

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SPORT DEVELOPMENT IN AZERBAIJAN

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Abstract. In many countries of the world, social media platforms play an important role in people's lives. People can easily access online the information they need. As the number of social network users grows, the spheres affected by social media increases as well. One of these is sport.

Keywords: sports; journalism; social media, development

This article will seek to demonstrate how social media can impact sport development in Azerbaijan. In addition, the thesis will investigate how people use social media within a sporting context, as well as the impact benefits of social media use on sport in Azerbaijan.

Introduction. In recent years, we have seen how social networks influence human life. One way in which people increase their audience on social media is to demonstrate their skills and talents. At the same time, we have seen how social media has driven radical changes in the way audiences consume mass-media. In both these respects, social media has had a dramatic influence on sport and those involved with it.

Sport is one of the most popular fields affected by social networks. Almost all athletes, coaches and teams have social media profiles. Social media has given many athletes the opportunity to build their careers in a more open, accessible, influential way. Athletes are able to develop an online relationship with their fans, passing on information to their

followers and, at the same time, helping to encourage a wider audience to lead a healthy lifestyle (2). Social media is a bridge between fans and athletes.

Azerbaijan has emerged as a very active country for social media use. Today, thanks to social media in our country, the interest in sport has increased. Our ideas about sports have changed, audiences have become acquainted with new types of sport and information is more freely and quickly available.

In addition, social media plays an important role in sports organisations. Sporting organisations communicate with the public online, feeding an active interest in sport and providing a valuable channel for promotion and advertising.

It should be noted that today Azerbaijan is increasingly recognised as a global capital for sport in the world. Specific targets have been set in the organisations that are directly involved in this field to achieve major growth in infrastructure and in the achievement of world-class athletes. The main measures to be taken for the development of sports include the maintenance, renovation and use of existing sports facilities (such as stadiums, pitches and halls), the construction of new sporting facilities and the provision of high-quality equipment. Once this is in place, the organisation and delivery of major competitions can take place, encouraging greater participation in sport, increased promotion for Azerbaijan, and the ongoing success of Azerbaijan athletes of all ages and levels (4). As a result of the very important events, our athletes have gained an increasing number of victories, and our tricolor flag is flown in front of cameras at more international arenas than ever before.

As a result of this successful national sports policy, Azerbaijan has also become a serious partner of the world's sports community, with our athletes held in the highest regard. In recent years, some of the world's most prestigious sporting events have been held in Azerbaijan (3).

Journalism plays an important role in the development of sport, helping to popularise sport and the social benefits of sport to the

wider population. This feeds a need and demand for more information by audiences in Azerbaijan. Social media platforms provide the channels through which this demand can be met and continue to grow, providing people with news and information more readily (6).

It should be noted that today there are more than 40 daily, and more than 200 weekly and monthly, newspapers in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is a country where internet is completely liberated and more than 75 percent of our population are active internet users. The number of people actively using social media is estimated to be about three million. This shows that the development of free media in Azerbaijan has been a positive force (5).

Around one third of the Azerbaijani population are active social media users. The key driver of social media consumption is content, and every day, users are exposed to hundreds of piece of content - thousands if they wish to explore their social media platforms. Exceptional and user-friendly content is tracked, shared, and creators of this content attract new audiences. Bloggers, celebrities, journalists, experts, social activists, public figures and other content creators can be called influencers. Influencers are considered to be the focus of ideas in social media and, therefore, brands are gaining significant success by attracting influencers to their communication projects.

Social media encompasses a wide range of online, word-of-mouth forums including blogs, discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer email, consumer product or service ratings websites, moblogs (sites containing digital audio, images, movies or photographs), and social networking websites (2). As a result, the 21st Century is witnessing an explosion of internet-based messages transmitted through these media, which in turn have become a major factor in influencing consumer behavior including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase intention, and post-purchase evaluation. Consequently, sporting

athletes who utilise this new media effectively have found the development of individual brand value can help influence marketability,

popularity, and commercial opportunities. The more this content can be focused, the more it will help to increase followers and develop fan engagement (1).

Research shows that one of the content types that is most interesting to people is sport. This has given rise to a growing number of athletes and coaches, and sports organisations who can be considered social media influencers (7).

Famous athletes post regular content to their personal profiles on their favorite social networks. This not only attracts an audience interested in the influencers sporting performance, but helps to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, particularly among younger audiences.

Summary. In conclusion, we can say that people use social media for different interests, but that in the development of sport in Azerbaijan, social media plays a very influential role. Social media is often the key channel for the promotion of sporting events and competitions, and in promoting the benefits of sport more generally. Fans are able to access information at any time, in any place, thanks to social media. At the same time sport is given a higher profile in the country, with all the attendant benefits to health, social interaction and community well-being.

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Azərbaycanda sosial medianın idmanın inkişafına təsiri

Bikə Abdullayeva

Açar sözlər: idman, jurnalistika, sosial media, inkişaf

Xülasə: Dünyanın bir çox ölkələrində sosial media platformaları insanların həyatında mühüm rol oynayır. İnsanlar asanlıqla lazım olan məlumatları onlayn əldə edə bilirlər. Sosial şəbəkə istifadəçilərinin sayı artdıqca, sosial mediaya təsir göstərən sahələr də artır. Bu sahələrdən biri idmandır.

Bu məqalə sosial medianın Azərbaycanda idmanın inkişafına necə təsir göstərə biləcəyi barədə məlumat verir. In addition, here is investigated how people use social media in this field, their benefits, and their impacts. Bundan əlavə, insanların bu sahədə sosial medianı necə istifadə etmələri, onun faydaları və təsirləri araşdırılır.

Влияние социальной меди на развитие спорта в Азербайджане

Бика Абдуллаева

Ключевые слова: спорт; журналистика; социальные медиа, развитие

Аннотация: Во многих странах мира платформы социальных сетей играют важную роль в жизни людей. Люди могут легко получить доступ к информации, которая им нужна. По мере роста числа пользователей социальных сетей увеличиваются и области, на которые влияют социальные сети. Одна из этих сфер - спорт.

Эта статья расскажет о том, как социальные медиа могут повлиять на развитие спорта в Азербайджане. Кроме того, здесь исследуется как люди используют социальные сети в этой области, их преимущества и их влияние.