



The Impact of Social Media Engagement on NFL Team Revenue

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INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, social media has transformed the way sports organizations connect with fans, promote events, and generate revenue. Platforms like **Instagram** and **TikTok** now serve as primary channels for communication, replacing many traditional marketing methods and reshaping how fans engage with their favorite teams. As younger generations spend increasing amounts of time online, social media marketing has become not only relevant but essential for driving ticket sales, merchandise purchases, and overall fan involvement.

This research investigates the extent to which social media activity truly influences consumer behavior in the sports industry by comparing engagement metrics such as likes, views, and comments with measurable outcomes like ticket sales, merchandising revenue, and TV ratings. By analyzing data from teams with contrasting social media followings, this study aims to reveal the extent to which these claims are true.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

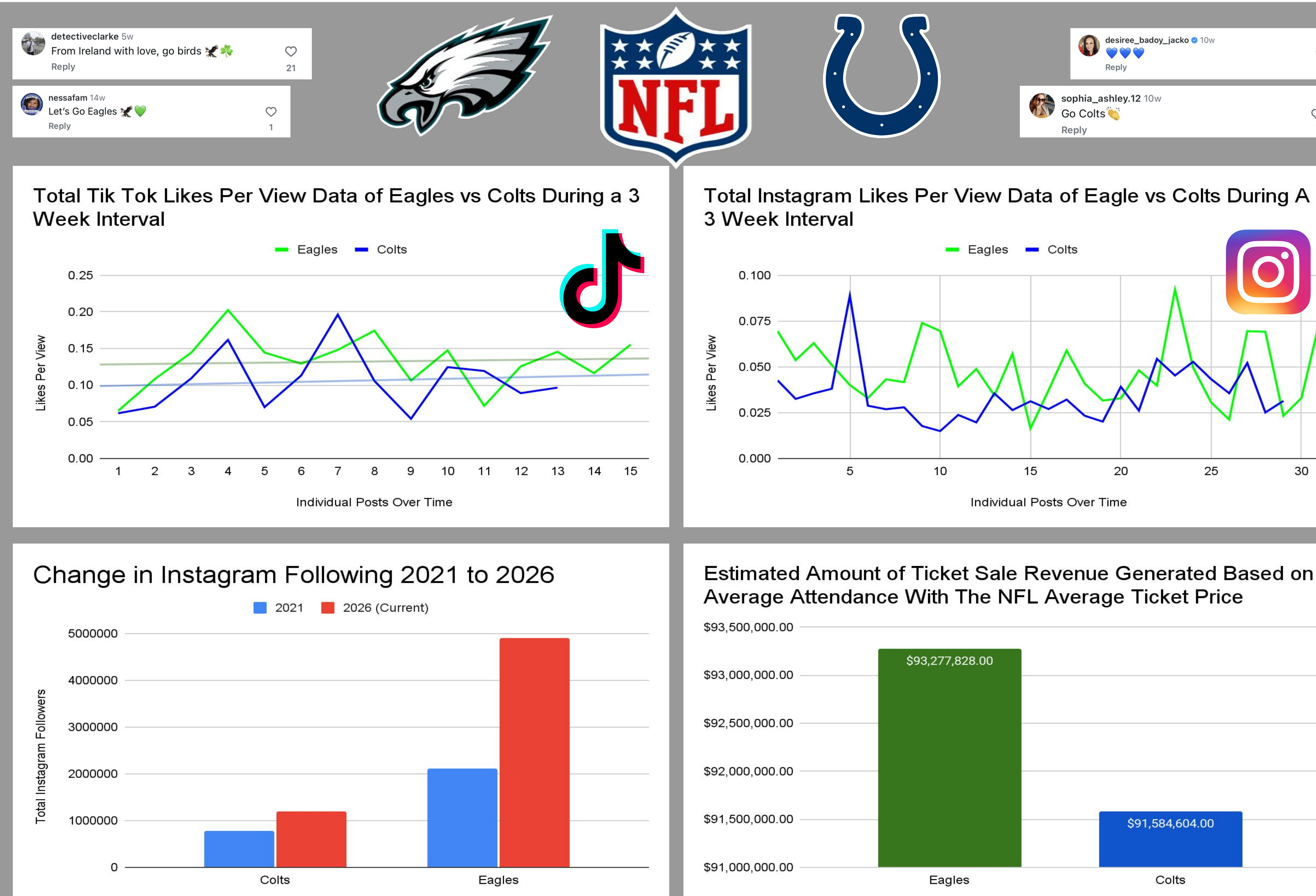
This study uses observational research to analyze existing data from Instagram and TikTok over the final five weeks of the NFL season. Focusing on the **Indianapolis Colts** and **Philadelphia Eagles**—teams with contrasting social media followings.

Data will be collected three times a week at consistent intervals. Metrics such as likes, views, comments, and converted ratios (likes per view and comments per view) will be recorded and compared across four post categories: charity, game/practice clips, interviews, and creative content.

Ticket sales percentages will be calculated before each game based on remaining seats, while merchandising data will be gathered periodically from NFLPA sales reports. Difference in ticket revenue will be calculated using the average attendance percentage, multiplied by an equivalent stadium capacity, multiplied by the average NFL ticket cost, and then multiplied by the 9 home games for a single season.

By comparing these numbers, **the research aims to identify patterns between social media engagement and revenue outcomes**, as well as determine which content types are most effective for fan engagement.

DATA AND FINDINGS



DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

- The Eagles average 0.0889 likes per view while the Colts average 0.0718 likes per view making the **Eagles likes per view approximately 0.17 greater**.
- The difference in the estimated revenue generated strictly through ticket sales by each team is **\$1,693,224 per season in favor of the Eagles**.
- The Eagles have **over 4 times the amount of total followers** than the Colts, with the **Eagles having 4.9M vs the Colts 1.1M**.
- The revenue generated by the NFL as a whole has been on a steady increase since 2017 (Beside 2020) possibly creating a parallel with the rapid increase in social media following.
- Since 2021 the Eagles have increased on instagram from 2.12M followers to 4.9M followers (**131% growth**) vs the Colts who have increased from 780,000 to 1.1M (**41% growth**).
- **Saquon Barkley (Eagles) was atop the list of total jersey sales at #1**, while **Jonathon Taylor (Colts) wasn't even in the top 50**



CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Conclusions

- Social Media fan interaction correlates with higher fan interaction.
- Higher overall engagement and followers likely boost revenue.
- Rapid Social Media Growth can be linked to brand expansion.

Implications

- Teams with higher social media engagement can increase ticket sales and merchandise revenue, giving a competitive financial advantage.
- Teams lagging in social media growth may miss out on fan engagement and related revenue opportunities.
- The trend suggests that social media strategy is becoming as important as on-field performance for financial success.

Next Steps

- I'm interested to further research more and more teams to see if the trend continues.
- I'm curious to more deeply analyze how major events the occur cause social media interaction to spike or plummet.
- A potential flaw in the data could be the small sample size that it was collected at so it may be important to collect more data to see if the trend holds up.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

***Special thanks to Ty Lifeset and Mr Shenfor helping make this project possible.

*****QR CODE TO FULL PAPER:**

