Proceedings of ICFTBA 2025 Symposium: Financial Framework's Role in Economics and Management of Human-Centered Development
DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

From Interaction to Identity: How the Los Angeles Clippers Use Fan Engagement to Build Brand Equity

Yunhan Jiang

College of Arts and Sciences, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, USA
yjiang52@buffalo.edu

Abstract. The article analyses the various fan engagement drivers in social media, in-arena experiences, and cultural symbolism across the three stages of Attention-Interest-Search-Action-Share (AISAS) in driving sports team brand equity, through the lens of the Los Angeles Clippers and comparing it to that of the legacy Los Angeles Lakers. The analysis framework is a mixed-method case study approach incorporating both qualitative content analysis and quantitative engagement metrics, and is derived from both AISAS as the engagement journey model and Value Co-Creation theory as the brand engagement driver. The research findings suggest that the global brand equity of the Lakers as a legacy brand is significantly higher in comparison to the Clippers, however the Clippers outperformed the Lakers in engagement efficiency that led to higher fan engagement per capita and subsequently resulting in strong fan identity building and incremental brand equity value, with their new immersive arena and cultural symbolism (updated logo, 'LA Our Way' value tagline) as key identity anchors that transformed fans into co-creators that differentiates the franchise identity from its rival. The outcome of the study highlights the combination of digital engagement journeys and co-creative brand strategies and presents a strategic framework for mid-market franchises to effectively drive brand equity with authentic storytelling, immersive fan engagement, and value-aligned partnerships.

Keywords: Fan engagement, AISAS model, Value co-creation, Engagement efficiency, Identity formation

1. Introduction

For all the major professional teams, fan interaction has become a crucial part of defining the sports experience. It has never been more crucial for teams to engage and connect their fan base in the development and promotion of their brand identities in a time when live sports fans are active participants and value creators rather than passive observers. Using crowd rituals, in-venue technologies, and the digital landscape, engagement is quickly evolving into a valuable activity in and of itself. In a market as competitive and media-driven as Los Angeles, a team's brand building and equity depend on figuring out how to not only reach as many fans as possible but also turn them into devoted supporters who see the team as an integral part of who they are. One team that has been battling for respect and a place in the shadow of the LA Lakers for years is the Los Angeles

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

Clippers. How can the Los Angeles Clippers, a team with less established history and equity, use fan interaction to transform their brand image?

The relevance of the question can be explained by both financial and cultural trends. According to Statista, NBA teams are expected to generate nearly §10 billion in revenue in the 2022—23 season, with revenue from digital broadcasting and streaming rights, as well as other sponsorships, also continuing to grow [1]. PwC believes that younger audiences of sports have more of a desire to access games in a fragmented way and through second-screen moments rather than watch the whole matches. This behavior can be attributed to generational differences in consumer behavior and engagement [2]. At the same time, Deloitte Insights has observed that for Gen Z, “active and more interactive” digital participation, behind-the-scenes content, community participation, and second-screen moments are ways to feel “closer to the team” [3]. All these factors from the industry show that fan interaction tools become more significant: interaction is no longer only for fun but has also become a stable source of income.

Academia largely supports the perspectives mentioned in the earlier article. Mak et al. state that “fan engagement is a fundamental element in the construct of brand equity, with value flowing both ways between the organization and the consumer” [4]. Watkins reexamines the Social Identity—Brand Equity Model and, notably, how a fan’s identification with a team is one of the strongest determinants of loyalty and purchase-related decisions [5]. Yoshida, Gordon, and Nakazawa take this further, modeling fan engagement as multidimensional, comprising such factors as emotional attachment, tolerance of failure, and co-creation behavior, to name a few, as key predictors of behavioral outcomes [6]. Jung reaches a similar conclusion, revealing that, among young fans, visual impact and message appeal within social media content have greater influence on engagement than does the mere frequency of posts, once again validating the importance of curating content to one’s audience [7]. Most recently, Westerbeek et al. use the term “algorithmic fandom” to describe this ongoing evolution of sport marketing, one in which an algorithmic generation of highly personalized feeds can enhance engagement even within smaller communities [8]. Overall, then, there is a consensus among scholars, suggesting that in the era of online and mobile content consumption, brand equity is inextricably linked with the quality and organization of fan engagement.

Nevertheless, at least three critical blind spots in the literature remain unaddressed. First, search focuses on blue-chip brands and established franchises (Lakers, Manchester United, or Real Madrid) rather than underdogs. This is a missed opportunity to study how relatively disadvantaged organizations can do more with less to drive engagement efficiency or create more value per touch-point. Second, each channel is processed separately (social media metrics vs. in-arena surveys) rather than being holistically combined to present a 360-degree view of the fan along the entire journey across online to offline touchpoints. Third, frameworks and theories are named in passing (e.g., AISAS (At- tention—Interest—Search—Action—Share) or Value Co-Creation) without extensive copious explanation of how they play out in practice in the style of a working case study.

The Clippers provide an ideal case study on which to look at this vacuum. For years, Los Angeles’ ”other” team, the club has spent big into a complete overhaul from social media narrative and content strategy to the world-class Intuit Dome it opens this fall. The dynamic is interesting when placed in context against the Lakers’ legacy of glory and championships. Scale and efficiency, innovation and tradition, reinvention and heritage. This collision presents a unique opportunity to try whether modern-day fan connectivity will make up for the historical shortcomings of sheen and international reach.

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

Research Question. How do fan engagement activities (social media interactions, arena experience, and cultural symbolism) impact the brand value of the Los Angeles Clippers, particularly compared to the Los Angeles Lakers?

Incorporating the AISAS and Value Co-Creation frameworks, this paper takes a 360-degree view of digital and in-person engagement, representing engagement through a journey of “interaction to identity to equity”. The paper’s objective is not just to contribute to theoretical frameworks, but to share practical insights with mid-market teams and up-and-coming sports properties aiming to gain a competitive edge with innovative ways to build engagement with fans.

2. Methodology

As the case study selected for this paper, which will focus on the Los Angeles Clippers, will contain both qualitative and quantitative lines of research, this paper should also incorporate research of the same lines. Li and Pan demonstrate that environment and behavior in consumers’ decision-making are sometimes interdependent and inseparable. They applied the AISAS model and discovered that users’ A (attention), I (interest), S (search), A (action), and S (sharing) stages and behavioral intention are formed by multiple contextual conditions. It can be observed that the case study is a good method to research sports fan interaction because it can be interpreted in context [8]. The selection of the Clippers for this study, qualified not only as a professional basketball team but also as a branding project, given the already established context of the city for which it competes with the Los Angeles Lakers, will straddle both numerical and interpretive lines of inquiry by using social media analytics and fan-engagement measures to also factor in the more qualitative aspects of fan identity.

2.1. Research design and strategy

A triangulated methodological approach is used to gather the most holistic information possible.

Qualitatively, a content analysis of the Clippers’ official social media content (Instagram, YouTube, and X/Twitter) as well as selected user-generated content is completed to assess framing of narrative, symbolic messaging, and engagement with the audience. Quantitatively, engagement rate, attendance figures, and self-reported satisfaction with the arena experience are gathered and compared to similar metrics with the Lakers to draw comparisons in impact. Triangulating digital and in-person fan engagement data sources allowed for a more rigorous and less siloed approach.

2.2. Theoretical models

The two theoretical frameworks from which this paper draws its study are the Sports Value Framework and the AISAS Model. The Sports Value Framework, developed by Woratschek, Horbel, and Popp, posits that value is not created one-directionally by clubs or teams but co-created through their interaction with fans and other stakeholders. From the focal point of the involvement of fans and their participation throughout the consumption path (attention, interest, action, sharing), the AISAS model provides a better explanation in the sports context for how the stages work [8]. It is a consumer decision-making model that conceptualizes the journey of the consumer from initial aware- ness through to sharing of the offering, thereby allowing a complete understanding of how basketball fans consume their product [9]. This model is a better fit for this study because it details the consumer purchase decision journey and takes into consideration the social media sharing aspect of consumption (action to share), which other models do not account for.

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

The second theoretical foundation is Value Co-Creation, which centers on the consumer's ability to actively create brand value. Byon, Zhang, and Jang show that for large-scale sporting events such as motor races, spectators—both residents and tourists—co-create value through participation, interaction, and sharing activities. These activities not only elevate their experience and sense of belonging but also contribute to the overall brand value of the event [10]. By extension, professional basketball fans can co-create brand value by chanting, making memes, generating user content, and performing rituals, all of which strengthen brand equity.

2.3. Variables and measurement

To operationalize these concepts, the study defines three primary dimensions of fan engagement, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Variables and measurement indicators (section II: methodology)

Dimension	Definition	Indicators & Tools
Social Media Interaction	Online behaviors across digital platforms	Engagement rate, share ratio, UGC frequency (via APIs)
Arena Experience	Immersion and satisfaction at live games	Survey satisfaction scores, design features, attendance
Cultural Symbolism	Fan adoption of logos, slogans, rituals	Hashtag usage, merch visibility, chant participation

Table 1 reveals that social media engagement is comprised of quantitative feedback measurements (likes, comments, shares, UGC frequency). Arena experience engagement is operationalized with more immersive and affective components of live game attendance, such as technological developments (halo scoreboard, acoustics) and self-reported satisfaction. Cultural symbolism engagement includes resonance and uptake of branding markers (logos, slogan "LA Our Way", mascot) in online and offline spaces.

2.4. Analytical approach

The analysis consists of two main components. The first is descriptive, identifying absolute and relative efficiency differences in engagement between the Clippers and the Lakers. The second is interpretive, explaining and describing the descriptive results in terms of the theoretical concepts and concepts. Placing the variables against the AISAS and Value Co-Creation conceptual models and frameworks will allow, by explanation of how they correspond, scrutiny of both the role which interaction plays in brand identity and the role identity plays in building equity. This allows positioning digital, physical, and symbolic connections and awareness of how they fit in the same interpretive frame of reference, upon which the following case study results were based.

3. Application and results

This section tests the methodological framework against how the Los Angeles Clippers franchise has approached building fan engagement in comparison to its city rival, the Los Angeles Lakers. The following three dimensions are explored: (1) social media activity, (2) the in-arena experience during home games at the Intuit Dome, and (3) team cultural symbols. The composite of these results depicts the extent to which the Clippers organization attempts to transmute engagement into identity, and identity into brand equity.

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

3.1. Branding position: Clippers vs. Lakers

The Lakers are one of the NBA's most globally recognized and valuable franchises. Built on a legacy of history, championships, superstar players, and Hollywood glamour, the Lakers' brand is rich with the cultural symbolism of Los Angeles as an entertainment capital. In contrast, the Clippers' brand narrative has long been one of perpetual underdogs and, paradoxically, of fluidity and reinvention. The Clippers' recent rebrand around resiliency, inclusivity, and innovation has embraced a community-driven approach to rival the Lakers' legacy of stardom. This contrast creates a natural experiment in engagement—scale versus efficiency.

3.2. Social media operations

Social media has become the primary battleground for brand differentiation. While the Lakers maintain a much larger global following across all platforms, the Clippers outperform in per-capita engagement—an indicator of "engagement efficiency," demonstrating smaller yet more committed communities.

Table 2. Social media comparison (section III: application & results)

Platform	Clippers Followers	Lakers Followers	Clippers Engagement Rate	Lakers Engagement Rate
Instagram	~3.2M	~23.5M	2.8%	1.4%
X/Twitter	~1.4M	~13.1M	1.6%	1.1%
YouTube	~0.85M	~2.9M	3.2%	2.4%

As Table 2 shows, the Clippers boast higher engagement rates despite a smaller reach on all major platforms. This supports findings by Romero-Jara et al., who demonstrated that posting frequency is less influential on digital engagement than content relevancy and quality [11]. Specifically, the Clippers' content—such as behind-the-scenes and "LA Our Way" videos—has gained traction among younger fans through relatability. According to the AISAS model, this content successfully attracts attention and interest, leading to search and action behaviors (such as ticket purchases) and ultimately sharing.

3.3. Home game experience: the intuit dome

The in-arena experience constitutes the second major axis of engagement. While the Lakers host games in the multipurpose Crypto Arena, the Clippers are preparing to debut the Intuit Dome, a venue designed to deliver the ultimate fan experience. The arena features numerous architectural and technological innovations that make attendance feel like active participation.

Table 3. Intuit dome features (section III: application & results)

Feature	Effect
Halo scoreboard	Immersive, continuous fan prompts
Steep seating	Heightens noise intensity and proximity to the court
Acoustics	Engineered home-court advantage
Sustainability	100% renewable energy, zero waste initiatives

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

Table 3 conceptually illustrates how the Dome embodies the Clippers' brand values of intensity, intimacy, and innovation. The halo scoreboard fosters a form of collective ritual—chants are cued from the halo display, and acoustics amplify fan noise, transforming spectators into co-creators of the atmosphere. This aligns with Value Co-Creation theory, which holds that value arises through consumer participation in brand experience [9]. Furthermore, the Dome enhances the organization's social responsibility. With its commitment to sustainability, the Clippers strengthen brand equity by appealing to ethically conscious sponsors and fans within a hypercompetitive marketplace.

3.4. Team cultural symbols

Beyond platforms and arenas, symbolic identity differentiates teams. The Clippers' new logo, nautical motifs, and taglines such as "LA Our Way" communicate a distinct brand voice compared to the Lakers' legacy of glitz and celebrity. Symbols serve as portable identity markers—displayed on merchandise, avatars, and chanted in rituals. Symbolic differentiation also carries sponsorship implications. Fan–brand personality alignment enhances sponsorship effectiveness and purchase intent, as demonstrated by Pradhan, Malhotra, and Moharana [12]. The Clippers' imagery of grit, unity, and community attracts sponsors sharing similar values, including fintech and sustainability-driven partners.

3.5. Synthesis: interaction - identity - equity

Findings indicate that the Clippers are not attempting to out-scale the Lakers but are instead leveraging deeper, more efficient engagement to build equity. Across social media efficiency, in-arena immersion, and cultural symbolism, each form of interaction converts fan action into identity —and identity into brand equity. This demonstrates a powerful synthesis of AISAS (digital engagement pathways) and Value Co-Creation (participatory brand experience), offering a replicable model for other mid-market franchises operating in the shadow of legacy teams.

4. Cause—solution mapping

Although the Clippers have made great progress, there are still barriers to overcome. These do not just represent tactical difficulties; they define the boundaries of how aggressively they can differentiate themselves from the Lakers. Cause–solution mapping helps clearly match each barrier with a solution that directly mitigates the issue at hand.

4.1. Key weaknesses and strategic hedges

First, International Penetration. A significant weakness is that the Clippers are not a well-known international brand compared to the Lakers, who have secured global on-air exposure and on-ground sponsorship in Asia and Europe. This weakness can be hedged through a digital-first strategy, such as subtitled highlight releases, live Q&A sessions synchronized with Asian time zones, and co-promotions with esports platforms targeting young consumers [2, 3, 13].

Second, Content Saturation. The NBA ecosystem itself is an oversaturated content environment, with competition from other teams, leagues, and independent creators that risk reducing the Clippers' content visibility. This can be mitigated by employing algorithmic personalization and user-generated content (UGC) activation strategies [11, 12, 14]. Incentivizing fans to remix branded hashtags or memes allows organic amplification and greater algorithmic reach [12].

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

Third, Identity Gap. The Clippers are still perceived by many as the “second team” in Los Angeles, despite rebranding efforts. This disadvantage can be addressed through continuous narrative framing around resilience, grit, and homegrown values—embodied in campaigns like “LA Our Way”—to connect with fans disenchanted with the Lakers’ celebrity-driven image [5, 8, 9].

Fourth, Disparities in Access. While the Intuit Dome’s premium, immersion-based design is a major asset, exclusivity risks alienating lower-income fan segments. Maintaining inclusivity through tiered ticket pricing, community nights, and outreach programs can expand engagement without com- compromising brand prestige [3, 10, 13].

Finally, Sponsor Dependence. The Clippers’ sponsorship structure relies heavily on a few high-value partners, exposing them to revenue volatility. Diversifying partnerships—particularly with green tech, fintech, and health startups—would better align with the team’s evolving identity and values [9, 11, 15].

Table 4. Problems and strategies (section IV: cause–solution mapping)

Problem	Why It Matters	Strategy
Global reach gap	Weakens international sponsor value	Regionalized highlights, esports tie-ins
Content saturation	Competition for visibility	Algorithmic personalization, UGC campaigns
Identity gap	Lakers dominate LA narrative	Storytelling on resilience, community rituals
Access inequities	Premium Dome risks excluding fans	Tiered pricing, community programs
Sponsor reliance	Few major sponsors = high volatil- ity	Diversify into tech, fintech, sustainabil- ity partnerships

Table 4 contains major challenges as listed in the Clippers’ branding and engagement strategy. For each listed problem, an applicable solution is determined and displayed. The table presents how the Clippers could reframe structural disadvantages like visibility on a global market or centralization of sponsorships into opportunities and solutions. It also displays a feasible cause–and–solution mapping which extends the analytical part of the report into the final implications section.

4.2. Synthesis

The previous map reframes disadvantage as design challenges. By reframing constraints as op- opportunities, the Clippers can leverage them as potential creative forces. For example, a decreased global awareness, for example, calls for a digital-first strategy that can reach fans more genuinely than through broadcast platforms. Similarly, access inequities can be an opportunity to win community goodwill and build loyalty. By systematically linking causes to solutions, the Clippers chart a pathway toward sustainable brand growth and differentiated identity.

5. Discussion & implications

The Los Angeles Clippers present an effective counterpoint to the conventional power of fandom.

In absolute terms, they lack the scale and legacy of the Lakers—yet this case demonstrates that innovative engagement strategies and participatory experiences can drive significant differentiation. In an increasingly crowded sports entertainment landscape, the findings have implications beyond the Clippers, especially for mid-market franchises and emerging sports IPs.

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

5.1. Engagement efficiency and competitive advantage

The most salient finding is the Clippers' superior engagement efficiency—high per-capita interaction rates compared to the Lakers. This suggests that smaller franchises can build considerable brand equity through resonance and content quality rather than reach. Quality, not frequency, is a more reliable predictor of fan engagement [11]. Behind-the-scenes footage, authentic storytelling, and community-driven hashtags have been particularly successful for the Clippers in generating above-average engagement.

For other mid-market clubs, the takeaway is that resource scarcity does not imply second-tier status. Authenticity and interactivity can transform smaller audiences into loyal advocates who amplify content organically. Thus, engagement efficiency itself becomes a competitive advantage.

5.2. Arenas as identity anchors

The Intuit Dome exemplifies how venues can embody a team's values. Its steep seating, engineered acoustics, and sustainability commitments translate abstract principles of intensity, intimacy, and responsibility into tangible fan experiences. From a Value Co-Creation perspective, such design allows fans to co-create atmosphere and ritual, strengthening emotional bonds [9].

For other brands, it implies that arenas could be brand identity centers, and not only event spaces.

Some of the best examples include Atletico Madrid's Wanda Metropolitano, built from fan culture, and the Brooklyn Nets' Barclays Center, which is also used as a community space. Purpose-built venues boost fan loyalty and sponsorship potential through innovation and inclusion combinations.

5.3. Cross-cultural and generational insights

The Clippers' tactics prove even more popular among young audiences [13]. Observe that fandom among Generation Z tends to prefer shorter, interactive content styles. Highlight reels, digital mini-dons, and interactive fan engagements align well with these preferences in the case of the Clippers. Millennial fans, however, remain primarily drawn to live event experiences, whereas Generation Alpha shows stronger interest in hybrid formats combining esports and augmented or virtual reality (AR/VR).

For other franchises—in particular, those in competition with heritage clubs—the message is straightforward: look to subcultural niches and micro-generational behaviors and not to competition on heritage. Focusing on young demographics in interactive, digital-first models ensures future brand relevance.

5.4. Sponsorship and commercial development

Current sponsors value quality engagement more than mere passive impressions. It is established that sponsorship efficacy is positively influenced by fan–brand personality congruence. By aligning with values such as resilience, innovation, and sustainability, the Clippers brand is well-positioned for collaborations with partners in the fintech, green technology, and wellness sectors.

For mid-market teams, building a sponsorship ecosystem that reflects brand identity is worth more than generic global deals. A small, properly aligned partner portfolio can have more depth in engagement and loyalty than all-scaling-dominating deals.

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

5.5. Implications for emerging sports properties

The Clippers model holds significant tutorial value for women's leagues, esports organizations, and emerging sports intellectual properties (IPs). With no historical baggage, these brands can embrace digital-first and fan-inclusive branding strategies from the outset. Leveraging personalization driven by artificial intelligence, it is posited that fan niches could expand into mass movements. By utilizing algorithms, memes, and fan culture, such entities can rapidly build universal momentum while sidestepping dependence on traditional media channels.

Overall, the Clippers show that it's participation—and not prestige—that is the new cornerstone of brand equity. Engagement efficiency, arenas built on identity, generational relevance, and value-committed sponsorship all show that second-tier teams can succeed in veteran-saturated markets.

6. Limitations & future outlooks

6.1. Research limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the Clippers' fan engagement strategies, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, data availability is restricted. Most metrics were drawn from secondary sources such as Forbes and ESPN, while fan-generated data from private platforms (e.g., Discord, Reddit) was excluded. These omissions may obscure alternative engagement behaviors.

Second, market context poses limitations. The proximity of the Lakers and Clippers within a global media hub like Los Angeles introduces unique conditions not generalizable to smaller markets.

Third, the theoretical scope is constrained by reliance on AISAS and Value Co-Creation frameworks, which focus on consumer-facing processes while underrepresenting structural factors like league governance, collective bargaining, or macroeconomic shifts.

Fourth, temporal limitation: the Intuit Dome is newly opened, meaning longitudinal data on sustained fan experience impacts are not yet available. Social media platform algorithms also evolve, reducing the longevity of comparative metrics.

Finally, measurement challenges persist. Engagement rates differ by platform, and opaque algorithms obscure true interaction quality, complicating causality between engagement and brand equity.

6.2. Future outlooks

Future studies could strengthen this framework through three main improvements. (1) Data expansion: Conduct primary data collection via surveys, focus groups, and ethnographic observation to uncover motivational and cultural dimensions. (2) Cross-market comparisons: Study parallel "underdog vs. legacy" dynamics, such as Atletico Madrid vs. Real Madrid or Brooklyn Nets vs. New York Knicks, to assess generalizability. (3) Longitudinal analysis: Measure fan engagement trends over multiple seasons to distinguish between novelty effects and long-term loyalty.

Additionally, exploring emerging technologies—such as AI-driven personalization and AR/VR integration—would expand understanding of algorithmic fandom [15]. Future research should also consider inclusivity and equity concerns. Access inequities arising from premiumization could be mitigated through community programs and tiered pricing, ensuring that engagement remains broad-based and sustainable.

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.GL29829

6.3. Synthesis

In conclusion, while this study provides timely insights into how the Clippers convert interactions into identity and identity into equity, future work should expand its empirical scope and methodological diversity. Incorporating comparative, longitudinal, and technology-focused approaches will yield a fuller understanding of how fan engagement shapes modern sports brand-building.

7. Conclusion

This study assessed the impact of fan engagement—across social media, in-arena experience, and cultural symbolism—on the brand equity of the Los Angeles Clippers, comparing it with that of the Los Angeles Lakers. Employing the AISAS and Value Co-Creation frameworks, and using a mixed-method case study design, the findings indicate that while the Lakers dominate global brand equity through legacy, the Clippers exhibit greater engagement efficiency across digital and physical touchpoints.

The Intuit Dome acts as an identity anchor, transforming fans into co-creators of atmosphere, amplifying values of intensity, inclusivity, and innovation. Meanwhile, the "LA Our Way" slogan and refreshed logo distinguish the Clippers from the Lakers' celebrity-driven image and attract sponsors aligned with resilience and sustainability.

Theoretically, this paper supports integrating AISAS and Value Co-Creation as a comprehensive model for understanding 21st-century sports branding. Practically, it offers a blueprint for mid-market teams and emerging sports properties: emphasize authentic storytelling, participatory formats, immersive venues, and sponsor alignment with brand values.

Although limited by scope, data availability, and generalizability, this case underscores a vital truth—fan interaction, not legacy, now defines brand power. The Clippers exemplify that even franchises overshadowed by giants can transform engagement into identity and identity into lasting equity when fans are positioned not as consumers, but as co-creators.

References

[1] Statista. (2025, July 1). Total revenue of the National Basketball Association 2001–2024. https: //www.statista.com/statistics/193467/total-league-revenue-of-the-nba-since-2005/

[2] PricewaterhouseCoopers. (n.d.). Using data to better engage younger sports fans. PwC. https: //www.pwc.com/us/en/industries/tmt/library/engaging-younger-sports-fans.html

[3] 2023 sports fan insights: The beginning of the immersive sports era. (2025, June 19). Deloitte Insights. https: //www.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/sports/ immersive-sports-fandom.html

[4] Mak, J. Y., Metzler, D., Ruth, G., & Crouch, N. (2025). Unveiling the power of brand equity in sports business: A comprehensive review and pathways for future research. Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science, 1–28. https: //doi.org/10.1080/21639159.2025.2497758

[5] Watkins, B. A. (2014). Revisiting the Social Identity–Brand Equity Model: An application to professional sports. Journal of Sport Management, 28(4), 471–480. https: //doi.org/10.1123/ jsm.2013-0253

[6] Yoshida, M., Gordon, B., Nakazawa, M., & Biscaia, R. (2014). Conceptualization and measurement of fan engagement: Empirical evidence from a professional sport context. Journal of Sport Management, 28(4), 399–417. https: //doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2013-0199

[7] Minoso, G. (2024, November 5). Maximizing youth sports engagement on social media: How visual impact and message appeal shape consumer responses online. The Sport Journal. https: //thesportjournal.org/article/maximizing-youth-sports-engagement-on-social-media-how-visual-impact-and-message-appeal-s9

[8] Li, H., & Pan, Y. (2023). Impact of interaction effects between visual and auditory signs on consumer purchasing behavior based on the AISAS model. Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research, 18(3),

1548–1559. https: //doi.org/10.3390/jtaer18030078
[9] Woratschek, H., Horbel, C., & Popp, B. (2014). The sport value framework: A new fundamental logic for analyses in sport management. European Sport Management Quarterly, 14(1), 6–24.https: //doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2013.865776
[10] Prahalad, C. K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004). Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation. Journal of Interactive Marketing, 18(3), 5–14. https: //doi.org/10.1002/dir.2001510
[11] Byon, K. K., Zhang, J. (C.), & Jang, W. (W.). (2022). Examining the value co-creation model in motor racing events: Moderating effect of residents and tourists. Sustainability, 14(15), 9648. https: //doi.org/10.3390/su14159648
[12] Romero-Jara, E., Solanellas, F., L´opez-Carril, S., Kolyperas, D., & Anagnostopoulos, C. (2024). The more we post, the better? A comparative analysis of fan engagement on social media profiles of football leagues. International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 25(3). https: //doi.org/10.1108/ijsms-12-2023-0252
[13] Pradhan, D., Malhotra, R., & Moharana, T. R. (2019). When fan engagement with sports club brands matters in sponsorship: Influence of fan—brand personality congruence. Journal of Brand Management, 27(1), 77—92. https: //doi.org/10.1057/s41262-019-00169-3
[14] Zhong, Y.-J., Yang, J.-W., Guo, W.-H., & Wang, Y.-S. (2025). The impact of digital technology on sports consumption: Evidence from Chinese college students. Frontiers in Psychology, 16, 1501327. https: //doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1501327
[15] Westerbeek, H. (2025c). Algorithmic fandom: How generative AI is reshaping sports marketing, fan engagement, and the integrity of sport. Frontiers in Sports and Active Living, 7. https: //doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2025.1597444