



The Influence of Social Media on Sports Communication

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Abstract: *Social media has seen drastic adoption across various fields. The current paper aims to highlight and discuss the role of social media and user-generated content in sports communication. One of the major benefits of social media has been its ability to connect athletes with their fans. However, its impact has been both positive and negative. On the one hand, athletes receive direct praise from fans for good performances, while on the other hand, they may also face hatred and trolling when their performances fall short. The current study aimed to examine the role of popular SNS Facebook in Sports Communication. Through survey the study found that users actively share current affairs and news updates on Facebook and also posts about sports related matters.*

Keywords: *Social media, Sports communication, Sports journalism, User-generated content.*

1. Introduction

Social media has expanded itself to every field and its realms covered that field fully. Specially, in terms of networked communication and global exposure, social media is quite effective. In the field of sports, social media has affected in various spheres. Social media main role can be defined in connecting the fans and sports persons. Earlier in traditional media times, it was not so possible. Another significant benefit of social media has been in merging boundaries through networked



communication. Now, not only within a territorial boundary but people from any country, any origin may connect and explore their sports interest and preferences online through social media. Somehow, it has empowered the individuals, their sports experiences, their point of view about sports, and has also empowered to highlight the concerns to the sports authority, society, and the concerned ones. Just like any other media, social media has given the freedom of expression in the field of sports too.

Social media initially was mainly used for self-expression and personal communication but recent trend shows that current affairs and news are also shared and discussed on the Facebook by most of the users. The UGMC (user-generated media contents) on social media encompasses all fields. The current study aimed to investigate what kinds of UGMC are posted on Facebook especially about sports.

1.1 History of Social Media

Internet initially was developed for ARPANET project, then became popular among all. In the initial stage, Internet was mainly one way communication, technically also referred as Web 1.0. The technological developments further expanded the uses and features of Internet. And Web 2.0 the interactive web was available where two-way communication became possible. Social media gave next level advancement to this two-way communication. It provided users with an interactive platform which they could create and manage on their own.

In the present time, a simultaneous virtual world is existing with the real world. Social media not only provided platforms for self-expression but recent studies by K. Mohamed (2009), Gootfried & Shearer (2016), Mishra (2015), and Aljendro (2010) through research findings suggested that Internet users are actively participating in creation and dissemination of news through online platforms. This content generated by individual users is called user-generated content. Organisation for Economic cooperation and Development describes user-generated content that has been generated by individuals out of professional routines, published online, and has some creative efforts.



The history of interactive web could be considered from 1971 with the introduction of email, 1979 developed Usenet, in 1984 Listserv, IRC in 1988, and in 1991 came personal websites, discussion groups and chat platforms, followed by first social networking site classmate.co. From 1998 onwards, there were rapid developments in social media platforms in the form of blogs, podcast, wikis, web 2.0 applications and dynamic aspects of user-generated contents.

Modern social media has been around for nearly two decades, yet it attracts users across all age groups due to its accessibility and numerous benefits. With rapid advancements in web technology, the digital landscape continues to evolve. The transition to Web 3.0 and Web 4.0 will enhance user interfaces, connectivity, interactivity, and participation, offering even greater opportunities for engagement. Web 2.0 has already paved the way for virtual communities and online interactions, and future innovations will not only simplify web usage but also expand its possibilities significantly.

1.2 Features of Social Media

Mass media has its own set of benefits, purposes, and aims. However, its primary aims are to inform, educate and entertain. Social media is more social by nature too. Social media provides connectivity, interactivity, quick time sharing of information, boundary free communication, abundance of user-generated content. The most popular features of social media are connectivity, interactivity, real time communication, and access to create and publish. One word to justify the social media users is producers; who produce contents and uses as well.

1.3 Social media and various fields

Media is such a discipline which is essential and covers all fields. Similarly social media being communication platform, covers all fields in depth. Being part of everyone's life it has made it scope in all fields whether personal communication, professional communication, academic, creative expression or whatever it may be as required.

1.4 Social media and Sports Communication

Specifically talking about sports communication, Sports communication means sharing information related to sports. It may be news, information, articles, editorials, motivational write-



ups etc. Now, considering the social media in the field of sports communication has brought drastic changes in sports communication. Through social media, Athletes and audience can connect, liked-minded may approach, Sportsperson can be contacted; appraised; and at the same time in cases have been trolled too. Social media has proved itself a boon in all fields but because of its misuses by amateurs, it has been proved a bane too. Also, social media provides the users to actively engage in creation and dissemination of sports relevant contents. Through social media, it has been quite easy to spread the links to the various social media platforms at the same time.

1.5 Social media and sports journalism

Social media has equally influenced the journalism too. Especially through citizen journalism. Once when there was news published only in printed papers about the win or loss in the games, now citizen journalists provide live cast, live report and instant updates on social media platforms. Not only just updating but all this also leads to discussions on social media. Sports fans now can directly follow the social media pages of sports persons, sports news portals, YouTube channels, FB pages of news media, social media pages of sports journalist and citizen journalists as well.

2. Literature Review

Jeffrey Gottfried and Elisa Shearer (2016) found that 62% of U.S. adults consume news via social media. The study found that the role of news varies across different platforms. According to the survey, 66% of Facebook users accessed news on the FB, while 59% of Twitter users did the same. Overall, Facebook ranked first in both the number of users and as the leading platform for social media news consumption. Jennifer (2010) examined how social media influence news reporting and newsroom operations. The study finds that journalists are adapting to technological changes by using social media to gather and distribute news.

Long Ma et. al. (2014) applied diffusion of innovation theory to analyse factors influencing news sharing. The study found that opinion leadership, online news preferences, and social ties impact users' intentions to share news on social media.



Schultz and Sheffer (2010) examined Twitter's impact on sports journalism, finding minimal overall change but generational differences in usage. Younger and broadcast journalists see Twitter as a standalone tool, while older and print journalists use it mainly for promotion.

Stavros et al.'s (2014) study explores fan motivations for engaging with NBA teams on social media, identifying passion, hope, esteem, and camaraderie as key drivers. The findings highlighted how social media fosters fan interaction, offering valuable insights for sports marketing and relationship management.

3. Research Methodology

The current study aimed to examine the influence of social media on sports journalism with a special reference to Facebook. Facebook as per data and records, has been found the most popular social networking site among all age groups. The Facebook is growing day by day not only in its users base but also in offered features. At present Facebook has numerous of applications related to various themes like business, education, entertainment, games, lifestyle, fun, sports utilities etc. To understand the role of Facebook in Sports Communication, the researcher conducted a survey on 100 students of Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar using a printed, personally administered questionnaire for data collection. The survey took place between February and May 2016, with respondents selected on a purely random basis. The questionnaire included both quantitative and qualitative questions. The quantitative aspect of the study involved data processing and treating it with descriptive statistics. After ascertaining the appropriateness of the data set, the data was entered into SPSS. Descriptive statistics, Percentage were used to analyse the data. Microsoft excel 2011 was used for making charts and tables. Statistical research package SPSS Statistics 16.0 was used for data analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Information: The survey was conducted on 100 respondents. The respondents were selected randomly, fulfilling the only basic condition of being a Facebook user. The researchers contacted students randomly from selected University and each student was found to be Facebook user. It shows the popularity of Facebook among the respondents i.e. Youth.



Table 4.1: Age of Respondents

Variable	Percentage
18-22 Years	51.25%
22-26 Years	36.75%
26-30 Years	7%
30-34Years	4%
Above 34Years	1%
Total	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 4.2: Area of Respondents

Variable	Percentage
Urban	60.25%
Rural	39.75%
Total	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 4.3: Gender of Respondents

Variable	Percentage
Male	56.25%
Female	43.75%
Total	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 4.4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Variable	Percentage
Pursuing Graduation	46.50%
Pursuing Masters	44.25%
Pursuing Ph.D.	5%
Pursuing Any Others	4.25%
Total	100%

(Source: Primary Data)



Table 4.5: Using Facebook Since

Variable	Percentage
Less than One Year	8.50%
Between 1 to 2 Years	9.25%
Between 2 to 3 Years	14.50%
Between 3 to 5 Years	38.25%
Between 5 to 10 Years	27.25%
10 Years and more	1.25%
Total	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 4.6: Current affairs related information recently posted/received on Facebook

Variable	Percentage
Yes	83.50%
No	16.50%
Total	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 4.7: Context of Current affairs related information recently posted/received on Facebook

Themes	Percentage
Entertainment	11%
Government	8.50%
Educational	8.50%
Political	7%
Social	10.50%
Environmental	3.75%
Science	6.25%
Sports	17.75%
Personal	4.25%
International	1.75%
Others	5.25%
Not received/posted	15.50%
Total	100%

(Note: Percentages and total are based on respondents)



Table 4.8 Cases/issues reported by Respondents

Category	Cases	%age
Entertainment	Bipasha Basu got married with Karan Grover	18.21%
	Pratusha Banerjee suicide case	50.57%
	Salman Khan and Kuria Vantar are getting married	15.14%
	Harithik and Kangana affair news	7.93%
	News about fan movie crosses 100 crore	3.79%
	Bollywood awards photos	4.36%
	Total	100%
Government Affairs	Delhi odd-even vehicle policy	37.47%
	Petrol and Diesel prices hike	12.52%
	Govt. initiatives of Swachh Bharat, digitalisation etc.	16.42%
	Scams & Elections in West Bengal & Kerala	8.89%
	Haryana politics & GK	8.52%
	Budget	5.63%
	Haryana Punjab water matter	6.89%
	Use made in India articles	3.63%
Total	100%	
Educational Matters	UPSC results (Tina Dhabhi case)	50.94%
	HRD & UGC news updates	28.47%
	JNU Kanhaiya case	20.59%
	Total	100.00%
Political matters	News	41.86%
	About Prime Minister	29.58%
	About Elections	6.14%
	About other leaders	22.43%
	Total	100%
Social matters	Jaat Agitation for reservation	68.00%
	Rape cases	13.43%
	Women empowerment	16.14%
	Agasta scam	2.43%
	Total	100%
Environmental matters	Heavy rainfall in Ujjain	5.68%
	Forest fire in Uttarakhand	34.33%
	About Jataayu park in Kerala	12.33%



	Scarcity of water	34.33%
	Nepal earthquake	13.33%
	Total	100%
Science and Technology	NASA Discovery	7%
	News	49%
	Own GPS system	31%
	Global space	13%
	Total	100%
Sports matters	About sportspersons	15.2%
	IPL 2016	51.26%
	Sports	33.54%
	Total	100%
Personal matters	Peer group related news & events	100%
	Total	100%
International matters	BBC's Scotland parliament member	13.28%
	Syria & Iraq presidency elections	30%
	Deal with America	12.28%
	Ivory burnt in Kenya worth \$50 million	16.28%
	International updates	29%
Total	100%	
General	News pages posts	70.40%
	Job alerts	29.57%
	Total	100%

The data highlights the diverse range of issues covered in Facebook posts. A total of 11 categories were identified from the responses, with each category containing a minimum of three and a maximum of eight cases, resulting in more than forty issues in total. User-generated Facebook posts encompass a wide variety of vital information, covering multiple topics and perspectives. This diversity ensures that users are exposed to various issues and their different aspects, enhancing their overall knowledge. Survey responses further indicate that Facebook serves as a valuable platform for information exchange and awareness among its users.



5. Conclusion

The survey findings show key demographic insights and usage patterns of Facebook in sports communication and current affairs engagement. The majority of respondents (51.25%) belong to the age group 18-22 years, with a significant proportion residing in urban areas (60.25%). The gender distribution shows 56.25% male and 43.75% female participants.

Most of the respondents are pursuing graduation (46.50%) or master's degrees (44.25%). Regarding Facebook usage, 38.25% reported that they have been using the Facebook for 3 to 5 years, while 27.25% have been active for 5 to 10 years, showcasing long-term engagement.

A significant 83.50% of respondents reported posting or receiving current affairs-related content on Facebook, with sports-related updates (17.75%) being the most frequently shared theme. Among reported cases, IPL 2016 dominated sports discussions (51.26%), indicating strong audience interest in sports coverage on Facebook.

These insights emphasize Facebook's role as a primary platform for sports journalism, real-time updates, and audience engagement, particularly among young, urban, and educated users. The platform facilitates active participation, discussion, and dissemination of information, reinforcing its significance in modern sports communication.



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