

Digital Disruption and the Transformation of Sports Media in Thailand: Generational Behavior and Organizational Strategy

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Abstract

Aim/Purpose: This study investigated the “Strategic Misalignment” between organizational supply—defined as adaptive capacity—and audience demand, characterized by generational Uses and Gratifications, within the Thai sports media landscape. It addressed three primary objectives: (a) to evaluate the internal Dynamic Capabilities of traditional sports media organizations in navigating digital disruption; (b) to analyze the significant variations in consumption behaviors and Uses and Gratifications sought across different generational cohorts; and (c) to empirically validate the extent of strategic misalignment and its implications for the long-term sustainability of media firms in a volatile digital economy.

Introduction/Background: The rapid proliferation of Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming and social media algorithms has fundamentally restructured the sports media ecosystem. In Southeast Asia, this transition has been intensified by a “mobile-only” leapfrog effect, in which digital consumption has outpaced organizational adaptation. Thailand, possessing a mobile Internet penetration rate of 85.3% (Kemp, 2024), serves as a pivotal representative case (proxy) for the broader ASEAN region. Despite these shifts, a critical research gap persists; existing literature has often examined digital disruption through a fragmented lens, focusing either on supply-side agility or demand-side patterns in isolation. This research addressed this absence of theoretical integration by evaluating how internal capabilities align with the evolving gratifications sought by diverse generational cohorts.

Methodology: A sequential exploratory mixed-methods design was employed to provide a comprehensive analysis.

Qualitative Phase: Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 16 senior executives and editors from eight prominent sports media organizations, including newspaper, radio, television, and digital platforms. These interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis grounded in Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) to identify barriers to digital transformation.

Quantitative Phase: A large-scale survey was administered to 1,200 sports media consumers in Thailand, stratified into three generational cohorts: Baby Boomers (Gen B) and Gen X ($n = 400$), Gen Y ($n = 400$), and Gen Z ($n = 400$). The survey utilized a framework derived from Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT).

Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and One-Way ANOVA, supplemented by Tukey’s HSD and LSD post-hoc tests, to determine statistically significant differences in media consumption preferences across generations.

Findings: The results empirically confirmed a severe strategic misalignment between organizational supply and audience demand.

Organizational Capabilities (DCT): While media executives demonstrated high proficiency in “Sensing” market shifts, their “Transforming” capabilities were significantly hindered by institutional inertia, risk-averse leadership, and a critical digital skills gap. Adaptation was found to be largely incremental, merely migrating legacy content to digital platforms rather than reconfiguring core business models.

Audience Gratification (UGT): ANOVA results revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) in preferences. Older cohorts (Gens B & X) maintained a “lean-back” preference for traditional television and professional credibility. In contrast, Gen Z demands high interactivity, authenticity, and a “mobile-first” experience, viewing traditional sports broadcasting as rigid and non-participatory. Gen Y serves as a transition group, exhibiting hybrid consumption patterns that legacy media struggle to capture effectively.

Triangulation: The synthesis of data indicated that the current organizational “supply” fails to meet the “demand-side” expectations of digital-native audiences, leaving legacy firms vulnerable to specialized digital competitors and independent content creators.

Contribution/Impact on Society: This study offers significant contributions on three levels. Theoretically, it advances media management literature by integrating DCT and UGT into a single analytical framework, bridging the gap between management and communication science. Empirically, it provides a robust, multi-generational dataset that serves as a vital “Regional Benchmark” for ASEAN countries experiencing similar digital leapfrogging. Practically, the findings offer a strategic roadmap for media practitioners and policymakers to overcome institutional barriers, ensuring the survival of professional journalism and its social role in promoting sports culture amid turbulent digital transitions.

Recommendations: To bridge the strategic gap, Thai sports media must move beyond incrementalism toward proactive transformation. First, organizations must transition from “fixed-asset” reliance (studios and broadcasting hardware) to “agile processes” and digital-first workflows. Second, human resource strategies should prioritize “upskilling” in data analytics and digital storytelling, while integrating younger generations into strategic decision-making roles. Third, content strategies must shift from “reach-based” metrics to “engagement-based” models, leveraging collaborations with digital-native creators to foster authenticity and community interaction.

Research Limitations: The study primarily focused on Thailand's established media ecosystem, which may limit the generalizability of its structural or regulatory inertia to other ASEAN nations. Furthermore, while the research covered traditional and digital platforms, it did not fully account for the emerging “Athlete-as-Media” phenomenon: individual athletes bypassing traditional media to engage directly with fans, creating a new layer of competition for audience attention.

Future Research: Future studies should conduct cross-cultural comparisons within the ASEAN region to evaluate how diverse institutional environments influence organizational adaptation. Additionally, research is needed to explore the ethical implications of AI-driven sports content generation and to identify sustainable monetization models for OTT platforms that can support regional media sustainability without compromising journalistic standards.

Keywords: *Digital disruption, dynamic capabilities, sports media, Thailand*

Introduction

The sports media landscape is undergoing an irreversible restructuring driven by digital disruption. Traditional revenue for print, radio, and linear television faces existential threats from emergent technologies and evolving consumer habits (Boyle, 2017; Hutchins & Rowe, 2012). Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming and social media platforms have fragmented audiences that demand instant, interactive, and personalized content. Consequently, legacy media organizations must rapidly adapt their production and monetization strategies to ensure survival (Song, 2024).

In the broader ASEAN region, this transition is characterized by a “mobile-only” leapfrog effect, where digital consumption accelerates at a pace that often outstrips the rate of organizational adaptation (Tapsell, 2020). Thailand serves as a pivotal representative case for the region, possessing one of the highest mobile Internet penetration rates in Southeast Asia at 85.3% (Kemp, 2024). Despite these rapid shifts, a significant research gap persists in current media literature. Most existing research

has tended to examine digital disruption through a fragmented lens—focusing either on organizational agility (supply-side) or on audience consumption patterns (demand-side) in isolation.

Consequently, there is a notable absence of theoretical integration that evaluates how internal Dynamic Capabilities (DCT) directly align with the evolving Uses and Gratifications (UGT) sought by diverse generational cohorts, particularly within the Thai and ASEAN contexts. This research addressed this gap by investigating the Thai sports media landscape as a proxy for the broader digital transformation challenges faced across the ASEAN region, where generational shifts and institutional inertia frequently collide. This study defined “Strategic Misalignment” as the operational gap where an organization’s adaptive supply fails to align with the evolving gratifications sought by its audience.

In this study, Organizational Supply was conceptualized through Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), focusing on a firm’s capacity to sense, seize, and reconfigure resources (Teece, 2018). Audience Demand was examined through the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), identifying the psychological needs and high expectations for digital-native content, particularly among younger cohorts (Newman et al., 2023; Ruggiero, 2000). By integrating these perspectives, the research assessed the extent of strategic misalignment across multi-generational groups.

The contributions of this research are threefold. Theoretically, it advances the literature by integrating DCT and UGT into a single analytical framework to bridge the gap between organizational supply and audience demand. Empirically, it provides a large-scale, multi-generational dataset involving 1,200 respondents in Thailand, serving as a vital evidence base for the ASEAN region. Practically, the findings offer a strategic roadmap for media executives to overcome institutional inertia and ensure long-term sustainability in a volatile digital market.

The primary objective of this research was to empirically validate this misalignment by evaluating Thai sports media against the specific gratifications sought by their fragmented audiences. Specifically, the study aimed to identify the internal barriers within organizational supply and determine how consumption behaviors significantly vary across generations. To achieve these goals, the study was guided by the following three research questions:

Research Questions (RQs)

RQ1: How do traditional Thai sports media utilize dynamic capabilities (Sensing, Seizing, and Transforming) to adapt to digital disruption, and what internal barriers hinder this process?

RQ2: How do sports media consumption behaviors and gratifications sought (UGT) significantly differ across generational cohorts in Thailand?

RQ3: To what extent does a strategic misalignment exist between current organizational supply (DCT-led) and evolving audience demand (UGT-led)?

Literature Review

Digital Transformation, Disruption, and Sports Media

Digital disruption refers to the structural alteration of value propositions and operational frameworks caused by advancing digital technologies (Dhephatsadin Na Ayutthaya, 2018; Yoo et al., 2010). In the sports media sector, this disruption is manifested in three primary areas.

1. Platform Fragmentation: OTT streaming services have decentralized the broadcast market, shifting control from traditional cable bundles to personalized, on-demand content (Song, 2024).

2. Audience Participation: Social media has transformed fans from passive recipients into active participants, fueling demand for immediate, interactive, and community-driven engagement (Towner & Munoz, 2016).

3. Technological Integration: The adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reconfiguring content production through automated reporting and personalized feeds. While increasing efficiency, these advancements introduce ethical dilemmas—specifically regarding data privacy and algorithmic bias—that require strategic oversight to maintain journalistic integrity (Molla & Ahsan, 2025).

The cumulative effect of these shifts forces legacy media to move beyond incremental changes toward a fundamental digital transformation. This necessity sets the stage for examining whether

organizations possess the requisite capabilities to align their supply of content with the evolving demands of a digital-first audience.

Organizational Adaptation: From RBV to DCT

Traditionally, the Resource-Based View (RBV) has posited that competitive advantage stems from valuable, rare, and inimitable resources (Barney, 1991). However, in a disrupted sports media market, these resources—such as legacy broadcasting licenses or brand heritage—often become “core rigidities” that hinder adaptation.

To address this limitation, this study adopted Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) as its primary framework. While RBV focuses on “what a firm has,” DCT emphasizes “what a firm does” to stay relevant. Specifically, it involves the capacity to sense digital shifts, seize new opportunities (e.g., OTT, short-form content), and reconfigure organizational structures (Teece, 2018). The shift from RBV to DCT is essential to explain how Thai media firms transform their static resources into adaptive strategies that satisfy evolving audience demands.

Audience Demand: Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) provides the foundational framework for understanding Audience Demand. Unlike traditional theories that view audiences as passive recipients, UGT posits that individuals actively select media to satisfy psychological and social needs (Rubin, 2009). In the context of digital disruption, UGT is essential for identifying the “Gratifications Sought” by sports fans, which have shifted from simple information-seeking to interactive and communal experiences (Towner & Munoz, 2016). Within this research, UGT serves as the critical counterpart to the organization’s supply-side capabilities; it enables the measurement of whether media offerings align with the active motivations of digitally empowered audiences.

Generational Differences in Media Consumption

Understanding generational behavior is essential for sports media organizations seeking to align supply with the diverse demands of their audiences. The evolution of sports media consumption is characterized by distinct generational shifts, creating a complex landscape for legacy media.

Baby Boomers (Generation B) and Generation X: This cohort generally maintains a “lean-back” consumption pattern, valuing traditional linear broadcasting and professional journalistic authority (Newman et al., 2023; Towner & Munoz, 2016).

Millennials (Generation Y): As a transitional group, Millennials exhibit hybrid behaviors, balancing traditional viewing with social media engagement and seeking content that aligns with personal identity (Euajarusphan, 2018).

Generation Z: As digital natives, Gen Z prioritizes instant gratification, interactivity, and perceived authenticity (Bilişli, 2026). They increasingly favor short-form, highlights-based content over full-game broadcasts (Singer et al., 2025).

These divergent motivational drivers underscore the central challenge for Thai sports media: a one-size-fits-all strategy inevitably leads to Strategic Misalignment as the “Sensing” and “Seizing” efforts of organizations (Supply) fail to reconcile the fragmented gratifications sought (Demand) across these three generations.

The Research Gap and Strategic Misalignment

Despite extensive research on organizational change and audience behavior, a significant gap exists in integrating these domains within the ASEAN context. In this research study, Strategic Misalignment was defined as the discrepancy between an organization’s adaptive supply (driven by DCT) and the audience’s demand (driven by UGT).

In the Thai sports ecosystem, this misalignment may occur when organizational “Sensing” and “Seizing” capabilities are decoupled from the specific “Gratifications” sought by Gens B and X, Millennials, and Gen Z. By triangulating these theoretical lenses, this study provides empirical evidence

of how institutional inertia can contradict audience motivations, ultimately impacting media sustainability in emerging markets.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design (QUAL → QUAN) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This design was specifically chosen to address the Strategic Misalignment problem; the qualitative phase first identified the organizational supply-side capabilities (DCT), which then provided the contextual indicators for developing a quantitative survey to measure audience demand (UGT). This approach ensured that the survey instrument was grounded in current industry realities rather than generic theoretical assumptions.

Participants, Context, and Sampling

The research context was the Thai sports media industry, characterized by intensified digital disruption.

Qualitative Phase

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to capture a comprehensive view of organizational adaptation. To ensure a balance between strategic vision and operational reality, each participating organization provided two representatives:

1. A senior management executive with decision-making authority (e.g., Managing Director)
2. An authoritative practitioner from the editorial or news department (e.g., Editor-in-Chief)

The sampling procedure involved contacting three major organizations within each of the four sports media sectors (Newspaper, Radio, Television, and Online). In each sector, two organizations agreed to participate, resulting in a total of eight entities. With two key representatives per entity, a final sample of 16 participants was achieved. This sample size was justified by theoretical saturation, as no new strategic themes or internal barriers emerged during subsequent interviews (Guest et al., 2006). All participants were required to have at least five years of professional experience in the industry to ensure the depth and reliability of insights provided.

Quantitative Phase: Generational Behavior

The quantitative phase targeted sports media consumers in Thailand, using quota sampling to ensure demographic balance. To achieve high representativeness, data collection was localized at key sporting hubs in Bangkok:

Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials (Gen Y): Respondents were recruited from individuals engaging in physical activities at the Sports Authority of Thailand, a primary national sports complex.

Generation Z: Data were collected from students at the Bangkok Sports School, representing the next generation of sports consumers.

A total of 1,500 respondents (500 per generational cohort) were initially solicited. Following data cleaning and validation, a final sample of 1,200 respondents (400 per group) was achieved, representing a robust 80% response rate. To ensure gender parity, each generational group was equally split between male ($n = 200$) and female ($n = 200$) participants.

The survey instrument was developed based on themes identified in the qualitative phase and validated through a pilot test ($n = 30$) to ensure internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha > .70).

Research Instruments and Data Collection

The qualitative phase utilized documentary analysis of organizational policy papers and annual reports to establish industry context, followed by semi-structured interviews based on the DCT framework, focusing on *Sensing*, *Seizing*, and *Reconfiguring* capabilities. For the quantitative phase, a self-administered online and paper-based questionnaire was developed, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale

to measure UGT constructs (e.g., information seeking, entertainment, and social interaction). Data collection was conducted over a six-month period to ensure a robust and validated dataset.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following their systematic approach, interview transcripts were iteratively coded and categorized into overarching themes aligned with the DCT framework (i.e., *Sensing, Seizing, and Reconfiguring*), alongside emergent themes regarding internal barriers. Quantitative data were processed using SPSS, involving descriptive statistics and One-Way ANOVA with Tukey's HSD post-hoc tests to determine significant differences in consumption behaviors across the three generations.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure qualitative rigor, member checking and inter-coder reliability were established. Quantitative reliability was confirmed via Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ($> .70$). Ethical integrity was maintained by obtaining written informed consent from all 1,216 participants. The study protocol was officially reviewed and approved by the Mahidol University Social Sciences Institutional Review Board (MUSSIRB) [MUSSIRB 2020/115], ensuring complete anonymity and adherence to international research ethics guidelines.

Findings/Results

The results are presented according to the two phases of the mixed-methods design: the qualitative analysis of organizational strategy (Dynamic Capabilities Theory), and the quantitative analysis of generational consumption behavior (Uses and Gratifications Theory).

Qualitative Findings: Organizational Strategy and Dynamic Capabilities (DCT)

Thematic analysis of the 16 executive interviews and organizational documents revealed a clear pattern of strategic adaptation challenges, interpreted through the lens of DCT.

Sensing the Digital Environment

All interviewed executives demonstrated a strong ability to 'Sense' the shifting media environment. They unanimously identified two critical threats: (a) the unbundling of content via international OTT streaming platforms (e.g., dedicated sports services); and (b) audience migration, particularly Generation Z, to social media platforms (e.g., TikTok, YouTube) where content is instantaneous and free.

We know the game has changed. Our biggest concern is not competition from the next TV station, but from tech giants and social media influencers who capture young attention instantly. The speed of change is overwhelming our traditional strategic planning cycles. (Executive, Traditional TV/Radio)

Seizing Opportunities: Adaptive Strategies

Executives detailed adaptive strategies employed to 'Seize' perceived opportunities, which primarily centered on content delivery and minor business model adjustments:

- 1. Cross-Platform Integration:** All organizations have established strong presences on digital platforms, using them primarily as distribution channels for linear content or news summaries.
- 2. Content Format Innovation:** A consensus emerged about the need to pivot towards short-form, highlights-based video content and live social commentary to cater to mobile consumption habits.
- 3. Monetization Experimentation:** Organizations are exploring hybrid revenue models, combining traditional advertising (Advertising Video on Demand [AVOD]) with limited attempts at subscription models (Subscription Video on Demand [SVOD]), often without full organizational commitment.

Transformation Challenges and Inertia

Despite successful sensing and preliminary seizing efforts, the analysis revealed significant internal barriers hindering the third core DCT component: '*Transforming*'. These challenges indicated profound institutional inertia:

1. Talent and Skill Gap: The most frequently cited barrier was a lack of in-house human capital skilled in data analytics, content personalization technologies, and digital-native production workflows.

2. Leadership Inertia: Strategic investment in disruptive technology and radical organizational restructuring was hampered by risk-averse leadership, prioritizing short-term profitability from linear operations over long-term digital sustainability.

3. Resource Allocation: Digital departments operated with disproportionately small budgets compared to their importance, reflecting a lack of genuine commitment to digital-first transformation.

Quantitative Findings: Generational Consumption Behavior (UGT)

Analysis of the 1,200 survey respondents confirmed statistically significant differences in media consumption patterns and motivations across the three generational cohorts ($F_{[2, 1197]} > 10.00, p < .001$ for most gratification variables); the results are shown in Table 1 below.

Platform Preference by Generation

Table 1 Comparative Analysis of Sports Media Platform Preferences and Consumption Timing Across Generational Cohorts (n = 1,200)

Generation	Primary Platform Preference	Secondary Platform Preference	Dominant Consumption Time
B&X (Baby Boomers & Gen X)	Linear Television (Live/Replay)	Print Media / News Websites	Evening (Prime Time)
Y (Millennials)	Hybrid: Mobile (Apps) & Linear TV	Facebook / YouTube	Flexible (Commute/Lunch/Evening)
Z (Gen Z)	Social Media (TikTok/Instagram)	Dedicated Sports Apps / OTT	Instant (Short Bursts)

Note. n = 1,200; B&X refers to the combined cohort of Baby Boomers and Generation X (aged 40 and above). Primary and secondary preferences were determined based on the highest frequency of weekly usage reported by respondents.

Key Finding: Gen Z relies on social media platforms for sports content more frequently than any other platform, indicating a fundamental preference shift from broadcast distribution to algorithm-driven, interactive feeds.

Differences in Gratifications Sought

The One-Way ANOVA results (see Table 2) confirmed that behavioral characteristics and gratifications sought from sports media varied significantly across generational cohorts, providing crucial context for UGT application.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Least Significant Difference (LSD) method revealed distinct progressive patterns for each cohort:

Table 2 Analysis of Variance Comparing Sports Media Consumption Behaviors Across Generations

Characteristics of Consumption Behaviors (Gratification)	Gen B&X (n=400) Mean (SD)	Gen Y (n=400) Mean (SD)	Gen Z (n=400) Mean (SD)	F-value	p-value	Post-Hoc (LSD)
1. Digital Platform Preference: Following sports movements/ trends via websites and social media	2.97 (.95)	3.17 (.97)	3.78 (.93)	78.64	< .001	Z > Y > B&X
2. Convenience & Usability: Willingness to adopt modern devices (Smartphones/Tablets) for convenience	3.06 (.89)	3.39 (.93)	3.76 (.94)	56.77	< .001	Z > Y > B&X
3. Interactive Engagement: Demanding to participate by giving opinions (e.g., comments, SMS)	2.69 (.95)	3.01 (.96)	3.30 (.92)	42.86	< .001	Z > Y > B&X
4. Content Co-creation: Demanding to be a part of content production (e.g., sending clips, reporting)	2.77 (.96)	3.10 (.98)	3.38 (.92)	41.43	< .001	Z > Y > B&X

*Note. Significant at $p < .05$. Mean scores based on a 5-point scale.

1. Traditional Reliability vs. Digital Adoption: While Generation B&X exhibited the lowest demand for interactive and digital-first content, reflecting reliance on traditional linear broadcasting, Generation Y demonstrated transitional behavior. Gen Y scored significantly higher than Gen B&X in willingness to adopt convenient modern devices ($M = 3.39$), highlighting their hybrid consumption nature.

2. Social Connectivity and Platform Preference: Generation Z scored significantly highest across all digital behavioral metrics. Their overwhelming preference for following sports trends exclusively via social media ($M = 3.78$) underscores a fundamental shift away from traditional news cycles.

3. Interactivity and Authenticity: The most critical divergence lies in the demand for active participation. Generation Z showed the highest demand for interactive engagement ($M = 3.30$) and content co-creation ($M = 3.38$). This indicated that for younger audiences, gratification derived from social interaction and authentic participation now supersedes passive content consumption.

Triangulation: Evidence of Strategic Misalignment

The juxtaposition of qualitative and quantitative findings reveals a clear strategic misalignment, which is the central conclusion of this study:

The Supply-Side (DCT): Thai sports media organizations currently excel only at *Sensing* change but fail at *Transforming* due to inertia and resource barriers.

The Demand-Side (UGT): The audience, particularly Gen Z, overwhelmingly demands interactivity, authenticity, and mobile-first delivery, which requires radical organizational and technological transformation.

The data demonstrate that content and distribution strategies being *Seized* by executives (i.e., cross-platform integration and short-form content) are insufficient to meet core UGT motivations of the new generation. This misalignment signals that the current rate of organizational adaptation is not sustainable and will likely lead to further audience erosion towards digital-native content providers.

Discussion and Implications

This section synthesizes the qualitative and quantitative findings through the lenses of Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). By triangulating empirical evidence with current literature, the discussion illuminates the strategic misalignment between Thai sports media adaptation and evolving generational consumption patterns.

Organizational Adaptation: The Gap Between Sensing and Reconfiguring (Addressing RQ1)

The qualitative findings regarding RQ1 revealed a significant "capability-action gap" within Thai sports media. While executives demonstrated high Sensing capabilities—unanimously identifying digital threats like OTT platforms—they struggled with Seizing and Reconfiguring internal resources (Teece, 2018). The "institutional inertia" reported by interviewees suggested that legacy mindsets act as a structural barrier, preventing agile adaptation. Unlike Western contexts where digital shifts were gradual, Thai media organizations face "compressed disruption," requiring a rapid transition from legacy broadcasting to digital-native workflows. This confirms that, without the "Transforming" capability of DCT, sensing market changes alone are insufficient to achieve organizational sustainability in a rapidly evolving regional market.

Audience Consumption: The Generational Pulse (Addressing RQ2)

The quantitative analysis provides empirical weight to these organizational challenges. The One-Way ANOVA results (F -test) confirmed significant statistical differences ($p < .05$) across all three generations regarding media platform preferences and gratifications sought. Specifically, Tukey's HSD post-hoc tests illustrated that Generation Z's preference for social media and OTT platforms significantly outpaced both Gen Y and Baby Boomers/Gen X. This group's "Lean-forward" demand for "Immediate Gratification" and "Interactivity" contrasted sharply with the "Lean-back" behavior of older cohorts, who still rely on linear television for "Information-seeking" (Rubin, 2009). For Gen Z, sports media has evolved from a simple news source into a critical tool for social validation and digital engagement (Bilişli, 2026). These statistical variances demonstrated that the audience is no longer a monolith; rather, it is fragmented into distinct motivational clusters that render the traditional "one-size-fits-all" broadcasting model obsolete in the modern era.

Strategic Misalignment and Media Sustainability (Addressing RQ3)

The synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data (RQ3) provides empirical evidence of Strategic Misalignment within the Thai sports media landscape. By triangulating the qualitative "Inertia" found in RQ1 with the quantitative "Generational Divide" confirmed in RQ2, this study illustrates that misalignment occurs when organizational "Seizing" efforts (Supply)—such as merely replicating traditional linear content on social media platforms—fail to reconcile with the specific "Gratifications" sought (Demand) by digital natives. The statistical significance of Gen Z's demand for short-form content and real-time interaction ($p < .05$) underscores a critical mismatch; digital adoption without strategic reconfiguration does not guarantee audience retention. To achieve long-term sustainability, Thai sports media must fundamentally align their Dynamic Capabilities (Supply) with the evolving Generational Gratifications (Demand), moving beyond a superficial digital presence toward a deep-level strategic integration that addresses the fragmented needs of modern audiences.

ASEAN Implications: The "Mobile-Only" Leapfrog Effect

The Thai experience offers critical insights for the broader ASEAN region, particularly in markets like Vietnam and Indonesia, which share a "mobile-only" leapfrog development pattern (Kemp, 2024; Tapsell, 2020). The exclusive broadcasting of the 2025 SEA Games on OTT platforms in Thailand served as a regional benchmark, signaling a permanent shift in sports rights management and audience engagement (Song, 2024; Wannapakorn, 2025). This digital transition mirrors broader regional trends where sports rights are increasingly consolidated within digital-first ecosystems to capture high-engagement audiences (ATxEnterprise, 2025). Furthermore, the rapid adoption in ASEAN creates a

sharper "generational divide" in trust and consumption compared to Western markets (McKenzie et al., 2024). For ASEAN media to survive, they must prioritize Agile Processes over Fixed Assets (Suparman et al., 2026), effectively bridging the gap between legacy institutional structures and a rapidly evolving digital-first population. This confirms that media sustainability depends on the continuous reconfiguration of supply-side capabilities (Teece, 2018) to meet the non-linear demands of mobile-centric audiences.

Conclusion

Summary of Major Findings

This mixed-methods study, grounded in Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), identified a critical "capability-action gap" within the Thai sports media landscape. While media executives demonstrate a high capacity to Sense digital threats, organizational Reconfiguration is significantly hindered by internal constraints, specifically leadership mindsets and a pervasive digital skill gap. Quantitatively, ANOVA results confirmed significant statistical differences ($p < .05$) in media consumption behavior across the three generations. While older cohorts (Gen B&X) remain tied to linear broadcasts for credibility, Generation Y functions as a "transition group," displaying hybrid behaviors that value both professional journalistic standards and digital convenience. In contrast, Generation Z overwhelmingly demands interactive, mobile-first engagement and social validation ($M=3.78$). The triangulation of these findings confirms a strategic misalignment: the current pace of incremental adaptation fails to capture the shifting loyalty of Gen Y and completely misses the high engagement demands of Gen Z, thereby threatening the long-term sustainability of traditional sports journalism.

Practical Recommendations

To mitigate this misalignment and ensure market relevance, Thai sports media organizations must:

Transition from Fixed Assets to Agile Processes: Prioritize digital-first workflows and flexible infrastructure over legacy broadcasting hardware to bridge the gap between supply-side inertia and digital demand.

Bridge the Talent Gap: Invest in urgent digital upskilling and integrate "digital natives" into strategic decision-making teams to better align production with Gen Z's UGT drivers.

Pivot Content Strategy: Shift from *Maximizing Reach* to *Maximizing Engagement* by developing interactive features and authentic collaborations that prioritize social validation over traditional production quality.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study focused on the Thai market, the findings offer a "regional benchmark" for other ASEAN nations, such as Indonesia and Vietnam, that are experiencing similar "mobile-only" leapfrog effects. However, the qualitative insights were limited to incumbent executives and did not account for the rising "Athlete-as-Media" phenomenon. Future scholarship should pursue:

1. Cross-cultural ASEAN studies to examine institutional inertia across different regulatory environments.
2. The ethical implications of AI and algorithmic bias in automated sports content generation.
3. An economic analysis of OTT monetization models (AVOD, SVOD, and Transactional Video on Demand [TVOD]) to identify sustainable revenue streams for regional sports content.

Author Contributions

Krisana Thuampeng: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, writing—original draft, writing—review & editing, project administration.

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