

# Digitalization of Sports Event During Pandemic Covid-19 Era

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**Abstract**—Sporting events during the pandemic Covid-19 era face quite a challenge. Various sporting events are held mostly in virtual, but some are held on a limited. Through various digital platforms, sports events can survive the Covid-19 pandemic era. the Digitalization of sporting events has become a new phenomenon in recent times. Sports events in the digital space have become part of the study of media events that are no longer celebration but also Contest, in this case between producers and consumers. Through a study of the complexity of sports media from Sut Jhally, this study found that the Digitalization of sports events through the Borobudur Marathon event is a form of sports media complexity. with the conclusion that the complexity of this sports media through digitization is another form of sports commercialization that changes the meaning of the sport itself.

**Keywords**—digitalization, sports-event, media-event, sport media complex

## I. INTRODUCTION

Digitalization in sports events has become a phenomenon during the Covid-19 pandemic. Sports have become a digital space for physical activity including a marathon. On the one hand, digital technology helps overcome sports events that are physically present and replaced with virtual events that occur in various sports. This situation makes a sports atmosphere in the pandemic period become more personal and can be done anytime and anywhere. It is not surprising when the government states that the activities at home make sports also participate it, some sports trends that occur in this pandemic situation such as yoga, run, and gymnastics that are all presented through digital media, both cellphones, computers or on television.

In digital activity, all sports turned to virtual and had become a fairly large public consumption in the early days of Covid Pandemic. Consumer surveys from McKinsey in 2020 noted that online sports trends increased during the Covid-19 pandemic which was 65% with the use of Sports applications [1]. From the trend, the impact was seen with the increasing number of people carrying out fitness activities utilizing the application which was paid and not. In addition, the sports competition also experienced challenges and many delays due to this pandemic. Several major sports events such as the Olympics, European Cup, and recreational in the Covid-19

pandemic period were forced to be postponed. With the digital phenomenon, the sports event took place by utilizing communication technology and in Indonesia, one of the sports events that utilized digital technology was Borobudur Marathon.

Borobudur Marathon as a recreational, tourist and competitive sports event for professional run athletes also experienced an impact of this pandemic. The event that has been more than 30 years has to face the challenge of the situation due to the Coronavirus outbreak that has increased rapidly in 2020. Since 2017 this event has adapted technology both in the implementation of competitions and through social media, in addition to using the latest technology of this event to Utilizing the digital platform to enliven the running sports event. The combination of the digital platform and technology is the focus of this research where the Marathon sports event becomes digitized.

Borobudur Marathon as a study of this study wanted to see how digitalization had changed the Landscape of the Marathon event in the Pandemic Covid-19 period. Where recreational runners can run several competitions anywhere by utilizing running virtually through digital applications. The Marathon event is considered to follow the development of communication technology, but the development of the event is only part of the element of interconnected media complexity, with its complexity, the Marathon event has been accommodated through the use of the technology. By wearing a critical point of view this article examines how sports events, in this case, Borobudur Marathon have been in a domain of technology commodification. Using Sport theory, Media Complex and Media Event will review how to digitize sports events in this pandemic period.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### A. Sports Media Complex

Jhally is of the view that it is important to recognize that modern sports are a production commodity that is mediated by a sporting event. At this point, Jhally encouraging the study of sports studies that builds on traditional research areas to interpret sports as (1) ritual/ideology and (2) compensation fulfillment (1984: 71) using the perspective of critical cultural studies simultaneously aiming to go deeper

[2]. analyze the complexity of the sports media. Jhally's idea of the complexity of the sports media opens the door to a wide variety of culturally critical works on the subject [2].

**B. Media Events**

Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz in their book *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History* (1992). According to Dayan and Katz media event is a genre that is quite strong in disrupting the daily flow of media so that it brings the audience to connect with the central (sacred) values of society and invite the audience to participate in the event [3]. Dayan and Katz then classified Media events into three forms, namely Contest, Conquest, and Coronations. First, a "Contest" (like the Olympics) is developed as a cycle of media events that takes place based on agreed-upon rules in an arena, stadium, forum, or studio, person by person, marked by the play of who will win and presented in a non-partisan way to the audience. that assesses, is governed by a rational-legal authority and is focused on the present. Second, "Conquest" "conquest" (like television coverage of the first human landing on the moon) which operates as a single media event, beyond any rule on the boundaries and boundaries of social space, with a hero acting against norms, beliefs, or nature, marked by drama will the hero succeed? and presented in a bardic manner to viewers who watched then organized around a charismatic authority focused on the future. Third, "Coronation" (included in the category this is a funeral or royal wedding) is not a regular but recurring media event, taking place according to tradition in the public sphere, marked by drama Will the ritual succeed? and presented in a respectful way to the audience to assert traditional authority with a focus on the past [3].

**III. METHOD**

This research will take the case of the Borobudur marathon 2020. For data collection purposes, it focuses on the online representation of the application platform and social media for the event which was published before, during, and during the competition period. First, by searching the online news database about the Borobudur Marathon. Second, looking for three online sources, namely the Borobudur event application, Facebook, and Instagram. By using the Critical Discourse analysis (CDA) will see how the relationship between the context and the history of the Borobudur marathon event has been digitalized.

By using a critical perspective, this paper will critically examine how the digitization of marathon running is represented on several digital platforms, through this analysis the writer will read how the virtual race during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Borobudur Marathon is just another form of sports commodification. Where the virtualization form only moves the atmosphere of the competition to individuals who are free to compete anywhere, but behind that the role of sponsorship is still very strong even though the participants are not charged.

The writer uses the Norman Fairclough model for the critical discourse concept. Fairclough's concept of the text focuses on three levels, first, each text simultaneously has three functions, namely representation, relation, and identity [4]. The function of representation is related to how social reality is presented in the form of text. Discourse practice

includes how the text is produced. This is related to the nature of the media's network with fellow media workers, the working pattern of the media as an institution, to become news in the media. Sociocultural practice includes an analysis of three things, namely economics, politics (especially concerning issues of power and ideology), and culture (especially about values and identities) which also influence media institutions and discourse. The data that will be used as research material is the discourse contained in several digital platforms such as Instagram and websites. With critical discourse analysis, we want to see how the three levels of discourse in a digital platform have the meaning of ideological power in the form of commercialization.

**IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The Borobudur marathon event is a recreational marathon running competition. Since the early 90s, this event has continued until now and during the Covid-19 Pandemic, it experienced quite a challenge. The competition that usually takes place at the location of the Borobudur temple, Central Java, has to move virtually. The initial process for registering for this virtual marathon is through the official Borobudur Marathon website. On this webpage, the participants get quite a lot of information and guidance to take part in the virtual run. as the main form of this part of the competition, the running guide is on the website. Various discourses emerge from the website which has various meanings not only regarding the digitization of sports events but also other elements such as commercialization.



Fig. 1. Registration web view and guide

At the text level, Figure 1 shows the contestant applicant page. The web page presents the procedure for filling out the online form as well as a competition guide. In addition, there is also a participant profile by uploading the results of the virtual competition. This web page is not just a guide but also an interactive media between the participants and the Borobudur marathon committee. where participants on this web page can directly connect to the health application platform and social media to upload photos of their virtual runs. In addition, on this web page, participants will get a participant number or BIB which must be downloaded and worn while running anywhere. Overall, this web page shows how the Borobudur Marathon virtual series took place during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the level of discourse, at this level, it appears that the discourse presented is quite complex, but the point is that the atmosphere of virtualization and digitization of running has begun to be directed. participants are required to have two applications listed on the web page. if in the offline form the

participants take the bib number by having to come physically, but on this web, only need to download it. So that this web content has a very strong appeal for participants who miss offline competitions. The results of the run were downloaded to the two sports applications that had been selected by the committee, making the discourse on virtualization even more real. but this website has discussed another form of commercialization in the form of a health sports application. our data that is downloaded in the application and the web is of economic value and becomes part of the commodification.

At the sociocultural level, the Covid 19 pandemic has changed the competitive situation to be more virtual. This competition then took advantage of changes in communication technology by utilizing sports applications. Runners can simply run anywhere within two weeks with some of the distances listed. Culturally, the use of digital in a solution during this pandemic is needed, but when viewed critically, it is a complex part of the circle between sports institutions, media, and sponsors. According to Jhally, once we concentrate specifically on sports in capitalism, it becomes clear that we can only talk about the sports/media complex [5]. Jhally recognizes and undertakes conceptual mapping of the relationships between ideology, economy, and culture that are central to the sports media complex and adaptation. The presence of regular sponsors at this competition keeps the Borobudur marathon going even though it is during a pandemic. Sports applications that are used for participant time records even though they are not official sponsors, but have meaningful values. Where Garmin and the May Map Run app are products that are quite in demand related to this running sport. Besides that, for this event itself, there were quite a lot of sponsors who participated and still provided support, in 2019 alone it generated quite large revenue of around billions of rupiah. The Kompas media as the main organizer with the cooperation of the Borobudur marathon foundation made the Borobudur marathon event more widely known and more festive. This combination makes sporting characteristics a powerful vehicle for transnational companies and their allied advertising and promotional gear. Thus figure 1 is just another part of the competition's euphoria that enters the digital realm, and it is all part of sponsorship cooperation and sporting events which should have been done if there was no pandemic. from here then digitizing the Borobudur marathon event into a mega sports event commercialization.



Fig. 2. Video virtual challenge

At the Text level, Figure 2 is a short video on the Instagram platform as an introduction to running virtually at the Borobudur Marathon. This video is 1 minute long, showing the preparatory steps before the virtual process begins. by displaying a picture of a cellphone and watch accompanied by a virtual running preparation narrative with health protocols. with the background of the folk song and the steps for uploading the results of the run into the application of the watch during a virtual run. besides that, this video also displays the procedures for uploading the results of the run into the predetermined application. The figure of a runner who was presented was also two male and female runners who were running in a quiet street situation which then ended up uploading the results of the run. at the text level, this is more to show how the virtual Borobudur marathon running guidelines.

At the Discourse level, a virtual running experience that gets a hint from a digital platform may be familiar. But the experience of running virtual races in Indonesia may be a little rare, the Borobudur marathon offers this. The discourse that comes out of the video shows how the Borobudur Marathon Virtual Challenge can be carried out anywhere, to present this atmosphere, in this video local music is arranged to feel like running throughout Indonesia. Thus, it indicates that the marathon event this time is in a pandemic atmosphere but can be felt in various places and situations. The discourse in this video then becomes a media event where the content and narrative are closely related if it is related to one of Dayan and Katz's studies called Coronations where the excitement and atmosphere of virtual running are presented in this video. Although the excitement is not in the form of the presence of participants or spectators as well as a magnificent stadium, in this virtual marathon race the excitement is contained in the content, narration, and song jingles contained in the background of the video. All of which is part of the excitement of the Borobudur marathon in this Pandemic era. So that indirectly even though it is quiet in the atmosphere, it is still hamp in the euphoria of this virtual marathon running.

At the sociocultural level, the covid-19 pandemic has caused various sporting events to stop because they prevent crowds so that the outbreak does not spread. It was during this period that sports events experienced challenges and one of them was to use the development of communication technology. The Borobudur marathon then takes advantage of this by holding virtual running competitions. This virtual competition is also held at world marathon events such as New York and London marathon but for Indonesia, it can be said that one of them is at this Borobudur event. If it is related to the previously lively organizing, with the presence of thousands of participants, strong mass media coverage, and social media networks that are very strong in promoting this event, this pandemic year has made everything change. The digital concept was utilized by the committee by developing from the previous year. By utilizing a virtual atmosphere with the help of a digital platform in the form of a health app, participants must experience the atmosphere of a running race in a different place but put the results of their run into an application. As part of the media events, fig 2 shows are included in the form of Coronations from the representation of the Borobudur marathon event. Where for Dayan & Katza this is related to a festive event like a big

event [3], what is interesting about the form of fig 2 is that the excitement is not visible with the large mass or large attributes but from the content. Where the narrative and content displayed are more spectacular in virtual form, showing how the atmosphere runs along with the background of regional music in Indonesia. As part of the media events, the Borobudur marathon for the Pandemic situation still uses promo videos but its spectacular content is that it displays the use of digital technology in uploading the results of the competition. And from that, the whole point is that the Borobudur marathon is still only part of the complexity of the media and sports which are part of the commodification of sports.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic that has hit the world since 2020 has changed all landscapes of human life. Sports events are one of them, where all these kinds of sporting events are always interesting to watch, participate in, and get involved in. However, this pandemic changes everything, the Borobudur marathon as a sporting event that has been going on for a long time must adapt to these conditions. However, for the last five years, digital technology has been implemented to support the Borobudur Marathon. Digital technology has been the choice for the Borobudur marathon so far as part of the modernity of sporting events which by default applies to similar events in other parts of the world. In the pre-pandemic era, the digitization of the Borobudur

marathon was part of the event commercialization tool to attract more participants with easy registration. During the Covid Pandemic, digitization was used as a tool to make it easier for participants to run virtually. But as a whole, the Borobudur marathon only makes digitalization a form of a liaison from what is called the commercialization of sports.

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