

The role of sports marketing in achieving social integration

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Abstract: This research aims to highlight the role of sports marketing in achieving social integration. The results obtained showed that there is an implicit relationship between sports marketing and achieving social integration, as sports marketing contributes to paying attention to the dimensions of social integration by adopting the social concept of sports marketing through the sports marketing mix. The results of the research also confirmed that the contribution of the sports product to achieving social integration is through the provision of goods, services and ideas that include a set of characteristics to satisfy the needs and desires of individuals, the most important of which are the needs of acceptance and belonging. While the Sports price contribution is shown by the perceived benefits that must be higher than the material or intangible cost paid for the success of the desired adjustment process in social behavior. It also highlights the role of sports promotion and distribution through cognitive and educational messages And decisions regarding appropriate distribution outlets.

Keywords: sports marketing, social integration, sports product, sports price, sports distribution, sports promotion

Introduction

Sports are no longer confined to the concept of recreation and sports activation in a competitive format, but rather aim at other dimensions related to the economic and social system prevailing in the country. Although sports enthusiasts can afford to practice an individual sport, sports activities at the local and international levels require a lot of organisation at all levels, whether at the social, economic, administrative and marketing levels. Thus came the idea of including marketing thought in the sports field.

Because the response of individuals is according to the adaptation of the classical hierarchy of effects model in the form of three types of responses (educational response, behavioral response and post-behavioral response), the effect of marketing on the response of individuals and then the behavioral process can be known (Lahouel, 2023).

The marketing concept of sports activities is a relatively new field at the local level and does not have an independent definition, but falls within the general definition of marketing with all its meanings and connotations. In recent years, sports marketing has been witnessing steady growth and is commensurate with the efforts of producing companies to expand their markets in light of the global free market. The latter now allocates a good share of its general budget to sports marketing (Bruhn & Rohlmann, 2022). Contemporary companies also seek to search for everything new and innovative and try to provide it to retain their customers, search for new customers, compete with similar institutions, and be able to grow and survive in a competitive market (Aissaoui et al, 2024). Therefore, the lack of a clear picture of the competitive landscape leads to marketing decisions that are far from confronting the risks that threaten the prospects of the market economy (Ghadjati et al, 2024).

Sports marketing also receives great attention from the people who are working to host various competitions and tournaments, thus creating marketing activities represented in the sale of broadcasting rights, for example, advertising and sponsorship, under the supervision of a marketing body with the aim of achieving material gains. Thus, an important financial resource is formed, both for sports clubs and for organizing and governing bodies.

On the other hand, studies confirm the role that sport plays in integrating into a single social fabric and transcending everything that can be a factor in self-isolation and isolation (Young, 2019). It can also be one of the solutions to the problems caused by urban violence. However, in all cases, sport as a function within an institutional framework is linked to a number of factors that must be present in the social framework concerned in order to have an effective impact on the values and general culture of their societies.

Many sports bodies are unable to implement their annual plans, including their social role, due to lack of interest in the marketing aspect and neglect of sports marketing as an activity and a tool to achieve their economic and social goals. Through the previous proposal, the problem of research can be presented in the next question: How can sports marketing contribute to achieving social integration? The relationship between sports and marketing dates back to 1870 when a tobacco company in the United States printed cards for the most famous baseball players, and inserted them into cigarette packs in order to promote cigarettes (McQuistan & Squier, 2019). Cigarette sales soared, and then these cards were attached to the then popular Bubble gum. These cards marked the beginning of sports promotion for the benefit of the industry.

The methods of advertising and promotion have evolved until the concept of sports marketing has expanded, especially after sports became an economic process and the growth in the field of sports marketing became large and at an amazing speed, which led to an increase in its spread and made commercial companies compete around sponsoring sports events (Bruhn & Rohlmann, 2024). By sponsoring global events such as the World Cup, these companies made fantastic profits, especially when satellite channels entered as an important party in the sponsorship issue because of the companies' desire to advertise their products, because the large numbers of viewers of sporting events became attractive and attractive. Common interests were integrated and a strong relationship was established between commercial companies

specializing in sports marketing and satellite channels around the world (Al-Satari, 2014). On the other hand, the lack of investment in sports infrastructure, poor funding for sports, and poor training in management and marketing methods may undermine the future of sports in general (Merka & Cojocar, 2024).

The term sports marketing was first used in the USA before the advertising era in 1989. It has since been used to describe a variety of activities associated with sports promotion (Shilbury, 2009). Accordingly, marketing is one of the main and important functions of any organization, whether in the sports or non-sports field, where the use and application of marketing concepts in the sports field is one of the modern topics addressed by researchers, so there are several definitions of sports marketing, it has been defined by Pits and Stotlar as "the process of designing and implementing activities for the production, pricing, promotion and distribution of sports products or services to satisfy the needs of consumers or participants to achieve the objectives of the body or facility (Darwish et al., 2013).

Grant and Bashom also defined it as "a survey of opinion and trends in the market, and then directing sports products and services to conform to those trends" (Hamdi Ahmed, 2011). Sports marketing is also defined as "a set of integrated and interactive activities in the fields of physical education and sports, linked to the process of creating, pricing, promoting and distributing goods, services and ideas, in order to serve the needs of beneficiaries and achieve the objectives of various sports institutions and workers in the fields of physical education and sports" (Shafei, 2006, p. 86).

In the same vein, sports marketing is defined as "a survey of opinion and trends prevailing in the market, and the orientation of sports products and services (such as tournaments, matches, sports channels, logos) to align with those trends" (Ramadi, 2012, p. 6). According to Mullin et al, sports marketing is defined as the set of activities designed to meet the needs and desires of the sports audience through the exchange process, as sports marketing has developed two main axes: Marketing sports products and services directly to the sports public; Marketing consumer and industrial products and services using promotion during the provision of sports services (Al-Hallaq, 2019).

This definition is consistent with the view of the classical school based on exchange, in which marketing is defined as a socio-administrative process in which individuals and groups obtain their needs and desires by creating and exchanging products and value with others .

It follows from the above that sports marketing is a relatively new field, and does not have an independent definition, but falls within the general definition of marketing with all its meanings and connotations (Cornwell, 2022). Due to the growth of sports marketing in recent years in a steady and proportionate manner, in addition to the attempt of producing companies to expand their markets in light of the global market, it is considered one of the most important foundations for achieving the objectives of the sports organization and includes identifying the needs and desires of the target market, in addition to obtaining the desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than competitors.

Sports marketing is defined by four main factors that shape its concept. Firstly, market focus plays a vital role in identifying market characteristics to better meet consumer needs. Secondly, orientation towards the recipient forms the cornerstone of successful sports marketing. This approach involves investing in understanding the needs and desires of recipients. For instance, a study by the German football team Werder Bremen revealed that adding five extra minutes to the halftime break not only enhanced audience satisfaction but also generated annual revenue of €300,000 for the club through increased sales in its affiliated stores. Thirdly, coordinated marketing emphasises the integration of marketing efforts across all organisational departments, requiring strong support from senior management to ensure success. This approach includes inbound marketing, where employees are rewarded, trained, and motivated to work collaboratively to serve recipients. Finally, profitability is a critical factor in sports marketing, as organisations must strive to meet the needs of recipients more effectively than competitors. This focus helps retain existing customers and attract new ones. A prime example is the sports merchandise market, where Bayern Munich generates €17 million annually from shirt sales, followed by Juventus with €13.5 million and Real Madrid with €12 million (Abdeen Muhammad, 2012).

Sports as a product possess unique characteristics that set it apart from other goods and services (Badawi, 2001). Sport is a stand-alone phenomenon, making it difficult for sports marketing to predict people's impressions of matches or the outcomes of games. Fans' emotional attachment to the teams they support adds another layer of complexity to the marketing process (Ladhari et al., 2022). These factors create a distinct and challenging environment for promoting sports products and services.

Additionally, several considerations must be made when marketing in the sports field. The final product is intangible, as the focus is not on the primary product itself but on the continuity of providing the service (Günay & Ijjaali, 2023). Consumer satisfaction is often linked to external factors such as the surrounding climate or social framework. Sports services are directly purchased by end consumers, and their significant presence in the media underscores their societal importance. However, the reliance on government subsidies for sports spending has historically limited the demand for extensive marketing efforts. Furthermore, sports marketers face challenges such as the inability to control the nature of the product, the absence of physical distribution activities, and the non-storable nature of sports products (Badawi, 2001).

In response to criticisms of traditional marketing, a new perspective has been developed that seeks to balance three core interests. This perspective emphasizes the consumer's right to access safe, high-quality, and affordable goods, the manufacturing enterprise's need to achieve appropriate returns on investments while managing risks, and society's broader interest in safeguarding the environment and public health. This evolving approach provides a foundation for aligning marketing strategies with contemporary societal and consumer expectations.

In response to the numerous criticisms directed at traditional marketing practices, a new perspective has emerged, emphasising a balanced and holistic approach. This perspective prioritizes the consumer's interest in accessing high-

quality, safe, and affordable goods while addressing the needs of manufacturing enterprises by ensuring appropriate returns on their investments in exchange for the risks they undertake. Additionally, it integrates the broader societal interest, emphasizing the importance of minimizing harm to the environment and safeguarding public health. This shift reflects a growing recognition of the need for marketing strategies that align with ethical, economic, and environmental responsibilities.

This trend has been called the social concept of marketing, which has expanded the functions and scope of application of marketing.

Therefore, to the extent that the application of sports marketing is beneficial to organisations and societies in general, it benefits sports organisations and increases their profits at the same time. Thus, it should be noted that some sports organisations are targeted for declaring their commitment to contribute to social development in general and social integration in particular, to improve their mental image in society and push them to overlook the damage that sports organisations can cause to the environment or abnormal dealings, etc.

Sports marketing does not differ from marketing in general in terms of the use of elements of the marketing mix, as it works to satisfy the needs and desires of the sports consumer and achieve the goals of the sports organization. This is done by providing the product or service and displaying it in appropriate places and at reasonable prices, while developing an effective promotional program.

It should be noted that sports marketing does not seek to achieve the objectives of the sports organization only, but also aims to achieve the welfare and happiness of society through the responsibility entrusted to it, which starts from paying attention to the problems of society to reducing their effects, especially with regard to social deviation, social adaptation, social normalization, social status, social class and social mobility, differentiation and minorities, hooliganism and violence.

Accordingly, the social concept of sports marketing is characterized by some characteristics that the marketing officer must take into account to achieve the effectiveness of the marketing mix and the effectiveness of each of its elements in achieving this concept, especially social integration.

Materials and methods

A sports organization can achieve social integration by applying the social concept of sports marketing through a sports marketing mix that consists of four basic elements: sports product; sports pricing; sports promotion; and sports distribution. The sports product is one of the most important components of the marketing mix and is the good or service produced by the organization to meet the needs and desires of sports consumers. A product is defined as "a set of characteristics that satisfy the needs and obtained by the consumer through the process of exchange and that includes a set of material and psychological benefits" (Abdullah, 2013).

The mathematical product is defined as "every material commodity made, anything that can be touched or seen (Smith, 2008). Thus, the word product is used in sports marketing in different directions including physical goods, services, ideas, and even the combination between them. The concept of a sports product includes

four types (material goods, services, ideas, or a combination between them), which includes a set of characteristics to satisfy the needs and desires of the consumer. One of the most important needs of the individual is acceptance, as the bulk of the human personality is based on the sociocultural organisation within which the individual exists. The individual, therefore, wishes to always be accepted by others, especially in childhood. The group's attitude towards him and its association with him are considered organized forces for his personality, whether by acceptance or rejection.

The human concept of himself also plays an influential role in reducing the self-contradiction (between the individual and himself). This reinforces the individual's expectations of acceptable behaviour that is supposed to emanate from him during his interaction with the group. Thus, an individual's acceptance of himself is linked to his acceptance within the group or team. This means that acceptance as a social need is related to the nature of social situations and the cultural framework experienced by the individual. Therefore, the creation of a valid and appropriate group, such as a play group or a sports team, allows the individual to form important and appropriate concepts to shape the child's personality, such as the individual's image of his body and the image of the individual about his movement. This is in contrast to unfit groups such as gangs and deviant individuals, which only reinforce deviant behaviour patterns.

Affiliation is also one of the needs that the individual seeks to satisfy, as the individual's belonging to the group is achieved through satisfying their needs through the community, the willingness to play a role as a member of the community, and the confidence of the individual in the participation of his concepts with the concepts of the group (Al-Khouli, 1996).

Results and discussions

As a result of an individual's belonging to the sports team, as a small, coordinated, interconnected and well-founded group, what the individual wishes to do will become the same as what he perceives, as a requirement resulting from his social role. If he goes out of the field to the reality of life and society, as a general frame of reference, his belonging to this reality depends on his belief that he has a role in the real world.

Social integration can be achieved through the following divisions of the mathematical product: Sports goods, Sports services, Composition (goods, services and ideas) (Smith, 2008).

Sports goods It is the sum of tangible material goods that fall within the framework of the sports industry. Examples of physical goods for sports include: sports shoes, tennis rackets, golf balls... Etc. On the other hand, there is a type of physical goods that are not used exclusively for sports, in the sense that they are used in sports or in sports experiments, such as sunglasses, hats, shirts, watches, solar powders, where these products can be tested or tried with the senses such as touch, taste, smell and hearing due to their tangible physical nature.

Sports services are intangible products, where institutions providing sports services provide benefits or benefits in the form of intangible experiences, for example, services provided in the form of recreational and fitness opportunities, or through television interviews, physiotherapy, training, and others. As these services

are intangible and cannot be bought and taken away, it is not possible for sports bodies to create long-term stored services for current or prospective consumers. Thus, there are four important differences between physical goods and services that have a deep resonance for sports marketing: tangible, consistency, wear and divergence.

An individual may buy sports equipment with the idea of becoming more agile or having stronger muscles. In another example, the idea of a sports product can be reflected in the realisation of the power of sport, the realisation of a sense of identity and the provision of an alternative for the masses. Through the above, it can be said that sport affects the consumer with psychological reactions, so he believes in several things as a response to thinking, as sports events cannot be limited to goods and services provided to the consumer only, but can be those ideas that are sold to the consumer that are associated with belonging and success.

Composition (goods, services and ideas), The majority of sports products are composite products from a group of tangible and intangible elements, where there are many physical goods that have service characteristics or elements associated with related ideas. Goods are often bought by the sports consumer because of the intangible property of their benefits, unlike other services that are related to something tangible material, membership in a football club may be concluded with a deal that includes club posters, badges and regular newsletters. The sports consumer often uses compound benefits for goods, services and ideas, as there are many examples of sports services that have been converted into sports goods, such as live games that have been converted into DVDs. Therefore, the installation and coordination of goods and services in sports marketing is usually carried out.

Price is one of the most important elements of the sports marketing mix, as it directly affects the revenues of sports clubs, as the sports products and services provided by clubs need inputs for the survival and continuation of this interaction. Price is also the most flexible element of the sports marketing mix because it is easy to change.

From a marketing perspective, price is one of the main determinants of value that is at the heart of sports marketing. Price is defined as the art of translating a product's value at some point into cash. The process of developing a pricing strategy is of great importance because it expresses the success of the marketing plan (Bernstein, 2015). Just as price represents tangible things such as money and time, it also represents imperceptible things such as change in beliefs and habits (Alnajem, 2016). The benefits or benefits perceived by the target parties may be much higher than the material or moral cost paid for the success of the desired modification process in the desired social behaviour, such as social deviation, where individuals differ in their ability to integrate socially, so some arise socially and others are antisocial. The antisocial individual expresses a socially abnormal phenomenon. It is from this category that delinquency, criminality and events appear. They are considered to be individuals who have not been socialised in an appropriate way in challenging the prevailing values and legal structure in society.

Alderman explained the close relationship between the individual's ability to integrate socially and the extent to which his need to belong is satisfied through

sports, as the social individual, that is, the socially integrated is often athletic and distinguished by vitality, activity, and mental and emotional presence, unlike what is characteristic of most introverts (Alderman, 1974).

When estimating the price of a sports product associated with social integration, some factors must be taken into account, including the price level of this product, is it high or low? Because the low price or free product may lead to negative perceptions about the product.

There are a set of controls to be considered when carrying out the mathematical pricing process taking into account the appropriateness of the price of the sports service for the sports beneficiary; considering the price of the sports service reflecting the true level of the sports service; ensuring the continuity of the sports service through the appropriate price of the sports service; conducting pricing studies with centers specializing in marketing; pricing bases must be in the light of market conditions; prices must be commensurate with the income of most strata of society; the price paid by the beneficiary is always very small compared to the total cost; and determining prices through what the beneficiary will bear instead of full cost recovery (Shafei, 2006).

Sports promotion is defined as "the ability of a sports marketer to communicate with customers, to inform, persuade and remind them about the advantages and benefits of sports products and services" (Smith, 2008). From this definition, it is concluded that sports promotion works in three directions, namely: Information giving information and building awareness that a sports product or service exists, what is offered and where it can be obtained; Persuasion building positive attitudes towards a sports product or service and motivating it; Reinforcement: that is, dispelling doubts about the action you are doing (buying or using) and ensuring that there is a suitable climate for future buyback. (Darwish et al., 2013) .

The sports sponsorship strategy also falls under the general sports promotion strategy, as it can be considered a public relations strategy or a sales promotion method (Harakti et al., 2021).

Therefore, sports promotion that contributes to social integration relies more on cognitive and educational messages that seek to convey an idea that leads to behaviour change and stabilises this change, such as social adaptation. Sports promotion may use personal and impersonal methods, such as media and new technology, to tell target individuals about the benefits of sports programs and convince them to exercise for social adaptation.

If social adaptation expresses compliance, many studies have addressed and emphasized the nature of the relationship between social adaptation and physical implications such as physical characteristics (such as short stature, weight), physical activity, etc. Based on the results of studies such as Hardy, Sanford, Tyron and others, which collectively indicate that individuals practising sports are distinguished by being integrated into social activity and are more socially acceptable. Thus, sports promotion is one of the most dangerous and influential elements on the success or failure of sports marketing campaigns or plans, because it is the mirror through which marketing activities are reflected.

It should be noted that the promotional mix used to contribute to social integration does not mean that it will be suitable for use in another social, economic

or political circumstance. The nature of the sports product to be marketed, as well as the demographic and psychological characteristics of the target parties, determine the nature of the promotional mix. However, the complementarity and harmony between the elements of sports promotion (advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion) can contribute to creating a positive and supportive impact on each other in stimulating social inclusion.

Because the essence of sport is fair competition based on fair principles in arbitration, it is one of the important means of normalization of social conflict and the concept of competition. Thus, each individual is aware of the components of the social system in which he lives in terms of roles, positions and social status.

On the other hand, several points must be taken into account when carrying out the promotional process, the most important of which are: coordination of elements of the promotional mix; allocation of a promotional budget; the use of specialized agents or offices to carry out promotional campaigns for tournaments and matches through the most widespread media; focusing on the benefits that will accrue to the beneficiaries of the service; and determining the appropriate promotional tool based on the nature of the target market and the beneficiary, and the results of the research (Shafei, 2006).

From the above, promotion can be considered as the vital link between the sports organisation and its audience. By using techniques to connect with consumers, attract their attention to what they market and increase their loyalty, a player who acquires acceptable attitudes towards his team or club, such as pride and loyalty, will improve his status by improving his social role. This pushes his fellow players to take on similar roles, which enhances cohesion and team unity. But the biggest role in providing this healthy social climate depends on the educator and sports leader. Thus, the process of loyalty from the club to the village and the city or region to which it belongs until it reaches loyalty to its homeland and belonging to it.

Sports distribution is defined as the various activities carried out by an organization to make a sports product or service readily available to customers (sports audiences, sports clubs, players) including expansion and location of services (Darwish et al., 2013). Thus, the success of any marketing operation depends on providing a place or access to the product, or the way the product is delivered to the concerned authorities, whether they are individuals, groups or even the whole community.

Therefore, sports distribution that contributes to social inclusion is the means through which sports programs can be accessed; it may be any of the organisations through which sports services are provided.

The importance of sports distribution is based on decisions related to the appropriate distribution outlets for the target parties, in addition to the services associated with the process of spreading the idea and concept of social integration using appropriate means to communicate it, with the need to train and introduce the target parties to use them in the desired way to achieve social integration. Among the dimensions of social integration is the lack of class privileges in society, and it has been shown that sport forms organized lines that represent a classification of social classes very clearly, and many studies have even indicated the difficulty of having a

recreational activity that is not built in this way. The era in which sport in Western societies was a class privilege or the monopoly of a class in itself is over.

In this aspect, the issue of quality of service and efficiency in reaching the specific form of the various social classes without any error or deficiency is addressed. This is what the distribution system seeks to achieve in sports marketing because it focuses on the intangible aspects of distribution channels, and the ideas or goals set in the distribution program are able to reach all social classes without discrimination and thus achieve social integration.

On the other hand, when carrying out the process of sports distribution, several points must be taken into account, the most important of which are: developing a distribution policy that reduces the effort and time in obtaining the sports service or product; increasing the number of ticket outlets for festivals, tournaments, and matches; outsourcing distribution agents for the distribution of sports services; carrying out periodic studies on the adequacy and efficiency of ticket outlets; conducting periodic studies on sports services that satisfy the needs and desires of the beneficiaries and the extent of their satisfaction; studying the environmental conditions of the viewing audience and their direct effects on the attendance rates of these tournaments; and using technological means to attract the sports beneficiary to the sports service (Shafei, 2006).

Conclusions

Sports marketing does not only seek to achieve the objectives of the sports organization, but also aims to achieve the welfare and happiness of society through the responsibility entrusted to it, which starts from caring for the problems of society to reducing their effects, especially with regard to social integration.

The results of the research showed that there is an implicit relationship between sports marketing and the achievement of social integration, as sports marketing contributes to paying attention to the dimensions of social integration by adopting the social concept of sports marketing through the sports marketing mix, which consists of four basic elements, namely: sports product, sports pricing, sports promotion, and sports distribution.

The results of the research also confirmed that the contribution of the sports product to achieving social integration is through the provision of goods, services and ideas that include a set of characteristics to satisfy the needs and desires of individuals, the most important of which are the needs of acceptance and belonging. While the sports price contributes to achieving social integration through the benefits perceived by the target parties, which must be much higher than the material or moral cost paid for the success of the desired modification process in the desired social behaviour.

From the same perspective, sports promotion contributes to achieving social integration through cognitive and educational messages that seek to convey an idea that leads to and stabilises societal behaviour change. While sports distribution contributes to achieving social integration through its decisions on the appropriate distribution outlets for the target parties, in addition to the services related to the process of spreading the idea and concept of social integration using appropriate means to deliver it, with the need to train and introduce the target parties to use it in

the desired way to achieve social integration.

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