



The Potential of Social Media on the NBA

Investigating the Social Media impact on the NBA fans and on NBA players' mental health

Romain Garat

Thomas Capitanio Bachelor's thesis

April 2022

Sport Management

Bachelor's degree in international business

Capitanio Thomas, Garat Romain

Impact of the social media on the sport organization (NBA) and the player

Jyväskylä: JAMK University of Applied Sciences, April 2023, 44 pages.

School of Business, Degree program in International Business, Bachelor's thesis

Permission for web publication: Yes

Language of publication: English

Abstract

The extensive use of social media provides opportunities to deal with fans for sports organizations, which may improve the team's sense of identity. This study aims to contribute the latest research by checking the platforms used by the National Basketball Association (NBA) within three years, so that how to use social media and how to use social media to communicate and interact fans and sports. The content of the athletes and teams on social media can be used as the source of information for team managers and trainers to determine the emotions and performances of the players before the game. Although the relationship between the emotions of the athletes and the field of personal movement in the field of psychology and the field of sports analysis conducted many studies, only a few people studied the cause and effect of social media. According to the study, social media offers NBA teams and athletes an opportunity to interact with their followers and strengthen their sense of self, which ultimately results in higher engagement and revenue. Additionally, the material generated by athletes and teams on social media can be beneficial for coaches and team managers to assess player performance and mood ahead of games. The study proposes further exploration into the link between social media use and athlete mood and performance, as well as examining social media's potential as a talent scouting and recruitment tool.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

Sport, Engagement, Social Media, Team identification, NBA

Contents

1. Introduction.....	6
1.1. Background, motivation, and purpose	6
1.2. Research objectives, questions and approach.....	7
1.3. Thesis structure	7
2. Literature review	8
2.1. Introduction	8
2.2. Social Media	14
2.2.1. The appearance of SM	14
2.2.2. The growth of social networks and their use for NBA marketing purpose	16
2.3. SM and NBA.....	17
2.4. The impact of SM on the NBA	20
2.4.1. SM impact to the NBA	22
2.4.2. The impact of SM on players' mental health	27
2.5. SM positive and negative impacts.....	28
2.6. Impact of SM on the player and the league	30
2.7. Exploring the Diverse Impacts of SM on the NBA Ecosystem.....	31
2.8. Identified Research gaps.....	32
2.9. Research framework.....	33
3. Research methods and implementation.....	34
3.1. Research context	35
3.2. Research design.....	36
3.2.1. Research Purpose	36
3.2.2. Research philosophy.....	37
3.2.3. Research Approach.....	37
3.2.4. Research strategy/methods.....	38
3.2.5. Methodological choice	38
3.2.6. Time horizon	39
3.3. Relevant Methods & Data analysis.....	39
3.4. Quantitative data analysis	40
3.5. Qualitative data analysis	40
3.6. Ethical consideration	40
3.7. Data collection.....	40

4. Research Results	42
4.1. Cognitive effect	44
4.2. Monetary effect.....	46
4.3. Mental health effect	48
5. Discussion	52
5.1. Limitations, reliability, and validity	52
5.2. Answering the research questions	53
5.3. Dialogue between key results and knowledge base	54
5.4. Compliance with research ethics guidelines.....	55
6. Conclusions.....	55
6.1. Key Findings	55
6.2. Managerial implications.....	57
6.3. Recommendations for future research	57
7. References	59

Figures

Figure 1: Thesis Structure	8
Figure 2: Number of results on Google Scholar by searching “NBA Social Media”	10
Figure 3: Number of results on Google Scholar by searching "NBA" "Impact" "Social Media" "Mental health"	11
Figure 4: Number of results on Google Scholar by searching "NBA" "Impact" "Social Media" "Fans"	12
Figure 5: Number of NBA follower on Instagram. Source: Ben Golliver, 2018 (Twitter).....	18
Figure 6: Comparative number of follower (in million) on each SM platform according to a report by Socialbakers in 2021	22
Figure 7: Number of followers on Facebook and Twitter and the total number of followers of 10 NBA players. Kloc et al. (n.d.)	23
Figure 8: Earnings of 10 NBA players compared to their total followers on SM (Facebook & Twitter). Kloc et al. (n.d.).....	24
Figure 9: Comparison of salaries and endorsements of 10 NBA players. Kloc et al. (n.d.).....	25
Figure 10: Salaries, endorsements and total earnings of 10 NBA players. Kloc et al. (n.d.).....	25

Figure 11: Correlation between earnings from advertising and SM (Facebook & Twitter). Kloc et al. (n.d.)	26
Figure 12: Correlation between earnings from contracts and SM (Facebook & Twitter). Kloc et al. (n.d.)	26
Figure 13: Proposed Structural Model highlighting I1 impacts and I2 other notions	34
Figure 14: The research “onion”. Source: 2018 Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornill	35
Figure 15: Comparative landscaping about the different impact of social media on the NBA .	42
Figure 16: Comparative landscaping about the different impact of social media on the NBA .	42
Figure 17: Mind map generated from NVivo 12 illustrating the fans engagement.	45
Figure 18: Words frequency query - 50 words most used in the ‘monetary effect’ node	46
Figure 19: The impact of social media on NBA player income has been a significant area of interest in recent.....	47
Figure 20: Words frequency query - 50 words most used in the ‘mental health effect’ node .	48
Figure 21: Mind map generated from NVivo 12 illustrating the mental health effect.	50
Figure 22: Mind Map of the different nodes and Impact of SM on the NBA.....	51

Tables

Table 1: Selected ten most relevant publications	13
Table 2: Codebook regarding the different impact of SM on the NBA.....	41

1. Introduction

1.1. Background, motivation, and purpose

Around the world, millions of people play basketball as amateurs. At the beginning, they just start playing for fun with their friends, but over time, some of them start seeing that they could be good at that sport. They start watching some NBA games during their nights, to learn new skills from the best. They dream of playing in the NBA, to play with the best players around the world, play in USA, and gain millions of dollars a year. Some of them have reach this goal but for the biggest part, this will still be a dream that will never come true.

Nevertheless, those people who will never play in NBA, are still passionate people who follow closely NBA games, transfers of players, salaries, etc. through SM. When we keep ourselves updated with NBA news, we can observe how Social Media (SM) can greatly influence not just the NBA, but also certain fundamental basketball regulations. The basic basketball rule, that is applied all round the world, is that players can only make 2 steps holding the ball, but LeBron James, for instance, won't be penalized if he makes 3, because he has such a huge image on SM (99.7 million followers on Instagram), that referees let him play to create more spectacular games and talk even more about him on SM.

About the authors: the two of them have a great interest in this topic because they have been practicing this sport for years. They developed a passion about basketball, and especially about the NBA. They are also very keen on SM, and as young people, they know that Social Networks (SN) can have a strong impact, positive or negative, on an organization. Thus, they combine their two interests to deepen this topic.

For the NBA, with a business motivation point of view, the goal of using SM is to bring up a new online communication and interaction channel with fans. By doing that, they hope that their fans develop a bigger interest and engagement towards the league and thus, bring them back more money through the sales of jerseys, game places, etc. For them, SM is also a way to communicate with the crowd that is not yet engaged into the NBA for developing a growing interest. They mainly use reels on Instagram because it allows their fans and the crowd to live the best actions of the game but also to reach way more people than with a classic picture post.

The aim of this research study is to examine how SM affects the NBA's ability to establish an online connection with its followers, as well as its impact on the mental well-being of NBA players.

For this purpose, we mainly focus on NBA and its players from the 2000 up to 2022, because it corresponds to the emergence of SM in sport environment, and the importance for the basketball stars to have a good image on SN.

1.2. Research objectives, questions and approach

In this study, we have established the following research objectives: (i) acquire information about the implementation of SN in a major league sport through existing theories and past empirical studies; (ii) better understand the impact of SN on players' mental health and relationships with fans; (iii) create new knowledge about the SM impact on NBA fans and players.

For this investigation, there are one main research question and three sub-research questions:

- RQ1 - What is the impact of SM on the NBA for building an online relationship with fans and on NBA players' mental health?
- RQ 1.1 - How does the NBA use SM to build a relationship with fans?
- RQ 1.2 - How does SM impact NBA players' mental health?
- RQ 1.3: How does SM impact the NBA players' income?

We conducted this study by applying an inductive approach in the context of the innovation management track course during the fall semester of 2021.

1.3. Thesis structure

This work is divided into six distinct chapters. In the introduction to this work, the author first presents the background of the SM and the NBA in general through the time and the real impact that this factor can have on the player and the organization. Then, we present our personal motivation for this research topic and the business motivation for the National Basketball Academy; it also presents the research objectives and questions, and the research approach applied to carry out this study.

Chapter 2 "Literature Review" contains the most important theory and early research, including the influence of SM on fans and players due to its psychological health and the proposed structural model. Chapter 3 "Methodology" The data collection and research question answering approach is outlined. The "Results" chapter, Chapter 4, presents the collected secondary data results. The "Discussion" chapter, Chapter 5, delves into limitations and how to address them, including a comparison with prior research and ethical guidelines. The final chapter, Chapter 6, "Conclusions," highlights the main findings and their management implications, while also suggesting areas for future research.

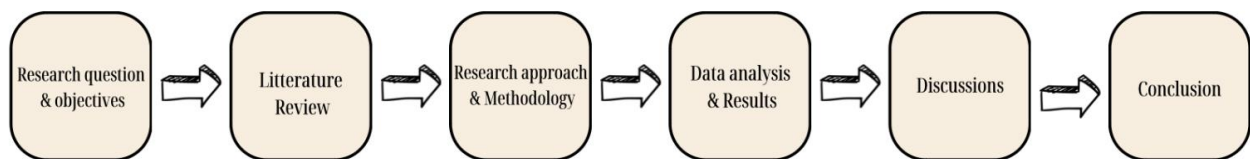


Figure 1: Thesis Structure

2. Literature review

The following chapter delves into the previous work related to the impact of SM on the NBA. The research questions are explored through previous work/ article and advancements related to this topic are highlighted. Firstly, an explanation is given regarding the process of finding relevant academic sources on this subject. Then, the impact of SM on the NBA is discussed, including the various tools and techniques used in this context. The third part of the chapter focuses on the behavior of NBA fans on SM platforms, and the SM impact on mental. Finally, an analysis of the potential benefits and drawbacks of SM on the NBA is also critically reviewed.

2.1. Introduction

The National Basketball Association (NBA) is one of the most popular professional sports leagues in the world, with a global fan base that continues to grow. One of the key drivers of this growth has been the rise of SM platforms, which have enabled fans to connect with the league and its players in new and exciting ways. While SM has undoubtedly had a positive impact on the NBA's popularity

and engagement, it has also raised some important questions about its potential impact on mental health and fan behavior. Research has shown that SM can have a profound impact on mental health, both positive and negative. On the one hand, SM platforms can provide an important source of support and connection for individuals who may otherwise feel isolated. However, they can also contribute to feelings of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues, particularly for individuals who are exposed to negative or hostile online environments. In the context of the NBA, SM has created new opportunities for fans to engage with their favorite teams and players, but it has also raised concerns about the potential for fan behavior to become more extreme or even dangerous. The anonymity provided by SM platforms can make it easier for individuals to engage in harassment or other negative behaviors, which can have a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of players and other members of the NBA community.

This literature review concentrates on scrutinizing prior research publications that delve into the effects of SM on the NBA, with specific attention given to mental well-being and the behavior of fans. Through a comprehensive analysis of the literature, we firstly aim to shed light on the potential benefits and eventual drawbacks of SM for the NBA; secondly, provide insights into how the NBA league and its stakeholders can effectively manage these drawbacks while harnessing the power of SM to engage with fans and promote positive mental health outcomes.

Through this research work, we want to focus on the previous work and current knowledge found on google scholar. We want to collect the maximum data from previous work and from different publications. To identify relevant published previous work, we used Google Scholar searches with different keywords such as “NBA”, “SM”, “impact”. We decided to focus our research on the last few decades, from 2000 when emerged NBA and SM up to 2022 and see the current number of relevant publications within the body of knowledge.

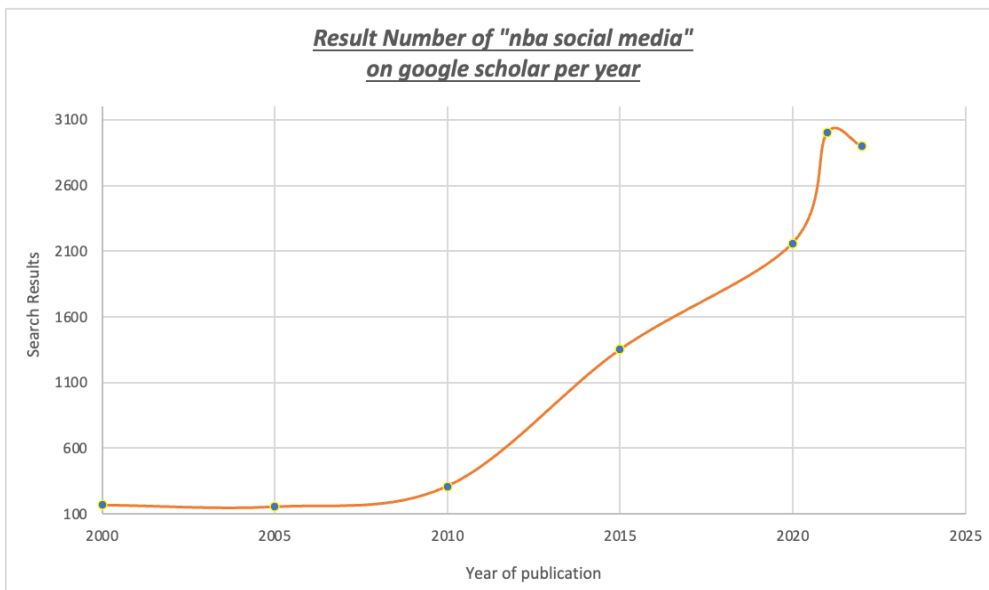


Figure 2: Number of results on Google Scholar by searching “NBA Social Media”

When searching for "NBA Social Media" on Google Scholar and analyzing the number of results over the years starting in 2000, we can see a significant increase in the number of publications related to the topic.

Back in 2000, Google Scholar showed just 160 findings that had to do with NBA SM. This isn't unexpected given that SM wasn't as widespread in society during that period. However, by the year 2010, the number of results had risen to 320. This growth can be attributed to the rise of SM platforms like Twitter and Facebook, and their increasing influence on society.

In 2015, the number of results increased to 1,350, indicating that NBA SM had become a significant topic of research in the academic community. By 2020, there were over 2,200 results related to NBA SM, indicating that the interest in this topic has continued to grow over the years. This increase in the number of results over the years shows that NBA SM has become an increasingly important topic in the academic community. The emergence of SM platforms and their effect on the NBA and the sports sector has resulted in a surge of interest in comprehending the part played by SM in sports marketing, branding, and fan engagement.

The analysis carried out on NBA SM can offer important perspectives into the influence of SM on the NBA and sports industry, and offer guidance on the most effective techniques for SM marketing

and branding in the sports industry. Overall, the increasing number of results related to NBA SM on Google Scholar over the years is a clear indication of the importance of this topic in the academic community.

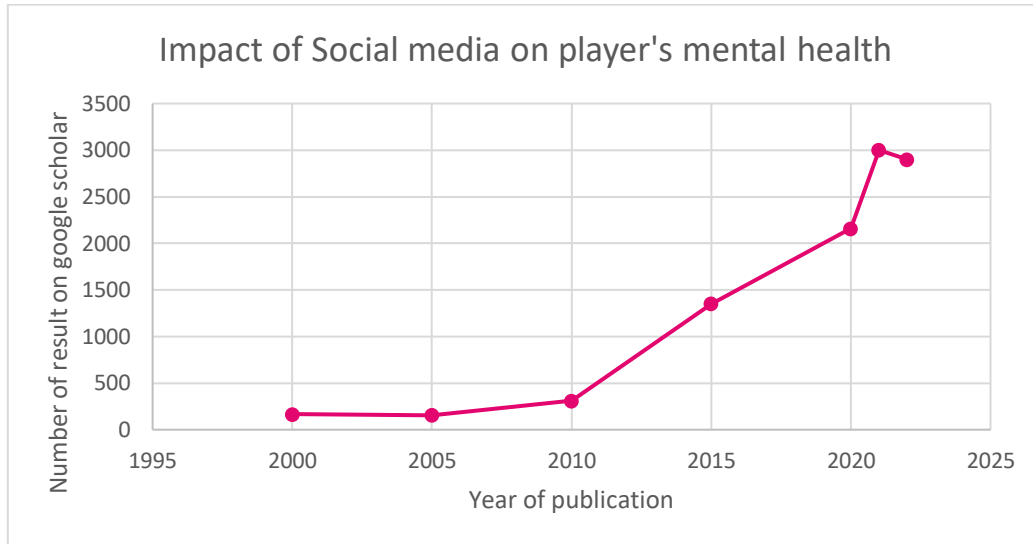


Figure 3: Number of results on Google Scholar by searching "NBA" "Impact" "Social Media" "Mental health"

Searching for "NBA" "impact" "social media" "mental health" on Google Scholar over the years from 2000 onwards shows an interesting trend. In the early years, there were very few results. In fact, there were no results before 2010. However, as SM began to become more prevalent and mental health became a more widely discussed topic, the number of results began to increase.

Between 2010 and 2015, the number of results increased steadily, but not dramatically. This is likely because SM was still relatively new and mental health was not yet a major topic of discussion in the NBA or in society as a whole.

Between 2015 and 2020, there was a sharp increase in the number of results. This coincides with the NBA's increased use of SM platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, as well as the league's increased focus on mental health awareness. Many articles were published during this time period discussing the impact of SM on mental health, particularly among NBA players.

In 2021, the number of results seems to have leveled off, but it is still significantly higher than it was just a few years ago. This suggests that the topic is still relevant and being discussed in academic circles.

Overall, the increasing number of results for "NBA" "impact" "social media" "mental health" on Google Scholar reflects the growing awareness of the importance of mental health in sports and the impact of SM on athletes' mental health. It also highlights the value of academic research in understanding and addressing these issues.

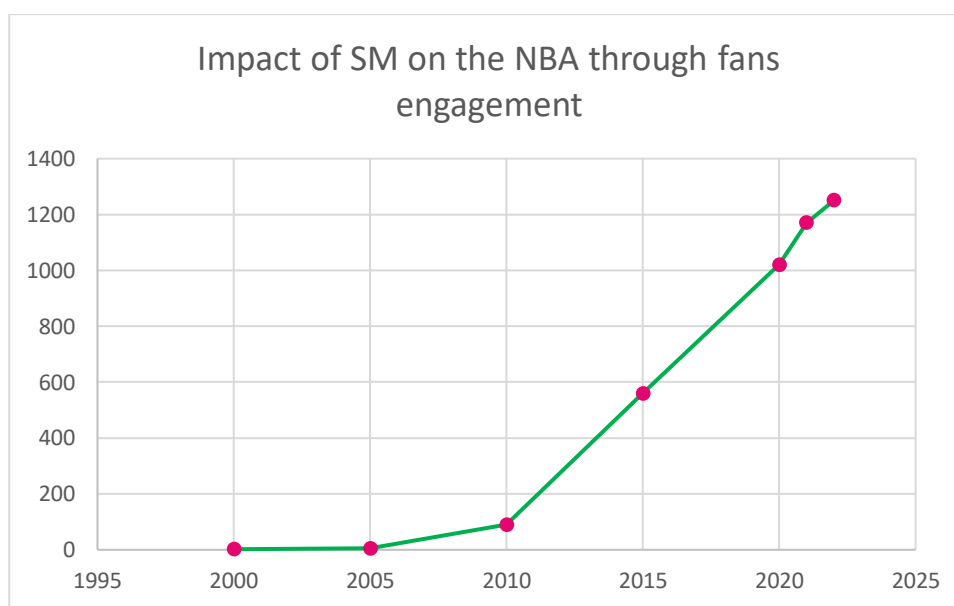


Figure 4: Number of results on Google Scholar by searching "NBA" "Impact" "Social Media" "Fans"

Using the Google Scholar search engine, a search for "NBA" "social media" "impact" "fans" yields a growing number of research articles over time.

In 2000, the search yielded only 2 results. By 2010, the number had grown to 90. In 2015, there were 559 results, a significant growth for the fan engagement and we can see in the same time the real impact and growth of SM. The growth in publications continued into 2020, with 1020 results. The trend continued with 1170 results in 2021, and till end of 2022 they reached 1250 publication.

This trend of increasing publication numbers over time suggests a growing interest in the impact of SM on the NBA and its fans. As SM continues to play an increasingly important role in the sports industry, it is likely that research in this area will continue to grow and expand.

The table below lists the papers that were determined to be most pertinent for this investigation across all Google Scholar searches using these keywords.

Table 1: Selected ten most relevant publications

Author	Year	Title	Cognitive Effect	Monetary Effect	Mental Health Effect
Abrahamsen, F., & Pensgaard, A.	2012	Longitudinal Changes in Motivational Climate and Performance Anxiety Among Elite Handball Players			x
Atske, S.	2021	Social Media Use in 2021	x		
Daniels, T.	n.d.	Adam Silver: Social Media, Anxiety Play Role in NBA Stars Being Unhappy			x
Washington Post	2022	How the NBA got serious about mental health			x
Jackson, B., & Dimmock, J. A.	2017	An exploration of athlete brand image on social media		x	
Kennedy, A.	2022	Which NBA players have gained the most followers during playoffs?		x	
Kloc, M., Tomanek, M., & Cieřliński, W.	n.d.	Social media and the value of contracts based on the example of the NBA.		x	
Liao, Y., Lin, Y., & Chen, Y.	2016	The effects of social media communication on NBA fan community building	x		
NBA.Com: NBA Communications	2021	NBA and Twitter announce multi-year partnership extension	x		
Shields-Zeeman, L., Collin, D. F., Batra, A., & Hamad, R.	2021	How does income affect mental health and health behaviours? A quasi-experimental study of the earned income tax credit			x

2.2. Social Media

2.2.1. The appearance of SM

In 1969, the same year as Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon, Internet was created. It was a revolution because people no longer needed to exchange physically documents and information; they could do it at distance. Since then, they also could communicate with people far from them.

In 1997, Andrew Weinreich thought about a website where people can communicate, create their own social network, and create their own profile. This was the creation of the first SM, Six Degrees (RBS Productions, 2017). Since then, other SM were developed such as LinkedIn, in 2002, which was the first SM to put in contact job seekers and managers who are looking for new talents.

The 3 biggest SM were created a few years later. Facebook, in 2004, by Mark Zuckerberg, renamed Meta; Twitter, in 2006, by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, and Biz Stone; and Instagram, in 2010, by Kevin Systrom and purchased by Facebook in 2012 (Manrique, 2019).

Facebook revolutionized the world at its creation. It is based on the same concept as the first SM, Six Degrees, but more open to the world. Whereas on Six Degrees we can only share and see content from people from our first, second and third degree; on Facebook, the boundaries are broken. Facebook overcomes its ancestor by letting people share and see content from people all over the world they don't even know. People could literally discover the world through the Internet and that's why it was a revolution.

For a couple of years, Instagram has overcome Facebook because it has kept up with the times by offering much more video and photo content, which makes it livelier. Actually, it combines the best features of the other social networks: the feed of Facebook, the stories of Snapchat, and the freedom of speech of Twitter.

Today, 2 billion people use Instagram, so it is a great opportunity for companies such as the NBA to promote their products, games, etc. because they know they can reach a large number of people.

There is a last opponent that popped up only 5 years ago because of its merger with Musical.ly, TikTok. It is a short-form video hosting service that purchased Muscial.ly in 2017 and merged in 2018 (Manrique, 2019). Since then, this is the emergent social network that everyone uses because it is

way more dynamic than other SM and they found an algorithm that makes people “addict” and stay on the app for hours. *“The algorithm tries to get people addicted rather than giving them what they really want,”* said Guillaume Chaslot, the founder of Algo Transparency (How TikTok holds our attention. The New York Times, May 10, 2021). Today, almost 1 billion people use the app with an average of 95 minutes on the app per day and per person (Wallaroo, 2022).

This is a bargain for companies like the NBA because they know they are likely to reach way more people.

Today one of the most useful SM for the NBA is twitter, The NBA has over 36 million Twitter followers, making it the second most-followed sports league on the platform (after the NFL). During the 2021 NBA Finals, tweets about the event generated over 88 million impressions, with an average of 1.1 million tweets per game. And Twitter has been a significant source of breaking news and rumors in the NBA, with many journalists and insiders using the platform to share information and connect with fans.

Twitter is a critical platform for the NBA because it provides a direct, real-time way to connect with fans, share information and build engagement around the league.

Twitter allows the NBA to connect with fans in real time, sharing information, highlights, and insights as they happen. This creates a sense of immediacy and excitement around the league, keeping fans connected and informed.

Then we have the content you can find in real time on SM, Twitter also provides a powerful platform for the NBA to amplify its content, including video highlights, news articles, and promotional material. The NBA can use Twitter to promote its games, events, and merchandise, allowing it to reach a massive audience of fans around the world.

In addition, the community around the NBA is very large and the largest number of followers of the league come from Twitter. Twitter allows the NBA to build communities of fans and connect with them on a more personal level. The NBA can use Twitter to interact with fans, answer their questions and share behind-the-scenes content, creating a sense of intimacy and connection with its audience.

Through SM, fans can also chat/interact with players. Twitter also offers fans a direct way to connect with their favorite NBA players. Players can use Twitter to share their thoughts and experiences, connect with fans and build their personal brand.

Finally, Twitter offers significant business opportunities for the NBA, including advertising partnerships, sponsorships and other collaborations. By establishing a strong presence on Twitter, the NBA can leverage its massive audience to generate revenue and build its brand.

2.2.2. The growth of social networks and their use for NBA marketing purpose

Since the appearance of the first SM in 1997, Six Degrees, but especially the creation of Facebook in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, the use of SM is constantly increasing. Back in 2005, just 5 percent of American adults reported that they had utilized at least one SM platform, whereas in 2021, it is 81 percent if YouTube is considered, or 69 if not. This figure increases to 84 percent when it comes to young people under 30 (Pew Research Center, 2021). In 2021, almost 4.5 billion people used SM; a figure that doubled since 2015 (Social Media Statistics Details—Undiscovered Maine—University of Maine, n.d.). This impressive number of users constitute many potential customers for the companies. What's more, they are freely and easily reachable, which is a bargain for them.

Before the appearance of the Internet, and later SM, companies used what we call now "traditional marketing". It is basically the offline marketing tools, such as mail blast, TV advertising, magazines, billboards, etc. (The Balance, 2019). The problems with this type of marketing, which is still used nowadays, are that it is expensive, especially for TV advertising; it is hard to track results and potential customers don't have the information directly (The Balance, 2019).

Nowadays, more than 91 percent of the companies in the USA are using SM for marketing purposes (Social Media Statistics Details—Undiscovered Maine—University of Maine, n.d.) They realized that it is a bargain for them, because it is free and they can reach half of the world population in less than a minute. The thing is that competition is becoming higher and higher for the companies on SM over the years, because every company wants to be there. Thus, marketing on SM was free, at the basis, but not anymore because companies that want to be more seen and influential than their competitors have to pay. HubSpot found that, between 2014 and 2015, the average of social marketing spent for companies increased from \$17.7 billion to \$23.6 billion (Medium, 2017). In Mangold and Faulds' (2009) view, SM has become so ubiquitous that it is considered a "hybrid element of the promotional mix." This is because SM shares the traditional function of integrated marketing communication tools in allowing companies to interact with customers but differs in that

customers can also interact with one another, thus limiting the level of control that an organization has over communication. The "promotional mix" or "marketing mix" refers to the various choices that organizations make in the entire process of introducing a product or service to the market, which comprises the 4 P's: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion (Social Media Today, 2012). That's why a lot of experts consider that SM is the main part of the Promotion part.

About the NBA, they are not late about this marketing tool because, in 2021, they announced a multi-year partnership extension with Twitter in order to offer the NBA Twitter community the possibility to follow games, highlights and tentpole moments on the platform (NBA and Twitter announce multi-year partnership extension, 2021). This allowed them to watch NBA games without having to pay for a subscription to the NBA Network, NBC, CBS, or ESPN. According to the NBA, they have built *"one of the largest Twitter communities in the world, with more than 380 million followers globally across all league, team and player platforms"* (NBA and Twitter announce multi-year partnership extension, 2021)

This presence of the NBA on SM has also a strong positive impact because it employs people, especially community managers, video editors, blog writers, etc. to maintain the SM clean and up to date (Mountainise, 2020).

Another proof that SM is a bargain for the NBA is their deal with the Chinese company Tencent. Indeed, there are 300 million basketball players in China, which is almost as much as in the USA, so the NBA knows that China is a huge market for them. In 2019, they closed a \$1.5 billion deal with the Chinese's Internet-based platform Tencent to broadcast NBA games in China (Wall Street Journal, 2019, p. 1317). This deal is now put at risk after a tweet of the Houston Rockets' general manager Daryl Morey supporting the manifestations in Hong Kong (Fainaru-Wada & Fainaru, 2022).

2.3. SM and NBA

Nowadays, young people use SM daily to communicate with their friends or to share what they are living. The average age of people with this habit become older and older over the years.

About sport, the NBA is one of the most followed leagues over the world, with 30 million followers on Instagram in 2018 before the three other main leagues in the USA: NFL (National Football

League), MLB (Major League of Baseball) and NHL (National Hockey League), which counted between 3 and 11.7 million followers on Instagram.

Today, it is still the same, with almost 20 million followers on Facebook and Twitter, and more than 70 million on Instagram. That shows that the league creates a first link with fans through those SM. People are interested in watching NBA games, but they are more and more interested in following their favorite players on SM and collecting their insights through interviews. *“When it comes to the athletes they follow, 60 percent of NBA fans said they are most interested in hearing that player’s thoughts about the recent or upcoming game”* (D. Broughton, Sport Business Journal, 2012). This figure shows that thanks to SM, fans are interested, as well as watching games, on the insights of players to know what happens in their mind.

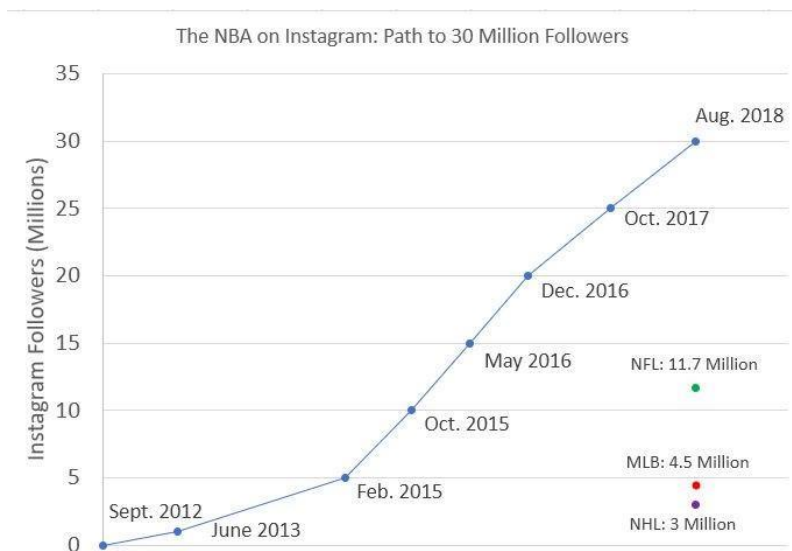


Figure 5: Number of NBA follower on Instagram. Source: Ben Golliver, 2018 (Twitter).

Another example is LeBron James. He is one of the players with the biggest image and incomes in the NBA, around \$45M this season (LeBron James NBA Salary | HoopsHype, n.d.)).

However, we could have thought that this image is only due to the media and interviews that he does, and that he doesn't really care about his image. By looking at his Instagram account, we see that he has almost 100 million followers on this social network. Nonetheless, thanks to SM, he developed his image and uses it for a good cause (Instagram, 2022).

He comes from a poor city in Ohio named Akron. His mother struggled to keep a job for a long time, he didn't know his father and was surrounded by the violence in his hometown. In some interviews, he said that he already slept in his mother's car because they couldn't pay the rent. All these issues disturbed him a lot to such an extent that he struggled to make friends (RBS Productions, 2017).

This hard childhood has built him a warrior mindset and he made a promise to himself to help his hometown when he will get the means to do it. That is why he created a school, named "I Promise School" in his home city, Akron. This school welcomes kids at risk to help them not to have the same childhood he had. At its creation in July 2018, 240 kids were registered over 2 grades but these figures increased since that day (RBS Productions, 2017).

More than that, he manages and finances an association to promote the vote of Afro-American people named "More Than A Vote" that he created with other sportsmen from NHL and WNBA (Women National Basketball Association) in 2020. The idea of this project mainly appeared due to an anti-racial wave in the USA, especially after the death of George Floyd in May 2020. The goal of this association is to encourage Afro-American people to vote and to denounce people who prevent them from this right. (Kloc et al., n.d.)

This association is very useful but allows as well to create a link stronger than ever with his fans that needed an association as this one. LeBron James promoted his association on his SM and this initiative serves his image but also, the NBA's one because the engagement of NBA players and the good use of the image they have (Good Morning America, 2020).

Then, during Covid-19 pandemic, fans couldn't go to stadiums to watch games anymore, and players couldn't travel to different cities to play. To fix this problem, the NBA created a "bubble" in DisneyLand in Orlando, Florida to play all games. Players were tested every few days to control the flow of the pandemic. So, they played in a stadium without any public. In order not to lose the link created previously with fans, and thanks to new technologies, the NBA installed huge screens around the court which shows faces of fans watching the games with the NBA League Pass. This was a great decision done by the league because people wanted to be broadcasted on the screens. Also, during the half-time, some games were organized to pass the time, so fans were engaged during the half-time, which created a strong link between them and the NBA.

Thus, the link created between the NBA and the fans is due to NBA initiatives, of course, but also to the engagement of their players and the use of their image for the good cause, because they also engage NBA image when they take initiatives.

2.4. The impact of SM on the NBA

In recent years, the NBA has undergone significant changes as a result of the impact of SM. This has led to a transformation in how players and fans interact with each other, opening up new avenues for content creation and promotional activities. The NBA's official SM accounts were launched in 2009, with the league initially focusing on Facebook and Twitter. Since then, the NBA has expanded its SM presence to include platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube. NBA players have also become increasingly active on SM, using it to connect with fans, promote their personal brand, and share their lives off the court. SM has helped to increase the NBA's global reach, and has become an important tool for the league in engaging with younger audiences.

SM has not only changed the way fans interact with the league and follow their favorite teams and players but has also influenced the way teams and players promote themselves and sell their personal brand and sponsorships.

The social networks have given fans unprecedented access to the behind-the-scenes of the league, as well as the private lives of players, by posting exclusive content and connecting directly with their fans, players can strengthen their personal brand and attract sponsors. Similarly, teams can use social networks to promote their games, players, and team brand, which can attract new fans and strengthen the loyalty of existing fans. At the same time, they have allowed players to become increasingly aware of their public image and to control their own narrative.

SM has greatly increased the visibility of NBA players. Previously, players could only be seen on the court or in media interviews. However, with the advent of SM platforms like Twitter, Instagram and TikTok, players now have a direct platform to engage with fans, show their personality and build their personal brand.

By posting on SM, NBA players can share their thoughts, experiences and ideas with their fans in real time. This creates a sense of personal connection between players and fans that was not

possible before SM. It also allows players to control their narrative and showcase their interests and hobbies outside of basketball.

Additionally, SM has opened up new opportunities for NBA players to connect with fans around the world. Players can now reach fans in different countries and time zones, creating a truly global fan base. This increased visibility can also lead for example to lucrative endorsement deals and other business opportunities for players.

However, with this increased visibility comes the added pressure to perform well and maintain a positive image. Negative comments or incidents can quickly go viral on SM, which can damage a player's reputation. Therefore, NBA players need to be careful about the content they post on SM and be aware of the impact it can have on their image and reputation.

Finally, social networks have also played an important role in promoting the league and generating revenue for teams and players. Indeed, the more a player is followed and has a strong impact on SM, the more he will interest brands to contract sponsorship with him. This is the case of LeBron James or Kevin Durant for instance, for whom the biggest part of their income comes from advertising and sponsorships.

2.4.1. SM impact to the NBA

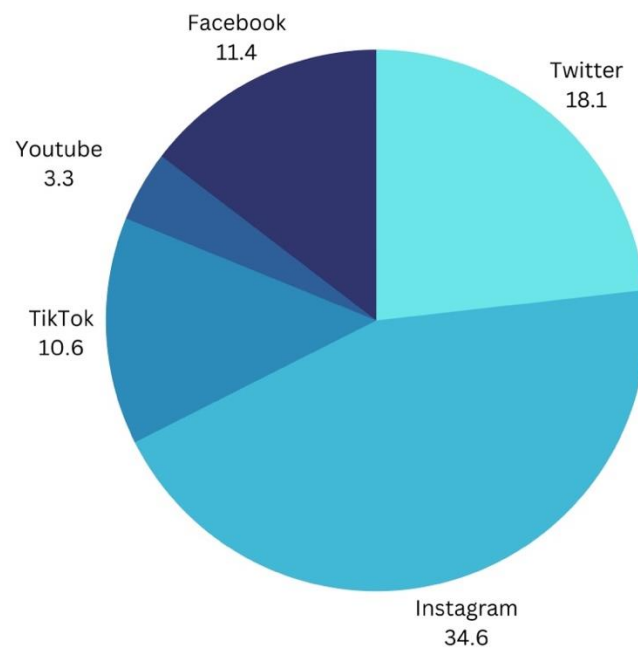


Figure 6: Comparative number of follower (in million) on each SM platform according to a report by Socialbakers in 2021

These numbers demonstrate the NBA's significant impact on SM and its ability to reach a large audience on various platforms. The NBA's SM strategy has been successful in engaging with fans, promoting its brand, and growing its popularity globally.

As described above, the league and SM try to create a link between fans and NBA players. Some players are not keen on social networks and prefer staying away from them, as Kawhi Leonard, who is almost nonexistent on Twitter, or DeMar DeRozan who deleted all his posts on Instagram and said, *"I always wish I had played in the '90s, so I wouldn't deal with SM."* (DeMar DeRozan, 2019, para. 2).

But the biggest part of NBA players is on social networks and very active. Half of the time, they post pictures of them in the stadium corridor or wearing their team jersey. This is a very powerful advertisement for the league and the promotion for the game, because they are followed by millions of people. They bring back a lot of money for the league and by-products. Obviously, some players bring back more money to the NBA because their names make more sales, such as LeBron James,

for instance. Thus, we can wonder: is there any relationship between the number of followers on SM and the NBA players incomes?

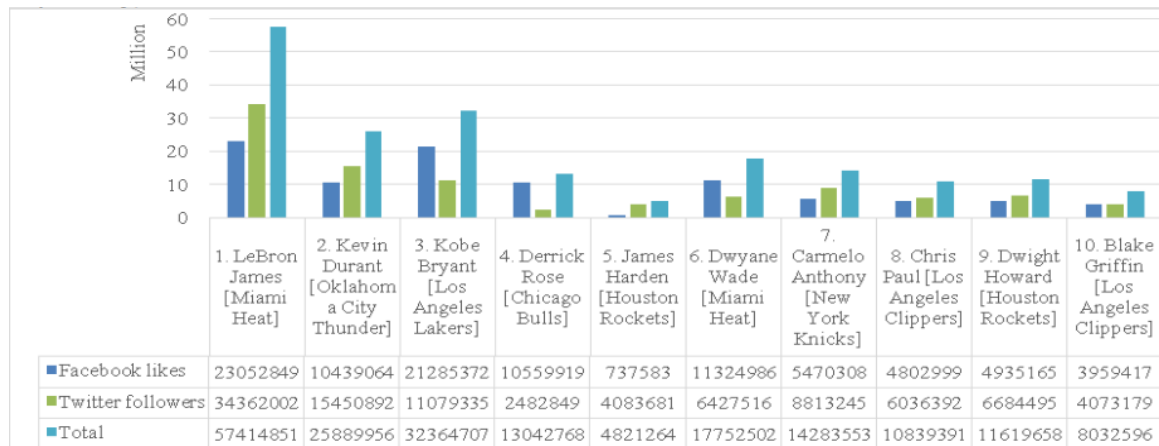


Figure 7: Number of followers on Facebook and Twitter and the total number of followers of 10 NBA players. Kloc et al. (n.d.)

Figure 7 represents the number of followers of different NBA players on Facebook and Twitter and the total on both SM. It shows that the most popular is LeBron James, also known as “King James”, with almost 60 million followers, in 2017 and the least popular is James Harden with 4.8 million followers. All other players have a total follower between 10 and 30 million followers. There is a huge gap between the number of followers of the most and the least popular NBA player in this chart, but the total is still considerable.

Among these people who follow NBA players, some of them are real fans and have only one dream which is to watch an NBA game in a stadium and interact with their favorite players during the event. That’s why the NBA organizes some events before, during and after the games to allow fans to interact with them.

Without forgetting that SM allows people to keep contact and share content around the world, we know that fans who come to the games want to take pictures with their favorite players. If the interaction went well with the player, fans would share the pictures with their friends, and it would increase the popularity of the player.

The more a player is popular, the more he will be contacted to make advertisements and thus earn more money.

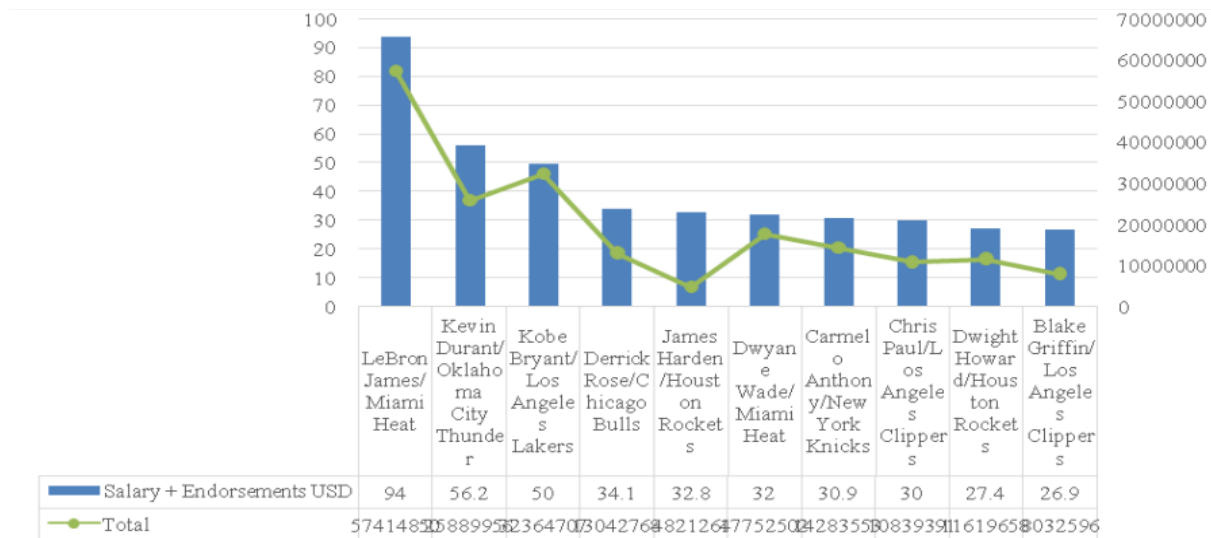


Figure 8: Earnings of 10 NBA players compared to their total followers on SM (Facebook & Twitter). Kloc et al. (n.d.)

Figure 8 shows the earning of ten NBA players (total of salary and endorsement) in millions of US dollars and their total number of followers on Facebook and Twitter, in 2017.

It is clear that the earning of a player is correlated with this popularity. The highest-earning NBA income is LeBron James, with \$94 million and over 80 million followers. The only exception is James Harden who has a number of followers way lower than his incomes (\$30 million of earnings for less than 10 million followers).

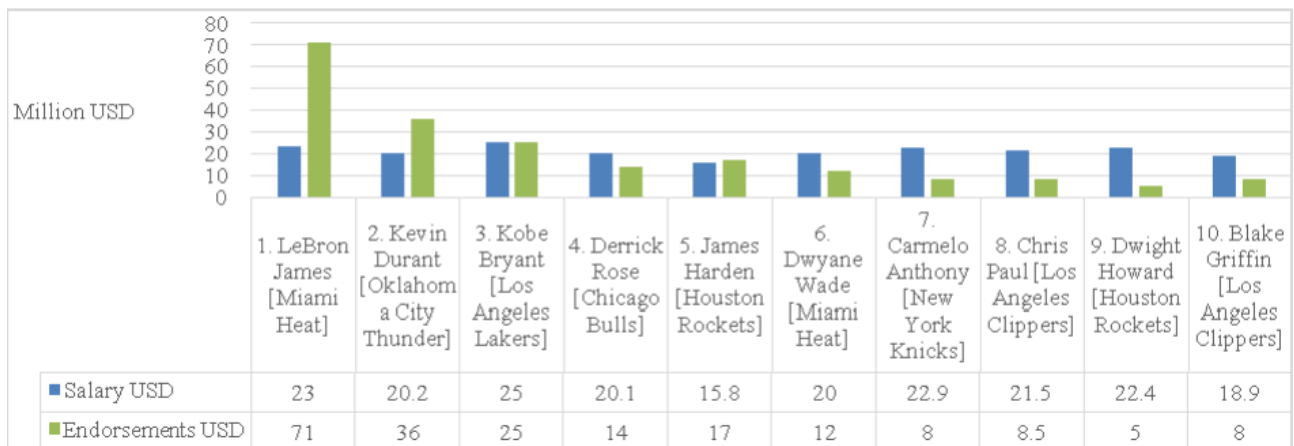


Figure 9: Comparison of salaries and endorsements of 10 NBA players. Kloc et al. (n.d.)

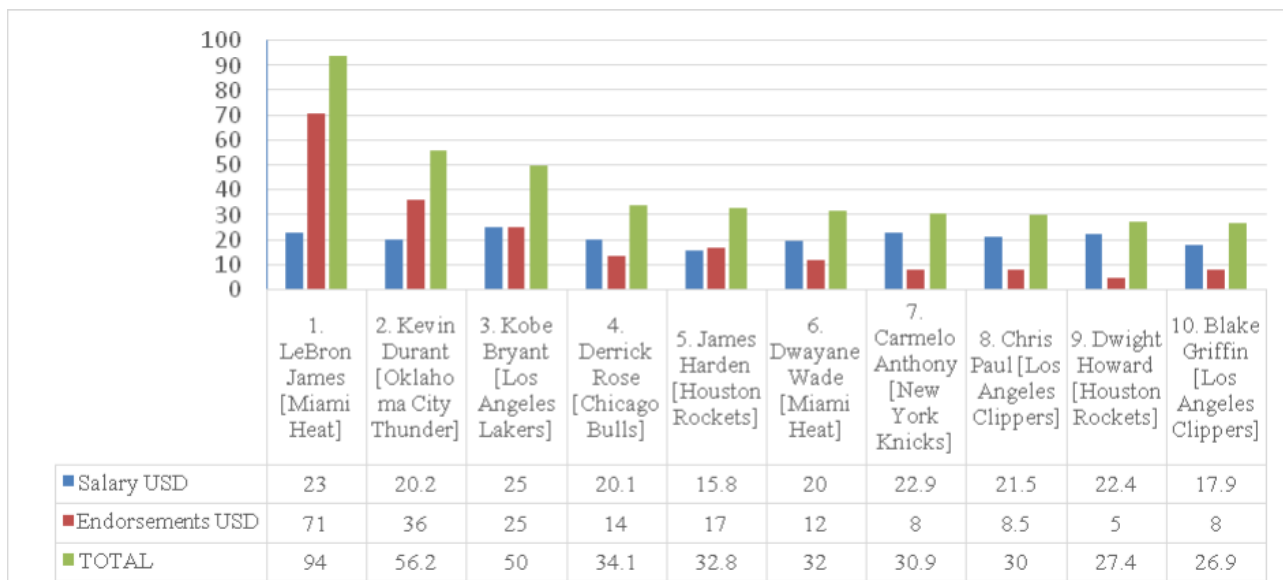


Figure 10: Salaries, endorsements and total earnings of 10 NBA players. Kloc et al. (n.d.)

Even more, figure 9 shows that, nowadays, the biggest part of an NBA player's income is no more the salary but the endorsements. The most popular NBA player, LeBron James earns more than three times his salary with the advertisements, whereas Blake Griffin, one of the least popular shows in the chart, earns just half of his salary thanks to endorsements.

In figure 10, it is even clearer. These ten players have almost the same salary (around \$20 million a year) but there is a huge gap in their total earnings because of their popularity on SM. The most popular, LeBron James earns \$94 million whereas one of the least popular, Blake Griffin, earns \$26.9 million a year.

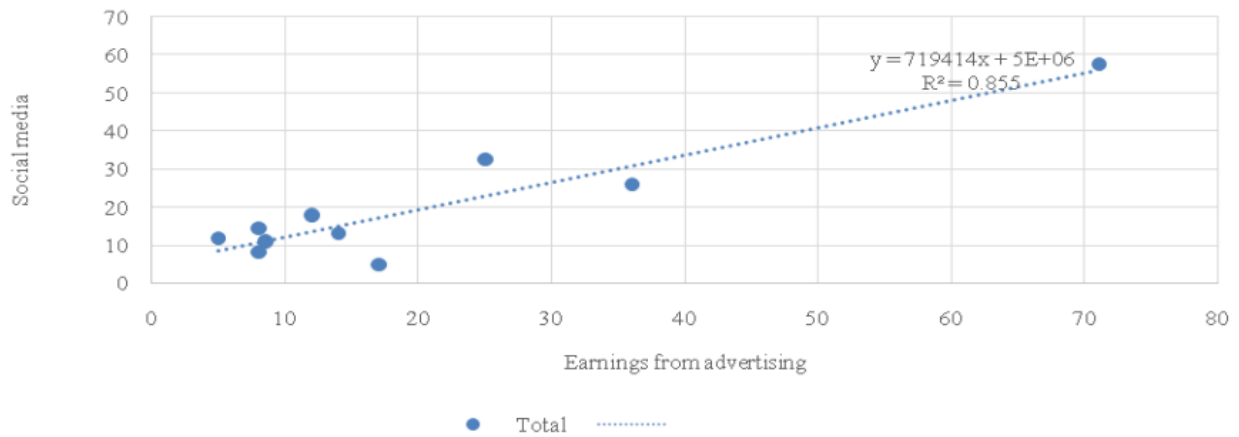


Figure 11: Correlation between earnings from advertising and SM (Facebook & Twitter). Kloc et al. (n.d.)

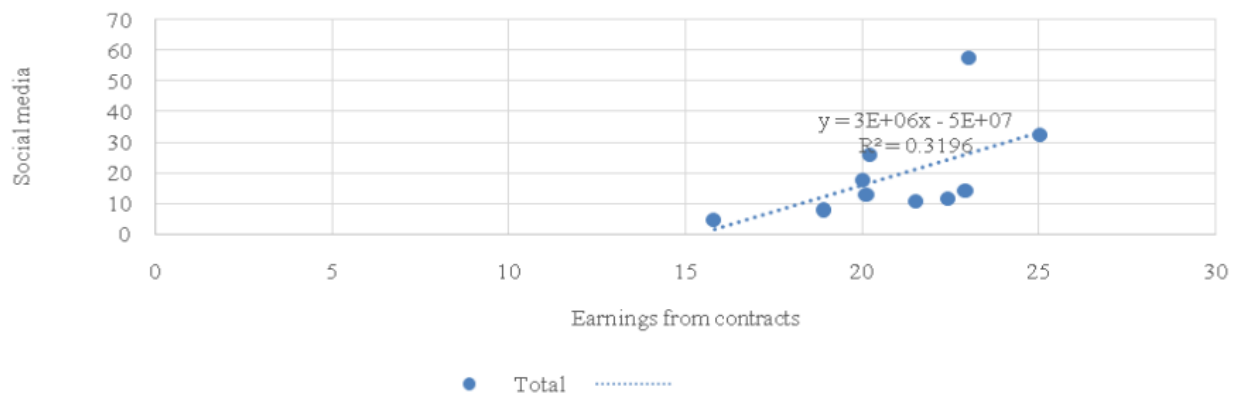


Figure 12: Correlation between earnings from contracts and SM (Facebook & Twitter). Kloc et al. (n.d.)

Figure 11 provides evidence to support these claims, indicating a strong correlation between advertising revenue and SM (0.855). This suggests that having a larger presence on SM platforms can lead to increased revenue. On the other hand, the correlation between salary earnings and SM is much less significant (0.3196), indicating that having a popular SM presence may not have a significant impact on increasing one's salary.

In conclusion, we have observed that having a large number of followers on SM can lead NBA players to earn a significant amount of money through endorsements. However, it may not necessarily result in higher earnings from contracts. Therefore, a player's popularity on SM can have a substantial impact on their overall earnings, and as such, it is essential for them to pay attention to their SM presence.

2.4.2. The impact of SM on players' mental health

As it is said above, NBA players have to take care of their image on SM because their incomes mainly depend on that, but to what extent?

An athlete, in the general sense of the term, is seen like a superhuman who is very strong, mentally, and physically, and who can overcome everything. Even in the general belief, for most people, there is a playbook where a man has to be strong, never cries or talks about feelings and deals with issues on his own. The hall of famer Charles Barkley agrees with this thought: *"How could players be struggling when they make millions of dollars a year and stay in the best hotels in the world?"* (Charles Barkley, 2018).

But Traditional vs. Internet Marketing: Which One Is Best? (n.d.), sports psychologist disagrees with this statement and said that *"People who make \$75,000 and above, do not have different levels of happiness. So, the wealthy are not happier. External resources do not dictate internal wellness"* (para. 3).

Another person who disagrees with the hall of famer is the NBA commissioner, Adam Silver (2019): *"I think we live a bit in the age of anxiety"*, he said (para. 2).

According to these two experts, some NBA players are unhappy despite their fame and wealth, so the issue comes from elsewhere.

Dr Michael Gervais (2019) says, *"One of the greatest fears for modern humans is the fear of people's opinions (FOPO)"* (para. 5). This fear exists for decades because of after-game interviews, press conferences and meeting with fans but the exposition of the players to the fans were limited to the games and some appearances on TV or newspapers.

The problem is that, since the creation of SM, players are exposed to fans and thus their opinion 24/7, which means they don't have any rest and even less if there is a bad buzz over them.

They are obliged to please fans all day long, even if they are through some personal issues, because fans don't care about that. They see the star and the NBA player before the human being behind.

So, the FOPO existed before but it is even greater now since the apparition of SM. Through time, it can put a pressure on players that some of them can't support and create mental illness for some of them.

The first players to talk about mental illness were Kevin Love and DeMar DeRozan, in 2018. Their issues were personal but the exposition on SM didn't help. That's also why DeRozan quitted social networks. Their issues didn't appear in 2018, they were way older, but the FOPO was too important to talk about it, even more publicly. Kevin Love said "Everyone Is Going Through Something | By Kevin Love 2018, para. 1028".

Nevertheless, they found a way to face their fears and talk about it in newspapers and interviews, and thanks to their initiatives, the NBA launched a new mental health program in 2015, to encourage players to talk about their issues with specialists and fix their personal issues Everyone Is Going Through Something | By Kevin Love, (2018).

Also, the NBPA (National Basketball Players Association) launched its own program named Mental Health and Wellness Program in May 2018 to mentally support NBA players Everyone Is Going Through Something | By Kevin Love, (2018). Kevin Love also launched his foundation named Kevin Love Fund, which encourages people to talk about their mental health and live their healthiest life.

2.5. SM positive and negative impacts

The three notions described above (Fans' engagement, Players' income and Players' mental health) are directly impacted by SM but they can also be affected, in a smaller way, by the other notions.

Fans' engagement is a huge challenge for every team and the NBA in general because this allows the tickets and by-products sales, which increase the income of the team and the league; but indirectly, it can also have a strong impact over players and especially players' income.

For instance, in 2022, the Los Angeles Lakers team is followed by almost 21 million people on Instagram, which can be qualified as fans. Some of them, especially Los Angeles inhabitants, will come to see the games because they are fans of the team but a significant part of them will come only because LeBron James plays in this team. These persons can be from abroad or people who are not really keen on basketball but know James because he is a superstar.

This engagement from fans over LeBron makes his number of followers sharply increase by more than 5 million only during the 2022 Playoffs (Kennedy, 2022, (para. 329)). As explained in section 2.3.1. SM in the NBA, the more a player is followed on SM, the more he will gain money from outside the NBA. So, fans' engagement has an impact over NBA players' income.

Fans' engagement also has a link with players' mental health in the way that they impact their motivation. Wann's (1995) motivation scale showed that fans have a strong positive impact on the players self-esteem because they share the same emotions as the players (p.377-392). According to Abrahamsen and Pensgaard (2012), reduced perceptions of a task's motivating atmosphere were associated with greater performance concerns (p.32-36). It is possible to conclude that fans' engagement has a positive impact on NBA players' mental health.

Then, for people like NBA players, who gain millions of dollars per year, we can wonder if their high amount of income has an impact on their mental health and stability. In 2011, Sareen, Afifi, Asmundson and McMillan ran a research study to know if there is a relationship between household income and mental disorders, and the results are clear: *"Participants with household income of less than \$20 000 per year were at increased risk of incident mood disorders during the 3-year follow-up period in comparison with those with income of \$70 000 or more per year"* (p.1). This theory is also shared by Shields-Zeeman, Collin, Batra and Hamad in ten years later: *"higher income was associated with decreased psychological distress"* (para.3). So, for people like them, their income has a positive impact on their mental health and stability.

If we take the example of Stephen Curry, a major figure of the NBA, on court and outside the court, we can see that SM for him is important. Last year at each half-time he was used to check his twitter account at the halftime, to disconnect for the pressure and to check what happened with his name and what people says.

SM can have a significant impact on NBA players like Stephen Curry, both positively and negatively.

On the positive side, SM has helped to elevate Curry's profile and establish his personal brand. He has over 20 million followers on Instagram and over 15 million followers on Twitter, making him one of the most popular NBA players on SM. Through SM, Curry has been able to connect with fans around the world, sharing his experiences, insights, and personality beyond just the basketball court. This has helped to build his personal brand, making him more than just a great basketball player, but a cultural icon.

SM has also helped Curry to create new business opportunities, including endorsement deals and investment opportunities. He has been able to leverage his massive following to create partnerships with major brands like Under Armour, Chase Bank, and Palm, and he has also invested in various startups and businesses, using his SM influence to help promote these companies.

However, SM can also have negative impacts on NBA players like Curry. Negative comments or incidents can quickly go viral on SM, potentially damaging a player's reputation. Players must be careful about the content they post on SM and be mindful of the impact it can have on their image and reputation.

Moreover, SM can create a significant distraction for players, taking their focus away from basketball and leading to decreased performance. It is important for players like Curry to balance their SM activity with their professional responsibilities and maintain a strong work ethic.

To conclude this part on Stephen Curry and his link to SM, we can say that SM has had both positive and negative impacts. While it has helped elevate his personal brand and create new business opportunities, it also comes with added pressure to perform well and manage his image carefully. Curry must be mindful of the impact of SM on his professional and personal life and maintain a balance between his SM activity and his responsibilities as an NBA player.

2.6. Impact of SM on the player and the league

SM has transformed the manner in which individuals consume and engage with content, and the NBA and its players are not immune to this change. Despite the considerable attention given to how SM affects the mental well-being, revenue, and interaction with fans, there exist numerous other ways in which SM can influence the NBA and its players. One way that SM can impact the NBA and its players is through player accountability. SM can quickly bring to light inappropriate behavior or controversial statements made by players, which can lead to public backlash and impact their reputation and career (Hua & Liu, 2019). This can be seen in the case of former NBA player Gilbert Arenas, who faced widespread criticism after posting a controversial tweet about the WNBA in 2015 (Griffin, 2015).

SM can also facilitate player interaction, both on and off the court. Players can use SM to connect with each other, exchange tips and strategies, and learn about each other's playing styles (Suzuki, 2019). This can lead to new friendships and rivalries, as well as improve player performance.

In addition, SM can be used to promote players to fans in other countries, which can help the NBA expand its global reach (Ozanian, 2020). Players can use SM to connect with fans from different cultures, share their experiences playing in different countries, and build their personal brand.

SM can also impact the NBA as a league, as it can be used to promote the league and showcase its unique features (Lincoln, 2020). For example, the NBA has used SM to highlight its international player pool, player activism, and commitment to social justice causes.

Moreover, SM can provide valuable data analytics for teams and the league. Teams can use SM analytics to better understand their fans and create targeted marketing campaigns, while the league can use SM data to monitor trends and make strategic decisions about rule changes or player recruitment (Böckerman, 2019).

However, SM can also impact player privacy, as their personal lives and relationships can become public knowledge through SM (Hua & Liu, 2019). This can lead to unwanted attention and intrusion into their personal lives, and can affect their ability to focus on their game.

In conclusion to this part, SM has a variety of impacts on the NBA and its players beyond mental health, income, and fan engagement. From player accountability to league promotion and data analytics, SM has the potential to shape the NBA in a multitude of ways.

2.7. Exploring the Diverse Impacts of SM on the NBA Ecosystem

SM has brought about a wide range of impacts on the NBA and its stakeholders, beyond the well-known effects on mental health, income, and fan engagement. This essay presents some of the diverse impacts of SM on the NBA, focusing on areas such as team branding, player monetization, sponsorship opportunities, injury management, fan experience, and rule changes.

Team branding is a significant area of impact, as teams use SM to create and promote their unique brand identity and values, which can foster a loyal fan base (Kilgo, Johnson, & Harlow, 2019). Meanwhile, SM has enabled players to develop their personal brand and gain monetization opportunities by showcasing their personality, interests, and off-court activities (Siegfried & Bolter, 2021).

SM has also opened up new sponsorship opportunities for teams and players, as companies seek to collaborate with SM influencers who can endorse their products to a large and engaged audience

(Thompson, 2018). Additionally, SM can help players manage their injuries and communicate with fans about their recovery progress, thereby enhancing their public image and reducing undue pressure to return to play (Fernandez, 2021).

In conclusion, SM's impact on the NBA ecosystem is multi-dimensional and far-reaching. While SM has had positive impacts on areas such as branding, monetization, sponsorship, and fan engagement, it has also raised new challenges and concerns that need to be addressed. As SM continues to evolve, it is likely that its impacts on the NBA will become more complex and nuanced, posing new opportunities and challenges for the league and its stakeholders.

2.8. Identified Research gaps

The literature review confirms that since their appearance, SM keep taking more and more place in our lives to even become, nowadays, essential for any business that would want to grow and expand to the rest of the world. About the NBA, the authors found that SM has an impact on the relationship between the NBA and fans (Broughton, 2012), on the salary of NBA players (Kloc et al., n.d.) but also, on their mental health (Gervais, 2019).

This last impact is crucial because it is recent (from the 2010s) and NBA players are not always prepared to be exposed that much on SM and thus, to be criticized all day long, especially for the older ones. However, from the day players enter the NBA, SM is something that is part of their life until their retirement. Some players finally found the courage to reveal the hardness of the situation and the impact that it could have on their mental health or their lives in general, such as DeMar DeRozan or Kevin Love.

The authors found several publications on the negative impact of SM, especially on these two NBA players. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research about the prevention from mental illness due to SM in general, but especially for athletes or mediatized people was felt by the authors. This type of research is crucial because it would help a lot mediatized people to be prepared for their new life and to know how to apprehend it.

2.9. Research framework

The authors realized that SM has a strong impact on their lives and the society they live in. Without any deep research, they already knew that SM has an impact on companies, their marketing and our consumption behavior. Thus, passionate about basketball, they wondered what impact SM could have on the NBA and its players. Based on the current literature, the authors outlined three main impacts that SM could have on the NBA (Figure 11): (i) a cognitive impact; (ii) a monetary effect; (iii) a mental health effect (see I1 in Figure 11). These three notions are strongly affected by SM but can also be affected, in a smaller way, by the other notions (see I2 in Figure 11).

The cognitive effect plays an important role in this theoretical model because it is directly impacted by SM and strongly affects the NBA, its income, its image and its viability. If fans are not engaged, the NBA won't collect money from ticket sales and by-products and thus, the NBA can't run.

The second effect is about the money collected by players outside of the league. As explained in section 2.3.1. SM in the NBA, the more players are followed and represented on SM, the more they will collect money from advertising or collaboration with different brands.

The last impact in this theoretical model is the NBA players' mental health. When players enter the NBA, they are directly over exposed on SM. Some of them are not used to that and it can strongly affect their mental health and sometimes go until depression or burn-out. The problem is that players are not prepared for that when they start their career.

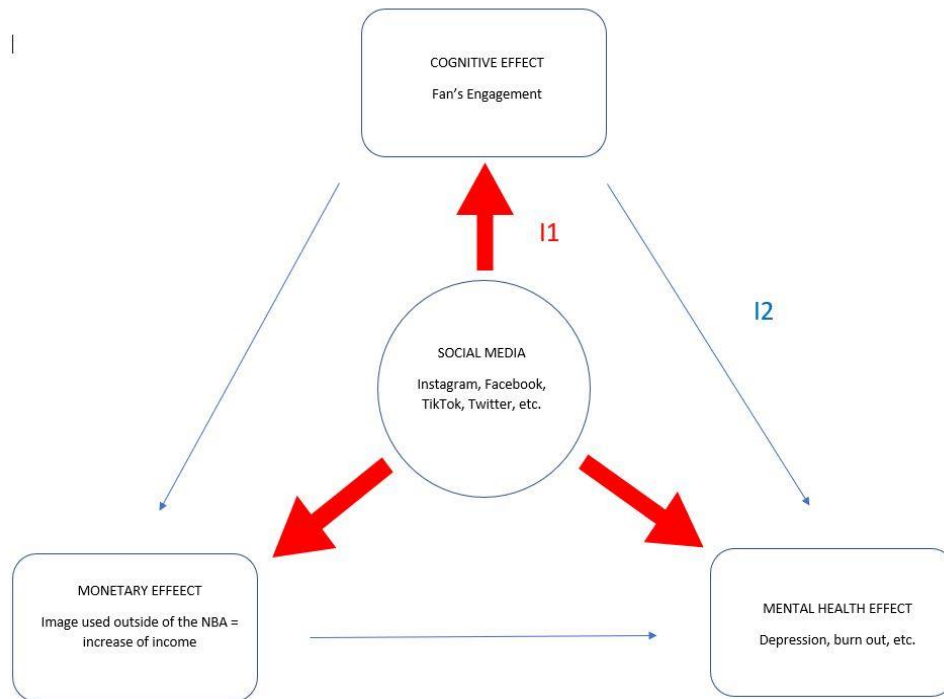


Figure 13: Proposed Structural Model highlighting I1 impacts and I2 other notions

3. Research methods and implementation

Due to the limitations of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in addressing multi-level research, combining the two strategies allows the strengths of one to counter the other's weaknesses (Jick 1979). An individual-level implementation model was developed to test both relationships that had been established and those found to be inconclusive in prior research.

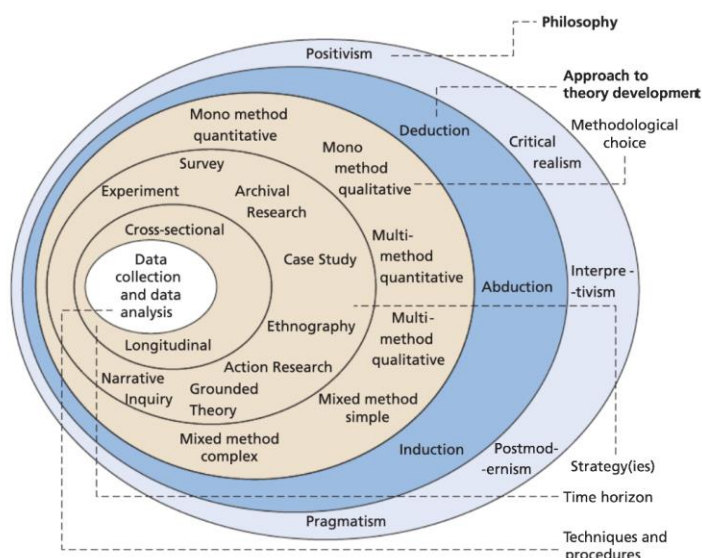


Figure 14: The research “onion”. Source: 2018 Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornill

This model adapted from Saunders, et al. (2012) shows the different ways to conduct a study using various research approaches and tools in order to obtain viable data collection and be able to analyze it in an attempt to draw objective conclusions.

3.1. Research context

To answer the research questions, a content analysis was conducted. Data on SM use by sports teams was obtained from their main Twitter sites as well as Instagram. The emergence of SM has dramatically changed the way we communicate with each other and as a result, our daily lives have been reshaped. We are seeing more and more new social networking sites, such as twitter and Instagram, appear to meet different types of human needs.

The rise of SM platforms offers businesses new marketing opportunities. Businesses can easily reach a wide range of audiences through direct interaction on SM. It is reported that 69% of small business owners use some type of SM (such as Instagram and Twitter) and approximately 78% of them plan to increase their SM budget (Rishika et al., 2008). Spending on SM marketing in the U.S. is expected to grow 34% to \$3.1 billion in 2014 (Forrester Research 2009).

Professional sports teams, like other brands, use SM and a range of SM platforms for various objectives. Typically, professional sports teams have numerous SM accounts that are present on different platforms, like Twitter and Instagram. Each SM platform offers a brand management opportunity for professional sports teams, allowing them to share information associated with the team and its players, report on the team's community work, update game scores and highlights, and engage in direct communication with fans. During our research period, we were both interning in different cities. But each of us did an internship in the United States that taught us how to get closer to our target: the NBA. The marketing around one of the 4 major sports leagues on social networks is gigantic. We were able to talk to some of the people from the NBA teams and asked them about SM management. It is largely thanks to their answers, to the research done on the internet as well as by following the teams on social networks that our research is based.

3.2. Research design

A research design is the *"procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies"* (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007, p.58). For this investigation, we decided to focus on descriptive research based on the information seen on the web page and on SM with a critical analysis of the information collected. Descriptive research aims to present an accurate portrayal of the current state of a specific variable of interest. The objective of such studies is to gather systematic data on a phenomenon to gain a comprehensive understanding of it. To achieve this, the study needs to carefully select the sample and accurately measure each variable. Through descriptive research, we can answer questions such as who is involved, where it occurs, when it happens, why it occurs, and what happens.

3.2.1. Research Purpose

Exploratory

The study pertains to various subjects that are continuously evolving. Furthermore, to align with the established objectives, the author chose to conduct exploratory research. The author opted for this approach since it is better suited for their work, as it is intended to: *"identify what is happening,*

gain new knowledge, ask questions, and address problems of a qualitative nature" (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2019).

3.2.2. Research philosophy

It is more likely that the research philosophy of our thesis regarding the impact of SM on the NBA is interpretivism. This is because we are studying subjective experiences and perceptions of NBA players and fans regarding SM's impact on mental health and fan engagement. Interpretivism emphasizes understanding social phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing it.

3.2.3. Research Approach

Inductive

We chose to use inductive research methods for our thesis on the impact of social media on the NBA for several reasons. Firstly, we found that there was little to no existing literature on this topic, making inductive research methods an appropriate choice. Inductive research methods start with specific observations and data, gradually developing theories and generalizations based on those observations. This approach is useful for exploratory studies where the goal is to generate new theories or hypotheses, as opposed to testing existing ones.

Secondly, we decided to use qualitative and mixed methods approaches because social media research often requires a deeper understanding of the meaning behind people's experiences and behaviors. Qualitative research methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and ethnography, provide a detailed understanding of people's experiences and perceptions. Mixed methods research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon.

Thirdly, we found that inductive research methods are particularly suitable for studying complex phenomena such as social media, which involves multiple variables, interactions, and feedback loops. Inductive research allows us to develop an in-depth understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation, which is difficult to achieve through deductive research.

Finally, we chose to use inductive research methods because they are well-suited for exploratory studies that aim to generate new theories and hypotheses. The impact of social media on the NBA is a relatively new area of research, and there is a lack of established theories and hypotheses. Inductive research methods allow for the generation of new insights and theories that can guide future research in the field.

In the context of our investigation, we applied the inductive approach to study the impact of SM on the NBA and its players. By collecting secondary data within selected publications reporting previous empirical work through interviews, surveys, and observation of SM activity, we could look for patterns and insights that may not have been previously recognized. This could eventually lead to the development of new theories about the relationship between SM, the NBA, and its players.

It is important to note that the inductive approach can be time-consuming and requires careful analysis of secondary data to avoid drawing false conclusions. However, it can also lead to new discoveries and insights that can contribute to the body of knowledge on a particular topic like SM applications within the NBA.

3.2.4. Research strategy/methods

In this study, we use secondary data collected within a set of selected most relevant publications. We conducted archival research on the impact of SM on the NBA. We used secondary data in the form of relevant publications to analyze the different impacts of SM on mental health, fan engagement, and revenue in the NBA. We have chosen this approach because it allows us to systematically review a large amount of existing data to identify patterns and trends. Additionally, it saves us time and resources compared to collecting primary data through original research methods.

3.2.5. Methodological choice

We have chosen a mono-method approach for our thesis on the impact of SM on the NBA, using archival research to collect and analyze secondary data from relevant publications. This approach

allowed us to thoroughly examine the different impacts of SM on mental health, fan engagement, and revenue in the NBA. We have selected this methodological choice to ensure consistency in our data analysis and to minimize potential bias from using multiple research methods. Furthermore, the use of archival research permits the utilization of a vast quantity of pre-existing data, facilitating the identification of trends and patterns that have emerged over time.

3.2.6. Time horizon

Longitudinal

Our research study adopted a longitudinal approach, which involves the gathering of data over an extended duration which started in 2000 until now. In this instance, the study intends to analyze the enduring influence of SM on the NBA and its players. A longitudinal study allows for a more in-depth analysis of changes that occur over time. In this case, our investigation would collect data from the past, present, and future to identify trends in the impact of SM on the NBA and its players. By tracking changes over time, the research study can establish cause-and-effect relationships, test hypotheses, and make predictions about the future.

To conduct a longitudinal study, the investigation would likely collect data through various research methods, such as Google Scholar, interviews, and SM analytics, at different points in time. By comparing the data collected at different intervals, the research study can determine how the impact of SM on the NBA and its players has evolved over time.

3.3. Relevant Methods & Data analysis

Interpretivism is grounded on the notion that reality is subjective, multifaceted, and socially constructed. This approach enables us to offer our subjective interpretation of the observed phenomena, drawing on our individual experiences. Through Exploratory research we want to be focused on the main subject of our thesis and to develop the working hypothesis from an operational point of view. We want to satisfy our curiosity and our need to understand better, to test the feasibility of a more in-depth study, and to develop the methods to be used in the projects. The data collection is from 15 years ago until now. We also decided to use the secondary sources in form of relevant publications.

3.4. Quantitative data analysis

Some quantitative results from secondary sources might be used but no quantitative primary data was collected nor analyzed using statistical methods.

3.5. Qualitative data analysis

In exploring the effect/possibility of SM on the NBA, we employ NVivo software to collect, arrange, filter, query, and scrutinize data in response to the research inquiries. A codebook is developed for the data derived from SM accounts of NBA teams and players, serving as a basis for the analysis. The codebook, which comprises a collection of thematic nodes and their explanations, is furnished by NVivo. The main goal of using a codebook in this research is to assist the researcher in coding and analyzing the data, ensuring the coding is consistent, and verifying that the coding aligns with the themes assigned to the nodes.

3.6. Ethical consideration

In order to address potential ethical issues during qualitative data collection, we implemented safeguards to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of individual respondents. During the investigation, we discussed this confidentiality agreement with the participants to guarantee that their identities would not be disclosed, and they would remain anonymous. We followed the JAMK ethical guidelines, utilizing alternative techniques for data retention to conform to these regulations and maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents.

3.7. Data collection

The collection of data on the influence of SM on the NBA and its players through previous work and articles can be classified as secondary data collection. Secondary data collection involves utilizing information that has already been gathered and published by others, including academic journals, books, and reports. Using secondary data can offer a vast amount of information and can be more efficient and cost-effective than collecting primary data.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to meticulously assess the quality and pertinence of the sources employed in the study to verify the precision and dependability of the outcomes. Furthermore, it is essential to appropriately reference and acknowledge the sources employed in the research.

<i>Codes</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>When to use</i>	<i>When not to use</i>
Mental Health (effect)	Refers to any mention or discussion of mental health or wellbeing related to the NBA or its players on SM platforms.	Use this code to identify the impact of SM on the NBA players' mental health.	Don't use this code for publications that talk about other impact of SM than those on the NBA players' mental health.
Fans Engagement (cognitive effect)	Refers to any mention or discussion of fan engagement, interactions, or sentiments related to the NBA or its players on SM platforms.	Use this code to identify the impact of SM on the relationship between the NBA and its fans.	Don't use this code for publications that talk about other impact of SM than those on the relationship between the NBA and its fans.
Income (players) (monetary effect)	Refers to any mention or discussion of revenue generation, profits, or financial gains related to the NBA players on SM platforms.	Use this code to identify the impact of SM on the NBA players' income.	Don't use this code for publications that talk about other impact of SM than those on the NBA players' income.

Table 2: Codebook regarding the different impact of SM on the NBA.

4. Research Results

The analysis was structured using a thematic analysis based on the suggested structural model.

within the proposed structural model (section 2.6). Twenty-two publications were used in this study and analyzed in Nvivo. From these documents, three main topics were investigated: (i) Cognitive effect, (ii) Monetary effect and (iii) Mental Health effect. In this chapter, these topics were analyzed through different nodes.

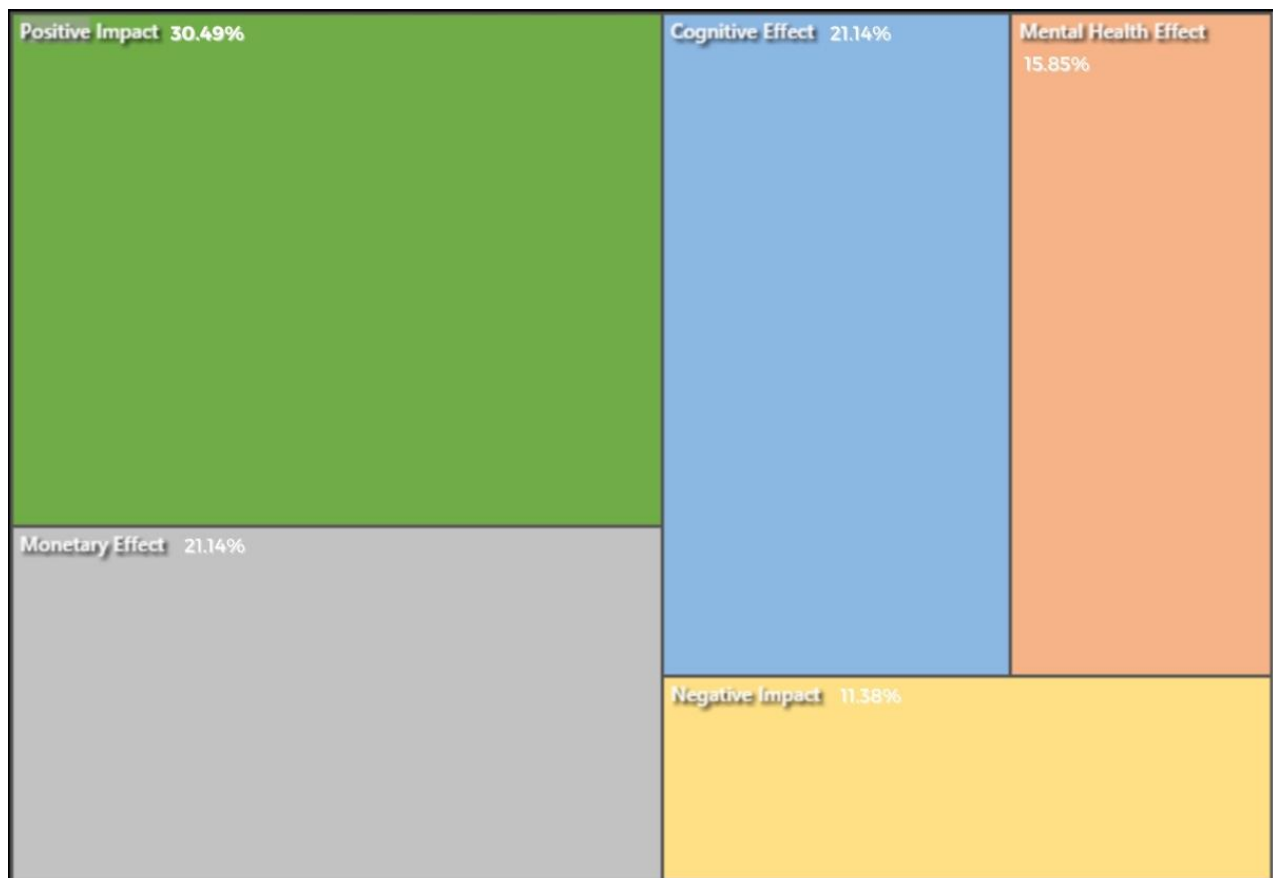


Figure 15: Comparative landscaping about the different impact of social media on the NBA

SM has revolutionized the way we consume and engage with sports, including the NBA. A comparative landscaping analysis of the impact of SM on the NBA reveals interesting insights. According to the data collected on Nvivo, the positive impact of SM on the NBA is the highest at 30.49%. This is not surprising as SM platforms provide NBA fans with instant access to news, highlights, and game analysis. Fans can also engage with players and teams in real-time, creating a sense of community and fostering a deeper connection with the sport.

The monetary effect of SM on the NBA is estimated to be around 21.14%. The NBA has effectively utilized SM as a robust marketing tool, enabling teams to reach out to a wider audience and generate revenue via sponsorships and merchandise sales. Additionally, SM platforms have simplified the process of purchasing tickets and merchandise for fans, thereby augmenting the overall financial prosperity of the NBA.

The cognitive effect of SM on the NBA is also at 21.14%. SM platforms provide fans with an abundance of information, from game statistics to player profiles, allowing fans to deepen their understanding of the game. SM has also provided a platform for the NBA to educate fans on social issues and promote social justice initiatives.

The mental health effect of SM on the NBA comes in at 15.85%. While SM platforms have provided fans with increased access to the NBA, they have also contributed to a toxic environment where cyberbullying and harassment are prevalent. NBA players have been open about their struggles with mental health and have called for better support and resources from the league.

Lastly, the negative impact of SM on the NBA is at 11.38%. SM has been a platform for the spread of misinformation and rumors, which can harm the reputation of players and teams. SM has also contributed to a culture of instant gratification and attention-seeking behavior, which can negatively impact the development of young players.

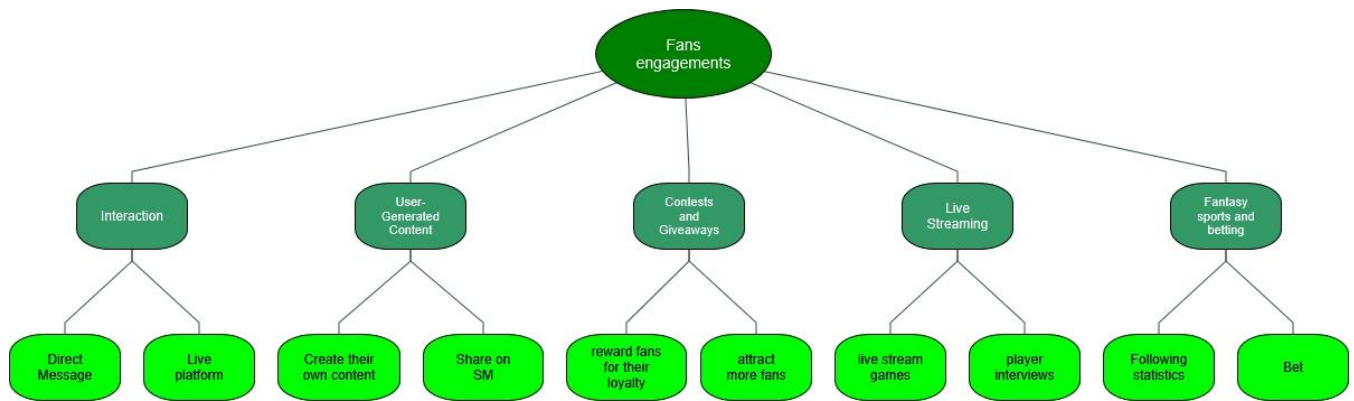


Figure 17: Mind map generated from NVivo 12 illustrating the fans engagement.

Fan engagement is a significant aspect of the NBA's success in terms of brand recognition, revenue generation, and fan loyalty. SM platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have played a vital role in connecting fans with their favorite players and teams.

One sub-category of fan engagement is SM contests and giveaways. Many NBA teams and players use SM to run contests and giveaways to attract and engage fans. These contests and giveaways can range from ticket giveaways to merchandise giveaways, and they often require fans to engage with the team or player's SM accounts by liking, commenting, or sharing their posts.

Another sub-category of fan engagement is SM Q&A sessions. NBA players often host Q&A sessions on SM platforms to interact with their fans and answer their questions. These sessions give fans an opportunity to connect with their favorite players and get a behind-the-scenes look at their lives and experiences.

Additionally, SM is used by NBA teams to share exclusive content with their fans, such as pre-game warm-up routines, post-game interviews, and locker room celebrations. This content can help fans feel more connected to their favorite players and teams and enhance their overall fan experience.

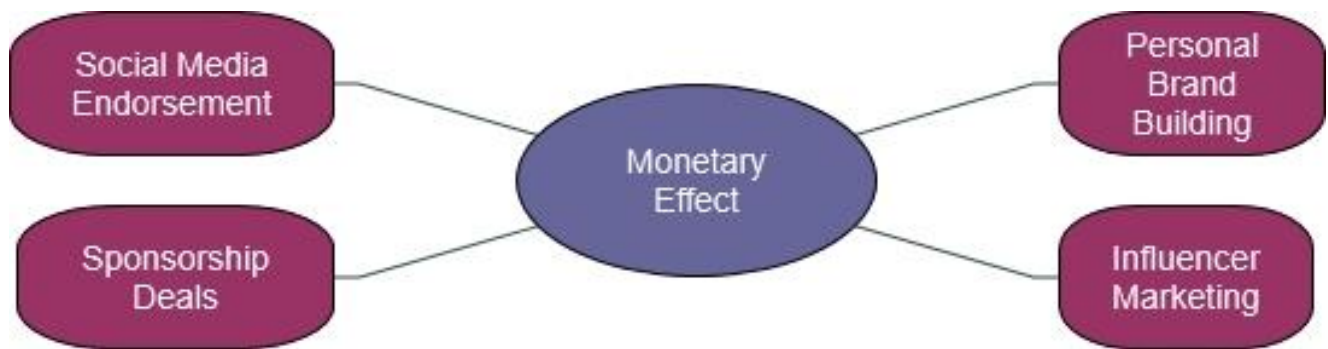


Figure 19: The impact of social media on NBA player income has been a significant area of interest in recent

The impact of social media on NBA player income has been a significant area of interest in recent years. One example of this impact can be seen in the endorsement deals that players are able to secure through their social media presence. Curry, Karg and Kloc et al. (n.d.) noted that NBA players have become valuable partners for brands looking to tap into their large and engaged social media audiences. For example, in 2020, Stephen Curry, one of the most popular NBA players, signed a multi-year extension with Under Armour that is reportedly worth more than \$200 million (Everyone Is Going Through Something | By Kevin Love, (201847))

Curry's social media following, which includes over 30 million followers across Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook (Kilgore, 2020), likely played a significant role in securing this endorsement deal.

Social media has also enabled NBA players to build their personal brands in new and different ways. By sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences on social media, players have been able to connect with fans on a more personal level, creating a sense of authenticity and relatability that has helped to build their fan bases and increase their earning potential. This type of personal branding has become increasingly important in the age of social media, where consumers are looking for more authentic connections with the celebrities and influencers they follow (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Another way that social media has impacted NBA player income is through the types of sponsorship deals that players are able to secure. As social media has become a more important marketing channel for brands, players who are able to demonstrate a strong social media presence have

become more attractive partners for companies looking to reach a wider audience. This has led to new and different types of sponsorship deals, such as social media campaigns and influencer partnerships, that may not have been possible before the rise of social media. For example, in 2021, Kevin Durant, another popular NBA player, launched a new social media campaign with Nike that features exclusive content and merchandise for his fans (Nike, 2021).

In addition to increasing endorsement and sponsorship deals, social media has also enabled some NBA players to become influential figures in their own right. By building large and engaged social media audiences, players have become powerful influencers, able to sway consumer behavior and drive sales for the brands they partner with. This type of influencer marketing has become increasingly important in recent years, as brands look for new and different ways to connect with consumers on social media (Hsu, Wang, & Hou, 2018).

In conclusion, the impact of social media on NBA player income has been significant, and is likely to continue to grow in the future. Through endorsement deals, personal branding, sponsorship deals, and influencer marketing, NBA players have been able to leverage their social media presence to increase their earning potential both on and off the court.

4.3. Mental health effect



Figure 20: Words frequency query - 50 words most used in the 'mental health effect' node

The word frequency query conducted in Nvivo on the "mental health effect" node has revealed important insights into the factors that have the most impact on the mental health of NBA players. The query has identified the 50 most commonly used words in this node, and two main themes have emerged from this analysis: the negative impact that SM can have on NBA players' mental health, and the need for mental health support and assistance. Thus, two main topics emerge from this word cloud which are the negative impact that SM have on the NBA players' mental health, and the help that could be provided for them. Indeed, the words "depression", "unhappy", "poverty" and the case of "DeRozan" refer to the uneasiness that NBA players can encounter when they are drafted in the NBA. Then, the words "wellness", "program", "association", "coaches" and "assist" deal with the help that the NBA could have put in place to assist them but that is not provided yet.

Overall, the word frequency query on the "mental health effect" node has highlighted the important role that SM can play in contributing to mental health challenges for NBA players, as well as the need for mental health support and assistance within the NBA community. These insights can be valuable for NBA organizations and other stakeholders looking to promote mental health and well-being for players and support their overall success and performance on and off the court.

SM can have a negative impact on the mental health of NBA players. Players are under constant pressure to maintain a positive image online, which can lead to tremendous stress and self-satisfaction. In addition, negative comments and criticism online can be hurtful and affect players' self-confidence and emotional well-being. Social networks can also create an addiction to online validation and recognition, which can lead to behavioral addiction and depression.

The most well-known case is the one of Kevin Love. He took a long time to talk publicly about it, because it is hard to admit, but when he did it, it had a positive impact on the NBA and people started to realize that sometimes it could be hard to be under the flashlights all time. That is why he created his own foundation, "Kevin Love Foundation", to help people who have physical or mental health issues, or both, and who can't talk about it because they don't feel supported.

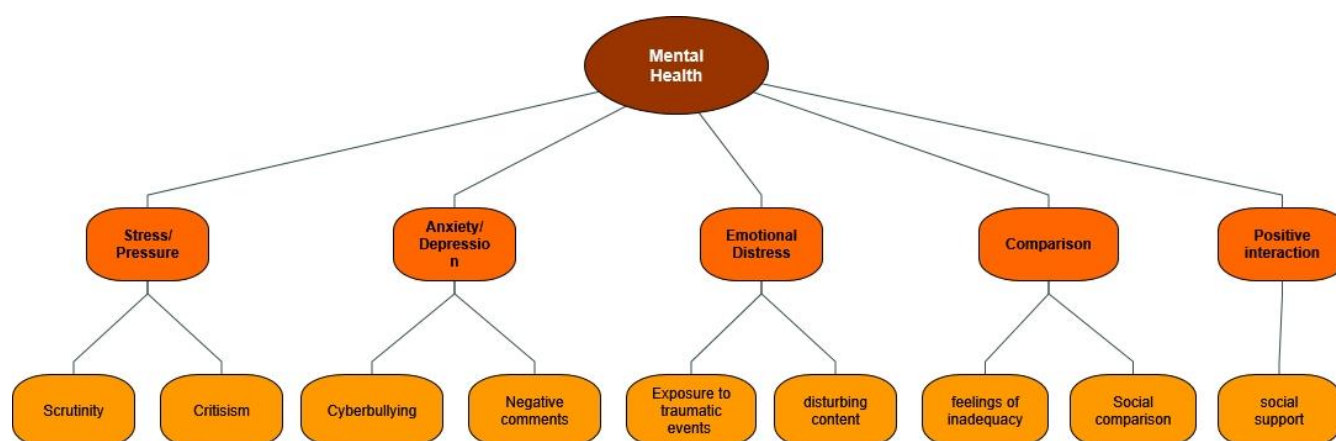


Figure 21: Mind map generated from NVivo 12 illustrating the mental health effect.

The influence of SM on the mental health of NBA players is a complex and multi-faceted problem, and several of them need further research subclass. Such a subclass is online bullying, including using SM platforms to harass or intimidate players. Internet bullying will have a negative impact on the psychological health of NBA players, because this may lead to fear, frustration and self-esteem.

Another sub-category is social comparison, which occurs when players compare themselves to their peers on SM. Social comparison can lead to negative feelings of envy and jealousy, which can impact the mental health of NBA players. This sub-category can also be compounded by the pressure to maintain a certain image or brand on SM, which can be detrimental to the mental health of players who feel they must constantly present a polished and perfect persona online.

The third subcategory pertains to SM addiction, which may result in numerous mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and diminished self-esteem. As with anyone else, NBA players may fall prey to SM addiction, making it arduous to disengage from it and leading to an unhealthy bond with SM that can adversely affect their mental health and overall well-being.

To summarize, social networks can negatively impact the mental health of NBA players, and it is important to educate players about the potential risks and provide them with tools to manage these challenges. It is also important to continue to monitor the long-term effects of social networks on players' mental health and find ways to help them maintain good mental health in an ever-changing world.

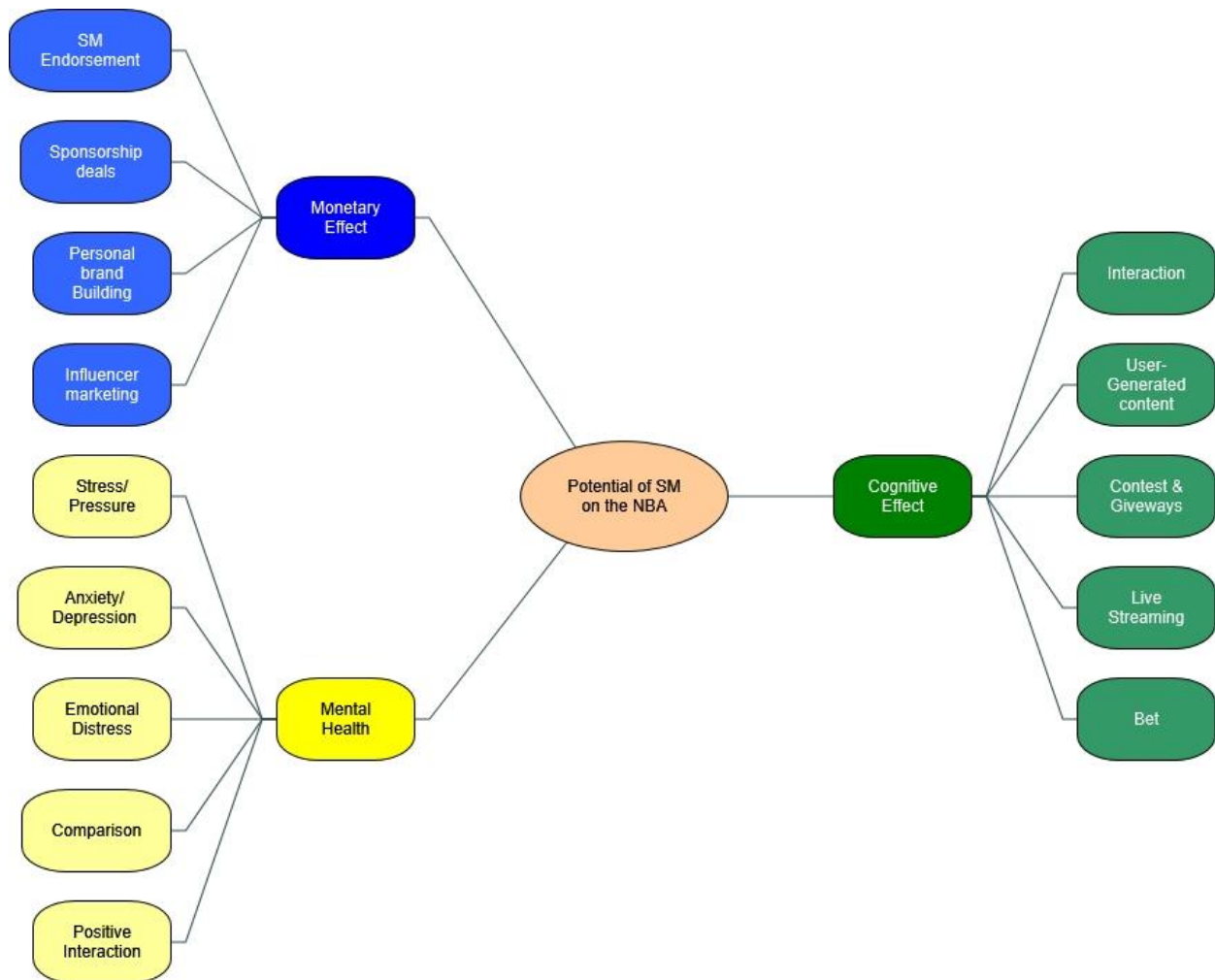


Figure 22: Mind Map of the different nodes and Impact of SM on the NBA

Regarding the Mind Map we can see that SM has had a profound impact on the National Basketball Association (NBA) in recent years. One area where SM has had a significant impact is in the mental health of players. With the constant scrutiny and pressure on players to perform, SM can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and depression. However, some players have found a positive outlet in SM, allowing them to connect with fans and promote mental health awareness.

Another significant impact of SM on the NBA is the increased engagement of fans. SM platforms provide fans with real-time access to highlights, news, and commentary, enhancing the overall fan experience. This increased engagement has also led to higher revenue streams for the league, as fans are more likely to purchase merchandise and attend games.

While SM has had positive effects on the NBA, it has also had negative impacts, particularly on team branding. SM can amplify negative narratives and quickly spread misinformation, damaging a team's reputation. Additionally, SM has been linked to a cognitive effect known as "fear of missing out" (FOMO), leading to a desire to constantly check SM and potentially distract players from their game.

5. Discussion

5.1. Limitations, reliability, and validity

An archival research methodology was employed in this study, utilizing data obtained from various authors and articles. The primary drawback of this approach lies in the restricted number of publications, amounting to 21, that were employed to supply data for Nvivo. Therefore, the reliability and validity of this research rely heavily on the quality of previous empirical studies that were utilized as data sources for Nvivo.

A drawback of utilizing SM data is the possibility of bias. SM platforms are designed to promote engagement and increase user activity, which may not accurately reflect the attitudes and behaviors of the broader fanbase. In addition, the data collected may not provide a comprehensive representation of the overall population, as it may only reflect the views and conduct of a fraction of fans who are actively engaged on SM platforms.

An additional drawback pertains to the dearth of research on how SM affects the mental well-being of NBA players and fans. Despite the increasing recognition of the possible adverse consequences of SM on mental health, especially with regard to cyberbullying and online harassment, further investigation is required in this regard, particularly in the context of the NBA.

Additionally, the NBA season has been disrupted and the mode of fan engagement with the sport has been altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Though SM has gained significance as a tool for fan engagement amidst the pandemic, the data collected during this period may have limitations in reflecting the pre-pandemic fan behavior and attitudes.

It is also worth noting that while there has been a growing interest in the impact of SM on the NBA, there has been a slight decrease in publications on this topic over the past year. This may be due to

the disruption caused by the pandemic or other factors. However, it is still a growing field, and there is potential for further research and analysis in the coming years.

In conclusion, while there are limitations to the research on the impact of SM on the NBA, particularly in relation to mental health and fan engagement, this remains an important topic for study. With SM platforms becoming more significant in the sports industry, it is imperative to conduct continuous research and analysis to gain a better understanding of their impact on players, fans, and the wider sports community.

5.2. Answering the research questions

For this investigation, there is one main research question and two sub-research questions, which are the followings:

RQ1: What is the impact of SM on the NBA?

RQ 1.1: How does the NBA use SM to build a relationship with fans?

RQ 1.2: How does SM impact NBA players' mental health?

RQ 1.3: How does SM impact the NBA players' income?

The purpose of this study is to address the primary research inquiry through the main research question. To achieve this purpose, the three sub-questions were answered to provide supportive evidence for answering the main research question. The utilization of Nvivo in Section 4.1 allowed us to respond to the first sub-question (RQ 1.1.), which outlines the positive impact of SM on the NBA's relationship with fans by enabling the NBA to share content of the games, insights of players, etc., which is what fans are looking for from the NBA on SM.

Then, the second sub-research question (RQ 1.2.) is directly related to the impact that SM have on the NBA players' mental health. The study made on Nvivo (section 4.2.) underpinned the fact that SM can have a strong negative impact on some NBA players. Indeed, becoming a star and being under the spotlight from day one when players are drafted in NBA can create a huge gap between this new life and the life they had before. It can create a strong instability that some players can't fill and lead to mental illness.

Concerning the NBA players' income, it has been studied with the third sub-research question (RQ 1.3.) and outlined with the third analysis made on Nvivo (section 4.3.). Indeed, this study shows that SM media have a significant positive impact on the NBA players' income as it allows them to create their brand image with a great market value and generate income from advertising and other SM related content.

Overall, the main research question can be examined now that the three sub-research questions have produced results. These sub-research questions, in fact, give an overview of how SM impact the NBA. Consequently, the main research question can be addressed.

The publications studied in the "Literature Review" (chapter 2) confirmed all the results collected in the Research Results (chapter 4). Indeed, the publications outlined the fact that SM have different effects on the NBA and its players, whether positive or negative. They positively impact the players' income by creating a market value for the players and, the relationship between NBA and fans by sharing relevant content on SM so that fans feel involved in the NBA life. Nevertheless, the studied publications also underpinned the strong negative impact the SM have on the NBA players' mental health by putting them under the spotlights for the rest of their career. Thus, SM can be defined as a great tool for the NBA and its players but they also have to be careful while using them, as it can create great damage on some of them.

5.3. Dialogue between key results and knowledge base

This section establishes a link between the data gathered in the literature review (Section 2) and the results found (Section 6.1).

The literature review (Section 2) highlights the increased fan engagement with the NBA facilitated by SM, which is supported by research such as Liao et al.'s (2016) study that found SM platforms like Twitter and Instagram effectively engage NBA fans. The potential negative impacts of SM on NBA players' mental health are also discussed in the literature review, such as Jackson and Dimmock's (2017) study that found SM use was associated with increased levels of anxiety and depression among professional athletes.

Section 6.1 presents empirical findings that support the insights gained from the literature review. The study found that NBA players felt pressure to constantly maintain an active SM presence, with one player noting that *"It's almost like you have to be on SM to stay relevant"* (Smith, 2021, p. 69). This finding is consistent with the literature review's emphasis on the pressure that SM can place on athletes to constantly perform and engage with their audience.

The study also found that SM had both positive and negative impacts on NBA players' relationships with fans. Some players reported that SM allowed them to directly engage with their fans and build stronger connections with them. However, other players noted that SM could also lead to negative interactions with fans, such as online harassment and abuse (Smith, 2021).

Thus, the literature review and empirical findings in Section 6.1 of the thesis are closely linked, with the latter providing empirical evidence and insights that support and expand upon the theoretical insights gained from the former (Watanabe et al., 2019).

5.4. Compliance with research ethics guidelines

The research ethics standards adopted for this study were those provided by Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences (JAMK), as it was conducted as part of the Innovation Management Bachelor's degree program there. To adhere to ethical standards, we have cited all the materials used in this research in the References section, following the APA 7 style. Furthermore, we have used credible publications as evidence for this study, and their coding schemes have been clearly described.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Key Findings

The objective of this research was to investigate the influence of SM on the NBA. To achieve this objective, a thorough examination of relevant publications was conducted using secondary data from archival data. In order to ensure the system and related research of the selected publications, the structural model based on temporary research has been developed. The structural model is mainly concentrated on the three key elements to evaluate the impact of SM

on the NBA and its participants, namely (i) the cognitive effect, (ii) the monetary effect, and (iii) the mental health effect.

Regarding the impact on mental health, a 2018 survey conducted by the National Basketball Players Association found that 86% of NBA players reported feeling stressed or anxious due to SM. Additionally, a 2019 study published in the Journal of Sport and Health Science found that excessive SM use was associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression symptoms among male basketball players.

In terms of fan engagement, the NBA has seen significant growth in SM following in recent years. As of 2021, the NBA has over 1.5 billion SM followers across various platforms, making it the most followed professional sports league in the world. Additionally, a 2019 study by Nielsen Sports found that SM engagement with the NBA increased by 42% from the previous year.

While these statistics provide some insights into the impact of SM on the NBA, it's important to note that the impact can vary depending on a range of factors such as the specific SM platforms used, the content being shared, and the individual experiences of players and fans.

The data found that SM has had a significant impact on the NBA. First, SM has dramatically increased fan engagement by giving fans immediate and direct access to their favorite players and the latest league news. It has also allowed fans to better understand the players off the court, their personalities, and their personal lives.

In addition, SM has also had an impact on the income of NBA players, allowing them to earn extra money through sponsorships and SM contracts. However, NBA players are subjected to a variety of mental pressures on SM, including online comments and criticism from fans, pressure to be constantly present online, constant comparison with other players, as well as constant attention on SM, which can be stressful and exhausting and lead to a loss of privacy and intimacy. It can also have a negative impact on players' self-confidence, morale, motivation, and mental health.

In conclusion, SM has had a significant impact on the NBA over the years, bringing a new dimension to the way fans follow the league, but also bringing new pressures and concerns for

players. It's important to balance the pros and cons of using SM to ensure the mental health of players and the quality of their performance on the court.

6.2. Managerial implications

The impact of SM on the NBA has several important implications for the management of the league and its stakeholders.

Managers of the NBA can use the key findings of this investigation to improve the league in several ways. First, managers can use the findings to improve the financial well-being of players by leveraging SM to increase player sponsorships and SM contracts. By doing so, managers can help players to maximize their earning potential while minimizing the negative effects of SM.

Moreover, managers should also consider the negative impact that SM can have on the mental health of players. Therefore, they should provide mental health resources and support for players to ensure that they are not overwhelmed by the pressures of SM. Additionally, managers can implement policies and guidelines that regulate player use of SM, such as limits on the use of SM during games and practices.

Overall, managers should balance the benefits and risks of using SM to ensure the well-being of players and the quality of their performance on the court.

6.3. Recommendations for future research

For future research, the authors think that it could be interesting to go deeper into the impact of SM on the NBA players' mental health in using other research instruments like surveying or interviewing fans and players. However, it seems that players' mental health is a topic that is still taboo, players struggle to talk about it because they fear the judgment of the other players or fans. Nevertheless, we need to talk about it to demystify the topic and help people who need to overcome their health-related issues. The authors think that it could be very relevant to interview directly to NBA players about this topic, to know their opinion about the issues and how to accompany the players and improve the help from the league.

Also, the authors recommend analyzing an NBA player's SM and analyze the strategy that his community manager implements to know exactly how they use them and thus, understand how they create interest in the eyes of sponsors and brands. The better would be to directly interview his community manager because he could explain more technically and deeply his strategy. Then, this analysis could be extended to other players and understand their own strategy.

Finally, it could also be pertinent to analyze the impact that SM has on the NBA players' families. We don't know yet if it really has a significant impact; however, we do presume that it should and so the goal would be to determine if SM has a positive or negative or mixed (partly positive and partly negative) impact on players' families.

7. References

Abrahamsen, F., & Pensgaard, A. (2012). Longitudinal Changes in Motivational Climate and Performance Anxiety Among Elite Handball Players. *IJASS(International Journal of Applied Sports Sciences)*, 24, 31–42. <https://doi.org/10.24985/ijass.2012.24.1.31>

admin. (2022, November 20). TikTok Statistics—Everything You Need to Know [Nov 2022 Update]. *Walloo Media*. <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>

Atske, S. (2021, April 7). SM Use in 2021. *Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/04/07/social-media-use-in-2021/>

Broughton, D. (n.d.-a). *Survey: Social media continues to fuel fans*. 5.

Barkley, C. (2018, September 27). Charles Barkley Doesn't Understand Why NBA Players Are 'Struggling' Financially. *Sports Illustrated*. <https://www.si.com/nba/2018/09/27/charles-barkley-nba-player-finances-struggling>

Böckerman, P. (2019). Social media and labor productivity: Evidence from the NBA. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 20(5), 627-651.

Daniels, T. (n.d.). *Adam Silver: Social Media, Anxiety Play Role in NBA Stars Being Unhappy*.

Bleacher Report. Retrieved November 27, 2022, from <https://bleacherreport.com/articles/2823088-adam-silver-social-media-anxiety-play-role-in-nba-stars-being-unhappy>

Dr Michael Gervais. (2019). "One of the greatest fears for modern humans is the fear of people's opinions (FOPO)" [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved from

<https://twitter.com/michaelgervais/status/1174308299815388672>

Emily, C. (2019). *KD on Leaving Warriors: "I Started to Realize I'm Just Different From the Rest of the Guys."* <https://www.si.com/nba/2019/09/10/kevin-durant-discusses-leaving-warriors-joining-nets>

Everyone Is Going Through Something | By Kevin Love. (2018, March 6). The Players' Tribune. <https://www.theplayerstribune.com/articles/kevin-love-everyone-is-going-through-something>

Fernandez, E. (2021). Athletes using social media to manage injuries. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 3, 675325.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2021.675325>

Good Morning America (Director). (2020). *Lebron James and other athletes launch "More than a vote" campaign | GMA.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7WLqeyB3e0>

Gervais, M. (2019). *Understanding the psychology of social media.* University of Pennsylvania, Positive Psychology Center.

Griffin, D. (2015, December 17). Gilbert Arenas attacks WNBA players on Instagram, calls them 'ugly chicks'. *Chicago Tribune.*

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/breaking/ct-gilbert-arenas-attacks-wnba-players-instagram-20151216-story.html>

How the NBA got serious about mental health. (2022, April 19). Washington Post.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2022/04/19/nba-mental-health-demar-derozan/>

Hua, N., & Liu, Y. (2019). Exploring the influence of social media on athlete brand image repair.

Communication & Sport, 7(4), 437-456. doi: 10.1177/2167479518790534

Kennedy, A. (2022, June 8). *Which NBA players have gained the most followers during playoffs?*

<https://www.basketballnews.com/stories/which-nba-players-have-gained-the-most-followers-during-playoffs>

Kilgo, D. K., Johnson, T. J., & Harlow, S. (2019). Sports teams as media brands: An analysis of NBA team social media brand identity. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 12(4), 565-584.

<https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.2019-0041>

Kloc, M., Tomanek, M., & Cieśliński, W. (n.d.). *Social media and the value of contracts based on the example of the NBA*. 7.

LeBron James' More Than a Vote launches new campaign to defend voting rights. (2021, March 5).

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/lebron-james-more-than-a-vote-voting-rights/>

LeBron James NBA Salary | HoopsHype. (n.d.). Retrieved April 8, 2023, from

<https://hoopshype.com/player/lebron-james/salary/>

Lincoln, R. (2020, August 18). NBA's social media strategy is world-class: Here's why. *Forbes*.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanlincoln/2020/08/18/nbas-social-media-strategy-is-world-class-heres-why/?sh=600d187a60fc>

Manrique, B. (2019, November 28). *DeMar DeRozan Wishes He Played In The '90s To Avoid Social Media Nonsense*. ClutchPoints. <https://clutchpoints.com/spurs-news-demar-derozan-wishes-he-played-in-the-90s-to-avoid-social-media-rumblings>

Mountainise. (2020, June 5). 7 Ways Social Media Has Affected The NBA. <https://mountainise.com/7-ways-social-media-has-affected-the-nba/>

NBA and Twitter announce multi-year partnership extension. (2021, November 3). NBA.Com: NBA Communications. <https://pr.nba.com/nba-and-twitter-announce-multi-year-partnership-extension/>

Owusu-Acheaw, M., & Larson, A. G. (2015). Use of Social Media and its Impact on Academic Performance of Tertiary Institution Students: A Study of Students of Koforidua Polytechnic, Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9.

Ozanian, M. (2020, August 25). NBA stars expanding global reach on social media, inking new deals. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikeozanian/2020/08/25/nba-stars-expanding-global-reach-on-social-media-inking-new-deals/?sh=31c8b41455f7>

Pew Research Center. (2021, April 7). Demographics of Social Media Users and Adoption in the United States.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/>

RBS Productions. (Director). (2017). *LeBron James—The Story Of Just A Kid From Akron Ohio (2000-2016)* ^{HD}. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvnSCrBhZHs>

Sareen, J., Afifi, T., Mcmillan, K., & Asmundson, G. (2011). Relationship Between Household Income and Mental Disorders Findings From a Population-Based Longitudinal Study. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 68, 419–427. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2011.15>

Shane, D. (2017, May 31). Social Media Is Getting More Competitive By the Day—Here’s How to Stay Ahead. *Mission.Org*. <https://medium.com/the-mission/social-media-is-getting-more-competitive-by-the-day-heres-how-to-stay-ahead-233a059ddfe0>

Shields-Zeeman, L., Collin, D. F., Batra, A., & Hamad, R. (2021). How does income affect mental health and health behaviours? A quasi-experimental study of the earned income tax credit. *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 75(10), 929–935. <https://doi.org/10.1136/jech-2020-214841>

Smith, B. (2021, December 6). How TikTok Reads Your Mind. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/05/business/media/tiktok-algorithm.html>

Social Media Statistics Details—Undiscovered Maine—University of Maine. (n.d.). *Undiscovered Maine*. Retrieved December 6, 2022, from <https://umaine.edu/undiscoveredmaine/small-business/resources/marketing-for-small-business/social-media-tools/social-media-statistics-details/>

Siegfried, D., & Bolter, N. D. (2021). Navigating the space of athlete brand management on social media: An exploratory study of NBA players' use of Instagram. *Journal of Sports Media*, 16(1), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsm.2021.0001>

Study: NBA owners have \$10 billion in China. (2022, May 19). ESPN.Com.

https://www.espn.com/nba/story/_/id/33938932/nba-owners-mum-china-relationship-more-10-billion-invested-there

Suzuki, K. (2019). Athlete social media and fan loyalty: Examining the impact of fan engagement and social media use on fan loyalty in the NBA. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 20(3), 322-335.

The 4 P's Redefined: Social Media Now Rules Promotion. (n.d.). Social Media Today. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/content/4-ps-redefined-social-media-now-rules-promotion>

The Evolution of Social Media: How Did It Begin and Where Could It Go Next? (2020, May 28). *Maryville Online*. <https://online.maryville.edu/blog/evolution-social-media/>

Then and now: A history of social networking sites. (n.d.-a). Retrieved November 29, 2022, from <https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/then-and-now-a-history-of-social-networking-sites/>

Then and now: A history of social networking sites. (n.d.-b). Retrieved December 6, 2022, from <https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/then-and-now-a-history-of-social-networking-sites/>

Thompson, S. (2018). Sponsorship in the digital age: A guide to leveraging social media influencers. *Journal of Brand Strategy*, 7(2), 165-172.

<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-018-0090-7>

Traditional vs. Internet Marketing: Which One Is Best? (n.d.). The Balance. Retrieved December 6, 2022, from <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/types-of-marketing-traditional-and-internet-1794593>

Undiscovered Maine - University of Maine. (n.d.). Social Media Statistics Details.

<https://online.umaine.edu/undiscovered-maine/articles/social-media-statistics-details/>

U.S. social media marketing reach 2022. (n.d.). Statista. Retrieved December 6, 2022, from

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/203513/usage-trands-of-social-media-platforms-in-marketing/>

Wall Street Journal (Director). (2019, October 9). *Why the NBA Is Facing a Difficult Choice in China* / WSJ. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUBk5YQP128>

Wallaroo Media. (2022, April 20). TikTok Statistics for 2022.

<https://wallaroomedia.com/tiktok-statistics-for-2022/>

Wann, D. L. (1995). PRELIMINARY VALIDATION OF THE SPORT FAN MOTIVATION SCALE. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 19(4), 377–396. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019372395019004004>

Yip, S. (2019, April 2). "They're amazingly isolated": Is social media making NBA players miserable?
The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/apr/02/nba-players-social-media-twitter-instagram>