



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE INFLUENCE OF MASS MEDIA IN SOCIALIZATION INTO SPORT OF KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of mass media on socialization into sport of Kenyan secondary school athletes. Parental social economics status was evaluated to assess how it may affect the influence of mass media in socialization into sport of the athletes. Data was collected through direct contact questionnaire from 636(320 males and 316female) athletes purposively selected from 40 secondary school in Kenya. The resulting data was analyzed through student *t*-test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that 240(38.4%) of the athletes had their fathers highest level of education of university and 203(32%) of the athletes had their mothers having secondary school education. Majority (138, 21.69%) of the athletes had their fathers occupation as unskilled activities. Influence of mass media on socialization into sport differed significantly ($p < 0.05$) between male and female athletes. Parental social economic status positively and significantly ($p < 0.05$) affected the influence of mass media in socialization into sport of secondary school athletes. It is recommended that schools and parents need to provide all forms of mass media to the secondary school athletes.

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INTRODUCTION

Research studies have utilized the social learning paradigm to unearth factors which are critical to socialization into sport for children. Based on these studies, personal attributes, significant others and socializing situations have been identified as core ingredients of sport socialization (Grendorfer and Lewko, 1987, Synder and Spreitzer, 1990). The crux of this study is to establish how socializing situations impact sport socialization of secondary school athletes. Socializing situations reflect on opportunity set for participation in sport, availability of programs and equipment for physical activities (Kenyon and Mcpherson, 1981). The school environment provides the greatest exposure to low cost recreational, sporting and coaching programme to children (Kleiber and Roberts, 1993). Wasonga(1990) suggests that high performance in athletics in Kenya could be attributed to the fact that most schools have access to a field which can easily be converted into a track and thus a majority of Kenyan children are socialized into athletics. The way socialization occurs is by interaction of peers and siblings, parents, teachers and coaches in schools, media cultural messages and social structure of the society (Synder and Spreitzer, 1990: Coakley, 1995). Thus active parents ,peers to play with, sport opportunities provided through schools, media coverage of sports events and the society value of a healthy body would all

interact to form a person's self image in sport (Synderand Spreitzer,1990). The medium of communication is playing an increasing part in the socialization process (Datta, 1984). Indeed Coakely (1995) observed that live coverage of sport events encourage active participation by giving people role model and game knowledge. Similarly, Hart and Birrell(1981); Roloff and Solomon (1989)found that those who watched more sport on television had the highest rates of active participation. They concluded that the press media socialize people into the role of spectators and nurtures interest, leading them to attend games in person. On the other hand, Toyama (1991) investigated the influence of mass media on learning a sport language in particular football terminology. It was evident that 65% of the sample reported that they learned football by watching television. Thus, it appears that the mass media, especially television, is an important agent in cognitive sport socialization. Beyond television the other forms of mass media cannot be underestimated in the process of sport socialization and it was worth investigating its influence on the socialization into sport of secondary school athletes in Kenya. Secondly, it was important to establish how the influence of mass media in sport socialization of secondary school athletes is mediated by parental social economic status.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The study was guided by the hypothesis that influence of mass media in socialization into sport of secondary school athletes does not differ significantly between:

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1. Male and female athletes
2. Athletes with different levels of parental education.
3. Athletes with different levels of parental occupation

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample: The study targeted Kenyan secondary athletes who took part in inter-provincial ballgames championships. They were participating in the games of rugby (boys only), netball (girls only), soccer, volleyball, handball, basketball and hockey. Stratified random sampling based on provincial representation was utilized to select athletes from 40 secondary schools. A total of 639 athletes with 320(50.3%) males and 316 (49.7%) females took part in the study. Their age range, mean and standard deviation of 15-22, 17.37 + 2.37 years respectively. Their birth ranks showed that 153 (23.9%) were first borns, 138 (21%) were last borns while (54.5%) were middle borns.

Questionnaire: The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A of the Questionnaire was comprised of items to elicit demographic data of the subjects such as gender, age, birth order and parental social economic status. Section B of the questionnaire had items on the influence of mass media in socialization into sport such as provision of role models, learning skills and tactics and encouragement in sport. Items in this section were weighted on a 3-point Likert scale of Always (A), Sometimes(S) and Never (N). The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a group of 30 secondary school athletes and yielded a reliability of 0.80 using the Split-half method. This indicated a temporal stability of the instrument and was considered adequate for the study.

Data Analysis: Data generated from the questionnaire was analyzed for frequencies, means and percentages. Inferential statistics of students, *t*-test and one way ANOVA was utilized to reject or accept hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Post hoc test of Tukey Honestly Significance Difference (HSD) was used to test the strength of the resulting significance difference.

RESULTS

Parental Social Economic Status

Parental Education: The distribution of athletes based on their parental highest level of education is shown in Table 1. Table 1 shows that majority of the athletes 240(38.4%) had their father's highest level of education as university while 7(1.1%) of the fathers' athletes had no formal education. The distribution of athletes based on their mothers' highest level of education had most in secondary up to form 4, 201(31.8%), 123(19.4%), 14.4% and 18(2.4%) followed by those of university, primary, secondary up to form 6 and no formal education respectively. Beyond the distribution of athletes based on their parents' level of education, it was important to establish the distribution of the athletes based on their parental occupation as shown in Table 2. As shown in Table 2 most of the athletes had their fathers' occupation as professional/managerial 138(21.69%), 116(21%), 106(19.2%), 102(16.5%) and 91(15.9%) were skilled, commercial/self employed, teaching and unskilled jobs, respectively. The athlete's mothers' occupation revealed that majority 197(30.96%) of the athlete's mothers' occupation were

unskilled, 164(25.76%) were commercial/self employed, 155(24.36%) were in teaching/health, 53(8.24%) were in skilled jobs and a minority of 36(5.65%) are in professional/managerial occupations. However 33(4.87%) of the athletes did not reveal their mothers occupation, possibly because they did not have their mothers, they did not know their mothers or their mothers are involved in weird occupations which are not worth revealing.

MASS MEDIA AND SOCIALIZATION INTO SPORT

The results on the influence of mass media on socialization into sport of male and female athletes are shown in Table 3. Table 3 shows that male and female athletes are influenced in socialization into through sports and TV/Video ($m=2.30$), radio ($m=2.05$) and internet ($m=1.65$). For the male athletes, they had higher scores than females' athletes on influences of TV/Video, sport magazines and internet. On the other hand, female athletes had higher mean scores than male athletes on the influence of radio and newspapers. However the *t*-test results showed that there are significant differences $p>0.05$ in the influence of internet ($t=2.18$) and radio ($t= - 3.21$) on socialization into sport of male and female athletes. The influence of newspapers, sport magazines and TV/Video on socialization into sport of male and female athletes were not statistically significant ($p<0.05$). Consequently, the hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the influence of mass media in socialization into sport of male and female athletes is not rejected

PARENTAL EDUCATION

Fathers' Education: The results on the influence of mass media on socialization into sport of secondary school athletes defined by their Fathers highest level of education showed that the influence of mass media on socialization into sport of secondary school athletes across all categories of fathers' highest level of education, the influence is strongest from the TV, sport magazines, newspapers, radio and internet with no. However, there were no significant differences. on the influence of newspapers $F(4,621)=2.18$ in terms of mean scores on socialization into sport of athletes whose fathers' had different levels of education. Post hoc tests (Tukey HSD) indicated that athletes whose fathers had never been to school differed significantly with those whose athletes fathers' highest level of education was primary, university, secondary up to form six and secondary up to form four with no significant differences on newspapers.

Mothers' Education

Based on the means, the influence of socializing situations is greatest by the TV/Video($m=2.54$) sport magazines ($m=2.47$), newspapers ($m=2.34$), radio($m=2.54$), sport magazines ($m=2.47$), newspapers ($m=2.34$), radio ($m=2.305$) and internet ($m=1.66$). To determine whether there were differences between the above means, ANOVA identified significant difference $F(4,628)= 6.68$ for the radio, $F(4,628) = 4.48$ for TV/video and $F(4,628)=5.41$ for internet in terms of mean scores on their influence in the socialization into sport of athletes with different levels of mothers education.

Table 1: Athletes' Parental level of Education

Level of education	Father		Mother	
	n	%	n	%
No schooling	7	1.1	18	2.4
Primary	86	13.7	123	19.4
Secondary up to form 4	163	26	203	32
Secondary up to form 6	130	20.8	91	14.4
University/tertiary	240	38.4	201	31.8
Not indicated	10	1.28	3	0.46
Total	636		636	

Table 2: Athletes' Parental Occupation.

Occupation	Father		Mother	
	n	%	n	%
Professional/managerial	138	21.6	36	5.65
Skilled	116	18.2	53	8.24
Teaching/health	102	14.2	155	24.36
Commercial/self	106	16.8	164	25.76
Unskilled	91	15.9	197	30.96
Not indicated	83	13	31	4.87
Total	636		636	

Table 3: Means standard deviations and t-values of influence of mass media on socialization into sport of male and female athletes

Mass media	Gender	N	m	SD	df	t-value	Sign
Radio	Male	320	1.97	.66	634	-3.21	p<.05
	Female	316	2.13	.63			
Newspapers	Male	320	2.27	.56	634	-1.38	p>.05
	Female	316	2.33	.52			
Sport magazines	Male	320	2.48	.55	634	.60	p>.05
	Female	316	2.45	.54			
TV/Video	Male	320	2.57	.51	634	1.33	p>.05
	Female	316	2.51	.50			
Internet	Male	320	1.71	.72	634	2.18	p<.05
	Female	316	1.59	.66			

PARENTAL OCCUPATION

Fathers' occupation: The results on the influence of mass media on socialization into sport of athletes based on their fathers occupation revealed the order of influence from the greatest to the lowest in TV/Video(m=2.55) sport magazines ,newspaper ,radio, and internet (m=1.07). To determine whether the influences differed between athletes whose fathers' had different occupations, ANOVA results were significant $F(4,548) = 3.80$ for radio, $F(4,548) = 4.67$ for TV/Video and $F(4,548) = 3.12$ for internet indicating significant differences in the mean scores on their influence in the socializing athletes with different levels of fathers' occupation. Post hoc Turkey's (HSD) showed that athletes whose fathers' occupation was unskilled differed significantly from athletes with different Fathers occupation.

Mothers' occupation : The results on influence of mass media on socialization into sport of athletes defined by mothers' occupation showed that across the board, the influence and is mass media on socialization into sport of athletes defined by their mothers' occupation shows that the is contributed more by TV/Video(m=2.21) and there were significant differences in the influence of radio in the socialization of secondary school athletes whose mothers occupation was unskilled (m=2.21) differed significantly from

was highest among athletes whole mothers occupation was unskilled and lowest among athletes whose mothers occupation was managerial. The influence of TV/Video was also significant $F(4,600) = 2.42$, $p < .05$ in the socialization into sport of athletes with different levels of mothers occupation. Turkey HSD showed that athletes whose mother's occupation was professional differed significantly from those athletes whose mothers' occupation was unskilled and commercial. Indeed, the influence of TV on socialization into sport was highest among athletes whose mothers' occupation was unskilled. This is because as occupational status becomes higher, the probability of owning a Tv/Video is equally higher. The influence of newspaper, sport magazines, and internet on the socialization into sport of secondary school athletes with different levels of mothers' occupation was not significant.

DISCUSSION

As majority of the athletes had their fathers' highest level of education as university, then it appears that these fathers' are able to pay school fees for their children, have value for participation in sport and encourage participation in sport (McPherson *et al.*, 1989). Thus it is evident that the higher the level of education of the parents, the more likely that their children would take part in sport. However, data in Table 2 tally with the data in Table 1 which reveals that the higher the level of education, the higher the occupation. It is evident that

the higher the fathers' occupation, the more likely that their offspring would participate in sport. This is because fathers' in higher occupations may value physical activity, have the ability to buy sport equipment and even have their siblings play in sports clubs. On the other hand, low occupations suggest lack of encouragement to participate in sport of their offspring's (McPherson *et al* 1989). The results in table 2 shows that the higher the mothers' occupation, the more unlikely their children will participate in sport. This would be attributed to the fact that these mothers may be spending most of their valuable time in their occupations and have less time to oversee or encourage the participation of their children in sport. Indeed female athletes are the ones who are more affected in this scenario than male athletes. Mothers in lower occupations have their children participate in sport. This attributed to their ability to be with their children and may take a keen interest in children's activities as the struggle to pay school fees for their children. These findings are congruent with Mbogoh's (2003) observations that males are more likely to get access to internet while females are more likely to listen to music from the radio due to its soothing music. Therefore, it is apparent that gender differences become eminent as athletes choose and get access to different sources of mass media. Mbogoh (2003) observed that newspapers and TV were the most used forms of print and electronic media. She indicated that sports broadcasts helped subjects in her study to learn techniques of sporting activities and helped them improve their sporting skills. That is why Hangreaves (1994) pointed out that TV is clearly the most dominant form of mass media. This is because it reaches the largest, most diversified audience, it appeals to a variety of senses, it is consumed in greater amounts than any other medium and its potential input on viewers in the most powerful.

To illuminate on gender differences in the influence of television on socialization into sport, Gantz (1981) found that female reported watching TV sports when nothing else was on, "there was nothing else to do" or family and peers were watching. By contrast males watched television sport, "to have few beers, to let off "steam", to get psyched, to experience some additional excitements as well as to pick up additional information about players. It is evident that females "appear" trapped into watching TV sport whereas males seem to be sincerely interested and derive enjoyment from it. It is imperative to appreciate that internet services may be picking up among the affluent members of society in Kenya but its access to people of the other cadres is still very low (Mbogoh, 2003). Results on the influence of newspaper and sport magazines on socialization into sport of secondary school athletes with different levels of mothers' education were not significant. This attributed to the fact that the school where these athletes are enrolled may have newspapers and sport magazines accessible to them and this neutralized the effects of mothers' level of education was university. Formal education up to primary school translates into non-skilled jobs low income or even jobless and this may necessitate their offspring to rely on radio as the only source of information. The influence of internet was most pronounced among athletes whose mother's level of education was university and least among athletes whose mothers' did not have formal education. This corroborates sociological literature that the higher the level of education, the higher the prosperity to utilize the internet. This is buttressed by the findings of this study where

the influence of internet on socialization into sport is very low compared to other forms of mass media. This is not surprising as the data was collected from schools whose teams have been doing well in sport. Thus, these schools spend time and resources towards sport excellence. They invest in hiring of coaches, support their players through sport equipment and the entire climate in these schools in pro-sport. That is why Clark (1980) observed that the school plays an important role in advancing and refining the already learnt sport skills. In the same dispensation, Iso-Ahola and Hartfield (1986) reported that the school plays an important role in reinforcing and expanding earlier patterns of sport socialization through inter-scholastic athletic programme. The influence of radio on the socialization of secondary school athletes was highest among athletes whose fathers' occupation was unskilled activities and lowest among athletes whose fathers' occupation was professional /managerial activities. This is buttressed by assertions that people in the lower class rely on the radio for information (Datta, 1984). The influence of the internet on the socialization into sport of secondary school athletes was more pronounced among athletes whose fathers' occupation was professional/ managerial and least among athletes whose fathers' occupation was unskilled. This is attributed to the fact that computers and internet in particular is not accessible to people of lower SES. Results on the influence of the newspaper and sport magazines in the socialization of secondary school athletes based on father's occupation was not significant $p > 0.05$. This is because of the newspapers and sport magazines are available in schools and are utilized by all the athletes without regard to the fathers' occupation. The above findings are supported by Mbogoh's (2003) observation that children whose parents worked in high level occupations used media more and they are able to afford a wide variety of media. Indeed, McPherson *et al* (1989) observed that age, gender, race ethnicity and social class may influence what individuals choose to pay attention to and probably the content interpretation. Possibly that is why there is no significant difference in the influence of newspapers and sport magazines on socialization into sport of athletes based on their father's occupation. As a matter of fact the school is appreciated to neutralize family influence as the athletes are subjected to equal opportunities in sport participation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study it is concluded that the majority of the athletes had their fathers' highest of education of university and mothers' education of secondary school. Most of the athletes' fathers' occupations were professional /managerial, while most of the athlete's mothers' occupational was unskilled activities. It is also apparent that gender affected the influence of mass media on socialization into sport of secondary school athletes. Parental social economic status was significant in the influence of mass media in socialization into sport of secondary school athletes in Kenya. As such the higher the educational level and occupational of the parents the greater the influence of Television and internet on socialization into sport of the athletes. On the other hand, the lower the educational level and occupation, the greater the propensity for the athletes to be influenced by radio, newspaper and sport magazines. From the above conclusions the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents need to strive to provide different forms of mass media to their off springs without regard to their social economic status.
2. In order to neutralize the effects of parental social economic status, it is important for secondary schools to provide all forms of mass media to the athletes.
3. Influence of mass media in socialization into sport was evident this study. Therefore, interschool sport organizers and the ministry of education, science and technology personnel need to ensure wide coverage of sporting events especially of secondary school level.
4. Other studies should be done to unearth how parental social economic status may negatively hamper socialization into sport of secondary school athletes.

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