

## Media communication in sport

**Teodora DOMINTEANU\***

*Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Department of Physical Education and Sports,  
Bucharest/Romania,*

*\*Corresponding author, teodora.dominteanu@defs.ase.ro*

**Neluța SMÎDU**

*Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Department of Physical Education and Sports,  
Bucharest/Romania,*

*neluta.smidu@defs.ase.ro*

**Andreea VOINEA**

*Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Department of Physical Education and Sports,  
Bucharest/Romania,*

*andreea\_voinea1981@yahoo.com*

**Abstract.** *We live in a world where the media is ubiquitous, through the multiple and diverse ways of expression, a world in which the press has become an "industry", with a coverage and influence that is difficult to anticipate not too long ago, having the ability to capture the imagination and exert its influence on all walks of life. Conquering and then broadening the area of the public are really the raison of a media. This conquest and expansion are, however, based on three guiding principles: to do the job seriously (credibility), to produce pleasure (the show) and to be empathetic (empathy). Throughout this "industrial platform", the sports press finds itself as a very important segment, with a major influence in society. Sport can also be regarded as a large global industry, with fans and spectators acting as consumers who demand. The research question is about the influence of media communication in the sports industry.*

**Keywords:** media, communication, sports, consumer, principles.

### Introduction

Media helps in mass communication. Thanks to media, messages are distributed quickly and widely to audiences as diverse as possible; at the same time, these mediatic messages can also influence their receivers (DeFleur et al., 1991; Roșca, 2014).

According to American communication researchers (DeFleur et al., 1991) there are five distinct stages of mass communication:

- Messages are created for professionals in order to be delivered to individuals;
- Technology helps these messages to be communicated fast and continuously;
- A large and diverse audience receives the messages;
- The messages are deciphered by the audience, who assigns a meaning to them;
- The audience is ultimately influenced by processing the messages, often leading them to change.

Throughout this "industrial platform", the sports press finds itself as a very important segment, with a major influence in society. 20 years ago, sports supporters depended on a copy of a newspaper for the latest updates about their favorite teams. Throughout this "industrial platform", the sports press finds itself as a very important segment, with a major influence in society. With

the advent of the Internet, the last decade has experienced a veritable explosion in sports news, analysis and discussions with dedicated fans who continue to devour "everything that moves in this world", journalism and sports journalist being forced to adapt to new challenges to preserve and strengthen their conquered positions. (DeFleur et al., 1991).

Andrew C. Billings, professor at the Department of Radio & TV "Ronald Reagan", in the Department of Journalism and Creative Media at the University of Alabama, director of the Sports Communication program, whose research focuses primarily on the study of sports communication, states: *"Journalism is moving towards a different era, where technology and information are becoming increasingly important. This gives more people the opportunity to get into the «game». The downward trend of the news industry seems bleak, but sports journalism is one of the fastest growing forms of media, and by incorporating technology and data, this growth will not slow down anytime soon. In sports, statistics mean everything, which makes data-driven journalism important. This creates a great need for knowledge, for journalists who can filter the data, process and analyze it, and present the finished product clearly and in meaningful ways..."* (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021).

***The research question are:***

- What is the interdependence between the media and the sports industry?
- How can the media influence the behavior of the sports consumer?
- What are the media trends in the sports industry?

**Literature review**

Interest in media and media management started to grow as television became more and more popular in the 1950s. Scientific studies began to be dedicated to media theory and research.

Any media wants to provide information, preferably novel to readers, auditors, or viewers, being par excellence qualified by professionals as "exclusiveness". The media must make sure that the information is taken seriously or loses its audience. For this, it is appropriate to multiply the authentication marks, evidence for what they are advancing to the public.

Traditional media usually acts like a "push" variable: it pushes information or news to large audiences who often remain anonymous to the creator of the message. The audiences are often left with no other choice than to consume the messages that are being pushed to them (DeFleur et al., 1991). Later on, in the 1980's, as mass-media proliferated and mediatic "noise" increased, consumers started to decide more about what they wanted to consume and what not. Today, users themselves generate content, such as for example on YouTube, Instagram or blogs. With the advent of online social media since mid-2000's onwards, communication has received a more personal character, often described as mass self-communication (Freitas & Lacerda, 2021): people act both as producers and consumers of the information, or, else told, "prosumers" – they produce and consume media simultaneously (Zavyalova & Galvin, 2022).

Sports media content is, of course, still created by professional journalists from traditional newspapers, websites, and television. However, in recent years, independent bloggers, fans and even athletes have created their own websites, achieving, through social networks, serious competition. *"This is the most important challenge facing sports journalists today. They need to evolve, reinvent themselves, become more professional in every sense of the word. They need to understand that they are the link between the public and the sport. For sport to grow, there needs to be a culture of quality sports journalism. It is no longer enough just to tell and convey about what happens at a sporting event. The commentary must be more critical and interpretive, with an*

*emphasis on adding color, understanding and depth to the economic processes surrounding the sport. Then we must classify them, avoid third-hand information, and not always underestimate the criteria of readers or viewers. In other words, we need to provide comprehensive information to create greater credibility and leave space for the public to interpret it".* (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021).

## Results and discussions

The reverse of the "medal" in terms of media is the "sports industry", both in connection and, at the same time, divergence. The sports industry has been increasing its impact on the global economy over the past 20 years, with investments in public infrastructure, resource mobilization and the creation of new professions and jobs. Sport is considered one of the largest industries globally in terms of employment and income, it is a billion-dollar global industry, propelled by enormous consumer demand.

The latter years have highlighted, in both areas, the sharpening of the battle for money. In the last 20 or 30 years, the major trend in sports has been the extraordinary increase in revenue, initiated by the television broadcasting of games. This innovation led to increased advertising sales, then sponsorships and then stadium naming rights. Over time, teams and leagues have become much more business-oriented and revenues have increased many times. This transformation has fueled the need for businessmen to make as much money as possible out of each sporting event. (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021). Sports business can mean a lot, offering many professional career paths, from the athletes themselves, to coaches, sports managers, PR specialists, sports journalists, sports media planners etc. (Roșca, 2010; The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021).

The sports industry is a social phenomenon that brings together numerous entities around the world, with the global sports market worth somewhere between \$480 and \$620 billion. From live sporting events to food stands, media sponsorships and material goods, the sports industry is growing at high speed, with high competition and a promising future (Roșca, 2011). Today, the sports movement is one of the professional sectors with the greatest economic momentum and generates the creation of opportunities for many people who aspire to a future in the world of sports. (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021).

Sports management is an area of education on the business aspects of sport. From here to the development of a symbiosis between sports and the media was only one step, after all, the two going, in a way, on a common path since the first press or sports events. (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021). *"Press companies use sports to promote newspaper sales, sell advertising space and win lucrative contracts for television and radio. In turn, the media helps to sell sports for spectators and sports and consumer products related to the public".* (Coakley, 2007).

In this way, the International Olympic Committee, international, continental, national federations and many of the sports clubs have created and have "media entities", with powerful media departments that produce various press materials (interviews, photos, films, videos, internet platforms, etc.), which they sell to the press. Keep in mind that many journalists, because of the crisis, chose to work in these departments. Finally, but very importantly, faced with the "media industry", most sports entities have begun to impose their own media rules, even if they are exaggerated, and to sell their "products" at increasingly higher prices. (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021).

Of course, all this becomes (or has become) heavy obstacles that block a large part of the media to inform the public and pave the way for the monopoly of large companies. Unfortunately,

in the pursuit of profits, most often in recent times, the rules are not followed, the boundary between sports and media businesses becoming very fragile. The owner of media companies is at the same time the owner of clubs or players, seeing in this offer a source of profit. For the same reason, the situation can be seen and vice versa – the owners of sports clubs are the owners of media companies. (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021).

In this "business game" large media companies are involved, being producers of sports programs that, in turn, have acquired stakes of control in sports organizations, being providers of content. That is why the increase in convergence between organizations and media conglomerates has become the engine of sport towards a new dimension, allowing media companies to have exclusive access and closer control over broadcasting and marketing rights. Moreover, media companies have intervened in the sports industry by buying clubs, players, or exclusivity, influencing the "life" or "death" of that sports discipline, depending on the interests. On the other hand, sports entities have strong media departments or have control over different media companies (TV or online), to ensure visibility and sponsors. (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021).

In the last few years – and the phenomenon tends to be constantly growing – a new player has appeared on the media market, which tends to replace more and more classic media: social media and journalists-citizens. Social networks are increasingly becoming an integral part of life, online social websites and applications are proliferating, mobile technologies and social media are majorly transforming and influencing sports and sports businesses.

In order to better understand the "world" in which the sports journalist must act in order to achieve his goals, it should be mentioned another important aspect, which exceeds the average and sport strictly, but which has a great influence: politics, an interference factor in both areas. In the modern era, in this "game", the media also entered, in a "game" that is a "roulette" with wins and losses. Although sports journalism has long been seen as the "toy department" of the media, rarely reporting on serious topics such as political corruption, sports journalists play an important role in society, working to meet the demands of a seemingly insatiable appetite only for sports news. It's just that the landscape has changed lately. (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021).

Most of the time and in most of the world, this interference can have negative consequences on the freedom of expression and protection of journalists, it can negatively affect the media. Sports journalism is unprotected from this interference, it is often negatively affected, and the interests of politicians and governments in different countries often cause damage to the media and sport.

The seriousness of the information, the credibility of the media discourse does not come by itself. To surprise the audience, to make the audience, the media, watercolor television in particular, resort to cheating. They are then victims, not only of the search for the audience at any cost, but also of the material conditions of treatment of information (journalists usually work as a matter of urgency). Thus, following the obvious twists of information ethics, the informative televised discourse is the subject of growing suspicion and severe criticism. (Lochard & Boyer, 1998).

It is obvious that, within the media communication, there is certainly the informative discourse which, must provide guarantees of seriousness and sincerity. Live broadcasts participate in this will make the event known in its novelty, spontaneity, and authenticity. Other media discourses do not make this principle the main objective of legitimacy. However, even a media discourse that cultivates fiction and dream as advertising, must lend credibility to the informative message it is trying to promote. (Lochard & Boyer, 1998).

Under the empire of a ruthless competition, media communication has tended to privilege the show, with the occupation of a place of honor, being even a concern that is in the heart of any act of communication. To stage an identity, an event, a history, means to build the discourse that

you consider the most appropriate to the respective communicative objective, because this discourse must interest, seduce, win adhesion. Television, by its own characteristics, but also because of the financial interests at stake, is certainly the average that indulges most easily in the spectacular. Media communication must establish collusion with its audience. She must offer him products according to what the audience expects: to give him to read, hear and see. (Lochard & Boyer, 1998).

The empathic functioning of the environments is largely based on the mobilization of the collective imaginaries (composed of images, attitudes, beliefs, values), which are in force within the community. These representations (a term used originally by sociologists, then by psychosociologists), are for the community as many filters that allow the perception of reality, the interpretation of the world. It is a powerful factor of self-identification, an indispensable cultural binder because it is consensual.

These imaginaries must do both with the founding heritage of the community (mythological history) and with the great representations of collective memory (the image of money, disease, the stranger, etc.). Survey institutions and specialized research centers, most often commissioned by mediums, seek to know the state of these imaginaries, their eventual evolution, to measure their dimension of consensus or conflict. Their methods of investigation are not unanimous. They are reproached that they are only seeking confirmation, approval and, above all, that they are manipulating public opinion, instead of recording it. (Champagne, 1990).

It is obvious that the media, having an assiduous, relatively homogeneous audience (in terms of age, gender, opinions...), will have the opportunity to promote values assumed as being those of the "target", to multiply the signs of complicity, by choosing the topics treated and by the way of treating them, by the privileged point of view, by the place they occupy (on the front page of the newspaper or in the inner page, at the beginning or end of the televised diary).

In today's world of business, with a lot of money in their pockets, between these "poles" – classic media/social-media/sport/politics or "media industry" and "sports industry" – there are also national or international associations of the sports press, organizations with a difficult position, but which can play an important role in the world of media and sports, taking into account the position, the principles, traditions and objectives generally accepted by the global media and the sports community. But most of them, especially at the national level, have become mere "shadows", unable to adapt to new changes, their role being, most of the time, decorative. (The Union of Journalists in Romania, 2021).

## Conclusion

The financial interests of the "media industry" and the "sports industry", the development of social networks across accepted borders, the economic crisis, the increasingly aggressive interference of politics in sports and media have changed every day the ways and way of working of sports journalism and its positions and has caught on as if in some pliers, without much possibility of reaction.

Jay Coakley (2007, p. 590) proposes a new approach to sport, the aim being to "highlight how sports and sports-related actions influence and are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they are created and played". And because sport is dependent on the social context and influences people's lives in different ways, and in terms of social identities, "sport gives value to certain physical attributes and achievements and denigrates others, affirms certain perceptions of how the mind and body are connected, of how the natural and social worlds are

connected. The identity of athletes is therefore not a natural consequence of physical activity, but a social construction." (Coakley, 2007, p. 590).

## References

- Champagne P. (1990). Faire l'opinion. Le nouveau jeu politique, col. "Le sens commun". Paris, Ed. De Minuit.
- Coakley J. (2007). *Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Jensen, K. B. (1991). When is meaning? Communication theory, pragmatism, and mass media reception. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 14(1), 3-32.
- Lochard G., & Boyer, H. (1998). *Media communication*, European Institute.
- McLuhan, E., & Zingrone, F. (1997). *Essential McLuhan*. Routledge.
- DeFleur, Melvin, L., Everette, E., D. (1991). Understanding the mass communication. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) New York: Houghton Mifflin. Retrieved from <https://ro.peopleperproject.com/posts/2352-understanding-mass-media-and-mass-communication>.
- Freitas, T. C. D., & Lacerda, J. D. S. (2021). Freire's "Pedagogy of Autonomy" and Castells "Mass Self-Communication" in the strengthening of protagonism of student in hybrid education in times of pandemic. *Intercom: Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação*, 44, 145-158.
- Real, M. R., & Mechikoff, R. A. (1992). Deep fan: Mythic identification, technology, and advertising in spectator sports. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 9(4), 323-339.
- Roșca, V. (2010). The Rugby Coach and His Three Roles in the Management of a Rugby Team. *Management & Marketing*, 5(4), 135-147.
- Roșca, V. (2011). Corporate Social Responsibility in English Football: History and Present. *Management & Marketing*, 6(2), 327-346.
- Roșca, V. (2014). *Media-encouraged gossiping—A dead of modern communication?*. In: Florentin Smarandache, Ștefan Vlăduțescu, Alina Țenescu (coordinators);, "Current Communication Difficulties", Editura Sitech, Craiova/Zip Publishing, Columbus, Ohio, 271-276.
- The Union of Journalists in Romania. (2021). O relație incomodă – „industria media” – „industria sportului”. Retrieved from <https://uzp.org.ro/17/05/2021/o-relatie-incomoda-industria-media-industria-sportului/>.
- Zamfir, V.-M. (2020). The Physical and Mental Benefits of Socialization. *Revista Marathon*, 12(1), 62-67, DOI: 10.24818/mrt.20.01.01.09.
- Zavyalova, K., & Galvin, C. (2022). Teachers as media creators and prosumers: exploring the reasons & values behind their YouTube pedagogical activity. *Irish Educational Studies*, 41(1), 187-200.

## Acknowledgments:

All authors had equal contribution to this manuscript. All authors approved the final version of the paper. This paper is a result of the „Project for continuous training in the field of scientific research for the Bucharest University of Economic Studies researchers”, conducted at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies.