

Sport Mass Media Influence on Promoting Sports in Order to Improve Public Health

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Abstract: Mass media could be one of the tools used to promote a physically active lifestyle. It is a direct and potentially effective tool for reaching public with means, knowledge and information and helping them to understand the importance of a physically active lifestyle. The main purpose of the study was to discover the influence of mass media in promoting sports activities in order to improve health in Sultanate of Oman, and attempt to determine the effect of the mass media in promoting sports activities to improve health. The study sample consisted of 470 participants divide to five age groups (15-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, and over 40 years, respectively). The study used a mass media survey to answer the main questions of the study. The results showed a weakness of mass media to encourage sports culture and exercise within different segments of society in order to improve health. Furthermore, it was a good signal that highlights the importance of mass media in promoting exercise in sport in order to improve health. In addition, the results of the study provide professionals in sports an adequate information to what mass media should be done to promote sports in order to improve health of the people of Oman. It recommend that mass media should embrace national projects to promote and encourage sport for health.

Key words: Physical activity benefits, sport mass media

INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, the Oman's enjoyed healthier lives as they led a more active lifestyle than compared to the present generation. Currently, technological advances, mechanization and automation have radically reduced their physical activity and leads to a sedentary lifestyle (Faith *et al.*, 2001; Richardson *et al.*, 2004; WHO, 2004). Also, most of the physical labor where is done by foreign labors. Studies have shown a sharp decrease in physical activity within different segments of society and the number of inactive people has increased (Al-Shamli, 2010; Khoo and Al-Shamli, 2010; Boreham and Riddoch, 2001; Hassan and Al-Kharusy, 2000; Sulayma *et al.*, 2001; Telama and Yang, 2000). Playing computer games, surfing the internet and watching television are some of the causes for the sedentary lifestyle in Omani society. Furthermore, the demands for fast food, high calories intake and fat have raised more concerns about human health (Faith *et al.*, 2001) and this is also prevalent among the people in Oman.

Physical inactivity and its associated health problems have substantial immediate economic consequences for any country's health care system (Pratt *et al.*, 2000). What is even worse, in the long run they could subsequently threaten to overturn the achievements that have been

made in reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with many chronic conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, cancer and obesity (Lee and Blair, 2002; Padilla *et al.*, 2005; Pescatello *et al.*, 2004; Sigal *et al.*, 2004).

Therefore, governments and health organizations have realized the risks of this emerging trend and have made concerted efforts to measure the levels of physical fitness of its citizens (Freedson *et al.*, 2000; Frotier *et al.*, 2001; Katzmarzyk and Caric, 2002). They have also encouraged and promoted a physically active lifestyle (Carrol *et al.*, 2000; Talbot *et al.*, 2000; WHO, 2004).

Mass media could be one of the tools used to promote a physically active lifestyle. It is a direct and potentially effective tool for reaching public with means, knowledge and information and helping them to understand the importance of a physically active lifestyle. Whether, intentionally or unintentionally by different media tools (audible or visible). Also, changes for better or worse their existing opinions. Therefore, due to their influence on public opinion, it is necessary to examine the influence of mass media on public in promoting sports in order to improve health. For instance, Naing *et al.* (2004) found that mass media was the best information source for the Malaysian adolescents to acquire knowledge about negative aspects of the substance use.

The purpose of the study: The main purpose of this study is to discover the influence of mass media in promoting sports activities in order to improve health. Therefore this study will attempt to determine the effect of the mass media in promoting sports activities to improve health. It also attempts to indicate what mass media should do to influence the public to exercise in order to improve health.

Research question: This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- Do mass media have a role to encourage participation in sport activities in order to improve health?
- To what extent do mass media influence the public's attitudes towards exercising in order to improve health?
- What should mass media do to influence the public attitudes towards exercising in order to improve health?

Significance of the study: The current study examines the role of mass media to encourage sports culture and exercise within different segments of society in order to improve health. It seeks to identify their opinions about the role of mass media in encouraging exercising in order to improve health. This study could be a good signal to mass media as to the importance of promoting exercise in sport in order to improve health. In addition, the results of the study would give professionals in sports adequate information to what mass media should be done to promote sports in order to improve health of the people of Oman.

METHODOLOGY

The study sample was made up of 470 Omani participants and sport mass media questionnaires designed to gather the study data. The questionnaires divide into four sections. The first one included the demographic information such as name, age, qualification. The second part included eight statements to answer the first question. Third part about the second question included of four statements, and finally the fourth part included thirteen statements to answer the third question.

The study was guided by three research questions. The research questions were assessed through statistical analysis including descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, percentages, and standards deviation, paired sample t-test, with the support of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Probability (p) values of 0.05 or less were employed for significant results.

RESULTS

Demographics of respondents: This section reports the demographics of the sample. Table 1 illustrates the

Table 1: Number of respondents according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	265	56.4
Female	205	43.6
Total	470	100

Table 2: Number of respondents according to age category

Age category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-20 y	62	13.2
21-25 y	154	32.8
26-30 y	95	20.2
31-35 y	78	16.6
36-40 y	54	11.5
Over 40 y	27	5.7
Total	470	100

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of respondent's according to qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Complete secondary education	88	18.7
University degree	290	61.7
Postgraduate degree	27	5.7
Professional certificate	65	13.8
Total	470	100

number and percentages of the respondents according to gender. This section reports the demographics of the sample. Table 1 illustrates the number and percentages of the respondents according to gender. The study sample consisted of 470 participants. As can be seen there were nearly equal number of respondents (56.4% Male, 43.6% female).

Table 2 shows the number of the respondents according to age category. As can be seen from Table 2, the age category 21-25 years represents 32.8% of the all study sample. While the over 40 year's category represent 5.7%.

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the respondent's according to qualification. As can be seen from the Table 3, the average of the respondents was holding university degree (61.7%). While 18.7 and 13.8% complete secondary education and professional certificate respectively.

Mass media and sport participation: Q1. Do mass media have a role to encourage participation in sport activities in order to improve health?

Table 4 shows descriptive statistics mass media and sport participation. As can be seen from the Table 4, the lowest average (1.4277) of the respondents was about the statement if the mass media have an influence on the public to participate in sport activities with a standard deviation of 0.5637, where 60.9% of response was yes. While the highest average of the statement if the mass media offer individuals with training programmes that helps them exercise without coach was about 2.1319 with a standard deviation of 0.7151. Whereas, the statements of mass media show an interest in health benefits of sport and if they encourage and cover sport activities for good health response similar (52.8 and 53%), respectively.

Table 4: Mass media and sport participation

Statement	M	SD±	Response					
			Yes		Sometimes		No	
			Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Do you participate in physical activities regularly?	1.9787	0.7556	139	29.6	202	43.0	129	27.4
Does mass media provide you with adequate information about sport benefits?	1.7021	0.6535	191	40.6	228	48.5	51	10.9
Does mass media play a role in the dissemination of sport benefits for good health?	1.5745	0.6674	247	52.6	176	37.4	47	10.0
Does mass media show an interest in health benefits of sport?	1.7532	0.6421	169	36.0	248	52.8	53	11.3
Does mass media encourage and cover sport activities for good health?	1.9085	0.6803	132	28.1	249	53.0	89	18.9
Does mass media have an influence on the public to participate in sport activities?	1.4277	0.5637	286	60.9	167	35.5	17	3.6
Is mass media your only source to get information about sports?	1.9596	0.7675	148	31.5	193	41.1	129	27.4
Does mass media offer individuals with training programmes that help them exercise without coach?	2.1319	0.7151	93	19.8	222	47.2	155	33.0

Table 5: Summary results of paired sample t-test between male and female in the role of mass media to encourage participation in sport activities

Statement	Gender	Mean	SD±	Mean difference	t-statistics	p-value
Do you participate in physical activities regularly?	Male	1.8377	0.7231	-0.0364	1.343	0.247
	Female	2.1610	0.7595			
Does mass media provide you with adequate information about sport benefits?	Male	1.9132	0.6124	0.0092	10.614	0.001*
	Female	1.4293	0.6032			
Does mass media play a role in the dissemination of sport benefits for good health?	Male	1.4792	0.6746	0.0358	1.798	0.181
	Female	1.6976	0.6388			
Does mass media show an interest in health benefits of sport?	Male	1.7208	0.5882	-0.1168	7.057	0.008*
	Female	1.7951	0.7050			
Does mass media encourage and cover sport activities for good health?	Male	2.0189	0.6121	-0.12473	8.570	0.001*
	Female	1.7659	0.7368			
Does mass media have an influence on the public to participate in sport activities?	Male	1.3434	0.4757	-0.1697	48.674	0.001*
	Female	1.5366	0.6454			
Is mass media your only source to get information about sports?	Male	1.9925	0.8071	0.0945	5.946	0.015**
	Female	1.9171	0.7126			
Does mass media offer individuals with training programmes that help them exercise without coach?	Male	2.1774	0.6648	-0.1082	5.262	0.022**
	Female	2.0732	0.7730			

*: Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$; **: Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Table 6: Descriptive statistics the extent of mass media influence the public's attitudes towards exercising in order to improve health mass media and exercise information

Question	M	SD±	Response					
			Yes		Sometimes		No	
			Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Are you interested in the information that mass media offers about sport?	1.4574	0.6102	284	60.4	157	33.4	29	6.2
Do you think that mass media has clear goals to disseminate sport?	1.3532	0.5719	327	69.6	120	25.5	23	4.9
Does mass media offer information about the importance of participation in sport and its role in promoting public health?	1.6340	0.6282	210	44.7	222	47.2	38	8.1
Does mass media offer convincing programmes about health benefits of exercise?	1.8553	0.6434	136	28.9	266	56.6	68	14.5

From the Table 5, all the statements shown a significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) except the participation in physical activities regularly ($p = 0.247$) and if the mass media play a role in the dissemination of sport benefits for good health ($p = 0.181$). As can be seen, the mean difference for the statement of mass media offer individuals with training programmes that help them exercise without coach (-0.1082) was lower than the other statements.

Mass media and exercise information: Q2. To what extent do mass media influence the public's attitudes towards exercising in order to improve health?

Table 6 shows descriptive statistics the extent of Mass media influence the public's attitudes towards exercising in order to improve health. As can be seen from the Table 6, the lowest average (1.3532) of the respondents was about the statement if the mass media has clear goals to disseminate sport with a standard

Table 7: Summary results of paired sample *t*-test between male and female in the influence of mass media toward exercise information

Statements	Gender	Mean	SD±	Mean difference	t-statistics	p-value
Are you interested in the information that mass media offers about sport?	Male	1.4264	0.5533	-0.0712	13.870	0.001*
	Female	1.4976	0.6761			
Do you think that mass media has clear goals to disseminate sport?	Male	1.4151	0.6041	0.1419	19.676	0.001*
Does mass media offer information about the importance of participation in sport and its role in promoting public health?	Female	1.2732	0.5178	0.0517	0.243	0.622
	Male	1.6566	0.6269			
Does mass media offer convincing programmes about health benefits of exercise?	Female	1.6049	0.6301	0.2625	16.704	0.001*
	Male	1.9698	0.6208			
	Female	1.7073	0.6434			

*: Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$; **: Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Table 8: Descriptive statistics of the mass media influence the public's attitudes towards exercising in order to improve health mass media and public health

Question	M	SD±	Response					
			Yes		Sometimes		No	
			Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Do you want mass media to be more interested in sport in order to improve public health?	1.2255	0.5387	391	83.2	52	11.1	27	5.7
Do you think that sport programmes in mass media are enough?	2.2830	0.6681	57	12.1	223	47.4	190	40.4
Do you think that the professional competence in mass media is the reason for the lack of awareness in the importance of sport in order to improve public health?	1.8043	0.7183	176	37.4	210	44.7	84	17.9
Do you think that mass media staff does not have sufficient experience in sport?	1.9915	0.691	114	24.3	246	52.3	110	23.4
Is there a close link between staff working in mass media and the professional sports?	1.8489	0.6436	138	29.4	265	56.4	67	14.3
Do you think there is a need for a professional publication to raise awareness of participation in sport in order to improve public health?	1.1596	0.3892	399	84.9	67	14.3	4	0.9
Does mass media use distinguished sports persons to encourage others to participate in sport?	1.8319	0.6782	154	32.8	241	51.3	75	16.0
Does mass media support national projects in sport in order to improve public health?	1.9489	0.7792	155	33.0	184	39.1	131	27.9
Do you think there is a need for professional programs to raise awareness of participation in sport in order to improve public health?	1.2511	0.5066	368	78.3	86	18.3	16	3.4
Are there reasons to teach students the benefits of participation in sport in order to improve public health?	1.2170	0.4426	374	79.6	90	19.1	6	1.3
Do sport programs' presenters use clear methodologies to deliver the overall concept of health?	1.9489	0.5855	93	19.8	308	65.5	69	14.7
Do sport programs agree with the concept of sport in order to improve public health?	1.7447	0.6045	161	34.3	268	57.0	41	8.7
Are there professional programs to raise awareness of the fact that prevention is better than cure?	1.9404	0.6568	116	24.7	266	56.6	88	18.7
Are sport programs interested in raising awareness among all citizens about the importance of sport in order to improve public health?	1.9021	0.6356	120	25.5	276	58.7	74	15.7

deviation of 0.5719, and 69.6% of response was yes. While the highest average of the statement if the mass media offer convincing programmes about health benefits of exercise was about 1.8553 with a standard deviation of 0.6434.

From the Table 7, all the statements shown a significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) except the statements of if the mass media offer information about the importance of participation in sport and its role in promoting public health ($p = 0.622$). As can be seen, the mean difference for the statement of interesting in the information that mass media offers about sport (-0.0712) was lower than the other statements.

Mass media and public health:

- What should mass media do to influence the public attitudes towards exercising in order to improve health?

Table 8 sows descriptive statistics of the Mass media influence the public's attitudes towards exercising in order to improve health. As can be seen from the Table 8, the lowest average of the respondents was about the statements if the mass media to be more interested in sport in order to improve public health, there is a need for a professional publication to raise awareness of participation in sport in order to improve public health, there is a need for professional programs to

Table 9: Summary results of paired sample *t*-test between male and female in the mass media influence of public attitudes towards public health

Question	Gender	Mean	SD±	Mean difference	t-statistics	p-value
Do you want mass media to be more interested in sport in order to improve public health?	Male	1.2981	0.6199	0.1664	47.908	0.001*
	Female	1.1317	0.3926			
Do you think that sport programmes in mass media are enough?	Male	2.3358	0.6429	0.1212	0.124	0.724
	Female	2.2146	0.6951			
Do you think that the professional competence in mass media is the reason for the lack of awareness in the importance of sport in order to improve public health?	Male	1.6717	0.6350	-0.3039	2.458	0.118
	Female	1.9756	0.7824			
Do you think that mass media staff does not have sufficient experience in sport?	Male	2.0340	0.6928	0.0974	0.023	0.878
	Female	1.9366	0.6866			
Is there a close link between staff working in mass media and the professional in sport?	Male	1.8943	0.6125	0.1041	10.804	0.001*
	Female	1.7902	0.6787			
Do you think there is a need for a professional publication to raise awareness of participation in sport in order to improve public health?	Male	1.2075	0.4063	0.1099	35.010	0.001*
	Female	1.0976	0.3573			
Does mass media use distinguished sports persons to encourage others to participate in sport?	Male	1.9245	0.6699	0.2123	6.332	0.012**
	Female	1.7122	0.6716			
Does mass media support national projects in sport in order to improve public health?	Male	2.0302	0.7379	0.18631	4.801	0.001*
	Female	1.8439	0.8195			
Do you think there is a need for professional programs to raise awareness of participation in sport in order to improve public health?	Male	1.2943	0.5472	0.0992	16.947	0.001*
	Female	1.1951	0.4439			
Are there reasons to teach students the benefits of participation in sport in order to improve public health?	Male	1.2642	0.4748	0.1081	26.784	0.001*
	Female	1.1561	0.3899			
Do sport programs' presenters use clear methodologies to deliver the overall concept of health?	Male	2.0415	0.5921	0.2122	1.312	0.253
	Female	1.8293	0.5558			
Do sport programs agree with the concept of sport in order to improve public health?	Male	1.7698	0.6184	0.0576	0.018	0.893
	Female	1.7122	0.5859			
Are there professional programs to raise awareness of the fact that prevention is better than cure?	Male	1.9472	0.6254	0.0155	5.016	0.026**
	Female	1.9317	0.6968			
Are sport programs interested in raising awareness among all citizens about the importance of sport in order to improve public health?	Male	1.8943	0.6063	-0.0179	2.676	0.103
	Female	1.9122	0.6731			

*: Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$; **: Significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

raise awareness of participation in sport in order to improve public health, and there are reasons to teach students the benefits of participation in sport in order to improve public health (1.2255, 1.1596, 1.2511, 1.2170), respectively. While the highest average of the statement if the sport programmes in mass media are enough was about 2.2830 with a standard deviation of 0.6681.

From the Table 9, eight out of fourteen statements shown a significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$), while sex of them did not shown significant differences.

DISCUSSION

This study consisted of 470 Omani participants, 56.4% were male and 43.6% females. The majority of responds were at the age category of 21-25 years (32.8%), and holding university degree (61.7%), while the over 40 year's category represent 5.7%, while 18.7 and 13.8% completed secondary education and professional certificate respectively.

The study found that mass media have a high ability to influence and arise public awareness in sport culture which is similar to the findings of Gapinski *et al.* (2003) that documented the influence of mass media of raising public awareness about the important of sport for health. The responders of this study show that mass media should pay attention to all age groups by arising awareness of the importance of sport for health, which deals with Doll-

Tepper (2006) findings. Also this study found that mass media do not offer appropriate programs that reinforcing audience in sport for health. Add to that, there is a straggle objectives and insufficient experience employs. The study results have shown that mass media did not embrace national projects to promote and encourage sport for health.

Based on the results of this study on sport mass media influence on promoting sports in order to improve public health, below are some recommendations and suggestions maybe that ought to implement:

- There is a need to supply the audience with adequate information about sport for health.
- They have to embrace national projects to promote and encourage sport for health.
- They have to provide sport exclusive models to encourage the public for exercise.
- There is a need to provide special courses to the persons in charge of mass media about exercise for health.

CONCLUSION

The current study examines the role of mass media to encourage sports culture and exercise within different segments of society in order to improve health. It found

that mass media have a high ability to influence and raise public awareness in sport culture. In addition, mass media did not offer individuals with suitable training programmes that help them exercise without coach. Also results showed a decrease in participation in sport activity within participants groups. Furthermore, they do not provide individuals with enough information about the importance of participation in sport and its role in promoting public health.

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