

Social Media Management Strategy in Increasing Fan Engagement of Sports Gaming Clubs in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the impact of Social Media Management Strategy (SMMS) on fan engagement among sports gaming clubs in Indonesia. A quantitative methodology was employed to gather data from a survey of 300 participants, which was subsequently analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM/PLS). This research collects 300 samples from Indonesia using an online survey. The findings demonstrate a robust and statistically significant positive correlation between SMMS and fan engagement ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that successful social media strategies enhance fan involvement and loyalty. The findings underscore the significance of continuous, interactive, and emotionally resonant material on social media platforms in cultivating better connections between fans and sports gaming clubs. Social Media Management Strategies substantially enhance fan participation and engagement, including material frequency, responsiveness to fan feedback, and interactive elements such as live streaming and polls. This study contributes to the expanding literature on digital fan involvement, specifically in esports within emerging markets such as Indonesia. It underscores the pivotal function of social media management in cultivating enduring fan loyalty and provides pragmatic ideas for sports gaming clubs to improve their social media strategy.

KEYWORDS: Fan Engagement, Social Media Management Strategy, Sport Gaming Club

I. INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of the sports sector has significantly changed the interactions between fans and sports organizations, athletes, and clubs. Previously auxiliary tools, social media platforms have evolved into indispensable communication, marketing, and fan interaction instruments. The swift expansion of esports, especially in digital environments characterized by predominantly online interactions, has highlighted the significance of proactive social media management. In this setting, social media has transformed from a medium for disseminating content to a platform for fostering dynamic, emotionally impactful interactions between fans and clubs. These advancements are particularly obvious in Indonesia, where the esports sector has experienced remarkable expansion in recent years. Despite the extensive examination of the digital revolution in sports, there is a paucity of studies regarding the specific impact of strategic social media management on fan involvement, especially in emerging markets such as Indonesia. This study examines the influence of social media management methods (SMMS) on fan engagement in Indonesian sports gaming clubs. The study will investigate how these clubs employ diverse social media platforms—Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter—to improve fan engagement, cultivate loyalty, and establish enduring relationships with their audiences. This study aims to empirically investigate the correlation between SMMS and fan engagement, elucidating the tactics that enhance fan participation and fortify the connection between clubs and their supporters within the dynamic e-sports environment.

Over the last ten years, the sports business has seen a digital transformation that has profoundly changed fan engagement dynamics. Social media platforms have become essential in sports marketing as the primary conduits for contact and engagement between fans and sports organizations. These platforms facilitate direct communication between clubs and their audience, providing a bidirectional conduit that promotes active engagement. By strategically utilizing social media, clubs may enhance emotional connections, reinforce their brand identities, and develop an engaging fan culture that transcends conventional spectator roles. Fans have transitioned from passive content recipients to active players in creating, distributing, and consuming digital content, profoundly influencing their relationship with sports clubs (Abeza et al., 2015; Pegoraro, 2010).

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The transition to virtual interactions in esports has been notably significant in contrast to conventional sports, which typically focus on physical venues such as stadiums and arenas, and esports clubs mainly function within digital environments. These clubs are established around gaming communities that predominantly operate online, primarily utilizing social media to distribute material, engage followers, and foster communities (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). In Indonesia, the burgeoning esports business has significantly amplified the influence of social media. Professional esports organizations progressively allocate resources to social media tactics to broaden their fanbases, improve fan engagement, and boost commercial success (Lim & Lee, 2020). Social media has become a crucial element in the success of esports clubs, as it allows them to reach a broader audience, cultivate stronger connections with supporters, and improve their commercial viability.

Although the esports business increasingly depends on social media, there is a paucity of research investigating the impact of strategic social media management on fan engagement in emerging markets like Indonesia. The majority of current literature regarding social media and sports engagement has concentrated on Western professional sports leagues or international esports organizations, where the dynamics of social media management may vary considerably due to cultural, technological, and institutional influences (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011; Kim, Kim, & Heo, 2022). Consequently, the study must investigate the specific obstacles and opportunities encountered by sports gaming clubs in Indonesia, a nation characterized by a distinctive socio-cultural and technological environment.

This study investigates the influence of social media management tactics on fan engagement in Indonesian esports gaming clubs. The study seeks to accomplish three primary objectives: first, to identify the social media management strategies utilized by Indonesian esports clubs; second, to assess the impact of these strategies on fan engagement; and third, to ascertain the components of social media strategy that most effectively cultivate positive fan–organization relationships. This study will elucidate the significance of social media management in fostering fan loyalty, encouraging interactive fan engagement, and boosting the overall success of esports clubs in Indonesia.

This research is significant for its contribution to understanding digital fan engagement in emerging economies and its practical implications for sports gaming clubs aiming to enhance their social media strategy. The results will provide actionable insights into the specific tactics that esports clubs can use to strengthen their connection with fans, improve their social media content, and enhance fan participation in both online and offline activities. In particular, the research will explore the role of emotional engagement, interactivity, and responsiveness in driving fan loyalty and will provide recommendations for clubs looking to improve their engagement strategies.

As social media continues to evolve, it is increasingly evident that clubs must be agile in adapting their strategies to meet the changing demands of their audiences. This study will explore the dynamic relationship between clubs and fans, examining how the interplay between content creation, communication, and fan interaction shapes the fan experience. By providing empirical evidence of how social media management influences fan behavior, the study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that drive engagement in the esports industry.

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study will provide practical recommendations for sports gaming clubs in Indonesia and beyond. Esports clubs that understand the impact of strategic social media management on fan engagement will be better equipped to build lasting relationships with their fans, increase loyalty, and enhance their overall brand value. As the esports industry continues to grow and evolve, clubs that prioritize fan engagement through effective social media strategies will be well-positioned to succeed in a highly competitive and rapidly changing digital environment.

The digital transformation of the sports industry has significantly impacted how fans interact with sports organizations, with social media playing a crucial role in shaping these interactions. This study investigates how Indonesian sports gaming clubs utilize social media management strategies to enhance fan engagement, focusing on the esports sector as a key growth area. By exploring the relationship between SMMS and fan engagement, the research will provide valuable insights into the strategies that drive fan loyalty and participation, contributing to the broader understanding of digital fan engagement in emerging markets. Through its findings, the study will offer practical recommendations for sports gaming clubs seeking to optimize their social media strategies and improve fan relationships, ultimately contributing to the success and sustainability of the esports industry in Indonesia.

This study is grounded in relationship Marketing Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), which emphasizes trust and commitment in long-term fan–club relationships. Previous research has highlighted the importance of social media in sports marketing (Abeza et al., 2015), fan identity (Phua et al., 2020), and content strategy in esports (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). However, most studies focus on Western contexts. In contrast, this study examines fan behavior in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, where cultural and technological dynamics differ significantly. While scholarly attention to digital transformation and social media strategies in sports has grown substantially, the majority of studies have concentrated on Western professional leagues, such as the NBA, Premier League, and global esports franchises (Abeza et al., 2015; Pegoraro, 2010; Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). In contrast, research examining how sports organizations in developing countries, particularly Indonesia, strategically manage social media to build fan

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engagement remains limited and under-theorized. Indonesia represents one of Southeast Asia's most dynamic digital markets, with a youth-dominated population, high smartphone penetration, and strong online engagement (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2023). Despite these conditions, many local sports clubs, including traditional federations and esports teams, lack structured digital strategies (Sudibyo & Nugroho, 2021). Moreover, few empirical studies have explored how fan engagement is shaped by social media management within the Indonesian context, where socio-cultural, technological, and institutional dynamics differ markedly from Western counterparts. Research is also scarce regarding Indonesian clubs' operational and strategic capabilities in utilizing media platforms for branding, fan loyalty, and monetization (Rakhmani, 2020). This gap is particularly relevant given the rapid growth of Indonesia's esports ecosystem and youth sports fandom, which calls for a localized understanding of digital fan behavior, management practices, and platform-specific strategies.

Social Media Management Strategy (SMMS) is an organization's structured framework to manage its online presence, content, communication, and interactions across social media platforms to achieve specific strategic objectives. These objectives may include building a brand, increasing user engagement, or cultivating consumer loyalty. SMMS is crucial for establishing long-term relationships with fans in sports, primarily through digital channels. This not only enhances fan engagement but also influences commercial aspects and the reputation of the clubs involved. By maintaining an active and consistent social media presence, sports organizations can foster a loyal fan base, increase merchandise sales, attract sponsors, and improve marketability.

SMMS plays an integral role in modern sports clubs, helping to build club brand equity, enhance fan engagement, strengthen fan communities, and encourage digital monetization. First, it plays a key role in building club brand equity by leveraging visual narratives, storytelling content, and consistently delivering club values. Well-crafted, engaging content helps establish a solid and recognizable brand identity for the club, which resonates with fans on a deeper, emotional level (Abeza et al., 2015). By consistently portraying the club's ethos and values, social media helps shape the public perception of the club and ensures that fans connect emotionally with the brand.

Second, SMMS enhances fan engagement through interactive content such as polls, question-and-answer sessions with players, and live match coverage. These interactive elements encourage fans to actively participate in content creation, which builds a stronger emotional attachment to the club (Meng et al., 2015). By offering fans opportunities to interact with the club and its athletes, SMMS creates a more personalized and engaging fan experience, leading to a more loyal and committed fan base. This interactivity is crucial in the digital age, where fans expect immediate, two-way communication with the clubs they support.

Moreover, SMMS is critical in strengthening fan communities by utilizing various community features such as groups, comments, and hashtags. These features help foster a sense of collective identity among fans, who feel connected to the club through shared experiences (Yoshida et al., 2014). This communal aspect of social media engagement helps deepen the bond between fans and the club, creating a supportive and interactive fan base more likely to advocate for the club online and offline.

SMMS contributes to digital monetization through increased merchandise sales, virtual presence, and interactions that attract sponsors. The digital channels used in SMMS allow clubs to promote merchandise and engage fans in online sales campaigns. Furthermore, by cultivating a highly engaged fan base, clubs become more attractive to sponsors, who see the value in partnering with clubs with an active and loyal following (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). In this way, SMMS improves fan engagement and generates revenue streams for the club, making it a vital component of modern sports management.

Fan engagement refers to a fan's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement with a sports entity such as a club, athlete, or league. In the modern digital context, fan engagement extends beyond physical presence at the stadium or arena. It encompasses active participation through social media, content consumption, and the formation of online communities. As Yoshida et al. (2014) and Williams & Chinn (2010) note, social media provides fans a platform to interact with their favorite clubs, comment on content, share posts, and participate in discussions, thus enhancing their overall engagement.

Fan engagement is also a multidimensional psychological response, as Brodie et al. (2011) explained. According to their model, engagement manifests itself in various forms, including loyalty, advocacy, and active involvement in communication channels. Fan engagement is crucial in sports because it drives long-term emotional bonds, enhancing fan loyalty and retention. Clubs with a highly engaged fan base are more likely to experience long-term success as fans remain committed to financially and emotionally supporting the club over time. This increased loyalty has increased the lifetime value per fan, leading to greater revenue generation (Yoshida et al., 2014).

In addition to fostering fan loyalty, fan engagement drives revenue and sponsorship opportunities. As Filo et al. (2015) explain, clubs with a high level of engagement are more attractive to sponsors because they can offer access to a highly interactive and responsive audience. This can lead to increased sponsorship deals as brands seek to partner with clubs with a strong and engaged following. Furthermore, fan engagement helps strengthen the club's identity and culture by creating a sense of belonging and social identity among fans locally and globally (Lock & Heere, 2017). Fans who feel connected to the club are more likely to engage with it in meaningful ways, both online and offline, contributing to its overall success.

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Two-way relationships with fans on social media allow clubs to manage public perception and build a collective narrative. As Abeza et al. (2015) note, these relationships enable clubs to respond to fan feedback, address concerns, and create content that resonates with fans. By engaging in meaningful conversations with fans, clubs can shape their image, resolve crises, and build long-term trust with their audience. This ability to manage fan relationships is crucial for maintaining a positive reputation and ensuring fans remain loyal to the club.

Contemporary literature on fan engagement identifies several key dimensions, particularly in the digital and social media context. These dimensions include emotional attachment, cognitive engagement, behavioral engagement, social engagement, and media engagement. Emotional attachment arises from love, identification, and pride in the club (Funk & James, 2006). Cognitive engagement refers to the attention, interest, and critical thinking that fans dedicate to issues surrounding the club (Brodie et al., 2011). Behavioral engagement includes concrete actions such as liking and sharing content, following official accounts, commenting, purchasing merchandise, or attending events (Kim et al., 2020). Social engagement refers to interactions between fans in digital spaces such as community groups, discussion forums, or social campaigns (Meng et al., 2015). Finally, media engagement pertains to responses to the club's digital content, including videos, highlights, and brand activations via social media (Vale & Fernandes, 2018).

In Indonesia, esports clubs have increasingly embraced SMMS as an integral part of their marketing and communication strategies. These clubs design social media content and interaction programs that align with their goals of growing followers, increasing loyalty, and monetizing their digital presence. As Felix et al. (2017) note, SMMS includes strategic orientation, which refers to the organization's ability to design and integrate various digital functions into its overall business structure. In Indonesia, club management uses data analytics and media monitoring tools to assess the effectiveness of their content and adjust their strategies in real-time. This data-driven approach enables clubs to optimize social media efforts and maximize fan engagement.

The content management strategies employed by Indonesian esports clubs are diverse, ranging from informational content about teams, players, and tournaments to emotional and storytelling content that builds personal connections with fans. Interactive content, such as polls, quizzes, and merchandise giveaways, encourages fans to engage with the club and share their experiences actively. Research by Zefanya Girsang (2022) highlights that posts containing entertainment, current trends, and personalized content significantly contribute to fan loyalty in Indonesia. This approach is efficient for gaming clubs, which often use entertainment-driven content to connect with fans and create a sense of excitement around their activities.

As esports clubs in Indonesia continue to expand, their social media strategies must evolve to meet the changing needs of fans. The combination of informative, emotional, and interactive content will likely remain a central feature of SMMS as clubs strive to create a deeper connection with their audience and enhance engagement. By continuously adapting to the demands of their digital audiences, clubs can strengthen their fan base and achieve long-term success in the competitive esports market.

Social Media Management Strategy is crucial in enhancing fan engagement in sports gaming clubs, particularly in esports. By building brand equity, fostering fan loyalty, and driving digital monetization, SMMS has become an essential tool for clubs seeking to expand their reach and create lasting relationships with their fans. Integrating interactive content, emotional storytelling, and data-driven decision-making allows clubs to maximize fan engagement and achieve commercial success. As the esports industry continues to grow, SMMS will remain a key factor in the success of sports gaming clubs, both in Indonesia and globally.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research design to explore the influence of Social Media Management Strategy (SMMS) on fan engagement (FE) within Indonesian esports clubs. An online structured questionnaire was administered to 300 fans to collect data that could provide valuable insights into how social media strategies impact fan loyalty, participation, and interaction. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM/PLS) to examine the relationships between SMMS and FE. This approach was chosen due to its capability to assess complex models with multiple latent variables and its suitability for small to moderate sample sizes.

Participants

The research was conducted among 300 fans of various sports gaming clubs in Indonesia, selected to ensure a representative sample of the esports community. Participants were surveyed using an online questionnaire distributed via social media, ensuring that the respondents were familiar with the esports scene and active on relevant social platforms. The sample consisted of fans from diverse age groups and genders, focusing on young adults who typically dominate the esports audience. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and they were assured that their responses would remain confidential. The survey respondents were selected from various esports clubs, ensuring diversity in age, gender, and level of engagement with sports gaming content. The sample is representative of the esports community in Indonesia, with a mix of fans from traditional esports tournaments and newer, emerging gaming clubs.

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Measures

The survey used a 5-point Likert scale, with respondents indicating their level of agreement with a series of statements related to SMMS and FE. This scale ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". It was designed to capture the intensity of fan engagement and the extent to which clubs utilized various social media management strategies. The key constructs in this study were Social Media Management Strategy (SMMS) and Fan Engagement (FE). These constructs were operationalized based on established theoretical frameworks and previous social media marketing and sports management research. The following outlines how each construct was measured. SMMS was measured using five key dimensions (content relevance, content variety, responsiveness, interactivity, and emotional engagement). On the other hand, fan engagement was measured through five key dimensions (social interaction, content consumption, sense of belonging, social media loyalty, and event participation).

Procedures

Data collection was performed using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure two key constructs: Social Media Management Strategy (SMMS) and Fan Engagement (FE). To ensure the validity of the measurement instrument, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of esports fans to refine questions and identify any ambiguities. Based on feedback from the pre-test, the final version of the questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert-type scale questions that allowed for the measurement of fan engagement and social media management practices across various dimensions

Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SEM/PLS, facilitated by the SmartPLS 4 software. This method was chosen for its ability to test complex relationships between latent variables and to handle small sample sizes effectively. Before evaluating the structural model, the measurement model was assessed for its validity and reliability. The measurement model was tested for **convergent validity**, the degree to which multiple indicators accurately measure the same construct. All items in the survey had outer loadings greater than 0.70, which is the recommended threshold for convergent validity. Composite Reliability (CR) was calculated for each construct to assess internal consistency, with all constructs exceeding the threshold of 0.70, indicating high reliability. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was also calculated, and values greater than 0.60 for all constructs confirmed the adequacy of the model's convergent validity. The structural model was tested to evaluate the relationship between SMMS and FE. The path coefficient between SMMS and FE was 0.68, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that higher levels of social media management strategy lead to greater fan engagement. The **t-statistic** for this path coefficient was 14.27, which is well above the threshold of 1.96, confirming the statistical significance of the relationship ($p < 0.001$). The **R² value** for FE was 0.462, indicating that SMMS explains 46.2% of the Variance in fan engagement. This is a substantial effect, showing that SMMS is a significant driver of fan engagement. A bootstrap analysis with 5000 samples was conducted to validate the results further. The bootstrap results confirmed the significance of the path coefficient, with a p-value of less than 0.001, further affirming the robustness of the findings.

Once the measurement model was deemed valid and reliable, the next step was to assess the structural model to examine the relationships between SMMS and FE. The path coefficient between SMMS and FE was significant ($\beta = 0.68$), indicating a strong positive relationship between the two constructs. This result suggests that higher levels of SMMS lead to greater fan engagement. The t-statistic for the path coefficient was 14.27, which is well above the threshold of 1.96, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. The R² value for fan engagement was 0.462, meaning that SMMS explains 46.2% of the Variance in fan engagement, which is a substantial effect in social science research.

The study conducted a bootstrap analysis to validate the results further. This technique assesses the stability of the path coefficients and ensures that the results are not due to sampling error. The bootstrap results confirmed the significance of the path coefficient ($p < 0.001$), providing additional confidence in the findings. This study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before they participated in the survey, and they were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study without penalty.

III. RESULTS

The primary objective of this study was to explore the relationship between Social Media Management Strategy (SMMS) and Fan Engagement (FE) in the context of Indonesian esports clubs. A quantitative research design was implemented to achieve this, and data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM/PLS). This approach was chosen due to its ability to analyze complex relationships between latent variables, such as SMMS and FE, while handling small to moderate sample sizes, such as the one used in this study (300 respondents).

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Descriptive Statistics

A sample of 300 fans of Indonesian sports gaming clubs was surveyed, representing a diverse cross-section of the esports community. The demographic data revealed a predominance of younger male participants, consistent with the general demographic trends within the esports fanbase. The respondents primarily engaged with social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, the primary sources of content consumption and engagement in the esports industry.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics (N = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	210	70%
	Female	90	30%
Age	<18 years	24	8%
	18–24 years	150	50%
	25–34 years	96	32%
	>34 years	30	10%
Status	Student	138	46%
	Worker	96	32%
	Student (Non-university)	36	12%
	Other	30	10%
Favorite Platform	Instagram	126	42%
	YouTube	78	26%
	TikTok	60	20%
	Twitter/X	24	8%
	Facebook	12	4%

The survey collected data on two key constructs: Social Media Management Strategy (SMMS) and Fan Engagement (FE). Each construct was measured using a set of carefully selected dimensions. SMMS was measured through five dimensions: content relevance, variety, responsiveness, interactivity, and emotional engagement. Fan engagement was assessed through five dimensions: social interaction, content consumption, sense of belonging, social media loyalty, and event participation. The data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale for each item, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The **mean** and **standard deviation** for each statement related to fan engagement (FE) were calculated, as shown in the table below. These descriptive statistics provide an overview of the fan engagement levels among respondents.

Table 2. Fan Engagement Descriptive Statistics

Statement	Mean	SD
I often like or comment on the club's posts.	3.88	0.81
I follow the latest news or updates about the club on social media.	4.15	0.68
I feel involved in the fan community through social media.	3.74	0.85
Social media makes me feel closer to the club.	4.05	0.72
I have participated in events or campaigns by the club because of information on social media.	3.61	0.89

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Before testing the structural model, the measurement model was evaluated to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. The measurement model consists of the constructs' outer loadings and internal consistency, measured by Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The outer loadings indicate how well each indicator measures its respective latent variable. All indicators showed outer loadings greater than 0.70, which is considered an acceptable threshold for convergent validity. The values for SMMS ranged from 0.75 to 0.84, while the loadings for FE ranged from 0.72 to 0.83. These values indicate that the measurement model has strong convergent validity. Composite Reliability (CR) measures the internal consistency of the constructs. All constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, with SMMS having a CR value of 0.90 and FE having a CR value of 0.88. These results indicate that SMMS and FE exhibit high internal consistency and are reliable measures of the underlying constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct was calculated to assess convergent validity. For SMMS, the AVE ranged from 0.60 to 0.69, and for FE, the AVE ranged from 0.59 to 0.63. All constructs showed sufficient convergent validity, as AVE values greater than 0.50 are acceptable. Therefore, the measurement model is reliable and valid for this study. Once the measurement model was validated, the next step was to evaluate the structural model to test the relationships between the constructs of SMMS and FE. The primary aim of the structural model is to test whether SMMS significantly impacts fan engagement in Indonesian esports clubs.

The path coefficient between SMMS and FE was 0.68, indicating a strong positive relationship between the constructs. This suggests that higher levels of social media management strategy lead to greater fan engagement. The t-statistic for this path coefficient was 14.27, well above the threshold of 1.96, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.001$). This proves that SMMS is crucial in driving fan engagement in esports clubs.

The R^2 value for fan engagement was 0.462, meaning that SMMS explains 46.2% of the Variance in fan engagement. This is a moderate but substantial effect, especially in social science research, where a higher R^2 value would be difficult to achieve given fan engagement's complex and multifaceted nature. The R^2 value indicates that while SMMS is an essential predictor of fan engagement, other factors not captured by the model may also contribute to the Variance in fan engagement.

A bootstrap analysis was performed to validate the structural model further. This technique provides a more robust estimate of the path coefficients' standard errors and confidence intervals. The results from the bootstrap analysis confirmed the significance of the relationship between SMMS and FE, with a t-statistic of 14.27 and a p-value of less than 0.001. The confidence intervals for the path coefficient did not include zero, further supporting the conclusion that SMMS has a significant and positive effect on fan engagement.

The Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) index assesses the overall model fit, which evaluates how well the model fits the data. The GoF value was calculated to be 0.50, which is considered a good fit for the data. This indicates that the structural model fits the data well and that the results are reliable and meaningful.

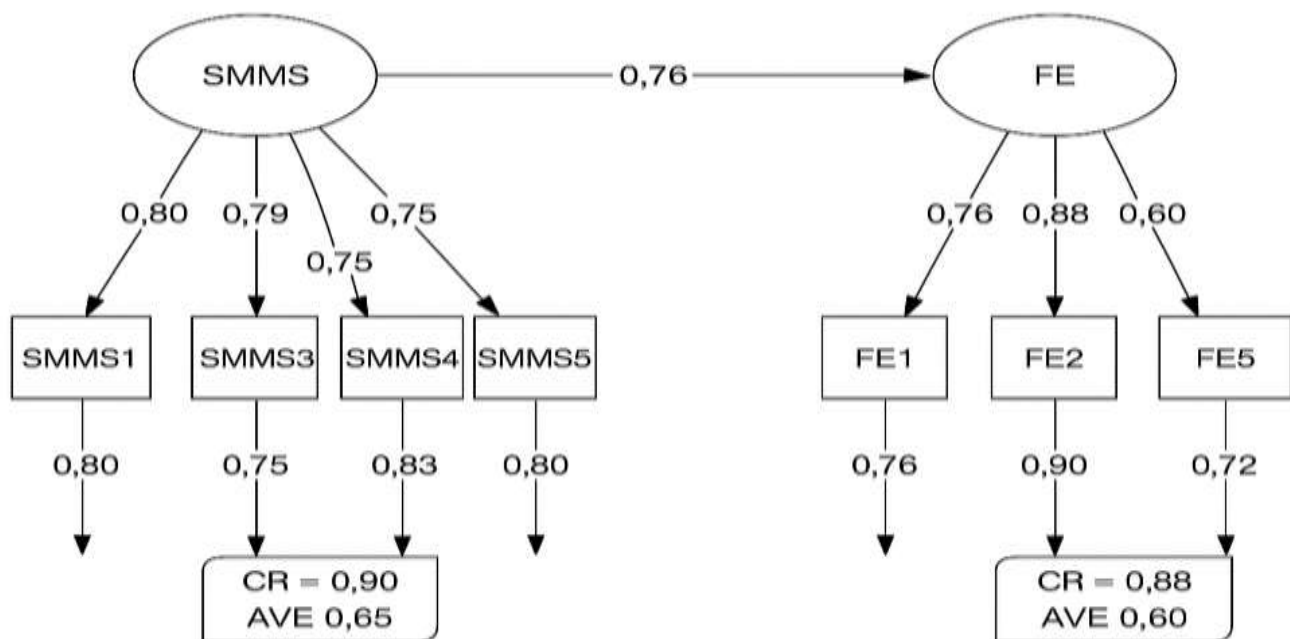


Figure 1: Final SEM Model

Table 3. SEM Model Results

Construct	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
SMMS	0.82	0.90	0.65
FE	0.76	0.88	0.60
SMMS1	0.80	0.91	0.68
SMMS2	0.79	0.89	0.66
SMMS3	0.75	0.88	0.64
SMMS4	0.81	0.90	0.67
SMMS5	0.84	0.92	0.69
FE1	0.76	0.87	0.61
FE2	0.83	0.85	0.62
FE3	0.77	0.86	0.60
FE4	0.80	0.84	0.63
FE5	0.72	0.83	0.59

The SEM diagram illustrates a direct path from SMMS to FE with a standardized path coefficient of **0.76**. This strong positive relationship suggests that an effective social media marketing strategy significantly enhances fan engagement. The model implies that improvements in strategic use of social media, through well-targeted content, interaction, and consistency, can meaningfully increase how audiences engage with a brand or organization.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study examined the correlation between Social Media Management Strategy (SMMS) and Fan Engagement (FE) within Indonesian esports clubs. Utilizing Relationship Marketing Theory, the results robustly affirm that consistent, intentional, and emotionally impactful social media engagement cultivates trust and commitment among fans. Interactive features like live Q&A sessions, comment responses, and fan-generated material promote two-way connections between clubs and their supporters, augmenting emotional and behavioral involvement. The findings correspond with current literature in sports management, emphasizing the crucial influence of digital media on fan identity and loyalty (Abeza et al., 2015; Meng et al., 2015). The study emphasizes the significance of cultivating an engaging, responsive, personalized fan experience via social media within the Indonesian esports landscape. The results enhance the existing research on fan engagement by illustrating how social media management strategies can effectively augment emotional attachment, cognitive investment, and behavioral participation among fans. This study corroborates prior research by demonstrating that emotional, social, or behavioral engagement significantly impacts fan behaviors, including content consumption, advocacy, and digital conversion (eWOM, sales). These findings underscore the significance of a planned social media strategy in fostering fan loyalty and improving digital engagement between fans and teams.

The findings of this study correspond with those of other research that highlights the significance of social media interaction in sports. Emotional, social, or behavioral engagement substantially affects fan behaviors, including content consumption, sharing, advocacy, and purchasing decisions (Williams & Chinn, 2010). This study verifies that sustained and significant engagement via social media can establish enduring fan relationships. This research's empirical evidence supports other studies, contributing to the expanding understanding that social media is a potent instrument for fan involvement.

This research diverges from earlier studies that mainly concentrated on streaming engagement or brand community dynamics (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011; Kim et al., 2022) by emphasizing club-level SMMS tactics and offering a comprehensive perspective on the impact of social media management on fan engagement. This study provides a holistic approach to analyzing the elements influencing fan loyalty and involvement in esports clubs by integrating a wider array of interactive, content-driven, and responsive techniques. This operational viewpoint provides profound insights into the particular methods esports organizations might employ to enhance fan engagement, enriching both scholarly research and practical implementations.

This study significantly contributes to the current literature by delineating the role of SMMS within the Indonesian cultural framework. It emphasizes how live updates, interactive polls, emotional narratives, and responsive involvement may augment fan

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participation and loyalty. The empirical results, with a path coefficient ($\beta = 0.68$) and an R^2 value of 0.46, offer compelling proof of the relationship between digital strategy and fan engagement in the esports industry. These findings enhance global research by providing a detailed comprehension of fan engagement in an emerging market such as Indonesia, where esports is experiencing significant growth.

This work synthesizes several recognized hypotheses into a singular comprehensive model. The study enhances the generalizability of fan engagement theory to emerging markets, namely in Indonesia, by integrating Relationship Marketing Theory, Uses & Gratification Theory, and Social Identity Theory. This cohesive theoretical framework offers a more thorough understanding of how digital interactions and social media strategies influence fan behavior, identity, and loyalty. This study's findings offer numerous practical implications for esports clubs aiming to enhance their social media strategies. The study emphasizes utilizing interactive and emotionally impactful content to captivate fans. Esports organizations should emphasize the creation of content that both educates and resonates emotionally with viewers. By including personal narratives, exclusive content, and fan-led initiatives, clubs may cultivate a heightened sense of connection and loyalty within their fan base.

The study underscores the importance of responsiveness in fan engagement. Esports clubs that promptly and considerately address fan comments, inquiries, and feedback will likely foster deeper ties and enhance fan retention. Through two-way communication, teams can fortify emotional connections with their followers, augmenting total loyalty and advocacy. The findings indicate that clubs should continuously evaluate and modify their social media tactics following real-time data and fan behavior. Clubs can utilize analytics tools to assess which material types most effectively engage their audience and adjust their strategies accordingly. This data-centric methodology can assist clubs in enhancing content quality and engagement, ensuring the efficacy and relevance of their social media efforts. The principal objective of this study was to investigate the correlation between SMMS and fan engagement; nevertheless, an unforeseen result was the very low degree of fan involvement in offline events (mean = 3.61). Despite elevated engagement levels on social media platforms, the findings indicate that such participation does not consistently convert into actual attendance at club activities. This gap may result from various sources, including logistical obstacles, limited accessibility, or the rising prevalence of virtual interactions, especially in esports, where fan communities primarily operate online. This discovery prompts significant inquiries into the essence of fan engagement in the digital era. It indicates that subsequent studies should investigate the determinants that affect the conversion of online engagement into offline behaviors.

This study enhances the existing literature on fan engagement by synthesizing various theoretical frameworks to elucidate the dynamics of digital fan interaction in esports. Relationship Marketing Theory underpins how social media initiatives can foster trust, commitment, and enduring loyalty. This study enhances the applicability of fan engagement theory to emerging countries such as Indonesia by synthesizing various ideas into a unified model, acknowledging the distinct digital media usage and fan behavior that may diverge from Western contexts. Notwithstanding the substantial findings, this study possesses many limitations. The primary drawback is the study's cross-sectional design, which assesses fan engagement at a singular moment. Future research may employ a longitudinal methodology to monitor variations in fan interaction over time and evaluate the enduring effects of social media techniques.

Furthermore, although the study offers significant insights into the Indonesian esports landscape, the findings may not entirely apply to other regions or sporting situations. Future studies may investigate fan participation in various nations or sports industries to ascertain whether the findings are consistent across diverse cultural and market contexts. Moreover, the study did not investigate the influence of individual factors (such as fan age, gender, or gaming preferences) on fan involvement. Future research may examine the impact of demographic characteristics on fan participation and how clubs might customize their social media campaigns for various fan groupings. Future studies should broaden the scope of engagement outcomes to encompass eWOM (electronic word of mouth), sponsor purchasing, brand loyalty, and content consumption and participation. Furthermore, research might investigate the efficacy of various social media platforms in enhancing fan engagement and compare the engagement patterns of traditional sports fans with those of esports enthusiasts. Longitudinal studies and cross-cultural comparisons may yield profound insights into the enduring effects of SMMS on fan engagement.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study illustrates that the Social Media Management Strategy (SMMS) is essential for improving fan engagement in Indonesian esports clubs. The results underscore the significance of interactive, responsive, and emotionally engaging social media content in fostering fan loyalty and involvement. The study enhances the knowledge of fan engagement by incorporating theoretical perspectives from relationship marketing, social identity, and uses and fulfillment theories. The empirical findings provide actionable insights for esports organizations aiming to enhance their social media strategy and cultivate greater connections with

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their followers. Notwithstanding the constraints, this research paves the way for further investigations into digital fan involvement, especially within emerging economies and the burgeoning esports industry.

VI. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Catur Supriyanto conceptualized the study, conducted the literature review, designed the experiment, performed measurements and data analysis, and drafted the original manuscript.

SUPPORTING AGENCIES

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors. The experiments comply with the current laws of the country in which they were performed. The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD STATEMENT

The Ethical Committee of the Surabaya State University, Indonesia has granted approval for this study on 17 June 2025

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