

Cricket Visuals Dominate In Indian Media: A Content Analysis of Front Page Visuals In Indian Newspapers

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Abstract

This research is focused on the use of various games in the leading vernacular and English newspapers in India. These newspapers – all Chandigarh (India) editions – were content analyzed and the results revealed cricket visuals are dominating in the Indian newspapers, 83.1% (N=182) cricket visuals were published by the selected newspapers out of total sports visuals, (N=219). Maximum space is also given to the cricket visuals by all the selected papers. *Dainik Bhaskar* newspaper had published maximum 91% (N=40) cricket visuals. *The Tribune* used maximum 75% cricket visuals with the story and *The Times of India* used maximum 34.4% cricket visuals with the story story on the front page. *The Tribune* used maximum sports visuals with the captions 80.6% and *Punjab Kesri* maximum 85.3% visuals without the caption.

Keywords: Sport visuals, photojournalism, content analysis, sport journalism

Introduction

The newspaper is an important medium of communication which performs the functions of informing, educating, influencing, and entertaining through the use of words and visuals around the world. In every society sports lovers want to know the latest in the various sports around the world. As Kinkema and Harris (1998) noted, in the United States there are occasions when as many as 10 sporting events are televised simultaneously. This wide enjoyment of televised sport has helped justify and lead to the mushroomed growth of sports channels. In the newspaper industry, newspapers have one or two pages for the sports coverage, and often all important sports events are used on the front page in Indian newspapers.

Navneet Singh, a senior sports journalist from the leading English daily in India, the *Hindustan Times*, says over the past decade, it has been noticed young generation is taking keen interest in sports and know leading newspapers in the country has started giving more display to sports stories/pictures on the main page.

Singh says sports pictures and stories break the uniformity on the front page, which is generally dominated by politics, government events. An action-packed or colorful visual is supposed to add spice to the page (Tewari,2015).

The front page of the newspaper is very important to every newspapers, they publish mainly important news of the day, preferably with the supporting visuals. The front page is the face of a newspaper and its is a major selling point of every newspaper. It is just like a window to news inside. Front page always attracts the reader to buy newspapers, visuals create the interest to read the news.

Jerome Bruner, a psychologist from New York University, discussed the importance of visuals communication with his research, noting that “people only remember 10% of what they hear and 20% of what they read, but about 80 percent of what they see and do” as cited by Paul Martin Lester in “Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication” (Lester, 2006).

Sports journalism is a rapidly growing field in the India, now all the national dailies have a separate section called sports desk for the sports. They have sports editor and his team of sports journalists and sub editors. They only concentrate on reporting sports news and events. Cemil and Oguz (2010) studied the sports coverage in national dailies of Turkey. They have used the content analysis method to examine the coverage the newspapers gave to sports, and how sports news was distributed by type, photograph and gender. The sample was taken from the top five papers (*Milliyet, Sabah, Zaman, Hurriyet* and *Posta*) in Turkey. Results indicated that the minimal covered sports branches are wrestling and weight lifting and soccer is most covered sports. Coverage of male athletes was most frequent, while news on female athletes was almost nil. *Zaman* used the most visuals in sports news.

Billings and Angelini (2007) have used quantitative content analysis for comparing male and female focus during NBC's coverage of the 2004 Olympic Games, in diving, gymnastics, swimming, and track and field. They finds, gymnastics and diving sports were more likely to contain gender biases. Out of the four sports examined, the biggest differences were found in gymnastics. Bengü Arslan and Canan Koca (2007) studied three different Turkish daily newspapers - *Hürriyet, Cumhuriyet, and Zaman* - to examine the sportswomen and gender stereotypes. Findings showing the gender biased in the sport coverage within Turkish newspapers. Male coverage dominated as 87.02% of all sports coverage went to men, whereas female athletes only received 6.05% and 6.93% covering both genders (man and woman).

This study is important to understanding the sports coverage of various games on the front pages in India. Through this study, scholar will know about the usage of various sports event in the leading Indian newspapers in 2011. From this study, we will come to know the trends in the media for publishing the various sports event on the front page. We will acquire the data of newspapers which have published maximum sports visuals of various games in 2011 on the front pages. This study also helps to know the newspapers' 1st preference to a particular game and maximum area for a particular game with captions or without captions, and with story or without story visuals on the front page.

While there have been a few studies on sport visuals in the print media, the objective of the current study was to find out the maximum publishing game on the front pages of leading Indian newspapers. The Chandigarh editions of these vernacular and English newspapers were considered for this study. Therefore, the study upon which this scholarly commentary is based is a content analysis of the sport visuals on the front pages of *The Tribune, The Times of India, Punjab Kesri, and Dainik Bhaskar* Chandigarh editions. The newspapers selected for this study were chosen because they represented the two different languages of the readers (i.e., English and Hindi) and because of their readership range, popularity, and circulation rates. In order to make a comparison among the newspapers and games the periods examined were the first week of each of the first six months of 2011.

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Which was the leading game in the newspapers of 2011 by each newspaper?

RQ2: How much space (area) was given to various game in 2011 by each newspaper?

RQ3: How many visuals had captions with them in 2011?

RQ4: How many visuals were used with story and without story on front pages in 2011?

Method

The content analysis methodology was adopted to examine the sport visuals published on the front pages of four leading Indian daily newspapers. A total of 168 front pages (editions) were collected and this yielded a total of sample of 219 sports visuals (N=219) from the selected newspapers in 2011. Visuals of various games published less than 5 is not studied it will be study under others games visuals. Riffe and Fritag (1997) confirmed the importance

of purposive sampling technique in content analysis. Per their observation, 60% of all the content analyses in Journalism Quarterly from 1971 to 1995 used this sampling procedure.

A coding sheet was prepared and all the variables were coded to get the data. This process was done for each edition of all the selected newspapers under study. For checking coder reliability, Scott's pi formula was used. Fifty visuals not included in the final study were coded twice to get the Scott's Pi reliability value of 0.534 and 80% agreement.

Content analysis is a research technique for objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. Harold Lasswell introduced the media content analysis method to study mass media in 1927; originally it was used to study propaganda. Lasswell, Lerner and Pool (1952) said “content analysis operates on the view that verbal behaviour is a form of human behaviour, that the flow of symbols is a part of the flow of events, and that the communication process is an aspect of the historical process ... content analysis is a technique which aims at describing, with optimum objectivity, precision, and generality, what is said on a given subject in a given place at a given time.” (p. 34)

Sports visuals of all games published in the 2011 newspapers on page one were examined in terms of quantity of the sports visuals, size (space) of the visuals, how many visuals were used with story or without story and without caption or with caption.

Results

A total of 219 sport visuals were found in 2011 of various games. In response to the first research question, which asked about the amount of sports visuals and various games used in the newspapers in 2011. The cricket visuals dominate in the newspapers according to this study, 83.1% (N=182) cricket visuals were published in the selected newspapers out of total sports visuals, (N=219). *Dainik Bhaskar* newspaper had published maximum 91% (N=40) cricket visuals out of (N=44) and 9% tennis visuals. *Punjab Kesri* published (N=63) 84% cricket visuals, (N=6) 8.0% of Tennis and (N=6) 8% of all other visuals. *Times of India* published (N=52) 81.2% cricket visuals,(N=7) 10.9% tennis and (N=5) 7.9% all other visuals. *The Tribune* published (N=29) 80.6% cricket and (N=7) 19.4% other visuals. The total sports as well as various games related visuals in 2011 can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Total sports visuals with various games in year 2011

Newspaper	Cricket	Tennis	Others	Total
Times of India	(N=52) 81.2%	(N=7) 10.9%	(N=5) 7.9%	(N=64) 100.0%
The Tribune	(N=29) 80.6%	-	(N=7) 19.4%	(N=36) 100.0%
Dainik Bhaskar	(N=40) 91%	(N=4) 9%	-	(N=44) 100.0%
Punjab Kesri	(N=63) 84%	(N=6) 8%	(N=6) 8%	(N=75) 100.0%
Total	(N=182) 83.1%	(N=16) 7.3%	(N=29) 9.6%	(N=219) 100.0%

The second research question was in regard to how much space was given to sport visuals and to various games during the time period studied. The *Dainik Bhaskar* gave maximum space to sports visuals 3614.58 sq cm and also to the cricket visuals 3506.01 sq cm . The *Punjab Kesri* gave 3575.45 sq cm space to sports visuals and 3270.22 sq cm to cricket visuals. *The Tribune* have given 2561.74 sq cm space to sports visuals and 2229.27 sq cm to

the cricket related visuals. The *Times of India* have given 2778.44 sq cm area to sports visuals 2492.91 sq cm to cricket and 183.25 sq cm to tennis visuals. The use of space for the sports visuals and the various games in 2011 is seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Newspapers	Sports Visuals	Cricket Area in sq.cm	Tennis Area in sq.cm	Others Area in sq.cm
D.Bhaskar	3614.58	3506.01	41.46	67.11
P.Kesri	3575.45	3270.22	148.21	157.15
Times of India	2778.44	2492.91	183.25	102.28
The Tribune	2561.74	2229.27	-	332.47

Third research question asked about the use of captions in sports visuals and in various games, *The Tribune* used maximum sports visuals with the captions 80.6% and *Punjab Kesri* maximum 85.3% visuals without the caption. *The Tribune* used 61.1% cricket visuals with caption and all the other visuals with the caption. *Dainik Bhaskar* and *The Times of India* used 68.2% and 50% respectively without the caption cricket related visuals. *Dainik Bhaskar* and *Punjab Kesri* used all the tennis visuals without the caption. Table 3 explain the newspapers’ use of captions during this study.

Table 3

With caption and without caption sport visuals and games on front pages in 2011

Newspaper		Cricket	Tennis	Others	Total
Times of India	With Caption	(N=20) 31.2%	(N=2) 3.1%	(N=2) 3.1%	24 37.5%
	Without Caption	(N=32) 50%	(N=5) 7.8%	(N=3) 4.7%	40 62.5%
The Tribune	With Caption	(N=22) 61.1%	-	(N=7) 19.5%	(N=29) 80.6%
	Without Caption	(N=7) 19.4%	-	-	(N=7) 19.4%
Dainik Bhaskar	With Caption	(N=10) 22.7%	-	-	(N=10) 22.7%
	Without Caption	(N=30) 68.2%	(N=4) 9.1%	-	(N=34) 77.3%
Punjab Kesri	With Caption	(N=9) 12%	-	(N=2) 2.7%	(N=11) 14.7%
	Without Caption	(N=54) 72%	(N=6) 8%	(N=4) 5.3%	(N=64) 85.3%

In response to the fourth research question, *The Tribune* used maximum 75% cricket visuals with the story and *The Times of India* used maximum 34.4% cricket visuals with the story story on the front page. *Dainik Bhaskar* used 52.3% cricket visuals with the caption and 38.6% without the caption. *Punjab Kesri* have published 58.7% cricket visuals with the caption and 25.3% without the caption. The results of the fourth research question are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Sports visuals and various games visuals with story or without story in 2011

Newspaper		Cricket	Tennis	Others	Total
Times of India	With Story	(N=22) 34.4%	(N=2) 3.1%	(N=27) 5.2%	27 42.2%
	Without Story	(N=30) 46.9%	(N=5) 7.8%	(N=2) 3.1%	37 57.8%
The Tribune	With Story	(N=27) 75%	-	(N=7) 19.4%	(N=34) 94.4%
	Without Story	(N=2) 5.6%	-	-	(N=2) 5.6%
Dainik Bhaskar	With Story	(N=23) 52.3%	(N=1) 2.3%	-	(N=24) 54.6%
	Without Story	(N=17) 38.6%	(N=3) 4.5%	-	(N=20) 45.4%
Punjab Kesri	With Story	(N=44) 58.7%	(N=2) 2.7%	(N=46) 3.9%	(N=49) 65.3%
	Without Story	(N=19) 25.3%	(N=4) 5.3%	(N=23)	N=49 34.7%

Discussion

This study shows after analyzed the data collected from the selected Indian newspapers, the cricket visuals dominating in the Indian print media. Cricket visuals (83.1%) are far ahead of all other games. The size of the visuals played an important role among the readers as large photographs attract the readers and communicate the message effectively. All the selected newspapers for the study have given maximum space (area) for the cricket visuals in 2011. All the Indian newspapers published maximum photographs of the World Cup cricket tournament because India’s national team was performing good in the cricket world cup in 2011. India won the tournament final most of the papers gave very good coverage to cricket, some of them published front page with the world cup photographs and caption only.

The caption provides the important information of the photographs and attract readers to read full news item. The photo caption provides the information needed to understand a photograph. Photo captions are one of the most read text in a publication after the titles of news content (Photo Captions & Cutlines, n.d.) . *The Tribune* was using maximum cricket visuals with captions in 2011 the paper used 61.1% cricket visuals with the caption. *Punjab Kesri* used maximum cricket visuals 72% without the caption.

All the selected newspaper except *The Times of India* used maximum cricket visuals with the news. As per the previous study use of visuals with the news item increase the credibility of the news and attract the readers to read the news. Visuals always work as an evidence of an event that occurred and is published in the newspaper. Newspapers should always use visuals with each news item.

Overall the content analysis of front page sports visuals of four leading Indian newspapers revealed that cricket visuals dominating in the Indian print media examined in this study. As per the study, some of the selected newspapers have published tennis visuals and rural sports, hockey, boxing and badminton occasionally. Study revealed that most of the newspapers have published cricket visuals without the caption, whereas photo captions are one of the most read text in a publication after the headlines on news content. In the current

study, only cricket visuals were displayed maximum in all the newspapers, whereas coverage should be balanced and equal space should be given to all other important sports events.

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