**Final project – Text & Social Media Analytics**

INSY 448

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**Part 1: Introduction**

Every four years, the Olympic Games, a major multi-sport event, are held in one big city in the world. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) organizes the games and oversees the host city’s preparations. The Summer Olympics have evolved from being a 42-event competition in 1896, with fewer than 250 competitors from 14 different countries to 339 events, in the most recent games held in Japan in 2021, with 11,420 competitors. Since the modern Olympic games reintroduction in 1896, dozens of different sports have entered the event, like badminton in the 1988 event or trampoline in the 2000 event. Likewise, multiple sports have been removed from the event, like tug of war, polo, cricket, or Jeu de Paume. For each Olympic games, new sports tend to be introduced for many different reasons, while others may be dropped.

The process of sports inclusion:

To be included in the Olympic games, sports first need to be recognized as a sport by the IOC. Once a sport is recognized, it moves to International Sports Federation (IF) status. At that point, the international organization administering the sport must enforce the Olympic Movement Anti-Doping Code, including conducting effective out-of-competition tests on the sport’s competitors while maintaining rules set forth by the Olympic Charter.

However, this does not mean that the sport will be included in the Olympic games event. The sport’s international committee can present its case to the IOC, which will then decide whether the sport will be included based on several criteria (“How Are Sports Chosen for the Olympics?”). In addition to the Olympic values and traditions, the sport must meet the following criteria:

1. *must be* ***popular*** *at a global scale* (it must increase the “value and appeal” of the Olympics) (Britannica, 2016).

Therefore, when choosing sports to include in the program, the IOC must consider media and public interest since these are key drivers behind the Olympic Games.

1. *must “retain and reflect its* ***modern*** *traditions”* (it should prove its popularity in recent years) (Britannica, 2016).

The sport's popularity in question must also be recent to preserve the popularity and reach of the Olympics with every passing four years.

1. *It must align with the host country’s popular sports* (Britannica, 2016).

It should also be noted that the country where the event takes place also plays a significant role in the final decision. Indeed, popular sports in the USA are more likely to be included in an Olympic event when it takes place in that country. This general rule serves multiple purposes. One purpose is to adapt the Olympics to the host country (with consideration for the media and public interest), and another one is the consideration of costs when trying to find venues to accommodate some sports’ specific needs (such as baseball and softball, which were discontinued from the Olympics after the 2008 Beijing Games but were later reintroduced as part of the shortlist for the Los Angeles games of 2028) (Britannica, 2016).

Another example is, *“In Tokyo 2020, the sports karate, baseball, and softball were included because these three are big in Japan and attracted many Japanese viewers. However, they will be removed in Paris 2024 for the exact opposite reason: The French aren’t really interested in them.”* (Maria, 2021).

The objective of our project:

Based on this information, collecting and analyzing the fans’ attitude towards sports that have presented their case to the IOC is crucial to make a final decision regarding their inclusion in the event. We have also considered that permitting new sports must also reflect the simultaneous discontinuation of others (Britannica, 2016).

Therefore, the objective of this project is to help the IOC members to make an informed decision about which sports should be included and excluded from the LA 2028 Olympic games event, as the decision has already been made for the Paris 2024 event. Our selection procedure will be applied to the IOC “shortlist” of sports to be included and those that are likely to be excluded. We will conduct multiple analyses, including sentiment and similarity, of these sports and as a result set the grounds for future Olympics sports selection.

**Problem Statement**

Which of the nine sports on the shortlist for the LA 2028 Olympic games deserve to be included in the event? Similarly, which sports deserve to be completely excluded from the event?

**Part 2: Data Collection & Cleaning**

Data Collection:

To gather data about this topic, we decided to scrape tweets from Twitter. Indeed, Twitter is the only website where we could find information and text data about all the sports on the IOC shortlist. The Twitter scraper script allowed us to scrape data efficiently using keywords, providing us with a large dataset for each sport. The keywords used to scrape the data were of the format, “Olympics AND sport name”. We performed one scrape for each sport considered in the analysis. As far as dates are concerned, for the sports being considered for inclusion, we decided to scrape content from July 23rd, 2021 (the first day of the Tokyo 2021 Summer Olympics) to November 18th, 2022, to preserve the recency of the sports’ popularity. For the sports being considered for exclusion, we scraped data from two timeframes: before (August 21st, 2016 - July 22nd, 2021) and after (July 23rd, 2021 - November 18, 2022 ) the Tokyo 2021 Olympics. Since these sports participated in the Tokyo Olympics, we were able to compare the attitude towards these sports before and after they were broadcasted, which is telling of how much people “enjoyed” watching them.

To decide which sports we should consider in this analysis, we simply decided to analyze only sports that have already presented their case to the IOC to be featured in the LA 2028 event, meaning that they are seriously considered. These sports are cricket, baseball/softball, breakdance, flag football, karate, kickboxing, lacrosse, motorsport, and squash.

In the same way, for sports to be excluded from the event, we considered sports that were in the Tokyo 2021 event, but not in the initial program for LA 2028 (“Twenty-Eight Sports Included in Youth-Focused LA28 Initial Sports Programme - Olympic News”). These sports are boxing, modern pentathlon, skateboarding, sport climbing, surfing, and weightlifting.

Therefore, we started off with 15 datasets (one for each sport). They all include enough tweets to conduct an accurate analysis. The data collected contains **tweet ID, Date, Text, Username, URL, Language, Likes, and Retweets**. We decided to focus on the same timeframe for every dataset to avoid time bias. Therefore, some datasets have more observations, because they were more popular during the timeframe of the analysis. We will therefore include the number of tweets collected as an indicator in our analysis.

Data Cleaning:

To clean the data for sentiment and document similarity analysis, we first got rid of the null values and dropped the duplicate tweets. We noticed that a lot of duplicates were not dropped because a different link was in the Text string for each observation, so we decided to remove all the links from the Text column as they do not provide any valuable input to our analysis; this allowed us to further remove all duplicates.

As well, we dropped observations where the Text variable was not in English using the Language column. We have mentioned in the introduction that the popularity of the sport at a global scale plays a role in the final decision to include it in the event or not. Therefore, our analysis only includes tweets in English, which creates a clear bias toward English-speaking countries' importance in the final decision. Nevertheless, we also stated that the sport’s popularity in the event’s host country is essential for one sport to be included in the event. Therefore, we will assume in our analysis that the bias created by the data collection accounts for this criteria.

**Part 3: Analysis & Results**

Sentiment Analysis:

After cleaning the data, we performed a sentiment analysis on each of the 15 sports (9 to consider for inclusion, 6 to consider for exclusion). For each sport, we obtained a positive, negative, neutral, and compound sentiment score for each of the tweets. Once we obtained this data, we found and removed all tweets where the neutral sentiment score was equal to 1 so as to not skew our further evaluation of the overall sentiment for each sport. We then calculated the average of each of these scores across tweets (using excel) to get overall sentiment scores for each sport. The compound sentiment score considers the positive, negative, and neutral scores in its calculation and thus we will use this score as our overall sentiment score for each sport. In brief, the results of the sentiment analysis tell us which sports are more or less liked by the public, and thus should be included/excluded from the LA Olympic Games.

First, we will look at the results of the sentiment analysis for the sports being considered for inclusion. The overall sentiment scores for each of these sports can be found in Appendix A. As we can see from this table, the ranking of the sports (from highest sentiment to lowest sentiment) is as follows: kickboxing, flag football, breakdance, lacrosse, baseball/softball, cricket, motorsport, karate, and squash. Amongst other things, this indicates that of the tweets scraped, kickboxing and flag football were more frequently mentioned in a positive manner whereas karate and squash were more frequently mentioned in a negative manner, both in the context of the Olympics.

Next, we will look at the results of the sentiment analysis for the sports that are being considered for exclusion from the Olympics. When calculating the average sentiment scores for these sports, we chose to split the data up into tweets posted before the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games (the last summer Olympic games) and during/after the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games. Thus, we calculated 2 sets of averages for each sport based on these dates. These results can be seen in Appendix B. This allowed us to see how the attitude toward these sports has evolved for the audience after having seen the event take place. Indeed, some of these sports had never been featured in the Olympic games. Therefore, a given sentiment about a sport included in the event could change in a positive or negative way after having seen the actual competition. The sports where the overall compound sentiment score increased from before to after the Tokyo 2021 event are boxing, skateboarding, surfing, and weightlifting. On the other hand, the sentiment scores for modern pentathlon and sport climbing decreased from before to after the event. This may indicate that once the Tokyo Olympics started, people were less than pleased with the presentation of modern pentathlon and sport climbing; and vice versa for the other 4 sports. This is something we will use to consider in our recommendation for which sports should be excluded from the 2028 LA Olympic games.

Document Similarity Analysis:

The criteria we still haven’t accounted for in our project is the respect for the Olympics’ traditions when choosing the sports to be included or excluded. Therefore, the goal for document similarity in our project is to check the association of each of the sports to be included or excluded in the Olympics with attributes that respect the Olympics' traditions. Initially, we decided to scrape tweets from some of the most popular sports to be featured in the Olympics, (such as cycling, gymnastic, aquatics, etc.), then look for the most frequently used “attributes” for each of those sports. However, the most frequently used words, in even as many as 50,000 tweets, were very generic words just referring to the game itself (such as “player”, “team”, “swim” etc.). Attributes were not as mentioned as we were expecting, in terms of frequency. To mitigate this problem, we decided to conduct our own research about what makes a sport in compliance with the Olympics' custom sports. The articles we read unanimously mentioned the attributes which we decided to use for this part of our project (International Olympic Committee). Although they are not core requirements for consideration, we would think they would make the sport more favorable in the eyes of the IOC:

1) **Simplicity / Simple:** anyone who sees the sport, even for the first time, should be able to understand at least the basics of it.

2) **Community:** for a game to reach millions, even billions of people, it should be sustained and carried by a strong community of supporters, players, and organizations.

3) **Subculture:** A subculture differs from a community in that it represents the larger context of the sport which has its own distinct cultures with its own set of values, roles, language, and norms.

4) **Longevity:** The popularity of a sport also depends on how long it has subsisted, meaning how long it has been supported by its audience.

The steps we took to accomplish this task are as follows. We first gathered the tweets from all our cleaned datasets into one big dataset with just the tweets and the sport it pertains to as columns (All\_Sports.xlsx). On this dataset, we ran the Document Similarity script (DocSim.py) and sorted the similarities in descending order. Only the first 215 tweets made it to the next step of the process since these tweets were considered the most significantly close to the word attributes.

Then, we were able to run a sentiment analysis on these first 195 tweets and sorted the negative sentiment score in descending order to delete all of the tweets where the negative sentiment was higher than the positive one. This allowed us to remove the tweets where the association between the sport and the attribute was negative. Our final list included 178 tweets, although we had started out with 65,704. Now, we were able to calculate the average similarity for only the tweets with either neutral or positive associations with the attributes that were taken into account (SENT\_on\_DOCSIM.xlsx). These similarities gave us an idea as to which sports were mentioned in the context of the attributes that would make the sport more likely to be included in the Olympics. The results are shown in Appendix C.

Then, we did the same thing for the tweets of all the sports that were considered for exclusion. The large dataset that included all of them is All\_Sport\_Exclude.xlsx. We followed the same procedure where we also removed the tweets where the negative sentiments were higher than the positive, and then calculated the average similarity scores for each of the sports. We started off with 232,080 tweets and finished with 437. We were then able to sort the sports to be excluded from most positively associated with the favorable attributes to least positively associated. In this case, we would be focusing on the sports at the bottom of the table, since we are looking for sports that are the most favorable for exclusion, meaning they are the least positively associated with our said attributes (Appendix D).

Following our analysis, we found that the sports with the highest positive (or neutral) association with the attributes were breakdance and cricket, for the sports to be included. For the sports considered for exclusion, we found that sport climbing and modern pentathlon were the least positively associated with the attributes at hand. This will aid us in making a more informed decision when considering the traditions and customs of the sports that tend to be included in the Olympics.

Engagement Analysis

As an indicator of the sports’ relevancy, we also conducted an engagement analysis. The metrics considered in this analysis are 1) the total number of tweets scraped within the same date range, 2) the number of likes per tweet, and 3) the number of retweets per tweet. After we scraped the tweets containing this data, we calculated an average engagement score per sport (the total number of likes plus the total number of retweets, divided by the total number of tweets scraped). These results can be found in Appendix E, for sports being considered for inclusion, and Appendix F, for sports being considered for exclusion.

Out of the 9 sports being considered for inclusion at the 2028 Olympic games, kickboxing had the most engagement, by a sizable margin. The following 3 sports with the most engagement are karate, baseball/softball, and motorsport, all with relatively close scores, above the median of the 9 sports. The sports with the lowest engagement are more predominantly squash and breakdance, followed closely by cricket. These results provide meaningful insight into which of these sports should be included in the next Olympic games.

In addition, the engagement scores for the 6 sports we are considering for exclusion provide insight into their overall relevance in the context of the Olympics. As shown in Appendix F, the sport with the lowest engagement is sport climbing, followed closely by modern pentathlon and surfing. On the other hand, the sport with the highest engagement is weightlifting. The three sports with the lowest engagement weren’t major events in the last Olympics, whereas weightlifting has been a major event since its introduction. Therefore, these figures are consistent with the reality of the event.

Results

After performing the sentiment, document similarity, and engagement analyses, the next step was to create an overall score per sport. To create an overall score for the sports to be included, we combined all 3 of these metrics. To do this, we first normalized the scores, using min-max normalization, for each metric so they could be analyzed on the same scale. As an example, to get the normalized value for cricket’s sentiment score, we subtracted the minimum sentiment score across all sports from the sentiment score of cricket and then divided this by the range of sentiment scores (maximum sentiment score - minimum sentiment score). We then applied the same process to all other sports and for each other metric, resulting in 3 new metrics: a normalized sentiment score per sport, a normalized similarity score per sport, and a normalized engagement score per sport. Following this, we calculated a 3-way weighted average of these 3 scores, assigning a weight of ⅓ to each metric. The results of these calculations and the final score we will use for ranking the sports to include can be seen in Appendix G, Table 1. In brief, the sports with the highest overall score are kickboxing, flag football, and breakdance, whereas those with the lowest scores are squash, motorsport, and cricket.

To obtain a final result for the sports being considered for exclusion the process was slightly different. Instead of combining all 3 metrics to get a single overall score per sport, we just combined the similarity and engagement scores. The reason for not including the sentiment score in this overall calculation is that we are not concerned with the value of the sentiment score itself, but whether or not the sentiment increased or decreased from before the start of the Tokyo games to after. Thus, the two metrics (similarity and engagement) were normalized and averaged to get an overall score per sport (Appendix H, Table 1). The results of the overall average scores show that the two lowest-ranked sports are modern pentathlon and sport climbing. This is consistent with the results of the sentiment analysis, where we see that modern pentathlon and sport climbing are the only two sports for which the overall sentiment decreased from before the Tokyo Olympics to after.

**Part 4: Recommendation & Conclusion**

Based on these results, we can make a final recommendation to the International Olympic Committee. The final ranking of the sports respects all criteria for the decision. As to how many sports should be included and excluded, we decided to recommend that the same number of sports should be included and excluded.

When we compare the ranking for the sports to be included and excluded, modern pentathlon should be replaced by kickboxing as their respective normalized scores are 0.0899 and 0.9070. Moreover, sport climbing should be replaced by flag football, as their respective normalized scores are 0.4197 and 0.6152. It should also be noted that the dataset might be positively biased toward flag football, as it is a very popular sport in North America. But again, as the event takes place in the United States, this bias is mitigated by the importance of the sport’s popularity in the host country. Finally, as the normalized scores for breakdance and surfing are similar, we recommend that the IOC wait for the Paris 2024 event to make a final decision, as the two sports will be included in the event.

**Appendix**

*\* Note: detailed calculations for each appendix can be found in ‘Olympics Rankings.xlsx’ \**

Appendix A: Average sentiment scores for each of the 9 sports being considered for inclusion at the 2028 Olympic Games (in descending order by compound sentiment score).

| Sport | Average Negative Sentiment Score | Average Neutral Sentiment Score | Average Positive Sentiment Score | Average Compound Sentiment Score |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Kickboxing | 0.0351 | 0.7747 | 0.1902 | 0.5371 |
| Flag Football | 0.0224 | 0.7843 | 0.1933 | 0.5159 |
| Breakdance | 0.0291 | 0.8214 | 0.1495 | 0.4179 |
| Lacrosse | 0.0378 | 0.8222 | 0.1400 | 0.3924 |
| Baseball / Softball | 0.0523 | 0.7839 | 0.1638 | 0.3610 |
| Cricket | 0.0565 | 0.7904 | 0.1531 | 0.3453 |
| Motorsport | 0.0545 | 0.8075 | 0.1380 | 0.3094 |
| Karate | 0.0687 | 0.7659 | 0.1654 | 0.2954 |
| Squash | 0.0669 | 0.7970 | 0.1361 | 0.2520 |

Appendix B: Average sentiment scores for each of the 6 sports being considered for exclusion from the 2028 Olympic Games.

Table 1. Sentiment of tweets posted before the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games

| Sport | Average Negative Sentiment Score | Average Neutral Sentiment Score | Average Positive Sentiment Score | Average Compound Sentiment Score |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Boxing | 0.0664 | 0.7709 | 0.1627 | 0.3129 |
| Modern Pentathlon | 0.0290 | 0.8203 | 0.1507 | 0.4131 |
| Skateboarding | 0.0492 | 0.7990 | 0.1518 | 0.3184 |
| Sport Climbing | 0.0242 | 0.8375 | 0.1384 | 0.4020 |
| Surfing | 0.0433 | 0.7969 | 0.1598 | 0.3545 |
| Weightlifting | 0.0544 | 0.7780 | 0.1676 | 0.3420 |

Table 2. Sentiment of tweets posted during and after the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games

| Sport | Average Negative Sentiment Score | Average Neutral Sentiment Score | Average Positive Sentiment Score | Average Compound Sentiment Score |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Boxing | 0.0530 | 0.7625 | 0.1845 | 0.4081 |
| Modern Pentathlon | 0.0803 | 0.7969 | 0.1228 | 0.1298 |
| Skateboarding | 0.0582 | 0.7671 | 0.1748 | 0.3451 |
| Sport Climbing | 0.0459 | 0.7976 | 0.1565 | 0.3732 |
| Surfing | 0.0443 | 0.7814 | 0.1743 | 0.3996 |
| Weightlifting | 0.0326 | 0.7403 | 0.2267 | 0.5568 |

Appendix C: Table showing the average similarity scores of the favorable attributes and the sports being considered for inclusion, in descending order.

| Sport | Average Similarity |
| --- | --- |
| Breakdance | 0.089517846 |
| Cricket | 0.069613035 |
| Lacrosse | 0.068727986 |
| Flag Football | 0.068588734 |
| Baseball | 0.068509289 |
| Karate | 0.066526864 |
| Kickboxing | 0.064549722 |
| Motorsport | 0.061561272 |
| Squash | 0 |

Appendix D: Table showing the average similarity scores of the favorable attributes and the sports being considered for exclusion, in descending order.

| Sport | Average Similarity |
| --- | --- |
| Skateboarding | 0.092471955 |
| Weightlifting | 0.090154864 |
| Boxing | 0.088321469 |
| Surfing | 0.086758401 |
| Sport Climbing | 0.077629978 |
| Modern Pentathlon | 0 |

Appendix E: Twitter engagement of each of the 9 sports being considered for inclusion at the 2028 Olympic Games (in descending order by engagement).

| Sport | Total Number of Tweets | Total Number of Likes | Total Number of Retweets | Average Engagement per Post |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Kickboxing | 508 | 28162 | 3169 | 61.68 |
| Karate | 6280 | 139302 | 28081 | 26.65 |
| Baseball / Softball | 29550 | 616904 | 100283 | 24.27 |
| Motorsport | 492 | 10034 | 729 | 21.88 |
| Flag Football | 1472 | 22100 | 2419 | 16.66 |
| Lacrosse | 1138 | 14240 | 2112 | 14.37 |
| Cricket | 24050 | 295158 | 31320 | 13.57 |
| Breakdance | 282 | 2190 | 504 | 9.55 |
| Squash | 1934 | 14445 | 1926 | 8.46 |

Appendix F: Twitter engagement of each of the 6 sports being considered for exclusion at the 2028 Olympic Games (in ascending order by engagement).

| Sport | Total Number of Tweets | Total Number of Likes | Total Number of Retweets | Average Engagement per Post |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sport Climbing | 6195 | 74348 | 12812 | 14.07 |
| Modern Pentathlon | 4244 | 63449 | 8512 | 16.96 |
| Surfing | 20931 | 318005 | 52299 | 17.69 |
| Boxing | 101995 | 2155158 | 363962 | 24.70 |
| Skateboarding | 50746 | 1199506 | 146714 | 26.53 |
| Weightlifting | 47974 | 1212855 | 232122 | 30.12 |

Appendix G: Overall ranking for sports considered for inclusion.

Table 1. Normalized scores and overall average scores for each sport considered for inclusion at the 2028 LA Olympic games (in descending order by overall score).

| Sports | Sentiment Normalized | Similarity Normalized | Engagement Normalized | Overall Average Score |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Kickboxing | 1 | 0.7211 | 1 | 0.9070 |
| Flag Football | 0.9255 | 0.7662 | 0.1540 | 0.6152 |
| Breakdance | 0.5818 | 1 | 0.0205 | 0.5341 |
| Baseball / Softball | 0.3822 | 0.7653 | 0.2970 | 0.4815 |
| Lacrosse | 0.4925 | 0.7678 | 0.1110 | 0.4571 |
| Karate | 0.1522 | 0.7432 | 0.3418 | 0.4124 |
| Cricket | 0.3271 | 0.7776 | 0.0960 | 0.4003 |
| Motorsport | 0.2014 | 0.6877 | 0.2520 | 0.3804 |
| Squash | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Table 2. Min and max values used for normalization

| Sports to Include | Sentiment | Similarity | Engagement |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Min | 0.2520 | 0 | 8.46 |
| Max | 0.5371 | 0.0895 | 61.68 |

*\*\* formula used for min-max normalization: (X - Xmin)/(Xmax - Xmin). \*\**

Appendix H: Overall ranking for sports considered for exclusion.

Table 1. Normalized scores and overall average scores for each sport considered for exclusion from the 2028 LA Olympic games (in ascending order by overall score).

| Sport | Similarity Normalized | Engagement Normalized | Overall Average Score |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Modern Pentathlon | 0 | 0.1798 | 0.0899 |
| Sport Climbing | 0.8395 | 0 | 0.4197 |
| Surfing | 0.9382 | 0.2257 | 0.5819 |
| Boxing | 0.9551 | 0.6622 | 0.8087 |
| Skateboarding | 1 | 0.7762 | 0.8881 |
| Weightlifting | 0.9749 | 1 | 0.9875 |

Table 2. Min and max values used for normalization

| Sports to Exclude | Similarity | Engagement |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Min | 0 | 14.07 |
| Max | 0.0925 | 30.12 |

*\*\* formula used for min-max normalization: (X - Xmin)/(Xmax - Xmin). \*\**

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