

Social Media as a Communication Tool in the Football Industry: A Case of the KZN Football Industry

Dr Paulene Naidoo *

Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Public Relations Management, Durban University of Technology, South Africa

Asanda Dzelwa

Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Public Relations Management, Durban University of Technology, South Africa

Sameera Hussain

Faculty of Applied Sciences, Department of Sport Studies, Durban University of Technology, South Africa

Abstract:

The football industry has over the years revolutionised into a modernised game through social media platforms (Wang, Cheng, and Sun 2021: 102). Social media platforms such as Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) have been used globally among soccer stars, fans, and footballing clubs to communicate (Weimar, Holthoff, and Biscacia 2020: 335). Football clubs are exposed to advanced technology opportunities, transformations, and integration opportunities because of the development of social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, etc. (Nairaine 2019: 223). It is evident that communication plays an integral role in the sporting industry.

This paper aimed to establish how social media is used as a communication tool in the KwaZulu-Natal football industry by three selected teams in building and maintaining relationships with their stakeholders. A mixed research approach was applied consisting of a combination of qualitative and netnography techniques.

The findings indicated that social media has become an integral part everyday life. Social media platforms such as Facebook, X, and Instagram have revolutionised communication, thereby making it easier for the teams to engage with their stakeholders. Football clubs adopted social media as a tool to communicate and disseminate information to their fans. Although possible barriers may exist when using social media, research has shown that it serves as a powerful tool when addressing social issues and fostering communication with soccer fans.

The study suggests that soccer teams should be consistent with their posts on their social media platforms and a communication strategy should also be developed and managed by the soccer teams.