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The Influence of Consumer Motivation on Engagement with Sports Club Social Media: An Intrinsic and Extrinsic Analysis

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Abstract

Background: Understanding the motivations behind consumer engagement on sports club social media can help clubs and marketers tailor their strategies to better connect with fans, fostering deeper loyalty and more meaningful interactions. By identifying what drives fans to engage—whether it is a genuine love for the brand or the pursuit of rewards—clubs can create more targeted content that not only boosts engagement but also strengthens the overall fan experience and community. **Objectives:** This study explores the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on consumer engagement with sports club social media, utilising the theoretical framework of Uses and Gratifications Theory. Methods/Approach: Using structural equation modelling and network analysis, different motivational factors, such as internal and external motivation, were analysed to determine their influence on engagement behaviours. **Results:** The findings reveal that both intrinsic motivations (e.g., personal identity, entertainment, and brand love) and extrinsic motivations (e.g., rewards, empowerment, and social interaction) significantly affect consumer engagement. Intrinsic motivations were strong predictors of high-quality engagement behaviours, including meaningful commenting and active participation in discussions. In contrast, extrinsic motivations, particularly the role of social interaction, were more associated with the frequency of posting and sharing content. **Conclusions:** These results underscore the importance of understanding the diverse motivational drivers behind consumer interactions with sports club social media to enhance fan engagement and loyalty.

Introduction

The role of motivation in shaping consumer behaviour and engagement has been widely explored across various domains, including knowledge transfer within organizations (Gutić Martinčić, 2020), brand promotion in the context of digital transformation (Istrefi-Jahja & Zeqiri, 2021), and social media marketing's influence on purchase intentions in transition economies (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021). Recent studies have also examined how influencer credibility and advertising disclosure impact consumer purchase intentions, particularly among younger generations (Sesar et al., 2022; Sesar et al., 2023). Furthermore, the importance of digital tools and smart technologies in enhancing cultural promotion has been highlighted, emphasizing the need for effective digital strategies in today's marketing landscape (Floričić et al., 2023). The application of brand equity models in higher education marketing has also gained attention, offering insights into the specific challenges of this sector (Vukasović, 2022). Additionally, the intersection of banking quality and reputation in the digital era, particularly through mobile banking, underscores the evolving dynamics of consumer trust and satisfaction (Pejić Bach et al., 2020).

Understanding consumer motivation is essential for marketers aiming to engage their target audience on social media platforms effectively. Emini et al. (2021) emphasises the significance of motivation theory in deciphering consumer behaviours in the digital realm. By delving into the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive individuals to interact with sports club social media, this research aims to provide insights into the underlying mechanisms of consumer engagement.

Intrinsic motivation emphasises the inherent value individuals place on certain activities or experiences (Chang et al., 2022). When consumers perceive engagement with sports club social media as fulfilling a personal interest or satisfying a need for connection with like-minded individuals, it reflects intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards or incentives, such as discounts, prizes, or recognition (Allam et al., 2019). Understanding the interplay between these two types of motivation is crucial for designing effective engagement strategies that resonate with consumers across various functions and activities on social media platforms.

This research seeks to uncover patterns and preferences that influence engagement levels on sports club social media by conducting a comprehensive analysis of consumer motivations. By identifying key drivers of consumer behaviour, marketers can tailor their content, messaging, and promotional efforts to align with the motivations that resonate most strongly with their target audience. Ultimately, this research aims to enhance our understanding of how sports clubs can leverage social media to cultivate meaningful relationships with fans and drive positive outcomes for both the organisation and its supporters.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study draws on three primary theories: motivation theory and uses and gratifications theory. These theories collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how and why consumers engage with sports club social media, highlighting the roles of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Motivation theory

Motivation theory serves as a foundational framework for understanding human behaviour across various contexts, including consumer engagement on social media platforms. Rooted in psychological principles, motivation theory delves into the

intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive individuals to take specific actions or pursue certain goals (Le, 2022).

Researchers such as Rode (2016) and Qureshi et al. (2024) have extensively studied these motivational dynamics, highlighting the importance of distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation, characterised by a genuine interest or enjoyment in an activity, is often associated with higher levels of engagement and sustained participation. This intrinsic drive stems from internal factors such as personal satisfaction, curiosity, or a sense of autonomy (Chang et al., 2022). In the realm of sports club social media, individuals may be intrinsically motivated by their passion for the sport, a desire for belongingness within the fan community, or the emotional connection they feel towards the club (Stavros et al., 2014).

Conversely, extrinsic motivation relies on external incentives or rewards to prompt action. While extrinsic rewards like discounts, prizes, or social recognition can initially attract attention and spur engagement, their long-term effectiveness may be limited if they do not align with individuals' intrinsic goals and values (Allam et al., 2019). For instance, sports club social media platforms may offer exclusive access to behind-the-scenes content, VIP experiences, or merchandise discounts to incentivise interaction and participation.

Understanding the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is crucial for marketers seeking to optimise consumer engagement strategies on social media. By catering to both types of motivation and aligning content and incentives with individuals' underlying desires and preferences, sports clubs can cultivate a vibrant online community, foster deeper connections with fans, and ultimately drive positive outcomes for their brand.

Moreover, insights from motivation theory can guide the development of tailored communication strategies that resonate more effectively with different segments of the fan base (Aichner, 2019). For example, content that highlights personal stories, achievements, and milestones of players and the club can appeal to intrinsically motivated fans (Ferreira et al., 2022). Meanwhile, time-limited offers, contests, and gamified experiences can attract those driven by extrinsic rewards (Machado et al., 2020).

Additionally, understanding these motivational factors can help create more engaging and interactive social media campaigns that capture attention and encourage active participation and loyalty. By leveraging both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, sports clubs can design social media content that not only engages but also retains fan interest, fostering a stronger, more dedicated community. This comprehensive approach not only enhances immediate engagement metrics but also contributes to long-term brand loyalty and advocacy, ultimately translating to increased support and revenue for the club.

Uses and gratifications theory

Uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1973) offers a foundational framework for understanding how individuals actively select media to satisfy specific needs and desires (Santos et al., 2022). This theoretical approach shifts the focus from the effects of media on audiences to the ways in which individuals utilise media to achieve personal objectives.

The theory identifies several key motivations for media use, including information seeking, personal identity formation, social interaction, and entertainment. Recent research applications of uses and gratifications theory in the context of social media have underscored its relevance in elucidating user engagement behaviours (Bailey et al., 2021). For instance, Zhang and Su (2023) have demonstrated that social media

users primarily engage with platforms for purposes such as social interaction, entertainment, information acquisition, and convenience. These motivations are particularly pertinent in the realm of sports club social media, where fans are drawn to real-time updates, opportunities to connect with fellow supporters, and access to exclusive content. Kharmalki, et al. (2020)have extended the uses and gratifications theory to the domain of sports marketing, revealing that fan engagement with sports clubs' social media channels is driven by needs analogous to those identified in broader social media contexts. Their study highlights that fans are particularly motivated to engage with content that enhances their connection to the club, provides valuable and timely information, and facilitates social interactions with other fans.

The interactive nature of social media platforms allows sports clubs to effectively apply the uses and gratifications theory by tailoring content to meet these specific needs. By providing timely and relevant information, sports clubs can keep fans informed and engaged with the latest news, match updates, and behind-the-scenes insights, thereby fulfilling fans' information-seeking needs and reinforcing their loyalty to the club. In the realm of personal identity and self-expression, sports club social media serves as a vital platform for fans to express their affiliation and passion for the team, fostering a sense of identity and belonging (Chang et al., 2022). This aspect is critical in cultivating a dedicated and emotionally invested fan base. Sharing personal stories and fan-generated content and incorporating interactive features such as polls and Q&As can deepen the personal connection between the club and its supporters. Social interaction is further enhanced through the community-building capabilities of social media. Fans can engage with one another, share their experiences, and celebrate the team's successes together, fulfilling their need for social connection (Vieira & Sousa, 2020). Sports clubs can facilitate these interactions by creating discussion spaces, hosting live events, and actively engaging with fans through comments and messages. Entertainment remains a central driver of engagement on sports club social media platforms. By providing a range of entertaining content, such as highlight reels, player interviews, behind-the-scenes footage, and humorous posts, sports clubs can maintain high levels of fan interest and activity.

The role of convenience in fan interaction with sports clubs on social media is also significant. The ease of accessing content, the ability to engage while on the move, and the immediacy of social media updates contribute to its appeal as a preferred medium for many fans. Sports clubs can leverage this by ensuring their content is mobile-friendly, regularly updated, and easily accessible across various platforms (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). In conclusion, the uses and gratifications theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and enhancing fan engagement with sports club social media. By addressing the key motivations of information seeking, personal identity, social interaction, and entertainment, sports clubs can create a dynamic and engaging online presence that resonates with their fan base and fosters a strong, loyal community. This theoretical approach not only aids in optimising current engagement strategies but also provides valuable insights for future developments in digital fan interaction.

Consumer engagement

Consumer engagement encompasses a dynamic and multifaceted relationship between customers and brands, extending beyond transactional interactions to include emotional connections, brand loyalty, and advocacy (Santos et al., 2022). At its core, consumer engagement involves ongoing and meaningful interactions across

various touchpoints and channels, where brands seek to connect with consumers, address their needs, and foster long-term relationships.

Central to consumer engagement is the establishment of a strong emotional connection between customers and the brand (Buzeta et al., 2024). This connection is often forged through positive experiences, shared values, and personalised interactions. Brands that successfully evoke positive emotions and resonate with consumers on a deeper level are more likely to cultivate loyalty and sustained engagement (Bailey et al., 2021).

Consumer engagement is closely intertwined with brand loyalty. Engaged consumers exhibit a higher propensity for repeat purchases, show a preference for the brand over competitors, and actively advocate for it within their social circles. Strategies such as loyalty programs, exclusive offers, and personalised rewards can serve to incentivise and reinforce this loyalty, further enhancing engagement (Vieira & Sousa, 2020). Engaged customers often transition into brand advocates, actively promoting the brand and sharing their positive experiences with others. Word-of-mouth recommendations and user-generated content generated by engaged customers significantly influence brand perceptions and attract new customers. Brands can nurture advocacy by fostering a sense of community among their consumers, encouraging interaction, and facilitating opportunities for them to share their experiences (William et al., 2020).

Consumer engagement and social media

Incorporating digital technologies into customer engagement strategies has increased brands' opportunities to engage with their audiences (Schwarz et al., 2022). Social media platforms, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and data analytics tools allow for highly personalised and timely interactions, enhancing the overall customer experience. These technologies enable brands to gather insights into customer preferences and behaviours, facilitating the development of targeted engagement strategies that resonate more deeply with individual customers.

Moreover, the shift towards a customer-centric approach in business practices underscores the importance of viewing engagement as a continuous process rather than a series of isolated events. This perspective encourages brands to adopt a holistic view of the customer journey, recognising the interconnectedness of various touchpoints and the cumulative impact they have on customer perceptions and loyalty. By maintaining consistent and meaningful engagement across all stages of the customer lifecycle, brands can build stronger, more resilient relationships with their customers (Bailey et al., 2021).

In conclusion, customer engagement is a critical driver of success in today's competitive marketplace, serving as a cornerstone for building enduring relationships with customers, driving business growth, and fostering brand advocacy. By understanding the underlying motivations and behaviours that drive engagement and by leveraging both academic insights and practical tools, brands can create more effective strategies that enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy. This, in turn, contributes to sustained competitive advantage and long-term business success.

Hypothesis development

By integrating motivation theory and uses and gratification theory, we can better understand the multifaceted nature of consumer engagement with sports club social media. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations drive fans' initial and sustained engagement, while social identity reinforces their connection to the club and other fans. The uses

and gratifications theory helps explain the specific needs and desires that social media fulfils for these consumers.

This comprehensive framework allows us to hypothesise that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations significantly influence consumer engagement with sports club social media. Specifically, it is expected that:

- o Intrinsic motivations (e.g., enjoyment, personal identity) will be strongly associated with higher levels of engagement, particularly in terms of active participation and content creation.
- o Extrinsic motivations (e.g., rewards, exclusive content) will also positively impact engagement, especially in terms of content consumption and sharing.

This theoretical framework provides the basis for an empirical investigation, as depicted in Figure 1, delving into the motivational factors influencing consumer engagement with sports club social media, leading to the following hypothesis:

- o H1. Intrinsic consumer motivation has a positive impact on consumer engagement on the social media of a sports club.
  - o H1a. Information as a motivation has a positive impact on consumer engagement on the social media of a sports club
  - o H1b. Fun as a motivation has a positive impact on consumer engagement on the social media of a sports club
  - o H1c. Personal identity as a motivation has a positive impact on consumer engagement on the social media of a sports club
  - o H1d. Love for the brand as a motivation has a positive impact on consumer engagement on the social media of a sports club
- o H2. Extrinsic consumer motivation has a positive impact on consumer engagement on the social media of a sports club.
  - o H2a. Reward as a motivation has a positive impact on consumer engagement on the social media of a sports club
  - o H2b. Empowerment as a motivation has a positive impact on consumer engagement on the social media of a sports club
  - o H2c. Integration and social interaction as a motivation have a positive impact on consumer engagement on the social media of a sports club

Figure 1
Research model
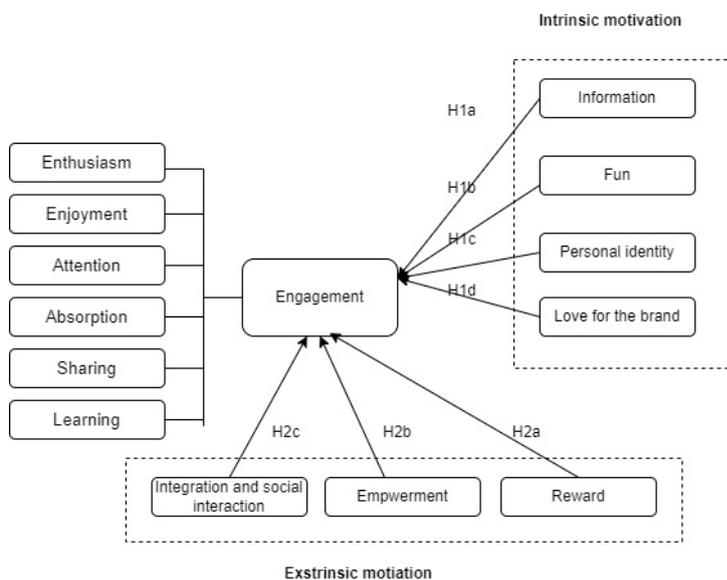
Source: Authors' work

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

Data for this study were collected from a sample of sports club social media users. Participants were asked to complete a survey that measured their motivations for engaging with sports club social media and their levels of engagement. The research sample includes 322 respondents (research participants) who follow sports clubs in the fields of basketball, football, and handball on social networks. Considering the gender of the respondents, the research sample included 52% of male respondents and 48% of female respondents. The largest share of respondents, 67% of them, resides in the City of Zagreb.

Measurement

A motive scale consisting of 15 items to examine intrinsic motivation and 12 items to investigate extrinsic motivation was tested according to the model by Vale and Fernandes (2018) adapted for this research (Table 1). Intrinsic motivation integrates four dimensions: information, entertainment, personal identity, and brand love. Extrinsic motivation contains three dimensions: reward, empowerment, integration, and social interaction (Table 2). Finally, Table 3 presents the engagement motivation research instrument, which was developed based on Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas (2016). A Likert scale with seven levels (determined by a scale from "1 - strongly disagree" to "7 - strongly agree") was used for measurement.

Table 1
Research instrument for intrinsic motivation

Variable	Code	Research items
Information	INF1	I follow a sports club on social media because I want to know what others think about the sports club.
	INF2	On the sports club's social networks, they can get information about the club's success.
	INF3	They can get information about player profiles on the sports club's social networks.
	INF4	On the sports club's social networks, they can get information about the schedule of the next matches.
	INF5	The information posted on the sports club's social networks helped me form my opinion about the sports club.
Fun	FUN1	I follow the sports club on social networks for fun.
	FUN2	The social network of the sports club is a place to escape from everyday life.
	FUN3	The social network of the sports club arouses my emotions and feelings.
	FUN4	The social network of the sports club relaxes me.
Personal identity	PER1	I follow the sports club's social networks because I want to express my personality.
	PER2	I follow the sports club's social networks because they give me confidence.
	PER3	I follow the sports club's social networks because I want to impress others with my knowledge of the sports club.
Love for the brand	LOV1	I follow the sports club's social networks because I am delighted with the sports club.
	LOV2	I associate the sports club with some important events in my life.
	LOV3	I participate in the sports club's social networks because I care about the sports club.
	LOV4	I identify with the sports club.

Source: Vale and Fernandes (2018)

Table 2
Research instrument for extrinsic motivation

Variable	Code	Research items
Reward	REV1	When I want to buy a ticket for a match, I use the club community on social networks to find a cheaper price and a discount.
	REV2	I am motivated to participate in social sports networks because that way, I can get discounts and prizes.
	REV3	I follow the sports club's social networks because I can get the information I want instantly.
	REV4	I follow the social networks of the sports club because I want to get better service from the club.
Empowerment	EMP1	I follow the sports club's social networks because I want to influence its activities and work.
	EMP2	I follow the sports club's social networks because I want to influence other people.
	EMP3	I feel good when other members of the sports club's social networks share my comments and ideas.
	EMP4	When the members of the sports club's social network comment positively on my post, I am happy to participate in the social network's activities.
Integration and soc. Inter.	INT1	I look forward to discussing and sharing information with other sports club followers on social networks.
	INT2	I follow the sports club's social networks because they make me more connected to the sports club.
	INT3	I follow the sports club's social media because I feel less alone.
	INT4	I follow the sports club's social networks because that is how I feel connected to the sports club.

Source: Vale and Fernandes (2018)

Table 3
Research instrument for engagement

Variable	Code	Research items
Enthusiasm	ENT1	I am delighted with the sports club I follow on social networks.
	ENT2	I am interested in everything related to the sports clubs I follow on social networks.
	ENT3	The sports club I follow on social media is interesting.
Enjoyment	ENJ1	Socialising and interacting with the sports club on social media makes me happy.
	ENJ2	I feel energetic in contact with the sports clubs I follow on social networks.
	ENJ3	Interaction with a sports club on social networks is like a reward for me.
Attention	ATT1	I spend a lot of time thinking about the sports clubs I follow on social media.
	ATT2	I always find time to think about the sports club.
Absorption	ABS1	I forget about everything around me when I interact with a sports club on social media.
	ABS2	Time flies when I interact with a sports club on social media.
	ABS3	I get carried away when I interact with a sports club on social media.
	ABS4	I am reluctant to stop interacting with the sports club on social networks.
Sharing	SHA1	I share my ideas on the sports club's social networks.
	SHA2	I share interesting things on the sports club's social networks.
	SHA3	I help a sports club on social media.

Learning	LEARN1	I ask questions on the sports club's social networks.
	LEARN2	I am looking for ideas or information on the social network of the sports club.
	LEARN3	I am looking for help on the social network of the sports club.
Approval	APP1	I actively support the sports club on the social network.
	APP2	I try to get other people interested in the sports club I support.
	APP3	I actively defend the sports club on the social network against its critics.
	APP4	I say positive things about the sports club to other people.

Source: Dessart, Veloutsou & Morgan-Thomas (2016)

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis in this paper focused on understanding the relationship between consumer motivations and engagement with sports clubs' social media platforms. A key component of the analysis was the use of network analysis, which provided a visual and quantitative assessment of the structure and density of the relationships among the engagement and motivation variables. This analysis helped identify the most influential factors within the network, revealing that variables like enjoyment and empowerment played central roles in driving engagement, while others like information seeking and rewards were less central.

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to explore these relationships further. Engagement was conceptualised as a second-order latent variable composed of multiple first-order factors such as enthusiasm, enjoyment, attention, absorption, sharing, learning, and active participation. The SEM analysis involved estimating factor loadings to determine how each of these first-order factors contributed to the overall engagement construct. The model's fit was evaluated using several fit indices, including CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR, all of which indicated an excellent fit to the data. Statistical analysis has been conducted using JASP ver 19.01, deploying lavaan R module for structural equation modelling (Rosseel, 2012).

Results

Descriptive analysis

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the average values of the research items. The descriptive statistics reveal important insights into consumer engagement and motivation on sports club social media. Among the engagement variables, enthusiasm (ENT) and enjoyment (ENJ) stand out with higher mean scores of 4.541 and 4.526, respectively. This indicates that users generally feel a moderate to high level of enthusiasm and enjoyment in their interactions with the sports club's social media. On the other hand, variables such as attention (ATT), absorption (ABS), and sharing (SHA) have lower mean scores of 2.974, 2.840, and 2.794, respectively, suggesting these aspects of engagement are less pronounced among users.

Regarding intrinsic motivation, information seeking (INF) has the highest mean score of 5.429, indicating that users predominantly engage with sports club social media to obtain information. Brand love (LOV) also has a relatively high mean of 4.609, reflecting a strong emotional connection with the sports club. However, personal identity (PER), with a mean of 3.243, suggests that fewer users engage with the intent of expressing their identity.

Extrinsic motivation's mean scores are generally lower than those of intrinsic motivation. Rewards (REV) have a mean of 4.013, indicating that while external incentives like discounts and prizes are motivating, they are less impactful than intrinsic

factors. Empowerment (EMP) and integration and social interaction (INT) have lower mean scores of 3.491 and 3.430, respectively, suggesting these extrinsic motivations play a smaller role in driving user engagement.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics	Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation
Engagement			
ENT	322	4.541	1.472
ENJ	322	4.526	1.522
ATT	322	2.974	1.779
ABS	322	2.840	1.722
SHA	322	2.794	1.645
LEARN	322	3.278	1.631
APP	322	3.584	1.677
Intrinsic motivation			
INF	322	5.429	0.967
FUN	322	4.333	1.297
PER	322	3.243	1.562
LOV	322	4.609	1.369
Extrinsic motivation			
REV	322	4.013	1.465
EMP	322	3.491	1.523
INT	322	3.430	1.288

Source: Authors' work

Table 5 presents the correlation analysis of the average variables of engagement and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The overall correlation analysis demonstrates a high level of interconnectedness among the various motivational and engagement variables, with most relationships showing statistically significant correlations. This indicates that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are closely tied to different aspects of engagement on sports club social media. Correlations are also presented in the heatmap depicted in Figure 1.

Table 5
Correlation analysis

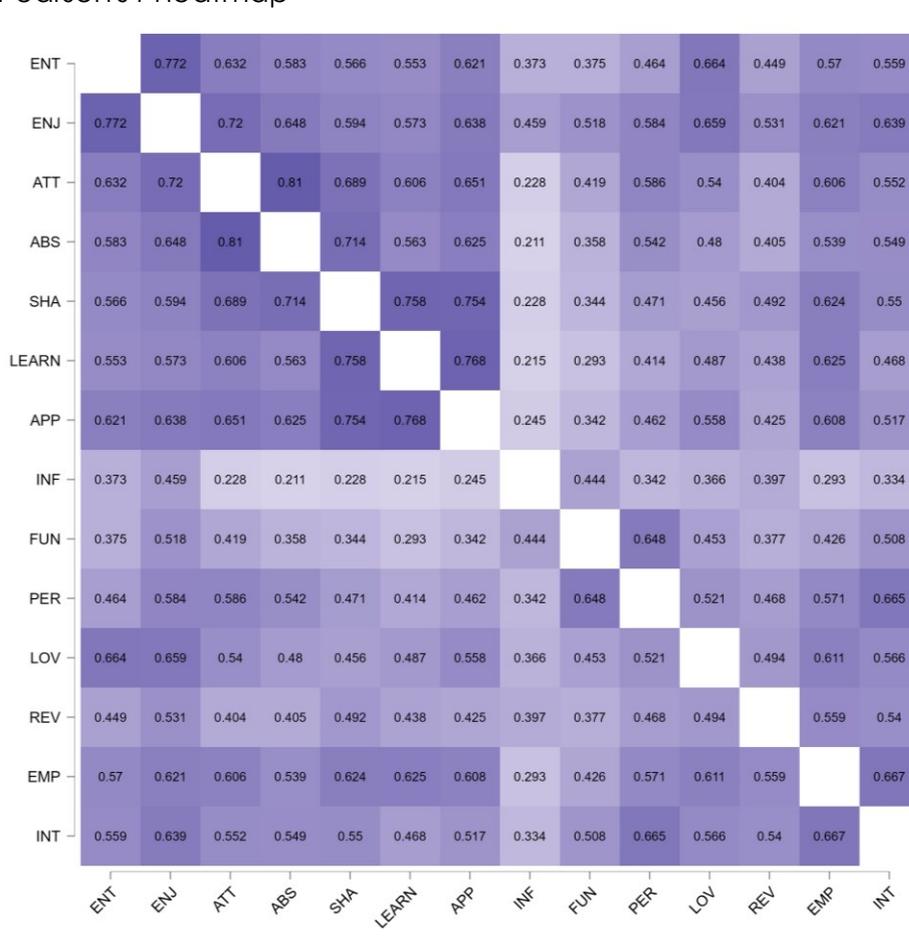| Variable	ENT	ENJ	ATT	ABS	SHA	LEARN	APP	INF	FUN	PER	LOV	REV	EMP	INT
ENT	1.00													
ENJ	0.77	1.00												
ATT	0.63	0.72	1.00											
ABS	0.58	0.65	0.81	1.00										
SHA	0.57	0.59	0.69	0.71	1.00									
LEARN	0.55	0.57	0.61	0.56	0.76	1.00								
APP	0.62	0.64	0.65	0.63	0.76	0.77	1.00							
INF	0.37	0.46	0.23	0.21	0.23	0.21	0.25	1.00						
FUN	0.37	0.52	0.42	0.36	0.34	0.29	0.34	0.44	1.00					
PER	0.46	0.58	0.59	0.54	0.47	0.41	0.46	0.34	0.65	1.00				
LOV	0.66	0.66	0.54	0.48	0.46	0.49	0.56	0.37	0.45	0.52	1.00			
REV	0.44	0.53	0.40	0.41	0.49	0.44	0.42	0.40	0.38	0.47	0.49	1.00		
EMP	0.57	0.62	0.61	0.54	0.63	0.63	0.61	0.29	0.43	0.57	0.61	0.56	1.00	
INT	0.56	0.64	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.47	0.52	0.33	0.51	0.67	0.57	0.54	0.67	1.00

Source: Authors' work

When examining the correlations between the engagement variables from Table 3 and the intrinsic motivation variables from Table 1, several strong relationships emerge. For instance, enthusiasm (ENT) and brand love (LOV) show a strong correlation (r = 0.664, p < .001), suggesting that intrinsic factors like a deep emotional connection with

the brand significantly enhance engagement behaviours such as enthusiasm. Similarly, enjoyment (ENJ) correlates highly with personal identity (PER) (r = 0.584, p < .001), indicating that individuals who express their identity through sports clubs tend to enjoy their social media interactions more.

The correlations between the engagement variables from Table 3 and the extrinsic motivation variables from Table 2 reveal moderate to strong relationships. However, they tend to be slightly lower than those with intrinsic motivations. For example, sharing (SHA) correlates with rewards (REV) at r = 0.492 (p < .001), indicating that external incentives encourage users to share content, though not as strongly as intrinsic motivations. Additionally, absorption (ABS) shows a moderate correlation with empowerment (EMP) (r = 0.539, p < .001), suggesting that feeling empowered can significantly contribute to deeper engagement, such as getting absorbed in the content.

Figure 1
Pearson's r heatmap

	ENT	ENJ	ATT	ABS	SHA	LEARN	APP	INF	FUN	PER	LOV	REV	EMP	INT
ENT		0.772	0.632	0.583	0.566	0.553	0.621	0.373	0.375	0.464	0.664	0.449	0.57	0.559
ENJ	0.772		0.72	0.648	0.594	0.573	0.638	0.459	0.518	0.584	0.659	0.531	0.621	0.639
ATT	0.632	0.72		0.81	0.689	0.606	0.651	0.228	0.419	0.586	0.54	0.404	0.606	0.552
ABS	0.583	0.648	0.81		0.714	0.563	0.625	0.211	0.358	0.542	0.48	0.405	0.539	0.549
SHA	0.566	0.594	0.689	0.714		0.758	0.754	0.228	0.344	0.471	0.456	0.492	0.624	0.55
LEARN	0.553	0.573	0.606	0.563	0.758		0.768	0.215	0.293	0.414	0.487	0.438	0.625	0.468
APP	0.621	0.638	0.651	0.625	0.754	0.768		0.245	0.342	0.462	0.558	0.425	0.608	0.517
INF	0.373	0.459	0.228	0.211	0.228	0.215	0.245		0.444	0.342	0.366	0.397	0.293	0.334
FUN	0.375	0.518	0.419	0.358	0.344	0.293	0.342	0.444		0.648	0.453	0.377	0.426	0.508
PER	0.464	0.584	0.586	0.542	0.471	0.414	0.462	0.342	0.648		0.521	0.468	0.571	0.665
LOV	0.664	0.659	0.54	0.48	0.456	0.487	0.558	0.366	0.453	0.521		0.494	0.611	0.566
REV	0.449	0.531	0.404	0.405	0.492	0.438	0.425	0.397	0.377	0.468	0.494		0.559	0.54
EMP	0.57	0.621	0.606	0.539	0.624	0.625	0.608	0.293	0.426	0.571	0.611	0.559		0.667
INT	0.559	0.639	0.552	0.549	0.55	0.468	0.517	0.334	0.508	0.665	0.566	0.54	0.667	

Source: Authors' work

Network analysis

The network analysis summarised in Table 6 provides an overview of the structure and density of the connections among the variables under study. With 14 nodes and 56 non-zero edges out of a possible 91, the network has a sparsity of 0.385. This indicates that while there is a moderate level of connectivity among the variables, a significant portion of potential connections remains unobserved, suggesting that only certain relationships are strongly represented in the data.

Table 6
Summary of network analysis

Number of nodes	Number of non-zero edges	Sparsity
14	56 / 91	0.385

Source: Authors' work

Table 7 presents the centrality measures for each variable, offering insights into their roles within the network. Enjoyment (ENJ) emerges as the most central variable, with the highest closeness (1.758) and strength (2.119) measures, indicating its pivotal role in connecting other variables and exerting a strong influence within the network. Empowerment (EMP) also shows high centrality, particularly in-betweenness (1.596), suggesting it acts as a key bridge between other variables.

Conversely, variables like Information Seeking (INF) and Rewards (REV) exhibit low centrality across multiple measures, including negative strength and expected influence, indicating their relatively peripheral roles in the network. These variables are less connected and exert less influence on other variables. Similarly, Fun (FUN) and Brand Love (LOV) show low centrality, suggesting these motivations, while important, are less integral to the overall structure of engagement in this context.

Overall, the centrality measures suggest that Enjoyment (ENJ) and Empowerment (EMP) are critical drivers within the network, acting as key influencers of engagement. In contrast, extrinsic motivators such as Rewards (REV) and Information Seeking (INF), despite their importance, appear to play more peripheral roles. These insights can guide the focus of engagement strategies, emphasising the importance of enhancing enjoyment and empowerment to foster deeper and more meaningful user engagement.

Table 7
Centrality measures per variable

| Variable	Betweenness	Closeness	Strength	Expected influence
ENT	-0.216	0.703	-0.249	-0.126
ENJ	1.394	1.758	2.119	2.072
ATT	0.791	0.827	1.205	0.627
ABS	0.187	0.319	-0.086	-0.113
SHA	-0.014	-0.347	0.773	0.822
LEARN	0.388	-0.137	-0.250	-0.127
APP	-1.222	-0.867	0.269	0.355
INF	-0.417	-0.776	-1.729	-2.234
FUN	-1.222	-1.282	-0.966	-0.791
PER	0.589	-0.099	0.300	0.383
LOV	-1.423	-0.800	-0.498	-0.358
REV	-1.222	-1.526	-1.361	-1.158
EMP	1.596	1.239	0.363	0.442
INT	0.791	0.989	0.109	0.206

Source: Authors' work

Figure 2 presents the network graph, which illustrates the relationships among engagement (ENG), intrinsic motivation (IM), and extrinsic motivation (EM) variables in the context of sports club social media interactions. The nodes are color-coded: orange for engagement, blue for intrinsic motivation, and green for extrinsic motivation. The thickness of the connecting lines indicates the strength of the correlations.

The graph reveals that engagement variables, particularly active participation (APP), sharing (SHA), and learning (LEARN), are closely interlinked. This suggests that users who actively participate and share content are also likely to engage in learning behaviours on the platform. Similarly, enthusiasm (ENT), enjoyment (ENJ), and absorption (ABS) are strongly connected, indicating that users who are enthusiastic and enjoy the content are also more likely to become absorbed in their social media interactions.

Within the intrinsic motivation group, brand love (LOV) occupies a central position, demonstrating strong connections with both engagement behaviours and other intrinsic motivations, such as personal identity (PER) and fun (FUN). This centrality underscores the pivotal role that emotional attachment and identity-related motivations play in driving user engagement on social media. Extrinsic motivation variables, including rewards (REV), empowerment (EMP), and integration and social interaction (INT), are also connected to both engagement and intrinsic motivation factors. However, these connections are generally weaker, as indicated by the thinner lines, suggesting that while extrinsic motivators are relevant, they exert a less significant influence on engagement compared to intrinsic factors.

Information seeking (INF), a key intrinsic motivation, shows substantial connectivity across the network, linking to both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. This highlights its critical role in driving user engagement, suggesting that the provision of timely and relevant information is a primary motivator for users.

Figure 2
Network analysis
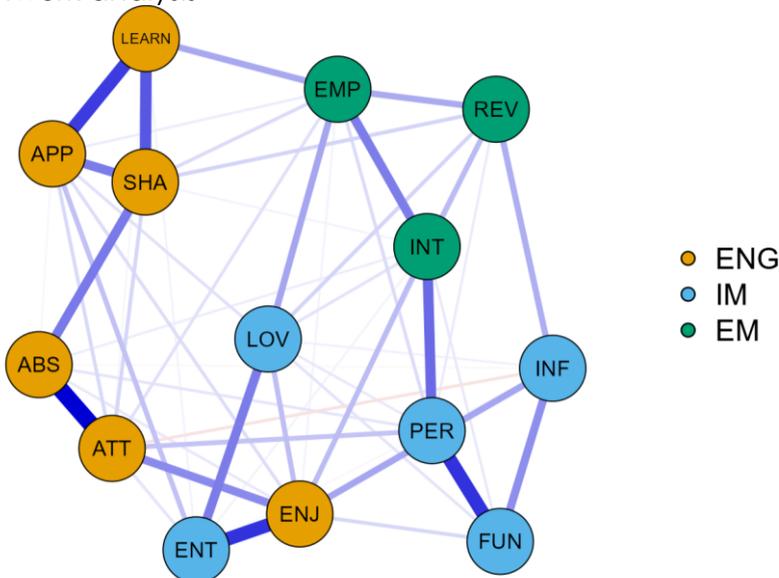
Note: ENG – Engagement; IM- intrinsic motivation; EM - extrinsic motivation
Source: Authors' work

Structural equation analysis

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test the hypotheses of the research. In this analysis, Engagement was conceptualised as a second-order latent variable, which is constructed based on the average scores of several first-order constructs. These constructs include Enthusiasm (ENT), Enjoyment (ENJ), Attention (ATT), Absorption (ABS), Sharing (SHA), Learning (LEARN), and Active Participation (APP). Each of these constructs represents a different facet of user engagement with

sports club social media, collectively contributing to the overall measurement of engagement within the SEM framework. The regression equation for testing the hypothesis was formed with the second-order variable ENG, while the independent variables are average scores of variables Information Seeking (INF), Fun (FUN), Personal Identity (PER), Brand Love (LOV), Rewards (REV), Empowerment (EMP), and Integration and Social Interaction (INT). Analysis was conducted using JASP v.19.0.1., and lavaan syntax is presented in Figure 3, while the structure of the models is depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 3
Lavaan syntax

```
#Second-order factor ENG
ENG =~ ENT + ENJ + ATT + ABS + SHA + LEARN + APP
# Regression equation for testing hypothesis
ENG ~ INF + FUN + PER + LOV + REV + EMP + INT
```

Source: Authors' work

Figure 4
Path diagram
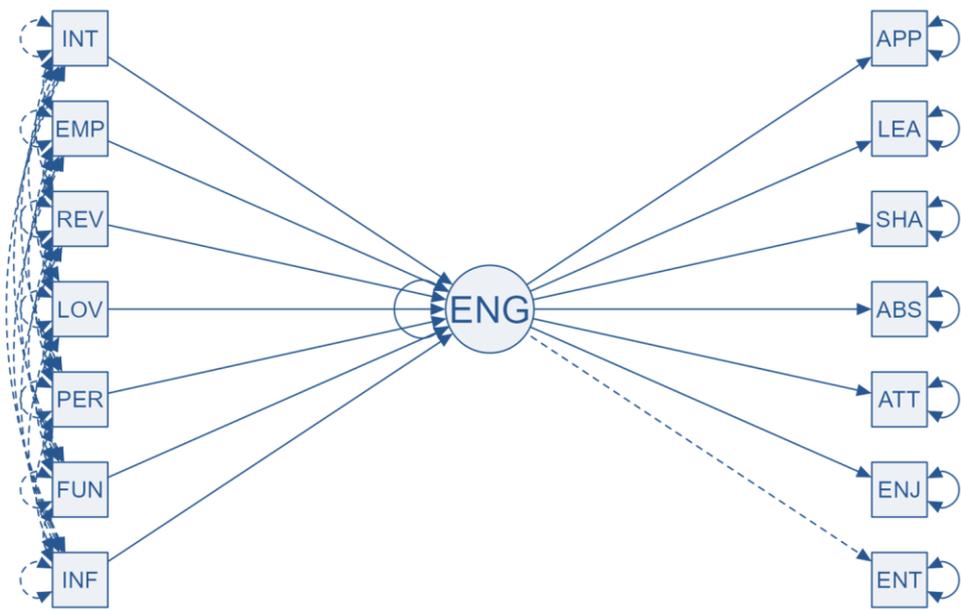
Source: Authors' work

The fit indices presented in Table 8 indicate that the structural equation model used in this study exhibits an excellent fit to the data. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is reported at 0.995, and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is at 0.994, both of which are well above the conventional threshold of 0.95, indicating a close fit to the model. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.057, which is below the recommended cut-off of 0.06, suggesting that the model has a good approximation of the population covariance matrix. Similarly, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.051, which is also within the acceptable range, indicating that the residuals are minimal. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) is extremely high at 0.996, further confirming the model's strong fit to the data.

Table 8
Fit indices

Index	Value
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.995
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.994
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.057
Standardised root mean square residual (SRMR)	0.051
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.996

Note. T-size CFI is computed for a = 0.05. The T-size equivalents of the conventional CFI cut-off values (poor < 0.90 < fair < 0.95 < close) are poor < 0.853 < fair < 0.916 < close for model
Source: Authors' work

Table 9 presents the factor loadings for the second-order latent variable Engagement (ENG), indicating how strongly each of the first-order constructs—Enthusiasm (ENT), Enjoyment (ENJ), Attention (ATT), Absorption (ABS), Sharing (SHA), Learning (LEARN), and Active Participation (APP)—contributes to the overall engagement construct. All the standardised factor loadings are higher than 0.5, indicating a good fit for the second-order latent variable.

Table 9
Factor loadings for the second-order variable engagement (ENG)

Latent	Indicator	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	Standardised
ENG	**ENT**	1.000	0.000			0.799
	ENJ	1.116	0.037	30.481	< .001	0.893
	ATT	1.047	0.035	29.746	< .001	0.837
	ABS	0.980	0.034	28.938	< .001	0.784
	SHA	1.009	0.034	29.296	< .001	0.806
	LEARN	0.943	0.033	28.444	< .001	0.754
	APP	1.004	0.034	29.234	< .001	0.802

Source: Authors' work

The regression analysis in Table 10 examines the correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motives and engagement (ENG) with the social media platforms of sports clubs.

Table 10
Regression analysis

Outcome	R-squared	Predictor	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	Stand. Load.	Hypothesis
			Intrinsic motivation					
ENG	0.674	INF	0.020	0.032	0.615	0.539	0.024	H1a
		FUN	-0.006	0.027	-0.220	0.826	-0.010	H1b
		PER	0.076	0.025	3.072	0.002**	0.149	H1c ✓ (1%)
		LOV	0.152	0.023	6.736	< .001**	0.261	H1d ✓ (1%)
			Extrinsic motivation					
		REV	0.039	0.018	2.144	0.032***	0.072	H2a ✓ (5%)
		EMP	0.181	0.024	7.590	< .001**	0.344	H2b ✓ (1%)
		INT	0.098	0.033	2.955	0.003**	0.158	H2c ✓ (1%)

Note: ** statistically significant at 1%; * 5%
Source: Authors' work

The model accounts for a significant proportion of the variation in involvement, with around 67.4% of the variance attributed to these motives. Information Seeking (INF) is

not a major intrinsic motive among the factors influencing engagement, and Fun (FUN) does not show significant predictive power. Personal Identity (PER) has a strong and statistically significant impact on engagement, suggesting that individuals who manifest their identities through social media engagements are more inclined to display higher levels of involvement. Brand Love (LOV) is a reliable predictor, highlighting the significance of emotional connection to the sports club in promoting active participation.

Extrinsic motives study shows that Rewards (REV) have a small but significant effect on engagement, supporting hypothesis H2a at a significance level of 5%. Empowerment (EMP) has a robust and statistically significant impact on engagement, supporting hypothesis H2b at a significance level of 1%. Integration and Social Interaction (INT) strongly predict engagement, with a precise estimate of 0.098 and a statistically significant p-value of 0.003, supporting hypothesis H2c at a significance level of 1%. These findings underscore the significance of social connection and interaction in stimulating user engagement with sports club social media platforms.

Conclusion

This study explored the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations on consumer engagement with sports club social media, leveraging the theoretical framework of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The findings revealed that both intrinsic motivations, such as personal identity, entertainment, and brand love, and extrinsic motivations, including rewards, empowerment, and social interaction, significantly impact consumer engagement. Intrinsic motivations, such as meaningful commenting and active participation, were shown to be particularly strong predictors of high-quality engagement behaviours. In contrast, extrinsic motivations were more closely associated with content consumption and sharing behaviours.

This research contributes to the understanding of consumer engagement on social media by integrating motivation theory with uses and gratifications theory. It highlights the essential role of intrinsic motivations, particularly emotional attachment, and identity expression, in fostering sustained and meaningful engagement. The findings support the notion that while extrinsic rewards can drive initial interactions, they are less effective in promoting deeper, long-term engagement unless they resonate with users' intrinsic motivations.

The results suggest the importance of creating social media strategies that address both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for sports clubs and marketers. Emphasising content that builds emotional connections aligns with fans' identities and provides entertainment can enhance engagement. Moreover, integrating extrinsic motivators such as rewards and social interaction opportunities can complement these efforts, particularly in encouraging sharing and participation.

The study's limitations include its reliance on a specific geographic sample and self-reported data, which may introduce bias and limit generalizability. Future research could explore these relationships in different cultural contexts or across various sports to validate and extend the findings. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into how motivations and engagement evolve and how emerging social media platforms influence these dynamics. Further research could also examine the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in driving brand loyalty and advocacy in the digital age.

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