

# The Influence of Social Media in Sports Marketing

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim of the Study:** This study aims to assess the influence of social media on the sports marketing industry. Global surge in social media marketing has influenced sports marketing as well. Coca Cola is one such company. Coca cola has switched its maximum marketing campaigns to digital. The sports market is currently under the severe pressure of social media. Traditional methods of advertising such as print, radio, and television have all but vanished from the market in recent decades. This study focuses on how marketing has changed through time, moving from conventional to digital methods.

**Methodology:** Current study has used survey method and for this purpose a questionnaire about Pakistani consumers' viewing and engagement preferences for sports sponsor brand commercials on traditional and social media was developed and responses from sample of (N=802) were recorded.

**Findings:** The results of the surveys and the data collected point that, at least in Pakistan, traditional media still has strong influence on marketing sector. For sports brands, social media marketing is a useful addition to conventional marketing.

**Conclusion:** This study concluded that sports brands don't have to completely abandon traditional marketing strategies; instead, they could embrace social media as a supplement to their traditional media marketing tactics.

**Keywords:** Sports Sponsor Brand, Sports Marketing, Sports Leagues, Social Media.

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## Introduction

Over the years various researchers have attempted to define sports marketing. It is perceived as a continuous development for the simultaneous achievement of direct and indirect goals among the sport consumers, businesses including other sports related organizations and individuals by the opportunities created by the contests (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Generally, sports marketing is defined as the marketing activity that is related to the sports industry which in itself is a huge industry therefore the marketing becomes significant covering every activity relevant to sports. However, this is the most generalized definition of marketing in sports. Sports marketing is exposed to the public at almost every encounter in daily routine such as walking down the street in the form of advertisements pasted on the walls or billboards, in daily newspaper, watching

TV in sports programs and magazines as well as mention by different authors (Chadwick, Chanavat, & Desbordes, 2015).

There are three segments in which sports marketing has been divided. It includes advertisement of sports and relevant organizations, use of sports for the promotion of products and sports promotion among people. In the first sector sports and associated sports organizations are promoted such as National Football League (NFL), English Premier League (EPL), Indian Premier League (IPL) and Olympics etc. While second sector involves the promotion of product by using athletes, respective sports teams or sports events such as leagues and the third sector concerns the increase in participation of public by promoting sports in the people. It is to be mention that the promotion of products using sports does not necessarily require the direct relation of these products with sports. In this regard if the promotion is concerning sports in general then this type of strategy is referred as “Marketing of sports” on the other hand if the promotion is not about sports but it is done by using sports such as professional players or athletes, sports events or teams then such strategy is “Marketing through sports” (Shank & Lyberger, 2014).

Henceforward, two parameters constitute the sports marketing first the marketing of sports and then the use of sports as a tool for marketing purpose. It can be evaluated that marketing of sports or marketing by sports are relevant to sports marketing industry. In general, in marketing industry if the promotion of sporting venues, events, respective teams or individual players along with the sponsorships and investment deals are associated with sports then such kind creates a distinct branch as sports marketing (Fullerton & Merz, 2008). Let us consider the example of Olympics games held after every four years. Thousands of athletes from all over the globe gather each year to compete in a variety of sports in the modern Olympic Games, sometimes known simply as the Olympics. The Olympic Games are often considered the greatest sports competition in the world, and they include over 200 teams representing independent nations and territories. Since 1994, the Summer Olympics and the Winter Olympics have taken turns occurring every two years over the four-year cycle of the Olympic Games, which are typically held once every four years (Abrahams, 2022).

According to the Oxford Olympics Study 2016, since 1960, the average cost of the Summer Games' sports-related expenses has been US\$5.2 billion, and the average cost of the Winter Games' expenses has been US\$3.1 billion. The costs associated with larger infrastructure, such as roads, urban trains, and airports, which frequently exceed those associated with sports, are not included in these calculations. Beijing 2008 had the most expensive Summer Games, costing between US\$40 and US\$44 billion, and Sochi 2014 had the most expensive Winter Games, costing US\$51 billion (Sudakov, 2022). As of 2016, the average cost per athlete for the Summer Games was US\$599,000, and the average cost per participant for the Winter Games was US\$1.3 million; the cost per athlete for London 2012 was \$1.4 million, and the cost per athlete for Sochi 2014 was \$7.9 million (Flyvbjerg, Stewart, & Budzier, 2016).

In the recent Tokyo Olympics 2020 the IOC contributed USD 0.8 billion, top sponsorship contributed USD 0.5 billion, local sponsorship contributed USD 3.4 billion, and an insurance premium for the postponement of the Games generated USD 0.5 billion (Committee, 2022). All of this should be seen as an investment in producing the Olympics as a sporting event, thus there must be a return on that investment. Marketing in the sports industry is essential to guaranteeing that the investment will be profitable. Just think about how many different pursuits may be grouped together as "sports." From bowling and archery to more traditional sports like track and field, there are many different types of sports. Graham (2001) asserts that the sports industry is “defined as all the revenues that are generated by sports” (Graham, Delpy Neirotti, & Goldblatt, 2001).

Sports can be considered in term of financial activity and it makes it a very powerful tool for marketing. There are dozens of premier leagues happening every year, league clubs included in the London exchange where the financial success or profit generated not solely depends upon the excellent performance of the athletes on the pitch but their off field activities are worth considering in other words marketing actions adopted by them play effective role as well. For instance, Manchester United a popular and successful football club were offered with a promotional trip in the Thailand and Melbourne for summer season. The

main purpose of this trip was not only concerned about the preparation of Manchester United team for the upcoming championship but it was rather based upon publicity. It is obvious that officials of the club were more interested in advertising the Manchester United brand Thai and Australian football market. Therefore, this promotional trip was for the welfare and development of the brand (Department C. , 2022).

In present time it is essential for the world to acknowledge the marketing strategies for the advertisement of products which are not directly related to sports but sports events are used as a tool for their promotion as one of the vital element in sports marketing. As sports is a popular type of physical entertainment therefore marketing professionals understand this popularity and for decades, they have been utilizing it for marketing campaigns and promotions. As the time has passed the popularity and size of national and international sports has grown noticeably along with the sports marketing. For instance, in a case study according to Statista (2022) it was evaluated that Budweiser, a famous and large beer selling company of USA has spent about 470.5 US dollars on commercials ever since the first Super Bowl in 1967 till January 2021 (Department, 2022). However, it was reported that for the first time in 37-year Budweiser along with Pepsi and Coca cola decided to not run any in-game commercials instead they preferred to promote the awareness and distribution of vacancies for Covid-19 using that platform (Lucas, 2022).

Sports has been a great source of entertainment for people and as the time is passing the number of sports fans and viewers are increasing in hundreds of millions therefore sports events continue to be used for the deliverance of advertising messages and commercials. Sports in any form is applied for selling products or services in sports marketing. As the content of sports assists in the marketing strategies so single marketing strategy is not considered ideal in this style of marketing. Marketing efforts are formulated depending upon the content as it is not only limited the popular and professional sports events and athletes but minor leagues, alternative sports or college athletics including emerging players are also covered.

Many successful and popular players sign contracts with brands and marketers to work as celebrity endorsers or model for the campaigns where they are photographed or act as model in the commercials. In sports millions of fans are devoted towards their favorite players or teams and marketers use this devoted fan following as a mean to ensure their sales. Therefore, it is believed that in sports marketing facilitate marketers as they piggyback on the popularity of teams and athletes (Charbonneau & Garland, 2006).

Instant credibility in the fans mind is achieved easily by associating with his favorite sport idol. For instance, if an individual has been a die-hard fan of an athlete or team and any marketers who associates with that player then an instant sense of believability is attained. The marketer is considered a sort of inverter or a sponsor as profit gained by such promotions is ultimately transferred to support the team. This investment plays important role in the success of team. Along with these advantages one of the major shortcomings of sports marketing is the outsized sports industry. Sports marketing industry is so vast and large that it becomes difficult to stand out in the crowded marketing promotions (Jensen & White, 2018). For instance, in a three-hour game of football a viewer watches dozen of different marketing messages and ads due to which ads are overlooked by him. A wide range of viewers must be exposed to such marketing messages and the risk that these commercials get over looked and ignored by fans who seem more interested in the game must be kept under consideration. In case of cricket as air time of a cricket match is maximum than any other sport thus enough time is accessible for the marketers (Davis, et al., 2019).

Sports marketing is now considered to be in theoretical context by most of the economist in terms of event marketing. As sports event are the main subject where marketing can function successfully to an extent that it directs in certain ways that how maximum profit can be generated and money can be attained through such events therefore operational structure of marketing is important in this regard (Xu, 2022).

Over the years social media has been of great interest for the researchers and they have defined social media according to their view point. However, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content”. The content of social media includes written text, audios and videos along with networks. First form of social media was text that was mainly featured in the

web blogs, which are content in the written form created the user themselves and available on the website. A blog is a type of content that is created by the user on a website. It can include daily diary summaries, audio and video clips, and pictures. Web 2.0 started to explode and various technological tools started to improve and evolve. Social media also started to gain popularity among millennial. There were many social networking sites that came about during this period. People were amazed by how easy it was for them to communicate with their friends and family (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

Instagram, Twitter and, Facebook are some of the most widely used and most well-known social networks online today. Social networks, which are a subset of social media in general, have emerged as the preferred platform for individuals to communicate with one another, create and share information, market themselves and their businesses, as well as for a variety of other user-friendly purposes. While some websites, like Twitter, have 280 characters maximum for a "tweet," other websites, like Facebook and Instagram, do not have a character limit for users to post online. Instagram only allows for the sharing of images and videos. The video feature has a 15 second time limit. Brands all across the world use these distinguished networks to advertise their goods and create as much brand recognition as they can. Additionally, users may look up friends, see profiles, leave comments, and access all the other intriguing features on the website. Users can upload and share videos online using services like YouTube. On YouTube, users can also set up their own channels to manage a collection of all of their videos under one roof. These social media users, or consumers, are the ones creating the material on these platforms that generate so much internet traffic. Social media channels typically convert broadcast media's "one to many" monologues to social media's "many to many" (Auxier & Anderson, 2021).

Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Pinterest, Tiktok and are among the top 5 social networks in 2021 according to the number of users who log on daily. The most widely used image-sharing platform, Instagram, has more than 2 billion members. Other social networks with a large and loyal user base include Skype, Viber, WeChat, LinkedIn, and Snapchat. These are some of the most widely used platforms for online human interaction. Due to the ever-increasing production and consumption of smartphones and the internet's current superpower status, billions of people have everyday access to social media. The image-focused social networks like Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat have unquestionably been the most popular ones over the past couple of years. Along with that video sharing app such as Tiktok has taken the world by surprise it has about 1.534 billion users till now. Social media image sharing and video sharing has become increasingly popular, especially among the younger population (Dixon, 2022).

One of the many global industries that has successfully responded to social media marketing is the sports industry. In this day and age, sports franchises, clubs, organizations, and players are making the most of the resources that social media provides. Any sports organization's objective is to build a passionate and devoted fan base. This is easier now than it was before the introduction of technology. Sports fans adore being associated with all that their preferred team, club, or organization stands for. They are the most devoted of supporters. Sporting organizations have used this as a key to launch numerous campaigns on social media platforms across a variety of social networks over the years.

### ***Study Objectives***

1. To give a comprehensive overview and discuss the key elements of the literature around the subject; social media marketing, sports marketing, and sports marketing on social media.
2. To understand social network principles and how they have altered the marketing environment in the current digital era using Coca-Cola as a case study.
3. To examine the consumers engagement with sports and advertisements for brands on traditional and social media channels.

### ***Research Questions***

***RQ1.*** How can social media marketing for sports brands be a successful addition to traditional marketing?

***RQ2.*** What is the impact of emerging trends of social media on sports marketing and purchase intentions?

**RQ3.** Is the exposure to advertisements effecting the sports engagement of the consumers?

### **Literature Review**

Since Findling and Pelle (2004) noted that sports marketing would not exist without sports, it is necessary to determine the motivations behind people's participation in sports and their enthusiasm for them in order to conduct an analysis of the nature and structure of sports marketing. Findling and Pelle (2004) also noted that sports marketing would not exist without sports. This is very important because it will help us understand the ways in which sports may influence the lives of people and the ways in which sports marketing can capitalize on these influences. There is not a clear and concise definition of sports. It would seem that competition in sports is one of those things that has "always" been there. It is common knowledge that competitive athletics played an important part in the culture and daily life of all of the great ancient civilizations. It is a fact that sports and competitions in the athletic arena, such as the Olympics, were very well attended in ancient civilizations. According to the Domi Encyclopedia, "sports are a series of physical activities whose principal goal is to offer exercise for people."

Graham et al. (2001) came to the conclusion that sports provide a structure for achieving this goal; more specifically, they offer a context in which this inborn need and characteristic of human nature might be satiated. Because it's good for them, people should spend more time focusing on themselves. For example, jogging gained a lot of popularity because of its ability to help people burn calories and reduce their overall body weight. Sports shoe makers made unique running/jogging shoes for their customers based on this fact. The environment of sports is well suited for social contact, and the urge to mingle with others or indulge in a pastime is typically what drives people to take part in sporting events. For instance, coworkers might go play 5-a-side football as a way to get to know one another or socialize instead of visiting a bar. Sports have social ramifications in addition to physical ones, therefore. In accordance to a study "Sport is a universal phenomenon that crosses all the social, religious and language barriers. It is a common denominator that appeals to the masse". Similarly, Eigenschenk, et al., (2019) also observed that irrespective of language, religion, or ethnic origin, when two different countries compete against one another in a football match, this is something that appeals to both civilizations. That is what makes sports unique and so incredibly well-liked worldwide.

Wenner (2021) made the observation that sports have an effect on politics as well as society. However, their economic and financial side is now the most important part of who they are as a whole. In the world of sports, performance is of the utmost importance, both on and off the playing field. It is a highly competitive endeavour to try to increase one's market share. The purpose of sports marketing is for clubs, leagues, sport committees, and other organisations to grow their market share, and it is a method that is implemented. It follows the core marketing premise that the success of a product is greatly dependent on the manner in which the product is marketed. The goal of this marketing approach is to maintain customer satisfaction by positioning the customer as the most important contributor to the success of the product. According to the findings of a research conducted by Dumitru et al. (2018), the ideal definition of sports marketing "consists of activities geared to suit the demands and requirements of sport customers." The demand of the customer to engage in the sport should be satiated as the primary focus of sports marketing. Given the information shown above, it is not difficult to comprehend the breadth of the sports industry or the function that sports now provide.

There are two dimensions to sports marketing, as was previously mentioned: first the promotion of sports secondly, Using sports as a means of advertising other goods. These two facets of sports marketing are not in competition with one another since they are depending on one another. On the other hand, the latter might be seen as a continuation of the former. The first component is responsible for establishing the foundation for exploiting marketing opportunities, while the second component works to improve marketing prospects. As a result, it is not impossible for both of these dimensions to coexist at the same time, which is often how things work out in the actual world.

Marketable stereotypes, role models, and symbols are debated, according to Yu (2005). Sports marketing's importance to a sport organisation is another matter. Take the David Beckham controversy from a few years ago. His move from Manchester United to Real Madrid for a reported sum of 25 million pounds was reportedly inspired more by his marketing talents than his playing abilities, as reported by Sports Press. In addition to being a fantastic football team, Real Madrid is also a very successful brand, as seen by the fact that it has its own television station, huge money from merchandise, and high gate receipts. The problem was that, although being very well-liked and marketable in Europe and Latin America, the club was basically unmarketable in Asia. This was despite the fact that it was incredibly marketable in those other regions. On the other hand, David Beckham has a very sizable fan base in Asia, a region in which he enjoys a great deal of popularity. In point of fact, David Beckham has garnered a great deal of notoriety thanks to his many accomplishments both on and off the field.

According to Hines (2022), in the last 15 years, social media has likely developed into the most well-liked commodity that can be purchased on the internet. It is incredible how far social media has grown throughout the world in such a short amount of time. According to Search Engine Journal, 4.55 billion individuals all around the globe participate in some kind of social media activity (2022). Regular users of social media make up 57.6 percent of the total population of the globe. This indicates that more than half of the people living in the globe make use of social media on a consistent basis, which is typically once per month.

KEMP (2022) noted that a survey by Data Reportal (2022) found that people of all ages are drawn to social media in Pakistan. In Pakistan in January 2022, there were 82.90 million internet users. Because social media is primarily used on smartphones and the internet, young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 make up the majority of users. This is because younger generations around the world are more tech-savvy. The population in the 30 to 49 age range is not far behind. 71.70 million Social media users of them use social media regularly. The elder generation does not utilize the internet as much or as frequently as millennials do.

Cave & Miller (2015) suggested that for sporting organizations to stay current and in touch with the online community, having a sizable and cult-like following on social media is crucial. Additionally, having a relationship with sports leagues and their athletes is advantageous when negotiating with potential sponsors. It was reported that Sports rights holders can develop new communication channels with their audience through social media engagement that can be monitored and recognized as a new business potential with sponsors. Meanwhile, companies who participate through sponsorships and social media campaigns gain more brand affinity and loyalty.

Sehar et al (2019) found that social media have grown to be a significant role in affecting a variety of areas of consumer behavior, including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchasing behavior, and post-purchase communication and review. The emergence of social media has significantly changed how client organizations interact with their consumers. In the previous few years, digital and social media have grown in popularity while traditional media has decreased. This explains why there is a lot of online interaction between businesses and their clients.

The global web has been completely overtaken by social networks. Here are a few of the best and most well-known:

**Facebook:** Mehta (2020) noted that in 2016, Facebook, which was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his college roommates, has surpassed all other social media platforms. Facebook has actually united the world, more so than any other social media platform, with its more than 2.85 billion members as of 2022 statistic report. This platform has grown tremendously over the years because to the possibility of making new friends and reconnecting with existing ones. This website enables users to connect with their preferred sports teams, celebrities, and other users on its network as well as share written articles, photographs, videos, links, and status updates. It was asserted that Facebook may have been the website that really got social networking off the ground. It has largely accompanied the social media revolution and is currently the most populous social networking platform.

**Twitter:** Crilley et al (2022) found that the simplest social network to use is possibly Twitter. 280 updated characters for a "tweet" is more than enough to post a link, share a picture, and send a message to one's favorite brand or celebrity. This social networking service receives daily logins from more than 100 million members with current 396.5 million users as of 2022.

**Instagram:** Janssen et al (2022) suggested that Instagram is a cutting-edge photo-sharing program that enables users to post photos as well as add various filters to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the image. Instagram has more than 2 billion users, and it is most popular with people between the ages of 18 and 35.

**LinkedIn:** Cortez & Dastidar (2022) noted the most widely used social media platform for networking and business communication is LinkedIn. In today's technologically advanced business environment, it is quite helpful for keeping a formal profile, applying for jobs, and making new contacts. From the standpoint of the employer, LinkedIn is a tool for finding new hires, establishing new vendor relationships, and maintaining a firm grip on business and industry news. The demographic group that uses their smartphone for social networks the most, LinkedIn has more than 875 million users and has established itself as the preferred social media platform for professionals.

Mallipeddi et al (2022) noted that as was previously said, one of the main factors driving the expansion of the sports sector is sponsorships. Brands want to be associated with the most well-known sports figures that are reputable both on and off the field. It was countered that simply because viewers like watching soccer on television, it does not follow that they will go to actual soccer matches. Popular athletes have gained a lot of money by endorsing businesses, including Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Roger Federer, Wayne Rooney, and Virat Kohli, to mention a few. These athletes frequently post or tweet about the good or service that they are supporting because they have a large social media following those numbers millions of users across numerous social media platforms. Millions of their admirers who follow them on social media receive their message as a result, which increases sales of the reputable good or service. One of these well-known athletes with a sizable social media following is Cristiano Ronaldo. The first athlete to reach 100 million Facebook fans was Cristiano Ronaldo. For the purpose of promoting their goods, several of the biggest companies in the world, like Nike, Tag Heuer, and Herbalife, have signed Ronaldo to endorsement contracts. Ronaldo is the most followed sports player on social media, with more than 122 million Facebook fans and more than 500 million followers on Instagram and Twitter as of this writing.

Su et al. (2020) found that there is a relationship between athlete brands and a network of other brand connections. In order to have an understanding of how athlete brands are developed, it is thus essential to take into consideration the combined impacts of connected brands at multiple levels, including the league, the team, and the athlete. It is essential to take into consideration the growth elements that have an effect on the athlete's Instagram and Twitter followings at vital moments when teams are making personnel changes. By collecting data from the NFL Draft because it provides a key window of opportunity to document the combined impact of variables connected to the league, club, player, and platform on the expansion of athlete brands. When a large sample of athlete social media followings from before and after the draft were compared, it was shown that immediate changes occur as soon as players begin their careers at the professional level. According to the results, if one want to have a comprehensive understanding of the role that each constituent plays in the process of developing athlete brands, it is essential to examine a variety of factors within the same model. Because the league and team are instances of master brands into which an athlete brand is incorporated, these new brand partnerships are beneficial to athlete brands. Athlete brands enjoy benefits from these new brand partnerships. In addition, network effects and the need of establishing a powerful brand before a significant event both stress its worth.

M.Nisar, et al (2018) another study attempted with the purpose of shedding light on the use of social media by sports teams as a form of online advertising. The purpose of the study is to get an understanding of how social media may be utilized to increase interaction between consumers and audience engagement. For this reason, an analysis of the interaction on the websites and Facebook pages of the 32 football teams who were playing in the 2014–2015 European Champions Cup was carried out. A Pearson correlation was performed

on the Facebook pages in order to assess the strength of the link between two variables and analyze how spectators engage with each other. It was shown that increased customer interaction on social media might be seen favorably and can boost viewership. It was also evaluated that a football club's website interactivity is not influenced by how well they do in a competition. The clubs in the higher pools of the European Champions do not seem to interact with their fans more effectively than the clubs in the lower pools, regardless of how well they do. These results were further supported by the results of multiple regression. The results have significant ramifications, chief among which is that social media, when used properly, is a powerful tool for marketing and can draw fans to a sports organization.

Vale & Fernandes (2018) noted that fans of sports form distinctive and interesting relationships with their favorite teams in person and online. However, there is still little social media-related study on sports fan engagement. Research comprehended why and how sports fans interact with clubs on social media. Seven motivations—Information, Entertainment, Personal Identity, Integration and Social Interaction, Empowerment, Remuneration, and Brand Love—as well as three dimensions of online engagement behaviors—Consumption, Contribution, and Creation—were taken into account in accordance with the Uses and Gratifications approach and the Consumers' Online Brand-Related Activities framework. There were 562 responses to a web-based poll that was sent out to football club supporters of a significant UEFA league on Facebook. Consumption, contribution, and creation are mostly driven by needs for information, empowerment, and brand love, respectively. The demand for social interaction and integration appeared as the second-most significant motive overall.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Under the realm of Uses and gratification theory the current study explores the role of social media in sports marketing. Proposed by Blumler and Katz theory suggests that users have active role in not only media choices but media consumption as well. They choose media and content to gratify their needs. With the emerging trends of social media and marketing people have shifted from traditional to digital platforms. The convenience of use and personalization of social media platforms have encouraged consumers to consume media content disseminated by digital media. With masses of the target audience available online sports marketers are also using this opportunity to boost their sales. In this study coca cola has been used as case study, for the brand has linked its marketing strategy to prominent sportsmen and athletes. People follow their favorite players on social media and get inspired by their lifestyles. Such gratification of desires helps the marketers to achieve their goals.

### **Methodology**

In this study quantitative research method has been used by designing and developing a structured questionnaire to establish a narrative on the marketing of products by sports using social media in addition to traditional media. In this study the activities and promotional conduct of popular brand Coca cola are presented as the case study. The purpose of the survey is to learn more about Pakistani citizens' involvement with and viewing patterns of sports sponsor brand commercials in traditional and social media. This survey is also used to determine whether traditional marketing strategies still have value for brands in the current marketing environment and the influence of social media on sports marketing. The questionnaire's questions were specifically created to achieve the study's goals. Only closed-ended questions were employed in this particular survey. In this questionnaire there are 20 questions in all. There are two different question types: yes/no and selecting from a list of choices. So, these are closed-ended inquiries. Certain characteristics in the individual such as age, gender and education were taken into account.

### **Population**

Pakistani citizens aging 18 years or above were defined as the population of the study.

### **Sampling**

Convenience sampling technique was used to define the sample size i.e. (N=802).



## Results

Sports social media marketing has grown to be such a major tool for globally recognized brands. Due to the fact that there were various activities using digital and social media, marketing, and programs to administer, Coca Cola established a whole digital sports division. Gaining a sizable following on social media takes time. Customers must believe in the brand and decide to follow it online continuously. That is how a company develops a loyal fan base. The following are some of the main conclusions of this study given this and the survey's results:

Table 1: *Internet/ Social media usage*

Statement	Yes	No	Neutral
Are you an active internet/social media user?	85%	12%	3%
Do you have an account on any of the social networks?	80.2%	11.8%	8%

Table 1 shows the values of the responses recoded from the defined sample of the study. 85% responded that they are active internet/social media users, 12 % negated their interest in social media while 3% remained neutral. 80.2% of the sample questioned in Pakistan having an account on at least one social network platform.

Table 2: *Favourite social site*

Statement	Instagram	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube
Which of the following social networks is your favorite??	40%	47%	5%	8%

Table 2 shows the values of responses recoded against the given statement. 47% of them stating that Facebook is the one they love using the most, 40% prefer Instagram, 5% twitter and 8% YouTube.

Table 3: *Time consumed on social media*

Statement	At least- 1 hour	2 to 4 hours	4 to 8 hours
How long do you typically spend each day on social media?	14.5%	68.5%	17%

Social networks are currently at an all-time high in popularity. The majority of the sample 68.83% is made up of Pakistani who routinely use social media for between 2 to 4 hours. 17% use for 4to 8 hours and 14.5% use social media for at least 1 hour daily.

Table 4. *Social media use for sports brand*

Statement	Yes	No
Do you follow the social media accounts of your favorite athletes?	83.77%	16.33%
Do you share, like, or comment on the social media postings from your favorite international sports brands?	62.3%	37.3%
Do you frequently utilize the relevant hashtags on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or any other social media platforms while discussing a brand's goods or services?	81.17%	18.83%
Do motivational social media promotions like #BelievingMagic or #RealMagic by Coca-Cola make you want to buy their drinks even more?	51.03%	48.97%
After interacting with the brand on social media, do you feel more emotionally linked to it??	56.3%	48.98%
Are you active on social media during major live sporting events like the Olympics, Cricket World Cup, or the Football World Cup?	67.2%	32.8%

Do user's reviews on websites like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube affect your decision to purchase a product?	76%	24%
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Table 4 shows the values of the responses recorded in accordance with the given statements. Majority of the sample population, 83.77%, follow their favorite athletes. The majority of consumers 81.17% don't use the corresponding hashtag of the social media campaigns that firms advertise. The social media marketing initiatives of Coca-Cola, such as #BelievingIsMagic or #BelievingMagic for the ICC men's Cricket World Cup 2022, have had no inspirational or influencing effect on the (48.97%) of the respondents while majority 56.3% is affected by appeals in advertisements. Similarly, majority of the users are active on social media during major sporting events like Cricket world cup, Olympic, Fifa World Cup etc. 76% of respondents are affected by the users reviews on social media platforms.

Table 5. *Cold-drink purchase*

Statement	Retail Stores	Online shopping
Where do you purchase cold drinks?	50.2%	49.8%

Values given in Table 9 show that 50.2% of the respondents prefer to buy cold drinks from a retail shop while others buy it online.

Table 6. *Media platforms for brand advertisement*

Statement	Television/Radio	Internet/Social Media	Newspaper	Billboards
Which platform exposes you to brand advertisements the most?	43%	40%	12%	5%

Values illustrated in table 6 show that television is still the largest source of brand marketing with 43% of the majority responses favoring the conception. 40% believe that they are exposed brand advertisements on social media, while 12% newspapers and 5% on billboard advertisements.

Table 7. *YouTube for ads*

Statement	Yes: I watch	No: I skip them
Do you view the YouTube ads before the video of your choice loads??	52.11%	47.89%

Table 7 shows that majority the respondents (52.11%) prefer to skip ads on YouTube while 47.89% watch ads on YouTube.

Table 8. *Social media advertisements of sportsmen*

Statement	Yes: I do	No: I don't
Do you view social media advertisements featuring well-known sportsmen like Babar Azam, Lionel Messi, and Cristiano Ronaldo when they appear in your newsfeed or timeline?	68.5%	31.8%

Values in table 8 show that majority of the respondents 68.5% of the study do watch social media ads featuring their favorite sportsmen while other don't watch such ads.

Table 9. *Product buying reason*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>I will purchase the product because he/she is my favorite sports athlete</b>	<b>I will purchase the product only if needed</b>
What effect does an endorsement from your favorite sports figure have on your choice to buy a product?	39.91%	60.09%

Table 9 shows that 60.09% of the participants in our poll indicated that they would only buy the goods if they actually needed it while other are persuaded by watching ads.

Table 10: *Favourite Coca-Cola ad platform*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Television/ Radio/ Print</b>	<b>Social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram)</b>
On which platform do you watch coca cola ads the most?	51.7%	48.3%
On which platform advertisements of Coca cola are more attractive to you?	49.2%	49.8%

Responses given in table 10 reveal that traditional media (TV/Radio/Print) is the major media to disseminate coca cola advertisements with 51.7% of the responses in favor while 48.3% participants are exposed o coca cola ads on social media. On the other hand an equal trend was observed among the responses with regards to the more attractive coca cola ads on traditional or social media platforms.

Table 11: *Ad difference on TV and Radio*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you feel any difference in the ads of Coca cola on social media or other media like TV/Radio etc?	68%	32%
Do you buy Coca cola after watching its ad on media?	49.09%	50.91%

Values given in table 11 show that majority of the respondents (68%) do not find any difference in the ads of coca cola on traditional or social media platforms while 32% believed that there is difference in the ads disseminated on social media and traditional media. Similarly, there has been recorded a slight difference of opinion among the respondents on their decision to buy coca cola after being exposed to particular advertisement of the product.

## Discussion

The research that was conducted and the findings that were obtained make it abundantly evident that sports sponsor businesses may significantly profit from engaging in social media marketing. Traditional marketing has been around for a long time, but it is losing ground as a consequence of technical improvements and the widespread use of social media networks for the promotion of brands. Traditional marketing is getting less and less popular as a result of these factors. In addition, the theoretical study presented in this article makes it abundantly evident that social media undoubtedly plays a key position in significantly affecting the overall landscape of the worldwide marketing sector. Conventional marketing techniques may and should be supplemented with social media marketing in order to maximise brand exposure for sports sponsorship businesses. Even with the over-the-top digital services that are currently available, there is still a television audience. Even though the notion that television is dying has been pervasive for almost ten years, many businesses are still vying for airtime to air their advertising.

For instance, a small struggling pizza shop in Philadelphia that made headlines in traditional media by giving away an additional piece to the homeless. This tactic attracted a lot of media coverage on television

and in newspapers. A guest appearance on the Ellen Show, which is hosted by well-known television personality Ellen Degeneres and has millions of viewers globally, was also extended to the business's owner. Due to the enhanced brand recognition brought about by the coverage in conventional media, this company's online presence benefited as the number of likes on its Facebook page climbed dramatically within a short period of time. To achieve the best outcomes and reach a wider audience, marketers must establish the proper connections between social media and traditional media marketing strategies (Elkins, 2022).

In the current era of technology variety of platforms are available where sports can be watched either free of cost or some paid versions are also offered. Therefore, with variety in available sports platforms its marketing can be adopted into many forms as well. Inside the stadiums teams sell their respective advertising area to the marketers who seem interested in purchasing posters and billboards for promotion of their goods or services including print ads as well. In the same way TV channels offer airtime during sports events for sale to the advertising associations (Jovanovska, 2020).

Short brand advertisements on social media appear to be more appealing and popular. For instance, the well-known Coca cola Facebook advertisement featuring the finest football players in the world was brief and of high production value. Sports marketers that think in such novel, unconventional ways help their brands connect with consumers. The opportunity to easily share opinions on a public platform and offer immediate feedback is another aspect of social networks that people love most, not only in Pakistan but around the world. Consumers love and anticipate new and inventive content from sports brands, such as polished images, amusing GIFs, and professionally made movies, as a result of their recent exposure to new technologies. With so many sporting and non-sporting activities taking place simultaneously these days, the average consumer's attention span has greatly diminished.

Even though study shows good statistic concerning social media engagement of sports marketing, sports brands should still be concerned about it and find new ways to engage emotionally with consumers, especially after spending time, money, and effort on their social media initiatives. The fact that well over half of the sample population in Pakistan still prefers to buy cold drinks from brick-and-mortar grocery stores rather than online. For consumers to make an online purchase, firms must develop engaging marketing campaigns and online promotions. Famous sportsmen who support things on social media are effective to persuade consumers to buy.

## **Conclusion**

After carefully examining the extensive research done and the relevant conclusions drawn from both the theoretical research and the questionnaire results, it is safe to say that even though social media has a sizable audience, it doesn't necessarily mean that people has quit the consumption of traditional media. Television is still a popular medium for people to view live movies, sporting events, and other forms of entertainment material. When it comes to employing traditional ways of marketing on television, billboards, and print advertising, sports marketers may achieve better success than they already do if they are able to think outside of the box when it comes to these methods of marketing. The conventional marketing environment has been radically transformed by social media, which has resulted in traditional marketing methods being more out of date. According to the findings of this research study, it is essential to keep in mind that conventional marketing still carries a substantial amount of value and emotion among customers in the modern market, provided that it is positioned and presented in an effective manner. There is no question that traditional marketing strategies have been replaced by digital ones at sports sponsoring companies like Coca-Cola and other businesses in general.

Traditional marketers have clearly taken a huge hit as a result of social media's rise. Nowadays, people are using the internet for longer periods of time. Traditional marketing strategies have proven challenging for marketers due to customer attention span issues and the wide range of content that is now available online. To be successful, these marketers need to combine their traditional marketing techniques with social media

marketing strategies. Although difficult, it is possible with strategic planning and innovative marketing techniques.

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