

IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT:

This research aims to integrate value of the student sports engagement within the framework of academic development. University sports is one of the elements of educational growth which is underrepresented topic of study in both educational and professional context worldwide. A fresh viewpoint on collegiate athletics may be noted, and numerous ramifications can be analysed, as a outcome of the vigorous worldwide growth of evidence and communication expertise, together with the global expansion of institutional-level education. To promote student sports and associated actions, this research investigates the potential of the Internet as a digital medium to communicate with students. A sample of Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan, students was used for the primary research. The study showed some noteworthy implications for students attitude concerning collection and usage of general data about student sports activities at the university level. It was demonstrated that the Cyberspace is a major component of the marketing potential of student sports. A comparative analysis of benchmark universities' digital marketing activities was conducted to identify recommendations for developing and enhancing digital marketing tools, such as a website, and mobile applications social network presence, in order to maximize the marketing potential of university sports. Multiple firms use various digital marketing channels to sell their products and services online. Sporting event data may be utilized and disseminated in a multitude of ways through digital marketing. Traditional sports marketing is being replaced by digital marketing as a result of the rise of social media. It facilitates communication between sports fans, teams, and sponsors. Even sophisticated smartphones have an impact on sports marketing. These enormous advances in digital marketing provide several challenges for the sports marketing industry. In the following paper, the author utilises a model of the sports eco-system to

provide novel concepts and methodologies. This digital marketing distinguishes between individual perspectives and those of sports organisations and federations. A novel strategy for the internet marketing of sports is outlined. This method is useful for analysing the present condition of digital marketing and creating a digital marketing plan for the sports industry.

Keywords: Sports and Social Media, University Sports Marketing, , Digital Marketing, Sports Development, and Social Media

INTRODUCTION:

Throughout the history of humanity, sports have been an integral part of human life and have evolved from a battle for survival to an industry that generates substantial financial revenue. The global sports sector expanded by 13.5% from 2020 to 2021, which is an astounding rate given that the sports industry has faced enormous hurdles since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020. Most live sporting events were canceled or suspended during the first few months of the epidemic. As a result, the athletic organization implemented restrictive measures, including social separation, remote employment, and the cessation of corporate operations. From those mentioned above, it is evident that sports have evolved and transformed over time dynamic. Because of this, Sport has a solid connection to every human group's social and cultural traditions. Due to the growth of the sports sector, sports staff is now responsible for ensuring that all competitors are treated equally, and those sporting events are kept exciting simultaneously. (Ratten, Ratten, 2011:614-615) and because of different business and marketing endeavors inside Sport, it has become commercialized and internationalized worldwide for everyone concerned. (Bee, Kahle, 2006: 109-110).

The development of social media and the evolution of information technology have created a parallel virtual world that has reduced the space available for sports activities while also open a new way for the effective use of internet tools to communicate with athletes and other sports enthusiasts. Interestingly, the mode of communication used 20 years ago to

tell the public about a particular sports topic or event pales in comparison to the current ways and means of communication used now. Some of the Internet's technologies, such as web portals, internet applications, social networks, and digital television, were difficult to forecast in the past but are now practically unfathomable in daily life. Due to these and other factors, online marketing is becoming increasingly important. The sports sector accepts these improvements and advances, which commonly utilize digital technology and connected media. Hutchins and Rowe concluded that Markets for sports-related media products are "marked by complicated interplay, intense rivalry. Sports, like rest of human interaction, involve a service provided by one party, with the other party, usually a sympathizer or consumer, using it to meet their particular emotional demands. Customers and sports fans may connect with others, share their views, and have a feeling of belonging thanks to the use of online communities. As a result, online communities allow customers to engage with athletes and sports organizations and sponsors in addition to other consumers.

As a subcategory of digital marketing, sports marketing primarily focus on promoting sports products, services, and players and teams. Nevertheless, the ties between sports organizations and their customers are more complex than a simple equation. Sports were promoted, brands were strengthened and fans were kept in touch with stakeholders (e.g. players, coaches and leagues) participating in sporting events throughout the epidemic, which required the use of digital media for advertising. For instance, in the summer of 2020, live athletic events resumed, but without the presence of fans. The sports sector relies on marketing communication via a number of methods (e.g., social media, public relations, and mass media) to sell goods and facilities, communicate information, and repair organizational images, which makes it a distinctive and crucial part of the industry. The sports sector relies on marketing communication via a number of methods to

sell goods and services, communicate information, and repair organizational pictures, which makes it a distinctive and crucial part of the industry. Everyone must be informed of all events, news, and whatever is occurring or possibly trending according to the social buzz' in this 'period of keeping current.

Social media facilitate the exact dissemination of sports news through social media. Due to younger generations' shorter attention spans, precision and brevity have become important. It encourages us to embrace the massive digital shift occurring due to the many kinds of content consumption on social networks. This study is mainly concerned with social media platforms in the present context. Regarding sports administration, development, and general management in terms of how sports news or information or sports material is disseminated to the public in the digital world, a great deal is occurring in the background. Digital marketing has increased the growth and profitability of sports brands and the sports industries. The dispersion of time and changes in user consuming patterns, wireless, video, portal, mobile, multi-screen, big data, social etc., have led to proliferation of digital marketing statement, which continues to evolve. The theoretical study of digital marketing, such as the study of digital marketing, is lagging behind in comparison to the intense practice of digital marketing. Digital marketing's progress will be hampered by the information gap that exists across academic institutions. Organizations use Internet technology to plan and package their products or services on the Internet platform before delivering them via computer technology and communication technology to specific consumer groups with actual needs, in order to improve operational efficiency and meet marketing objectives.

Top to analyze consumer behavior characteristics based on data channels, analyze consumer preferences, optimize operational processes, improve service quality and operational efficiency, and achieve marketing accuracy and data marketing

effectiveness A-level marketing activity. Digital transmission maximizes the use of diverse information resources and channels, improving the profitability and efficacy of marketing efforts and fostering businesses' comprehensive, rapid, and sustainable growth. Utilizing the Internet's distinctive characteristics has enabled the proliferation of new services. In summary, digital media marketing uses Internet resources to integrate corporate product information, promotional materials, corporate strategy, and customer service with corporate marketing activities, providing ongoing contact and informal contact between businesses and consumers allows involvement.

Digital marketing strategies, unrestricted by the numerous limitations of conventional marketing operations, may supply customers with the ironic evidence and most excellent services quickly and conveniently through an online trading platform anytime. This study examines the application of digital marketing among Lahore College for Women's student body. Student sports have both recreational and educational components. Since 72% of city inhabitants older than 18 use the Internet on a regular basis, and 92% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 do as well, we may conclude that the Internet is an essential component of this population's communication infrastructure. The athletic activities of the student population vary from leisure sports to international events in which students represent the institution and their country.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To evaluate the effects of digitalization on sports development at the university level.
2. To find out how much interest students at Lahore College for Women University have in participating in student sports and what aspects of student sports are necessary to keep them engaged.

HYPOTHESES:

- H₁ There are positive effects of digital marketing on sports development at the university level.
- H₀: There are adverse effects of digital marketing on the development of sports at the university level.

University Sports and E-Marketing:

Most student-oriented sports are conducted in the non-profit sector, as their primary objective is the improvement of student health. Numerous studies have shown that students' participation in sports activities is closely linked to their later lifestyle, implying that the freedom to participate in specific sports activities at university is linked to an inner motivation for competition in all fields, which is crucial during that phase of life. Academic sports coaches face several obstacles while attempting to give students of physical education inspiring and enjoyable experiences (Spittle, Byrne, 2009: 253-254). Due to the large number of pupils at the school and the inadequacy of sports facilities, this is a factor. Physical education courses, recreational activities, and competitive sports are all examples of academic sports that may be broken down into three basic groups. Because of its similarity to professional sports organizations, the last category of academic sport has the most marketing potential.

Marketing has undergone a radical makeover with the advent of modern information technologies. A company's ability to maintain a long-term connection with its clients both threatened and bolstered by improvements in information technology. Panian (2000: 87) shows how electronic marketing can help an organization achieve its marketing goals through the use of information and communication technology. Panian (2000: 87) Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer, and Johnson (2009: 8-10) found that current marketing theory also uses e-marketing and other digital technologies to achieve marketing goals. I think it is supported the study. The classic approach to marketing, considered the basis of marketing theory, was to combine four

elements: product, price, promotion, and location. Along with digital marketing, the definition of service marketing has been expanded from four to seven elements by adding processes, physical evidence, and people. Marketing research started to concentrate on the product exchange process, and thus the 4P framework was established, but service as an exchange object began to be explored later, resulting in the development of additional parts.

When it comes to electronic marketing, the classic 4P still applies, but 7P is tailored to the specifics of the market conditions in which the company works and the exchange is completed. In E-Marketing, predictive modeling refers to precise models that, based on acquired and processed data, identify the market at the micro level, allowing for an individualized approach and engagement with clients depending on their tastes and needs. This enhances the possibility of satisfying client's needs and goals, which is the foundation of all contemporary marketing strategies. The Internet has made it possible for clients to communicate regardless of their geographical location, supporting the growth of a global market. Knowledge transfer has never been more accessible or more vital.

This is evidenced by the prevalence of online communities, blogs, forums, and social networks. The use of marketing in sports dates back to the Sport's inception as a competitive activity, although it's more aggressive use is associated with incorporating corporate organizations into competitive sports. Numerous companies have identified sports as a vast, underutilized promotional medium with significant potential.

This strategy is increasingly being used in corporate sponsorship agreements with long-term terms and conditions. Sport's close connection to emotion makes it an ideal medium for developing rapport with target demographics, which is a main goal of marketing campaigns aimed at creating demand for a

certain product or service. When considering the application of marketing to sports, there are two major conceptual contrasts that marketing analysts believe are crucial. These are the two concepts that make up sports marketing. Sports marketing and sports marketing as a whole are not consistently defined by most writers, which should be taken into account. Fans, journalists, and sponsors "pay to promote and support the organization" for the advantages of "social exchange and personal, collective, and communal identity in a cooperative, competitive setting," according to Wakefield in 2007.

Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are among the most popular social networks used by sporting groups to communicate. There is a strong financial case for using social media as a communication tool at the university level, and this is owing to the high adoption rate of social media by the target demographic. Students' ability to make well-informed judgments is improved as a result of the increased use of social media at the university level. Direct marketing has replaced mass marketing in every structure because mass marketing has lost a lot of its efficacy and usefulness over the years. When it comes to marketing, digital marketing has made it much easier to pinpoint exactly who you're trying to reach. Various sports organizations, especially at the university level, might overcome earlier obstacles such as low fan engagement, less media attention, and smaller marketing budgets by utilizing social media as a unique marketing approach. Nevertheless, generating value for target audiences has become more complex over time, as people anticipate more from online experiences, such as forming social relationships.

This strategy presents corporate companies, including numerous sports groups, with obstacles and possibilities. The primary research question was formulated using the methodology mentioned above: what is the most effective media for engaging university students and overcoming the communication problems associated with university-related athletic activities?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

RESEARCH DESIGN:

This research uses inductive and deductive reasoning research methods, case studies and questionnaire surveys, a qualitative research method, and a cross-sectional time perspective. After data collection, all data were analyzed, and the data collection was consistent with the research's rationale and validity. The primary objective of this study was to determine the level of student knowledge regarding sports activities at the Lahore College for Women University in Lahore. Due to the scarcity of research on this topic and its limited applicability, the methodology used was derived from several partially compatible papers and studies.

There were 17,337 students registered at the University, according to the figures supplied by the University administration. A total of 1,733 students were included in the survey, which included 10% of the student body. The poll included 23 research questions and two demographic questions. A 5-point Likert scale was used to assess use, frequency, and agreement, as well as a number of free-form questions. In addition, when employing a Likert scale, caution should be used while interpreting the results since respondent subjectivity is possible. A total of 1,733 pieces of information were gathered via the use of an online survey and in-person interviews. Sample data shows that 37.5 percent of the students were first-year students, 20.7 percent were sophomores, 15.6 percent were third-year students, 12.4 percent were seniors, and 13.8 percent were fifth-year undergraduates, according to the results of the survey.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

Statistical analysis is the process through which quantitative methods are consistently employed to evaluate and comprehend data. In this study, the routinely used statistical software SPSS, version 26, was used to analyze the data collected. Several statistical tests were used to acquire the desired findings, including the mean, standard deviation, an independent sample t-Test, and a Paired sample t-Test.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Research shows that students get their college sports information from a variety of sources, including print and digital. Previous studies indicated that daily Internet usage among students was anticipated. Nearly 88% of respondents use the Internet numerous times (very frequent) every day, while just under 8% percent use it once per day (less frequent), and the rest of them rarely use the Internet.

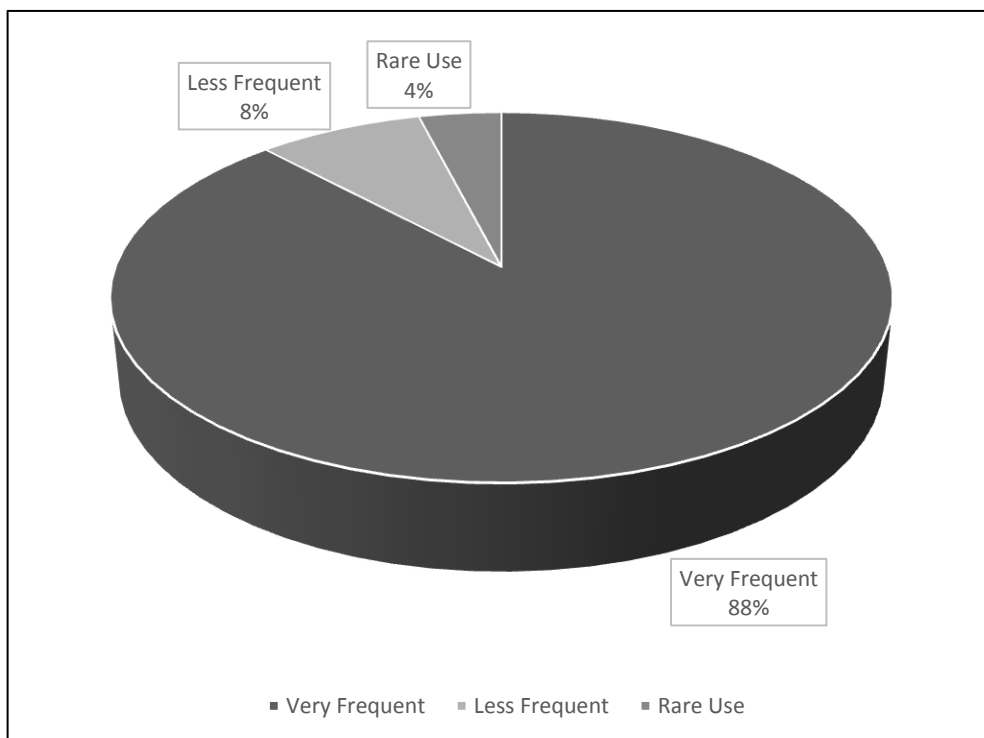


Figure-1 Internet usage of the respondent students

According to the collected data, there is a significant difference in the devices used to access the Internet. Respondents primarily use computers with a mean score (x) of $x=3.58$ and standard deviation (sd) of $sd=1.37$ and mobile phones ($x=4.68$, $sd=1.97$) to access the Internet, while tablets, institutional devices, and other public computers are not utilized to a more significant degree by respondents.

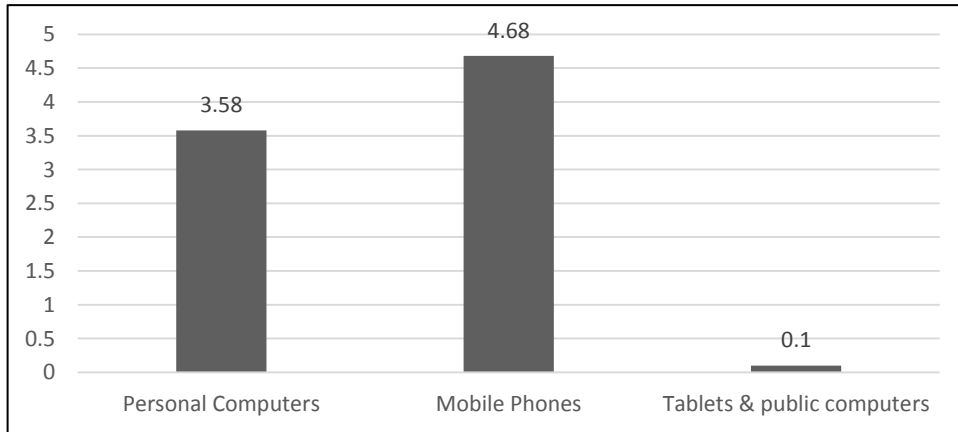


Figure-2 Device usage of the respondent's students to access the internet

Respondents were asked about their use of various communication channels for information access, including questions about their attitude toward general methods of informing about students' activities and their attitude toward information channels about students' sports activities, allowing for comparison. A 5-point Likert scale was applied, with 1 indicating the least common and 5 representing the most common.

As shown in the chart, respondents relied most heavily on Facebook for overall university information ($x=4.73$, $sd=1.76$) and College-level sports information ($x=4.28$, $sd=1.98$), followed by friends and colleagues ($x=4.27$, $sd=1.72$; $x=3.78$, $sd=2.1$) then on the university website and portal and then on faculty of the University (*Figure 3*). The survey also found that relatively few students depended on offline media such as newspapers, radio, and television for any category of evaluated information.

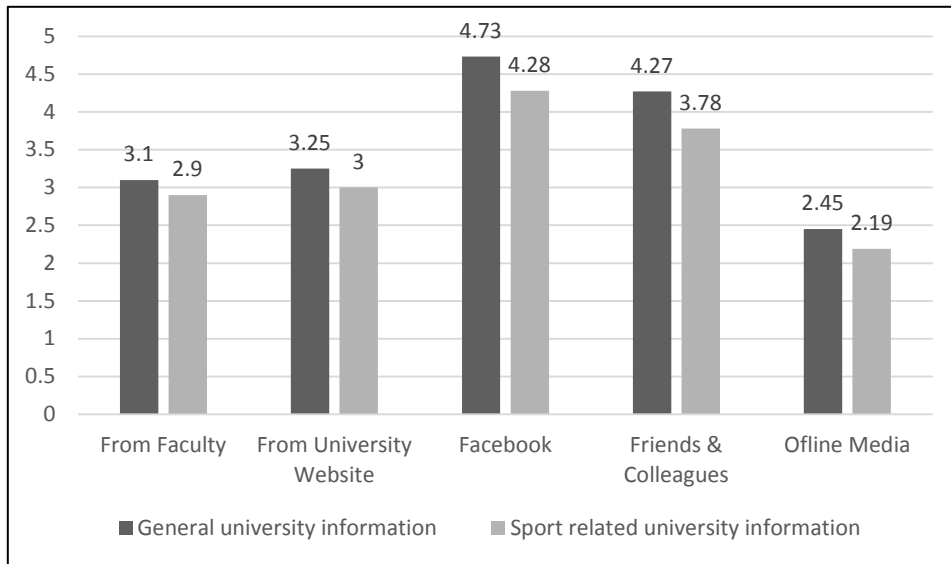


Figure-3 Respondent student's source of information

The paired t-test revealed a statistically substantial difference between overall university information and sports information of University for each of the listed information sources. i.e., university faculty, university website, Facebook, friends or colleague, and offline media. Analyzing the average score for each test item revealed that questioner are significantly less knowledgeable about sporting trials.

	Paired Differences					T	d f	Sig (2- tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
University faculty	.192	2.027	.049	.097	.288	3.947	1732	.000
University website	.798	2.007	.048	.703	.893	16.554	1732	.000
Facebook	.911	2.150	.052	.809	1.012	17.632	1732	.000
Friends or colleagues	.488	1.947	.047	.396	.579	10.424	1732	.000
Offline media	.165	1.153	.028	.111	.219	5.961	1732	.000

Table Paired t-test for general university and sport-related information sources

As seen in the graph, the research reveals that roughly 56 percent of responses fall between 2 and 3, indicating that most reactions are neutral with a minor bias towards non-recognition of student sports. We can simplify the results by dividing the Likert scale into three sections: the left section with a score range of 1 to 2 indicates non-recognition (to some extent), the middle section with scale item 3 shows a neutral attitude, and the right section with the score range of 4 to 5 indicates recognition.

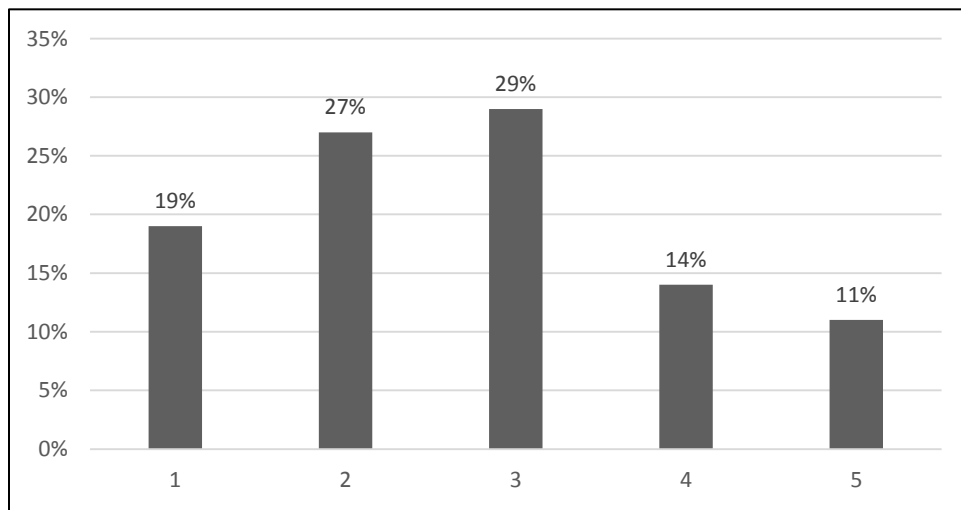


Figure-3 Attitude indicator on recognition of public sports events compared to other for students

Consequently, 46 percent of the responses were in the lower (left) area, while only 25 percent were in the right section. This indicates that, relative to other student activities, students view student sports as less identifiable than other student activities. When respondents were questioned about their acquaintance with university-level sporting events, they received average scores indicating moderate understanding ($\bar{x}=2.41$, $sd=1.36$). Using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents indicated their level of agreement with items about their knowledge of student sports activities. According to research, the average recognition grade diminishes as the amount of activity organization grows

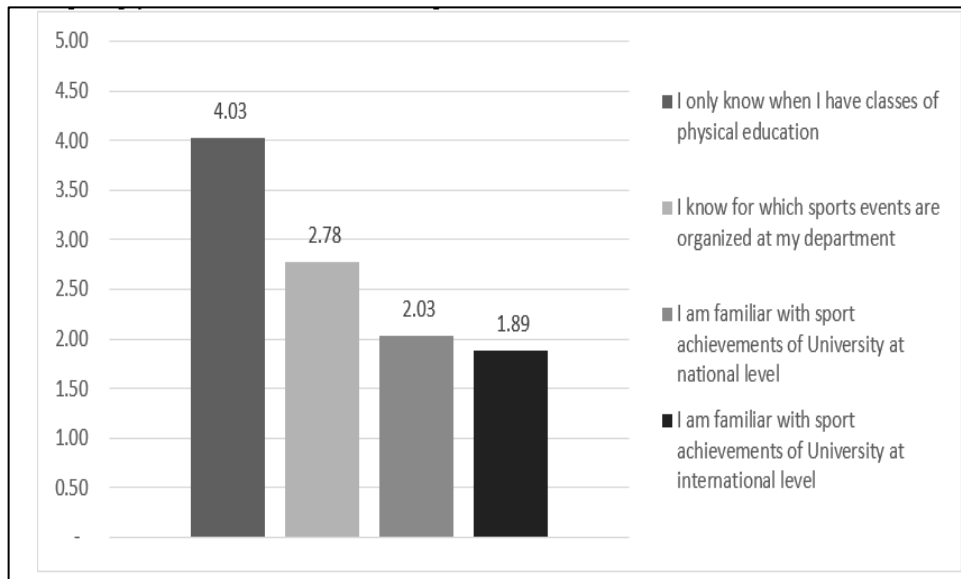


Figure-4 Grading of student athletic achievement knowledge

Respondents asserted that they know when they have physical education classes, an average value of 4.03; however, the rest of the claims received a middle grade of less than 3, indicating that they are uneducated about university level sports. In other words, respondents were not aware of their university's sports events and academic sports triumphs at the university, national, and worldwide levels.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the research was to assess the effect of digital marketing on university-level sports development. Marketing in sports, both competitive and non-profit, has become more important in the age of sports marketing. Marketing plays a crucial part in attaining the objectives of any sports organization and individual. E-marketing plays a vital role in the sports business area due to how it is implemented and the target audience it reaches through the Internet and its tools.

Research participants were from Lahore College for Women, Lahore University. Students rely heavily on the Internet for information about student activities and student sports activities, according to a study. Studying statistics on student awareness of university sports, it is feasible to infer that students were not properly acquainted with the institution's student sports. Students were ignorant of the reputation of the University Athletics Association and the existence of a website for student sports, according to a study. Other students are also a good source of information about what their peers are doing, and Facebook is a popular platform for doing so. Only a small percentage of pupils were aware of other websites and offline broadcasting such as radio, television, and newspapers.

According to the findings of the study, college students think they are undereducated when it comes to student athletics. This research offers a agenda for future research on the Internet and social media usage in universities and other institutions. This study explains internet usage from the student's perspective, but a prospective study might consider the organization's views, the sports customer, and potentially the sponsors. Along with the continued expansion of the Internet and mobile devices, there is little question that the use of the Internet as a source of university sports information will increase in the future.

Future research might also focus on the behaviour and habits of pupil cyberspace users, as well as the use of social networks and mobile Internet during university level sporting events. This study has various deficiencies. Self-reporting may contain incorrect and inconsistent data due to the respondent's potential propensity to project their perceptions. Due to the possibility of respondent subjectivity in evaluating the Likert scale items, the conclusions should be interpreted cautiously. Consequently, the self-reporting assessment is an evident restriction of the gathered data and may affect the presented findings.

The impacts of digital marketing on sports marketing are immense. Digital marketing methods fundamentally alter the sports industry. Digital marketing has provided practical suggestions for sports marketing on the web and social media. These methods also optimize the conception, development, and execution of digital marketing initiatives. The sports sector is undergoing a swift transformation with all social media channels. The sports sector uses digital marketing tactics to engage its supporters, increase brand sales, and foster better communication. Knowing the expectations of their fans and following them is incredibly important to the sports sector. Consequently, we may infer that digital marketing methods have a favourable influence on the sports business. Physical fitness is a prerequisite for success both in sports and in everyday life. The higher the fitness component, the more strength is achieved. This power in numerous body parts has contributed to enormous successes in sports careers and other vital elements of life.

According to the findings of the study, students are under-informed about pupil sports and that Internet and word-of-mouth are the key sources of information about these activities, with a particular emphasis on social networks and mobile internet access. Lahore College for Women University's sports have a lot of promise, however they're underrepresented on the internet. Therefore, future study may focus on the challenges faced by university sports and the role of digital marketing as a possible future development for university sports.

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