SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT AND REVENUEGENERATION AMONG ATHLETES IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

This study addressed the limited empirical evidence on how structured social media management influences athletes' revenue generation in Lagos State, Nigeria. Despite the growing commercialisation of sports and the increasing reliance on digital platforms for personal branding, there is insufficient scholarly clarity on which dimensions of social media management significantly drive athletes' income. To fill this gap, the study examined the perceived effect of social media management on revenue generation. The study was guided by four objectives, four research questions, and four corresponding hypotheses. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised registered athletes across selected sports associations in Lagos State, including track and field, football, basketball, volleyball, badminton, and table tennis. Using a stratified and simple random sampling technique, a sample size of 300 athletes was selected. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Social Media Management and Athletes' Revenue Questionnaire (SMMARQ)*. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experts in sports management, measurement and evaluation. Reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that content strategy significantly predicted revenue generation ($R = .634$, $R^2 = .402$, $F(1,98) = 21.45$, $p < .001$). Audience targeting also had a significant effect ($R = .574$, $R^2 = .329$, $F(1,98) = 19.28$, $p < .001$). Engagement metrics showed the strongest predictive influence ($R = .689$, $R^2 = .475$, $F(1,98) = 29.86$, $p < .001$). Brand perception was also significant ($R = .617$, $R^2 = .381$, $F(1,98) = 24.90$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that effective social media management dimensions are significantly associated with improved revenue outcomes among athletes in Lagos State. The study concludes that structured digital branding strategies enhance the commercial viability of athletes within the Lagos sports ecosystem. It recommends the integration of digital marketing training into athlete development programmes and calls for further longitudinal studies to strengthen causal inference within the Nigerian sports industry.

Keywords: Social media management, Social media, Revenue Generation, Athletes.

Introduction

The rapid expansion of social media has fundamentally transformed global communication systems, reshaping how individuals, organisations, and industries create value and sustain competitive advantage (Jenni, 2017). Beyond interpersonal communication, digital platforms have evolved into strategic marketing infrastructures through which brands cultivate visibility, engagement, and monetisation opportunities. Businesses increasingly rely on sustained virtual presence to attract and retain customers in highly competitive digital marketplaces (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2013). Within this evolving digital economy, personal branding has emerged as a critical asset, particularly in industries where identity, influence, and public perception determine commercial success.

The sports industry has not been immune to this transformation. Globally, professional athletes are no longer evaluated solely on athletic performance but also on their brand equity, online engagement, and marketability. Athlete branding literature suggests that symbolic image construction, emotional appeal, and perceived authenticity significantly influence endorsement attractiveness (Arai, Ko, & Ross, 2013). Consequently, social media platforms have become strategic tools through which athletes communicate narratives, interact with fans, and attract sponsorship deals. However, while digital visibility is widely acknowledged as beneficial, empirical evidence on the specific mechanisms through which structured social media management translates into measurable revenue outcomes remains limited, particularly in developing sports economies.

Social media management extends beyond casual posting and encompasses strategic planning, audience segmentation, content optimisation, performance analytics, and brand positioning (Torning, Jaffari, & Vatrapu, 2015). Within marketing scholarship, structured content strategy has been associated with improved audience retention and brand differentiation, although claims that social media presence alone guarantees marketing success remain contested and context-dependent. Rather than assuming that a strong presence is the "surest" marketing strategy, contemporary research suggests that effectiveness depends on alignment between content, audience expectations, engagement monitoring, and coherent brand identity (Kazazi, 2022; Ajibola, Ogunsemore & Salami, 2019). These dimensions, content strategy, audience targeting, engagement metrics, and brand perception, represent measurable constructs through which digital branding may influence financial outcomes.

In the Nigerian context, and particularly in Lagos State, athletes operate within a sports ecosystem characterised by infrastructural limitations, irregular sponsorship structures, and income instability. While Lagos hosts a high concentration of athletes across football, athletics, basketball, volleyball, and other sports, structured digital branding practices remain underdeveloped. Many athletes prioritise training and performance but lack professional social media management support, potentially limiting their commercial visibility. Despite the rapid growth of social media usage in Nigeria, there is limited empirical research examining how its strategic management affects athletes' revenue generation within this specific socio-economic environment.

Existing studies on athlete branding and social media engagement are largely situated in Western contexts, where sponsorship structures and digital literacy levels differ significantly from those in Nigeria. This creates a contextual research gap. It remains unclear whether the established relationships between digital engagement and revenue performance observed in developed markets are replicable within Lagos State's sports economy. Furthermore, few studies have disaggregated social media management into specific operational dimensions to examine their independent contributions to financial outcomes among athletes in developing regions.

Therefore, this study addresses this empirical and contextual gap by investigating the perceived effect of four dimensions of social media management, content strategy, audience targeting, engagement metrics, and brand perception, on revenue generation among athletes in Lagos State, Nigeria. By situating the inquiry within a developing sports economy and focusing on measurable constructs, the study contributes to sports marketing literature while providing context-specific evidence for stakeholders within the Nigerian sports industry.

Statement of the Problem

The commercialisation of sports in the digital era has significantly altered how athletes generate income beyond prize money and salaries. Globally, social media platforms have become important channels through which athletes build personal brands, attract sponsorships, and monetise fan engagement. Through strategic content creation, audience segmentation, engagement monitoring, and reputation management, athletes are increasingly able to convert online visibility into financial opportunities. However, while this transformation is well documented in developed sports economies, there remains limited empirica

l clarity regarding how these mechanisms operate within developing contexts such as Nigeria.

In Lagos State, many athletes operate within an environment characterised by irregular sponsorship structures, limited institutional funding, and infrastructural constraints. Although the state hosts a large concentration of athletes across multiple sports, revenue streams for many remain unstable and insufficient. Traditional income sources such as club contracts, government stipends, and competition winnings sometimes fail to provide long-term financial security; therefore, alternative revenue channels have become increasingly important. Social media platforms present a potential avenue for addressing these financial challenges by enabling athletes to enhance visibility, connect directly with audiences, and attract brand endorsements.

Despite the widespread use of social media among Nigerian youths and public figures, structured social media management practices among athletes in Lagos State appear underdeveloped. Many athletes maintain online accounts; however, the extent to which they apply strategic content planning, targeted audience engagement, performance analytics, and deliberate brand positioning remains unclear. Moreover, there is insufficient empirical evidence establishing whether these dimensions of social media management significantly influence revenue generation within the Lagos sports ecosystem. Existing literature on athlete branding and digital marketing largely reflects Western contexts, where sponsorship systems, media exposure, and digital literacy levels differ substantially from those in Nigeria. This raises concerns about the generalisability of established findings to the Nigerian sports industry.

Research Objectives

The following are the specific objectives of this study:

1. **To investigate the perceived effect of content strategy on the revenue generation of athletes in Lagos state.**
2. **To find out how audience target affect athletes' revenue in Lagos State.**
3. **To determine the effect of engagement metrics on the income generation of athletes in Lagos state.**
4. **To ascertain the effect of brand perception on the long-term career sustainability of athletes in Lagos state.**

Research Questions

1. **What is the perceived effect of content strategy on the revenue generation of athletes in Lagos state?**
2. **How does audiene target affect athletes' revenue in Lagos State?**
3. **Is there any effect of brand perception on the long-term career sustainability of athletes in Lagos state?**
4. **What is the effect of brand perception on the long-term career sustainability of athletes in Lagos state?**

Research Hypotheses

1. **Content strategy will have no significant effect on the revenue generation of athletes in Lagos state.**

2. **Audience targeting does not significantly affect athletes' revenue in Lagos.**

3. **There will be no significant effect of engagement metrics on the income generation of athletes in Lagos state.**

4. **Brand perception has no significant effect on the income generation of athletes in Lagos state..**

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between social media management and revenue generation among athletes in Lagos State, Nigeria. This design was appropriate for assessing naturally occurring relationships among variables without experimental manipulation. The target population comprised registered athletes in Lagos State across selected sports, including track and field, football, basketball, volleyball, badminton, and table tennis. A sample of 300 athletes was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Athletes were first grouped into strata based on sport type, and proportional allocation was used to determine the number selected from each category. Simple random sampling was subsequently applied within each stratum to ensure fair representation and minimise sampling bias.

Data were collected using a self-developed instrument titled Social Media Management and Revenue Generation Questionnaire (SMMRGQ). The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A captured demographic information, while Section B measured the study variables using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). The independent variables were content strategy, audience targeting, engagement metrics, and brand perception, while revenue generation served as the dependent variable. Each construct was operationalised using multiple items reflecting its theoretical dimensions.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation to ensure clarity, relevance, and construct alignment. Reliability was established using the test–retest method. The instrument was administered to a pilot sample of athletes outside the main study group and re-administered after a two-week interval. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to assess stability over time, yielding a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.82$, indicating satisfactory temporal consistency. The questionnaires were personally administered and retrieved by the researcher to maximise the response rate. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. All data were used strictly for academic purposes.

Data Analysis and Results

Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15 – 20 Years	90	30%
21 – 25 Years	168	56%
26 years and above	42	14%
Total	**300**	**100**

From Table 1, 30% (n = 90) of the respondents are 15 – 20 years old, 56% (n = 168) of the respondents are 21 – 25 years old and 14% (n = 42) are 26 years and above. Thus, majority of the respondents in this study are between 21 – 25 years old.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	215	71.67%
Female	85	28.33%
Total	**300**	**100**

Table 2 showed that 71.67% of the sampled respondents are male while 28.33% are females.

Figure 1: Type of Sports

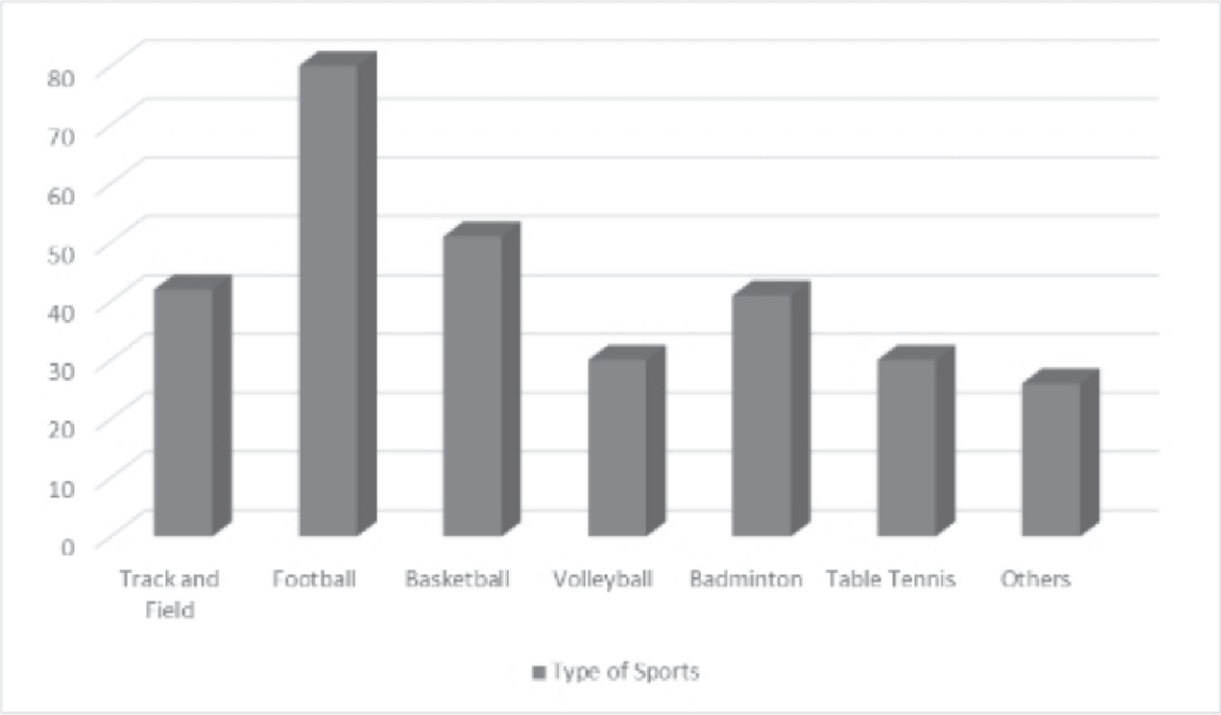


Figure 1 shows that 14% (n = 42) of the respondents are track and field athletes, 26.67% (n = 80) plays football, 17% (n = 51) plays basketball, and 10% (n = 30) plays volleyball. The figure also shows that 14% (n = 41) plays badminton, 10% (n = 30) are table tennis players, while 8.7% (n = 26) are into other sports.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One: This states that **content strategy will have no significant effect on the revenue**

generation of athletes in Lagos state.

Model R	Adjusted R Square	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
.634a	.402	.389

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	512.32	1	512.32	21.45	.000b
Residual	760.68	298	7.76		
Total	1273.00	299			

Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardised Beta	Coefficients t	Sig.
(constant)	2.540	1.125		2.257	.027
Content	1.324	.287	.634	4.631	.000

The regression analysis showed a significant impact of content strategy on revenue generation ($p < 0.001$). The R-squared value of 0.402 indicated that about 40.2% of the variance in revenue generation can be explained by content strategy. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: Audience targeting does not significantly affect athletes' revenue in Lagos.

Model Summary:

Model R	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
.574a	.329	.314	4.124

ANOVA:

Model	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**

Hypothesis Three: There will be no significant effect of engagement metrics on the income generation of athletes in Lagos state.

Model Summary:

Model R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.689a	.475	.460	3.178

ANOVA:

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	604.10	1	604.10	29.86	.000b
Residual	669.90	298	6.84		
Total	**1274.00**	299			

Coefficients:

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardised Beta	Coefficients t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.852	1.015		1.825	.071
Engagement	1.423	.260	.689	5.465	.000

The regression analysis showed a significant effect of engagement metrics on income generation ($p < 0.001$). The R-squared value of 0.475 indicates that 47.5% of the variance in income generation could be explained by engagement metrics, rejecting the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis Four: Brand perception has no significant effect on the income generation of athletes in Lagos state.

The regression analysis indicated a significant perceived effect of brand perception on **income generation of athletes in Lagos state** ($p < 0.001$). The R-squared value of 0.381 suggested that 38.1% of the variance in income generation can be explained by brand perception. This, therefore, made the null hypothesis rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that content strategy significantly predicted revenue generation among athletes in Lagos State ($R^2 = .402$, $p < .001$). This indicates that approximately 40.2% of the variance in revenue outcomes was associated with structured content planning. This result

suggests that deliberate content curation, rather than mere social media presence, plays a substantial role in commercial visibility. From a theoretical standpoint, this aligns with the athlete brand image model proposed by Arai, Ko, and Ross (2013), which emphasises athletic performance, attractive appearance, and marketable lifestyle as key brand dimensions. Strategic content enables athletes to project these brand elements consistently, thereby strengthening sponsor appeal (Babatunde & Ajibola, 2017). However, it is important to note that while the relationship is statistically significant, the survey design does not establish causality. It is possible that athletes who already earn higher revenues may have greater resources to invest in professional content management, thereby reinforcing the observed association.

Audience targeting also demonstrated a significant effect on revenue generation ($R^2 = .329$, $p < .001$). This finding highlights the importance of market segmentation within sports branding. Drawing from social exchange theory, economic benefits in sponsorship relationships are sustained when perceived value is reciprocated between parties. Athletes who understand their audience demographics may be better positioned to deliver targeted value to sponsors seeking specific consumer segments (Mouratidis, Saprikis, & Antoniadis, 2025; Ibrahim, 2021). Nevertheless, alternative explanations must be considered. For example, sponsorship acquisition may depend not only on audience targeting but also on sport popularity, media exposure, and pre-existing institutional affiliations, which were not controlled for in this study.

Engagement metrics produced the highest explanatory power ($R^2 = .475$, $p < .001$), suggesting that measurable interaction, likes, comments, shares, has a strong association with revenue generation. This finding extends prior studies such as Pegoraro (2010) by providing context-specific evidence within Lagos State. High engagement may signal authenticity and relational closeness between athletes and fans, reinforcing trust-based exchanges consistent with social exchange theory. However, engagement metrics may also be influenced by platform algorithms, timing of posts, and external publicity events, which may confound direct financial interpretations.

Brand perception was also found to significantly relate to financial outcomes. Consistent with Agyemang (2011), athletes who cultivated positive and coherent brand identities appeared to attract stronger sponsor confidence. Within the Lagos context, where authenticity and community alignment are culturally valued, brand perception may function as a reputational currency. Nonetheless, reputational strength may also stem from athletic performance success rather than social media strategy alone, indicating a possible interaction effect that warrants further investigation (Lin et al., 2024).

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examined the perceived effect of social media management on revenue generation among athletes in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated whether content strategy, audience targeting, engagement metrics, and brand perception significantly relate to athletes' revenue outcomes. The findings indicated that all four dimensions were positively and significantly associated with revenue generation. Among the predictors, engagement metrics demonstrated the highest explanatory power, followed by content strategy, brand perception, and audience targeting. These findings contribute to emerging scholarship on digital branding within developing sports economies.

In Lagos State, where athletes often face irregular sponsorship structures, limited institutional funding, and infrastructural constraints, social media may serve as a complementary platform for enhancing commercial visibility.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed within the realities of Lagos State's sports environment:

1. Athletes in Lagos State may benefit from developing deliberate content calendars that reflect both athletic performance and culturally relevant narratives. Additionally, sports associations could organise periodic digital branding workshops to strengthen athletes' strategic communication skills.
2. Athletes should consider analysing their follower demographics to better understand local and diaspora audiences. In a diverse socio-economic market like Lagos, segmented communication may improve sponsor alignment. However, audience targeting should be a complement of performance excellence, rather than replacement.
3. Regular review of engagement indicators may provide insight into audience responsiveness. While higher engagement was associated with higher revenue in this study, athletes should recognise that algorithmic factors and platform trends also shape visibility.
4. Athletes may enhance sponsor appeal by maintaining consistent personal branding across platforms. In Lagos State, where reputation and community trust influence endorsement decisions, authenticity and professionalism are critical.

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