

Sports Participation and its Influence on Information-Seeking Behaviour among Athletes: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Background: Sports participation requires continuous learning and informed decision-making, where athletes actively seek information related to training, nutrition, injury prevention, and performance enhancement. With the expansion of digital media and sports science, athletes now access diverse information sources; however, their information-seeking behaviour varies according to their level of participation, experience, and training environment. Purpose of the study: This study aimed to explore the types of information sought by athletes, understand how sports participation influences their information needs and behaviours, identify preferred information sources and access patterns, and examine barriers faced in accessing reliable information. Methods: A qualitative research design was employed. Data were collected from 150 athletes representing various sports disciplines, including both competitive and recreational participants, using purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore athletes' information needs, sources, motivations, and challenges. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes related to information-seeking behaviour. Results: The findings revealed that athletes seek diverse types of information, including training techniques, injury prevention, nutrition, psychological support, and competition strategies. Sports participation significantly influences information behaviour, with competitive athletes demonstrating more structured, frequent, and specialized information needs compared to recreational athletes. Preferred information sources included coaches, trainers, physiotherapists, digital platforms, and peers. Access patterns varied from routine-based (competitive athletes) to need-based (recreational athletes), with increasing use of real-time digital access. Major barriers included information overload, lack of credibility in online sources, limited access to professionals, time constraints, low information literacy, and language difficulties. Conclusion: Sports participation plays a crucial role in shaping athletes' information-seeking behaviour. Higher levels of engagement lead to more complex and structured information needs, while also increasing reliance on expert-based sources. However, challenges such as misinformation and limited information literacy hinder effective information use. The study highlights the need for structured information support systems and improved information literacy programs to enhance athletes' decision-making and performance.

Keywords: Sports participation; information-seeking behaviour; athletes; digital information; sports science; qualitative study; information literacy

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1. Introduction

Participation in sports is not merely a physical activity but a continuous and dynamic process that requires ongoing learning, adaptation, and informed decision-making. Athletes are constantly challenged to enhance their performance, prevent injuries, and maintain both physical and mental well-being. This continuous development depends greatly on the ability of athletes to seek, access, and apply relevant information. Whether they are professional competitors or recreational participants, athletes rely heavily on information to make informed choices about training methods, nutrition, recovery strategies, and overall lifestyle management. In this sense, information becomes a critical resource that supports athletic performance and long-term development.

Athletes' information needs are diverse and often evolve over time depending on their experience level, the nature of the sport, and the intensity of training. For instance, novice athletes may seek basic knowledge related to training techniques, fitness routines, and foundational skill development, whereas more experienced athletes often pursue advanced information on performance optimization, injury prevention, mental conditioning, and competitive strategies. This demonstrates that information-seeking behaviour is closely tied to the stage of an athlete's career and their performance goals. As athletes progress in their sporting journey, their information needs become more specialized and complex.

The sources athletes rely on to obtain information are equally diverse. Traditionally, coaches, trainers, and medical professionals have served as primary sources of information. These interpersonal sources are often considered reliable due to their expertise and direct involvement in the athlete's development. However, the advancement of technology and the widespread use of digital media have significantly expanded access to information. Today, athletes frequently consult online platforms, training videos, digital applications, and social media for guidance on technique, nutrition, recovery, and mental preparation. While digital platforms provide immediate and extensive information, they also present challenges related to credibility and accuracy, requiring athletes to develop critical evaluation skills.

The training environment and level of competition play a significant role in shaping athletes' information-seeking behaviour. Athletes competing at higher levels often have access to specialized support teams, including sports scientists, nutritionists, psychologists, and medical professionals. These resources provide structured and evidence-based information tailored to the athlete's needs. In contrast, athletes at amateur or recreational levels may rely more heavily on informal sources, such as peers, online content, or personal experience. This variation highlights the influence of social, organizational, and environmental factors on how athletes seek and use information. Moreover, information-seeking behaviour among athletes is driven by specific motivations, including performance improvement, injury prevention, recovery management, and mental preparation. Athletes often search for information to solve immediate problems, enhance competitive performance, or maintain long-term health. Their ability to find and use accurate information directly influences training effectiveness, performance outcomes, and overall well-being. However, athletes also face several challenges in this process, including information overload, difficulty identifying reliable sources, limited access to experts, and the time constraints associated with training schedules.

Understanding the relationship between sports participation and information-seeking behaviour is crucial for developing effective support systems within sports organizations. By gaining insights into how athletes search for and use information, coaches, trainers, and policymakers can design better communication strategies, educational programs, and information services that align with athletes' needs. This understanding can also support the

development of athlete-centered information systems that promote informed decision-making and contribute to improved performance, injury prevention, and overall athlete welfare.

Ultimately, examining athletes' information-seeking behaviour provides valuable insights into how knowledge is accessed, evaluated, and applied in sports contexts. As sports continue to evolve with advances in technology and sports science, understanding how athletes interact with information will remain essential for promoting sustainable athletic development and success.

2. Literature Review

Recent research demonstrates that athletes' information needs evolve significantly across different stages of their sporting careers. Beginner athletes typically seek fundamental knowledge related to training techniques, fitness routines, and skill acquisition, whereas elite athletes require more specialized and evidence-based information concerning performance optimization, biomechanics, and sports science (Case & Given, 2016; Söker et al., 2025). Contemporary studies further highlight that long-term athlete development frameworks emphasize continuous learning, structured knowledge acquisition, and access to specialized information systems as essential components of athletic progression ([Frontiers](#)). This progression reflects the increasing complexity of information needs as athletes advance in their careers.

Interpersonal sources such as coaches, trainers, physiotherapists, and peers remain central to athletes' information-seeking practices due to their perceived credibility and experiential knowledge. Trust plays a critical role in shaping information behaviour, as athletes often prioritize advice from individuals directly involved in their training environment (Wilson, 1999). However, recent studies indicate that help-seeking behaviour among athletes, particularly in areas such as mental health and injury management, has expanded to include professional and institutional sources, reflecting a broader shift toward formalized information systems ([PMC](#)). This suggests that athletes increasingly combine traditional interpersonal sources with professional expertise when making health-related decisions.

The rapid advancement of digital technologies and online platforms has fundamentally transformed athletes' information-seeking behaviour. Digital media, including social media platforms, online coaching tools, and video-based learning environments, now serve as primary sources of information. Research shows that sports media use significantly influences sports participation and commitment, indicating a strong relationship between digital engagement and athletic behaviour ([ResearchGate](#)). Similarly, studies on digital technology in sports consumption reveal that online platforms enhance access to information, increase engagement, and facilitate knowledge sharing among athletes ([Frontiers](#)). Despite these advantages, the growing reliance on digital sources introduces challenges such as misinformation, lack of regulation, and difficulty in assessing credibility.

Information overload and the proliferation of unverified content have made information literacy a critical skill for athletes. Recent empirical studies show that individuals engaged in physical activity frequently rely on social media and online platforms as primary sources of information, often for purposes such as improving performance, health, and physical appearance ([Springer](#)). However, without adequate information literacy skills, athletes may struggle to distinguish between scientifically valid information and misleading content. This underscores the importance of developing critical evaluation skills to ensure effective decision-making in sports contexts.

Furthermore, contemporary research highlights the increasing integration of data-driven approaches and emerging technologies in sports. Advances in sports and exercise medicine demonstrate a growing emphasis on interdisciplinary knowledge, including biomechanics, injury prevention, and performance analytics ([Springer](#)). Similarly, recent studies on athlete data ecosystems emphasize the importance of structured information flows in managing health and performance data, suggesting that modern athletes operate within complex information environments that require both technical and cognitive competencies (Stenger & Feng, 2024). These developments further reinforce the need for athletes to engage actively with information and develop adaptive information-seeking strategies.

In addition, psychological and behavioral dimensions of sports participation significantly influence information-seeking behaviour. Research trends indicate that mental health, motivation, and emotional regulation are increasingly recognized as critical components of athletic performance ([ScienceDirect](#)). Athletes often seek information related to stress management, motivation, and psychological resilience, highlighting the multidimensional nature of their information needs. This aligns with recent systematic reviews that emphasize the importance of psychological support and coping strategies in athlete development ([Frontiers](#)).

Overall, the literature suggests that athletes' information-seeking behaviour is shaped by a combination of individual, technological, and environmental factors. The integration of digital technologies, the growing importance of information literacy, and the increasing complexity of sports science have collectively transformed how athletes access, evaluate, and utilize information. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing effective information systems, training programs, and support mechanisms that enhance athletic performance and well-being.

3. Research Objectives

- To explore the types of information sought by athletes.
- To understand how sports participation influences information needs and behaviours.
- To identify preferred information sources and access patterns among athletes.
- To examine barriers faced in accessing reliable information.

4. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore in depth the experiences, perceptions, and practices of athletes regarding their information-seeking behaviour. A qualitative approach was considered most appropriate because it allows for a rich, detailed, and contextual understanding of how athletes interact with information in real-life sporting environments. Unlike quantitative methods that focus on numerical measurement, qualitative research emphasizes meaning, interpretation, and subjective experiences. In this study, the qualitative design helped capture how athletes perceive their information needs, how they make decisions about sources, and how sports participation shapes their overall approach to seeking and using information.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 150 athletes drawn from different sports disciplines to ensure diversity of experiences and perspectives. Both competitive and recreational athletes were included in the sample, allowing for comparison of information-seeking behaviour across different levels of engagement in sports. Competitive athletes typically operate in structured training environments with access to coaches, medical staff, and performance specialists, whereas recreational athletes often rely on more informal or self-directed learning methods. This variation provided a broader understanding of how context and level of sports

participation influence information behaviour. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, ensuring that only individuals actively involved in sports and capable of providing relevant insights were included in the study.

Data Collection process

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, which allowed participants to freely express their experiences while ensuring that key areas of interest were covered. The semi-structured format provided flexibility, enabling the researcher to probe deeper into responses and explore emerging ideas during the interviews. The interview guide included questions focused on several core areas, including the types of information athletes need for training and performance, the sources they prefer for obtaining this information, and the reasons behind their choice of specific sources. Additionally, participants were asked about their motivations for seeking information, such as performance improvement, injury prevention, or psychological preparedness. The interviews also explored the challenges athletes face in accessing, evaluating, and applying reliable information, particularly in the context of digital media and rapidly changing sports environments.

Data Analysis

The data collected from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data. The process began with careful transcription of all interviews, followed by repeated reading to ensure familiarity with the content. Initial codes were then generated by identifying meaningful segments of text related to athletes' information-seeking behaviour. These codes were systematically organized into categories based on similarities and patterns. Subsequently, broader themes were developed to represent key findings across the dataset. These themes reflected common patterns such as preferred information sources, motivations for seeking information, and barriers to accessing reliable content. The final stage involved interpreting these themes in relation to the research objectives, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how sports participation influences information-seeking behaviour among athletes.

5. Findings of the study

The findings of this study are based on data collected from **150 athletes** representing various sports disciplines. The sample included both **competitive and recreational athletes**, ensuring a broad and diverse understanding of information-seeking practices across different levels of sports participation. Competitive athletes generally operated within structured training systems supported by coaches, trainers, and medical professionals, while recreational athletes relied more on self-directed learning and informal networks. This variation provided meaningful insights into how sports context influences the types of information athletes seek. The analysis revealed that athletes actively seek multiple categories of information to support their performance, health, and overall development. One of the most commonly reported types of information was related to **training techniques and skill development**. A large proportion of athletes indicated that they regularly search for new training methods, exercise routines, and sport-specific skill enhancement strategies. Competitive athletes, in particular, emphasized the importance of advanced training information such as periodization plans, strength and conditioning programs, and sport-specific drills designed to improve performance outcomes.

Another major category of information sought by athletes was related to **injury prevention and rehabilitation**. Participants highlighted that avoiding injuries and ensuring quick recovery were critical concerns in their sporting careers. Many athletes reported seeking

information on warm-up exercises, stretching techniques, physiotherapy exercises, and recovery strategies. Competitive athletes often relied on medical staff and physiotherapists for such information, whereas recreational athletes frequently turned to online videos, fitness blogs, and peer advice.

The study also found that **nutrition and dietary information** represented a significant area of interest among athletes. Respondents reported seeking guidance on meal planning, hydration strategies, supplement use, and weight management. This type of information was considered essential for maintaining energy levels, improving endurance, and enhancing overall physical performance. Competitive athletes showed a higher tendency to consult nutritionists or scientifically validated sources, while recreational athletes often depended on social media content and general fitness websites.

In addition, athletes demonstrated a strong need for **psychological and motivational information**. Many participants reported seeking strategies for stress management, confidence building, focus enhancement, and coping with competitive pressure. This was particularly prominent among competitive athletes who regularly participate in high-pressure environments. Recreational athletes also acknowledged the importance of motivation-related content, especially for maintaining consistency in training and physical activity.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that athletes frequently sought **competition-related and tactical information**. This included understanding opponents' strategies, game rules, match analysis, and performance feedback. Competitive athletes emphasized the importance of video analysis, scouting reports, and coach feedback, whereas recreational athletes relied more on informal observation and peer discussions. Overall, the findings clearly demonstrate that athletes seek a wide range of information types that extend beyond basic training knowledge. Their information needs are multidimensional, encompassing physical, psychological, nutritional, and strategic aspects of sports participation. The variation between competitive and recreational athletes further highlights how the level of engagement in sports significantly influences the depth, complexity, and sources of information sought.

Objective 2: To understand how sports participation influences information needs and behaviour

The findings related to this objective reveal that **sports participation has a significant and direct influence on athletes' information needs and information-seeking behaviours**. The responses of the 150 athletes indicated that the intensity, frequency, and level of sports involvement strongly shape what type of information is needed, how urgently it is required, and which sources are preferred for obtaining it. Athletes engaged in regular and intensive training reported more complex and frequent information needs compared to those participating in sports at a recreational level.

The analysis shows that as the level of sports participation increases, athletes develop **more specialized and performance-oriented information needs**. Competitive athletes involved in structured training programs demonstrated a strong demand for advanced and technical information, such as biomechanics, sport-specific strategies, recovery protocols, and performance analytics. In contrast, recreational athletes primarily required general information related to fitness maintenance, basic training routines, and general health improvement. This indicates that higher sports engagement leads to more sophisticated and specialized information requirements.

The findings further reveal that sports participation influences the **frequency and urgency of information-seeking behaviour**. Athletes who trained daily or participated in competitive events reported frequent and continuous information needs, often seeking

immediate solutions to training-related challenges, injuries, or performance issues. On the other hand, less active or recreational athletes engaged in occasional and need-based information seeking, usually when they encountered specific problems or motivation gaps. This suggests that consistent sports participation creates a continuous cycle of information dependence and learning.

Another important finding is that sports participation significantly shapes the **choice of information sources**. Competitive athletes were more likely to rely on structured and expert-based sources such as coaches, physiotherapists, nutritionists, and performance analysts. These sources were considered credible, reliable, and directly applicable to their training needs. Recreational athletes, however, showed a stronger reliance on informal and easily accessible sources such as social media platforms, YouTube tutorials, friends, and general fitness websites. This difference highlights how structured sports environments encourage trust in professional expertise, while less structured environments lead to greater dependence on digital and peer-based information.

The study also found that sports participation influences the **decision-making process in information evaluation and use**. Athletes deeply involved in sports demonstrated a more critical approach toward evaluating information, particularly regarding training methods and injury prevention techniques. Competitive athletes were more likely to verify information through coaches or scientific sources before applying it in practice. In contrast, recreational athletes were more likely to adopt information directly from online platforms without thorough verification, indicating differences in information literacy levels based on sports engagement.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that sports participation contributes to the development of a **habitual information-seeking culture** among athletes. Regular involvement in sports encourages athletes to continuously seek knowledge to improve performance, prevent injuries, and maintain physical and mental well-being. Over time, this leads to the integration of information-seeking as a routine part of training behavior, especially among competitive athletes.

In summary, the results clearly demonstrate that sports participation plays a crucial role in shaping athletes' information needs and behaviours. Higher levels of engagement in sports lead to more complex, frequent, and structured information-seeking practices, while lower levels of participation are associated with simpler and more informal information behaviours.

Findings associated with Objective 3:

The objective of identifying preferred information sources and access patterns among athletes reveals that athletes depend on a diverse range of information channels shaped by their level of sports participation, training environment, and personal needs. The findings indicate that athletes do not rely on a single source of information; rather, they engage with multiple sources that include expert-based, digital, and interpersonal channels. This diversity reflects the complexity of modern sports environments, where access to accurate and timely information is essential for performance, health, and skill development.

One of the most preferred sources of information among athletes is expert-based interpersonal support, particularly coaches, trainers, physiotherapists, nutritionists, and sports physicians. These sources are highly trusted because they provide direct, experience-based, and individualized guidance. Competitive athletes, in particular, show a strong reliance on these professionals for technical advice, injury management, and performance improvement strategies. The trust placed in these sources highlights the importance of professional expertise in shaping athletes' decision-making processes.

In addition to expert sources, digital platforms have emerged as highly popular and frequently used information channels among athletes. Social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, along with fitness applications and sports websites, are widely used due to their easy accessibility, visual learning formats, and immediate availability of content. Recreational athletes, in particular, rely heavily on digital sources as they often lack access to structured coaching systems. However, while digital platforms provide convenience and variety, they also present challenges related to the credibility and accuracy of information.

Peer networks also play a significant role in athletes' information-seeking behaviour. Teammates, friends, and fellow athletes are commonly consulted for quick advice, practical tips, and motivational support. These sources are valued for their relatability and ease of access, especially in informal training settings. However, the reliability of peer-based information varies depending on the experience and knowledge level of the individuals within the group, making it a supplementary rather than primary source for most athletes.

The analysis further reveals distinct patterns in how athletes access information. Competitive athletes tend to follow a structured and routine-based access pattern, where information is continuously integrated into their daily training schedules. They often receive ongoing guidance from coaches and use performance monitoring tools regularly. In contrast, recreational athletes generally adopt a need-based pattern, accessing information only when specific challenges arise, such as learning new exercises or addressing fitness concerns.

Another notable pattern is the increasing use of real-time and instant access to information. With the widespread availability of smartphones and internet connectivity, athletes frequently seek quick solutions during training sessions or competitions. This immediate access allows them to make rapid adjustments in technique, strategy, or recovery practices. Additionally, many competitive athletes adopt a multi-source verification pattern, where they compare information from coaches, digital platforms, and peers before applying it. This reflects a higher level of information awareness and critical thinking.

Overall, the findings suggest that athletes operate within a blended information environment that combines professional expertise, digital technology, and social interaction. The preference for specific sources and access patterns is strongly influenced by the level of sports participation, availability of resources, and individual information literacy. Understanding these patterns is essential for developing effective information support systems that enhance athletes' performance, learning, and overall well-being.

Objective 4: To examine barriers faced in accessing reliable information

The qualitative findings of this study reveal that athletes experience multiple and interconnected barriers in accessing reliable and accurate information related to sports performance, training, nutrition, injury prevention, and health management. These barriers are shaped by differences in sports participation level, access to professional support, digital literacy, and availability of credible resources. The analysis of responses from 150 athletes indicates that while information is widely available, its reliability and accessibility remain significant challenges.

One of the most frequently reported barriers is **information overload**, particularly due to the rapid expansion of digital media platforms. Athletes indicated that they are exposed to a vast amount of information from social media, websites, videos, and fitness applications. However, the excessive volume of content often makes it difficult to identify relevant and accurate information. Many participants reported confusion when different sources provide contradictory advice regarding training techniques, diet plans, or injury recovery methods.

This overload not only reduces efficiency in decision-making but also increases dependence on random or unverified sources.

Another major barrier identified is the **lack of credibility and trust in online information sources**. Athletes expressed concern that much of the information available on digital platforms is not scientifically validated or is shared by non-experts. Recreational athletes, in particular, reported difficulty in distinguishing between expert advice and opinion-based content. Even competitive athletes acknowledged that while they use digital platforms frequently, they often cross-check information with coaches or professionals due to concerns about accuracy. This indicates a general lack of trust in unregulated online information.

The study also found that **limited access to professional guidance** is a significant barrier, especially for recreational and low-resource athletes. Unlike elite athletes who have access to coaches, nutritionists, and medical staff, many participants reported that they do not have consistent access to expert advice. This limitation forces them to rely on informal sources such as peers or online platforms, which may not always provide reliable or individualized information. This gap highlights inequalities in access to structured sports support systems.

Time constraints and training schedules were also reported as important barriers. Athletes, particularly those involved in competitive sports, often have demanding training routines that leave limited time for searching, evaluating, and analyzing information. As a result, they tend to rely on quick-access sources such as social media or short videos rather than in-depth or evidence-based materials. This convenience-driven approach sometimes compromises the quality of information used in decision-making.

Another emerging barrier is **low information literacy among athletes**, particularly in evaluating the authenticity and relevance of information. Many participants admitted that they lack formal training in assessing the quality of online or digital content. This makes them vulnerable to misinformation, especially in areas such as supplementation, injury treatment, and performance enhancement techniques. Athletes with higher exposure to structured training environments demonstrated better evaluation skills, indicating that information literacy is closely linked to training context. Language and accessibility issues were also highlighted as secondary barriers. Some athletes reported difficulty understanding technical or scientific content, particularly when it is presented in complex language or academic formats. This reduces their ability to benefit from research-based sports knowledge, especially when it is not translated into practical training guidance.

In summary, the findings reveal that athletes face a combination of structural, technological, and cognitive barriers in accessing reliable information. These include information overload, lack of credibility in digital sources, limited access to experts, time constraints, low information literacy, and difficulties in understanding complex content. Collectively, these barriers significantly influence how athletes search for, evaluate, and apply information in their sporting activities, highlighting the need for improved information support systems and targeted literacy interventions in sports environments.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into how sports participation shapes athletes' information-seeking behaviour, preferred sources of information, and the barriers they face in accessing reliable knowledge. Overall, the results demonstrate that athletes operate within a complex and dynamic information environment where performance, health, and decision-making are strongly dependent on the quality and accessibility of information.

In relation to the first objective, the study found that athletes seek a wide range of information, including training techniques, injury prevention, nutrition, psychological preparation, and

competition strategies. This finding aligns with the understanding that modern sports performance is multidimensional and requires continuous learning beyond physical training alone. The variation in information needs between competitive and recreational athletes further indicates that the level of sports participation significantly influences the depth and specialization of information required. Competitive athletes tend to seek structured, scientific, and performance-oriented information, whereas recreational athletes focus more on general fitness and health-related content.

The second objective revealed that sports participation has a strong influence on both the nature and frequency of information-seeking behaviour. Athletes who are more actively engaged in structured training environments demonstrate more consistent and systematic information-seeking patterns. They often integrate information acquisition into their daily routines and rely heavily on expert guidance. In contrast, less active or recreational athletes exhibit more irregular and need-based information-seeking behaviour. This suggests that increased engagement in sports not only increases the demand for information but also enhances the development of habitual information-seeking practices. These findings are consistent with the idea that experience and exposure in sports lead to more refined decision-making and greater reliance on evidence-based knowledge.

Regarding the third objective, the study highlighted that athletes prefer a combination of expert-based, digital, and peer-based information sources. Coaches and other professionals remain the most trusted sources due to their expertise and direct involvement in athletes' development. However, the increasing dominance of digital platforms reflects a significant shift in information access patterns. Social media, fitness applications, and online videos have become essential tools, particularly for recreational athletes who may lack access to formal coaching structures. This blended approach to information sourcing suggests that athletes are increasingly operating in hybrid information environments where traditional and digital sources coexist. However, the reliance on digital media also raises concerns regarding the accuracy and reliability of information, particularly when it is not supported by scientific evidence.

The findings related to the fourth objective reveal several critical barriers that limit athletes' access to reliable information. Information overload emerged as a major challenge due to the excessive availability of often conflicting content online. Additionally, the lack of credibility in digital sources forces athletes to frequently verify information, increasing cognitive effort and reducing efficiency in decision-making. Limited access to professional support further exacerbates the problem, especially for recreational athletes who depend heavily on informal and unregulated sources. Time constraints associated with training schedules also restrict athletes' ability to engage in detailed information evaluation, leading to reliance on quick and convenient sources. Furthermore, varying levels of information literacy among athletes affect their ability to critically assess and apply information effectively. These barriers collectively highlight systemic and individual challenges within the sports information ecosystem.

Overall, the discussion suggests that athletes' information-seeking behaviour is shaped by an interaction of personal, environmental, and technological factors. While digital advancements have improved access to information, they have also introduced new challenges related to credibility and overload. The study emphasizes the need for structured information support systems within sports organizations, as well as training programs aimed at improving athletes' information literacy. Such interventions would help athletes make more informed

decisions, enhance performance outcomes, and reduce risks associated with inaccurate or misleading information.

In conclusion, the study highlights the critical role of information in modern sports participation. It demonstrates that effective information access and utilization are essential components of athletic success, and that addressing existing barriers can significantly improve both performance and well-being among athletes.

6. Conclusion of the Study

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that athletes' information-seeking behaviour is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon shaped by their level of sports participation, training environment, and access to resources. Based on data collected from 150 athletes, it is evident that sports participation significantly influences the type of information sought, the frequency of information needs, and the ways in which information is accessed and applied in practice. Athletes require diverse categories of information, including training techniques, injury prevention strategies, nutrition guidance, psychological support, and competition-related insights, all of which are essential for enhancing performance and maintaining overall well-being.

The study further concludes that higher levels of sports participation lead to more specialized, frequent, and structured information needs. Competitive athletes, who operate within organized training systems, rely heavily on expert-based sources such as coaches, trainers, and medical professionals, while also integrating digital tools and performance data into their routines. In contrast, recreational athletes depend more on informal and digital sources, reflecting less structured but more flexible information practices. This variation highlights the strong relationship between sports engagement and the development of information-seeking habits.

Moreover, the study establishes that athletes adopt multiple information sources and access patterns, including expert consultation, digital platforms, and peer networks. While this blended information environment enhances accessibility and convenience, it also raises concerns regarding the credibility and reliability of information, particularly from digital and unregulated sources. Athletes increasingly face challenges such as information overload, lack of trust in online content, limited access to professional guidance, and time constraints due to intensive training schedules.

In addition, the study concludes that information literacy plays a crucial role in determining how effectively athletes evaluate and use information. Athletes with better exposure to structured training environments demonstrate stronger critical evaluation skills compared to those relying primarily on informal sources. However, overall gaps in information literacy make many athletes vulnerable to misinformation, especially in areas related to health, nutrition, and injury management.

Finally, the study emphasizes the need for developing structured, athlete-centered information support systems that integrate professional expertise with reliable digital resources. Enhancing information literacy, improving access to credible sources, and reducing barriers to information access can significantly improve athletes' decision-making, performance outcomes, and overall well-being. In conclusion, understanding athletes' information-seeking behaviour is essential for optimizing sports training systems and supporting sustainable athletic development in modern sports environments.

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