

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Questions

This study specifically intends to explore the kinds of impact internet, online and interactive media have on sports journalism and sports journalists. The following research questions are:

RQ1. What impact does online media have on the process of sports journalism?

RQ2. What role do media gatekeepers have in the age of online media?

RQ3. How has the role of a sports journalist changed with the ever increasing availability of information on the web?

RQ4. What impact does online media have on the interactivity of the journalists, fans and the athletes?

RQ5. How has the quality of sports reporting changed in the internet age?

3.2. Research Methodology

The researcher employs a triangulation method where an audience survey (quantitative) and textual analysis (qualitative) was conducted.

Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon. It can be used in both quantitative (validation) and qualitative (inquiry) studies and is a method-appropriate strategy of founding the credibility of qualitative analyses. It becomes an alternative to traditional criteria like reliability and validity and is the preferred line in the social sciences. (“Triangulation”, n.d)

3.2.1. Audience Survey

The audience survey research design is a very valuable tool for assessing opinions and trends.

In their study of journalists' use of Twitter, Schultz and Sheffer (2010) surveyed sports journalists across four US media platforms (newspapers, television and radio stations, and ESPN). Similarly, in 'Journalism in the age of social media', Jennifer Alejandro conducted a survey among selected chief editors from different parts of the world about social media usage in news operations. The editors surveyed were: former future media chief of the UK's biggest news organization, the North American bureau chief of a wire agency, the Singapore bureau of a news wire agency, a Malaysian wire and radio news organization, an Indonesian news agency and one of the biggest digital online groups in India.

In this study, thus, the researcher conducted an Audience Survey in order to analyse the impact of internet on sports journalism. The target audience of this survey are the sports journalists.

As the study is concerned with the impact of internet on the process and quality of sports journalism, role of sports journalists and internet's influence on interactivity and relevance of gate-keeping, the people who are on the job will have a focused understanding on the issues. Keeping in mind the focus of the study, a questionnaire was prepared and sent to 150 sports journalists through email, out of which 100 responded.

3.2.2. Textual Analysis

This study also used qualitative method of textual analysis to understand the change in language of sports stories, which is one of the research questions.

Textual analyses are non-reactive tools that uncover both explicit and subtle underlying meanings within mass media content. (Vincent, J., & Crossman, J. (2008) They are both interpretative and subjective. This definition suits the aim of this project to determine how sports journalists make decisions while writing the headlines and story. (McKee, 2001).

Here Texts are headlines and pre-match preview and post-match reports which were published in the four newspapers during the above mentioned years during the coverage of football and cricket world cup.

Although no similar study on sports journalists and internet has been done, there are a few studies about internet's effect on media, but the majority has been done on foreign media, in countries other than India.

In 'Twitter's impact on sports journalism practice: where a new medium meets an old art', Kyle Sears (2011) used the methods of qualitative textual analysis and in-depth interviewing, while analyzing the words and tweets of nine journalists at prominent US newspapers in an attempt to fill a void in research among the topics of journalistic decision-making, sports journalism, and Twitter and to answer questions that arise from the marriage of a certain type of journalism and a particular new media platform.

Similarly, Edward M. Kian, Ph.D., Stan Ketterer, Ph.D., Cynthia Nichols, Ph.D. and James Poling (2014), in a study named 'Watchdogs of the Fourth Estate or Homer Journalists? Newspaper Coverage of Local BCS College Football Programs', employed a textual analysis to examine hometown media framing of mismatches by community newspapers that cover football programs in the Big 12 Conference.

As part of this study, the researcher focused on the coverage of two of the biggest sporting event -- football and cricket World Cup across two eras (2002 vs 2010/2002 vs 2011) by the four national dailies. The study will attempt to understand the impact of internet on the language on the sports text.

Main stream newspapers have always been known for serious news coverage. Hence four of the most popular newspapers of India, The Times of India, The Hindustan Times, The Indian Express and The Hindu were picked and examined for their coverage of the sporting events for the above mentioned time period.

The researcher considered mainly the striking headlines, words and phrases in few select stories as part of the analysis, while leaving out the placement of the headlines and stories, along with the use of illustration and photography. The researcher considered all the headlines but analysed the words and phrases of only the pre-match previews and post-match reports. The data was collected with the help of newspapers and web links.

Textual analysis of the selected headlines was conducted in terms of language devices used in the headlines. Definitely, the types of these devices were not decided in

advance as “the qualitative categories . . . are not predetermined but are derived inductively from the data analyzed” (Dornyei, 2008, p. 245). Thus, the literary tools discussed throughout the paper have emerged during the data analysis.

Reference:

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Website Links

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation_\(social_science\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation_(social_science))
- <https://explorable.com/survey-research-design>