ISSN:4211- 4350
Volume 15, Number 1, 2026
Keffi Journal of Management and Development Studies
Faculty of Social Science Journal, ***Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria***

THE EFFECT OF FAN ENGAGEMENT MARKETING ON REVENUE GENERATION IN THE DELTA STATE SPORTS INDUSTRY

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https://doi.org/10.60787/IJMSSR.VOL12NO2.4252

Abstract
This study examined the effect of fan engagement marketing on revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated the effects of social media engagement, live sports event engagement, and fan loyalty on organisational revenue generation. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Data were collected from 107 managerial respondents drawn from 37 registered sports organisations using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated scales. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, while descriptive statistics and simple linear regression were employed for data analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27. The findings revealed that social media engagement significantly and positively influenced revenue generation ($\beta = 0.640$, $t = 5.326$, $p < 0.001$). Live sports event engagement also exerted a significant positive effect on revenue generation ($\beta = 0.640$, $t = 5.326$, $p < 0.001$), while fan loyalty emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.673$, $t = 6.365$, $p < 0.001$). The study concludes that effective fan engagement marketing is a critical driver of revenue generation and long-term financial sustainability in sports organisations. It recommends that sports organisations strengthen digital engagement strategies, enhance live event experiences, and implement robust fan loyalty programmes to improve commercial performance. The study contributes to sport marketing literature by providing empirical evidence from the Nigerian sports industry, thereby extending knowledge on fan engagement and revenue generation in an emerging African sports market.

Keywords: ***fan engagement marketing; social media engagement; live sports event engagement; fan loyalty; revenue generation; sports industry; Nigeria*****.**

INTRODUCTION

The sports industry has evolved into one of the world's most commercially significant sectors, driven by technological advancement, media expansion, and changing patterns of consumer behaviour. Modern sports organisations increasingly compete not only through athletic success but also through their ability to build strong relationships with supporters who contribute to organisational sustainability through ticket purchases, sponsorship attractiveness, merchandising, broadcasting, and digital consumption (Deloitte, 2024; PwC, 2023). Consequently, fan engagement marketing has emerged as a strategic marketing capability for enhancing organisational competitiveness and long-term revenue generation.

Fan engagement marketing encompasses the deliberate use of interactive activities to develop meaningful relationships between sports organisations and their supporters across physical and digital platforms. These activities include social media interactions, live sporting experiences, loyalty programmes, personalised communication, and online fan communities that strengthen emotional attachment and encourage continued patronage (Filo et al., 2015; Parganas et al., 2017). Previous studies suggest that highly engaged fans are more likely to attend sporting events, purchase merchandise, recommend teams to others, and maintain long-term relationships with sports organisations, thereby creating substantial commercial value (Yoshida et al., 2014; Tsiotsou et al., 2023).

Despite increasing investment in fan engagement initiatives, many sports organisations continue to experience challenges in converting fan interactions into sustainable revenue streams. Although digital platforms have expanded opportunities for communication and relationship building, high levels of online engagement do not necessarily translate into increased ticket sales, sponsorship income, merchandising revenue, or other commercial returns (PwC, 2023). This disconnect highlights the need to understand how different dimensions of fan engagement contribute to organisational revenue generation, particularly in developing sports markets where commercialisation is still evolving.

Extant literature has largely examined fan engagement from behavioural and psychological perspectives. Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that fan engagement enhances customer satisfaction, emotional attachment, team identification, brand loyalty, advocacy behaviour, and purchase intentions (Filo et al., 2015; Yoshida et al., 2014; Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012). Similarly, studies have shown that social media platforms facilitate stronger interactions between sports organisations and supporters while improving brand visibility and community participation (Naraine & Parent, 2017; Parganas et al., 2017). However, relatively fewer studies have investigated whether these engagement activities produce measurable improvements in organisational revenue generation, especially within emerging economies.

The evidence is particularly limited in Nigeria, where sports organisations increasingly operate in a competitive environment characterised by declining public funding, rising operational costs, growing digital adoption, and increasing dependence on commercial income. Delta State occupies a prominent position within Nigeria's sports landscape owing to its consistent investment in sports development and the presence of professional clubs, sports associations, and sporting events. Nevertheless, organisations within the state continue to face financial sustainability challenges, making effective fan engagement marketing an important strategic tool for expanding revenue sources and strengthening organisational viability.

Although previous studies have examined individual aspects of fan engagement, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the combined influence of social media engagement, live sports event engagement, and fan loyalty on revenue generation within the Delta State sports industry. This represents both a theoretical and contextual gap because these dimensions capture complementary mechanisms through which sports organisations create commercial value. Addressing this gap is important for advancing sport marketing literature and providing evidence-based guidance for practitioners seeking to improve financial sustainability through fan-centred marketing strategies.

Against this background, this study examines the effect of fan engagement marketing on revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry. Specifically, the study investigates the effects of social media engagement, live sports event engagement, and fan loyalty on revenue generation. The findings are expected to contribute to sport marketing scholarship by extending existing knowledge on the commercial outcomes of fan engagement while providing practical insights for sports managers and policymakers seeking to strengthen the financial sustainability and competitiveness of sports organisations in emerging markets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

This study is anchored on three complementary theoretical perspectives: Relationship Marketing Theory, Service-Dominant (S-D) Logic, and Social Exchange Theory. Collectively, these theories explain how fan engagement marketing fosters enduring relationships, facilitates value co-creation, and stimulates reciprocal behaviours that ultimately enhance revenue generation within sports organisations.

Relationship Marketing Theory

Relationship Marketing Theory, advanced by Morgan and Hunt (1994), posits that organisational success depends on establishing, maintaining, and strengthening long-term relationships with customers rather than relying solely on discrete transactions. The theory identifies trust and commitment as the central mediating variables through which organisations develop enduring customer relationships that encourage repeat patronage, advocacy, and long-term profitability.

Within the sports industry, fans constitute strategic relational assets whose emotional attachment to teams extends beyond conventional buyer–seller exchanges. Consequently, sports organisations increasingly invest in engagement strategies, including personalised communication, digital interactions, loyalty programmes, fan communities, and experiential marketing, to strengthen long-term relationships with supporters. Such relational investments deepen fan commitment, enhance brand attachment, and increase behavioural outcomes such as ticket purchases, merchandise consumption, membership renewal, sponsorship attractiveness, and media engagement. Relationship Marketing Theory, therefore, provides the primary theoretical explanation for the relationship between fan engagement marketing and revenue generation. Specifically, it suggests that stronger fan relationships translate into greater customer lifetime value and more sustainable revenue streams.

Service-Dominant Logic

Service-Dominant (S-D) Logic, proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2008), reconceptualises marketing by arguing that value is co-created through interactions between organisations and customers rather than being embedded exclusively in products or services. Under this perspective, customers are active participants in value creation, while service exchange constitutes the fundamental basis of competitive advantage.

The theory is particularly relevant to contemporary sports marketing, where digital technologies have transformed fans from passive spectators into active co-creators of value. Through social media platforms, mobile applications, online fan communities, fantasy sports, streaming services, and user-generated content, supporters continuously interact with sports organisations, shape brand narratives, and contribute to organisational visibility. These interactions generate commercial value by enhancing sponsorship activation, digital advertising effectiveness, subscription revenues, merchandising opportunities, and data-driven marketing capabilities. Accordingly, Service-Dominant Logic explains why technology-enabled fan engagement has become a strategic mechanism through which sports organisations create value and strengthen revenue-generating opportunities.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) explains social relationships as ongoing exchanges in which individuals evaluate interactions based on perceived benefits and costs. Relationships are sustained when participants perceive that the rewards obtained exceed the resources invested, thereby encouraging continued interaction and reciprocal behaviour.

Within sports marketing, fans invest emotional attachment, financial resources, time, and social identity in supporting their preferred teams. In return, they expect rewarding experiences, including competitive performance, meaningful interactions, exclusive content, community participation, recognition, and quality service delivery. When these expectations are fulfilled, fans are more likely to reciprocate through behaviours that directly contribute to organisational revenue, including repeated event attendance, merchandise purchases, premium subscriptions, sponsorship support, membership renewal, and positive word-of-mouth. Social Exchange Theory, therefore, provides the behavioural mechanism through which fan engagement activities influence revenue generation by explaining why satisfied and engaged supporters voluntarily increase their economic contributions to sports organisations.

Theoretical Synthesis

Although each theory explains fan engagement from a distinct perspective, together they provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between fan engagement, marketing and revenue generation. Relationship Marketing Theory explains how sustained organisational–fan relationships cultivate loyalty and repeat patronage. Service-Dominant Logic demonstrates how interactive engagement enables organisations and fans to co-create value through digital and experiential platforms. Social Exchange Theory complements these perspectives by explaining why fans reciprocate positive engagement experiences with behaviours that generate commercial returns.

Collectively, these theories suggest that sports organisations capable of fostering meaningful fan relationships, facilitating value co-creation, and delivering rewarding engagement experiences are better positioned to strengthen multiple revenue streams, including ticket sales, sponsorship income, merchandising, media rights, digital subscriptions, and licensing revenue. Guided by these theoretical arguments, the present study proposes that the three dimensions of fan engagement marketing, social media engagement, live sports event engagement, and fan loyalty exert significant positive effects on revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry.

Conceptual Review

Fan Engagement Marketing

Fan engagement marketing refers to the strategic process through which sports organisations develop and sustain meaningful interactions with supporters to strengthen emotional attachment, behavioural participation, and long-term commercial value (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Yoshida et al., 2014). Unlike traditional sports marketing, which primarily promotes sporting events and products, fan engagement marketing emphasises continuous, interactive relationships that encourage enduring supporter commitment.

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has expanded fan engagement beyond match-day experiences to include interactions through social media, mobile applications, streaming platforms, virtual communities, and customer relationship management (CRM) systems (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012; Filo et al., 2015). These platforms enable sports organisations to personalise communication, encourage user-generated content, and co-create value with supporters.

Relationship Marketing Theory views fan engagement as a long-term strategic capability that builds trust, commitment, and mutual value, transforming casual spectators into loyal brand advocates who contribute through ticket purchases, merchandise consumption, sponsorship activation, digital participation, and positive word-of-mouth (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Parganas et al., 2017; Abeza et al., 2020). Accordingly, fan engagement is widely recognised as a multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions that collectively enhance customer lifetime value and organisational sustainability (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014).

In today's competitive sports industry, effective fan engagement has become a strategic source of competitive advantage, enabling sports organisations to strengthen supporter loyalty, stimulate consumption, and improve revenue generation through technology-enabled engagement initiatives (Naraine & Parent, 2017).

Dimensions of Fan Engagement Marketing
Social Media Engagement
Social media engagement refers to the use of digital platforms to create interactive and value-driven relationships between sports organisations and their supporters (Filo et al., 2015). Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp facilitate two-way communication through content sharing, live interactions, and user-generated content, thereby strengthening fan relationships and expanding organisational reach (Parganas et al., 2017). Beyond communication, social media enhances sponsorship activation, targeted advertising, e-commerce, and merchandise sales, making it a strategic capability for improving both fan engagement and organisational revenue (Abeza et al., 2020).

Live Sports Event Engagement
Live sports event engagement refers to the extent to which sports organisations create memorable and interactive experiences that strengthen spectators' emotional connection with sporting events (Yoshida et al., 2014). Guided by the experience economy perspective (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), organisations enhance fan experiences through stadium atmosphere, entertainment, hospitality services, and interactive technologies (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012). Such experiences encourage repeat attendance, increase spending on tickets, concessions, hospitality, and merchandise, and ultimately improve organisational revenue and long-term competitiveness.

Fan Loyalty
Fan loyalty is the enduring psychological commitment and behavioural consistency of supporters towards a sports organisation, reflected in repeated patronage, advocacy, and emotional attachment despite fluctuations in team performance (Bauer et al., 2008; Idenedo et al., 2025; Idenedo & Asiagwu, 2024; Idenedo et al., 2023; Idenedo & Ebenuwa, 2022; Idenedo & Goodie-Okio, 2022; Idenedo & Wali, 2022). Relationship Marketing Theory views loyalty as a strategic asset that generates recurring revenue and strengthens long-term customer relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Through digital platforms and loyalty programmes, sports organisations reinforce supporter commitment, leading to sustained ticket purchases, merchandise consumption, memberships, subscriptions, and sponsorship value (Biscaia et al., 2013).

Revenue Generation
Revenue generation refers to an organisation's ability to create and sustain financial value through commercial activities such as ticket sales, sponsorships, merchandising, licensing, hospitality, broadcasting, and digital subscriptions (Beech & Chadwick, 2013). Advances in digital technologies have enabled sports organisations to monetise fan interactions through personalised marketing, e-commerce, and customer relationship management systems (PwC, 2023). Given the limited availability of objective financial data, this study measures revenue generation using managers' subjective assessments of commercial performance, an approach widely recognised as a valid proxy for objective financial outcomes (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986; Richard et al., 2009).

Empirical Literature Review
Social Media Engagement and Revenue Generation

Social media engagement has become a strategic marketing resource that enables sports organisations to strengthen relationships with supporters while creating commercial opportunities through digital advertising, sponsorship activation, merchandise sales, and personalised marketing (Filo et al., 2015; Parganas et al., 2017). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that interactive digital engagement enhances fan identification, brand equity, purchase intentions, and sponsorship value (Filo et al., 2015; Parganas et al., 2017). Similarly, Naraine (2019) and Vale and Fernandes (2018) found that social media analytics and relationship-building activities improve customer loyalty and online commercial performance. More recent studies further indicate that digital engagement increases merchandise purchases, subscription intentions, and revenue diversification (Winell et al., 2023; Kim & Manoli, 2024). However, most existing studies were conducted in developed sports markets, limiting the generalisability of their findings to emerging economies such as Nigeria.

Live Sports Event Engagement and Revenue Generation

Live sports event engagement remains a critical determinant of commercial performance because memorable spectator experiences encourage repeat attendance and increased spending. Studies have shown that event quality, stadium atmosphere, entertainment, and service delivery positively influence spectator satisfaction, behavioural loyalty, and revenue generation (Yoshida & James, 2010; Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012). Further evidence indicates that enhanced event experiences stimulate expenditure on hospitality, premium seating, concessions, merchandising, and sponsorship activation (Wakefield & Bennett, 2018; Biscaia et al., 2023). Recent technological innovations, including mobile applications and interactive stadium technologies, have further strengthened spectator engagement and digital revenue opportunities (García-Fernández et al., 2024). Nevertheless, empirical evidence remains largely concentrated in developed professional sports markets, with limited evidence from emerging African sports industries.

Fan Loyalty and Revenue Generation

Fan loyalty represents a valuable strategic asset that generates recurring revenue through repeated ticket purchases, merchandise consumption, membership renewals, digital subscriptions, and positive word-of-mouth. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that loyal supporters exhibit stronger purchasing behaviour and greater long-term commercial value (Bauer et al., 2008; Biscaia et al., 2013). Likewise, Yoshida et al. (2014) found that fan engagement strengthens emotional attachment, which translates into behavioural loyalty. More recently, García and Welford (2022) and Tsiotsou et al. (2023) reported that loyal supporters contribute significantly to customer lifetime value through sustained patronage and premium membership renewals. Despite these findings, existing evidence is predominantly derived from developed sports markets, leaving limited understanding of fan loyalty's commercial implications within emerging contexts such as Nigeria.

Empirical Gap

Although previous studies consistently report positive relationships between social media engagement, live sports event engagement, fan loyalty, and organisational performance, three major gaps remain. First, empirical evidence is dominated by studies from developed economies, limiting its applicability to emerging sports markets. Second, existing research has largely examined these dimensions independently rather than within an integrated fan engagement framework. Third, empirical evidence from Nigeria, particularly within the Delta State sports industry, remains scarce despite increasing commercialisation and digital adoption. This study addresses these gaps by examining the combined effects of social media engagement, live sports event engagement, and fan loyalty on revenue generation among sports organisations in Delta State, Nigeria, thereby extending sport marketing literature with evidence from an under-researched African context.

THE STUDY

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the effect of fan engagement marketing on revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry. The design was appropriate for testing the hypothesised relationships using quantitative data collected at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study population comprised 37 registered sports organisations in Delta State, Nigeria, including professional sports clubs, sports associations, sports academies, sports event management organisations, and sports marketing organisations, as identified from the Delta State Sports Commission (2026). Given the relatively small population, a census approach was adopted, covering all 37 organisations. Three managerial personnel—the Marketing/Commercial Manager, Business Development/Fan Engagement Manager, and Media/Public Relations Officer—were purposively selected from each organisation, yielding 111 questionnaires.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated sport marketing scales. Fan engagement marketing was measured through social media engagement (Filo et al., 2015; Parganas et al., 2017; Vale & Fernandes, 2018), live sports event engagement (Yoshida & James, 2010; Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2012; Biscaia et al., 2013), and fan loyalty (Bauer et al., 2008; Yoshida et al., 2014; Tsiotsou et al., 2023). Revenue generation was measured using managers' subjective assessments of commercial performance, an approach widely accepted as a reliable proxy for objective financial performance when financial records are inaccessible (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986; Richard et al., 2009). All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

The instrument was validated through expert review and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity confirmed sampling adequacy and factorability, while only items with factor loadings of 0.50 or above were retained (Hair et al., 2022). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 1: Result of Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Engagement	0.857
Live Sports Event Engagement	0.883
Fan Loyalty	0.855
Revenue Generation	0.910

Source: SPSS 27.0 Output (based on 2026 field survey data)

Questionnaires were administered both physically and electronically over a six-week period. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Completed questionnaires were screened for completeness before coding and analysis.

To minimise common method bias associated with self-reported data, procedural remedies recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003) were implemented, including assuring respondent anonymity, improving questionnaire clarity, separating predictor and criterion variables, and using neutral measurement items. Harman's single-factor test indicated that the first unrotated factor explained less than 50% of the total variance, suggesting that common method variance was not a significant concern. Non-response bias was assessed by comparing early and late responses using independent-samples *t*-tests, which revealed no significant differences across the study variables ($p > 0.05$).

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) summarised respondents' characteristics and study variables. Prior to hypothesis testing, regression assumptions—including normality, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, independence of errors, and linearity—were examined using established diagnostic procedures. Tolerance values above 0.20 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 5.00 confirmed the absence of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2022).

The hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression analysis to examine the effects of social media engagement, live sports event engagement, and fan loyalty on revenue generation at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$). The analysis reported regression coefficients, *t*-statistics, R^2, adjusted R^2, ANOVA statistics, confidence intervals, and effect sizes. The estimated model was specified as:

[RG=\beta_0+\beta_1SME+\beta_2LSEE+\beta_3FL+\varepsilon]

where *RG* represents revenue generation; *SME*, social media engagement; *LSEE*, live sports event engagement; *FL*, fan loyalty; (\beta_0) is the intercept; (\beta_1-\beta_3) are the regression coefficients; and (\varepsilon) is the error term. Ethical standards for social science research were strictly observed through informed consent, voluntary participation, and the protection of respondents' confidentiality.

RESULT

Data Presentation

A total of 111 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the selected respondents in line with the determined sample size. Of these, 107 copies were properly completed and returned, while 4 were not retrieved, resulting in a non-response rate of 3.6%. This yielded a response rate of 96.4%, which is considered statistically adequate for behavioural and organisational research. Consequently, data analysis for the study was conducted using the 107 valid and usable questionnaires returned by respondents.

Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine respondents' perceptions of the dimensions of fan engagement marketing and revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Social Media Engagement	107	3.75	0.64	2.30	4.80
Live Sports Event Engagement	107	3.88	0.66	2.20	4.95
Fan Loyalty	107	3.82	0.62	2.20	4.85
Revenue Generation	107	3.84	0.68	2.50	5.00

(Measured on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Source: (SPSS Output, 2026)

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables based on responses from 107 participants. All variables recorded mean scores above the benchmark value of 3.00 on the five-point Likert scale, indicating favourable perceptions of social media engagement, live sports event engagement, fan loyalty, and revenue generation.

Social media engagement recorded a mean score of 3.75 (SD = 0.64), suggesting that respondents generally perceived sports organisations to actively engage fans through digital platforms. Live sports event engagement had the highest mean score (M = 3.88, SD = 0.66), indicating that respondents considered live sporting experiences a critical component of fan engagement. Fan loyalty also recorded a high mean score (M = 3.82, SD = 0.62), reflecting strong perceived commitment of supporters to their preferred sports organisations. Similarly, revenue generation recorded a mean score of 3.84 (SD = 0.68), suggesting that respondents agreed that sports organisations generate revenue through diverse commercial activities.

The relatively low standard deviations (0.62–0.68) indicate limited variability in responses, demonstrating a high degree of consistency among respondents. Furthermore, the observed minimum (2.20–2.50) and maximum (4.80–5.00) values show that responses were concentrated within the upper range of the measurement scale, reflecting predominantly positive assessments of the study constructs.

Overall, the descriptive results indicate that fan engagement practices are well established among sports organisations in Delta State, with live sports event engagement emerging as the most highly rated dimension. These findings provide preliminary evidence supporting the relevance of fan engagement marketing in enhancing revenue generation and justify the subsequent inferential analyses.

Correlation Analysis

Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the effect of each dimension of fan engagement marketing on revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 5% significance level (α = 0.05). Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected where the associated probability value (p-value) was less than 0.05.

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Social media engagement has no significant effect on revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.640[a]	.410	.187	2.1007

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Engagement

Table 5: Fitness of the Model

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	125.154	1	125.154	28.362	.000[b]
	Residual	520.712	104	4.413		
	Total	645.866	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Revenue generation b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Engagement
The regression results indicate that social media engagement exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on revenue generation. The estimated regression coefficient (β = 0.640, t = 5.326, $p < 0.001$) indicates that increases in social media engagement are associated with corresponding improvements in revenue generation among sports organisations in Delta State.
The model was statistically significant (F = 28.362, $p < 0.001$), indicating that social media engagement significantly predicts variations in revenue generation. Although the model explains a meaningful proportion of the variance in revenue generation (R^2 =.410), a substantial proportion of the variance remains attributable to other organisational and environmental factors not included in the model.
Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. The finding demonstrates that effective utilisation of social media platforms contributes significantly to revenue generation through enhanced fan interaction, improved brand visibility, increased sponsorship attractiveness, digital advertising opportunities, merchandise sales, and stronger commercial relationships with supporters.

Hypothesis Two
H_{02}: Live sports event engagement has no significant effect on revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry.
Table 6: Regression Analysis of the Effect of live sports event engagement on Revenue Generation.
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.630	1.590		7.946	.000
	Live Sports Event Engagement	.693	.074	.640	5.326	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Revenue generation
Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.673[a]	. 453	.132	2.1709

a. Predictors: (Constant), Live Sports Event Engagement

Table 8: Fitness of the Model
ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	89.780	1	89.780	19.051	.000[b]
	Residual	556.087	104	6.713		
	Total	645.867	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Revenue generation
b. Predictors: (Constant), Live Sports Event Engagement
The regression analysis reveals that live sports event engagement has a positive and statistically significant influence on revenue generation (β = 0.640, t = 5.326, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that improvements in spectators' engagement during live sporting events are associated with increased organisational revenue.

ISSN:4211- 4350
Volume 15, Number 1, 2026
Keffi Journal of Management and Development Studies
Faculty of Social Science Journal, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria

The ANOVA results further confirm that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 19.051$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that live sports event engagement is a significant predictor of revenue generation among sports organisations in Delta State. The coefficient of determination indicates that the model explains a meaningful proportion of the variation in revenue generation, while the remaining unexplained variation may be attributable to factors beyond the scope of the present study.

Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected. The findings suggest that investments in enriching spectators' experiences during live sporting events, including entertainment, event atmosphere, customer service quality, and interactive engagement activities—can significantly improve commercial outcomes through increased ticket sales, hospitality services, merchandising, and sponsor activation.

Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: Fan loyalty has no significant effect on revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry.

Table 9: Regression Analysis of the Effect of Fan Loyalty on Revenue Generation.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	13.486	1.741		7.748	.000
	Fan Loyalty	.660	.083	.673	6.365	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Revenue generation

Table 10: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.628[a]	.394	.373	1.9864

a. Predictors: (Constant), Fan loyalty

Table 11: Fitness of the Model

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	180.282	1	180.282	45.691	.000[b]
	Residual	465.585	104	6.946		
	Total	645.867	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Revenue generation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Fan loyalty

The regression results demonstrate that fan loyalty exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on revenue generation ($\beta = 0.673$, $t = 6.365$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that stronger fan loyalty significantly enhances the revenue-generating capacity of sports organisations.

The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 45.691$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that fan loyalty is an important determinant of revenue generation. Furthermore, the model explains a substantial proportion of the variation in revenue generation ($R^2 = 394$), suggesting that loyal supporters represent a valuable source of sustainable commercial income.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The findings indicate that strengthening fan loyalty encourages repeated ticket purchases, increased merchandise consumption, sustained sponsorship patronage, premium membership subscriptions, and positive word-of-mouth promotion, all of which contribute to improved organisational revenue.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Discussion of Findings

Social Media Engagement and Revenue Generation

The findings revealed that social media engagement has a positive and statistically significant effect on revenue generation among sports organisations in Delta State. This suggests that increased interaction with fans through social media platforms enhances commercial performance by strengthening brand visibility, expanding audience reach, stimulating merchandise purchases, attracting sponsorships, and creating additional digital advertising opportunities. The result supports the growing view that digital engagement has become an important strategic resource for revenue generation in the sports industry.

The finding is consistent with the studies of Filo et al. (2015), who found that social media engagement strengthens fan identification and purchase intentions, thereby increasing merchandise sales and sponsorship value. It also corroborates Parganas et al. (2017), who reported that interactive social media strategies enhance brand equity and sponsor attractiveness among professional sports organisations. Similarly, the finding aligns with Naraine (2019), Vale and Fernandes (2018), Su et al. (2023), and Kim and Manoli (2024), all of whom concluded that effective digital engagement contributes significantly to commercial performance through improved customer relationships, targeted marketing, and diversified revenue streams. The present finding extends this body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence from the Nigerian sports industry, thereby addressing the contextual gap identified in previous studies.

Live Sports Event Engagement and Revenue Generation

The study found that live sports event engagement has a positive and statistically significant influence on revenue generation. This indicates that improving spectators' experiences during live sporting events enhances the financial performance of sports organisations through increased ticket sales, hospitality services, merchandise purchases, and sponsor activation. The result underscores the importance of creating engaging and memorable event experiences capable of strengthening fan participation and commercial outcomes.

This finding is consistent with Yoshida and James (2010), who reported that perceived event quality positively influences spectators' revisit intentions and future purchasing behaviour. It also supports the findings of Uhrich and Benkenstein (2012), who demonstrated that favourable stadium atmosphere and social interaction enhance spectator satisfaction and behavioural loyalty. Furthermore, the result agrees with Wakefield and Bennett (2018), Biscaia et al. (2023), and García-Fernández et al. (2024), who concluded that investments in event experience and interactive technologies significantly improve consumer spending and sponsorship effectiveness. By confirming these relationships within the Delta State sports industry, the present study contributes empirical evidence from an emerging sports market where such investigations remain limited.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effect of sports fan engagement on revenue generation in the Delta State sports industry, focusing on social media engagement, live sports event engagement, and fan loyalty. The findings revealed that all three dimensions have positive and statistically significant effects on revenue generation. Specifically, enhanced social media engagement improves brand visibility and commercial opportunities, engaging live sports experiences increase ticket sales and sponsorship value, while strong fan loyalty promotes repeat patronage and sustainable revenue. The study therefore concludes that effective fan engagement is a critical driver of revenue generation and long-term sustainability in the sports industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Sports organisations should strengthen their social media presence through engaging digital content to enhance fan interaction and increase commercial opportunities.
2. Management should improve the quality of live sporting events by providing memorable spectator experiences that encourage repeat attendance and higher spending.
3. Sports organisations should implement effective fan loyalty programmes to promote repeat patronage, merchandise purchases, and long-term revenue generation.

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