

## HOW MASS MEDIA FRAME THE MEGA SPORTING EVENT: THE CASE OF THE 17TH INCHEON ASIAN GAMES 2014

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Synopsis:

The current study is intended to examine how mass media, especially newspaper articles, have framed the 17th Incheon Asian Games 2014. A total of 625 Korean nationwide and local newspaper articles covering the Asian Games during the 9-year period between April 7, 2005 and September 18, 2014 were analyzed in terms of three aspects of framing: (1) the types of issues highlighted, (2) the sources of information cited, and (3) the ways in which either possibilities of positive or negative externalities depiction were used for the 17th Incheon Asian Games 2014. The results of the current study reveal that “political issues” (e.g., administrative and/or political conflict among central government, host city, and local residents, participation of North Korea national team) except “factual information of the event” (e.g., schedules, results, athlete performance, history) were the most commonly highlighted, “administrators” who are the government agencies who prepare the Asian Games were the most frequently cited sources of information and the frame of “negative externalities” was more employed than the frame of “positive externalities” in newspapers of the Asian Games.

Abstract:

The Asian Games, also known as Asiad, is the second biggest multi-sports event following the Olympic Games. According to the China Central Television (CCTV) (2011), more than 847 million audience watched the 16th Guangzhou Asian Games 2010 (China) on television and more recently, the 17th Incheon Asian Games 2014 (S. Korea) brought more than 20,000 participants, comprised of 13,000 athletes and team officials from 45 Asian nations (Olympic Council of Asia, 2014). With enormous public’s interest and attention on mega-sporting events and the possibility of generating tangible and/or intangible externalities (i.e., impacts), governmental and public authorities often discuss to seek hosting mega sporting events like the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup, or the Asian Games (Lee & Krohn, 2013). However, the issue of hosting

mega sporting events has become a popular research topic which tends to focus on only economic or other social and psychological impacts (Bob & Swart, 2009; Crompton, 2004), there has been a dearth of research on the framing of hosting mega-sporting events in media coverage. Thus, given the controversial issues of hosting mega-sporting events and the importance of media framing, especially the Asian Games, the current paper was to build the knowledge by examining how the 17th Incheon Asian Games 2014 have been framed in newspaper coverage.

A substantial body of mass media research has utilized the concept of framing, demonstrating that media play an important role in influencing people's perception and values by presenting stories in a particular way (Croteau & Hoynes, 2000). Specifically, mass media frames are "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Framing theory involves a focus on the packages that members of the mass media use to characterize a particular issue (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). Ultimately, by selecting how to frame the stories that are presented to the public, media may play a key role in structuring and defining reality as well as the interpretation and evaluation of issues and events (de Vreese, 2005; Lee, Kim, & Love, 2014; Papacharissi & Fatima Oliveira, 2008).

The current study is intended to examine how mass media, especially newspaper articles, have framed the 17th Incheon Asian Games 2014. A total of 625 Korean nationwide and local newspaper articles covering the Asian Games during the 9-year period between April 7, 2005 and September 18, 2014 were analyzed in terms of three aspects of framing: (1) the types of issues highlighted, (2) the sources of information cited, and (3) the ways in which either possibilities of positive or negative externalities depiction were used for the 17th Incheon Asian Games 2014. The results of the current study reveal that "political issues" (e.g., administrative and/or political conflict among central government, host city, and local residents, participation of North Korea national team) except "factual information of the event" (e.g., schedules, results, athlete performance, history) were the most commonly highlighted, "administrators" who are the government agencies prepare the Asian Games were the most frequently cited sources of information and the frame of "negative externalities" was more employed than the frame of "positive externalities" in newspapers of the Asian Games.

The role of the media is important to host mega sporting events and operate sport business that have invested through public subsidy, because how issues are framed can have a great impact on social and political supports. This current study regarding media coverage of the Asian Games identifies how mass media agencies influence their target audience using framing theory. However, while the current analysis of issues, sources, and positive externalities/negative externalities framing in newspaper articles was an empirical approach to examining coverage of the Asian Games, the findings of this study are not broadly generalizable due to its limitations. Thus, there is room for such an approach to be expanded in the fields of sport management and media, and several possibilities for future research were also discussed.

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