

The Impact of Online Social Media on Chinese Professional Badminton Players

Yujie Shan^{1,*}

¹ Department of School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Leicester, United Kingdom

* Corresponding Author Email: Y.Shan2-22@student.lboro.ac.uk

Abstract. The use of online social media is an inevitable activity for many professional athletes, and under the background of the rapid development of sports in the information age and the commercialization of sports, the performance of Chinese professional badminton players will be affected by online social media. From the positive aspect, it is beneficial for professional badminton players to promote sports, promote accountability and training performance, can be monitored on online social media, and sports commercialization also has gifts to increase the income of professional athletes. From the negative aspects, rapid information development and negative evaluation storms can put pressure on athletes to make decisions and cause them to play intensively, Moreover, the commercialization of sports brings income to athletes, and the impatience brought by high income will also show up, so that they are not focused enough in the competition training. Therefore, the right treatment of online social media and its impact is conducive to the sustainable development of professional badminton players.

Keywords: Online social media, qualitative research, professional badminton players.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

With the advent of the internet age, the use of online social media is an inevitable trend for anyone, and for professional athletes as well. That the role that social media plays in users' lives has changed. The entertainment element now plays a crucial role in motivating digital consumers to engage with social media, and at any time of day and in different locations, opportunities for social engagement continue to drive the evolution of social platforms into entertainment hubs. In other words, it is no longer a purely "social" activity, but a more purposeful activity, especially in the choice of user content consumption. Therefore, in response to this change, some brands have also used relationship marketing between professional badminton players and fans in China to establish marketing cooperation with athletes[1], which is one of the main purposes for most professional athletes to use social media. In fact, because of this, most Chinese professional badminton players are also influenced by online social media.

Studying the impact of online social media on Chinese professional badminton players is no longer an innovative topic. However, it is important academic research value to make some suggestions for Chinese professional badminton players based on the impact of social media on athletes' performance.

1.2. Literature review and research gaps

The presence of modern online social media has indeed increased the public's understanding of athletes. From multiple perspectives, people can learn about the athletes' situation outside the arena through online media, which leads to the identity of the athlete being made public. This is a popular trend and phenomenon on online social media[2]. Many scholars believe that this is beneficial to badminton players, because through the use of social media, people learn more about the sport through athletes, and increase their interest index. And for some athletes who perform well, it's a walking billboard. When athletes perform well in the Olympic arena, their popularity will increase, and the click rate of content posted on social software will increase, which is the performance of sports commercialization, sports commercialization means the increase of athletes' income, the

increase in training team income can help athletes improve the training environment, including food, mental health services, correspondingly, athletes' training effects will appear, and athletes' performance in the arena will be better and better. This is a virtuous circle.

On the contrary, some scholars believe that online social media is a double-edged sword. The negative impact on badminton players is more, especially when professional athletes who need to concentrate on training in a quiet environment choose to post their daily life content on social media, then the problem they encounter is not only the difficulty of training, but different negative comments from netizens. Too many different perceptions are stressful for athletes and are factors that prevent them from focusing on training. Secondly, even the commercialization of sports and the brand value of athletes makes the mentality of badminton players impetuous, and the growth of income increases the possibility that athletes will not be able to focus on training. This is how some scholars have taken on the impact of online social media on athletes.[3].

Most scholars have analyzed the impact of online media on professional athletes from a single perspective. This study focuses on multiple factors and multiple angles to analyze the impact of online media on Chinese professional badminton players, intending to have a more comprehensive and specific understanding.

1.3. Research theme and approach

The theme of this research is the impact of online social media on professional badminton players in China. The method used is qualitative research, based on ontology, epistemology, and methodology on the nature of online social media, the impact on professional badminton players, and the process uses literature research and interview survey.

2. Research Approach

2.1. Philosophical foundations

This study is based on epistemology and methodology. Epistemology believes that first, is research's theme needs to be clarified, which is the impact of online social media on Chinese professional badminton players. According to the epistemology, there are two concepts, one is online social media, the other is the performance of Chinese professional badminton players, and finally the impact of the former on the latter. It is important to understand the definition and the connection between them[4]. At the same time, after clarifying the concepts that need to be understood, this research adopted the method of qualitative research, and in the choice of research methods, and distinguished between quantitative and qualitative research.

Both qualitative and quantitative research are the main research methods on social science topics. Through analysis and comparison, that quantitative research is closer to the process of deduction; that is, it is generalized from general principles to special situations[5]; Qualitative research is based on descriptive analysis, which is essentially an inductive process, generalizing conclusions from particular scenarios. Quantitative research focuses on and relies heavily on the measurement and calculation of things. Qualitative research focuses on and relies on the description and understanding of the meanings, characteristics, metaphors, and symbols of things. Therefore, for the relevant topics of the impact of online social media on professional badminton in China. It is more suitable for qualitative research, because its research process and research content are more subjective, and the analysis of each concept is more suitable for summarizing and summarizing, so this study will be speech social media, the performance of Chinese professional badminton, and the impact of the former on the latter as the target research object, through some methods commonly used in qualitative research, including interviews, and summary literature, to analyze its specific meaning and specific impact.

2.2. Methods

2.2.1 Literature review and research

Critically analyzing the literature and drawing more complete conclusions based on the results of previous research is one of the important methods of qualitative research[6], and this method is also used in this study. Because the research and theories on some social science contents need to be cumulative, the substantive theories of sociology often reflect that there is no universally accepted theoretical paradigm in sociology to promote the development and maturity of middle-level theories. Sociology is still in the "pre-paradigm" stage, still exploring a unified paradigm. Marx's historical materialism and Parsons' structural functionalism both attempt to establish a unified theoretical paradigm, so they need to rely on some theories that have been professionally studied to support them.

2.2.2 Offline interviews

Due to the time and space constraints of the semi-structured interview, this interview adopts a combination of online and offline methods, mainly focusing on the impact of online social media on Chinese professional athletes and interviewing Chinese professional badminton players. The main questions are as follows:

(1)-How do you think online social media has affected your performance in the competition? In what ways does it have an impact?

(2)-Do you use your smartphone a lot during training or competition? Do you pay attention to what social platforms say about you?

(3)-Do you interact with your followers on online social media? Do you think they are friendly and supportive enough for you?

(4)-How do you think what your fans say about you affects your performance? Positive or negative?

(5)-Do you think Chinese professional badminton players use online social platforms correctly? For example, using these tools to promote the sport of badminton?

In total, six professional badminton players were interviewed this time, each with a different perspective on the above issues.

2.2.3 Analysis of media coverage

The analysis of media coverage refers to the coverage of Chinese professional badminton players by some official media outlets. Due to the development of the Internet age, most media outlets publish their stories online, as well as through social media platforms. It is analyzed based on their content, language style, attitude, and comments accompanying the report. Due to the acceleration of the speed of information dissemination, most media reports are now less specific to international events in pursuit of click-through rates and views, but some reports on the personal lives of Chinese professional badminton players have increased [7]. In order to increase attention, and most media organizations use the same text to forward news, lacking careful proofreading. However, most media organizations take an encouraging, neutral approach to reporting about professional badminton players. Returning to the topic of the impact on professional badminton players in China, focus more on the comments attached below the report, since the media statement will increase the visibility of the event while increasing the number of negative reviews, which will also have a negative impact on badminton players[8].

3. Result

Based on the results of the interview, it was found that due to the development of the times, almost every professional athlete will use online social media because they think that "this is an era where mobile phones are not left in hand", which is indeed inevitable. When asked if they received some negative reviews from the Internet, most athletes were very optimistic, they thought that most netizens were very enthusiastic about them, and very few had negative reviews. Further, in how they respond to some negative reviews, some people will choose to ignore them, indicating that they will focus on

praising their own evaluations. However, on the contrary, some athletes say that they even like to accept negative comments, especially when everyone thinks that she is doing well on the field, because they are afraid that they will be too proud of their praise, so they want to get some more comprehensive reviews to help them improve, even if these reviews may be negative and ugly. They know what kind of mindset is conducive to improving their performance on the field, and it also shows that social media reviews have an impact on them. Secondly, they also are asked questions about whether Chinese professional badminton players share their daily lives and influences on online social media or whether Chinese professional athletes use online media to promote badminton [9]. Almost all interviewees answered yes. Everyone recognizes the role of online social media in promotion and dissemination and believes that the use of social media by athletes is conducive to promoting the popularity of the sport.

According to the results of the comprehensive interview, the frequency of Chinese professional badminton players using online social media is very high, because it is an inevitable trend of the times. Secondly, some evaluations from different people on online social media have an impact on the performance of most professional badminton players. Most athletes take the attitude of ignoring negative reviews or focusing on positive ones [10]. Of course, there is also a more positive attitude, that is, using negative reviews to improve players' performance. Finally, online social media has also brought Chinese professional badminton players closer to ordinary people; for example, professional badminton players can share their training routines on online social media, while increasing brand value and improving team revenue. However, there are also most professional badminton players who think that negative reviews will affect their performance in the game, and they will be more stressed, so this is a negative effect. Fortunately, the interviewees were all positive in the face of negative reviews [11].

In view of the impact of online social media on Chinese professional badminton players, the result of this study is that online social media, as a trend of the times, is one of the social software that most athletes do not avoid, as public figures, they will receive more attention and love for content posted on social media, but also receive some negative comments [12]. And these negative evaluations, due to a large number of people, compared to ordinary people, will receive more negative evaluations. So, to some extent, these negative comments will have an impact on the performance of professional Chinese badminton players. For example, they will feel frustrated, more stressed on the playing field, and may even be unable to concentrate.

It is undeniable that most professional badminton players feel that they get more encouragement and support from their fans, so they will also be more motivated to train and compete. Secondly, due to the use of social media by badminton players and the coverage of media outlets, many people will call Chinese professional badminton players "sports stars", especially some athletes who perform well on the field. Therefore, their daily life will also attract attention, and at this time, some brands will also cooperate with athletes for brand promotion. This increases the personal and team income of professional badminton players, which is a manifestation of the commercialization of sports. The spread of online social media is incredibly fast; through athletes and media reports, many professional badminton players said that this had increased the popularity of the sport, and more people through them know badminton and even fall in love with badminton. Promoting sports is conducive to the health of the whole people, which also gives Chinese professional badminton players a greater sense of identity and occupation and more confidence in the field. This is one of the charms of online social media.

To sum up, the impact of online social media on Chinese professional badminton players is multifaceted. There are not only positive and negative, depending on how the athlete uses and how it is viewed, the negative impact is mainly focused on the impact of some negative evaluation on the attention and mood of their game, which is an inevitable nature, so it also requires professional badminton players to have a more substantial psychological quality to deal with [13]. At the same time, due to the rapid spread speed and universality of online social media, although the commercialization of sports has led to the growth of revenue for professional badminton players and

teams, the development of income and excessive attention to things other than competition and training will distract athletes and make them more impetuous, so athletes themselves need to correctly deal with commercial promotion cooperation.

4. Discussion

Athletes' use of social media is an inevitable habit in the internet age. The Internet receives different evaluations precisely because social media is a tool and platform for people to share opinions, experiences, and life experiences with each other, and with the socialization of the Internet, more and more people have begun to use related social software. Social media has certainly made it easier to communicate with people, but its growing influence has also had some effects, such as encouraging people or causing anxiety [14].

The impact of negative perceptions of professional athletes or public figures in other industries is also due to the fact that the Internet and social media platforms provide a breeding ground for rumors, fueling their power to spread more widely and rapidly. Speech on the Internet is inherently influenced by rumors and is prone to polarization; Today's social platforms use pervasive recommendation algorithms to analyze users' preferences and constantly recommend similar content to users, so the messages and remarks people receive will become more and more single, and their thoughts will become more and more likely to be solidified by the same point of view, thus going to extremes. As the Internet and social media continue to flourish, communication between people becomes more convenient, and the public opinion situation has become particularly complicated. At present, the punishment of online rumors still needs to be strengthened, and those who maliciously spread false news and incite extremism should be punished by the platform; At the same time, recommendation algorithms on social media platforms should also be regulated. As users, we young people should also keep our eyes open to distinguish between true and false statements on the Internet.

The different attitudes towards social media adopted by different athletes are a reflection of their psychological differences. The Internet has become highly psychologically expensive Internet[15]. It is a mirror that makes the flow of information and information more transparent, but it also magnifies the gap, reflects the real world, reflects the possible world for everyone, a world where you can see the state of other people's lives anytime, anywhere, all these changes make it more and more difficult for people to satisfy their own lives now.

5. Conclusion

Through interviews with six professional badminton players, the following common results were obtained; Almost all badminton players read reviews on the Internet, and even though most of them are good, there are plenty of negative comments that affect the mentality of professional badminton players and their attention during matches. Therefore, the influence of online social media on badminton players exists.

The impact of online social media on Chinese professional badminton players is two-sided. The positive impact is reflected in the encouragement and support of some netizens on online social media, which increases the confidence of badminton players and is beneficial to their training and competition performance psychologically. Yes, at the same time, some pertinent negative comments will also motivate them to correct shortcomings and improve athletes' performance. Secondly, the popularity of online social media is linked to the commercialization of sports, which has increased the income of some well-known badminton players and their teams and improved their training conditions. At the same time, most professional badminton players believe that their speeches on social media are conducive to promoting badminton and making more people fall in love with this healthy sport. Negative effects focus on the negative emotions that negative evaluations bring to badminton players and even reduce their attention in the game. At the same time, excessive commercialization and excessive attention from netizens to their daily lives make badminton players

more impetuous, and it is difficult to calm down and train. The above-mentioned influences are the psychological influences that athletes receive when using online social media. When dealing with some negative consequences, it is crucial to forming a correct attitude.

References

- [1] Jiang N, Khong K W, Gan J L, et al. Impact of athlete performance and brand social value on product involvement: a mediation role of celebrity endorsement in social media[J]. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration*, 2022 (ahead-of-print).
- [2] Ardha N B D, Sari K E, Kamayanti A. How Social Media Enforces Athlete Accountability in Sport?[J]. *Indonesian Journal of Sport Management*, 2022, 2(2): 123-134.
- [3] Niu Z, Zhang R. Investigating the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Millennial's Purchase Intention of Sports Brands in China[C]//2021 3rd International Conference on Economic Management and Cultural Industry (ICEMCI 2021). Atlantis Press, 2021: 937-943.
- [4] Lin K C, Lee I C, Cheng C F, et al. The Effects of Adopting Tablets and Facebook for Learning Badminton Skills[J]. *Educational Technology & Society*, 2020, 23(4): 89-105.
- [5] Lim J H, Donovan L A, Kaufman P, et al. Professional athletes' social media use and player performance: evidence from the national football league[J]. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 2020, 14(1): 33-59.
- [6] Fitriana M, Xin T Y. The athlete performance management: An impact of self-integrity, family supports and social media[J]. *Journal of Education and Social Science*, 2019, 12(5): 54-63.
- [7] Doyle J P, Su Y, Kunkel T. Athlete branding via social media: Examining the factors influencing consumer engagement on Instagram[J]. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 2022, 22(4): 506-526.
- [8] Hayes M, Filo K, Geurin A, et al. An exploration of the distractions inherent to social media use among athletes[J]. *Sport Management Review*, 2020, 23(5): 852-868.
- [9] Durand-Bush N, DesClouds P. Smartphones: How can mental performance consultants help athletes and coaches leverage their use to generate more benefits than drawbacks?[J]. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 2018, 9(4): 227-238.
- [10] Hayes M, Filo K, Geurin A, et al. An exploration of the distractions inherent to social media use among athletes[J]. *Sport Management Review*, 2020, 23(5): 852-868.
- [11] Su Y, Baker B, Doyle J P, et al. Rise of an athlete brand: Factors influencing the social media following of athletes[J]. *Faculty/Researcher Works*, 2020.
- [12] Hayes M, Filo K, Riot C, et al. Athlete perceptions of social media benefits and challenges during major sport events[J]. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 2019, 12(4): 449-481.
- [13] Rahmati M M. A sociological reflection on commercialization of sports[J]. *Journal of Harakat*, 2007, 32(32): 161-186
- [14] Karlsson J, Bäckström Å, Redelius K. Commercialization processes within Swedish child and youth sport—a Deleuzioguttarian perspective[J]. *Sport in Society*, 2022, 25(12): 2397-2414.
- [15] Stokvis R. Globalization, commercialization and individualization: Conflicts and changes in elite athletics[J]. *Culture, Sport Society*, 2000, 3(1): 22-34.