

Applications and Challenges of Social Media Platforms in the Sports Events Management

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Abstract: The development of social media has precipitated a profound transformation in the dissemination of sports events. And the shift from traditional media to digitalization and multi-platform interaction has markedly enhanced audience participation and dissemination speed. Therefore, this paper explores the application of social media in sports events and its impact on event promotion, audience experience, and brand communication. In addition, it examines the characteristics and potential applications of various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, to illustrate how social media can facilitate audience engagement, influence audience viewing habits, and offer innovative marketing strategies for events. At the same time, data analysis and user behavior research in sports events are explored to support decision optimization, and challenges faced by social media in sports event management, such as privacy issues and the spread of false information, are highlighted. The results indicate that social media not only broadens the audience reach for sports events but also enhances audience engagement and increases the commercial value of the events.

Keywords: Social Media, Sport Events Management, Marketing Strategies, User Behavior.

1. Introduction

The advent of digital technology has precipitated a profound transformation in the operational paradigms of a diverse array of industries, including the sports industry [1]. Moving from traditional television broadcasts and print media to today's digital and multi-platform interactions, the social media has served as a crucial channel for sports event promotion. Sports brands and organizations are increasingly turning to social media platforms to achieve broader audience coverage and more effective brand promotion. Social media not only provides new promotional platforms for sports events but also transforms the viewing experience and participation modes of audiences through real-time interactions and diverse content formats. This paper aims to explore the application of social media in sports events, analyzing its impact on event dissemination, audience engagement, and brand marketing. The research indicates that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have not only expanded the reach of events but also enhanced audience participation and increased the commercial value of the events. The widespread use of social media has accelerated the dissemination of sports events, broadened their coverage, and provided sports organizers and brand sponsors with more innovative marketing opportunities. In the new media environment, the dissemination and development of sports events are deeply influenced by social media, which

promotes the commercialization, industrialization and globalization of sports events, and thus provides more personalized and diversified content for the dissemination of sports culture.

2. Overview of Social Media in Sports Management

2.1. Types of Social Media Platforms

The rapid advances in technology and digitization have greatly impacted the role of technology in sports, as well as the manner in which fans interact, engage, and disseminate knowledge through social media and other technologies [2]. The utilization of different social media platforms provides unique advantages for the management and promotion of sports events. Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter provide an effective platform for broad participation and real-time updates, which are essential for event promotion and community building. Photo-sharing platforms, such as Instagram, are particularly adept at visual narratives and are perfect for showcasing campaign highlights and capturing audiences' interest through compelling images. Video-sharing platforms such as YouTube provide a vast repository of video content, including event recaps and analyses, which can be used to enhance audience interaction and engagement. Interactive media platforms such as TikTok aim to engage younger audiences with short, engaging videos, which is an effective strategy for generating interest and expanding reach. In addition, professional networking sites such as LinkedIn facilitate brand development within industry-specific contexts, aiding in professional networking and industry-related branding. The unique capabilities and audience characteristics of each platform can guide its selection, which should be chosen based on the specific goals and target audience of the sports event management strategy [3].

2.2. Development of Social Media Use in Sports Events

Social media platforms have become an important tool for sports organizations, athletes, and sports fans, providing unprecedented opportunities for engagement and branding [4]. Notable examples highlight the effectiveness of social media in these areas. During the 2024 Olympics, brands, like ANTA, use social media platforms such as Weibo and TikTok to effectively market their products. ANTA's campaign featuring celebrity endorsements and the champion dragon suit achieved substantial visibility and user engagement. Similarly, YILI's use of interactive content related to the Olympic emblem stimulated widespread discussions and bolstered brand recognition. Platforms like MIGU Video, TikTok, Kuai, and Tencent Video have enriched the audience experience and increased audience engagement through high-definition live broadcasts and interactive features. For instance, Migu Video enhanced viewer engagement during the Paris Olympics by incorporating interactive elements into its live broadcasts. Additionally, the NBA serves as a prime example of effective social media utilization through its comprehensive digital strategy. The NBA attracts and retains a large number of fans by regularly releasing game highlights, player updates and exclusive behind-the-scenes content. Interactive features such as Q&A sessions, polls, and challenges further enhance user engagement. Also, the NBA's strategic cross-promotions and collaborations with the fashion and entertainment industries have expanded its brand influence. These examples highlight the transformative impact of social media in sports event management, demonstrating its ability to drive engagement, amplify brand promotion, and enhance the overall event experience.

3. Application of Social Media in Sports Event Management: A Case Study of TikTok

3.1. Event Promotion and Marketing

Practice has shown that effective event promotion and marketing require strategic approaches that align with clear objectives [5]. In the case of TikTok, the platform has become a powerful tool for the promotion of sporting events thanks to its unique short-form video format and broad user base. First, identifying promotional goals and target audiences is critical to ensuring that marketing messages resonate with TikTok users, and content creation plays a key role in this. Crafting engaging and shareable short videos that integrate trending topics and fresh insights can effectively capture audience interest and encourage widespread dissemination on the platform. TikTok's interactive features represent another important strategy for enhancing user engagement. For instance, through challenges, hashtag campaigns, and live streaming, event organizers can interact directly with the audience, sparking discussions and participation in the events. This not only attracts more users but also boosts the event's visibility and appeal. Utilizing TikTok for product promotion can also significantly enhance brand influence. Influencer marketing on the platform, leveraging key opinion leaders (KOLs) to endorse events or related products, can quickly expand brand reach. Additionally, TikTok's short video ads and creative marketing features offer new avenues for event sponsorship. By posting relevant content about sponsored events, such as news, behind-the-scenes footage, and user-generated content, sponsors can enhance their brand image and boost user engagement. The integration of online and offline interactive marketing can facilitate the creation of innovative consumer experiences. The social dissemination mechanisms of the TikTok platform, when considered in conjunction with collaborative initiatives in the realms of e-commerce and entertainment, offer a plethora of avenues for the promotion of events. The partnership between TikTok and event organizers highlights the platform's significant role in modern sports event marketing, thus reflecting deeper engagement and mutual benefits. This dynamic serves to enhance brand positioning and contributes to the overall success of sports event promotion and marketing.

3.2. Audience Engagement and Interaction

Social media has revolutionized the way audiences engage with sports events, offering diverse and flexible viewing options. As the media landscape evolves, audiences increasingly prefer to follow highlights and key moments via social media rather than watching entire live broadcasts. This shift allows viewers to selectively engage with content they are interested in, enhancing viewing efficiency and satisfaction. TikTok exemplifies this transformation in audience interaction. During the 2024 Paris Olympics, TikTok's interaction data related to event highlights increased by 40% compared to previous years. This interaction extends beyond passive viewing to include active sharing, commenting, and participating in discussions, significantly enhancing viewers' sense of engagement and connection to the sports events. Research indicates that active social media users report significantly higher levels of engagement and satisfaction compared to non-users. For example, a study on the 2023 FIFA World Cup found that fans who engaged with event-related content on social media had 30% higher satisfaction and engagement levels compared to those who did not. This suggests that interaction on social media platforms greatly enriches the overall event experience for viewers. Furthermore, the surge in sports and fitness content on platforms like TikTok reflects the public's ongoing interest in sports. On TikTok, views for sports and fitness videos have increased by 50% year-on-year [6]. By providing live streams and brief video content, TikTok is able to cater to a diverse range of interests, which drives more immersive engagement with sports-related content. [7].

3.3. Data Analytics and Decision Support

Data analysis plays a crucial role in sports event management, particularly in optimizing audience engagement and content strategies. Firstly, user behavior analysis on TikTok can reveal detailed insights into audience preferences and interaction patterns. Data from TikTok shows that content posted during peak user activity times has 50% higher engagement compared to other times. This data helps identify the best times to post to maximize audience interaction. Analyzing metrics such as video watch time, completion rates, and interaction behaviors like likes, comments, and shares provides a comprehensive assessment of content attractiveness. For example, studies have shown that shorter videos tend to have higher completion rates than longer videos, indicating that shorter content is more effective at maintaining viewer attention. Content analysis further deepens the understanding of audience preferences. TikTok data reveals that short videos with a duration of 30-60 seconds have a 20% higher completion rate compared to longer videos [8]. This suggests that shorter videos are more effective in capturing viewer attention. By analyzing the performance of different content types, such as challenges, dance videos, or sports-related content, organizers can determine which types resonate most with the audience. Additionally, hashtag analysis can track trending topics and help adjust content strategies to align with current trends and audience interests. A systematic approach to data collection and analysis includes setting clear goals and metrics. For example, defining key indicators such as user growth, content interaction rates, and advertising effectiveness can guide the data collection and analysis process. TikTok's analytics tools provide detailed data on metrics such as views, interaction behaviors (e.g., likes and comments), and user demographics. This data not only helps understand audience behavior patterns but identifies trends in content performance and user preferences. In-depth analysis includes identifying trends and conducting competitive analysis. By analyzing content trends on TikTok, one can discover which types of videos and themes are most popular. Competitive analysis helps understand the content strategies of similar events and activities, enabling adjustments to differentiate one's own strategy from competitors. The creation of detailed user profiles, including information such as age, gender, location, and interests, provides data support for the development of personalized and localized content recommendations. Based on the analytical results, the organizers can develop optimization strategies to enhance engagement and effectiveness..

4. Challenges and Future Prospects

Social media presents several challenges for sports event management. Privacy is a major concern, as excessive scrutiny of athletes' personal lives can lead to psychological stress and performance problems. In order to address this, strict privacy policies must be implemented, and athletes need to be educated on managing their online presence. Another challenge is the spread of misinformation and the manipulation of public opinion, which can result in reputational damage and mislead fans. Sports organizations need robust fact-checking and clear communication strategies to effectively counter false narratives. Platforms like TikTok also face issues of over-marketing and negative content; sensationalist strategies can distort the true nature of sports events, while harmful content undermines the integrity of the online environment. Strict content regulation and the promotion of accurate reporting are crucial for maintaining a healthy platform. Looking ahead, advancements in artificial intelligence and augmented reality will enhance engagement and personalization in sports events. Artificial intelligence can provide customized content based on user data, while augmented reality can provide immersive experiences, such as virtual stadium tours. As regulation tightens, a greater focus on data privacy and ethical standards will be critical. Sports organizations must adopt advanced encryption and transparent data handling practices to earn audience trust. Emerging social media platforms and features will continue to shape the landscape, providing new opportunities and requiring adaptation.

5. Conclusion

This paper explores the transformative influence of social media on sports event management, highlighting its important role in event promotion and marketing, audience engagement, as well as decision-making processes. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become indispensable tools for sports organizations, offering diverse and effective channels for audience interaction. These platforms support targeted marketing strategies, interactive content, and real-time engagement, thereby increasing event visibility and deepening fan connections. These success stories, such as social media activities for the Paris Olympics and the NBA, show that strategic use of social media can enhance brand awareness, drive fan engagement, and contribute to event success, which underscore the effectiveness of comprehensive social media promotion and dynamic content in attracting audiences. However, the study also identifies challenges associated with social media, including privacy issues, misinformation, and negative content. Addressing these challenges requires sports organizations to implement stringent privacy measures and accurate communication strategies, so as to protect user information and maintain credibility. In the future, advancements in artificial intelligence and augmented reality may further enhance fan experiences. Additionally, evolving data privacy regulations will necessitate careful handling of user information to ensure compliance and uphold user trust.

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