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## Studying role of mass media in sport development

Mona Tavakoli<sup>1</sup>, Alireza Najafi<sup>2</sup> and Zahra Nobakht Ramezani<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Physical Education, Qazvin Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qazvin, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Department of Physical Education, Karaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran

### ABSTRACT

Sport development is a step toward national development. Due to affecting personal and social life, sport has attracted the attention of people and government. Mass media is an important means of sport development, which influence realizing most of sport development objectives. One of the mass media with a growing audience is on-line news agencies. Investigating the situation of sport coverage in such media is one of the research needs for sport development programs and the amount by which sport materials could help sport development was the main question of this research. The current work compared sport news of Fars and BBC on-line news agencies in terms of news coverage type of sport social organizations (educational sport, public and recreational sports and women sports). This research was of content analysis type and Chi-square test was utilized to analyze the data at significance level of  $p=0.05$ . The results show a significant difference between two Fars and BBC news agencies in terms of public, educational and women sports. Also, there was a significant difference between these two news agencies considering championship and professional sports. Results of the research related to content analysis of mass media indicated that, as far as the variable of sport components was concerned, most focus in Fars news agency was on professional and championship sports, especially a limited number of fields such as football. While public and recreational sports do not receive sufficient attention in sport mass media, sports like educational, women, disability and local sports cover a widespread community; also experts believe that some of them like public and educational ones have more important roles in society than championship and professional sports.

**Keywords:** Sport social organizations, On-line media, Internet

### INTRODUCTION

Almost everyone is dealing with the phenomenon of sport in today's world. People are either athletes or sport fans, who follow sport news and materials in mass media including radio, TV and newspapers. Therefore, investigating sport and media has been widely developed. Increase in reporting and studying in sport mass media, especially about the audience and content in various sport media, is among such examples. Mass media are a function of increasing interest in sport and this interest increase of the audience develops attention of mass media like newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, recently Internet and their wide sport coverage [1, 2].

Considering effect of sport on different dimensions of personal and social life, importance of its development at national scale and mediator role of media in this regard, it is essential to identify role of media in sport development and prepare appropriate plans for it. Any macro planning for effective use of media functions in sport area requires deep identification of this area and investigation of these functions in different axes of development in sport. Mass

media of the country, especially national mass media, need to leave traditional and sectional decision making in this regard and move toward strategic planning in different axes and consider consistent national and organizational goals [3, 4].

Mass media have an axial and undeniable role in meeting the need for development awareness through transferring information to the audience and exchanging thoughts. This point makes it possible for humans to know their surrounding world and make their important personal and social decisions based on clearer and more updated information so that they could get familiar with their social responsibilities, especially for development. Second main responsibility of mass media is their leadership and guidance role. Mass media could play an effective, instructive and leading role in development, awakening public consciousness and raising public awareness by spreading novel ideas [5, 6].

Media activities in sport are conducted in order to communicate and send messages from sport organization or the media itself to the audience. Communication has a major role in transferring knowledge, skills, attitudes and information. Among the mass media, on-line media which are called new media in sport have found an influential domain today. The necessity of knowing "Internet" and its role in distributing sport news and also need for studying to find results in line with achieving this important issue have provided a research field in this regard. Since no comprehensive research has been implemented in this field to compare on-line news of sport social organizations in active local and international sport agencies and considering the importance of media role in sport development and guiding public opinion, performing a targeted study on on-line sport media and presenting useful information could assist planners of this field. The present researcher attempted to answer this question: how is the situation of sport social organizations in on-line media?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Method

The research method was of content analysis type. Statistical population included two popular local (Fars) and international (BBC) news agency websites. Also, statistical sample consisted of the news related to the aforesaid components (championship, professional, public and educational sports) in these two news agencies on selected days in 2010.

Public sport means physical education activities and sport of the whole society which are done regularly by individual or official or unofficial groups to meet physical and mental needs in order to gain health and high spirit and improve people's social relationships in an informed way.

However, professional sport includes organizational activities which are done in a targeted and ranked manner to gain outcome and develop economic and social values. One of the features of this sport is prosperity.

Championship sport refers to organized competitive sports which are done considering particular rules and regulations to promote sport records and achieve medals or ranking.

As far as educational sport is concerned, it can be said that an individual learns sport skills in certain courses in family and official training institutions and understands their roles and values in physical and mental health and success in life. The main feature of this type of sport is growth development and includes student sports.

In this research, 120 days were determined using random sampling method and the news of those days was extracted from the two news agencies. The news was divided according to the aforesaid components; then, percent of the obtained news was calculated and the results were compared using  $X^2$ .

Measurement tool of this research was a researcher-made coding sheet for studying sport components. This tool was utilized to place sport components in educational, public-recreational, championship, professional and women categories and to codify them. Content validity of this tool was calculated using an agreement coefficient among three codifiers and its time validity was also obtained. To collect the data, first, two local and international news agencies (on-line BBS and Fars news agencies) were selected in 2010. 120 days of the year were randomly selected and these days were corresponded in Christian and solar calendars. Then, the news related to these days were extracted from the two news agencies and divided to four components of sport social organizations (championship,

professional, educational and public). The news was separated based on having images or not and being related to men or women.

To analyze the data, descriptive statistical methods were utilized to calculate (mean, standard deviation, frequency and percent) and, to test the research hypotheses,  $X^2$  test was used based on nominal scale in codifying analysis unit categories. Also, Chi-square test was used to compare the distributions.

**Research Findings**

Investigating results of descriptive data showed that Fars News Agency was involved in football (54%) and then wrestling (11.7) more than other sports. In BBC, football (26.2%) and rugby (16%) received more consideration, respectively (Table 1).

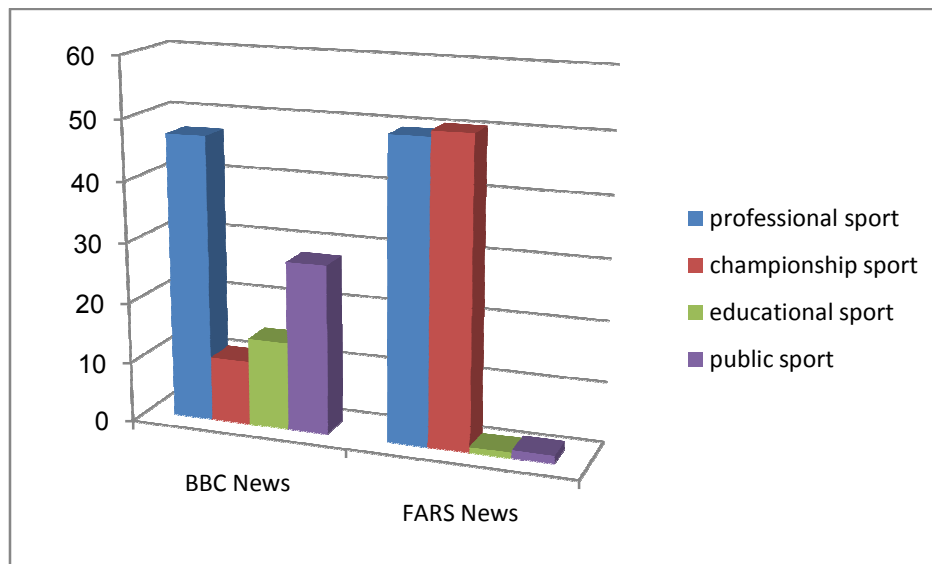
**Table (1): Descriptive data related to sport fields in Fars and BBC news agencies**

News agency Sport field	Fars News Agency		BBC News Agency	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Football	3372	54.0	912	26.2
Wrestling	732	11.7	-	-
Rugby	-	-	557	16

Moreover, results of descriptive data showed that most of the news in Fars News Agency was related to professional sports (50.4 %) and the least news was about educational sports (0.9 %)(figure 1); in contrast, most of the news in BBC News Agency was related to championship sports (47.1%) and the least was about professional sport (10.6 %) (Table 2).

**Table (2): Data related to sport social organization in Fars and BBC news agencies**

Sport social organizations	BBC News Agency		Fars News Agency	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Championship	1635	47.1	2960	49.4
Professional	368	10.6	3149	50.4
Educational	503	14.5	59	0.9
Public	969	27.9	82	1.3



**Fig (1): Data related to sport social organizations in Fars and BBC news agencies**

Comparison of news related to Fars and BBC news agencies using  $X_2$  test showed a significant difference between Fars and BBC news agencies in terms of educational news (Table 3). That is, most of the news related to educational sport (89.5 %) was available in BBC news agency.

Table (3): Comparing news related to educational sport in Fars and BBC news agencies

Variable	Df	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig	Result
Educational sport	3	3042.60	0.05	Rejecting null hypothesis

This result existed in public sport as well; i.e. most of the news related to public sports (92.2%) was in BBC News Agency (Table 4).

Table (4): Comparing the news related to public sports in Fars and BBC news agencies

Variable	D. f	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig	Results
Public sport	3	3144.67	0.05	Rejecting null hypothesis

There was a significant difference between Fars and BBC news agencies in terms of championship sports (Table 5).  $X_2$  test showed that most of championship sport news was in Fars News Agency (64.4%).

Table (5): Comparing championship news in Fars and BBC news agencies

Variable	D. f	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig	Result
Championship sport	3	2790.97	0.05	Rejecting null hypothesis

There was a significant difference between Fars and BBC news agencies in terms of professional sports (Table 6).  $X_2$  test showed that most of championship sport news was in Fars News Agency (89.5%).

Table (6): Comparing professional sports news in Fars and BBC news agencies

Variable	D. f	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig	Result
Professional sport	3	3015.73	0.05	Rejecting null hypothesis

There was a significant different between Fars and BBC news agencies as far as women sport was concerned.  $X_2$  test revealed that most of the news related to women was in BBC News Agency (53.4%) (Fig. 1).

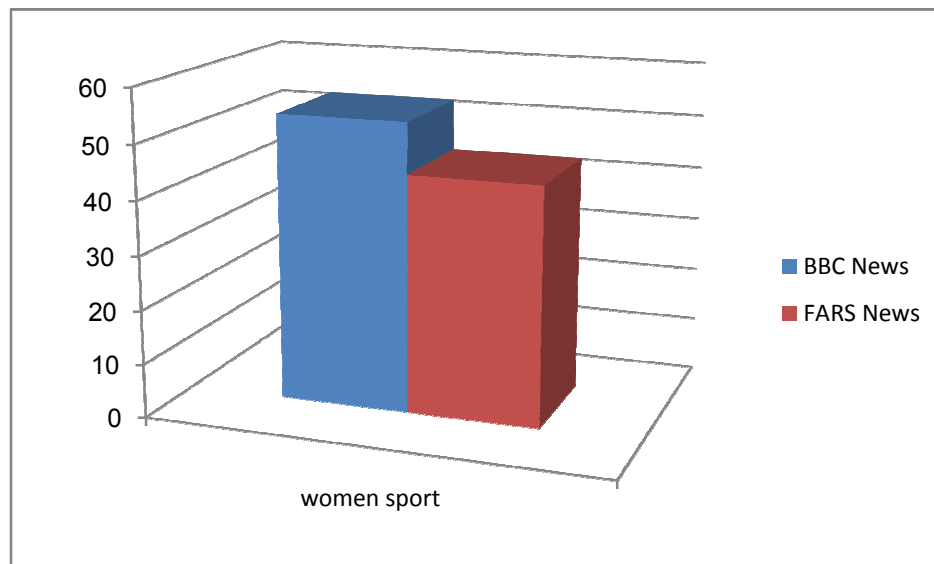


Fig. 1: News related to women sport in Fars and BBC news agencies

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research results related to content analysis of mass media indicated that, as far as variables of sport components were concerned, the highest emphasis was on professional and championship sports, especially in a limited number of sports like football. It seems that public-recreational, educational, women, disability, institutional and local sports cover a widespread community; also sport experts believe that some of them like public and educational ones have more important roles in society than championship and professional sports [7, 8, 9]; however, these sports did not receive the required attention in sport mass media while educational sport had the highest level and domain of people participation compared with other components.

People are able to participate in recreational, championship and even professional sports when they have already gained rich sport and motional activities and experiences at school and have passed their period of motional growth, especially in elementary and junior high schools. In fact, educational sport is a basis and foundation for reaching championship and professional sports.

Activity of mass media was limited and number of active participants was high at educational sport level, even in school championship. It seems that educational sport received less attention and professional and championship sports had the highest level of attention, especially at professional and championship levels. The results showed that 85% of materials were related to football and 45% of this percent was about two teams (professional sport). In the current situation, the press in Iran had more focus on football and limited number of other fields at professional and championship levels and attention percentage to other components was negligible. This feature was also relatively the same in radio and TV.

Considering importance of educational sport, presence of representatives from both educational and university sports in decision-making boards for sport of national media or presence of effective representatives from national media in decision-making boards of this field is necessary for increasing the share of educational sport in mass media and consequently its development.

Moreover, public and recreational sports are related to the existing social institutions such as economics, government, politics and mass media as efficient social inhibitor forces; however, development of public sports requires the media to pay deeper attention to paving the way for implementing sport activities to achieve physical and mental health in the society.

Advertisement of mass media was needed to develop public sport at an acceptable level. General physical activity and sport summarized in public sport had remarkable effect on generating security and mental and social tranquility and providing health and healthy life and mass media were considered effective factors for these activities. At the same time, being encouraged to do physical activities via mass media or recreational watching of sport events had a particular role in developing sports [7, 8, and 9].

Today's media have more opportunity to attract the audience to recreational watching of sport events than their stimulation to performing physical activities. To this end, it is obligatory to have the relevant experts in decision-making boards of national media; conversely, eligible people must also have national media in their decision-making sessions for developing public sport [10, 11, 12, and 13].

It should be noted that terms of mass media on some sport fields which are even placed in sport developmental projects of the country provide some obstacles in reflecting the relevant events. In this regard, some women sports such as swimming, wrestling, basketball, volleyball and tennis could be mentioned, the TV broadcasting of which with real sport outfit is prohibited due to legal and religious terms.

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