

MARKETING STRATEGY AND CLUB EXISTENCE: EVIDENCE FROM PERDAPA VOLLEYBALL CLUB IN CIREBON CITY

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article History Submitted: 09-01-2026 Revised: 08-02-2026 Accepted: 20-02-2026 Published: 26-02-2026 Keywords: Marketing strategy; Sports marketing; Volleyball club; Digital media; Stakeholder relationships;	This study aimed to analyse the marketing practices of the PERDAPA Volleyball Club in Cirebon City in maintaining its existence, including the use of digital media, the role of matches and championships, stakeholder relationships, and supporting and inhibiting factors. A descriptive qualitative approach with a postpositivist paradigm was employed. The study was conducted at the PERDAPA Volleyball Club in Kesambi District, Cirebon City, West Java, from January to August 2026. Six informants were selected through purposive sampling, with snowball sampling used when necessary, consisting of two coaches, two athletes, the General Secretary, and the General Chairperson. Data were collected through structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation of activity archives, photographs, and social media content. Data credibility was examined through triangulation of techniques, and the data were analysed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings showed that PERDAPA had not implemented a formal, structured, and commercially oriented marketing strategy. Club recognition was mainly supported by coaches, recommendations, sports networks, athlete achievements, participation in championships, club history, alumni, and institutional relationships. Digital media was used for information and publication but remained limited and inconsistent. Matches and championships provided opportunities for visibility and interaction within the volleyball environment, while relationships with Perumda Pasar, the Cirebon City Government, PBVSI, coaches, athletes, alumni, and schools formed part of the club's organisational context. Supporting factors included the club's history, achievements, coaches, alumni, networks, institutional relationships, and championship participation, while constraints included limited funding, management changes, limited digital publication facilities, athlete mobility, and changes in the market-trader environment. Overall, the findings indicate that marketing-related activities form one component of the broader organisational and social context associated with the continued existence of PERDAPA, rather than a single determining factor.

INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of local sports clubs is closely related to their ability to maintain organisational activities, visibility, and relationships with surrounding communities and stakeholders. In this context, sports marketing is not limited to commercial promotion; it also

involves communication, public engagement, event activities, and relationships that support a sports organisation's recognition. Research on sports marketing has highlighted the role of marketing communication in connecting sports organisations with their audiences, particularly through digital and interactive media (Byon & Phua, 2021). Sports marketing strategies have also been associated with efforts to build public awareness and interest in sporting activities, indicating that marketing can function as part of how sports organisations communicate their activities and identity to the public (Permata et al., 2024).

The development of digital communication has further expanded how sports organisations can publish activities and interact with their audiences. Digital media provides opportunities for sports organisations to communicate information and promote their activities, but its effectiveness depends on how consistently and appropriately organisations manage available platforms (Byon & Phua, 2021; Syadzwina et al., 2024). Therefore, the presence of social media or other digital platforms does not by itself indicate that an organisation has implemented a structured marketing strategy. The organisation of communication, the continuity of publication, and the content presented remain relevant when examining how digital media is used within a sports organisation. For local clubs with limited organisational resources, these aspects may be particularly relevant because marketing activities may develop alongside existing organisational practices rather than through formal commercial planning.

Sports club management also provides an important context for understanding continuity. Research on sports organisations has discussed the importance of management in supporting the operation and development of clubs, including at the local level (Sari et al., 2025; Palmizal & Setiawan, 2024). In local sports settings, organisational activities may involve coaches, athletes, alumni, communities, governing bodies, and other institutions. These relationships can become part of the way a club maintains its activities and develops its network. At the same time, examples from more commercially oriented sports organisations demonstrate that marketing can be developed through more structured strategies aimed at supporting organisational growth (Umar & Belgiawan, 2023). Such examples provide a useful comparison, but their context cannot be directly equated with that of a local volleyball club whose primary activities are not necessarily organised around commercial objectives.

The PERDAPA Volleyball Club of Cirebon City provides a relevant local context for examining this issue. The club was established in 1979 and grew out of volleyball activities among market traders in Cirebon City. It has continued to operate and participate in athlete development activities in the region. The club's continued existence provides an opportunity to examine how a local volleyball organisation maintains its recognition and organisational presence amid changes in the sports environment. Based on the preliminary description in this study, PERDAPA does not operate with a formal commercial marketing orientation. Its recognition involves the role of coaches, recommendations within sports networks, athlete achievements, participation in championships, club history, alumni, and institutional relationships. Digital media is also used for information and publication, although its use is not yet consistent.

Previous studies have discussed sports marketing, digital communication, and sports organisation management, but the specific practices through which a local volleyball club maintains its existence through formal and non-formal marketing activities remain less clearly described in the context of PERDAPA. This study therefore focuses on the marketing practices of the PERDAPA Volleyball Club of Cirebon City, particularly its use of digital media, the role of matches and championships, relationships with stakeholders, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the position of marketing activities in maintaining the club's existence. The study does not assume that marketing is the sole determinant of club existence; rather, it examines how marketing-related activities operate alongside the club's history, achievements, interpersonal networks, and institutional relationships.

METHOD

Research Design and Setting

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design within a postpositivist paradigm. The design aimed to provide an in-depth description of the PERDAPA Volleyball Club's marketing practices in Cirebon City and their role in sustaining the club. The study focused on the club's marketing practices, including how it introduced itself to potential athletes and the wider sports environment, its use of digital media, participation in matches and championships, and relationships with relevant stakeholders. The research was conducted at the PERDAPA Volleyball Club, Kesambi District, Cirebon City, West Java, from January to August 2026.

Informants and Sampling

The research informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their direct involvement in the club's activities and marketing-related practices. The selection could be expanded through snowball sampling when additional information or perspectives were considered necessary during the research process. A total of six informants participated in the study: two coaches, two athletes, the General Secretary, and the General Chairperson of the PERDAPA Volleyball Club. Including these informants provided perspectives from individuals in different positions within the club who were directly involved in its activities.

Data Collection

Data were obtained through structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The interviews gathered information on the club's marketing practices, including how the club was introduced, the role of coaches and sports networks, the use of digital media, participation in competitions, and relationships with stakeholders. Direct observation was used to examine activities and practices occurring within the club's environment. Documentation complemented the interview and observation data and included activity archives, photographs, and the club's social media content. These three data collection techniques were used to obtain information from different forms of evidence about PERDAPA's marketing practices and organisational activities.

Data Credibility

The credibility of the data was examined through triangulation. Information obtained through interviews was compared with information obtained through observation and

available documentation. This process was intended to examine the consistency of information obtained through the different data collection techniques. The comparison involved information from the same sources where relevant, particularly regarding the club's activities, promotional practices, digital media use, participation in championships, and relationships supporting the club's activities.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved selecting and organising information relevant to the research focus from the interview, observation, and documentation data. The reduced data were then organised and presented to facilitate identifying patterns and relationships among the findings. Conclusions were subsequently drawn from the patterns identified in the data and were continuously verified against the available evidence. These analytical activities were conducted throughout the research process rather than only after data collection had been completed. The process continued until the data were considered saturated, meaning additional information no longer provided substantial new information relevant to the research focus.

Methodological Boundaries

The study focused on describing the marketing practices and their relationship to the continued existence of the PERDAPA Volleyball Club based on the experiences and information provided by the selected informants and supporting documentation. The qualitative design does not provide a basis for statistically determining the causal effect of marketing activities on club existence. Therefore, the findings are interpreted in terms of patterns, practices, roles, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors identified within the club, rather than as evidence of a causal relationship.

RESULT

Marketing Practices of the PERDAPA Volleyball Club

Findings from interviews, direct observations, and documentation showed that the PERDAPA Volleyball Club had not implemented a formal, structured, commercially oriented marketing strategy. The club was introduced primarily through coaches' involvement, recommendations from friends and sports networks, athlete achievements, participation in championships, the club's history, alumni, and institutional relationships. These findings indicate that the club's marketing practices were largely integrated into its existing organisational and sports activities rather than implemented as a separate formal marketing program. The club's history was also identified as part of its recognition within the local sports environment. PERDAPA was established in 1979 and developed from volleyball activities among market traders in Cirebon City. Its continued participation in volleyball activities and athlete development contributed to the club's continued presence. Available documentation and observations supported the information obtained from informants regarding the club's activities and its participation in the volleyball environment.

Use of Digital Media

The findings showed that PERDAPA had used digital media as a means of information and publication. However, its use was not yet optimal or consistent. Publications were more commonly associated with athlete achievements and the opening of athlete recruitment or training activities, while routine training activities were not consistently published. The findings also identified organisational changes and limited digital publication facilities as factors affecting the continuity of social media management. Consequently, digital media served as a supporting communication channel rather than the primary means through which the club introduced itself to its broader environment.

Role of Events and Stakeholder Relationships

Participation in matches and championships contributed to the PERDAPA Volleyball Club's visibility and recognition within the sports environment. Through these activities, the club and its athletes interacted with other clubs, coaches, and athletes. Competition participation therefore formed part of the club's activities, through which it maintained its presence within the volleyball network. The findings also showed that relationships with Perumda Pasar, the Cirebon City Government, PBVSI, coaches, athletes, alumni, and schools formed part of the organisational environment supporting the club. These relationships were associated with athlete development, competition participation, and other club activities. The findings therefore indicate that the club's continued activities were supported by relationships extending beyond the club's internal organisation.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The findings identified several factors supporting PERDAPA's recognition and continued existence. These included the club's history since 1979, athlete achievements, coaches, alumni and senior members, sports networks, institutional relationships, and participation in championships. Several factors also constrained the club's activities. These included limited funding, changes in club management, limited digital publication facilities, athlete mobility, and changes in the market-trader environment. Limited funding affected participation in competitions requiring greater financial resources. Changes in management affected the continuity of social media management, while limited publication facilities constrained digital communication. Athlete mobility also affected participation in match invitations, and changes in the market-trader environment affected the strength of community support associated with the club.

Marketing and Club Existence

The findings indicate that the existence of the PERDAPA Volleyball Club was associated with several interconnected factors. These included its history, athlete achievements, coaches, alumni, sports networks, championship participation, and institutional relationships. Marketing-related activities included the club's introduction, competition participation, stakeholder relationships, and the use of digital media. However, the findings did not show that PERDAPA's existence was determined by a formal marketing strategy. Rather, marketing practices operated alongside the club's established history, achievements, interpersonal networks, and institutional relationships. Thus, within the context examined in this study, marketing activities functioned as one component of the broader organisational processes

associated with maintaining the club's existence, while formal and consistent marketing practices, particularly digital media management, remained limited.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the PERDAPA Volleyball Club has not implemented a formal, structured, and commercially oriented marketing strategy. Instead, the club's recognition has developed through coaches, recommendations, sports networks, athlete achievements, championship participation, alumni, club history, and institutional relationships. This pattern suggests that marketing practices within PERDAPA are embedded in its existing organizational and sporting activities rather than organized as a separate commercial function. This interpretation is consistent with the case-study perspective in sport marketing, which emphasizes the importance of examining marketing practices within their specific organizational and contextual settings (Zhang et al., 2026). Therefore, the findings should be understood as a description of how marketing-related practices operate within PERDAPA rather than as evidence that a particular marketing strategy determines the club's existence.

The use of digital media represents another aspect of PERDAPA's marketing practices. The club has used social media for information and publication, but the findings show that its use remains limited and inconsistent, with publications occurring more often around achievements and athlete recruitment or training activities. This finding is relevant to Marthinus et al. (2025), who specifically examined social media adoption as a marketing communication tool among non-professional sports clubs. The relevance of this comparison lies in the organizational context: PERDAPA, like the clubs considered in that study, operates outside the highly commercial environment of professional sports. Siguencia et al. (2017) also examined social media in sports communication management, illustrating its role as a communication channel for sports organizations. At the same time, the present findings show that simply having social media does not mean that digital marketing is implemented systematically. Changes in management and limited facilities for digital publication were identified within PERDAPA as factors affecting continuity. Thus, the issue identified in this study is not the absence of digital media, but the limited consistency of its management.

Participation in matches and championships was also identified as part of the process through which PERDAPA maintained visibility within its sports environment. Through competitions, athletes represented the club and interacted with other clubs, coaches, and athletes, creating opportunities for the club to be recognized beyond its immediate environment. Rundh and Gottfridsson (2015) discussed sports events from a network perspective, emphasizing the relationships and interactions surrounding sports events. More recently, Breuer et al. (2026) examined major sporting events in relation to club development in non-profit sports clubs. These studies provide a useful context for interpreting the PERDAPA finding, but they do not establish that participation in competitions directly causes the continued existence of the club. In the present case, competitions were one of several activities associated with the club's visibility and network development.

The findings also show that relationships with Perumda Pasar, the Cirebon City Government, PBVSI, coaches, athletes, alumni, and schools form an important part of

PERDAPA's organizational environment. This finding is consistent with research emphasizing the role of stakeholders in nonprofit sports organizations. Miragaia et al. (2016) examined stakeholder involvement in relation to the efficiency of nonprofit sports clubs, while Ivašković (2022) examined stakeholder–performance relationships in nonprofit sport clubs. Varmus et al. (2018) further discussed cooperation with stakeholders in relation to the long-term sustainability of sports organizations. These studies support the relevance of stakeholder relationships when examining local sports clubs, but the present study does not establish a measurable stakeholder effect on PERDAPA's existence. Rather, the findings show that the club's activities are supported by relationships with multiple parties and that these relationships form part of the context in which the club continues to operate.

The supporting and inhibiting factors identified in PERDAPA further demonstrate that its existence cannot be reduced to marketing activities alone. The club's history since 1979, athlete achievements, coaches, alumni, sports networks, institutional relationships, and participation in championships were identified as supporting factors. Conversely, limited funding, management changes, limited digital publication facilities, athlete mobility, and changes in the market-trader environment were identified as constraints. Research on the long-term sustainability of organised sports programs also reflects the importance of organisational and stakeholder conditions (Ooms et al., 2019). MacLean (2013) provides a historical perspective on the place of clubs in sports historiography, while Agergaard (2011) illustrates how sports clubs can function within broader social and institutional environments. These perspectives help explain why a club's history and relationships may remain relevant to its organisational identity and activities, although they do not provide evidence that these factors independently determine PERDAPA's continued existence.

Overall, the findings indicate that PERDAPA's marketing-related practices operate within a broader organisational context consisting of history, achievements, interpersonal networks, competition participation, digital communication, and institutional relationships. Formal marketing was not identified as the central organizational mechanism, while digital media remained underused and inconsistently managed. The findings therefore suggest that the club's continued presence is associated with a combination of established organisational and social resources rather than with a single marketing activity. This interpretation is also consistent with the distinction between professional and non-professional sports settings reflected in the literature on sports marketing and organisational sustainability (Marthinus et al., 2025; Varmus et al., 2018). Because this study used a descriptive qualitative design and focused on six informants within one local volleyball club, the findings should be interpreted as a context-specific description of PERDAPA's marketing practices and organisational conditions, rather than as a general explanation of how marketing determines the existence of local sports clubs.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the marketing practices of the PERDAPA Volleyball Club in Cirebon City in relation to maintaining the club's existence. The findings showed that PERDAPA has not implemented a formal, structured, and commercially oriented marketing

strategy. Instead, the club's recognition and continued activities have been supported by a combination of its long history since 1979, athlete achievements, the role of coaches, alumni, sports networks, participation in championships, and institutional relationships with relevant stakeholders. Digital media has been used as an information and publication channel, but its use remains limited and inconsistent. Participation in matches and championships provides opportunities for club visibility and interaction within the volleyball environment, while relationships with Perumda Pasar, the Cirebon City Government, PBVSI, coaches, athletes, alumni, and schools form part of the organizational context supporting the club's activities. At the same time, limited funding, management changes, limited digital publication facilities, athlete mobility, and changes in the market-trader environment were identified as constraints. Overall, the findings indicate that marketing-related activities are one component of a broader set of organizational and social factors associated with the continued existence of PERDAPA. The study does not establish that marketing determines or causes the club's existence. Rather, it shows that the club's continued presence is maintained within a combination of historical identity, sporting achievements, interpersonal networks, competition participation, digital communication, and institutional relationships. Further development of more consistent digital publication and systematic documentation of the club's history and achievements may be considered within the existing organizational context.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Authors should provide the following information where applicable. Statements that are not relevant to the manuscript may be omitted.

Statement	Description
Acknowledgements	The authors express their sincere gratitude to the PERDAPA Volleyball Club, Cirebon City , including the coaches, athletes, General Secretary, and General Chairperson, for their cooperation and participation throughout the research process. The authors also extend their appreciation to the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Majalengka, for the academic and institutional support provided during the completion of this study.
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Author Contributions	M.F.S.: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing—Original Draft. D.S.P.R.: Methodology, Formal Analysis, Writing—Review & Editing, Supervision. M.N.: Writing—Review & Editing and Supervision. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.
Conflict of Interest	The authors declare that there are no financial or non-financial conflicts of interest related to this research or its publication.

Data Availability Statement	The data generated and analysed during this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available because the study includes information obtained from individual informants within a small local sports organisation, and unrestricted disclosure could potentially compromise the confidentiality of the participants.
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