

A FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS OF SPORTS NEWS CONSUMPTION AMONG YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

Sports news composes major part of various mass media platforms. Print, Radio, Television, Web media etc. sport is a major segment of news. Whether one is directly associated with any game or not but goes through the sports news. Mainly during national sports events, international sports event, everyone is curious to know the sports updates. In India, Cricket being the most favorite game of most, other games too have gained importance and significance with time. The current study aims to investigate sports news consumption patterns among youth. The main objectives of the study were to explore the sports news consumption motives, preferences, and perceptions among youth. Through focus group discussion, the study found that youth are interested in sports news of all types, they prefer sports news related to their game of interest, and all of the participants agreed that their sports news consumption increases during sports events of at the national and international level.

KEYWORDS: Media Consumption, Perception, Preference, Sports News, Youth.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sports news have significant coverage in all mass media platforms. Most of the newspapers publish a dedicated page on sports news and events, In Radio or television they have particular time-slot for sports news presentation. Along with mass media platforms, there are dedicated 24*7 live as well recorded broadcasts of sports on dedicated sports channels. The digital media has advanced

sports communication to another level. The mobile screen provides personalised experience of watching sports at viewers' convenience. Sports are as enjoyable to watch as to play. In variety of indoor, outdoor games; kids, youth, and people of all age groups enjoy as well as get benefitted from sports benefits. The current research study aims to investigate how do youth consumes sports news, what are their motives to engage in sports news, what are their perceptions about sports news coverage and in their perception how does it affects them.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dafna et. al. (2014) studied the gendered nature of news consumption among children and youth. The researchers conducted a comprehensive survey of 931 children of age 8 and 11 in year 2007. The results showed that both girls and boys use all forms of media but there were significant differences in the selection of news areas as per traditional perceptions of gender appropriate interests.

Baranda et. al. (2020) investigated gender difference in sports news coverage on Twitter. The main objective of the study was to explore if the news communication channel such as Twitter maintain the gender stereotypes while reporting sports news. The researchers analysed 6544 tweets of four most followed media in Spain. The tweets were collected from March to June 2016. The analysis showed that 96.19% of the tweets were about sportsmen and only 3.81% for sportswomen. The result showed a significant difference in coverage of sportswomen as compared to sportsmen in sports media on Twitter.

Gulam (2016) studied the available literature to assess the role of various media tools employed as sources of interaction of the mass media channels and sports. The study found through the analysis of several researches on content analysis of mass media that highest emphasis was on professional and championship sports that too for limited number of sports.

Kim et al. (2016) explored the uses and gratifications behind young people's use of social media for sports-related content. From 468 online survey participants, data from 391 valid responses were analyzed. The findings revealed that the primary motivations for youth engaging with social media in the context of college athletics were entertainment, social interaction, information seeking, and surveillance.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study aimed to investigate the sports news consumption among youth. For a thorough analysis and discussion, the study employed focus group discussion methodology. A focus group discussion was held in the month of March, 2023 with total of 8 students of Journalism and Mass Communication studying in Post graduate course in Central University of Haryana. All the participants were codified alphabetically A to H. The results of the discussion are discussed in the next section.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The focus group discussion was conducted on a few common points such as: News and information sources, sports interest, major sources for sports news access, types of contents preferred, and engagement with sports news.

As per the discussion, participant A mentioned that he regularly checks online newspapers and YouTube for trending news and updates. He mentioned that sports is a passion for him from childhood so he actively plays sports and is curious for sports updates. He reads the sports news pages in newspaper in detail and also keeps on checking YouTube and social media sites regularly. Also, to aware others and to actively pursue sports field he usually keeps on sharing the sports news with others through various social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram etc.

Participant B mentioned that She is not much active in sports but as a student of Media studies, keeps on checking sports updates in the news. She mentioned that she checks sports coverage more frequently during national and international sports events and share the same on social media sites too.

Participant C also agreed with B that her primary media sources to access news are online media and tracks sports news as part of news and current affairs. And for events of major importance, she keeps checking the sports updates more frequently than regular.

Another participant D said that he accesses news and information in newspapers as well as through online media. He mentioned that he likes cricket the most so whenever there are cricket matches

then follows sports news more actively and likes to share favourite cricketer scores and updates on his social media handles.

Participant E responded that she regularly reads newspapers of Hindi as well English. And is not especially interested in sports so is not quite active in sports news consumption. But yes, when some posts regarding international or national level are viral on social media then she gets more attentive and if liked then shares among known through social media platforms mainly on Instagram.

Participant F said he is hard core fan of Football. He usually reads e-papers for news updates and on YouTube follows a few news and current affairs channels. During Football matches watches live telecast and share every important moment on social media accounts.

Participant G said that he likes to watch news on television. And yes, watches live broadcasts of sports events too. And very rarely shares on social media.

Participant H opined that nowadays social media and mainly X provides all the important updates. So, he mostly follows news related pages on Insta and X and gets updates about major events. During sports events as there are more frequent sports related posts on social media so he also gets every updates as updated. And likes, comments on such posts as per context and sometimes shares the same too.

5. CONCLUSION

The focus group discussion revealed that while participants differed in their level of interest in sports, most relied heavily on digital platforms such as YouTube, social media (Instagram, X, Facebook), and online newspapers for news and sports updates. Sports enthusiasts like Participants A, D, and F showed more active and consistent engagement, including regular sharing of content on social media, whereas others like B, C, and E engaged more passively or during major events. Traditional media like newspapers and television still played a role, but digital platforms were the dominant source across the group, especially during significant national or international sports events.

6. REFERENCES

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