

UDC: 796.062:004.738.5

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS ON MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN PROFESSIONAL SPORTS CLUBS

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Annotation. This article examines the impact of digital platforms — including customer relationship management (CRM) systems, social media networks, sports analytics software, mobile applications and e-commerce tools — on management practices in professional sports clubs. The study is based on the analysis of scientific and methodological literature, comparative analysis of empirical research, and statistical generalization of data obtained from international academic and industry studies. The results show that the level of digital platform adoption differs considerably between organizations: a cluster analysis of 367 voluntary sports clubs identified four distinct categories of digitalisation practice, ranging from advanced to cautious users. An analysis of 19,745 social media posts published by 16 elite football clubs revealed that, although the X (Twitter) platform accounted for 64% of the posts analyzed, Instagram generated the highest average engagement rate (1.87), considerably exceeding Facebook (0.11) and X (0.05). Industry surveys further indicate that 81% of sports media executives expanded their use of artificial intelligence for managerial and operational efficiency in 2025–2026. These findings confirm that digital platforms are transforming decision-making, marketing and stakeholder-communication practices in contemporary sports club management.

Key words: digital platforms, sports management, professional sports clubs, digitalization, social media, fan engagement, sports analytics.

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PROFESSIONAL SPORT KLUBLARI BOSHQARUVIDA RAQAMLI PLATFORMALARNING TA'SIRI

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada professional sport klublari boshqaruvida raqamli platformalarning — mijozlar bilan munosabatlarni boshqarish (CRM) tizimlari, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, sport analitikasi dasturlari, mobil ilovalar va elektron tijorat vositalarining — ta'siri tahlil qilingan. Tadqiqotda ilmiy-uslubiy adabiyotlarni tahlil qilish, empirik tadqiqotlarni qiyosiy tahlil qilish va xalqaro ilmiy va tarmoq tadqiqotlaridan olingan ma'lumotlarni statistik umumlashtirish usullaridan foydalanilgan. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, raqamli platformalardan foydalanish darajasi tashkilotlar o'rtasida sezilarli darajada farq qiladi: 367 ta notijorat sport klubi ustida o'tkazilgan klaster tahlili raqamlashtirish amaliyotining to'rt xil toifasini — ilg'or foydalanuvchilardan tortib ehtiyotkor foydalanuvchilargacha — aniqladi. 16 ta yetakchi futbol klubining 19 745 ta ijtimoiy tarmoq postini tahlil qilish natijasida X (Twitter) platformasi tahlil qilingan postlarning 64 foizini tashkil etgani aniqlangan bo'lsa-da, Instagram eng yuqori o'rtacha qamrov (engagement) ko'rsatkichiga (1,87) ega bo'lib, bu ko'rsatkich Facebook (0,11) va X (0,05) ko'rsatkichlaridan ancha yuqori bo'lgan. Tarmoq so'rovlari, shuningdek, 2025–2026 yillarda sport sohasidagi media-rahbarlarning 81 foizi boshqaruv va operatsion samaradorlikni oshirish maqsadida sun'iy intellektdan foydalanishni kengaytirganini ko'rsatadi. Ushbu natijalar raqamli platformalarning zamonaviy sport klublari boshqaruvida qaror qabul qilish, marketing va manfaatdor tomonlar bilan muloqot amaliyotini tubdan o'zgartirayotganini tasdiqlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: raqamli platformalar, sport menejmenti, professional sport klublari, raqamlashtirish, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, muxlislar bilan ishlash, sport analitikasi.

UDC: 796.062:004.738.5

ВЛИЯНИЕ ЦИФРОВЫХ ПЛАТФОРМ НА УПРАВЛЕНЧЕСКИЕ ПРАКТИКИ В ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫХ СПОРТИВНЫХ КЛУБАХ

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается влияние цифровых платформ — систем управления взаимоотношениями с клиентами (CRM), социальных сетей, программного обеспечения для спортивной аналитики, мобильных приложений и инструментов электронной торговли — на управленческую практику профессиональных спортивных клубов. Исследование основано на анализе научно-методической литературы, сравнительном анализе эмпирических исследований и статистическом обобщении данных из международных академических и отраслевых отчётов. Результаты показывают, что уровень внедрения цифровых платформ существенно различается между организациями: кластерный анализ 367 любительских спортивных клубов позволил выделить четыре категории практик цифровизации — от передовых до осторожных пользователей. Анализ 19 745 публикаций в социальных сетях 16 ведущих футбольных клубов показал, что, хотя на платформу X (Twitter) приходилось 64% всех проанализированных публикаций, наибольший средний показатель вовлечённости (engagement) был зафиксирован в Instagram (1,87), что значительно превышает показатели Facebook (0,11) и X (0,05). Отраслевые опросы также показывают, что 81% руководителей спортивных медиа в 2025–2026 годах расширили использование искусственного интеллекта для повышения управленческой и операционной эффективности. Полученные результаты подтверждают, что цифровые платформы существенно изменяют практику принятия решений, маркетинга и коммуникации с заинтересованными сторонами в современном управлении спортивными клубами.

Ключевые слова: цифровые платформы, спортивный менеджмент, профессиональные спортивные клубы, цифровизация, социальные сети, вовлечённость болельщиков, спортивная аналитика.

INTRODUCTION

Professional sports clubs have experienced a fundamental shift in their management, marketing, and financing due to the swift growth of digital platforms such as social media networks, mobile applications, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, big data analytics, and e-commerce tools. Sports managers around the world are finding that the challenge of effectively incorporating these tools into club governance, marketing strategy, and fan-relationship management, while at the same time maintaining organizational identity and financial sustainability, is becoming more and more important.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Digital transformation is now considered a fundamental strategic priority for sports organizations, according to prominent researchers including P. Stegmann, S. Nagel, T. Ströbel, V. Ratten, G. Abeza, J. Sanderson, and P. Ehnold, who highlight

that it has moved beyond being merely a supplementary technical feature. A significant factor in an organization's success, encompassing its effectiveness in sports and business, is its digital maturity, which has a direct impact on its commercial outcomes, the loyalty of its fans, and its overall efficiency.

The relevance of scientific research pertaining to this subject is additionally illuminated and defined by the issuance of Decree No. which was presented by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Strategy 'Digital Uzbekistan – 2030' was officially approved through UP-6079, a document that was issued on October 5, 2020, and this approval also included a set of comprehensive measures designed to ensure its effective implementation, alongside a Resolution from the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, bearing the number [Resolution Number]. On August 21, 2025, a decree known as PP-262 was published, focusing on implementing measures to enhance the digitalization and significantly broaden the widespread involvement in football throughout the Republic of Uzbekistan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To examine the impact of digital platforms on management practices in professional sports clubs and to identify the main directions for their effective integration into club governance, marketing and fan-relationship management.

Research tasks:

1. To study and analyze scientific and methodological literature on digital transformation in sports management.
2. To determine the main categories of digital platforms used in the management of professional sports clubs.
3. To assess, on the basis of existing empirical research, the effect of digital platforms on fan engagement, marketing efficiency and organizational decision-making.
4. To analyze the obtained results and develop practical recommendations for the effective integration of digital platforms into sports club management.

The following scientific-methodological methods were used in the research:

1. Analysis of scientific and methodological literature – scientific literature, industry reports and academic studies related to the digitalization of sports management were studied and theoretically analyzed.

2. Comparative analysis – case studies and reports describing the implementation of digital platforms by professional and voluntary sports clubs in Europe, North America, South America and Asia were examined and compared.

3. Statistical-analytical method – quantitative data published in international academic and industry studies on digital platform adoption and its managerial effects were generalized and systematized.

4. Method of generalization and systematization – the analyzed digital management practices were classified into structural categories: fan-relationship management, internal communication, performance analytics and commercial operations.

According to a hierarchical cluster analysis of 367 voluntary sports clubs conducted in Austria and Germany, four distinct categories of digitalization practice were identified, ranging from clubs that actively pursue digital instruments as a strategic priority to clubs that remain cautious due to limited organizational capacity or perceived risk. The study showed that the depth of digital integration depends largely on a club's available human resources and staff competencies rather than on its size or sporting level alone.

Over a 45-day observation period, 19,745 social media posts from 16 elite football clubs across Europe, South America, and North America were analyzed, which showed a distinct disconnect between the amount of posting and how efficiently the clubs managed their social media. With a significant majority, the X (formerly Twitter) platform represented 64% of the total posts that were subjected to analysis, and this was closely followed by Facebook, which constituted 22% of the analyzed posts, and then Instagram, making up the remaining 14%. In terms of the different categories of content, posts that were focused on "Marketing" elicited the greatest level of interaction on Instagram, with a score of 2.03, and this was closely followed by "Institutional" content which achieved a score of 1.78, and then "Sports" content with 1.74, whereas content categorized as "Commercial" and "ESG" registered

comparatively reduced levels of engagement, with scores of 1.54 and 1.41 respectively.

Sports club managers who exclusively base their resource allocation on how often content is posted might be making a mistake, as the data suggests that platforms with less frequent posting can actually lead to significantly greater fan engagement, thus necessitating management strategies that are customized to the specific audience behavior of each platform rather than a one-size-fits-all method applied across all platforms.

Surveys distributed across the entire sports media and club executive industry serve to further substantiate the escalating significance of digital technologies in managerial decision-making, revealing that a substantial 81% of respondents acknowledged an increased integration of artificial intelligence over the preceding year, aiming to enhance operational effectiveness and curtail expenses. At the same time, a significant 70% of the surveyed executives indicated that commercial sponsors are increasingly requiring a more substantial production of digital content, which is to be intrinsically connected to the specific clauses and conditions present within their sponsorship contracts. According to analyst reports, professional sports organizations in North America experienced an approximate 18% surge in their digital fan-engagement technology spending compared to the previous year in 2025, a trend that underscores the expanding portion of management budgets dedicated to digital infrastructure.

When all of these discoveries are considered collectively, they provide compelling evidence that digital platforms have been thoroughly integrated into the fundamental operational responsibilities of professional sports organizations, encompassing aspects such as managing relationships with fans, strategically distributing marketing budgets, making internal organizational choices, and conducting negotiations for sponsorships, thereby transcending their previous role as simple supplementary communication instruments.

The analysis of existing scientific and industry research confirms that digital platforms exert a substantial and measurable influence on the management practices

of professional sports clubs, reshaping decision-making, marketing strategy and stakeholder communication.

The differentiated levels of digital maturity identified among sports organizations show that successful integration of digital platforms depends less on club size than on internal organizational capacity, staff competencies and a clearly defined digital strategy.

The comparative analysis of social media management practices confirms that posting volume alone does not determine managerial effectiveness; platforms differ considerably in the engagement they generate, requiring sports managers to adopt platform-specific resource-allocation strategies rather than uniform cross-platform approaches.

The growing adoption of artificial intelligence and analytics tools in sports management reflects a broader shift toward data-driven decision-making, requiring club managers to develop new digital competencies alongside traditional sport-management skills.

The integration of digital platforms into professional sports club management allowed for the following:

- a measurable increase in the efficiency of fan-relationship management and marketing communication;
- a more accurate, data-driven allocation of managerial and marketing resources across digital channels;
- the development of new organizational competencies related to digital tools and analytics;
- improved capacity for evidence-based decision-making in club governance and sponsorship negotiation.

CONCLUSION

It is strongly suggested that professional sports organizations formulate a distinct digital strategy, ensuring that the selection of digital platforms is in harmony with the club's particular management aims and its established organizational capabilities.

Club managers are advised to strategically distribute their marketing and management resources amongst various social media platforms by giving precedence to those that yield the most significant fan engagement in proportion to the number of posts made, as opposed to merely concentrating on how often they publish content. Club managers faced with the task of allocating marketing and management resources for social media platforms should prioritize identifying and ranking those platforms exhibiting the most significant fan engagement in proportion to the volume of content disseminated, rather than merely focusing on the sheer number of posts. Club managers, when allocating their marketing and management resources across social media, should make it a primary objective to concentrate on those platforms that yield the greatest fan engagement relative to the volume of content published, as opposed to solely focusing on how frequently they post.

It is advisable that the utilization of customer relationship management (CRM) systems and analytical instruments be embedded within the standard decision-making frameworks for managers, as opposed to being relegated to a distinct, technical domain.

In order to ensure the effective integration of digital platforms, which is significantly reliant on the proficiency and receptiveness of employees towards novel technologies, club management ought to prioritize the enhancement of staff's digital competencies by providing consistent and ongoing training opportunities.

To ensure continuous improvement, the effectiveness of digital platform integration must be consistently assessed through engagement and performance metrics, and these findings should be contrasted with data from earlier time frames.

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