Review

Sport and social media research: A review

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of social media has profoundly impacted the delivery and consumption of sport. In the current review we analysed the existing body of knowledge of social media in the field of sport management from a service-dominant logic perspective, with an emphasis on relationship marketing. We reviewed 70 journal articles published in English-language sport management journals, which investigated new media technologies facilitating interactivity and co-creation that allow for the development and sharing of user-generated content among and between brands and individuals (i.e., social media). Three categories of social media research were identified: strategic, operational, and user-focussed. The findings of the review demonstrate that social media research in sport management aligns with service-dominant logic and illustrates the role of social media in cultivating relationships among and between brands and individuals. Interaction and engagement play a crucial role in cultivating these relationships. Discussion of each category, opportunities for future research as well as suggestions for theoretical approaches, research design and context are advanced.

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1. Introduction

Social media have garnered a great deal of attention from academics and practitioners due to their pervasiveness and cultural impacts. Consumers can interact with social media during multiple stages of the consumption process including information search, decision-making, word of mouth, and the acquisition, use, and disposal of products and services. Social media use is an increasingly popular activity for Internet users. In Australia, 88% of 15–17 year olds and 86% of 18–24 year olds use social media (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011). In the United States, 73% of Internet users actively engage with social media platforms (Pew Research Center, 2013). Due to the popularity of social media, sport brands invest significant time and resources to drive engagement and relationships online. Events such as the Super Bowl, FIFA World Cup and the Olympics; professional teams such as Manchester United and Real Madrid; and brands including Converse, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo expend significant resources to integrate social media practices into their marketing strategy. Such organisations face challenges developing social media policies that leverage the opportunities afforded by these technologies while mitigating the complications stemming from social media usage by athletes and consumers (cf. International Olympic Committee, 2012; Mossop, 2012).

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As social media use has developed, businesses and brands have evolved practices to communicate with consumers, and generate revenue through interactive online tools. This has led to a specific role for social media, distinct from traditional media or communications tools. Most prominently, social media present a cost effective medium that: embraces interactivity, collaboration and co-creation above one-to-many communication; integrates communication and distribution channels; provides opportunities for customisation; and delivers superior speed to the delivery of information communication and feedback (Shilbury, Westerbeek, Quick, Funk, & Karg, 2014).

The opportunities and challenges inherent to social media practices in sport have catalysed academic research in this area. Research to date provides sport management academics and practitioners with insight regarding how to optimise social media usage from strategic and operational standpoints. However, organising these insights is challenging due to the dynamic and broad nature of the digital world in general and social media technologies, specifically. Accordingly, the purpose of this review is to provide an examination of sport management research conducted on social media to date.

For the purposes of the present review, we define social media as:

> *New media technologies facilitating interactivity and co-creation that allow for the development and sharing of user-generated content among and between organisations (e.g. teams, governing bodies, agencies and media groups) and individuals (e.g. consumers, athletes and journalists).*

Traditionally, definitions of social media within the context of sport have focused on the distinction between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 technologies (e.g., Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). However, social media predate Web 2.0 considerably (Harrison & Barthel, 2009); thus, we have excluded this distinction from our definition to focus on the components of social media that differentiate from other mediums. Specifically, our definition of social media encompasses platforms within the following new media categories: social networking sites, blogs and micro-blogs, online communities and discussion forums (Shilbury et al., 2014). Importantly, this definition does not include new media categories such as: broadcasting and content extensions, fantasy sport or eCommerce. The rationale behind this delimitation is that these technologies and offerings may facilitate interactivity, but the user-generated component is not core to the service or experience. Additionally, the latter groups are excluded here as desired outcomes from these platforms are less about mutual exchange and relationship building, with the content and/or platform largely controlled by one organisation or stakeholder.

We structure the review as follows. First, we describe the basis upon which relevant research was selected, along with a brief introduction to the literature. Next, existing research is categorised into three groups (strategic, operational and user-focussed). From there, we outline theoretical frameworks that could be applied to future research on social media in sport along with suggestions for the direction and design of forthcoming academic inquiry. The approach taken within this review is derived from a method employed over a period of significant development for sponsorship research. Accordingly, we acknowledge Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and Walliser (2003) for the direction provided.

2. Theoretical framework

To provide structure, we locate this review within Service-Dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The S-D perspective provides an organising framework that overlays the work published in sport management on social media. In this section, we first introduce the S-D perspective and the concept of value co-creation. Second, we outline approaches to relationship marketing (Abreza, O'Reilly, & Reid, 2013; Grönroos, 1994, 2004), which exist as part of the S-D marketing paradigm. Third, we introduce the concept of engagement and identify this as the catalyst to the formation of meaningful relationships with brands.

The S-D approach formalised a transition in the field of marketing that built from origins in service marketing. Underlying the shift to S-D logic, Vargo and Lusch (2004) argued against traditional economic approaches to marketing, which focus on a goods-based exchange of tangible resources via transactions. Instead, they advocated for a revised paradigm, concentrating on the interactive nature of services and relationships, in which consumers' role in the value exchange process assumed primacy. Value co-creation is a central concept within the S-D framework (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). In contrast to the goods-dominant approach, value is created through the process of consumption. As such, organisations or brands offer value propositions, which consumers then evaluate in their own terms (Ballantyne & Varey, 2008). Due to the interactivity of social media, S-D logic provides powerful insights for sport management research that we use to frame the articles included in this review.

The S-D perspective draws heavily on service-orientated work, delineating the benefits of fostering meaningful, long-term relationships with consumers and other stakeholders (Grönroos, 1994). Relationship marketing refers to the efforts of brands to build and maintain bonds with customers and other stakeholders through mutual exchange and interactivity (Grönroos, 2004). An array of research on social media and sport has been framed and conducted from a relationship marketing perspective, illustrating its relevance to the topic (e.g., Abreza et al., 2013; Garcia, 2011; Pronschinske, Groza, & Walker, 2012; Williams & Chinn, 2010; Witkemper, Lim, & Waldburger, 2012). This acknowledges the pertinent strategic and operational role that social media platforms provide for building relationships with consumers. Furthermore, relationship marketing involves a variety of disciplines including services, consumer behaviour, communication, and strategy (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995), and each of these represent areas relevant to sport management education and research. Hence, this perspective can provide opportunities for collaboration across sport management sub-disciplines.

To build relationships, brands need to psychologically engage consumers in the co-creation process facilitated by social media platforms (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011; Brodie, Ilić, Jurić, & Hollebeek, 2013). Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2010) placed psychological engagement as a core component of relationship marketing. Recent conceptual work on psychological engagement goes further (e.g., Brodie et al., 2011, 2013), situating the concept as the engine room driving the formation of meaningful relationships between consumers and brands, communities of consumers (e.g., Hatch & Schultz, 2010) and brands and stakeholders. Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa, and Biscaia (2014) note that engagement has been defined as a multidimensional construct that can comprise cognitive, affective and behavioural elements. Each describes an important facet of the connections or interactions that individuals or organisations can have, and each is encouraged through social media.

Given the role of social media in cultivating more meaningful exchange relationships, relationship marketing – as a derivative of S-D logic and an overarching concept of engagement – is used as an organising framework to make sense of existing research and to guide opportunities for future scholarship. From this basis, we propose three streams, derived from the above components, that serve to describe the process and impact social media can have:

(1) Brands use social media strategically to build relationships and facilitate outcomes with consumers and stakeholders.
(2) The achievement of relationship building relies on understanding and executing operational actions to sustain and cultivate relationships.
(3) Users co-create content and participate as members of communities, which also fosters meaning between individuals and, in turn, benefits brands.

3. Method

3.1. Research selection process: channels of information

The definition of social media we advance guided our literature search. Moreover, we limited our search to sport management journals; hence, journals from related fields such as events, tourism, leisure and recreation are not incorporated within this review. Furthermore, our review includes only articles that have been published in English.

The process of identifying journal articles for review aligned with the recommendations for integrating research outlined by Cooper (1989). Accordingly, informal, primary and secondary information channels were used to select articles that fit our criteria. Informal channels included the primary exploration conducted among the research team personally as well as the "invisible college" (Cooper, 1989, p. 43). Our experience in sport management research broadly, and new media technologies specifically, informed this channel. Meanwhile, for the purposes of the current review, the invisible college reflected discussions with colleagues as well as attendance at professional meetings (i.e., academic conferences such as North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM), European Association for Sport Management (EASM), and Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand (SMAANZ)). Collectively, these informal channels allowed for the generation of a list of authors and journals for which to search.

Primary channels of information were accessed through a review of sport management journals. Initially, seven journals were identified to begin the review: *Journal of Sport Management*, *Sport Management Review*, *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, *European Sport Management Review*, *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, *International Journal of Sport Management and Sponsorship*, and *International Journal of Sport Management*. These seven journals were selected based upon Shilbury's (2011a, 2011b) bibliometric analysis of the field of sport management which identified these outlets as the leading publications in terms of quality and longevity. The *International Journal of Sport Communication* was included, as informal channels indicated that this journal has published a number of social media-focussed articles. Once identified, we conducted a manual search of each journal for articles on social media.

From there, an "ancestry approach" (Cooper, 1989, p. 43) was employed within each article deemed to reflect our target population. The ancestry approach involves uncovering additional articles that meet the criteria by reviewing the citations of relevant research obtained through the manual search. The ancestry approach unearthed relevant articles published in journals such as *Communication & Sport*, *Global Sports Business Journal*, *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics* and *Journal of Sport Administration & Supervision*.

Secondary channels of information included indexing services. In this instance, Google Scholar was the primary interface used to search for relevant publications. Search terms including: sport or sport management; along with: social media, social networking, or blogging were used. The manual search conducted through the primary channels provided a large number of journal articles and the secondary channels served to confirm this list of relevant publications, rather than uncover new pieces of research. The use of informal, primary and secondary channels of information to identify articles for review adheres to the approach taken by Cornwell and Maignan (1998). In total, 70 articles were included within our review. We organised these articles based upon their research objectives and findings. The process for this categorisation is detailed next.

3.2. Categorisation

In line with the relationship marketing perspective, and the themes defined above, we identified three categories of social media research: (1) strategic, (2) operational, and (3) user-focussed. The strategic category is defined as research examining

the role and function of social media (and specific tools) from a brand's perspective (e.g., team, organising body, athlete, event, journalist; we use the term 'brand' to represent these groups or individuals from hereon). This definition includes organisational objectives for social media usage, philosophies and attitudes towards social media use by managers, and the investigation of the integration of social media use with a brand's traditional communication approach. As such, it considers studies advancing the forward-looking role or nature and integrative impact of social media, not the execution or use of the technologies. Distinct from this, operational use of social media is defined as research reviewing how a brand utilises social media. This includes the day-to-day social media actions of brands, and implementation of strategy. Finally, user-focussed literature includes research examining sport fans' motivations, constraints, perceptions and preferences with regard to social media usage as well as demographic or user profiling of social media users.

As part of the review, we also noted three broad research types: primary, secondary and conceptual. Primary research includes studies in which the researcher[s] implemented the data collection process firsthand. Methods deployed in the primary studies reviewed include: online questionnaires, paper surveys, and in-depth and semi-structured interviews. Secondary research encompasses studies that drew on existing data collected from social media tools and/or active social media accounts. The methods utilised within this group were predominantly content analyses or social network analyses. We deemed such approaches as secondary since the data points were advanced by social media users (e.g., consumers, journalists, teams, athletes), not to address a research objective. In this research type, the data existed prior to researchers downloading and analysing the content (i.e., the researchers were not the primary data gatherer). Last, conceptual research included articles in which researchers advance ideas based upon theory, trends, and concepts without the presentation of empirical data (primary or secondary).

4. Categorisation of social media research

The research comprising sport and social media within this review is now presented in three tables (see Tables 1–3). Each table reflects the categories detailed above. Within each table, the following details are provided: author, year, theoretical or conceptual framework (if applicable), sport context, geographic location and research type. Each category is now summarised.

4.1. Strategic

The strategic use of social media category included research examining the role and function of social media (and specific tools) from a brand's perspective. This category includes studies concerned with the planned use of and organisational objectives for social media; attitudes towards social media by managers; the impact of social media on brand equity/outcomes and the integration of social media use with a brand's traditional communication and promotional strategy. In total, 35 journal articles fell within this category.

Of the three categories, strategic showcased the most diversity in terms of the methodological approach taken by the researchers. Questionnaires were used in five articles (e.g., Eagleman, 2013; Hopkins, 2013; McCarthy, 2014; Sheffer & Schultz, 2010; Walsh, Clavio, Lovell, & Blaszka, 2013), qualitative data were collected in six articles (e.g., Abreza et al., 2013; Gibbs & Haynes, 2013; Hopkins, 2013; Kian & Zimmerman, 2012; McEnnis, 2013; O'Shea & Alonso, 2011), and content analyses were conducted in eight articles (e.g., Antunovic & Hardin, 2012; Clavio & Eagleman, 2011; Hambrick, Frederick, & Sanderson, 2013; Pronschinske et al., 2012; Sanderson & Hambrick, 2012; Sanderson, 2011; Schultz & Sheffer, 2010; Waters, Burke, Jackson, & Buning, 2011). Other studies conducted social network analysis (e.g., Clavio, Burch, & Frederick, 2012; Hambrick, 2012), or were developed as conceptual/reflective pieces (e.g., Billings, 2014; Butler & Sagas, 2008; Gantz, 2013; Garcia, 2011; Hardin, 2014; Hutchins, 2014; Pedersen, 2013, 2014; Pegoraro, 2014; Rowe, 2014; Sanderson, 2014; Williams & Chinn, 2010) or case studies (e.g., McCarthy, Rowley, Ashworth, & Pioch, 2014; Pfahl, Kreutzer, Maleski, Lillibridge, & Ryznar, 2012; Schoenstedt & Reau, 2010).

In terms of theoretical or conceptual approaches within this research category, the relationship marketing perspective was the most frequently used framework (seven articles). Notably, 19 of the articles examining the strategic use of social media did not explicitly articulate a theoretical framework. The findings across the research on the strategic use of social media provide insights on organisational objectives of social media use, the opportunities (and challenges) afforded by social media, the impact and use of social media within journalism and sport communication, and reflections of sport and communication researchers on the current state and future of social media-based scholarship.

The objectives of social media use for organisations uncovered through sport management research highlighted an emphasis on engagement, communication, relationship development and branding. For instance, Hambrick et al. (2013) revealed that Lance Armstrong utilised social media tools to advance a range of narratives to communicate with his followers, and counteract messages communicated by traditional media in the aftermath of his doping scandal and USADA investigation. Eagleman (2013) investigated social media use within National Governing Bodies (NGBs). She determined that most NGBs viewed social media as a strategic communication tool used to cultivate the brand's relationship with fans and promote the sport, rather than a marketing tool to activate sponsorship and deliver promotions. A focus on communication and relationship development was also uncovered by Waters et al. (2011) in their exploration of the NFL's use of online engagement.

Table 1
Strategic social media research.

Author(s) (Year)	Theoretical/conceptual framework	Sport context (geography)	Research type
Abreza et al. (2013)	Relationship marketing perspective	Running Events (Canada)	Primary
Antunovic and Hardin (2012)	Feminist standpoint theory	Women's Soccer, Basketball, Hockey (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Secondary
Billings (2014)	N/A	Sport Communication (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Conceptual
Butler and Sagas (2008)	N/A	Professional Sport & NCAA Athletics (United States)	Conceptual
Clavio and Eagleman (2011)	N/A	Sport Bloggers (United States)	Secondary
Clavio et al. (2012)	Systems theory	NCAA Football (United States)	Secondary
Eagleman (2013)	N/A	National Governing Bodies of Sport (United States)	Primary
Gantz (2013)	N/A	Fanship (North America)	Conceptual
Garcia (2011)	Relationship-management perspective	Professional Football (Europe)	Secondary
Gibbs and Haynes (2013)	N/A	Media Relations, Journalism, Public Relations (Canada & United States)	Primary
Hambrick (2012)	N/A	Cycling (United States)	Secondary
Hambrick et al. (2013)	Image repair	Cycling (North America)	Secondary
Hardin (2014)	N/A	Sport Communication (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Conceptual
Hopkins (2013)	Relationship marketing perspective	Australian Rules Football (Australia)	Primary
Hutchins (2014)	N/A	Sport Communication (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Conceptual
Kian and Zimmerman (2012)	Planned happenstance learning theory	Sport Journalism (United States)	Primary
McCarthy (2014)	N/A	Tennis & Gymnastics (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Primary
McCarthy et al. (2014)	Relationship marketing perspective	Soccer (United Kingdom)	Primary and secondary
McEnnis (2013)	N/A	Sports Journalists (United Kingdom)	Primary
O'Shea and Alonso (2011)	N/A	National Rugby League; A-League (Australia)	Primary
Pedersen (2013)	N/A	Sport Communication (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Conceptual
Pedersen (2014)	N/A	Sport Communication (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Conceptual
Pegoraro (2014)	N/A	Sport Communication and Marketing (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Conceptual
Pfahl et al. (2012)	N/A	NBA (North America)	Conceptual
Pronschinske et al. (2012)	Relationship marketing (broader framework)	NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL (North America)	Secondary
Rowe (2014)	N/A	Sport Communication (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Conceptual
Sanderson and Hambrick (2012)	Framing theory	Sport Journalism (United States)	Secondary
Sanderson (2011)	Communication privacy management theory	NCAA Athletics (United States)	Secondary
Sanderson (2014)	N/A	Sport Communication (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Conceptual
Schoenstedt and Reau (2010)	N/A	Local Sport Event (United States)	Conceptual
Schultz and Sheffer (2010)	Technological determinism perspective	Sport Journalism (United States)	Secondary
Sheffer and Schultz (2010)	N/A	Sport Journalists (United States)	Primary
Walsh et al. (2013)	Brand personality	NCAA Sport Event (United States)	Primary
Waters et al. (2011)	Relationship-management perspective	NFL (United States)	Secondary
Williams and Chinn (2010)	Relationship marketing process	General Sport Consumption (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Conceptual

The importance of communication is also emphasised by Pronschinske et al. (2012) who found that interacting with fans and engaging in ongoing discussion on Facebook can positively impact the number of 'fans' or 'likes' on a brand's official Facebook page. The authors also found that demonstrating authenticity (e.g., communicating that a page is the official team page) can positively impact the number of fans, and this focus on authenticity speaks to the importance of brand trust within social media. Pfahl et al. (2012) provided further evidence of the importance of branding with social media through a Cleveland Cavaliers case study of brand development, brand communication and brand discussion.

Researchers also highlighted opportunities that social media use affords sport brands in relation to communication, relationship development and promotion. Williams and Chinn (2010) argued that social media tools present brands with the opportunity to communicate, interact, and add value to the consumer experience. Hambrick (2012) specified that Twitter can be a critical tool for a brand to disseminate information and promotional messages, while highlighting the role of influential users in transmitting these messages. Hopkins (2013) found that different social media platforms allow brands to communicate and develop relationships with fans in different ways, specifying that Twitter provides a mechanism for real-time updates and interactivity, while Facebook provides a medium to enrich consumer experiences.

Table 2
Operational social media research.

Author(s) (Year)	Theoretical/conceptual framework	Sport context (geography)	Research type
Armstrong et al. (2014)	N/A	NHL (United States)	Secondary
Baker et al. (2013)	N/A	General Sport Marketing and Law (United States)	Conceptual
Browning and Sanderson (2012)	Uses and gratifications theory	NCAA Football, Basketball, Baseball (United States)	Primary
Butts (2008)	N/A	NCAA Athletes (United States)	Primary
Coche (2014)	N/A	Women's Soccer (United States)	Secondary
Frederick et al. (2013)	Agenda setting	Olympics (London 2012)	Secondary
Frederick et al. (2014)	Parasocial interaction & uses and gratifications theory	MLB, NBA, NHL, NFL Athletes (North America)	Secondary
Hambrick and Mahoney (2011)	N/A	Cycling & Tennis (North America)	Secondary
Hambrick et al. (2010)	Uses and gratifications theory	NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB, WNBA, MLS, PGA/LPGA, auto sports, minor league baseball, UFC, tennis (North America)	Secondary
Havard et al. (2012)	Social capital	NCAA Athletics (United States)	Primary
Hull (2014)	Self-presentation theory	PGA (United States)	Secondary
Ioakimidis (2010)	N/A	Premier League, Super League, NFL, NHL (Europe and North America)	Secondary
Kassing and Sanderson (2010)	Parasocial interaction	Cycling (Italy)	Secondary
Lebel and Danylchuk (2012)	Presentation of self theory	US Open Tennis Championship (United States)	Secondary
McKelvey and Masteralexis (2013)	N/A	Athlete Endorsement and Law (United States)	Conceptual
Pegoraro and Jinnah (2012)	N/A	NBA, NHL, NFL, UFC (North America)	Secondary
Pegoraro (2010)	N/A	NFL, NHL, NBA, MLB, Golf, Soccer, Motor Sports, Winter Sports (Predominantly North America)	Secondary
Sanderson (2009)	Audience labour	NBA & NFL (North America)	Secondary
Stoldt and Vermillion (2013)	N/A	NCAA Athletics (United States)	Primary
Wallace et al. (2011)	N/A	NCAA Athletics (United States)	Secondary

The opportunities available through strategic social media use were often presented alongside challenges stemming from these tools. Abreza et al. (2013) identified five opportunities that brands can derive from social media, including enhanced knowledge of consumers, advanced interaction, effective engagement and efficient use of resources, along with five challenges: lack of control, concerns with credibility, concerns over effectiveness, difficulties identifying true customers and the allocation of organisational resources. Likewise, McCarthy et al. (2014) revealed that UK football club employees recognised opportunities through social media use including enhanced content, interaction and building communities. However, employees articulated challenges such as generating revenue through social media and maintaining brand control. Similarly, O'Shea and Alonso (2011) advanced increased efficiency as an opportunity afforded by social media use by brands in Australia through the cost effectiveness of the medium along with the capacity to tailor messaging. The authors did also caution that sport organisations must learn to constantly adapt to technological developments and the consequent implications this has for sport delivery.

An additional challenge inherent to social media use is social media policy development within organisations (Sanderson, 2011). Pedersen (2013) and Gantz (2013) outlined the challenges of balancing the benefits and opportunities of social media use with the traditional delivery of sport and communication strategy in reflective essays on sport communication. Garcia

Table 3
User-focussed social media research.

Author(s) (Year)	Theoretical/conceptual framework	Sport context (geography)	Research type
Blaszka et al. (2012)	Uses and gratifications theory	MLB (North America)	Secondary
Clavio and Kian (2010)	Uses and gratifications theory	LPGA (North America)	Primary
Clavio and Walsh (2013)	Uses and gratifications theory	NCAA Athletics (United States)	Primary
Clavio (2008)	Uses and gratifications theory	NCAA Athletics (United States)	Primary
Clavio (2011)	Theory of planned behaviour	NCAA Football (United States)	Primary
Clavio et al. (2013)	N/A	NFL, NBA, NHL (North America)	Primary
Gibbs et al. (2014)	Uses and gratifications theory	Canadian Football League (Canada)	Primary
Jensen et al. (2014)	N/A	NCAA Football (United States)	Secondary
Kwak et al. (2010)	Information-processing perspective	NCAA Basketball (United States)	Primary
Mahan (2011)	Technology acceptance model	General Sport Consumption (Geographic Location Not Specified)	Primary
Ozsoy (2011)	N/A	Professional Sport (Turkey)	Primary
Reichart Smith and Smith (2012)	Social identity theory and team identification	NCAA Baseball (United States)	Secondary
Sanderson (2010)	N/A	Professional Golf (North America)	Secondary
Stavros et al. (2013)	N/A	NBA (North America)	Secondary
Witkemper et al. (2012)	Relationship management perspective	General Sport Fanship (North America)	Primary

(2011) implemented a case study approach examining Real Madrid to suggest that alignment of communication among social media, traditional websites and other marketing tools is the key to effective relationship marketing.

Research examining the strategic use of social media also examined the role and impact of social media for journalists. Here, as journalists use social media to develop a personal brand, we analyse them as a part of the strategic category. McEnnis (2013) discovered that journalists believe that Twitter has placed greater emphasis on the provision of truthful, reliable and insightful content among professionals in order to successfully confront the 'citizen journalism' that can be practiced through social media. In terms of usage, Schultz and Sheffer (2010) revealed that professional journalists use Twitter for commentary and opinion rather than breaking news or self-promotion. Meanwhile, Schultz and Sheffer (2010) suggested that younger journalists use Twitter more innovatively than older journalists who primarily use Twitter to promote their work. Sanderson and Hambrick (2012) classified these preferences, finding that journalists use Twitter to offer commentary, break news, and interact with other journalists. Clavio et al. (2012) discussed the interaction among journalists via Twitter in a social network analysis of a NCAA football team's Twitter followers. Traditional and non-traditional media members were the most active users, and these users existed within subgroups among the followers.

The distinction between traditional and non-traditional media is demonstrated through the focus on blogs and interactive sites relying upon user-generated content within this category. Kian and Zimmerman (2012) conducted semi-structured interviews with traditional journalists who outlined the demise of newspapers due in part to the emergence of non-traditional media via social media. McCarthy (2014) found that engaging with others was a critical motivation for fan bloggers, and that these fan blogs are often used to complement mainstream media. Similarly, Butler and Sagas (2008) outlined a synergy between sites relying upon user-generated content and mainstream media sites. A synergy between traditional media and social media was put into practice by Schoenstedt and Reau (2010). Here, a case study detailed the successful employment of a social media newsroom within a charity sport event to complement the traditional media centre, which posed questions concerning social media use to extend the traditional marketing and communication efforts of the event. The extension of traditional marketing communication through social media was also highlighted by Gibbs and Haynes (2013) who found that Twitter had expanded the role, responsibilities and opportunities for sport media professionals.

Lastly, gender differences within blogs were explored by two sets of researchers. Clavio and Eagleman (2011) found that sport blogs contain more images of males than females, while images of women in blogs are presented in a more sexually suggestive manner. Antunovic and Hardin (2012) analysed women's sport blogs, finding that these platforms can increase knowledge and visibility of women's sport, but do not necessarily address broader social issues confronted by these sports.

A notable subcategory of strategic use of social media comprised a collection of essays reflecting on research on Twitter in the fields of sport management and communication. These eight essays parallel the current review in that existing research is critically reviewed along with suggestions for future research directions based upon the body of knowledge. However, these essays are limited to a single platform (i.e., Twitter) and do not represent inventories of all output in this context to date. Nonetheless, the authors addressed a variety of worthwhile ideas and critiques for consideration.

Billings (2014) cautioned against overestimating the penetration and appeal of Twitter to the mass sport audience, while advocating for an examination of the impact of Twitter on broader populations, rather than only social media users. Sanderson (2014) also endorsed a shift in focus towards the implications and broader outcomes of Twitter use in sport. Hardin (2014) observed an over-reliance on the expansive data sets readily available to Twitter researchers (i.e., the analysis of existing tweets) as a constraint to the theoretical and sociocultural boundaries explored within the existing body of research. Hardin (2014) called for more research on Twitter that draws upon the social sciences and humanities. Hutchins (2014) called for the use of non-sport contexts to advance knowledge. Pedersen (2014) suggested that a point of data saturation may have been reached within the initial, exploratory research on Twitter, and recommended the employment of lengthier and more challenging data collection techniques, such as ethnographies and experimental design. Rowe (2014) also acknowledged that research on Twitter is still very much exploratory, and advised scholars to position the social media tool within broader capitalist and market forces in an effort to extend knowledge beyond current understanding. Pegoraro (2014) portrayed Twitter as a disruptive innovation and indicates that improved understanding of the platform relies on innovative and incremental advances in theory. Overall, these brief reflections provide sound commentary on research on Twitter (and social media), and the directions for research in this context introduced within each essay are well aligned with suggestions articulated in the latter portion of the current review.

The strategic category of social media research with sport management reflects a degree of diversity. There was some variety in terms of the research method employed and the brands examined (e.g., journalists, bloggers, teams, events, athletes in crisis, sport management scholars). In addition, this category included four articles from outside of North America, two within the context of sport in Australia, another article investigating a European Football club, and one exploring sport events in Canada. This exhibits some range in terms of geography. However, there is a relatively limited theoretical application and/or analysis across the research within this category. In addition, the focus on communication, relationship development and branding demonstrated opportunities and benefits presented by social media that can be extended through a more in-depth analysis and investigation of the functional role of social media within organisations. The discussion of social media use in conjunction with traditional strategic marketing efforts can also be expanded through multifaceted examinations of different social media platforms.

4.2. Operational

Operational use of social media focussed on research exploring how brands use social media on a day-to-day basis. A total of 20 journal articles comprised this category. This category utilised a large proportion of secondary research, with 14 of the 20 articles employing content analysis, including digital ethnography (e.g., Armstrong, Delia, & Giardina, 2014; Coche, 2014; Frederick, Burch, & Blaszka, 2013; Frederick, Lim, Clavio, Pedersen, & Burch, 2014; Hambrick & Mahoney, 2011; Hambrick, Simmons, Greenhalgh, & Greenwell, 2010; Hull, 2014; Ioakimidis, 2010; Kassing & Sanderson, 2010; Lebel & Danylchuk, 2012; Pegoraro & Jinnah, 2012; Pegoraro, 2010; Sanderson, 2009; Wallace, Wilson, & Miloch, 2011). In addition, three articles used questionnaires (e.g., Butts, 2008; Havard, Eddy, Reams, Stewart, & Ahmad, 2012; Stoldt & Vermillion, 2013) and one article used semi-structured interviews (e.g., Browning & Sanderson, 2012). The remaining two pieces of research were published in law reviews (e.g., Baker, Brison, & Byon, 2013; McKelvey & Masteralexis, 2013). Over half of the journal articles did not explicitly outline a theoretical or conceptual framework for the research (11 out of 20). In the remaining studies, uses and gratifications theory was used in three studies, two articles examined parasocial interaction, while one study applied self-presentation theory, one study employed audience labour as a framework, one study utilised agenda setting, and one study sought to advance discussion of social capital.

The findings across this category facilitate an understanding of the different categories of social media posts by brands, platform preferences for social media use, post hoc analysis of operational use and legal implications for social media use by brands. Analysis of the different categories of social media posts reveal that social media technologies allow brands to interact with fans in a personal and engaging manner. Armstrong et al. (2014) found that the Los Angeles Kings were able to foster community and a unique identity for the team through their novel, earnest and human approach to their official Twitter feed. A content analysis by Pegoraro (2010) suggested that athletes discuss their personal lives and interact with fans via Twitter. This aligns with Frederick et al.'s (2014) contention that athletes interact most frequently with everyday fans on Twitter, and are more likely to discuss their personal lives than their professional lives. Offering behind the scenes access and differentiating personal brands were two lessons gleaned from a content analysis of select athlete's Twitter feeds (Pegoraro & Jinnah, 2012), while Hull (2014) highlighted front stage (e.g., direct communication with fans) and back stage (e.g., behind the scenes reports) glimpses provided by PGA Tour golfers during an event. Similarly, content analyses of athlete's tweeting during an event conducted by Kassing and Sanderson (2010) uncovered behind the scenes access offered through this interface. An additional content analysis of Twitter during an event (London Olympics) conducted by Frederick et al. (2013) highlighted how an event can use an official Twitter handle (e.g., news and information dissemination) and an official Twitter hashtag (e.g., broader discussion by users) for different purposes.

The notion that social media posts provide a mechanism for overt athlete promotion received some support in work to date. Hambrick et al. (2010) found that a relatively low proportion of athlete tweets discussed sponsors. A content analysis of two 'celebrity athletes' revealed that 428 out of 3623 tweets for one athlete, and 131 out of 3579 tweets for the other athlete could be categorised as explicit sponsor promotion (Hambrick & Mahoney, 2011). Gender was found to impact athlete preferences for and promotion via social media. Female athletes have been found to be more brand and image conscious using social media (Butts, 2008; Lebel & Danylchuk, 2012). A gender difference with regard to social media was also uncovered through Coche's (2014) analysis of two official United States Soccer Federation Twitter accounts during the 2011 Women's World Cup. This gender difference encompassed less posts about the women's team than the men's, as well as less importance assigned to women's soccer overall within posts. In the NCAA context, differences have been revealed between student athletes and non-student athletes (Havard et al., 2012), with student athletes using Twitter to maintain social connections, interact with followers, and obtain information (Browning & Sanderson, 2012).

From a team perspective, analysis by Ioakimidis (2010) indicated that social media was the fifth most frequently used media mechanism in a sample of North American Professional sport teams, while Stoldt and Vermillion (2013) found that sports information directors and media relations personnel in NCAA athletics recognised increased use of social media within their jobs. Sanderson (2009) noted that the monitoring of athlete behaviour by fans via social media represented a service provided to sport organisations through these technologies. Content analyses of NCAA team's official Facebook pages conducted by Wallace et al. (2011) showed that this platform promotes product attributes, success, rivalry, and socialisation. The legal reviews within this category highlighted important considerations for brands attempting to generate Facebook likes (Baker et al., 2013) and communicate endorsements (McKelvey & Masteralexis, 2013). Such work provides guidance for brands to ensure that Facebook promotions seeking to obtain likes and/or featuring an entity that sponsors an athlete or the team adhere to relevant advertising guidelines, specifically the Federal Trade Commission's Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials.

Overall, the research within this category demonstrates that sport brands use social media to interact with consumers in an engaging and entertaining manner, often involving a more personal or human approach. In addition, the research suggests that while brand management and promotion are inherent to social media use, a less explicit focus on this may be a more effective way of engaging consumers. Nearly all of the articles examined a North American brand. As noted above, the application of theory to the investigations conducted within this category was relatively limited. Furthermore, the approach taken to generate insights drew heavily on content analyses and secondary data. In addition, a large number of articles examined one social media platform at a single point in time (i.e., applied cross-sectional research designs).

4.3. User-focussed

The user-focussed category included studies examining sport fans' motivations, constraints, perceptions and preferences with regard to social media usage and the demographic or user profiles of social media users. It is important to clarify that the studies in this category do not examine social media practice. Rather, they focus on user profiling and market composition, and were – distinct from the preceding categories – dominated by primary/empirical research. This category consisted of 15 of the 70 articles included in the review. A majority of the researchers adopting a user-focus (9 out of 15) used questionnaires to collect data (e.g., Clavio, 2008, 2011; Clavio & Kian, 2010; Clavio & Walsh, 2013; Clavio, Walsh, & Coyle, 2013; Gibbs, O'Reilly, & Brunette, 2014; Mahan, 2011; Ozsoy, 2011; Witkemper et al., 2012). In addition, content analyses were conducted within five articles (e.g., Blaszka, Burch, Frederick, Clavio, & Walsh, 2012; Gibbs et al., 2014; Reichart Smith & Smith, 2012; Sanderson, 2010; Stavros, Meng, Westberg, & Farrelly, 2013) and one study utilised an experimental design (e.g., Kwak, Kim, & Zimmerman, 2010). Jensen, Ervin, and Dittmore (2014) utilised existing data (i.e., Twitter usage and NCAA football statistics) to model factors contributing to higher numbers of followers for NCAA football coaches. In the user-focussed category, the most frequently applied theoretical framework was the uses and gratifications theory, which researchers applied in five of the 15 articles. An additional five studies did not explicitly state the theory used.

Profiles of social media users have been advanced across various platforms. Clavio (2008, 2011) revealed that NCAA message board users are predominantly male, highly educated, affluent, and older. Meanwhile, Clavio (2011) also found that younger NCAA football fans displayed heavy use of Facebook and YouTube, but lesser involvement on Twitter. Similarly, Clavio and Walsh (2013) indicated that Twitter use is relatively low among college sport fans. Ozsoy (2011) examined social media use among sport fans in Turkey and found that more males than females used social media to follow sport.

The motives for using and engaging via social media have been examined within a variety of contexts and from different perspectives. Mahan (2011) demonstrated that consumers motivated by the enjoyment of using social media contributed to a positive response to sport organisations using social media platforms. In the context of NCAA sport, Clavio and Walsh (2013) found that Facebook and Twitter are used by sport fans for interactivity and information-gathering purposes. Similarly, Gibbs et al. (2014) revealed that interactivity, news and live game updates were three of the four most influential dimensions of social media use among Canadian Football League fans (along with promotion). In addition, the authors indicated that the majority of gratifications sought by CFL sport fans through social media use were satisfied by teams. Information gathering was a motive uncovered by Ozsoy (2011). Witkemper et al. (2012) also highlighted information gathering as a motive driving sport fans to Twitter use (along with entertainment), while concerns about skills and social anxiety were highlighted as constraints to Twitter use. In a content analysis of Facebook pages for NBA teams, Stavros et al. (2013) found that consumers are motivated to engage because of passion, hope, fandom/esteem and camaraderie. Fandom was also revealed as a factor instigating use of the official Major League Baseball World Series hashtag (Blaszka et al., 2012).

The motives of social media users were also examined for gender differences. Clavio and Kian (2010) administered a questionnaire to followers of a retired LPGA golfer finding that female followers were more likely to be motivated to buy the athlete's products, obtain news and information, enjoy the athlete's writing, and express their long-term fanship, while male followers were more likely to be motivated to follow by the athlete's physical attractiveness. Clavio et al. (2013) found additional gender differences for social media followers. Specifically, among fans of select NFL, NBA and NHL teams, females rated the informational, commercial and social functions of a team's official Twitter feed higher than males.

With regard to user preferences, a few trends have been highlighted in the existing research. Using an experimental design, Kwak et al. (2010) found that less identified consumers view user-generated content more favourably. This suggests that consumer-generated content plays an important role in engaging individuals with lower identification levels. Sanderson (2010) conducted a content analysis and found that consumer perspectives on an athlete's personal issues delivered via social media are more sympathetic and positive than the perspectives delivered by the media. In a content analysis of Twitter use during the NCAA College World Series, Reichart Smith and Smith (2012) purported that the same conversations (e.g., cheering, jeering, game updates, and commentary) occur via social media, but the medium and contributors have changed to virtual tools in which users from all around the world can participate. Meanwhile, Jensen et al. (2014) indicated that programme quality reflected through factors such as programme history, on-field success, attendance and stadium capacity was the most important predictor of NCAA football coaches' number of Twitter followers.

User-focussed research illustrated that consumers engaged with sport via social media for a variety of reasons. The motives uncovered, as well as preferences and usages of various social media platforms, can differ by gender, sport context, age, and education. Collectively, user-focussed research advanced the notion that social media allow fans to engage in a process whereby they can express opinions, insights and fanship to a wider audience via multiple platforms. Similar to operational use of social media, the user-focussed research reviewed had been conducted primarily in the North American context, and theory had not consistently been applied. Some degree of methodological advancement is apparent in this category, with over half of the articles collecting primary data. Additionally, there were examples of experimental designs and research spanning multiple platforms rather than a single social media tool in the user-focussed category.

5. Discussion and directions for future research

The purpose of this review was to provide a summary of sport management research conducted on social media. The current review analysed prior research insights regarding the role, function and integration of social media from a brand's

perspective, the day-to-day utilisation of social media by brands, and the attitudes, profiles, behaviours, and perceptions towards social media held by users. The categories provide a starting point to organise current and future social media research from the perspective of sport managers and the people that engage with brands on social media platforms. Meanwhile, opportunities exist to build upon this research through three core areas for development: a more rigorous and diverse application of theory, the employment of broader contexts and perspectives, and expansion of methodological approaches taken.

The strategic use of social media category highlighted how social media tools provide a mechanism for brands to communicate with users, develop relationships and promote brand activities. Communication, relationship development and promotion are fostered through the posting and sharing of content with consumers (e.g., Hambrick et al., 2013; Sanderson & Hambrick, 2012) as well as through exchange and interaction facilitated through social media (Eagleman, 2013; McCarthy et al., 2014; Pronschinske et al., 2012). Exchange between brands and consumers via social media aligns with the interactive nature of relationships advanced by Vargo and Lusch (2004), while demonstrating that relationship building occurs through a process that is dyadic, interactive and meaningful (Brodie et al., 2013). In addition, the networks of users revealed through social network analysis of a brand's social media followers (e.g., Clavio et al., 2012) suggests that engagement with these platforms can facilitate meaningful relationships among communities of consumers (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). Collectively, the importance placed on using social media to foster relationships demonstrates that these platforms are critical tools for mutual exchange (Grönroos, 2004). The advantages of social media outlined within the current body of literature such as improved knowledge of consumers, advanced interaction and effective engagement underscore the value provided through co-creation (Brodie et al., 2011, 2013). The strategic use of social media category aligns closely with the S-D logic framework and the existing research has demonstrated some application of theory. There is scope for extension of this category through the examination of multiple social media tools within the same study, as well as a shift in focus to managerial perspectives and planned outcomes of social media use.

The operational use of social media category revealed the different types of content shared and posted by brands, including: interaction with fans/followers, behind the scenes access, news and information, promotion, along with the emphasis on personalisation employed by brands via social media. The frequent emergence of posts surrounding interaction (e.g., Browning & Sanderson, 2012; Hambrick et al., 2010; Kassing & Sanderson, 2010; Pegoraro, 2010) also aligns with the notion of value co-creation within S-D logic (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). In addition, the sharing of personal lives and provision of behind the scenes access to consumers by brands (Armstrong et al., 2014; Frederick, Lim, Clavio, & Walsh, 2012; Hull, 2014; Kassing & Sanderson, 2010; Pegoraro, 2010) reflects efforts to engage on the part of brands (Vivek et al., 2010) to cultivate relationships. Overall, the operational use of social media provides some guidance for the practical use of social media. There is opportunity to advance beyond secondary research, and expand the predominant descriptive focus within this category. Profitable extensions for this category include investigation of how content and operational use can facilitate engagement.

The user-focussed category illustrated that social media users are young and educated, with heavier use found among males compared to females. A collection of motives including interactivity, information gathering, entertainment, fandom and camaraderie influence social media use. Furthermore, gender and other demographic variables explain variation in these motives. The differences between demographic categories (e.g., Clavio, 2008, 2011; Clavio & Kian, 2010) as well as the various motives unearthed (e.g., Clavio & Walsh, 2013; Stavros et al., 2013) support the notion that consumers evaluate value propositions offered by brands in their own terms (Ballantyne & Varey, 2008). Meanwhile, the impact of social media use on behavioural intentions and attitudes (e.g., Mahan, 2011) demonstrates the positive influence of social media engagement in creating positive psychological outcomes towards brands (Brodie et al., 2011, 2013). The research within the user-focussed category is highly descriptive and largely limited to one context. Future work can extend current understanding through investigations in multiple contexts. In addition, the connection between user preferences and tangible engagement outcomes for brands represents a fruitful area for research development.

The categories outlined above provide a summary and structure of existing research on social media. These categories are interrelated, and we expect additional research to extend both the number of categories and specific streams within each category. A similar extension and broadening of categories has occurred within sponsorship research (cf. Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Walliser, 2003).

Within the existing body of research on sport and social media, there are three major areas for development. First, over half of the articles reviewed (52%) did not explicitly state a theoretical framework. Of those articles that did explicitly state a theoretical framework for the research, there was a lack of consistency and diversity. Specifically, researchers draw heavily on the uses and gratifications theory, along with the relationship marketing perspective. Twenty different theories or conceptual approaches have been used in the articles included within this review, but only five appear more than once. A failure to appropriately apply or develop theory (be that grounded theory or otherwise) to guide the formation of research questions and hypotheses is a critique that has been previously levied on sport management research (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003). Pegoraro (2014) raised a similar concern specific to sport and social media research. To advance theory, sport management scholars researching in the realm of social media must move towards a more integrated application of theory. Through this approach, researchers can strive towards incorporating theory into the paradigmatic approach, detailing how theory guided the research design implemented, and articulating how results and findings derived contribute to existing theoretical knowledge or develop new theoretical knowledge. In many of the studies reviewed, a theoretical or conceptual framework receives a mention in either the literature review or discussion of findings, but there is a lack of depth in communicating theoretical application and contribution.

Social media research in sport has the capacity to generate new theoretical caveats in existing work, while also providing a fertile ground for the evolution of grounded theories (Glaser, Strauss, & Strutzel, 1968). This echoes calls for broader and deeper application of theory within social media research conducted in non-sport contexts (e.g., Kietzmann, Silvestre, McCarthy, & Pitt, 2012). Advocates for the development of inductive theory in social media research argue that many traditional communication and marketing theories emerged when media communication was unidirectional. Consequently, these theories may not be applicable to the many-to-many interaction facilitated via social media. Based on Kietzmann et al. (2012) and the frameworks suggested below, we provide a basis for the expansion of existing theoretical work in social media research.

Second, the majority of social media research in sport derives from the North American perspective. Social media transcend geographic boundaries (Shilbury et al., 2014). Consequently, many of the samples and data within the articles reviewed above – particularly research wherein the followers of an international sport figure were analysed – were likely from diverse geographic backgrounds. Despite this observation, the research reviewed focussed on North American brands. Select research did utilise European and Australian brands as the subject, but there is room for greater diversity. This can include a more global approach to the use of platforms beyond traditional business and promotional boundaries, as well as the impact of how cultural factors impact social media usage.

Third, sport management research investigating social media relies heavily on content analyses and questionnaires for data collection. These two methods were used in over 64% of the studies we reviewed. While these data collection tools align with methods employed in existing sport management research, and the employment of content analysis leverages the existing pool of data points available through social media (Hardin, 2014; Hutchins, 2014; Pedersen, 2014), opportunity exists for the expansion of data collection methods as the strategic and operational use of social media evolves. This aligns with calls for a wider range of methodological approaches within sport management research generally (e.g., Amis & Silk, 2003). In addition, researchers should consider combining methods, similar to the approach taken by Gibbs et al. (2014) and Hopkins (2013) to collect data from different stakeholders and groups engaging with a brand via social media.

Based upon the findings discussed, we advance directions for further research in the following two sections. Specifically, we emphasise a collection of new or yet to be used theoretical frameworks (not an exhaustive list) that may guide future research to address a shortage of theory application within the existing body of research. Also, additional contexts and research designs that can be utilised to increase the diversity of research on this topic are presented.

5.1. Future directions: theoretical frameworks

A number of theoretical frameworks are relevant to social media and provide a base to build upon existing knowledge of the subject. The current review positioned social media within S-D logic and relationship marketing, which falls in line with our definition of social media and existing research on the topic. Future research should explore the S-D logic approach to advance clearer understanding of the engagement process facilitated via social media (Brodie et al., 2011, 2013). In particular, the notion that strategy should inform operational use of social media, while allowing users to co-create value with one another and with organisations. This engagement process also provides a source of research to determine the impact of practices for relationship development.

However, this does not limit social media research to the marketing perspective, and this existing body of knowledge can be broadened to include additional areas of sport management such as: sport development, education, facility management, operations, organisational design and strategic management. The current review revealed an emphasis on marketing and consumer behaviour, and additional perspectives to broaden understanding warrant attention. For example, from a sport development perspective, there is a cogent agenda to explore social media as an avenue to distribute educational and informative content to participants. The impact of social media use by attendees on facility design, and the use of social media to enhance service delivery before, during and after events represent additional avenues of potential inquiry.

In terms of additional theories that may broaden understanding, social exchange theory (SET) states that social exchange among entities reflects a series of interactions that create obligation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). These interactions involve actions by individuals, or organisations, contingent upon mutually rewarding actions from other individuals or organisations (Emerson, 1976). As noted above, existing research has highlighted a variety of benefits and opportunities deriving from social media usage, along with a collection of challenges inherent to social media (e.g., O'Shea & Alonso, 2011). Through the application of SET, these opportunities and challenges can be examined as benefits and costs, and expanded upon (e.g., increased revenue, strategic investment, monitoring) to determine how benefits may or may not offset costs. In addition, SET researchers suggest that interaction and exchange take place when it is mutually rewarding to both parties (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976). Each entity must continually invest in the other, recognising that their effort and investment may not be reciprocated by the other entity (Blau, 1964). Future research can explore what sport brands are sacrificing through encouraging user-generated content, and how this is offset by the benefits of empowering consumers.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) represents another relevant framework to examine the predictors and outcomes of social media use. The TPB indicates that intention influences behaviour, while attitude, subjective norms and perceptions of behavioural control affect intentions (Ajzen, 1991). In a non-sport context, Pelling and White (2009) revealed that attitude and subjective norms predicted intention, which in turn, predicted behaviour (high-level social media use), while self-identity predicted both intention and behaviour. Sport management researchers can extend research on the benefits and costs of social media use through the application of the TPB to identify factors predicting social media behaviour. The

applicability of the TPB to sport and social media research is exemplified by Clavio (2011), who re-interpreted his results from this perspective.

Additional theories that align with social media and sport include resource dependence theory (RDT), the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM), and institutional theory. RDT indicates that an organisation does not operate autonomously, but rather relies upon a network of other organisations, and these dependencies and interdependencies require management to ensure organisational sustainability (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009). Once again, the exchanges inherent to co-creation appear relevant to this theory and ripe for exploration of how brands may depend upon users for content. In addition, this approach also provides an opportunity to explore the potential strain on resources resulting from the deployment and maintenance of social media strategy.

The PCM includes four stages of awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance based upon a consumer's psychological connection to a sport object (Funk & James, 2006). Sport management researchers can investigate how consumer engagement with social media tools offered by a brand vary based upon PCM stage, as well as how consumer involvement with the brand influences social media engagement. This investigation can provide insights on different channels to be used to bolster consumer psychological connection through communication and marketing via social media.

Institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977) frames how organisations behave in relation to broader logics and myths that exist in the external environment. Given the rise of social media over the past 10 years as a taken-for-granted aspect of organisational practice (cf. Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990), there is scope for sport organisations to adopt social media strategies to imitate accepted practice. As such, organisations engage in social media practices to obtain legitimacy in the eyes of consumers, funding agencies and other stakeholders – whether or not it represents the most efficient course of action (Santomier, 1979). Institutional theory also provides a basis to understand why sport organisations employ certain practices or approaches to using social media. As an example, given the social and open nature of social media, there are grounds to expect replication and isomorphism of brand strategy to exist in practice, which is worthy of attention. For this reason, institutional theory provides a lens to examine the underlying forces that influence why and how sport organisations' use social media.

To explore the impact of social media use on sport consumers, we advocate for the use of theoretical frameworks addressing consumer psychology. Wann's (2006a) Team Identification-Social Psychological Health (TISPH) model examines how following sport teams may contribute to positive states of social-psychological well-being. In the model Wann (2006a) posits that team identification can lead to increased psychological health via increased opportunities to interact with others (Wann, 2006b), and various social media platforms would appear to provide an avenue for these interactions. Notably, the TISPH proposes that social psychological health benefits will only be relevant for individuals who identify with a local team (Wann, 2006a). Given social media can eliminate geographic boundaries for following a team (Shilbury et al., 2014), there is an opportunity to examine whether relationships formed via social media also lead to social-psychological health benefits. Meanwhile, the five dimensions of wellbeing (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment) advanced within wellbeing theory (Seligman, 2011) provide an opportunity for exploration of which components are activated through social media and can contribute to human flourishing.

5.2. Future directions: research design and context

The existing body of knowledge within sport and social media research presents a number of opportunities to expand understanding through building upon the approaches taken within existing research. For instance, the legal implications of social media use can extend beyond the law reviews provided by Baker et al. (2013) and McKelvey and Masteralexis (2013). Also, netnographic studies exploring fostering community can extend the existing social network analyses (Clavio et al., 2012; Hambrick, 2012). Furthermore, social media as a tool for (and potential threat to) strategic issue management and the handling of crises and scandal can amplify the understanding provided by Hambrick et al. (2013) and Sanderson and Hambrick (2012) around strategic communications. In addition, evaluation of the monetisation of social media presents a worthwhile area for academic investigation.

As noted above, secondary research was the dominant form of data collection within the existing research on social media. While this research has provided a sound basis of knowledge in relation to how social media have influenced sport management, opportunity exists for an expansion of methodological approaches. First, experimental designs can be utilised more frequently (Pedersen, 2014), building on Kwak et al. (2010) who implemented an experimental design to assess consumer attitudes towards user-generated content. Similar designs could assess consumer attitudes to posts across multiple platforms and/or different types of posts (e.g., text, video, picture, etc.). Outside of the sport context, field experiments have been used to evaluate how social media usage can impact political attitudes and behaviours (e.g., Bailard, 2012). This approach could be adapted to the sport context to assess how engagement with a sport brand or with sport consumers via social media may influence behaviours such as attendance and merchandise purchase or attitudinal measures such as involvement. Lastly, experiments requiring fundraisers to solicit donations via social media tools provide insight regarding both fundraiser and donor behaviour (Castillo, Petrie, & Wardell, 2014). Similar experiments or virtual scenarios could be developed within sport management to allow existing social media users to post and share content to gauge user attitudes as well as response from peers.

Mixed method approaches could also provide a more holistic understanding of social media within sport. In the introduction to a special issue on social media and political change, Howard and Parks (2012) advocated for a combination of

case-based qualitative approaches with broader quantitative methods to advance understanding of social media. To that end, Hopkins (2013) combined the results of a previously conducted online questionnaire administered to an AFL team's membership base with personnel interviews within the team in an effort to obtain information from multiple stakeholders. In addition, Gibbs et al. (2014) used triangulation through interviews with team representatives, content analyses of team Twitter feeds, and a questionnaire administered to sport consumers. Similar approaches provide a basis to develop understanding of the use and impacts of social media among both consumers and sport managers.

Beyond increased use of mixed method research design, longitudinal data offer additional opportunities to extend knowledge of social media use. A large number of studies included within this review, particularly within the operational category, collected data from a single point, or period of time. A longitudinal approach seems relevant to this context given some concern within the sport industry that social media, and specific platforms, represent a fluctuating set of tools that may lack longevity (McCarthy et al., 2014) or provide competitive advantages that – given the open and social nature of social media platforms – may be replicable and unsustainable. Furthermore, sport management scholars have been encouraged to use longitudinal data more often (Pedersen, 2014; Stewart, Smith, & Nicholson, 2003). Longitudinal research would facilitate observing growth or change over time, and could potentially incorporate multiple platforms. In addition to longitudinal research, a shift towards examining multiple cases as well as testing the same factors across multiple sports and demographics can extend beyond the single platform or single timeframe approach. There is also scope for sport management researchers to move beyond user profiling. The profile of users for any given site(s) is context specific, which limits the insights regarding consumers as it is difficult to contend that the findings from user profiles would hold globally.

Lastly, to expand the geographic diversity within this area of academic inquiry, there is a need for more research conducted beyond the North American perspective. In particular, given increasing social media penetration within the Asia Pacific region (Chan & Guillet, 2011), investigation in these countries is warranted. In addition, further examination of social media use by both consumers and brands can be conducted in Australia and Europe. The data collected from these regions and countries can also be utilised for cross-cultural comparisons. The inclusion of country specific cases along with comparative work across regions represents an additional suggestion by Howard and Parks (2012) to broaden understanding of social media. Beyond the expansion of geographic perspectives, the existing research can be extended through replication in different markets, comparison of multiple platforms and comparison of small versus large organisations.

6. Limitations and conclusions

We acknowledge two limitations of this review. First, as noted within the research selection process, the search for journal articles was delimited to sport journals. We could have conducted a more expansive review of social media and sport research through the integration of related fields (e.g., tourism, events) and/or broader journal categories (e.g., mainstream business). In addition, we only included literature published in English, which excludes knowledge developed in other languages.

Second, the recent emergence of academic research on social media within sport management means that the current review reflects an initial exploration of an emerging field. The earliest publication year for an article reviewed is 2008, six years prior to our review. As a point of comparison, Cornwell and Maignan's (1998) initial review of sponsorship research took place nearly fifteen years after journals began publishing research on the topic. From there, Walliser (2003) conducted a similar review that both expanded the pool from which articles were drawn (e.g., German and French articles were included; the number of journals reviewed was increased) and the years of publication from which the articles were drawn. A follow-up review that both extends the 'target population' of journals and allows for the continued evolution of social media research in sport management will broaden understanding of the state of knowledge. Similarly, we deliberately defined the existing research included within this review within a small number of distinct categories as a reflection of the embryonic stage of academic work in this realm. As academic inquiry within the realm of social media evolves, our expectation is that further differentiation within categories will emerge alongside the identification of additional categories.

This review analysed sport management research published on social media. Social media were defined as: new media technologies facilitating interactivity and co-creation that allow for the development and sharing of user-generated content among and between organisations (e.g., teams, governing bodies, agencies, media groups) and individuals (e.g., consumers, athletes and journalists). We conducted this review within the broader framework of social media as a critical tool within relationship marketing. A total of 70 journal articles were deemed to meet criteria for selection, and were analysed based upon findings. From there, three categories were identified: strategic, operational and user-focussed.

The review provided a summary and insights on how organisations are using social media as well as the utility of a single social media tool/platform from the perspective of sport brands. The existing body of research outlined sport consumer preferences for social media in terms of motivations, constraints, attitudes and behaviours. Opportunity exists for research development through increased focus on the strategic use of social media, including the examination of the functional responsibility of social media within a given organisation and the integration of social media alongside traditional marketing communication.

There is also scope to investigate the impact of social media on brands and consumers in a more holistic manner. Beyond a focus on strategy, social media research can benefit from diversification in terms of the theoretical frameworks applied, methods used and research contexts investigated. In making these suggestions for future research directions, we acknowledge that sport management scholars come from diverse backgrounds in terms of both current home institution as

well as research training. These backgrounds can include academic fields such as: marketing, communication, kinesiology, health education, and administration among others; reflecting the eclectic nature of the discipline. This diversity has implications for the theoretical perspectives taken, research design implemented, and research context utilised. However, given the pervasiveness of social media, academic research on this topic presents an opportunity to connect these fields and build bridges among researchers. We hope that this review and the consequent suggestions for future research provide a basis for sport management researchers with interest and expertise in this continually evolving context. In addition, it is hoped that the process employed within this review is adopted to evaluate and assess additional topics that are highly relevant and timely for both sport management academics and practitioners.

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