

Integrated Communication Strategies For Hockey Branding: A Case Study of the Central Java Hockey Federation

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the communication strategies implemented by the Central Java branch of the Indonesia Hockey Federation (FHI) in developing hockey branding in the digital era. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. A purposive sampling approach was employed to recruit five key informants, comprising organizational representatives, a hockey coach, and two active hockey athletes. These individuals were selected because of their direct involvement in communication activities, branding efforts, and hockey development programs. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the Central Java FHI's communication strategy is carried out through a combination of direct communication and the utilization of digital media. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are used as the primary means for publicizing activities, promoting athletes' achievements, and increasing interaction with the public, particularly the younger generation. Additionally, coaching clinics, sport competitions, and collaborations with schools and universities form part of the organization's branding strategy. This study also found that limited facilities and the high cost of sports equipment remain the primary obstacles to the development of hockey in Central Java. Nevertheless, the growth of digital media and athletes' achievements present strategic opportunities to boost the popularity of hockey. This study contributes to the development of sports communication research, particularly regarding the branding strategies of regional sports organizations in Indonesia.

Keyword : communication strategy, sport branding, digital media, hockey, sports communication



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Introduction

Sports play a vital role in enhancing the quality of human resources, whether in terms of health, character development, or

improved performance (Hoki & Faruk, 2025). In addition to serving as a form of physical activity, sports also contribute to the development of a community's social and cultural identity (Michael et al., 2023). As they have evolved, sport organizations have expanded their focus beyond simply training athletes, they are now expected to build the image and popularity of their respective sport through effective communication strategies (Stegmann et al., 2024). One sport that is still developing in Indonesia is field hockey (Mohamed et al., 2025). Compared to soccer, badminton, and volleyball, field hockey still enjoys relatively low popularity among the public (Hoki & Faruk, 2025). This situation requires field hockey organizations to implement effective communication strategies to raise the sport's profile and increase public interest in it (Rai et al., 2025). In this context, the Central Java branch of the Indonesia Hockey Federation (FHI) plays a crucial role in developing the sport of hockey through athlete development, organizing competitions, and conducting promotional activities (Marthinus et al., 2026).

Advance in digital technology have transformed the way sports organizations communicate (López-carril, 2023). Social media has become a strategic tool for building sports branding because it can reach a wide audience quickly and interactively (Woods et al., 2025). The concept of sports branding emphasizes that sports organizations need to build their identity, image, and emotional connection with the public through integrated communication strategies (Alshalawi, 2022). The use of digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube is considered effective in strengthening public engagement particularly among the younger generation in engaging with sports organizations (Stegmann et al., 2024). In addition, the theory of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) explains that the success of an organization's communication depends on its ability to consistently integrate various communication channels (Suvorova, 2023). In the context of sports organizations, communication strategies are implemented not only through digital media but also through direct communication channels such as coaching clinics, sport competitions, school outreach programs, and collaborations with the sport community (Tjørndal et al., 2023), most research has focused on popular sports and professional settings. Existing studies have also tended to emphasize athlete development and performance enhancement while providing limited discussion regarding organizational communication practices and the strategic use of digital platforms (Woods et al., 2025). Limited attention has therefore been given to how regional sports organizations in minority sports such as hockey implement integrated communication strategies to strengthen brand awareness and public engagement (Astleitner & Schlick, 2025). Furthermore, empirical evidence regarding the application of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) within regional sports federations in Indonesia remains scarce (Boluda et al., 2025). Existing studies have predominantly examined digital communication practices in professional sport organizations and mainstream sports such as football and basketball (Habyarimana et al., 2022). Limited attention has been devoted to minority sports

organizations operating at the regional level, particularly in developing countries (Habyarimana et al., 2022). In addition, previous studies have largely explored social media utilization and sport branding as separate constructs, leaving limited understanding of how Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and sport branding can be combined to strengthen public awareness and stakeholder engagement (King, 2024). Consequently, further research is needed to examine how regional hockey federations integrate online and offline communication channels to develop sustainable sport branding initiatives (L'ópez-Carril et al., 2025).

Therefore, this study investigates how organizational actors perceive these communication activities as contributing to audience engagement, organizational visibility, and brand awareness. The Central Java Hockey Federation integrates digital and in-person communication activities to build its hockey brand image (López-carril, 2023). Previous studies have examined social media usage, fan engagement, and sports brand image. However, limited attention has been paid to how regional minority sports federations coordinate bold and engaging communications under resource constraints. Therefore, this study examines not only the use of communication channels but also the mechanisms through which these channels are broadcast and translated into audience engagement and brand awareness (Marthinus et al., 2026). Unlike previous research that focuses on athlete performance and sports development, this study examines communication practices from an organizational perspective by combining the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) framework and sports brand image in the context of minority sports (Memon et al., 2022). This study contributes to the sports communication literature by providing empirical evidence from regional sports federations in Indonesia and expanding the concepts of IMC and sports brand image in minority sports organizations in developing countries.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Sport Branding theories. IMC emphasizes the integration of multiple communication channels to deliver consistent messages and strengthen organizational relationships with stakeholders. According to (Michael et al., 2023), communication effectiveness is achieved when organizations coordinate various communication activities to create a unified brand identity and reinforce audience engagement. In the context of sport organizations, IMC involves the integration of digital media, public relations activities, events, athlete promotion, and community engagement initiatives. Through this integration, organizations can strengthen audience engagement, improve brand awareness, and enhance organizational visibility across different stakeholder groups (Mohamed et al., 2025).

Sport branding theory highlights the importance of creating a distinctive identity, positive image, and emotional connection between a sport organization and its audiences (Oudat et al., 2025). Effective sport branding not only increases public recognition but also

encourages participation, loyalty, and community support. According to (Suvorova, 2023), effective sport marketing and branding strategies rely on consistent communication efforts that strengthen brand awareness, foster audience engagement, and create meaningful associations between sport organizations and their stakeholders. In minority sports such as hockey, branding strategies become particularly important because public awareness and media exposure remain relatively limited compared with mainstream sports (Syadzwina et al., 2024).

Therefore, sport organizations must utilize various communication channels to enhance visibility and strengthen their relationships with the public. Based on these theoretical perspectives, this study examines how FHI Central Java integrates digital and direct communication activities to develop hockey branding, increase public awareness, and strengthen stakeholder engagement. From a sport branding perspective, explain that an effective sport brand is built through several interconnected dimensions, namely brand identity, brand image, brand awareness, brand associations, and brand loyalty (Abeza, 2023). Brand identity refers to how an organization seeks to present itself to its audiences, while brand image reflects how the organization is perceived by the public.

Brand awareness concerns the ability of audiences to recognize and recall a particular sport brand, whereas brand associations encompass the ideas, values, and meanings linked to that brand. Collectively, these dimensions contribute to the development of brand loyalty and the establishment of long-term relationships with stakeholders. In the context of minority sports, strengthening brand awareness and creating favorable brand associations are essential for improving visibility, attracting public interest, and encouraging broader participation (Boluda et al., 2025). Therefore, this study examines how the communication initiatives implemented by FHI Central Java contribute to strengthening hockey branding through increased organizational visibility, audience engagement, and public recognition.

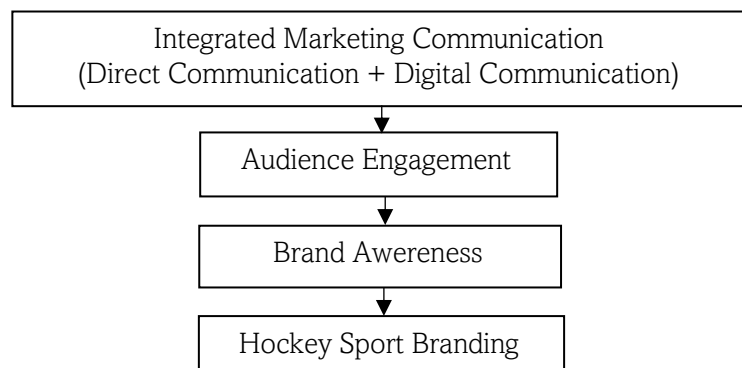


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Hockey Branding Development

In this study, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is treated as an analytical framework rather than as an established organizational practice within FHI Central Java. The use of multiple communication channels does not necessarily indicate full

communication integration (Marthinus et al., 2026). Multi-channel communication refers to the use of several platforms or activities, whereas integrated communication requires strategic coordination, message consistency, audience segmentation, shared communication objectives, and evaluation across channels (López-carril, 2023). Therefore, this study examines the extent to which FHI Central Java's digital and direct communication activities demonstrate elements of integration, while recognizing that these practices may remain informal, emerging, or only partially coordinated.

Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the communication and branding strategies implemented by the Central Java branch of the Indonesian Hockey Federation (FHI) in introducing hockey to the public. The study was conducted at the FHI Central Java secretariat through field observations and direct interviews with organizational officials. This study focused on the organization's communication strategies, hockey branding, the use of digital media, and the challenges and opportunities for hockey development in Central Java. A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit five key informants, consisting of the Secretary of FHI Central Java, the Deputy Chair of FHI Central Java, a hockey coach, and two active hockey athletes. Participants were selected based on their direct involvement in organizational communications, branding initiatives, and hockey development activities, as well as their knowledge of promotional programs implemented by FHI Central Java. The number of participants was considered sufficient because data saturation was achieved during the interview process (Woods et al., 2025). After the fifth interview, no additional themes or meaningful insights were found, indicating that the data collected was sufficient to answer the research objectives. This study was conducted from January to March 2025. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. The interview instrument was developed by drawing on key concepts from Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and sports branding literature. Discussions focused on communication channels, audience engagement strategies, brand awareness development, stakeholder interactions, and organizational branding efforts implemented by FHI Central Java.

Data collection methods included:

1. In-depth interviews to obtain information on communication strategies, athlete development, and digital media usage.
2. Observation, conducted by directly observing organizational activities and hockey promotional efforts.
3. Documentation, in the form of photographs of observational activities and interviews conducted during the study (Xu et al., 2025).

The trustworthiness of the study was strengthened through the application of source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking (Rummakko, 2024). Interview data were cross-validated with observational evidence and supporting organizational

documents to confirm data consistency. Furthermore, the Secretary and Chair of FHI Central Java reviewed initial findings and interview summaries to verify the accuracy of interpretations. This process helped enhance the credibility and reliability of the study. The collected data were then examined using the interactive analysis framework proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, information relevant to the research focus was selected, organized, and grouped into thematic categories (Hoki & Faruk, 2025). The data presentation stage involved presenting findings through descriptive explanations and supporting tables to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were formulated by identifying recurring themes, patterns, and relationships emerging from the data.

To examine the level of communication integration, interviews explored several organizational dimensions, including the actors responsible for designing communication messages, the existence of communication planning or content, the consistency of the organization's identity across platforms, the intended audiences of each communication channel, coordination between digital promotions and in-person activities, the division of communication responsibilities, and the mechanisms used to evaluate communication outcomes (Naraine & Parent, 2017). These dimensions were used to distinguish the simple use of multiple communication channels from more strategically coordinated communication practices.

Results And Discussion

Research results are presented in the form of graphs, tables, or descriptive. Analysis and interpretation of these results is required before they are discussed. The table is written in the middle or at the end of each descriptive text of research results/acquisitions. If the width of the table is not enough to be written in half a page, it can be written a full page. Table titles are written from left to right, all words are capitalized, except for conjunctions. If more than one line is written in single space. For example, it can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes Identified from Qualitative Data Analysis

Main Theme	Sub-Theme
Direct Communication Strategy	Coaching Clinics, Competitions, School outreach
Digital Communication Strategy	Instagram, TikTok, YouTube Content
Branding Assets	Athlete Achievements
Challenges in Hockey Development	Facilities, Equipment Costs, Media Exposure
Opportunities for Hockey Branding	Social Media Utilization, educational Partnerships

Based on the research findings, FHI Central Java implemented a direct communication strategy through coaching clinics, friendly

matches, sports outreach programs in schools and universities, and engagement with the sports community. This strategy was implemented to increase public awareness of hockey through direct community engagement. One informant explained : *“We regularly hold matches for all age groups, from youth to seniors, and also introduce the public to accomplished field hockey athletes so that public awareness of hockey increases.”* (Interview with FHI Central Java Secretary, March 2025).

Coaching clinics are considered effective because they allow the public to learn the basic techniques of hockey firsthand. This view was reinforced by the coach, who noted that coaching clinics and athlete development programs serve as important channels for familiarizing wider community groups with the sport of hockey. *“Coaching clinics and athlete development programs offer opportunities for community members to become familiar with hockey through direct participation. These activities help increase public interest in the sport while supporting the growth of a more engaged and active hockey community.”* (Interview with Hockey Coach, January 2025). In addition, direct interaction between athletes, coaches, and the public fosters an emotional connection that strengthens the image of the sports organization. The findings indicate that face-to-face communication remains a key strategy in the development of local sports. This strategy aligns with the concept of organizational communication, which emphasizes the importance of direct interaction in building social relationships with the public (López-Carril et al., 2025).

The Use of Digital Media and Channel Activations in Hockey Branding

The research findings indicate that social media serves as a key tool in FHI Central Java’s branding strategy. The organization uses Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to share information about its activities, match highlights, and promote athletes’ achievements.

Table 2. Evidence of Multi-Channel and Emerging Integrated Communication Practices in FHI Central Java

IMC dimension	Current evidence in FHI Central Java	Interpretation
Use of multiple channels	Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, competitions, coaching clinics, and school outreach	Multi-channel communication is evident
Message consistency	Promotion of hockey activities and athlete achievements across channels	Partial evidence; consistency requires further documentation
Audience segmentation	TikTok is perceived as targeting younger audiences	Emerging but informal segmentation

Cross-channel coordination	Offline activities are publicized through social media	Partial or informal coordination
Strategic planning	No formal plan or content calendar was clearly documented	Insufficient evidence
Division of responsibility	Not sufficiently explained in the current data	Requires further investigation
Evaluation	Likes, comments, and sharing are mentioned, but no systematic metrics are presented	Informal evaluation only
Stakeholder relationship management	Collaboration with schools, universities, athletes, and communities	Evident, but not formally integrated

One of the organization's officials stated:

"We use social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to promote hockey among younger audiences. In addition, we leverage athletes' achievements as a promotional tool to raise public awareness of the sport of hockey." (Interview with FHI Central Java Secretary, February 2025). A comparable viewpoint was expressed by the Vice Chairman of FHI Central Java, who underscored the strategic importance of communication and promotional initiatives in strengthening public awareness and recognition of hockey. *"Strategic communication and promotional initiatives are essential for increasing public recognition of hockey. By utilizing social media platforms, school-based activities, tournaments, and community campaigns, hockey can engage wider audiences, encourage new involvement, and build greater public support for its development."* (Interview with Vice Chairman of FHI Central Java, March 2025). The findings indicate that digital communication platforms perform complementary roles in supporting hockey branding initiatives. Instagram functions as a visual communication medium that highlights athlete achievements, organizational activities, and hockey-related information, thereby strengthening organizational identity and public recognition. TikTok serves as an engagement-oriented platform that attracts younger audiences through short-form and interactive content, helping to increase interest and participation in hockey activities (Tanasale et al., 2025). The use of athlete achievements as promotional content further enhances organizational credibility and visibility among the public. Collectively, these digital communication strategies enable FHI

Central Java to reach diverse audience segments while maintaining consistent branding messages across multiple platforms.

The use of digital media is seen as a way to increase public engagement with sports. The findings demonstrate that FHI Central Java applies Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) principles by combining multiple communication channels to deliver consistent organizational messages. These findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasize the importance of digital communication in sport organizations. (Alshalawi, 2022) argued that social media platforms can strengthen relationships between sport organizations and their audiences by facilitating greater interaction and engagement. (Naraine & Parent, 2017) highlighted that digital technologies have transformed stakeholder communication by enabling continuous and two-way communication processes. However, unlike studies conducted primarily within professional sport settings, the present study demonstrates that regional sport federations with limited organizational resources can also implement Integrated Marketing Communication strategies effectively. In the case of FHI Central Java, digital communication works alongside direct outreach activities, creating a complementary communication approach that enhances organizational visibility, public awareness, and stakeholder engagement.

Social media platforms function as digital communication tools, while coaching clinics, competitions, and educational outreach activities serve as direct communication channels (Fang et al., 2021). The integration of these channels enables the organization to strengthen audience engagement and reinforce the identity of hockey among various community groups. The findings indicate that FHI Central Java employs multiple communication channels with different practical functions (Michael et al., 2023). Instagram is primarily used to publish organizational activities and athlete achievements, TikTok is used to reach younger audiences through short-form content, and YouTube is used to document matches and organizational programs. Direct communication activities, including coaching clinics, competitions, and educational outreach, provide opportunities for face-to-face interaction with potential participants and community members (Astleitner & Schlick, 2025). However, the available data do not demonstrate the existence of a formal content calendar, standardized audience segmentation, systematic cross-platform planning, or a structured evaluation mechanism. Therefore, these practices are more accurately understood as a complementary combination of digital and direct communication channels rather than a fully institutionalized IMC system. Rather than utilizing these channels independently, the organization combines face-to-face engagement activities and digital media platforms to create a more comprehensive communication strategy (Mohamed et al., 2025). This integrated approach contributes to strengthening stakeholder engagement and supporting the development of hockey branding. Accordingly, Figure 2 presents the integrated communication model derived from the study findings.

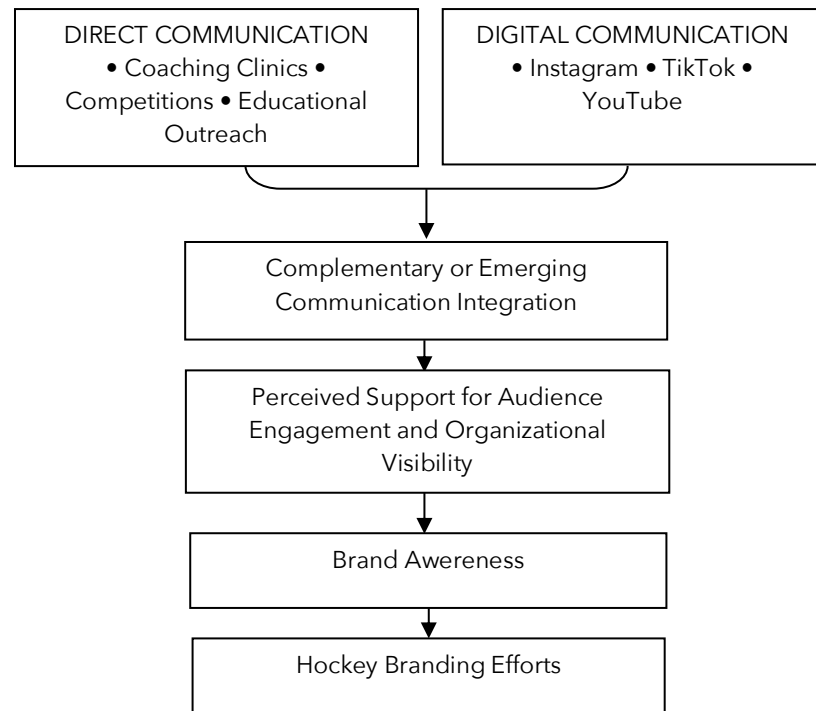


Figure 2. Emerging Integration of Digital and Direct Communication Practices in Hockey Branding

Figure 2 illustrates the emerging and informal integration of communication practices identified in the study. Digital and direct communication activities perform complementary functions in supporting organizational visibility, audience interaction, and hockey branding efforts. The model does not represent a causal relationship or a fully institutionalized IMC system. Instead, it reflects organizational actors' perceptions of how different communication activities contribute to the promotion of hockey in Central Java (Stegmann et al., 2024). These findings emphasize the significance of integrating multiple communication channels to improve organizational visibility and cultivate stronger relationships with stakeholders. These findings support the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) perspective, which highlights the importance of synchronizing communication channels to maximize communication effectiveness and organizational impact. The findings suggest that personal communication initiatives, such as direct outreach and community-based activities, help establish stronger experiential connections between the organization and its target audiences (Naraine & Parent, 2017). At the same time, digital media serve as an effective mechanism for reaching larger audiences and maintaining ongoing communication. The synergy between these channels enhances organizational visibility, increases public engagement, and supports the development of lasting stakeholder relationships. Consistent with the principles of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), the findings indicate that effective branding depends on the strategic

coordination of different communication channels (Habyarimana et al., 2022). The integration of face-to-face initiatives and digital media allows FHI Central Java to convey coherent branding messages while fostering meaningful relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.

Different digital platforms perform specific roles within the organization's overall branding efforts (Fenton et al., 2023). Instagram functions as a key channel for enhancing brand visibility and sharing information related to hockey activities, organizational programs, and athlete accomplishments. TikTok contributes to audience engagement by offering interactive and short-form content that resonates with younger users. In contrast, YouTube serves as a platform for more comprehensive storytelling, event documentation, and educational content concerning hockey (Oudat et al., 2025). The strategic integration of these platforms allows FHI Central Java to engage multiple audience groups while reinforcing a coherent and recognizable organizational identity. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the strategic role of digital media in sports branding. (Suvorova, 2023) argued that social media contributes significantly to the development of relationships between sports organizations and their audiences. Likewise, (Abeza, 2023) highlighted that digital platforms provide opportunities for organizations to improve visibility and establish stronger public recognition. Therefore, the communication practices implemented by FHI Central Java reflect broader trends in contemporary sports communication. One of the key findings of this study is the use of athletes' achievements as an organizational communication tool (Syadzwin et al., 2024). FHI Central Java does not rely solely on social media promotions but also leverages athletes' successes in various competitions to raise public awareness of the sport of hockey. (López-carril, 2023) According to informants, athletes' achievements at the regional and national levels are consistently publicized through the organization's social media channels. These publications aim to demonstrate that field hockey offers opportunities for young athletes to achieve success, thereby attracting public interest in learning about and trying the sport. *"We don't just promote field hockey through social media, but also through the achievements of the athletes who have won championships, thereby increasing public awareness and recognition of hockey."* (Interview with FHI Central Java Secretary, February 2025)

Based on observations of the organization's social media activities, content highlighting athletes' achievements tended to receive higher levels of audience interaction compared with general informational posts. Increased engagement was reflected through audience responses such as likes, comments, and content sharing (Habyarimana et al., 2022). These findings suggest that athletic achievements function not only as evidence of sporting success but also as a communication asset capable of strengthening the organization's image and attracting public interest toward hockey. Athletes' accomplishments provide clear evidence of the effectiveness of the organization's athlete development efforts. Within the sport branding framework, athlete achievements represent important

branding resources that help reinforce organizational identity and strengthen audience engagement (Fenton et al., 2023). This perspective was also reflected in athletes' views, particularly regarding the role of social media in increasing the visibility of hockey and promoting athletic accomplishments to wider audiences. *"Social media serves as an important platform for highlighting athletes' achievements and attracting greater public attention to hockey. For a developing sport such as hockey, digital media are essential for expanding visibility and reaching wider community groups."* (Interview with Hockey Athlete 2, May 2025). The prominence of accomplished athletes not only showcases organizational effectiveness but also builds credibility and trust, ultimately contributing to stronger brand awareness and public engagement.

The higher the level of achievement attained by athletes, the greater the organization's chances of gaining public attention. Although various communication strategies have been implemented, research findings indicate that the development of hockey branding still faces a number of obstacles (Tjørndal et al., 2023). One of the main challenges is the limited availability of training facilities and the high cost of hockey equipment. These conditions result in the public having more limited access to hockey compared to other sports, for which facilities are more readily available. *"Hockey equipment remains quite expensive, making it a barrier for people who want to try this sport."* (Interview with FHI Central Java Secretary, March 2025). In addition to infrastructure factors, the lack of hockey coverage in national media presents a distinct challenge. Low media exposure means that information about competitions and the achievements of hockey athletes is not widely known by the public (Woods et al., 2025). These findings indicate that the limited popularity of hockey is shaped not only by constraints in facilities and equipment availability but also by broader issues related to communication and public visibility. In comparison with more established sports such as football, badminton, and volleyball, hockey receives relatively limited media coverage and public attention (Astleitner & Schlick, 2025). As a consequence, opportunities for the public to gain familiarity with the sport and engage in hockey-related activities remain restricted. This suggests that branding efforts alone may have limited impact on increasing public interest unless they are supported by wider institutional commitment, stronger media engagement, and sustainable sport development initiatives (Ambra et al., 2022). Such support is essential for improving the visibility, accessibility, and long-term growth of hockey.

This finding was further supported by the perspective of athletes directly involved in training and competition activities in Central Java. One athlete explained that although organizational support had been beneficial, several challenges were still experienced during tournament preparation: *"As an athlete, I highly appreciate the support provided by various parties especially FHI Central Java as the governing organization. The availability of training facilities, including the field, standardized equipment, and access to fitness centers, has greatly supported my preparation process. In addition, structured*

training programs such as regular practice schedules, sparring sessions, and guidance from experienced coaches have increased my confidence in facing competitions.” (Interview with Central Java hockey athlete, May 2025). “Despite the available support, there are still several obstacles that I face as an athlete. Financial limitations remain one of the major challenges, particularly in fulfilling nutritional needs, purchasing equipment, and supporting recovery processes. Furthermore, access to physiotherapy services is not always adequate, which sometimes slows down injury recovery. Managing time between intensive training and academic or professional responsibilities is also quite demanding.” (Interview with Central Java hockey athlete, May 2025). These findings indicate that although organizational support has positively contributed to athlete preparation, issues related to funding, recovery services, and athlete welfare remain important challenges in the development of hockey in Central Java.

Based on observations, these limitations have an impact on the number of people who have a deep understanding of hockey. Most people still view hockey as an exclusive sport played only by certain groups (Astleitner & Schlick, 2025). Therefore, a more intensive and sustained communication strategy is needed to increase public understanding of the sport of hockey. Despite various challenges, advances in communication technology have opened up significant opportunities for FHI Central Java to boost the popularity of hockey. The growing use of social media among the younger generation allows the organization to reach a wider audience without being limited by geographical boundaries (Michael et al., 2023). According to the research findings, social media provides organizations with the opportunity to quickly publicize their activities and receive immediate feedback from the public (Naraine & Parent, 2017). In addition, collaborations with schools, universities, and sports communities can expand the reach of promotional efforts and increase public participation in hockey activities.

The findings should not be interpreted as evidence that FHI Central Java has implemented a fully developed Integrated Marketing Communication system. Instead, the organization demonstrates an emerging form of integrated communication through the complementary use of digital platforms and direct community engagement (Fang et al., 2021). The organization uses different channels to support related communication objectives, particularly increasing hockey visibility, promoting athlete achievements, and encouraging community participation (Stegmann et al., 2024). However, several core IMC elements, including formal strategic planning, consistent cross-channel message management, explicit audience segmentation, and systematic evaluation, were not sufficiently documented (Mohamed et al., 2025). Thus, the communication practices identified in this study represent partial or informal integration rather than a fully institutionalized IMC structure.

This distinction is important because the simultaneous use of several communication channels may reflect multi-channel communication without necessarily demonstrating strategic integration. In the case of FHI Central Java, Instagram, TikTok,

YouTube, competitions, coaching clinics, and school outreach activities perform complementary functions. Still, the extent to which they are coordinated through shared objectives and formal organizational procedures remains limited (L'opez-Carril et al., 2025). The findings therefore suggest that FHI Central Java is moving toward integrated communication, although its implementation remains dependent on available resources, organizational capacity, and informal coordination among internal stakeholders.

Research Limitations

Although this study provides meaningful insights into hockey branding practices, several limitations should be acknowledged. The findings were derived from five informants representing organizational leadership, coaching personnel, and athletes. Since the research was conducted within a single regional sports organization, the results primarily reflect the specific communication and branding context of FHI Central Java. Therefore, caution should be exercised when applying these findings to other sports organizations or regions. Subsequent studies are encouraged to adopt mixed-method or quantitative approaches while incorporating participants from diverse sport organizations and regional contexts to further evaluate communication strategy effectiveness and strengthen the broader applicability of the results.

Conclusions

The findings should not be interpreted as evidence that FHI Central Java has implemented a fully developed Integrated Marketing Communication system. Instead, the organization demonstrates an emerging form of integrated communication through the complementary use of digital platforms and direct community engagement. The organization uses different channels to support related communication objectives, particularly increasing hockey visibility, promoting athlete achievements, and encouraging community participation. However, several core IMC elements, including formal strategic planning, consistent cross-channel message management, explicit audience segmentation, and systematic evaluation, were not sufficiently documented. Thus, the communication practices identified in this study represent partial or informal integration rather than a fully institutionalized IMC structure. This distinction is important because the simultaneous use of several communication channels may reflect multi-channel communication without necessarily demonstrating strategic integration. In the case of FHI Central Java, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, competitions, coaching clinics, and school outreach activities perform complementary functions. Still, the extent to which they are coordinated through shared objectives and formal organizational procedures remains limited. The findings therefore suggest that FHI Central Java is moving toward integrated communication, although its implementation remains dependent on available resources, organizational capacity, and informal coordination among internal stakeholders.

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Author Contribution

Conceptualization and methodology: [A1]; Manuscript review and harmonization: [A2]; Data processing and analysis: [A3]; Data collection: [A4] and [A5]. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

Not conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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