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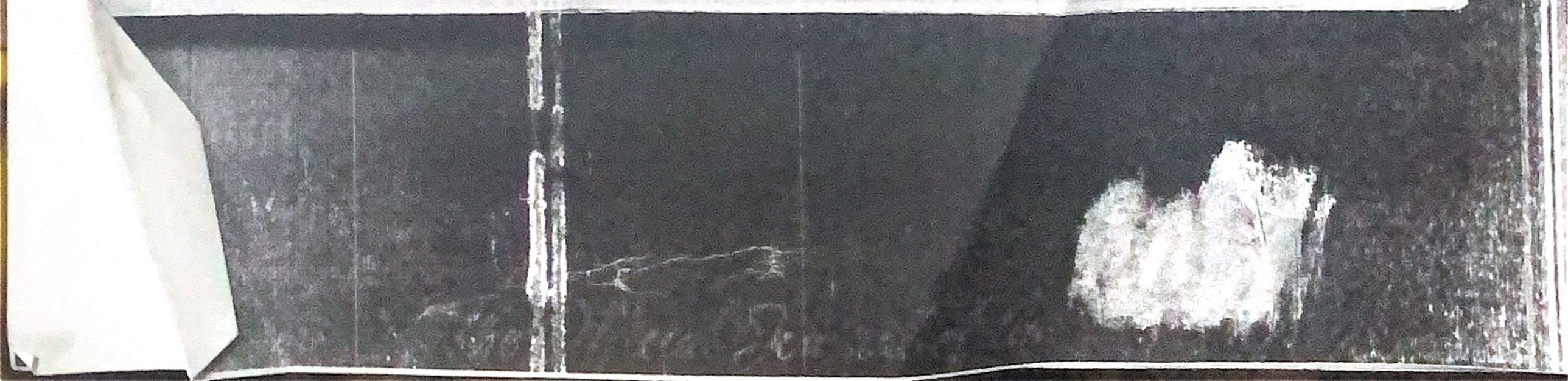
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UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AS COMMUNICATION TOOLS AMONG SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS IN KWARA STATE SPORTS COMMISSION

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Abstract

The study examined utilization of social media platforms as communication tools among sports associations in Kwara State Sports Commission. Descriptive survey research design of survey type was employed. The population comprised of coaches, journalist and all staff within the study area. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 130 respondents. A self structured questionnaire was used for this study. The instrument was validated by experts and tested for reliability using test re-test method through Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC). A correlation coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. The instrument was administered by the researcher and three trained research assistants. The data collected were analysed using inferential statistics of chi-square (x^2) to test the formulated hypotheses set for the study at 0.05 alpha level. The result revealed that the utilization of blog, twitter and YouTube on social media significantly served as effective communication tool among sports association. The study recommends that coaches, sports administrators and sports journalist should explore the use of twitter, Facebook and YouTube to promote sports programme around the world.

Keywords: Utilization, Social Media, Platform Communication tools, Sports Association

Introduction

Sports as a social entity has grown from being just as a form of entertainment and recreational activity to assume a professional status. Sports develop individuals, society and nations. It is a big time business venture shaping the social, political and economic constructs of nations, worldwide. Social media is seen as the online technologies people use to share opinions, experiences, insights, content, perspective and media themselves. It combines participation powered by network effects. Making social media platforms almost the most powerful form of media yet created (Hinchelitte, 2017). Social networks have changed the way people communicate, the interaction they have and the ability to create and share information with the rest of the world, becoming a daily occurrence (Gomez, Roses,

Farias, 2012). Social networks foster the maintenance, development and creation interpersonal relationships based on the elaboration of a personal profile in which cessible information is published and shared by all who are present on the social twork (Kwon & Yixing, 2010). Social networks have gradually emerged as a new venue of Communication between teachers and students, mainly in higher ducation, becoming an important communicative tool (Akcaoglu & Bowman, 016), generating diverse questions about teacher-student Communication through social networks and their impact on the teaching-learning process (Hershkovitz, Forkosh-Baruch, & Morrison, 2012).

Social media have garnered a great deal of attention from academics and practitioners due to their pervasiveness and cultural impacts. Consumers can interact with social media during multiple stages of the consumption process including information search, decision-making, word of mouth, and the acquisition, use, and disposal of products and services. Social media use is an increasingly popular activity for Internet users. In Nigeria there are about 23 million social media users as at January 2021. The increase in number of social media users in Nigeria was 6 million (22% between 2020 and 2021) which was equivalent to 15.8% of the total population in January. Social media statistics in Nigeria as of March, 2021; Facebook 53.29%, Twitter 24.35%, YouTube 2.38%, (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics 2021). Australia, 88% of 15-17 year olds and 86% of 18-24 year olds use social media (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011). In the United States, 73% of Internet users actively engaged with social media platforms (Pew Research Center, 2013). Due to the popularity of social media, Sport brands invest significant time and resources to drive engagement and relationships online. Events such as the Super Bowl, FIFA World Cup and the Olympics; professional teams such as Manchester United and Real Madrid; and brands including Converse, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo expend significant resources to integrate social media practices into their marketing strategy. Such organizations face challenges developing social media policies that leverage the opportunities afforded by these technologies while mitigating the complications stemming from social media usage by athletes and consumers (Edim, Emeribe &Akah, 2016).

Sport is a medium through which competition, friendship, tolerance, unity, discipline, endurance and diplomacy are promoted. Sports as a social event is a civilizing and socializing process of gathering men and women of good will who come together to take part in athletics and Sporting event for the purpose of physical, mental, social and political development (Adesoye, 2013). Sport is the activities involving power and skills, competition, strategy, and chance, engaged in for the enjoyment, satisfaction and personal gain (such as income) of the participant and spectators including organized Sports as well as Sports entertainment. Sports play very important roles in educational institutions in virtually all parts of the

world and the contribution of Sports to educational process in institutions cannot be overemphasized (Ibraheem & Ojo, 2014).

Rothschild (2011) found that there is a significant rise in Facebook social medial utilization in the Sports organization and the resulting indecline to effective Communication methods. He further stated that a strategic use of Facebook approach is becoming increasingly important in Sports administration and organization. Ohaja (2013) also supported that Facebook is not just for an individual alone to be followed by their friends and to post pictures of their lives, it has influence on Sports activities for both Sports organization and athletes. It is an invaluable tool for marketing Sports clubs, athletes, coaches, fans, companies and others. This Facebook has added value to Sports activities because many Sports stars, clubs and organizers have their own Facebook accounts and millions of fans are following them through this Facebook. Some big clubs have found Facebook as a huge business advantage. Many fans give ways to their clubs and their lovely athletes through Facebook media by creating an active Communication following franchise.

Twitter is one of the social media platforms that has influence on Sports organization. Nowadays, many Sports stars and member of Sports organization and teams love twitter network and this twitter media has a big impact on Sports activities through how teams, athletes, companies, Sports organization are promoting themselves. Utilization of twitter network offers a relatively cheap and easy ways to reach a large audience. Heinemann (2013) said that application of twitter media to Sports activities play a great role to spread the vital messages to large number of people in the society for the latest upgrading of live scores and other important information. Twitter is one of the most important Tools for Sports. Over the past years many athletes and fans gain popularity through the use of twitter media and people follow their lovely and favourites athletes through this twitter and get the most updated Sports contents instantaneously from it. This simply means that twitter media play a significant role on Sports organization. The advantage of using twitter in Sports organization is that, twitter media help to build relationships with the public and reduce the marketing cost and also increase easy way of sending messages and communicating to large number of the people at the same time. Sport organization and athletes also use twitter media to promote a two-way conversation with the public and build a community under their mission (Cater, 2013).

Internet is the most important innovation since the printing press. Blogs essentially complete the work that Gutenberg started-by making reproduction not merely possible but universal (Hopwood & Shell, 2011). Blogs are perhaps the most known form of social; media and are commonly referred to as online journals. They actually represent the beginning of all these technology revolution. Blogs are an 'open-source intelligent gathering (Trishal, 2017) 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 distinctively ministry (Alboher, 2015).

Statement of the problem

The researcher observed that Sports Association officials in Kwara State Sports Commission are yet to fully utilize the modern information technology devices available in order to enhance effective communication among members. It is not just enough for them to store information on computers and mobile phones, they also need to adopt effective platform to disseminate information to athletes, coaches and other stakeholders within the Sports industry. The media can influence the popularity of sports, provided there are free publicity for local teams and players to showcase their performance to the general public.

Social media platforms such as YouTube, Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter and others are relatively cheaper and easy to use for effective communication among sports associations in the study area, but to the best of researchers knowledge, some of these associations have not fully engage themselves in using these social media platforms to disseminate information to their members, and other stakeholders. Recently the use of social media is fundamental to the development of sports especially in the aspect of disseminating information to the general public and even to the players and sports association. However, there is no study as far as the researcher knows, that has addressed the utilization of social media platforms as communication tools among sports associations in Kwara state Sports Commission, hence this study.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the utilization of social media platform as Communication tools among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission. Specifically, the study was meant to:

1. investigate the effectiveness of blog as Communication Tools among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission
2. examine the impact of Twitter as Communication Tools among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission
3. assess the effectiveness of YouTube as Communication Tools among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were raised and tested for the study,

1. Utilization of blog on social media platform will not significantly serve as a Communication Tools among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission.
2. Use of Twitter on social media platform will not significantly be a Communication Tools among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission.
3. Use of YouTube on social media platform will not significantly serve as a Communication Tools among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design of survey type was employed for this study. This research design is considered suitable for this study because its allows the researcher to gather and interpret the data from the respondents based on their opinion (Owolabi, 2015). The population for this study comprised of all coaches, sports journalist and staff of sports commission with approximately 130 respondents. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the sample size. The respondents were stratified into 3 strata, coaches, sports journalist and sports administrators. Purposively all the 38 coaches from all the 19 sports associations were sampled. All the 6 sports journalists attached to the sports commission were purposively sampled and all the 86 staff of the sports commission were purposively sampled. In all 130 respondents were sampled. A self structured questionnaire was used to gathered information for the study. The instrument was validated by 2 lecturers in the department of Human Kinetics Education, University of Ilorin and two lecturers in the department of Mass Communication and Information Science Kwara state University Malete (KWASU). The reliability level of the instrument was established through test re-test method using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). A correlation coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using inferential statistics of chi-square to test the postulated hypotheses set for the study at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Ho1: Utilization of blog on social media will not significantly serve as a communication tool among sports associations in Kwara State Sports Commission.

ble 1 revealed chi-square analysis of utilization of blog on social media and mmunication tool among sports association

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Row total	Calculated x^2 value	df	Critical x^2 value	Decisions
1.	Feedback can be achieved through comments on blog thereby influencing communication	15	12	62	41	130	48.49	9	16.92	Hypothesis rejected
2.	Videos can be commented upon bringing about discussions among members of the association.	12	33	34	51	130				
3.	Pictures portraying sport information can also be posted on blog to create awareness for the association	39	12	46	33	130				
4.	Blog can be created for sport purpose only where members can come together to discuss.	23	29	19	59	130				
	Column total	**89**	**86**	**161**	**184**	**520**				

$P < 0.05$

Table 1 shows the calculated x^2 value of 48.19 and critical x^2 value of 16.92 with a degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated x^2 value is greater than the critical x^2 value, hence, the null hypothesis that stated that utilization of blog on social media will not significantly serve as a communication tool among sports association in Kwara State Sports Commission was hereby rejected. This means that utilization of blog on social media significantly served as a communication tool among sports association in Kwara State sports commission.

Ho2: Twitter on social media will not significantly serve as a communication tools among sports associations in Kwara state sports commission.

Table 2 sh
communica

S/N	Va
1.	Comm n c achiev throug sendin direct on twit
2.	Posting informa tagging particip the ass effects commu
3.	Those not vas use of would commu
4.	Commu n could retrieve member are behind twitter
	Column

$P < 0.0$

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Table 2 shows chi-square Analysis of use of twitter on social media as a communication tool among sports association

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Row total	Calculated x^2 value	df	Critical x^2 value	Decisions
1.	Communication can be achieved through sending of direct messages on twitter.	20	15	20	75	130	38.04	9	16.92	Hypothesis rejected
2.	Posting of information and tagging participants of the association effects communication	13	20	67	30	130				
3.	Those who are not vast in the use of twitter would hinder communication	10	40	42	38	130				
4.	Communication could also be retrieved for members who are distance behind on twitter	19	10	58	43	130				
	Column total	**62**	**85**	**187**	**186**	**520**				

$P < 0.05$

Table 2 indicated the calculated x^2 value of 38.04 and critical x^2 value of 16.92 with a degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated x^2 value is greater than the critical x^2 value hence the null hypothesis that stated that use of twitter on social media will not significantly serve as a communication tools among sports associations in Kwara State sports commission was hereby rejected. This implies that the use of twitter on social media significantly served as a commutation tools among sports associations in kwara state sports commission.

3: Use of YouTube on social media will not significantly serve as a mmunication tool among sports associations in Kwara state sports commission.

able 3 indicate chi-square Analysis of use of YouTube on social media as ommunication tool among sports association

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Row total	Calculated x^2 value	df	Critical x^2 value	Decisions
1.	Communication could be achieved through comments on YouTube.	14	20	52	44	130	29.68	9	16.92	Hypothesis rejected
2.	Posting of Sports videos as a means of communication is made possible.	30	15	20	65	130				
3.	A reply comments on videos promotes communication among the associations.	43	10	47	30	130				
4.	Videos and comments could also be retrieved through search on YouTube.	6	21	58	45	130				
	Column total	**93**	**66**	**177**	**184**	**520**				

$P < 0.05$

Table 3 revealed the calculated x^2 value of 29.68 and critical x^2 value of 16.92 with a degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated x^2 value is greater than the critical x^2 value hence the null hypothesis that stated that the use of YouTube on social media will not significantly serve as a communication tool among sports associations in Kwara state sports commission was hereby rejected. This implies that the use of YouTube on social media significantly served as a communication tool among sports associations in Kwara state sports commission.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding from tested hypothesis one revealed that utilization of blog on social media significantly served as a communication tool among sports associations in Kwara state sports commission. This result supported the view of Iry (2015) who stressed that blogs are perhaps the most common form of social media and they are also referred to as online messages. Blogs are an open-source of intelligent gathering consisting of millions of people writing and uploading their own content with no obstacles, making all information including sports to be free online (Alboher 2015).

The finding from tested hypothesis two shows that use of twitter on social media significantly served as a communication tool among sports association in Kwara state sports commission. This result is in line with the view of Beech and Chadwick (2013) who affirmed that application of twitter media to sports activities play a major role in sharing messages to a large number of people in the society such as latest upgrading of live scores and other important sports news across the globe. Similarly Cater (2013) pointed out that the advantage of using twitter on sports Association is that, twitter media help to build relationship with the public and reduce the marketing cost and also increase easy ways of sending messages to a large number of people. Sports associations and athletes also use twitter media to promote a two-way conversation with the public. The finding from tested hypothesis three indicated that use of YouTube on social media significantly served as a communication tool among sports associations in Kwara state sports commission. This result is in line with the view of Edim, Emeribe & Akah (2016) that stated that many sports association and athletes benefits from the use of YouTube on social media by retrieving information from their fans and post valuable picture of athletes on action which helps to build personal and interpersonal relationship between players and Fans. Also Cater (2013) stressed that many athletes, coaches, and sports association embraced the use of YouTube on social media because it helps them to market themselves and other sports products. It is also an avenue to connect both the fans and players together.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Utilization of blog on social media platforms significantly served as a Communication Tool among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission.
2. Use of Twitter on social media platforms significantly served as a Communication Tool among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission.

3. Use of YouTube on social media platforms significantly served as a Communication Tool among Sports Associations in Kwara State Sports Commission.

ecommendations

ased on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Sports personnel at various Associations should make effective use of blog to reach out to millions of people which would positively improve Sports programmes beyond the sports commission.
2. Sports Associations are encouraged to use twitter page to always share or disseminate information to the general public so as to enhance effective communication.
3. All stakeholders in sports should be encouraged to engaged in digitalization of sports programmes on YouTube as a means of communication tool among sports Associations.

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