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**CONSUMER'S ENGAGEMENT TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA
FOR SPORTS EVENT MARKETING IN INDIA**

Master's Thesis

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I declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors have been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously been presented for grading. The document length is 11826 words from the introduction to the end of the conclusion.

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ABSTRACT

In a current situation, sports event struggles about participants in India is the concerning issues for the event organizers and their stakeholders. Previous researches in a similar area have shown that due to the lack of proper marketing and understanding of social media fundamentals amongst sports event organizers are the reasons for not witnessing enough sports participants. Social media can be proved as an effective marketing tool to attract sports lovers. This paper examines the lack of knowledge in organizers about social media user's motives and needs in terms of sports events engagement. The aim of this paper to find out social media effectiveness in relation to sports event marketing in India. This paper is based on the theory of consumer engagement and social media engagement. The research was directed with a mixed method approach, both qualitative and quantitative approaches used wherein qualitative approach semi-structured interviews conducted with a representative of sports event organizing companies in India, to get organizers viewpoint on consumer behavior, motives and needs while interaction with sports events on social media. In a quantitative approach, an online – survey conducted with social media users who attended events before with social media, which helps to understand the user's reception over sports event marketing on social media. This research concludes that social media has the potentiality to convert its users into prospective sports event consumers in India.

Key Words: Social Media Engagement, Consumer Engagement, Sports Event Marketing, Sports Engagement, Online Marketing, India.

INTRODUCTION

India has a great potential economy and has the second largest population in the world. There is no denying in the fact that, in the current scenario, even though lots of other industries are flourishing in India; the sports industry is struggling and couldn't reach to that peak where it supposed to be. The reason for this problem is the lack of promotion and inappropriate marketing strategies for sports events. The contribution of ticket sales is not reaching 10% of the revenue pie (Pande, 2018). This is the main challenge in the sports events and concerning issues for the event organizers and stakeholders.

Previous research in the parallel area concludes that there are many great event organizers with the ability to success events, but they are lacking at the appropriate branding and marketing for the events especially social media marketing (Kennelly, 2017). Related online articles also expose that, sports organizers are having a lack of understanding about social media user's motivation and which is the reason organizers are not acquainted with the potentiality of the social media marketing (Clapp, 2017). There is limited research in the area of social media user's motives and needs for sports event engagement.

Although cricket still is the dominant sport in India from a viewership standpoint, all the other sports are not getting enough attention. However, sports in India have been given tremendous appreciation and getting the attention of the young generation since the last decades. The sports industry has potentiality over the contribution to the national growth in India. It is found that most young generations have a keen interest in sports, but the question is how youth can be converted into the potential business consumer for sports events.

Nowadays, in India, Social Media users and their engagement, increasing at an alarming rate especially in the young generation. Since 2015, there were 142 million users of social media, which increase to 260 million in 2019 and growing more and more every other day (Statista, 2019). The current growth in social media in India has the potential to influence businesses which can give

tremendous business results. Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp are generally popular in India. Previous researchers have discovered that, social media marketing campaigns can be proven as the best investment opportunities for any successful business or organization.

Earlier sports event industry used to prefer print media marketing campaigns to increase their number of participations, to attract more and more participants (Rothschild, 2011). However, print media and relevant forms, on the other hand, can be expensive, time-consuming and not that effective to reach a large audience when it is about a country like India which has the greatest population. However, times have changed, now more emphasized is given to social media regarding event promotion and marketing. (Harb *et al.* 2019).

Previously scholars have revealed that social media is recognized as most powerful relationship builder tool, however, there is a lack of understating regarding how well and why organization uses this platform (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). Social media as a marketing tool can promote a sporting event and attracts new potential consumers if the organizers use this platform more effectively and efficiently. It is generally noticed that social media user's motives towards using such platforms are to connect themselves with the current world. Nonetheless, this paper will discuss in the deepest sense of social media engagement.

The aim of this paper is to understand the social media effectiveness as a marketing tool for a sports event in India by concentrate research problem; the lack of knowledge about social media users' motives and needs in terms of sports event engagement in the organizers and its influence on sports event marketing in India. Two research question has been set to achieve research aim (1) What is social media user's reception on sports event marketing in India? (2) How motives and needs of social media users for sports event engagement impulse to become acquainted with sports events in India?

To get the answers for research questions following research tasks were set: (1) Finding on an understanding of India's sports marketing and users' reception. (2) Considerate evidence on consumer behavior (motives and needs) over online sports event marketing. (3) Understand brand engagement and brand relationships through social media influence. (4) Highlights the knowledge gap in sports marketing and promotion over social media.

The first part of this thesis is a theoretical framework where the literature reviews will present the earlier research done by scholars in the major theme of sports events and social media engagement.

The author will be examining the concept of consumer engagement in sports, social media influence, social media engagement, social media marketing and lastly sports event and social media which will help to achieve a research aim.

The second part pronounced methodology where data collection is done by a mixed-method approach will be shown. In a qualitative approach, a semi-structured interview is conducted with sports event organizers in India to understand how organizers make their marketing strategies and promotion planning, also what behavior consumer follows on social media when it comes to sports event campaign. In a quantitative approach, an online questionnaire survey is conducted with social media users to get information about social media users' reception over social media marketing and sports event engagement. Collected data will examine with the conducted interviews, besides data analyses and interpretation to find out answers for the research questions. The final part is about conclusion over this thesis along with limitation and future research, references & appendices at the end.

The author would like to thank his supervisor Iivi Riivits-Arkonsuo, who helped to carry out this thesis. Her guidance and support benefit in conducting this paper within the decided timeframe. Without her direction, this thesis couldn't be done in a proper manner. The author also thankful to the event management companies in India for giving time to answer all the interview questions, which helps the author to get extensive information to conduct this research. Along with the online survey respondents who shared their personal opinion on social media and sports event.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the author has described the concept of consumer engagement in sports and social media. First, consumer engagement in sports is specified to understand people association with sports events. Then the three aspects of social media are introduced; starting with social media influence, social media engagement and social media marketing which elaborate how those aspects work individually and affects consumer motives and needs during the consumer journey. Lastly, the interconnection relations between a sports event and social media are covered to achieve the research purpose.

1.1 Consumer engagement in sports events

The previous researcher has discovered that the term engagement can be defined as a positive state of understanding which is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli *et al.* 2001). Where vigor characterized with high mental resilience, dedication measured for the strong involvement with a feeling of significance to the prospect and enthusiasm, and an absorption defines as concentration. The notion ‘Consumer engagement’ has been invented by the business leaders looking to manage and motivate consumers to network and associate with the brand or company (Brodie *et al.* 2016). Based on the previous research in a similar area, the author has observed that engagement in a context with sports is an engagement to be an optimum state in sports and a type of wellbeing (Guillén and Martínez -Alvarado, 2014).

Sports industries are creating many opportunities for a niche market such as tourism and employment. Sports event plays a vital role in sports tourism for any nation. Organizers and sponsors of the sporting event are increasingly aware of the benefits to be derived from creating such events (Alonso-Dos-Santos *et al.* 2017). Nowadays sports in India have been given tremendous appreciation and has been witnessing many new developments that have contributed to

its own significant growth (Ernst & Young LLP. 2017), which can create new phenomena for the sports lover to rise their desired towards participation in the sports. Sports event products are the combination of the goods, sponsors, vendors and ticket sales, which nowadays is the complex task for the event organizers (Harb *et al.* 2019).

It is discovered that mass participation in the sports event such as a marathon, cycling race gives motivation to the people to become more active physically (Brown *et al.* 2017). Growth in sports mass participation primes to arise into the health of the nation, which is the current interest of the government to promote their sports events across the country (Boardley, 2013). Sports event has the power to attract a large audience, attention of media and can contribute to the nation in terms of representation of the national individuality across the world, which has ultimately alignment on the nation's tourism demand and identity (Bowdin *et al.* 2011). The current development in the event industry due to major sports event has been witnessing large scale growth and government support mainly concern with the leveraging positive sponsorship and regeneration of opportunities which directly leads to the measure place competitiveness (Jepson *et al.* 2014) Furthermore, motivation-opportunity-ability model support measuring self-efficacy contribution into the consumer engaged in the event planning process.

According to the previous researchers, engagement in sports for the participants that is linked with emotions of the event or occasion, where participants often can be considered as a sports enthusiast, whether they play competitive or recreational sports, or if they are not part of any sport but enjoying watching sports event (Guillén and Martínez -Alvarado, 2014). The importance of social, cultural and personal sense attached to the event several components as well as its revisit effects which is emphasized key motivation for the attendees to appreciate the event's traditions and intellectual improvement (Westwood *et al.* 2018).

The term consumer engagement involves a variety of concepts such as brand loyalty, brand relationship, concentric marketing, customer relationship management, orientation marketing and social networks (Barger *et al.* 2016). Engagement comes with the individual interests, dedication, and level of involvement in the activity. Further research in the same area, origination for the initiation of sport participation, involvement is significantly influenced by motivation. It has been documented that, in general events provide feelings of attachment because of the involvement of different people from different backgrounds (Hixson, 2014). These social inspirations are important for the attendees, which have to study by the event designer to get the best out of event success.

Rendering to the planned behavior theory, an intention to participate in sports is the outcomes of the individual's attitude, norms and perceived behavior about sports (Boardley, 2013). Sports include different forms of physical activities over casual and organized participation, the primary focus is to enhance physical ability and psychological well-being, also it leads to forming social interactions that produce competitive outcomes as a whole (Ramchandani *et al.* 2017). Previous research in the sports event engagement shows that the young generation is mostly associated with the live event such as sports event (Yeoman, 2013).

The term sports engagement is not defined only for participation in the events, today's new technology has made it broader in a sense; for instance, engaging in sports-related activities on tools like the Internet, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Such tools also sustenance sports devotees get themselves involve in sports with their everyday lives (Rothschild, 2011). Social Media currently plays a very important character for the consumer brand relationship with sports in the online association.

In the same field researchers have highlighted that consumer engagement behavior for any product or service is nothing but the cause of the consumer previous engagement (Viswanathan *et al.* 2017). Moreover, conceptual model consumer engagement provides a highlight in the relation between Purchase behavior, consumption behavior, and engagement behavior. Where Purchase starts with the exchange of money over the service. Production and consumption stage show the intention of the purchase. The simplest example of this model is purchasing a ticket (Purchase) for the sports event to watch the match (Consumption). In the sports event, consumer prior association for event leads them to buy event tickets.

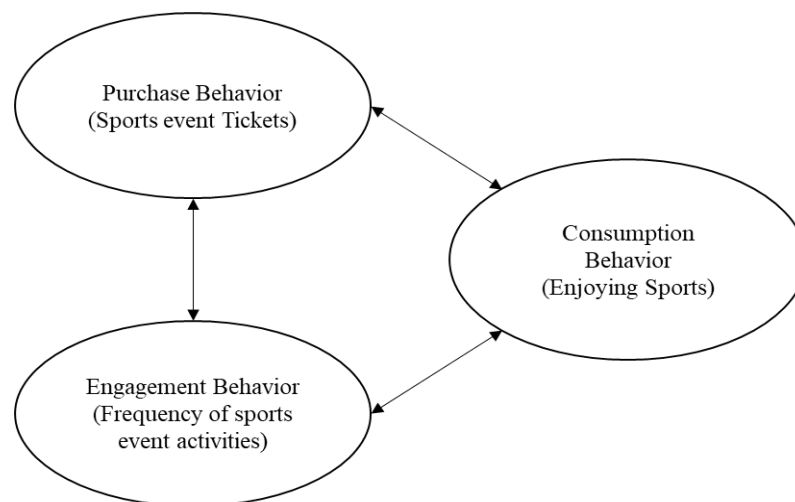


Figure 1: Conceptual model of customer engagement/disengagement.
Sources: Viswanathan *et al.* 2017.

According to Figure 1, consider the sports event engagement and disengagement role. If the sports event organizer is failing to pay attention to the consumers, their engagement towards the brand and services will start demising (Viswanathan *et al.* 2017). Consequently, sales will also decrease. In arguing with this theory some researcher has discovered that engagement is behavior founded extends beyond the purchase which has brand focus involvement in the purchase decision (Ashley and Tuten 2015).

India is the world's second most populated country in the world, which has billions of people and what those people are doing in their free time is also an obvious question. Sports are very much popular in gaining subjects in India and become one of the preferred choices to occupy leisure time. Besides, events are often identified as a place for social integration and social bonding between individuals and others, but in reality, the event is organized for the purpose of fun, enjoyment, and interaction with the other world (Shone and Parry, 2013). People love to follow their passion regarding the events, where events are could be anything, such as sports, festivals, concerts or entrainment.

One of the biggest aspects of the sports event enthusiasm is that participants prefer to watch sports events from the arena itself rather than watch on television broadcasts. This gives a boost to their passion and they can enjoy the event to the fullest (Rundh and Gottfridsson, 2015). A group of people who are psychologically associated with sports is vulnerable to influence themselves by the sporting role models (Brown *et al.* 2017). Moreover, consumer behavior has been changed with the time, now they like to be an active user for the sports event rather than a passive audience. However, event location plays a very important role to appeal to participants in the sporting event. A showcase of destination imaginary and description in the promotion of the event will create high chances of a rise in a number of the participants (Kennelly, 2017).

Engagement for the sports and involvement in the sports, all this exposure to the sports event level can give a direct and positive influence on the recognition of the event sponsors, which can create fund opportunity for the event operations from the sponsors itself (Cornwell *et al.* 2001). Famous brand as a sponsor association with the sports event can also affect the behavior of consumer due to previous brand association. It is found that people like to talk more about an event or sports with others for which they are engaged previously. consumer engagement in the sports event ultimately attracts new sponsors for the event which can give the more monetary success of the event. Participants attitude related to the sports engagement has an impact on the event, sponsorship, sponsor patronage and buyer intention (Hazari, 2018).

Consumer engagement in sports event has a direct and positive impact on the sales figures of the event. Ticket sales for the sports event can be measured with the help of current engagement amongst the consumers. Previous researches in the consumer engagement with sports events conclude that, engagement plays not only significant role in the financial success of the event, but also it helps the organizers to create long term brand relationship with the consumers (Laurell and Söderman 2018).

The author believes that sports event engagement is a growing concept in India. Consumer engagement with sports notion must take in the consideration that designed for future marketers in rapport with organizing sports event. Furthermore, online viewership and engagement of sports are continuously rising in India (Ernst & Young LLP, 2017). The author has highlighted the viewpoint that, to understand social media user's reception about sports event marketing, first the level of people engagement term in sports in India is needing to observe. This is the reason the author had driven this concept in this paper for a better view on engagement about the sports event as a whole.

1.2 Social media influence

Social media has a great influence on people living nowadays. There is no denying of the fact that social media have drastically changed the way of people interacting in their daily lives. It helps users to connect themselves with the rest of the world. Sharing of pictures, videos, views make communication more interesting and effective. The uniqueness of social media is that it is two-way communication dialogues which offers interactivity and time effective response to a direct and cultivated communication (Downes *et al.* 2018).

One single post or blog can read and examine by the millions of people at the same time, social media tools are available through most internet-enabled devices and are linked to users' physical location as well (Bernhardt *et al.* 2012). Researcher have claimed that, there are no conclusive types of social media, but their common features allow individual and businesses to interact in this technology world which could not possible before (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014).

The current growth in social media around the world has given enormous opportunities to its users to create and share content online with billions of people. The huge amount of information is flowing on social media that influence its members to get attention on other users spread messages (Romero *et al.* 2011). Previous scholars have found out that, the term influencing behavior states

to the consumer overall contributions over the resources like knowledge, involvement, and pride that move perception and preferences for the company or brand (Brodie *et al.* 2016). Social media offers wide prospects of content creation, peer-to-peer conversation with the exchange of information amongst the users which is the prime factor to get influence about social media platforms (Rothschild, 2011).

New technologies have influenced the old traditional method of search and share information. Social media influences, increasing day by day among the people, due to this reason businesses are now in pressure to increase the power of social media in their marketing strategies (Downes *et al.* 2018). Behavior and attitude of the consumer conservatively been disseminated from media like television, radio, newspaper, and magazines. Moreover, social media have replaced the old traditional media, which have great influence among the consumers especially the young consumers. The researcher also discloses that, these behavior changes present an opportunity as well as a challenge for the organization (Duffett, 2017).

Popular social networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram are generally used by many businesses for the product or service marketing (Chrisos, 2018). The organization's directly targeting younger consumers with social media because the usage of social media is extremely increasing amongst the young generation. In this "socially charged" era, where users are influencing each other, the way companies used to influence consumers (Rohm *et al.* 2013). Furthermore, the researcher also has investigated that, social media have a high influence on consumer engagement behavior which has to be recognized by future marketers.

It is generally noticed that, social media have both positive and negative influences on consumer behavior. Positive in terms of quick information gathering about the current activity of the businesses. However, the consumer behavior quickly turns to negative if the platforms are not actively monitored. The consumer spends more and more time on social networks to get more information over products and service, buying decision for what to purchase often reproduces the communication with other's influence (Hudson and Hudson, 2013).

Consumers nowadays prefer to connect themselves with their choice of brands and activities on social media according to their previous influence (Hollebeek *et al.* 2014). Previous research illustrations that social media has fundamentally changed the consumer decision process regarding their buying behavior. Also, researchers have exposed that social media advertisement will grow incessantly in the future and have the potentiality to produce relatively strong results due to its ability to tightly target audience through social media activities (Hudson and Hudson, 2013). Social

media has the power to change the consumer attitude and behavior over the product and services by its influence.

Social media is a place that helps businesses to create brand association with consumers through direct communication and offers unique opportunities to manage favorable public perception through its influence power (Thompson *et al.* 2018). Communication plays a very important role during the influence creation process amongst the people. People always like to take the opinion of other consumers about the things which are less familiar to them, which have a bigger influence on the consumer buying decision. With the below Lasswell's communication model, it will be easy to understand the communicative importance regarding influence.

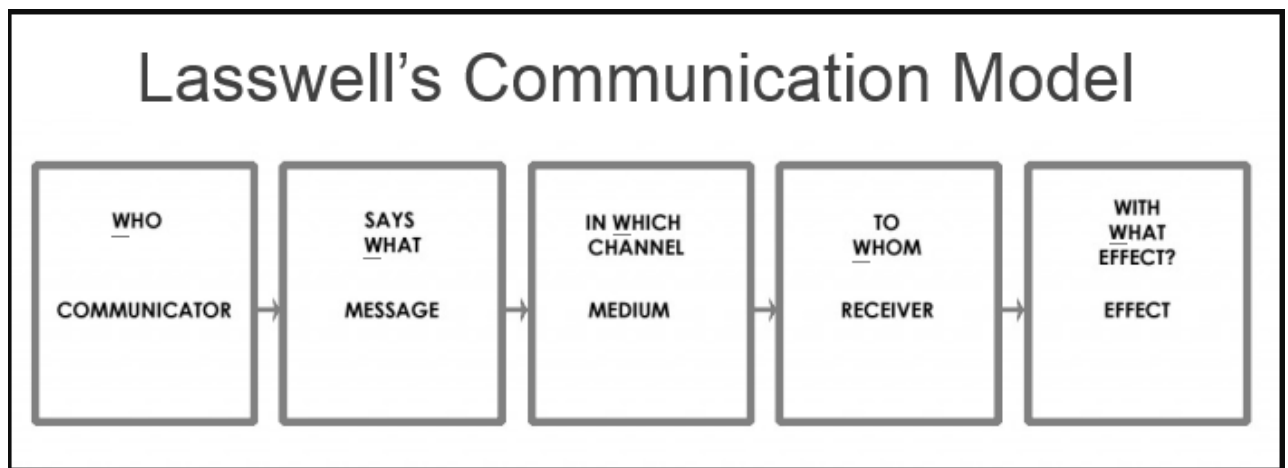


Figure 2: Lasswell's communication model 1948.

In social media, communication with other users or with the companies has effects on the consumer buying decision. Lasswell's model designates the act of the communication by defining who said it, what was said, in what channel it was said, to whom it was said what effect it was said. To better understand, let's take an example of a sports event advertisement on social media as per Figure 2. One user found that there is a sports event in the city who have a keen interest to attend the event, this one user (Who) informed about the event (Message) on social media (Channel) to other users (Receiver) with a keen interest (Effect) to attend the event. In this case, users will take the opinion or reviews on social media of others who show their interest to attend the event and accordingly made their decision.

Social media influence plays a very important role in the consumer engagement process. Social media influence and engagement are two sides of the same coin. Nowadays, in India, social media are using by many people and their influences increasing day by day. Social media create a greater influence on sports amongst people. Sports event organizers can promote their products and take immense benefits out of it.

1.3 Social media engagement

Social media is considered as a part of the user's daily life. It is the easiest and the best way how people are engaging themselves with others in this busy world. Certain features of social media such as user-generated content and web 2.0 make its user engagement more interesting and entertaining. Researchers in the studies investigate that, higher engagement in social media is due to a willingness to share and create information and content with other social network users and its increasing consumption in daily lives (Hazari, 2018).

The theory of consumer engagement in the context of social media explains the term consumer engagement by the level of expression of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by a degree of activation, identification, and absorption in brand interactions (Hollebeek, 2011a). Social media are seeing as a mainstream media platform that connects almost half of the world's population with each other (Forlani, 2019).

Previous researches respect to the social media users motive reveals that there are a number of categories motives that encourage the consumer to engage themselves with social media. such as, promotion and incentives (Schultz and Peltier, 2013), real-time information, product & service information (Rohm *et al.* 2013), social influence (Azar *et al.* 2016), impression management (Berger, 2014), browsing, purchase, customer service, branded content, entertainment (Son *et al.* 2012) and personalization (Hamilton *et al.* 2016). There is no doubt on the fact that the purpose to engage in social media is also correlated with the earlier social media engagement (Barger *et al.* 2016).

According to the social media engagement theory by (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), there are four features of social media technology that shapes the user experience, to begin with, completeness which highlights the concept of information gathering, user's engagement with social media ultimately increase when social media meets the information need by users. Secondly, flexibility which enhances user experience and leads to the higher and positive level of social media

gratification for instance, easy to access. Thirdly, evolvability which defined as the degree of new involvement under social media platforms to meet the needs and requirements of users such new connected apps and games make social media more interesting. Lastly, integration means the created content level of intermixed from a variety of sources.

According to the research of (Di Gangi and Wasko 2016) who divided the mental state of the user's engagement into individual engagement and personal meaning. Whereas, Individual engagement includes feelings, interests, and motives for participation. For personal meaning researchers discovered that, the fulfillment of personal interests, needs, and values with high intensity. Moreover, it is noticed that the prime and most important reason for people to engage with social media is that social media fulfills certain needs of their users, such needs are managing interconnections in daily life, the practice of networking and following social culture over the internet.

Consumer intention to use social media platforms, its primary concern with the needs of awareness and motivation for participation. Social media as an engagement tool ongoing growth is not surprising in this tech world. (Rothschild, 2011). Due to emerging digital media, consumer engagement entered into a new phase where the dynamics of the media landscape that currently increasing every other moment (Hollebeek *et al.* 2016a).

Online engagement research exposes that, it helps the organization to enhance their product and service quality with consumer collaboration on social media which provide new ideas and development over products and services to the organization (Rohm *et al.* 2013). Such kind of attitude is found amongst the social media users, especially the young generation and consumer who is actively involved with social media and their preferences heavily affects by the peer and friends.

Social media provides a wide opportunity to the consumer to directly connect with the business which has transformed consumer from the passive observer to active participants regards to the products and services (Dolan *et al.* 2016). The significant amount of information provided by social media to both consumers as well as organizations such as, consumers' comments, reviews, and information shared online which can be the sources of the evaluation of both the parties. It is discovered that consumer loyalty in social media for business offerings is outcomes of consumer social stimulus, compatibility, satisfaction and behavior behind the usage (Valos *et al.* 2016).

Preceding research on the consumer behavior engagement in social media discovered that, engagement in consumers occurs at fluctuating levels, which can be as high and can be at low

involvement (Dolan *et al.* 2016). As per Figure 3, which elaborate in a sense that, consumer reading comments and ongoing activities on social media are considered as passive participation, whereas creating content and sharing information is proposed as active participation in social media consumption.

Dormancy level in the Figure 3. shows zero contributions from the active and passive users regarding any content creation or participation in the activities which means users are neither actively participating in social media activities nor completely disconnected themselves. Co-creation is the stage where consumers are highly active in interactions, involvement with other members that come through the positive contribution of the individual on social media. However, in the detachment stage, the consumer keeps themselves away from the social media for a short time or permanently by unlike or unsubscribe pages on social media which leads to negative contribution and end up with co-distraction.

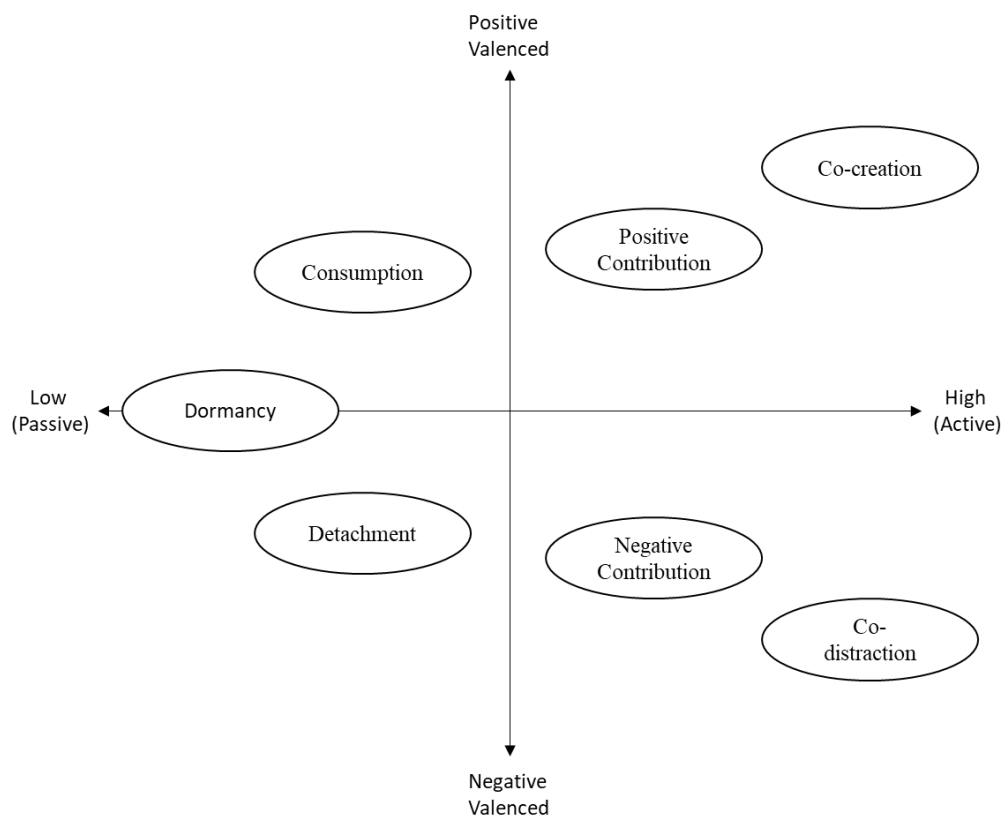


Figure 3: Social media engagement behavior typologies.

Sources: Dolan *et al.* 2016.

(Hollebeek *et al.* 2014) define consumer engagement concepts into consumer's positive valence brand cognitive and emotional behavior while interacting with brands, which shows consumer's

high level of involvement in social media. Consumer co-creation on social media replace the market into a forum where consumers, organization, consumer group, and business networks interact with each other, due to this consumer influence and power has been shifted, which was earlier attributed to the organization (Laurell and Söderman, 2018).

To understand consumer motives and needs behind engaging on social media, it is necessary to escalate consumer behavior while consumers interact with social media platforms. Consumer engagement on social media necessitates to trust and commitment formation, consequently which build consumer engagement cycle on social media which includes stages from connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy and engagement (Sashi, 2012).

The notion of engagement is a very interesting topic in social media, which required to have simply understanding metrics. Consumer engagement on social media is the combination of the four pillars which helps to measure consumer engagement in social media (Bartholomew, 2008)

Exposure	Engagement	Influence	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Information / Knowledge • News • Entertainment • Peer Connections • Subscriptions • Visits or Hits • Blogs & Articles • Comments & Reviews • Search Engine Rank • Online Discussion • Current events updates • Job Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post View • Posts comments & Review • Rating Products • Like & share • Page subscription & follow • Tagging friends with related contents • Invite other people • Listening & Update audio / Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase Behavior • Create awareness • Change in attitude • Brand association • Recommendation • Knowledge improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to Store • Attend the event • Buy a product • Get the right information • Direct Communication • Referred to peer

Figure 4: Social media engagement metrics

Source: Bartholomew, D. 2008 (Metricsman).

As per the above Figure 4, social media are offered a wide range of exposure to its users. Users motives and needs which independently connect the exposure and the engagement process start with themes. When users anticipate the required results from the exposure, engagement in the activities will form largely with specific views (Boardley, 2013). These beliefs influence the importance of the opinion of the users. With a high level of engagement on social media leads to influence behavior and perception of the users which encourage more referral activities and additional purchase, product reviews & customer co-creation hence subsequent actions taken consequently (Rohm *et al.* 2013).

It is found that many students and young people use social media for the job- and work-related purposes. Moreover, employers are also posting work opportunities on different social media platforms. However, social media only help with short-term work for less skilled workers (Herbold and Douma, 2013). Many event organizations and clubs are providing exposure to the social media users in terms of their upcoming events and ongoing events, consequently which induce users to take part in events with individual interests (Price *et al.* 2013).

(Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014) stated in their research that, people use social media with different types of behavioral reasons, for instance, help other users by sharing their own experience, read reviews and comments of other users; those are the kind of reasons why people are going to social media which benefit them to understand the earlier product or service knowledge which previously posted on the social media. Moreover, social media engagement proposes potential brand association with direct communication beyond geographical boundaries and barriers, users can have access to communicate directly to the interactive prospects with different platforms (Thompson *et al.* 2018)

Social media engagement is emerging concepts with delivering a wide range of information and data which shared online with different other users such as, travel-related information, organization information, current news and affairs that functioned as a source of knowledge gathering (Laurell and Björner 2018). Furthermore, it offers opportunities to become part of the online decision or debate where user's engagement can create and provide their opinion and that is examined by other users. Nowadays, social media consumption also serves as buying and selling platform tool, many sellers sell their products with social media and buyer can have direct and effective commutation with them without any third-party interference (Sashi, 2012). In the field of entertainment, it is found that social media engagement can create long term relationships with music and sports fans. Which is also providing monetary benefits to the companies who put a social media strategy in the entertainment area (Hudson and Hudson, 2013).

There are several types of research that have been done in social media engagement. Many scholars support the term that social media engagement has an influence on the user's action. However, some argue on the same. In the previous research of social media engagement, the researcher elaborated that, consumer engagement in social media is a constant problem for its users. Engagement measurements are not able to provide at what degree engagement is associated with the trustworthiness for the user and sales figure for the organization (Barger *et al.* 2016).

1.4 Social media marketing

New technology has changed the marketing forms for the businesses and organization. Companies are giving more importance to the new marketing tool “Social Media” in comparison to the old traditional marketing methods such as Print Media and Digital Media (Downes *et al.* 2018). The advertisement world has accepted social media as the new marketing concept in marketing strategies. The evolution of social media has created a new marketing dynamic, enabling consumers to engage in brand activities (Hollebeek and Brodie, 2016). Over the last many years, numerous studies have been endeavored to inspect the importance and role of social media in the business organization, most of them being conducted in the perspective of consumer behavior and loyalty (Valos *et al.* 2016).

Social media marketing has provided an opportunity to the businesses with multiple mobile channels to find and reach out to the targeted consumer with the actual context of where consumer make their decision, this direct and both way communication take place in real time when consumers make their purchase. Moreover, the investment in social media marketing that serves as a place that makes it more important, provokes social change and promotes products and services to consumers (Bernhardt *et al.* 2012). In the framework of online marketing, social media is emerging concepts and become the fastest and effective communication tool which appreciate in the internet environment world and practicing by billions of people altogether (Harb *et al.* 2019)

Social media constitute an important means in today’s competitive world to connect the consumer. Social media is a growing idea in the form of a digital communication channel for consumers (Hudson and Hudson, 2013). This is the reason why many businesses are now using social media platforms to involve with their consumers with business news and ongoing activities. Consumer engagement and association with other social media network users increase the chances of spreading businesses, marketing messages across different platforms, ultimately which create brand awareness and brand association as a whole (Hazari, 2018).

Social media marketing is considered to be cost-effective in comparison to the traditional marketing approaches, it is a fast, easily accessible and effective tool for the exchange of information. Besides that, social media is becoming the main communication tool for the consumer themselves and consumers with businesses as well (Harb *et al.* 2019). Social Media channels are user-friendly, worthwhile, and mobile grounded expertise which is the best tool to attract millions of consumers

at a time. Recent research shows that organizations keep increasing their marketing budget for social media marketing to get the best marketing impact.

The success of the business marketing plan can be credited to their integrated social media marketing exertions which shaped to reach targeted audiences with multiple new channels with creating content that is extremely relevant and appealing. Social media allow companies to connect with the consumers in real time and with extraordinary ways, offering greater richness and consumer more profound involvement during attaining extensive reach to large numbers of new users (Bernhardt *et al.* 2012). In order to achieve commercial marketing goals by gaining optimistic attention and regular recognition, businesses required effective efforts with transparency and consistency over social media action (Wang, 2012).

To maintain strong relationships with consumers, business needs to communicate with their consumers and social media is the best platform to apply this concept nowadays in this interconnected world (Downes *et al.* 2018). Social media content, interaction with users and the communication type have a greater influence on the consumer relationship with the organization and leads to the positive effects on consumer behavior (Thompson *et al.* 2018). It is observed that social media provide opportunities to engage the consumer at any place and at any level, no matter where consumers are, consumers can interact with business and can make their decisions from any part of the world.

There is a general notice nowadays that, people are mostly favoring social media to connect the companies for customer services (Survata, 2016). Previously scholars suggested that future marketers should use social media in a comprehensive way to interact with the consumer, as consumers are always looking for the product information, customer service issues solutions, real-time information on discounts, incentives, sales and information on the new products and services (Hamilton *et al.* 2016)

The organization's continuously practicing social media to create a relationship with exiting as well as potential new consumers also form a group of users, which interactively collaborate to recognize problematic issues and observing an explanation for them (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). Furthermore, marketers have recognized these prospects and now progressively engaging this notion as part of the business promotion strategy. According to (Wang, 2012) research on consumer's perspective on social media emphasized the 6'P framework of the social media (person, profile, perception, peer, post, and pull). The 6'P framework can be significantly useful for the business to enhance their social media marketing strategies.

According to (Brown and Fiorella, 2013) theory on influence marketing in social media reveals that products or service popularity of social media is not going to affect purchase behavior of the consumer necessarily. Here in research discloses that electronic word of mouth has a great impact on consumer buying behavior. Social media is the place where different consumers share their experience with others about the product and service so that they can make the right decision.

Below word of mouth mechanism model helps to understand how consumers are receiving recommendations, opinions or reviews over products and which ultimately leads to decision making power. However, there are some studies argue that willingness for word of mouth engagement on social media is lesser than in person due to associated perceived social risk with online information sharing (Barger *et al.* 2016). Nevertheless, the need to self-improvement can mitigate these risks, which increases the willingness to participate in online word of mouth.

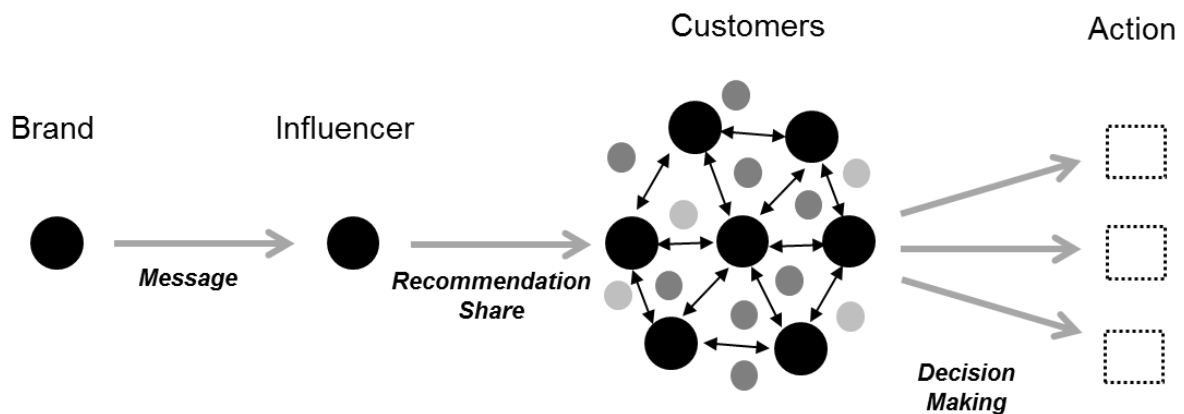


Figure 5: Word of mouth mechanism in social media.

Sources: Brown and Fiorella 2013.

In a general observation on social media, it is found that occasionally users are not able to understand online advertisement purpose and try sidestepping from its messages. Theory about persuasion knowledge model found that consumer creates their own perception about the advertiser’s purpose over the marketing and resist themselves for being influenced. Thus, they avoid the advertiser’s message for the services and products and create distrust images about the brand (Göbel *et al.* 2017). However, To Increase in brand reputation, consumer engagement, and online sales; organizations appreciate and invest the need to engage in current social media conversation (Keegan and Rowley, 2017) Furthermore, the researcher also explore that, research in social media marketing strategy is limited and rare.

There are a number of reasons that touches social media marketing outcomes. To begin with, social media is a kind of new marketing tool, to measure & tracked engagement is tricky. Moreover, its diverse formats and platforms make it more difficult for businesses to track their efforts. Finally, short term promotional activities with social media have an adverse effect on long term brand equity (Barger *et al.* 2016) In research on social media engagement behavior of the consumer, scholars have exposed that, in marketing practices for social media networks; development of theoretical understanding is required. Additionally, at the same time, a list of guidelines and marketing efforts in social media is infinite, previous academic investigation and experimental evidence are rare in the same area (Dolan *et al.* 2016).

1.5 Social media & sports events

Social media consumption regards to a sports event is been growing tremendously, sports enthusiasts taking part in the sports event promotion on social media by showing their interest on the event pages (Hazari, 2018). Social media attracts millions of sports fans with its interesting features and become a key actor for creating interaction with sports followers (Rundh and Gottfridsson, 2015). Sports engagement on social media provides an opportunity for its users to create sports-related content, share, and their reviews are taking into consideration over a period of time. Event marketing tools are considered to be experimental marketing which mainly emphasizes on the consumer understanding, emotional treats and rational consumption (Vel and Sharma, 2010). Studies in events and social media investigate that, enjoyment in using social media for the events has an important impact on the user's attitude and behavior (Harb *et al.* 2019).

Event organizers are increasing usage of social media for the promotion of events to influence the consumer attitude throughout the sports event marketing. Social media has a direct influence on the consumer attitude, beliefs and behavioral intentions regarding the sports event. Previous research in this similar area stated that there is a lack of scholarly investigation on the effectiveness of social media as an important marketing tool for a sports event (Hazari, 2018). For a better understanding of the social media users' motives and needs in terms of sports event marketing additional research is needed in social media consumption and user's reception.

According to the previous researcher's investigation, promotion for the sports events include two characteristics, one is to encourage to the physically not active people to take part in sports and secondly is to enable the current sports enthusiast to do more sports-related activities (Ramchandani

et al. 2017). India has optimism for sports development throughout the country by sports participation at the grassroots level. However, governments have kept the initiative and promote sports to increase the number of participants during the events, especially the younger generation, and keep encouraging the entire population to be more physically active and fit (Banerjee, 2011).

Sports event promotion on social media plays a vital role to attract a sports lover at the same time. Social media, the new technology is by nature consumer driven, different than the old traditional media such as print media; content created on social media is largely maintained and shared by other consumers and people on the social media which influence participation's motives at a great extent (Bernhardt *et al.* 2012). According to the research by (Downes *et al.* 2018), it is stated that social media is an important tool for the sports event to engage dedicated consumers through making them feel that, they are part of the event promotion.

There is considerable change found in consumer interaction with the consumption of sports. Sports brands now have opportunities to create a personal relationship with the consumers by the expansion of the brand interaction throughout the consumer journey over the benefit of social media (Thompson *et al.* 2018). Further to this study, due to the expansion of the special media usage, sports event has to look for the development of the specific strategies to enhance fan loyalty, development of consumer and brand relations, which ultimately built sports brand equity. Besides, event organizers are often witnessing success for the promotion of their event on the online realm.

Social Media has changed the paradigm of the organizers regarding the fact that the event audience is just not an audience at all, they are active participants in continually developing discussion. When a consumer wants to reach to the organization for the questions or feedback; they are no longer reaching them by telephone or emails; they are straightway writing the feedback on organization social media pages (Downes *et al.* 2018). The influence of these new technologies in sports events uncovers the consumers' needs and motives for the organizers and leads to understanding how those tools can use at the maximum level (Thompson *et al.* 2018). Sports enthusiast is always seeking for the information and share their knowledge and opinion on social media platforms about the sports event (Rothschild, 2011)

Earlier researches in the sports event organization reveal that organizers are claiming that event has a positive effect on the number of participants with their marketing strategy. However, another research shows that sports event is not witnessing a new number of participants. There is the theory of previous engagement in sports that applies to the retention of the participants (Taks *et al.* 2018). Marketing of sports event has been always the concerning issues for the organizers (Hazari, 2018).

Further, in this research, participants show their favorable motives and attitude towards the event when they have access to the specific information about the event on social media or website.

Social media is the right platform, where organizers of the sports event to engage and co-create value with their consumers. This is the main reason how well organizers understand the needs of relevant consumers and emphasized the opportunities offered to them through social media (Downes *et al.* 2018). The research also found that social media can also use as an experienced tool for the participants and helps to develop the experience of the consumer. In the domain of social media and sports event, storytelling creates high co-creation process where associated stories formed around events and organizers have opportunities to procedure a high level of engagement (Laurell and Söderman, 2018). Moreover, variation in the story of a similar event can replicate diverse devotions with different groups.

(Mackellar, 2013) research on participant observation explains that participant observation during the event environment can provide a greater understanding of social dynamics and its effects on the behavior of the participants, which assistances organizer to develop future marketing as well as management strategies for the event. During the event, people often tag their friends and location details on social media in real time which shows their involvement in events. In the research of digital event engagement, where researchers found out that, digital engagement about the events creates engagement with the related places where the event is going to take place (Laurell and Björner 2018). Consequently, with the smartphones and social media, people showcase their opinion, experience about the event with their fellow people at the same time (Yeoman, 2013).

Organizers nowadays are using social media to engage their consumers in every step of the customer journey, which ultimately creates the chances of consumer retention in the long term (Hudson and Hudson, 2013). Certain researches elaborate that, there is little information available about the direction for incorporating social media with the communication strategies of the organization with consumers. However, Social media have a potentiality for shaping consumer decisions and work as an important tool for the success of the organization's marketing goal. Moreover, it is stated by the scholars that, there is a solid return on the investment in social media for companies.

Social networks, for instance, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter work as an attractive tool for the sports fans who are using social media features such as Hashtags, Pages, Like, Blogs, Comments, and Sharing. Social media consumption allows them to participate in the online group pages & discussion which is created by the organizers to keep update their current consumers.

Where the user's identity and attraction are created, from the interests of the common sports in terms of similar experience with other users (Hazari, 2018). Subsequent research also reveals that the organizers use of social media often underutilized as a brand management tool to maintain a relationship communication with fans (Thompson *et al.* 2018).

Social media popularity has provided opportunities for sports clubs and events to increase significant investment in time and resources to drive online association with their fans (Vale and Fernandes, 2018) It is observed that many social media users are following their ideal sports person online and they are kept updated themselves with event pages and ongoing activities. Besides that, in order to achieve marketing target through social media effectively, organizers need proper guidance to create and maintain their online presence with the understanding of fans motivation and behavior.

Social media facilitates the relevance of word of mouth and individual endorsement in the decision construction process of the consumer about event appearance, which helps to create a participant base stronger. (Hede and Kellett, 2011). Many types of research for events association and social media conducted by scholars, however, some scholars argue that more research is required on how the social engagement resulting to the influence for event programs (Brown *et al.* 2017).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the marketing communication process, both consumers, as well as organization involvement, are required. To know the viewpoint from both sides; the author has included opinions from consumers; that is social media users and organizations; who are sports event organizers. In order to answer the research questions from different angles, a mixed-methods approach used by the author, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.

The mixed approach allowed a more in-depth understanding of social media effectiveness for sports event marketing in India. The method approach based on the previous research conducted in a similar context by (Downes *et al.* 2018) where the researcher reveals that how social media plays role in enhancing the interactions amongst the consumers and event organizers.

The reason for choosing a mixed-method approach by the author for this paper is to validate and corroborate the data which are collected by both the methods. Besides, to examine developed theory about social media engagement and to test those theories mixed-methods approach has been selected. Moreover, the mixed-method approach helps the author to get an idea about the current situation of sports event marketing and social media user's reception for sports event advertisements on social media.

2.1 Data collection

To begin with, a qualitative approach where semi-structured telephonic and email interview conducted with the representative of sports event organizers in India, which has given new eyesight to the author regarding sports event marketing and social media engagement. Six companies were chosen for an interview, three companies organizing sports events on an international level and national level in India. Whereas another three companies organizing sports events on city and state level events. To choose these companies in a different region, the author aim was to find out social media marketing strategies impact on different levels.

Interview with organizers helps the author to find out that, how organizers make their marketing strategies and promotion planning, also what behavior consumer follows on social media when it comes to sports event campaign. Moreover, what are the challenges organizers are facing with social media promotions and at what extent social media helps organizers to get desire event participants. All interview questions are extracted from the presented literature reviews and were relevant to social media marketing and sports event, which investigate the current marketing situation for a sports event in India. The interview answers are presented as per the answers are given by the interviewee.

There are 15 interview questions start with the background material about the company general information. Later, authors have shifted questions to the marketing strategies and campaigns for the company. Further questions are related to the social media marketing in terms of a sports event in India, where authors emphasize on the consumer motives and need to analyze barriers that event organizers are facing throughout the event promotion. The interviews are end-up with the closing questions.

Table 1. Event management companies' interview.

INTERVIEW	COMPANY	OCCUPATION	INTERVIEWEE
Telephonic	Entertainment Sportz	Event management Company	Mr. Karan Rughani Founder of Entertainmentsportz
Telephonic	TSC Asia	Sport event Management Company	Mr. Varun Chopra Managing Director of TSC Asia
Telephonic	Vadodara Marathon	Marathons and sports event organizers	Mr. Ahmed Shaikh Sr. Event Coordinator of Vadodaara Marathon
Telephonic	Boyzone Events & Promotion	An event management company	Mr. Shihab Pathan Director of Boyzone Event Company
Email	Encompass Event's Private Limited	An event management company	Mr. Aditya Vatta Senior Manager – Client Servicing at Encompass
Email	JP Sports & Events	Sports & Event Management Company	Mr. Jigar Patel Founder of JP Sports and Events

Source: Malek (2019)

In a quantitative approach, an online questionnaire with a Google form survey conducted with social media users in India. Where 17 questions are represented based on social media and sports events

in India. All the questions are sum up with consumers' awareness, motivation, needs and involvement for the sports event with social media marketing. The aim of this questionnaire to get answers for research questions by getting information about social media users' reception over social media marketing and sports event engagement.

All the questions were related to the context of the theories presented in this paper. The answer to all this presented question will help the author achieve an in-depth sense of the user's motives and needs for sports event marketing on social media. The author believes that, with this answer, the effectiveness of social media for sports event marketing in India can be examined in a better and broader way. Moreover, quantitative methods help the researcher in this study to move closer to the research aim.

3. RESULTS

This chapter presents the data analysis and outcomes of this study, which were collected with a mixed-method approach. The author will analyze the results of the collected interviews and online survey; examine them with the presented theories to get the answers to research questions. Results from the research have been given a comprehensive understanding to the author about the current marketing practices used by the event organizers and the needs and motivation of consumers in relation to the social media for a sports event. Data collected through qualitative and quantitative approached evaluated below which comes with the interesting facts.

3.1 Qualitative findings

This chapter described the outcomes with the qualitative approach where it is clear that social media has the potentiality to create immense awareness for the sports event in India. Out of six companies, four companies are using social media more often for their marketing campaign for sports events. According to them, social media are placing to promote their event and attract participation. Social media is easy to operate for the users this is the reason why millions of people can target through social media to attend marketing goals.

Throughout the interviews with event companies, the author has found out that Facebook and Instagram are the most popular social media in India in current times and they are using these two platforms frequently for their event engagement which associated with the results comes out with the questionnaire survey (see Appendix 7). Facebook event promotion is rapidly creating awareness and public relationship also helps potential consumers to experience reviews and comments about the event (Harb *et al.* 2019). The companies also agreed that other social media like Twitter that is popular but not many people have access to it.

All the companies agreed that social media works as a marketing and brand hammering tool for their events. Event promotions and posts get appreciation and recognition on social media (Hazari,

2018), but the consumer conversation rate is still tricky. Consumer’s needs and motives are different on social media for the purpose of a sports event. It is found that consumers always need proper and real-time information about the event that’s been the most prime reason consumers are connecting organizers on social media (see Figure 6). Which makes organizers realized that consumers are active rather than passive recipients of media in the context of social media engagement behavior typologies (see Figure 3).

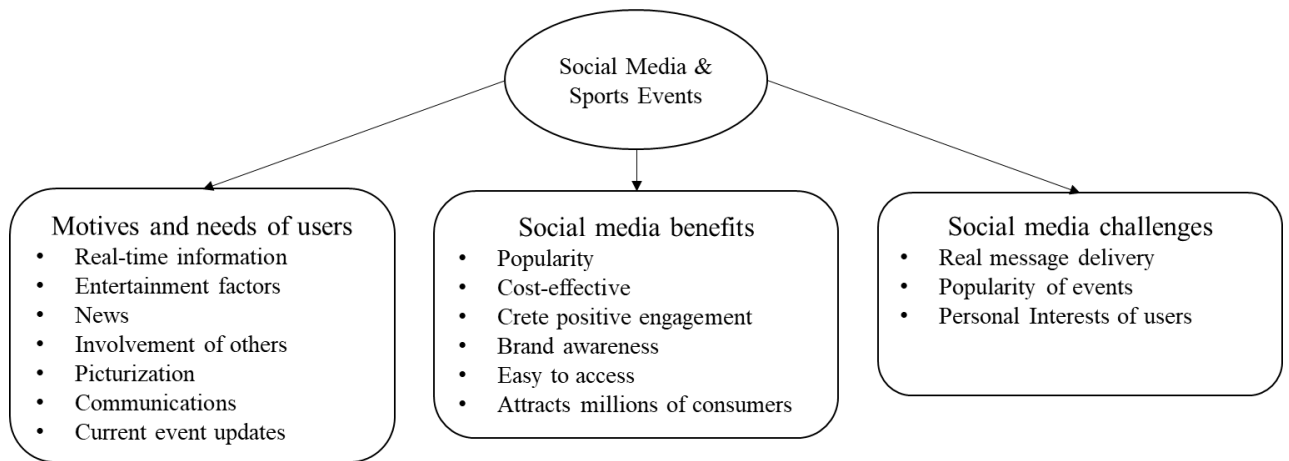


Figure 6: Qualitative outcomes.

Sources: Malek (2019)

As per Figure 6, social media users motive and need for sports event engagement which includes, entertainment, news, real-time information, others involvement, picturization and updates about the event, current communication (see Figure 2. Laswell’s communication model) and specific event interests. All those factors affect the behavior of social media users to make the decision for going to the event or not. Those facts clearly lined up with the theory of the conceptual model of customer engagement / disengagement (see Figure 1) and social media engagement metrics (see Figure 4).

According to the all the six sports event organizers, there is only one common reason has found out about the less success for sports event than over other recreational events is the consumer specific level of interests about sports engagement. In a sum up, it has been clear with the interview answers given by the organizer that, social media is the right place for the sports event branding and promotion in India. Because of its popularity, cost-effectiveness, influences of millions of people, real-time information and easily accessible benefits.

3.2 Quantitative findings

In a quantitative method, a total of 160 respondents took part in the survey where 35% were female and 65 % male respondents with the first gender division question. The second question was about the different age groups were the highest respondents, 67.5% are from the younger age group between 26-35 years. The third question was related to the popular social media usage amongst the user where Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have the highest vote (see Appendix 7) which explained the popularity of the social media platforms and the results were associated with the appendix 1 to 6 from data collected with the company's interviews.

The author has divided the online questionnaire results into three parts “respondents’ awareness”, “respondents’ motives & needs” of the social media users and “respondents’ suggestions”. Tables 2, 3 and 4 present in-depth quantitative findings with the concept of awareness, motives & needs and suggestions of the social media users for sports events. The reason behind dividing the answers in different characteristics will help the researcher to give a comprehensive understanding of what are the factors that affect the consumers' decision for sports events.

Table 2. Respondents awareness.

QUESTIONS	% OF RESPONDENTS
To what extent do you agree or disagree that, people spending more time on social media in India?	
Strongly Agree	64%
Agree	17%
Neutral	6%
Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	8%
Have you seen sports event advertisement on social media?	
Always	19%
Very often	46%
Sometimes	27%
Rarely	5%
Never	3%
To what extent do you agree or disagree that social media helps to create awareness about sports in India?	
Strongly Agree	14%
Agree	64%
Neutral	8%
Disagree	7%
Strongly Disagree	7%
Does social media help to connect with the sport brands?	
Yes	84%
No	6%
Don't Know	10%

Source: Malek (2019)

Table 2. described how social media helps users to make them aware of the sports in general and sports events in India. As per Table 2. level of engagement in social media is quite high in India where 81% respondent agreed on that, which explained an indication for the future marketers in India to understand the importance of the growing concept of social media engagement as there are 260 million social media users in India (Statista, 2019).

As per the social media engagement matrices model (see Figure 4) social media offered a wide variety of exposures for engagement that force people to be acquainted with social media. Almost

70 % of the respondents agreed that respondents have seen sports event advertisements on social media. Moreover, a similar percentage of respondents agreed that social media helps to create sports-related awareness in India. Also, it helps to connect with the sports brand.

Table 3. Respondents motives & needs.

QUESTIONS	% OF RESPONDENTS
For what motives do you use social media?	
Entertainment	83%
News	66%
Connection with friends	39%
Communication	29%
Current events updates	22%
Job Survey	1%
Do you provide your reviews or comments on different posts on social media?	
Always	42%
Very often	19%
Sometimes	23%
Rarely	13%
Never	3%
Have you ever attended any sports event through the social media advertisement?	
Many times	10%
Once	56%
I will	10%
Never	17%
Not sure	7%
Do you follow any sports event page/sports person on social media?	
Yes	50%
No	48%
Not sure	2%
For which sports games do you follow social media for live scores update?	
Cricket	92%
Football	57%
Hockey	5%
Tennis	10%
Gymnastics	1%

Have you ever shared any sports event advertisement on social media with other users?	
Always	8%
Very often	8%
Sometimes	54%
Rarely	15%
Never	15%

Source: Malek (2019)

With the collected data from the questionnaire, as per Table 3. it is found that most of the users practice social media for entertainment motives in India. The term entertainment is wide, there are different sub-purposes associated with entertainment. The second most voted option is news on social media, which can be about current ongoing information and knowledge around the world. Other motives such as online connections with friends/peers, communication and current ongoing event updates found considerable significant.

More than half of the respondents like to give comments and reviews on social media posts. In general terms, users provide products and service reviews on diverse posts associated with their interests (Barger *et al.* 2016). Such features of social media give immense opportunities for users, which broaden their perspectives about the data flowing on the internet. People association on social media for sports events has been given good responses even more than expected.

As per Table 3. More than 60 % of the respondents show that they have attended sports events through social media. Furthermore, 50 % of respondents declare that they are following a sports event page on social media. Cricket is the most famous sports ever in India (Russell, 2019). That is the reason why 92 % of the respondents with other sports interests follow cricket live updates on social media. According to word of mouth mechanism in social media by Brown/Fiorella 2013 (see Figure 5.) people over social media like to share event general information with others. Partial respondents agreed that they have shared sport event advertisements with other users.

Table 4: Respondents suggestions.

QUESTIONS	% OF RESPONDENTS
To what extent do you agree or disagree that sports event organizers should use social media for sports related advertisements?	
Strongly Agree	17%
Agree	61%
Neutral	16%
Disagree	3%
Strong Disagree	3%
According to you which social media is proper place for sports event related posts?	
Facebook	84%
YouTube	74%
Twitter	15%
Instagram	23%
None	2%
What makes sports event more interesting on social media?	
Pictures	79%
Videos	40%
Blogs	11%
Hashtags	12%
Event updates	69%
To what extent do you agree or disagree that social media is right place for sports event advertisement?	
Strongly Agree	66%
Agree	15%
Neutral	7%
Disagree	6%
Strong Disagree	6%

Sources: Malek (2019)

Table 4. provide suggestion received from the respondents' side with suggestion requested questions in the survey. Sports event promotion and marketing over social media is a bright concept and many event companies implementing this strategy (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). More than 70 % of the respondents suggest that sport event organizers should use social media for their event branding and marketing purposes, whereas more appreciation is given to platforms like Facebook, YouTube,

and Instagram (Table.4). Similar findings in the qualitative methods where event companies explained in the interview that, they are using Facebook & Instagram more in event promotion in India (see Appendix 1 to 6).

Different features of social media play a very important role while promoting products and services on social media (Rothschild, 2011). For instance, proper picturization, quality of products/service videos, hashtags, storytelling, live streaming and event highlights. According to respondents, sports event organizers should use more event pictures, videos and current event updates with event pages on social media to attracts more participants.

In a final statement from quantitative method outcomes, it is found that more than 80% of respondents believe that social media is the right place for sports event promotions and advertisements (Table 4). In response to the entire online questionnaire survey, it is proven that social media engagement has a valuable effect on users' motives and needs concerning sports events. Moreover, social media is the perfect tool for sports event promotion and advertisement. Outcomes from both the methods help the author to answers below research questions.

(1) What is social media user's reception on sports events marketing?

With the help of an online questionnaire survey about sports event marketing, it is proven that social media create immense awareness and positive engagement about the sports event, also about sports in general term in India. Users have attended many sports events through social media and share event posts with other users. Moreover, more than 70 % of respondents believe that social media is a platform that should use by sports event organizers (Table 4) so that potential consumers can be a part of an interesting event. With a qualitative interview it is found that social media promotion and marketing reach a large audience, which is valued by the users (see Figure 6). In a sum up, social media users' welcome and appreciate sports event marketing on social media.

(2) How motives and needs of social media users for sports events engagement impulse to become acquainted with sports events in India?

As per the results with this study, the author has found out that, social media offer different engagement exposures. Those exposures directly linked with social media users' motives and needs. Moreover, for sports event engagement, it is found that there are some factors such as entertainment,

real-time information and latest updates about the event, current involvement of other people and specific event interests (see Figure 6). All those factors create and affect the motives and needs of social media users to make a decision for sports event engagement.

According to interviews conducted with the sports event organizers. Social media works as a brand hammering tool, which creates a large extent brand promotion for a sports event. By providing real-time information and satisfy the needs of the consumer related to their questions about the event on social media. Social media attracts million of new consumers for a sports event in India. Many respondents have believed that social media is the perfect tool for sports event marketing and sports-related advertisement. To acquitted consumers with sports events through special media, the author would like to suggest to the future marketers that, make event promotion more entertaining aligned with the sports event message. Sports event pages on social media should be keep monitored and updated with event pictures and current information which makes event promotion more interesting according to respondents (Table 4).

CONCLUSION

In event industries, marketing plays a very important role to attract consumers. The proper form of marketing leads to success rapidly and effectively. There are a number of marketing tools are being practiced by the organizers to create awareness about the events and support the organization's marketing goals, such as television advertisement, flyers, banners, and hoardings. But to reach out a large extent audience in a country like India will be so expensive and challenging.

The aim of this paper was to gain insight to measure the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool for sports events in India. The results of this study are supported by the presented theoretical framework and collection of the data through an online survey and semi-structured interviews. With this research results, it has been proven that social media helps to create awareness about the sports event in India. It works as a Marketing and Brand hammering tool that helps organizers to reach out to millions of audiences rapidly and quickly.

In terms of sports event engagement in India, this research found that sports are very centric and targeting areas where involvement of people driven by the concept of personal interests. However, organizers can affect the behavior and motives of the consumer with their social media tactics and make them interested in the sports event. With this research author also expose that, the needs of the social media user's in terms of sports event has to satisfy timely, otherwise, there are chances that organizers can lose their valuable consumers if consumer lost his interests about the event (see Figure 1. conceptual model of engagement/disengagement). This study also reveals that social media features such as contents, live streaming, event highlights posting, hashtags, storytelling other tactics like fan giveaways strategies should use more to make user's acquainted with sports which affect the consumer motives regarding event involvement.

In the current scenario in India, cricket is most famous in sorts of all sports, however, many other sports are gaining attention thru the help of social media. The author believes that it's a matter of time, other sports need time to grow with their uniqueness which is appreciated by many Indians. Through the survey with social media users in terms of a sports event, the author has found out that,

most of the users like to share event updates with other users, which create the awareness about the event as a whole (see Figure 5: Word of mouth mechanism in social media by Brown/Fiorella 2013)

It is proven with the online survey and interviews with the sports event organizing companies that social media has the potentiality to attract the consumer in India. However, there are some exception factors involved in that. Such as like consumers conversion rate, a specific level of interest of the participants, entertainment factors, brand association and previous engagement which creates motivation and needs for the consumer (see Figure 3: Social media engagement behavior typologies by Dolan *et al.* 2016).

This study investigates the tasks which were set up to find out research answers. This study contributes the insight over the understanding of India's sports marketing tactics. Those tactics help future marketers to make their marketing strategies for the sports event. Moreover, the author has examined consumer overall online marketing behavior with the sporting theoretical framework and factors affecting buying behavior. This paper emphasizes the brand association and brand relationship, which is also acknowledged by the respondents in online surveys and sports event organizers in interviews. Finally, this paper also highlights the knowledge gap in marketing and promotion over social media by examining the user's engagement factors and exposures.

In conclusion, the author would like to express his view on social media and sports event engagement in India that, social media is growing concepts so as other sports events in India. With the proper understanding of the social media user's motives and needs, sports event organizers can achieve their marketing goals. Social media is the best tool to create awareness about the events. However, to convert those aware audiences into potential consumers depends on the organization's individual marketing tactics. Social media has some limitation as well as immense benefits. Future marketers need to understand those challenges and take the right decision which can be in favor of the organization benefits.

This study has been limited to the limited opinions of the users, however, survey opinions come from the different parts of India. It cannot define the actual behavior of the entire Indian population towards the social media and sports event. Also, interviews conducted within the sports companies which are largely operated in entire India level. Their perception of the consumers is might not touch the research aim. India is a huge country with billions of people, to sum up, their behavior on social media motives and needs regards to sports in one paper is tricky.

Relevant future studies could be a study in to find out the consumer conversation with social media advertising so that the effectiveness of social media goes more into practices. User's motives and

needs on social media are a very wide term which includes a number of aspects that have to be addressed properly so that the consumer conversation target can be achieved. Furthermore, relevant future studies about the sports event could design the approach through which a specific target audience and specific group of communities who are inflicted by the sports activities are facilitated.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview with company 1.

Telephonic interview with CEO of the Entertainmentsportz

30th of March 2019,

Interviewee: Mr. Karan Rughani

Length: 30 minutes

1. What is your occupation?
A. Founder and CEO of Entertainmentsportz which organizing sports event, corporate events, entertainment event and providing event solution
2. How often do you organize sports event in year?
A. 25 Events in a year.
3. How do you plan your marketing campaign? DM, SM, PM (digital media, social media, print media)
A. Digital Media.
4. How does potential consumer reach out to your company?
A. Word-of-Mouth, Referral (social media and digital marketing helps to create brand positioning).
5. Do you think new technology has changed the way of event marketing and promotion in India?
A. Yes, at very great extent.
6. Do you believe that Social media has potential to attract consumer for your events? Why?
A. Don't think so, social media is might create awareness about the sports event, but the conversation rate is not that high. Because sports event is very targeting area and specific interests' area.
7. Which social media platform do you use most for your event promotion? Why?
A. Instagram, Facebook because those are popular platforms in India.

8. Do you think your customers are using such platforms?
A. Yes.
9. Do you think how social media tool helps you to generate lead for your event business?
A. No, for sports event No but other event yes due to specific interests of the people.
10. How social media helps in communication with sports event sponsors in India?
A. For the National level sports event social media helps to create ROI for the sponsors but for state level and city level event it doesn't give much effects. Brand visibility over social media attracts sponsors but to get that level ROI for sponsors is challenging.
11. What kind of challenges you meet when using social media for sports event?
A. Consumer eyesight, perception is reaching to the right message to the audience. Challenges of social media like in twitter limitation of number of votes, for Instagram describe entire convincing message in one picture, Facebook guideline for limiting over content. Proper content is for social media that convey organizers message to specific audience is challenging.
12. What a general consumer motives you encounter when you deal with event branding on social media?
A. For the sports event only motives we experience that, people are not interested in all kind of sports they have specific interests such as, some likes cricket, some likes football. Consumer willingness for specific event is not catching organizers direct message. For example, cricket has 90 % of market shares and other sports have only 10 % market shares. It is difficult in terms of sending right message to the audience because most of the people wants to see cricket in the event promotion.
13. Do you think social media is best marketing tool over others?
A. It is subjective answers, there are many arguments and discussion going on that, but it is personal experience of mine that social media helps to create awareness but not the business.
14. What is the reason behind less attention of people for sports event over other recreational events?
A. Well, level of specific involvement interest. sports have divided in region in world scenario like football in Europe, cricket in India, NFL in US. Other entertaining forms like music and entertainment from different counties are acceptable by the people of India but sports are quite centric.
15. Do your customers provide feedback on post event?
A. Yes, very immediate feedback we received, sometimes in pre-event, on event and post event.

Appendix 2. Interview with company 2.

Skype interview with Managing Director of TSC Asia (The Sports Company)

3rd of April 2019

Interviewee: Mr. Varun Chopra

Length: 16 Minutes

1. What is your occupation?
A. Sports Company Management company. Organizing sports training, sports events.
2. How often do you organize sports event in year?
A. 40 Events a year on different scale.
3. How do you plan your marketing campaign? DM, SM, PM (digital media, social media, print media)
A. All of them, Digital Media, Social Media, Print Media.
4. How does potential consumer reach out to your company?
A. Social Media, we have active social media campaign on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Every day we raise engaging posts on social media which helps consumer to reach out to us.
5. Do you think new technology has changed the way of event marketing and promotion in India?
A. Yes, it has made it very cost effective and fast marketing process.
6. Do you believe that Social media has potential to attract consumer for your events? Why?
A. For sure, Yes, we are in digital era. Everything starts from news to find soul mates people prefer social media there many exposures involve in social media such as people also use social media career and training information for sports event as well.
7. Which social media platform do you use most for your event promotion? Why?
A. Instagram, we were also use Facebook, but we have experienced that Facebook has lost his motives for what they have promise and how advertisement and promotion can achieve through Facebook is not that powerful nowadays. Facebook is nowadays more into personal engagement and connections.
8. Do you think your customers are using such platforms?
A. Most of them are, cost effective smartphome in India is one of the reasons, mostly youth are so much actives on social media.

9. Do you think how social media tool helps you to generate lead for your event business?
- A. Do not help us to generate lead for business, however social media helps us to generate awareness in potential consumer about our business.
10. How social media helps in communication with sports event sponsors in India?
- A. Sponsors are only interests to reach out to the audience via the sports event and social media gives them platform where they can reach out number of people as potentials of holding an event at grassroots stage is matter.
11. What kind of challenges you meet when using social media for sports event?
- A. Well for challenges we can say that some events are generating huge response on social media and some events are not. We would like to give one example here that we have organized one football tournament which is affiliated by AIFF (All India Football Federation) where we have got 500 team participation responses on social media and for other sports events response on social media we have just got 60 responses so that is how it is challenging.
12. What a general consumer motives you encounter when you deal with event branding on social media?
- A. There is one negative aspect of social media that, even if all the event related information updated on posters and captions on social media, consumer always call us out and asking for same information again and again, at some point, it becomes so frustrating. But as we are in service industries we are obliging to answers all the questions. Consumer always asking questions related to specific information, facilities which related to their needs about the event.
13. Do you think social media is best marketing tool over others?
- A. Social media is best marketing tool for Start-ups and young companies when they have limited budget to reach out large audience. For young companies they have budget strains so social media can best solution for their marketing strategies.
14. What is the reason behind less attention of people for sports event over other recreational events?
- A. India is booming economy and with all that we are just looking at these years and last couple of years been an explosion of concerts, food events, art events and sports. Give it time to grow, because we just known sports and that is cricket. I think we should give times to sports to grow.
15. Do your customers provide feedback on post event?
- A. Yes, they do mostly, and as a sports company we try to ensure to do get an honest feedback because end of the day our intention to create a legacy with whatever we do. And make the participants ready for our next events with their feedback.

Appendix 3. Interview with company 3.

Telephonic interview with Senior Coordinator of Vadodara Marathon.

3rd of April 2019

Interviewee: Mr. Ahmed Shaikh

Length: 12 Minutes

1. What is your occupation?
A. Vadodara Marathon is Private Limited Company organizing sports running events.
2. How often do you organize sports event in year?
A. Marathon once in a year and small events like bicycle race, Triathlon, in every two months.
3. How do you plan your marketing campaign? DM, SM, PM (digital media, social media, print media)
A. All social media, digital media, Print Media.
4. How does potential consumer reach out to your company?
A. Website and social media and advertisement medium.
5. Do you think new technology has changed the way of event marketing and promotion in India?
A. Yes, due to digital technology marketing and promotion becomes cost effective.
6. Do you believe that Social media has potential to attract consumer for your events? Why?
A. Sure, our mostly consumer comes through the social media. Because it is popular in India.
7. Which social media platform do you use most for your event promotion? Why?
A. Facebook, because it is very famous social media platform in India. There might be chances that people don't use Twitter much in India, but Facebook use by many people nowadays.
8. Do you think your customers are using such platforms?
A. Yes, they do.
9. Do you think how social media tool helps you to generate lead for your event business?
A. For our kind of products like marathon mostly people attracted by social media and get themselves registered for the marathon. So yes, social media helps us to generate business leads.
10. How social media helps in communication with sports event sponsors in India?
A. We show our number of people association and interests' level on social media with sponsors and which makes them to invest in our project.

11. What kind of challenges you meet when using social media for sports event?
 - A. Sometimes consumers are not able to get the right message which we posted on social media. It is experienced that, customers are always get confused with the posts and raise their questions.

12. What a general consumer motives you encounter when you deal with event branding on social media?
 - A. Consumer always like to get real time information and update about the events on social media. So that they can avoid misunderstanding. And that is the reason for which they are connecting to us on social media.

13. Do you think social media is best marketing tool over others?
 - A. Well we can say that all marketing tools are good but social media has one plus point which is like everyone in India are using smartphones and with that they can connect to social media anywhere. Also, they can have access to the event related information in real time. For supposed, there might be chances that print media updates about information missed by participants but if we put such information on social media it will go straight to the users.

14. What is the reason behind less attention of people for sports event over other recreational events?
 - A. Vadodara Marathon is sport event organization and we can understand that sports is not everyone's interests. So specific interest about the event is the reason we have encounter.

15. Do your customers provide feedback on post event?
 - A. Yes, they do and throughout all over the year we are receiving feedback on social media from different part of the word. Some of them are suggestions, some of them are enquires and some of them are related to the sponsorship.

Appendix 4. Interview with company 4.

Telephonic interview with Managing Director of Boyzone event and promotion company.

3rd of April 2019

Interviewee: Mr. Shihab Khan

Length: 10 Minutes

1. What is your occupation?
A. Event management solution for sports event, concert events, corporate events.
2. How often do you organize sports event in year?
A. 10 to 12 events with state level events.
3. How do you plan your marketing campaign? DM, SM, PM (digital media, social media, print media)
A. Social Media and Digital Media.
4. How does potential consumer reach out to your company?
A. Word of mouth and Referral.
5. Do you think new technology has changed the way of event marketing and promotion in India?
A. Yes, new technology comes with different creativity which attracts consumers.
6. Do you believe that Social media has potential to attract consumer for your events? Why?
A. Yes, because social media is famous and sharing common interests.
7. Which social media platform do you use most for your event promotion? Why?
A. In India there are two social media Facebook and Instagram are very popular and because of the you can reach out to the target audience.
8. Do you think your customers are using such platforms?
A. Yes, I think most of the people are using social media nowadays.
9. Do you think how social media tool helps you to generate lead for your event business?
A. I don't think so, Social media work as brand hammering for the event but generating business lead no.
10. How social media helps in communication with sports event sponsors in India?
A. We are sharing social media response report with our sponsors that, we have number of potential event attendees and that can give us business opportunities and audience for which sponsors are looking for.

11. What kind of challenges you meet when using social media for sports event?
A. Not often but sometimes regarding live updates.

12. What a general consumer motives you encounter when you deal with event branding on social media?
A. We have found that, consumers are often look for the involvement of the other people for the same event so that they can also involve themselves, maybe we can say in a general note that, are my friends or associates also going in the same events so that I can also join them.

13. Do you think social media is best marketing tool over others?
A. Yes, we agree on this question, because social media is very cheap and cost-effective tool to reach out large audience.

14. What is the reason behind less attention of people for sports event over other recreational events?
A. There is reason of entertainment option some people favor entertainment in sports whereas some finds in concerts and arts festivals. It depends on the personal interests.

15. Do your customers provide feedback on post event?
A. Yes, they do. and we do collect feedback after the events and which makes us improve our services.

Appendix 5. Interview with company 5.

Email interview with Senior Manager – Client Servicing at Encompass Event’s Private Limited.

23rd of April 2019

Interviewee: Mr. Aditya Vatta

1 What is your occupation?

A. I am employed with Encompass Event s Pvt. Ltd. As a Senior Manager in the Client Servicing Department. Encompass is primarily involved in experiential marketing, where we conceptualize and execute the experiential marketing needs of our client.

2 How often do you organize sports event in year?

A. We usually organize 2 or 3 sports events in a year.

3 How do you plan your marketing campaign? DM, SM, PM (digital media, social media, print media)

A. We do not plan the marketing campaign, but it is planned by our clients.

4 How does potential consumer reach out to your company?

A. Web search, word of mouth, old associates, sometimes ex-employees become clients.

5. Do you think new technology has changed the way of event marketing and promotion in India?

A. Yes.

6. Do you believe that Social media has potential to attract consumer for your events? Why?

A. Yes, because all most all Indians are using social media.

7. Which social media platform do you use most for your event promotion? Why?

A. Facebook or Instagram, because in India fakebook is more popular.

8 Do you think your customers are using such platforms?

A. Yes.

9 Do you think how social media tool helps you to generate lead for your event business?

A. Not actually helps to generate business but it creates immense awareness amongst the participants.

10. How social media helps in communication with sports event sponsors in India?

A. Sponsors are interested in return on Investment and that’s why they like to know that how many people shows their interests about events on social media.

11. What kind of challenges you meet when using social media for sports event?

A. Sometimes through social media actual message is not reaching to audience and which creates confusions.

12. What a general consumer motives you encounter when you deal with event branding on social media?
- A. Consumers are more shows their interests to know event current updates and people current engagement in the event. Also, entertainment factor as well.
13. Do you think social media is best marketing tool over others?
- A. Yes, because it is cheap and effective to reach large audience.
14. What is the reason behind less attention of people for sports event over other recreational events?
- A. Sports are very specific interest. Not all people are interested in the sports. However, sports interests among the Indians are increasing every day and we are able to see to bright future of Indian sports.
15. Do your customers provide feedback on post event?
- A. Yes.

Appendix 6. Interview with company 6.

Email interview with Founder of JP Sports & Events

7th of May 2019

Interviewee: Mr. Jigar Patel

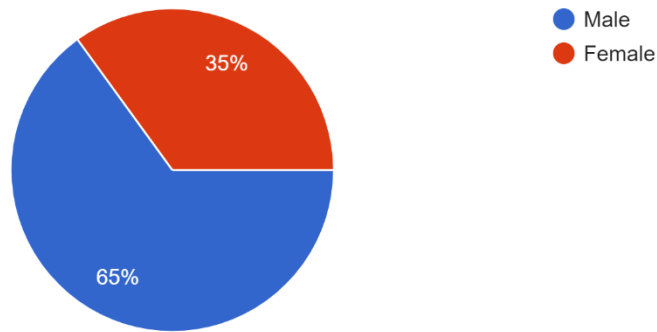
1. What is your occupation?
A. Founder of JP sports and Events company we are sports and event management company
2. How often do you organize sports event in year?
A. 4-5 Events in a year.
3. How do you plan your marketing campaign? DM, SM, PM (digital media, social media, print media)
A. For sponsorship led event it is 360 degree including radio.
4. How does potential consumer reach out to your company?
A. Promotion/Social Media.
5. Do you think new technology has changed the way of event marketing and promotion in India?
A. Yes.
6. Do you believe that Social media has potential to attract consumer for your events? Why? Social
A. Media is cheaper medium in compare to mainstream medium for the event. It is easier to target potential consumer/participants on social media through location targeting.
7. Which social media platform do you use most for your event promotion? Why?
A. Facebook and Insta which covers most of our target group.
8. Do you think your customers are using such platforms?
A. Very Much our TG is very actively on social media.
9. Do you think how social media tool helps you to generate lead for your event business?
A. It helps.
10. How social media helps in communication with sports event sponsors in India?
A. Social Media does not help in getting sponsors, but it helps in promoting the event. By checking the popularity of the event sponsors can invest their money
11. What kind of challenges you meet when using social media for sports event?
A. Targeting is very expensive in compare to concerts or any other such events.

12. What a general consumer motives you encounter when you deal with event branding on social media?
- A. We get all kind of enquires. Right from how to register to registration fees to venue to what should we carry for the event? We get all kind of queries. Most of the queries we received on phone and social media page.
13. Do you think social media is best marketing tool over others?
- A. No. It's not the best but it is useful marketing tool to target the specific consumer bracket.
14. What is the reason behind less attention of people for sports event over other recreational events?
- A. The scenario has changed now, and people are getting conscious about health and fitness however Sports events are not getting much hype and see enthusiasm of participation in compare to other events. They are not willing to pay registration fees, lack of awareness and fitness.
15. Do your customers provide feedback on post event?
- A. Yes.

Appendix 7. Online Questionnaire Survey.

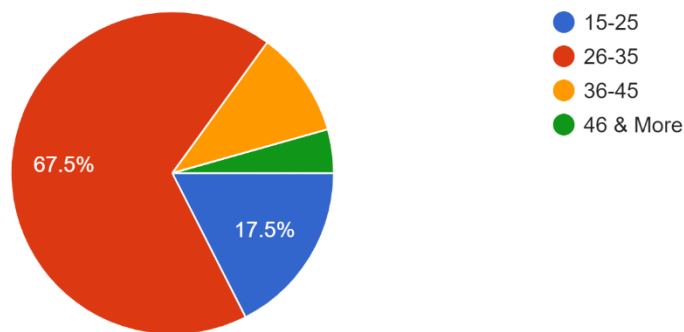
1. Gender

160 responses



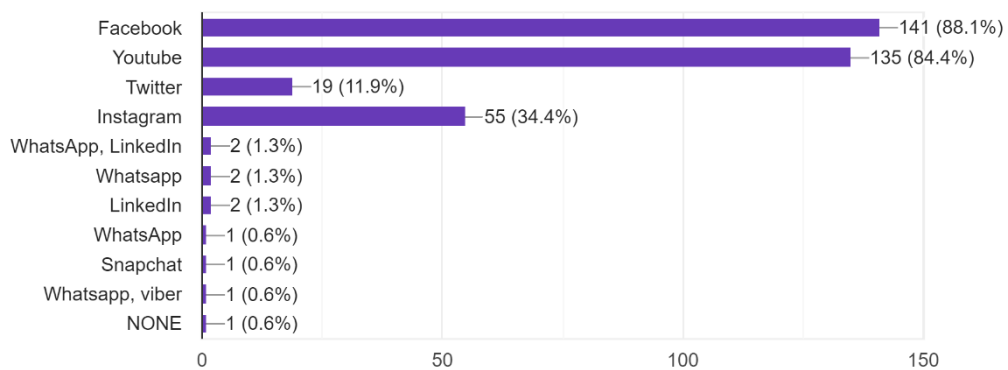
2. Age group

160 responses



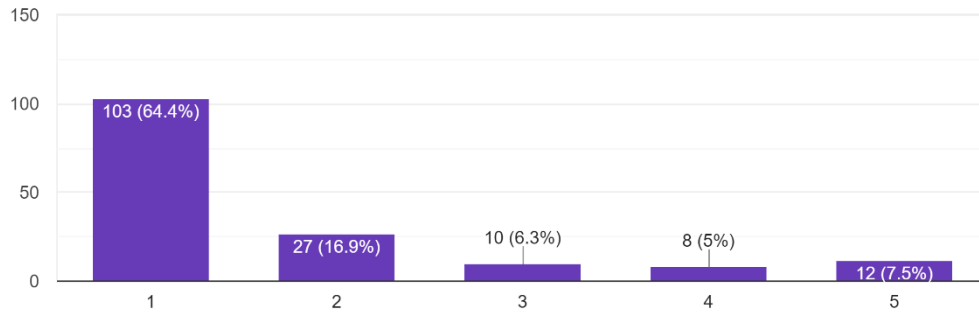
3. Which Social networks do you use ?

160 responses



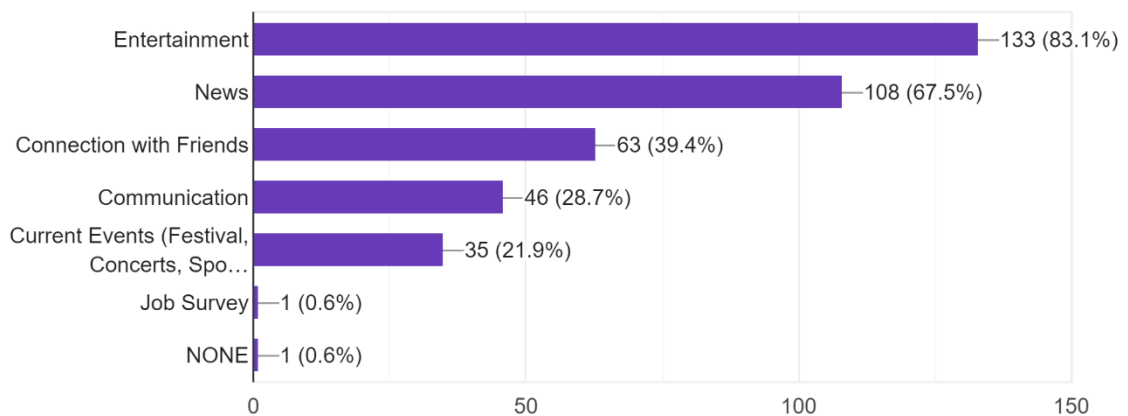
4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that, people spending more time on social media in India ?

160 responses



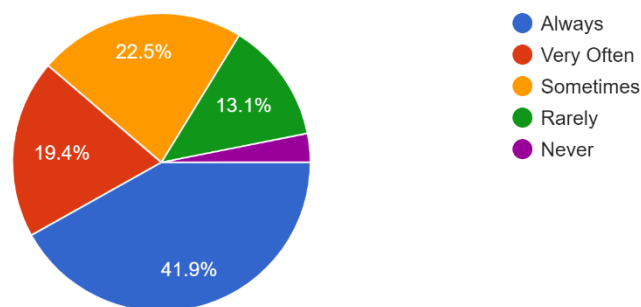
5. For what motives do you use social media ?

160 responses



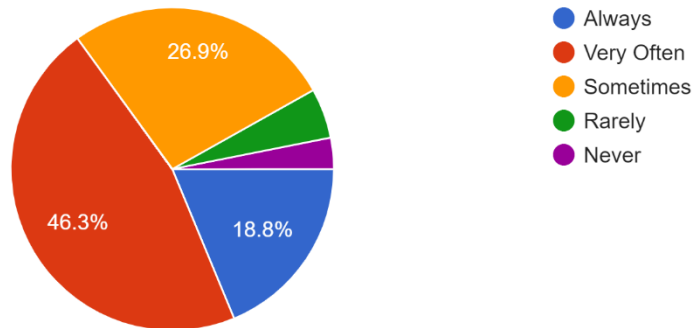
6. Do you provide your reviews or comments on different posts on social media

160 responses



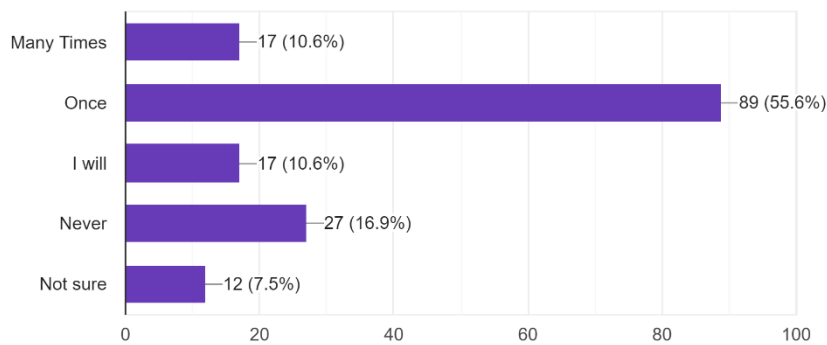
7. Have you seen any sports event advertisement on social media?

160 responses



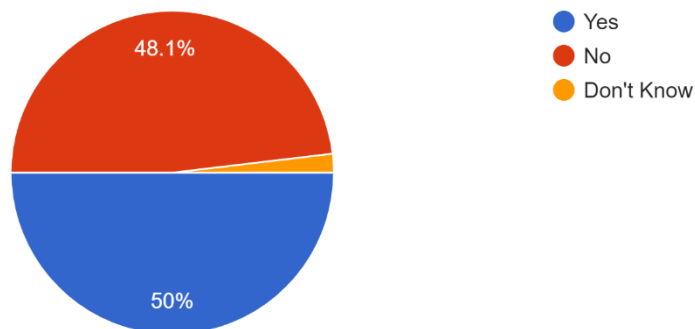
8. Have you ever attended any sports event through the social media advertisement ?

160 responses



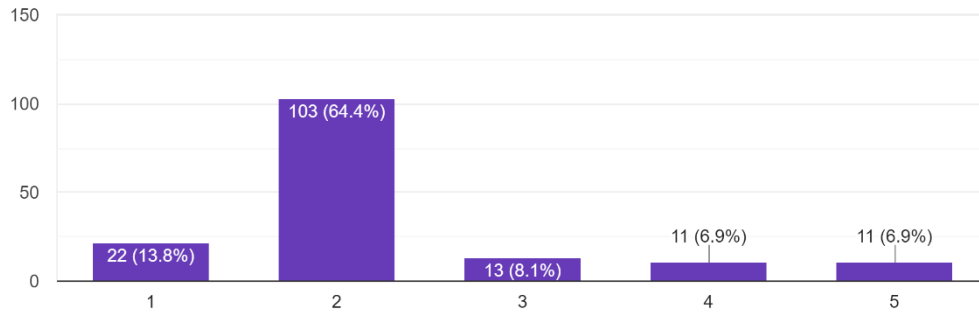
9. Do you follow any sports event page/sports person on social media?

160 responses



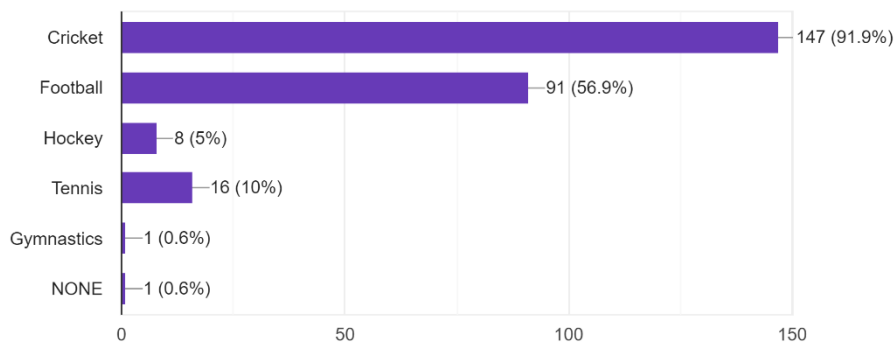
10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that social media helps to create awareness about sports in India?

160 responses



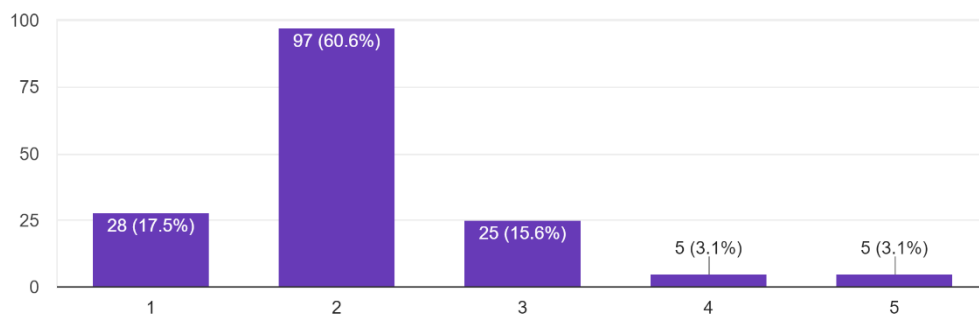
11. For which sports games do you follow social media for live scores update ?

160 responses



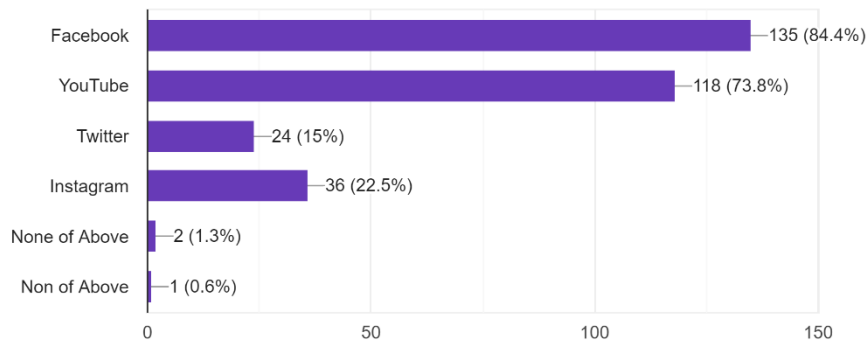
12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that sports event organizers should use social media for sports related advertisements ?

160 responses



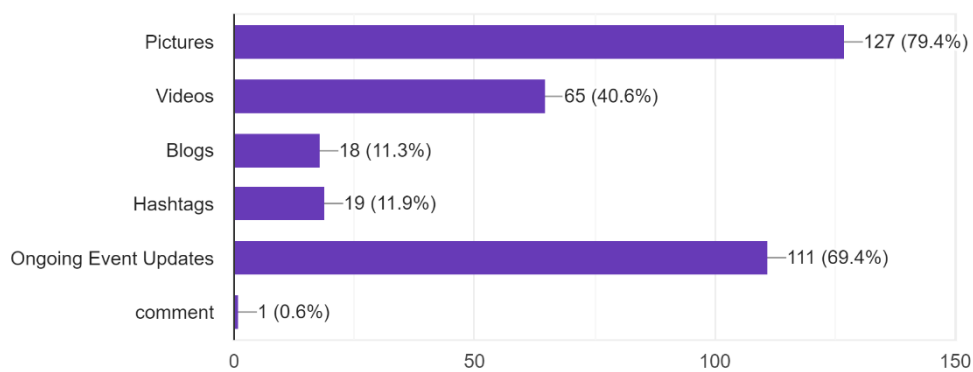
13. According to you which social media is proper place for sports event related posts ?

160 responses



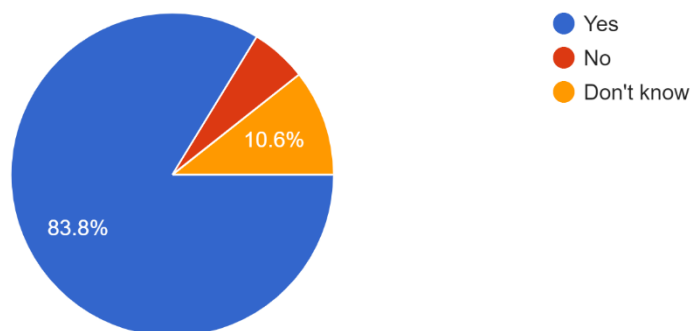
14. What makes sports event more interesting on social media ?

160 responses



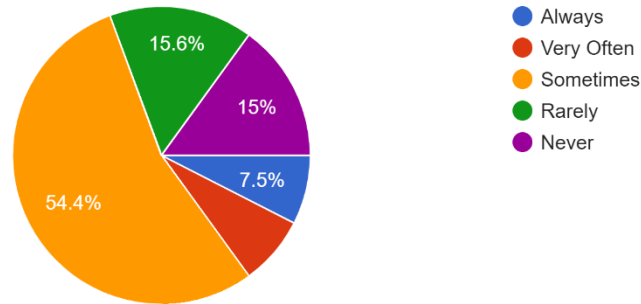
15. Does Social media helps to connect with the sport brands?

160 responses



16. Have you ever shared any sports event advertisement on social media with other users?

160 responses



17. To what extent do you agree or disagree that social media is right place for sports event advertisement

160 responses

