

A STUDY ON THE INTERACTION BETWEEN SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS AND JOURNALISTS—THE CASE STUDY OF NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES (NGBS) IN TAIWAN

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Aim

Mega sport events such as Olympic Games and Asian Games have been attracting media attention. Media has been paying close attention to the whole sport events involving the preparation, the facilities, marketing, and even event volunteers. Sport organizations, therefore, play a critical role for information dissemination. Furthermore, sport organizations have a close relationship with media. The issue of the relationship between sport organizations and media has been critical in the field of sport management as sport events/services rely heavily upon media exposure. Thus, this current topic warrants sport management researchers' attention and efforts. National Governing Bodies (NGBs) in Taiwan were in charge of their own sports, making significant decisions regarding sports, and therefore attracting much media attention. As a result, this study focused on how the NGBs interacted with the media. The primary purpose of the current study was to investigate how NGBs in Taiwan interact with the sport journalists. More specifically, the major research questions included the following: (1) how sport journalists chose and accessed to sources of information from NGBs; (2) how NGBs currently interacted with the sport journalists; and (3) how sport journalists' expertise capabilities impacted sources of information from NGBs. It took approximately one year (from August, 2010 to July, 2011) to accomplish this study, including contacting the informants, interviewing, data collection, transcribing, data analysis, and report the write-ups.

Theoretical background or literature review

Most of the related literature came from the field of mass communication and media. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) argued that sources of information provided the media with information in order to produce news. However, sources of information and the media sometimes took different values, norms and attitudes, making these two entities confronted sometimes. Awad (2006) further suggested that journalists tried to obtain usable information to produce news while sources of information sought to influence journalists to produce news which is in favor of the sports organizations. Moreover, Smith (2003) emphasized that the production and the content of news highly relied on the interaction between sources of information and journalists. The preceding literature led to the idea of the current research.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

The qualitative research approach with the case study technique was utilized in the present research. Thirteen out of 41 NGBs in Taiwan and five media companies agreed to participate in this research, resulting in a total of 18 informants (13 NGB officials and 5 sport journalists) participated in the current research with purposive sampling. Interviews with semi-structured questions were the primary data collection technique. Four well-trained interviewers conducted the interviews and collected data. All the interviews were video-taped and transcribed. Credibility and dependability of the current study were ensured by member checks, peer debriefings, and triangulations. Data analysis was performed mainly through theme analysis.

Results, discussion and implication/conclusions

The results of the current study included the following: sport journalists chose sources of information from NGBs depending upon the values of the information; (2) sport journalists tended to use the NGBs' officials of higher position as their information; (3) most of the sport journalists actively contacted the NGBs in order to gain information; (4) most of the sport journalists interacted with NGBs in the public events while others did it privately; (5) the quality of interaction between sport journalists and NGBs was influenced by the political opinions they held. The results were consistent with the framework proposed by Gieber and Johnson (1961). In addition to the information listed above, there was much more information gained from the current study which was not presented here due to the page limits.

The present study suggested that NGBs keep a positive relationship with the media by providing sport journalists with relevant and accurate information to establish positive image of the NGBs. Furthermore, the study investigated the issue regarding the interaction between the media and NGBs, which filled the void in the existing literature. Finally, the findings of the current research made contributions to the sub-field of media and sport in the sport management.

References

- Shoemaker, P. J., & Reese, S. D. (1991). *Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content*. New York: Longman.