sure (Golder, Wilkinson &Huberman, 2007).

Similarly, digital media facilitates social interaction and empowers people in the organization and administration of sports. Sarita (2016) affirmed that digital media connects players, coaches and fans in ways that never possible before which enable users to maintain friendships across time and distance. It empowers the individuals who are socially disconnected or by one way or another set apart from their quick physical network to associate with similarly invested or like-arranged individuals. Advanced media additionally encourages association crosswise over social, monetary, social, political, religious and ideological limits, taking into consideration improved comprehension among individuals, sports partners comprehensive (Sarita 2016). Many sports stakeholders (such as coaches, association secretaries, clerks, directors, players and sports fans) access social media platforms to express empathy and receive support from sports fans and family, including in times of emotional distress. This enriches people's relationships and their ability to stay in touch.

Digital media served as a vehicle to mobilize resources, organize programmes and draw sports stakeholders' attention to the events (Barker, 2008). The author further stressed that digital media has also enhanced information sharing across the sports organization, giving sports stakeholders much greater access to facts, figures and statistics about the upcoming or present event and allowing such information to circulate much faster. This not only enables people to respond in real time as events unfold but also helps to expose political corruption and unfair sports practices in any sports organizations (Barker, 2008).

Nevertheless, study of Paul (2018) affirmed that digital media and other online communication are associated with developing addictive behaviour especially if it is not managed properly that sometimes result to decline in employee productivity. It also poses privacy issues and poses security risks such as identity fraud during the accreditation of teams and players. In his own view, Jordan (2018) concluded that digital media and other online communication may result in secondary data collection (i.e. indirect derivation of data from existing sources). It may lead to social networking spam (i.e. propagation of unsolicited messages). Digital media and other online communication hold the risk of corporate espionage/spying (i.e. organizations' information can expose their intellectual property and other proprietary information to the outside world or to people within the organization) with the negative result which is detrimental to sports organizations (Sarita, 2016).

Mark (2017) affirmed that of all the web contents that sports organization produce, blogs are probably the most under-utilized or improperly utilized. That does not have to be the case, though. With a strong blogger and a clear objective, one can produce engaging and highly shareable content thereby gain loyal following readers. Blogs a common story in a sport organization creates a blog because they feel they should have one. However, everyone gets busy and forgets to update it, or the summer student who was running it leaves, or the

athlete-blogger gets swamped with training and stops returning e-mails. The blog starts to collect dust, or it morphs into a collection of news articles.

Patrick (2014) observed that sport blogs are part of a new free resource whereby sports administrators can raise fund due to continued slash in athletic budgets and as the average cost of participating in a youth sports program increases. Ayla (2016) also affirmed that there is no better way to share your blog wins with your audience than by starting up a blog on your sports team website. He further stated that apart from the wins and losses or transfers happening on the field, people want to know what happening off-field is. Fans will love to have a clue behind the scenes and a glimpse of what is happening in the lives of their teams' players. Ayla (2016) concluded that a good blog site needs to stand out in a way that makes it easy for visitors to digest every bit of information within the first few seconds and the following are the ways to make this happen, organisation/team logo, identity, keep the visitors updated with news and blogs, photos and videos speak volume, current team roster, schedules to show upcoming events, leader boards, top scores and standing, social profiles, player profiles, contact information and team and player statistics.

The Internet is the most important innovations since the printing press. Blogs eventually complete the work that Gutenberg started by making reproduction not merely possible but universal (Steins &Stephen, 2008). Blogs are perhaps the most known form of social media and are commonly referred to as online journals. They actually represent the beginning of this technology revolution. Blogs are an open-source intelligent gathering (Friedman, 2007) having millions of people writing and uploading their own content with no obstacles, making any kind of information flow freely. Now, blogging has entered the mainstream and had reached businesses. Used as another business tool, some businesses have adopted blogs both to get corporate messages to the public and as an internal medium for staff. Experts considered it a low-cost, high-return tool that can handle marketing, public relations, and raise a company's profile but those business bloggers are still a distinct minority (Alboher, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

It is no more a fact but truism that sports has become a universal language that promote peace, tolerance and understanding by bringing people together across boundaries, cultures and religion. Sports language must be clear and unambiguous for easy interpretation and understanding. Suffice to note that before now the sporting world as being making used of one way communication (traditional media) in disseminating sports information. Definitely, this one static nature of communication (traditional media) has its inherent weaknesses i.e. Lack of feedback, delay in delivery messages, loss of massages in transit among others. This apparent shortcomings of traditional media has made social media a welcome development to the sporting communities globally.

The world is technologically driven, therefore, there is need for sports organizers and administrators to tap into utilizing social medial platform (digital media and micro blogs) that could enhance prompt and accurate information dissemination in other to improve on service delivery (Abdulraheem 2019). Apart from the fact that these devices gives two way communication, it is also relatively cheap and faster compared to traditional means (Radio, Television, post office, bus delivery) which has been hitherto being used by sports stakeholders. Similarly, it is researcher observation that in more than two instances coaches, players, managers and spectators get to the match venue only to be informed that the match has been postponed. Furthermore, paucity of information on this nascent field of communication (social media) prompted the study on utilization of social media on organization of sports in the north central zone sports councils of Nigeria.

METHOD AND MATERIAL

The study design was a descriptive research of survey method. The population for this study are the officials of all the States Sports Councils in the North Central States of Nigeria. They are 856 in number. (States Sports Councils in North Central Zone, 2018). Specifically, the target population are the management staff, coaches, association secretaries and clerical officers in the six (6) Sports Councils States of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. Purposive and stratified sampling technique was used to select 806 respondents as follows 49 management staff, 273 coaches, 264 association secretaries and 220 clerks across the sports councils in six (6) states and federal capital territory Abuja.

Researcher's structured questionnaire was the instruments used for data collection. To ensure the validity of the instrument, draft copies of the questionnaire was presented to 3 expert in Human Kinetics Education and Communication Information Science Departments, University of Ilorin for content and construct validation. A pilot study of the test-retest method of reliability was conducted; the researcher administered the questionnaire to a group of respondents in Oyo State sports council who were not part of the study after the period of two weeks, the researcher re-administered the same items to the same respondents for the second time. The researcher then compared the relationship between the first and second tests using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 alpha level. The coefficient/index obtained was 0.86r. The researcher and 3 trained research assist administered the questionnaire. Inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical methods were also used to analyze the hypotheses to determine the level of significance of 0.05. alpha

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Table 1. Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on Analysis of Digital Media (Photo Showing) on the Organisation of sports in North Central zone sports councils, Nigeria.

Variables	N	$\overline{X}+$	SD	df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Digital Media	806	25.28	7.896	804	0.76	0.001	H_0 Rejected
Organisation of Sports	806	36.89	12.62				

Table 1 above revealed the calculated r-valueof 0.76 andp-value of 0.001 with 804 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level, since the p-value of 0.001 is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This reveals that digital media (photo showing) have a significant relationship on organization of sports in North Central zone sports councils, Nigeria. This implies that sports administrators in the North Central zone sports councils, Nigeria uses sports photography and photo sharing to disseminate information relating to sporting activities to their staff and the general public, hence it assists ineffective organization of sports in the North central zone sports councils, Nigeria.

Table 2. Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on Analysis of Blogs and Micro-blogs on the Organisation of sports in North Central zone sports councils, Nigeria.

Variables	N	$\overline{X}+$	SD	df	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Blogs and Micro-blogs	806	22.61	6.821	804	0.89	0.000	H_0 Rejected
Organisation of Sports	806	36.89	12.62				

Table 2 above shows the calculated r-value of 0.89 and p-value of 0.000 with 804 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level, since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that blogs and micro-blogs have a significant relationship on organization of sports in the North Central zone sports councils Nigeria. This means that

sports administrators in the North Central zone sports councils uses blogs and microblogs to get corporate messages to the public and it also serves as internal medium for staff in the North Central zone sports councils, Nigeria. Thus it assists greatly in the organization of sports in the study area.

Discussion of findings

Table 1 result revealed that of digital media (video showing and photo sharing) have a greater influence on the organization of sports in the North Central Zone Sports Councils, Nigeria. This is in line with Ivy (2015) who affirmed that digital media connects players, coaches and fans in ways that never possible before which enable users to maintain friendships across time and distance. It enables those who are socially isolated or set apart from their immediate physical community to connect with like-minded or like-situated people. Digital media also facilitates interaction across social, economic, cultural, political, religious and ideological boundaries, allowing for enhanced understanding among people, sports stakeholders inclusive (Sarita 2016). Acquaah (2008) also noted that digital media helps to foster relationship and facilitates the formation of supports networks among coaches administrators, players, fans and other stakeholders.

These distinct characteristics are not clearly noted not until the advent of this new line of communication. In his own contribution, Barker (2008) observed that digital media serves as a vehicle to mobilize resources, organise programmes and draw sports stakeholders attention to any impending events. Despite inherent benefits of digital media to sports organizations and administration, studies (Hathi, 2008; Perkins, 2008; Violino, 2008) have identified some risks involved in digital media and other online communication that associated with developing addictive behaviour especially if it is not managed properly. For instance, digital media poses privacy issues and poses security risks such as identity fraud during the accreditation of teams and players. While Perkins (2021) concluded that digital media and other online communication may result in secondary data collection(i.e. indirect derivation of data from existing sources) which may lead to social networking spam (i.e. propagation of unsolicited messages).

The findings in hypothesis two (H_{02}) equally revealed that blogs and microblogs (Instagram sites) have a positive relationship on organisation of sports in North Central Zone Sports Councils, Nigeria. This finding is supported by Nick (2016) who observed that Instagram create a lot of opportunities for a sports organization to market their teams and attract fans and followers because it has grown from a trendy teen hangout to a marketing heavyweight and is by now the second most used platform after facebook. He concluded that studies have shown that humans respond to visual much more than text and also the fact that mobile traffic is increasingly important to underscore the imperativeness of Instagram in a sports organization. In addition, Mark (2017) also noted that instagrams demographic skews younger than other platforms. He said only 13% of the users are over 35years which makes it than a perfect avenue to reach athletes, volunteers and other young sports enthusiasts.

Sport experts considered blogs as a low-cost and high return tool that can be used to handle sports marketing, public relations, and rise sports organization profile. In addition, these online discussion portals offer a fantastic opportunity for the organization to engage with their clients by inviting clients or discussing relevant issues or just highlighting some useful information that might be relevant for their customers and their market place. Blogs are not a place for the hard sell; these online portals should be used to communicate with sports fans, spectators in a 'social' way that encourage interaction (Ivy, 2015).

Nevertheless, another concern of blogs' risk as expressed by Wallace, Robert and Susan (2006) was that sports organizations also need to be aware of their legal liabilities for unmodulated content when patronizing blog. As blogs may put a sports organization's assets,

reputation and future at risk. Without strategic blog-related policies, rules and procedures, sports organizations would face the potential for workplace lawsuits. On an equal note, Baker and Green (2017) concluded that great risk has to be the entries to the blog which made by players, fans and coaches outside the sports organizations and administrations councils. As there is no monitoring, editing or verification of posted information, players, fans or coaches can post anything they like, even false or malicious information. For instance, a fan could post that they had a terrible experience with the officiating and facilities used for a past match.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn that digital media (video showing and photo sharing) assists in effective organization of sports programmes in North Central zone sports councils, Nigeria. Blogs and microblogs plays a vital role in organisation of sports programmes in North Central zone sports councils, Nigeria.

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