

Social Functions of Mass Media in Developing Citizen Sports

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Abstract

The purpose of present research was to investigate the current and ideal state of social functions of mass media in developing citizen sports. It was applied, descriptive-comparative research. Data collection was done through field study. Population composed of 600 media experts and sport experts. There were 80 subjects as sample selected by convenience sampling. Instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire. Fourteen university professors expertized in physical education and communication sciences confirmed the validity and reliability was desirable (Cronbach $\alpha=0.81$). Normality of data distribution and significance of hypotheses were measured by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Wilcoxon test respectively.

Results showed that there was a significant difference between current and ideal state of social functions of mass media in line with subscales information, correlations, continuity, and mobilization to develop citizen sports ($p \leq 0.001$). However, there was not a significant difference between current and ideal state of social function of mass media in line with subscale entertainment to develop citizen sports ($p \geq 0.05$). Considering social functions of mass media, we can develop citizen sports.

Keywords: Citizen sports; Social functions; Information; Correlations; Continuity; Entertainment; Mobilization.

Introduction

Citizen sports are as one of life requirements in metropolises. The urbanity has been developed consequently kind and amount of physical activities have been changed. Physical mobility should be considered with a planned exercise activity as workable solution for the sedentary and inactivity. Citizen sports are physical activity in order to entertain in leisure time. All kinds of sport can be included in citizen sports (Kashef, 2010). In fact, citizen sports are sport for all therefore all citizens can participate. Sport for all is to do exercise partially or fully. It improves mental and physical health, social relationships and other positive results. Citizen sports can be considered as recreational sport too. Recreational sport is simple, inexpensive, informal, pleased, and joyful physical activity. All have chance to enjoy it (Rahmaninia, 2010).

Propaganda and promotion are essential in citizen sports. Today media is the most effective instrument to extend thoughts and make culture in societies. Media (such as TV, radio, the press, internet) play prominent role to support social norms like sport. Some European and North American states use media share to propagate and promote sport and activity. European Union would organize a radio station for sport for all (Moradi, Ahmadi, Honari, Ahmadi & Moradi, 2011).

McQuail's five functions are one way in which the functions of media can be explained. He identified the following five major categories as social functions of media: *information*, *correlations*, *continuity*, *entertainment* and *mobilization* (McQuail, 1984; 1987). *Information* is about world events, power relations, progress and innovation. *Correlations* are referred to explaining and interpreting events, and consensus building. *Continuity* describes expressing culture and national identity. *Entertainment* is devoted to relaxation and reducing social tension. Finally, *mobilization* includes social objectives, politics, war, and the like. Therefore, mass media can manage integration, coordination, control, stability, mobilization, tension, thoughts, values, discipline, and conformity (Mehdzadeh, 2010).

Ghafoori, Rahmanseresht, Ehsani and Koozehchian (2003) declared that mass media affected significantly to change individuals' attitudes and behavior -mostly behavior- to engage in sports. Ghassemi (2007) examined the role of mass media in developing national sport to offer a pattern. There was significant difference between current and ideal state. Moreover, Kordi (2007) found that there was significant difference between current and ideal state of mass media role in developing national sport in sport for all, school student sport, university student sport, female sport, disabled sport, and laborer sport. Roshandel Arbatani (2007) presented that mass media explained base and changes of sport for all considerably. Moradi et al. (2010, 2011) declared that there was significant relationship between fourfold role of sport media (i.e., informing, educational, social participation and culture making) and development of sport for all. But, there was no significant difference between current state of sport media roles to develop sport for all. Jackson and Michael (1991) found that the effects of mass media are %87 and %30 to increase individuals' knowledge and change individuals' attitudes about physical

education respectively. Greenwood and Hinnigs (1996) showed in a research done in Australia that there was a significant relationship between media advertising and changing attitudes towards physical education. Mull (1997) studied physical education experts' attitudes towards mass media focusing on championship sport and sport for all. Media was related significantly to develop championship sport and sport for all. Ballaard, Gray, Reilly, and Noggle (2009) realized that mass media was a means to guide exercises. In fact, watching media (TV, DVD) orderly was the best means to guide the exercise. Pyun and James (2010) suggested a model as a first level to understand informing attitude better all over the sport resulted in recognizing sport arena as the best field for advertising than other arenas.

The purpose of present research was to investigate the current and ideal state of social functions of mass media in developing citizen sports. Mass media can change, modify and complement knowledge, belief, attitude, and thoughts. From one hand, physical activity and citizen sports improve physical, mental, and psychic health. From other hand, it decreases medical costs. Consequently, the research question was whether there was significant difference between the current and ideal state of social functions of mass media in line with subscales information, correlations, continuity, entertainment, and mobilization in developing citizen sports.

Methodology

It was applied, descriptive-comparative research. Data collection was done through field study. Population composed of 600 media experts and sport experts. There were 80 subjects as sample selected by convenience sampling. Media experts included sport journals editors-in-chief, sport journals editors, and sport news editors. Sport experts included presidents, vice presidents and secretaries of sport federations and sport boards. The sample was selected by convenience sampling. Individual characteristics, normality of data distribution, and significance of hypotheses were measured by descriptive statistics (tables, frequency, frequency percent), Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and Wilcoxon test respectively. Instrument was two researcher-made questionnaires. Individual characteristics questionnaire measured age, gender, education, background. Social functions questionnaire composed of 40 items using a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). It composed of five subscales including information (8 items), correlations (8 items), continuity (8 items), entertainment (8 items), and mobilization (8 items). University professors including experts of communicational sciences and physical education confirmed the validity. The reliability was desirable (Cronbach $\alpha=0.81$). All the statistical calculations were done by SPSS 18 software and EXCEL 2010.

Results

Table 1 shows frequency and frequency percent of participants' gender, age, education, and background.

Table 1. Frequency and frequency percent of participants based on gender, age, education, and background

		Sport experts		Media experts		whole	
		frequency	Frequency percent	frequency	Frequency percent	frequency	Frequency percent
Gender	male	28	70	24	60	52	65
	female	12	30	16	40	28	35
	whole	40	100	40	100	100	100
age (year)	Less than 25	2	5	4	10	6	7.5
	25-35	8	20	10	25	18	22.5
	36-45	13	32.5	16	40	29	36.25
	More than 45	17	42.5	10	25	27	33.75
	whole	40	100	40	100	80	100
Education	B.A.	21	52.5	29	72.5	50	62.5
	M.A.	15	37.5	9	22.5	24	30
	Ph.D.	4	10	2	5	6	7.5
	whole	40	100	40	100	80	100
background (year)	Less than 5	4	10	3	7.5	7	8.75
	5-15	13	32.5	21	52.5	34	42.5
	16-25	17	42.5	12	30	29	36.25
	More than 25	6	15	4	10	10	12.5
	whole	40	100	40	100	80	100

Table 1 presented that the most subjects were male, B.A. educated, 36 to 45 years old, and 5 to 15 year experienced.

Table 2 shows the difference between current and ideal state of social functions of mass media in developing citizen sports based on media and sport experts' attitudes.

Table 2. Difference between current and ideal state of social functions of mass media in developing citizen sports

	state	mean	Standard deviation	Wilcoxon test	df	sig
Information	Current	2.27	0.35	-743.52	79	0.001
	Ideal	4.45	0.18			
Correlations	Current	2.02	0.28	-702.26	79	0.001
	Ideal	4.18	0.21			
Continuity	Current	2.18	0.36	-765.13	79	0.001
	Ideal	4.11	0.23			
entertainment	Current	3.95	0.43	-1413.84	79	0.67
	Ideal	4.23	0.11			
mobilization	Current	2.43	0.38	-812.38	79	0.001
	Ideal	4.33	0.28			

As shown in table 2, results of Wilcoxon test showed that there was a significant difference between current and ideal state of social function of mass media in line with subscale information to develop citizen sports ($Z=-743.52$, $p\leq 0.001$). Moreover, there was a significant difference between current and ideal state of social function of mass media in line with subscale correlations to develop citizen sports ($Z=-702.26$, $p\leq 0.001$). Furthermore, there was a significant difference between current and ideal state of social function of mass media in line with subscale continuity to develop citizen sports ($Z=-765.13$, $p\leq 0.001$). In addition, there was a significant difference between current and ideal state of social function of mass media in line with subscale mobilization to develop citizen sports ($Z=-812.38$, $p\leq 0.001$). However, there was not a significant difference between current and ideal state of social function of mass media in line with subscale entertainment to develop citizen sports ($p\geq 0.05$).

Discussion

The method of most research in media field has been content analysis and some research were survey, comparative between real condition and ideal condition. Therefore, it would not be possible to compare present research precisely with previous studies. We had to discuss the results generally. Results showed that there was a significant difference between current and ideal state of social functions of mass media in line with subscales information, correlations, continuity, and mobilization to develop citizen sports. The results of hypotheses are in consistent with previous research (Ghassemi, 2007; Kordi, 2007; Moradi et al., 2011).

According to implementation theory by Greiner et al, media messages influence audiences strongly and similarly in general. Mass media should employ tactful, experienced experts proficient in citizen sports problems and media disciplines. Such experts can express correct,

essential, up to date information about citizen sports. Public knowledge increases and attitudes are changed leading to better state.

According to the spiral of silence theory by Neumann (1984), three features of communication (consonance, cumulation, and ubiquity) are synthesized to influence public relations strongly. If mass media does not broadcast widespread comprehensive, planned programs about citizen sports, correlations and mobilization will not be changed positively.

According to hypodermic needle theory, TV is cultural arm in USA. TV set is one of main members in family telling story most times. After introducing citizen sports, mass media should continue citizen sports programs. It causes people to join in sports continuously.

There was no significant difference between current and ideal state of social function of mass media in line with subscale entertainment to develop citizen sports. According to agenda-setting theory (1970), media can influence society. So, media experts can change individuals' idea about entertainment function. Up to date educational programs can be designed to focus on basic elements in different sport fields in citizen sports. Citizen sports committee and opinions of media experts and sport experts are offered to be used to innovate in media programs. Citizen sports are life-worth therefore all these considerations are vital.

In general, it is suggested to have more communication between managers of sport media and managers in responsible of citizen sports and sport for all in sport for all federation and mayoralties, a media-citizen sports committee, periodical meetings to report activities, and opinion exchanges to present solutions to develop citizen sports. Considering social functions of mass media especially TV, we can develop citizen sports.

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