

## **RELEVANCE OF COMMUNICATION TO THE OLYMPIC GAMES AND ITS IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)**

**OGUNSANYA, JEPHTAH OLANIYI (Ph.D)**

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education,  
Faculty of Specialised and Professional Education,  
Emmanuel Alayande University of Education Oyo, Oyo State  
**Email: [ogunsanyajo@eauedoyo.edu.ng](mailto:ogunsanyajo@eauedoyo.edu.ng)**

&

**RASHEED, MUTAIRU AKANDE (Ph.D)**

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education,  
Faculty of Specialised and Professional Education,  
Emmanuel Alayande University of Education Oyo, Oyo State  
**Email: [rashmutakovee2016@gmail.com](mailto:rashmutakovee2016@gmail.com)**

### **Abstract**

*This paper examined the relevance of communication to the Olympic Games and its anticipated impact on sustainable development goals (SDGs). It looks into the concept of Relevance of Communication to the Olympic Games and Sports as well as the effects of communication on Olympic Games through mass media. The concept of The Sustainable Development Goals and sports were as well considered. It also examined the impact of Olympic Games on sustainable Development Goals. It examined possible elements of communication in Olympic Games. The means of media communication in Olympic Games was also looked into while the role of media on Sustainable Development Goals was also discussed. Some useful recommendations were suggested. These include relevance of what is to be used for communication at the Olympic Games, reliability of the message and completeness of the communication to the recipient.*

**Keywords:** *Relevance, Communication, Olympic Games and Sustainable Development Goals*

### **Introduction**

Communication is as old as the first man that was created by the creator. It is in existence everywhere, every day and every time. Even it is around us. Based on this, every individual engage in 3 communications at home, in the office, school and at the sports events or arena. Without communication, human existence would have been meaningless because this would have led to communication gap which sometimes cause lack of understanding that brings about violence in sports events. Every agent of communication is essential in the sport event starting from the radio

announcer in broadcasting house to both officiating and organizing officials at the venue of competition. One of the determining factors in the success of sports is good communication among parties (athletes, coaches, spectators and stakeholders) Sofyan, Abdullah, Akinci & Osiobe (2022). Communication by a coach theoretically and practically influences athletes' performance and behaviour. Today, the world has been reduced to a global village through communication Radio can now transmit human voice across the globe within seconds, a person can telephone another person in nearly any country. Satellites have equally made communication possible through world-wide television broadcast. Viewers can sit down comfortably at home, watching various Olympic events without being present at the venue of the competition.

However, communication has different meanings to different people throughout the world. In other word, there is no uniforms definition of what communication is Communication is an act of sending message, from sender to the receiver (user) in order to effect change in receiver (user) behaviour. According to Tihamiyu (2003), communication is generally understood as the processes by which the content of message is composed, structured and transferred b senders, and subsequently received and interpreted by recipients. And, inability to comprehend communicated message can however, be of great danger before, during and after the competition, especially when officiating official could not give appropriate signal to the player on the field of play, as well as wrong application of laws of the game. The Olympic Games was revived in 1896 and Baron Pierre De- Coubertin was regarded as the father of modern Olympic Games, after it had been stopped for many years. The games are organized every four years since that time and it usually lasted for two and half weeks. The Olympic events include athletic events, weight lifting wrestling swimming, cycling, tennis, gymnastics, boxing, hockey, basketball, football, volleyball, handball, etc. The International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.) is responsible for the conduct of the game globally.

In Olympic Games, communication planning according to Moragas et al (2003) begins at least six years before, the opening ceremony and can stretch to the conception of the bid when the basic strategic elements including the image of the host city and country are defined. The essence of this long period of planning is to make adequate provision for successful and hitch free competition that would be in line with the objectives of Olympic Games. Communication is dynamic and Social media is being used more and more by everyone to connect to each other and to stay updated about the world as well promoting some of the Sustaining Development Goals (SDGs). The fact that these past Olympics were given the title the "Social Media Olympics" demonstrates how prevalent social media has become as a channel of communication. Social media helps fans to learn about athletes and acts as a form of image-enhancement for athletes, Maggie, (2013). However, the sole purpose of social media is not just image-enhancement. Athletes can use social media to communicate with their fans like never before. Social media as a new channel of communication helped to improve the Olympic experience for athletes and fans. Communication also assists the organizer of the Olympic to preach the gospel according to the promotion of good health, peace and unity before the fans on social media and among others medium of communication.

### **Relevance of Communication to the Olympic Games and Sports**

The Olympic Games and the media have had a very close and symbiotic relationship since the first Olympic Congress in Paris in 1894, serve as vehicles for the dissemination of culture, and are the main source of funding for the Olympic Movement. Relationships between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Olympic Games communication stakeholders, such as broadcasters, sponsors, and audiences, are built around an interrelated system of positive feedback. In order to achieve audience success on television, it has been seen as crucial to offer content that appeals to both male and female audiences, Emilio, (2024). Nowadays, the formation of mass communication through sports on the national or international levels has developed to a great extent by creating sports excitement and attractions (Mona, Moslem & Farshad, 2011). Communication has an agenda, setting function and it emphasis information. It also, sends information of all sorts to people and interprets them as they relate to sports; this includes radio commentaries and sports reviews.

During sports discussion on mass media, communication shapes and influences the people's perception of what is worthy of sports news and what issues should dominate the public discussion. Furthermore, it entertains, by updating knowledge through publications and programmes that are light-hearted. However, communication reflects and influences the life of the whole community globally especially the Olympics games, host and participating nation.

### **Effects of Communications on Olympic Games through Mass Media**

According to John et al (2005), the media have had a number of effects on Olympic Games, some of which have been positive. For example, the media have, performed the following:

- (1) Brought more sponsors into the Olympics games.
- (2) Awakened public interest in Olympics games so that people either play or watch games more often.
- (3) Made some sports performer rich and famous through projection.
- (4) Given sports the technology to help referees and officials control the games more easily.
- (5) Enhanced acceleration of information positively between coaches and athletes to study techniques on video and improve their performance.
- (6) As Olympic Games athletes become media personalities, they may find their private life as well as their sporting talent in the sport light. Examples of Olympic Games athletes that become media personalities includes; Michael Phelps (USA – Swimming) is one of the most decorated Olympian of all time with 28 medals (23 golds). After retirement, Phelps became a global media figure, appearing on talk shows (e.g., *The Tonight Show*, *60 Minutes*), in documentaries (*The Weight of Gold*), and as a commentator and mental health advocate in sports media. Also, **Usain Bolt of Jamaica – Athletics who was Eight-time Olympic gold medallist**, widely regarded as the fastest man alive. After retirement, Bolt became a sports media celebrity, brand ambassador, and frequent guest on global TV programs. He also appeared in commercials, documentaries, and hosts his own media projects.

But media also had a number of negative effects on Olympic Games;

- (1) Sports like football and track events get wide coverage, while others find it hard to get coverage in the media, and minor Olympic games find it hard to attract sponsorship e.g. Gymnastics.
- (2) Live television coverage often means smaller crowds at the venue of event which may reduce the income to be generated from the gate fees, because people may prefer to watch the game from the comfort of their home.

### **The Sustainable Development Goals and Sports**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global call to action to end poverty, protect the earth's environment and climate, and ensure that people everywhere can enjoy peace and prosperity, Olagoke, (2017). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been described as 'a plan of action for people, in the universe for prosperity and transformative steps which are urgently needed to change the world into a sustainable and resilient path. According to UN General Assembly, (2015), the 2030 Agenda is based on extensive consultation and negotiation that has been led by member states, facilitated by the United Nations, and has involved broad participation from major development groups, civil society stakeholders, the private sector, academia, the media and individual citizens. Meeting this plan are 17 Sustainable Development Goals that are 'integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental'.

Sport can be of assistance to promote nations efforts and activities to achieve Sustainable Development Goals in a very non abstract ways. Its goals reach and universality makes a sport a low cost, high impact tool to support all countries irrespective of their size and financial status working towards the Sustainable Development Goals, Commonwealth (2015).

The cross-cutting nature of sport makes it to address most of the goals at once. Six (SDGs) were identified as areas where sport approaches could make effective and cost-efficient contributions towards achieving the Goals:

Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all, at all ages

Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

### **Impact of Olympic Games on Sustainable Development Goals**

1. It will facilitate cultural exchange both within and outside Nigeria towards realization of Sustainable Development Goals Nigeria.
2. Improvement and development of new techniques of various sports and Games which will prepare Nigeria athlete for global contests towards realization of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria.

3. Development of bilateral and multilateral agreements.
4. Fostering unity with the nations of the world in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria.

### **Possible Elements of Communication in Olympic Games**

A lot of definitions as regard communication have been propounded. From the researcher's observation, some basic factors have been constant in almost all the definitions. There is no gainsaying that communication is a process or a system that puts into action and reaction all the element involved. These elements which are vital to communication, are source, receiver, message, and channel.

- (a) **Source:** This is the initiator of the message or information to be given out. It comprises of individual, an organisation or an institution. In Olympic Games the source could be international Olympic Committee (IOC), officiating officials, athlete or player, spectators and broadcasting organisation, as well as local organizing committee (LOC).
- (b) **Message:** This is a set of stimuli sent out by the source. They can be in form of verbal and non-verbal stimuli. It includes signals, words of mouth, symbols, gesticulations, body movements and so on. The Olympic mascot and the symbol (or logo), the referee's whistle and cards, assistant Referees Flags, posters all combined to form an overall look for the Olympic games.
- (c) **Receiver:** This is the decoder and the recipient of the message. Thus, not until the receiver behaves or reacts negatively or positively to the message through the feedback that communication is said to have taken place. The receiver from observation is perhaps the most vital in communication process. This could be athletes or players, spectators, viewers at home, organizer and officials
- (d) **Channel:** This is the carrier of the message. In other words, a channel is the means by which a message is passed to the receiver. Channel could be interpersonal channel in human communication process which involves face to face exchange of message between the source and the receiver, for example, officiating official to players, and organizing official to officiating officials. Another channel of communication in Olympic Games is the media, which plays significant role in coverage of Olympic Games events. And this now leads us to the means of media communication in Olympic Games.

### **Means of Media Communication in Olympic Games**

It had been discovered that media, be it print or electronic, play relevant roles in the development of Olympic Games.

#### **Print media** (such as posters, books, magazines, periodic and handbills)

At least, six months before the inauguration, print media (especially newspaper) would have sensitized the world about the organizing nation in respect of its political identity, economy status, security position and other parameter that would make the participating countries to prepare their contingent either to take part or not in the Olympic games.

### **Electronic Media - (Radio and Television)**

The electronic media makes it possible the sending of the Olympic events images and sound in perfect conditions. Both radio and television made it possible to have live broadcast and coverage of events at the Olympic game. The importance that the Olympic Games have acquired and their universal dimension would be incomprehensible without television.

Within the general framework of the electronic media, television has made it possible to send images of the Games all over the world, at the same time from where the events are taking place. Technological advances, on the other hand, have enabled a substantial improvement of quality increasing, at the same time, the amount of live information.

**Social Media:** During the 2016 Olympic, social media really came to prominence and organizational communication gained in significance as they became an indispensable communication channel providing organizations with their own voice (Litchfield and Kavanagh, 2019). Some hoped that the open online space would challenge male hegemony in sports coverage (Bruce, 2013; LaVoi et al., 2019). Together with traditional media, social media provide an important source of information and reference points for its audience (Grabmüllerová, 2022). This indicates that understanding the needs for media-intensive sports events like the Olympic requires knowledge of the processes by which media texts are formed, as well as the reasons why they are constructed in specific ways of communication.

### **The Roles of Media on Sustainable Development Goals**

The media plays a vital role in raising awareness about sustainable development goals (SDGs) and their potential impact on our planet. Through various forms of media, including television, radio, print, and social media, the media can inform, educate and engage the public on issues related to sustainable development. Wole –Abu, (2018), opined there are many authors have written on SDGs from different perspectives in educating and sensitizing the general public on the realization of the global goals by 2030 which mass media has been saddled with responsibility of playing a wide and significant role in achieving this. Many studies have also indicated that television, radio, print media and digital media are also effectively popularising the SDGs by reaching a wide range of masses.

**Social Media:** Due to the widespread use of social media, authorities are engaging the public on this topic through Facebook and Twitter, as a means of increasing awareness and understanding. For example, Darsano et al. examined students' awareness of the SDGs and found that, in Kenya, the adoption and promotion of social media was a useful awareness-raising tool (Darsono et al., 2019).

**Traditional Media:** Newspapers, television and radio have long played a substantial role in disseminating information. For example, a study by Dahal et al. on media coverage on environmental sustainability and gender equality in one of Nepal's leading daily newspapers showed that television programs and newspaper articles raised such issues (Dahal & Aram, 2015).

**Digital Media:** Digital media is becoming ubiquitous in disseminating and delivering content related to the SDGs. A report from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020) informs that social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram continue to be a vehicle for mobilising young people and forming online communities committed on sustainable development.

### **Conclusion**

Communication played significant role in the 2012 'London' Olympics Games as most of the events were communicated to the audience either at home or venue of the Olympics Games through mass media that made live broadcast and coverage possible.

Communication has a lot of positive effects over its negative consequences, in the last Olympic game, for instance, it has a positive effect on almost every facet of human development. It is hard to believe that there is no aspect of events involved in Olympics Games today that communication has not addressed, most especially on (SDGs) that Olympic promoted.

### **Recommendations**

In Olympics Games what is to be communicated must be relevant to the problem being considered. Because of the nature of the event relevant information which increases knowledge, reduces uncertainty and is usable for the intended purpose should be opted for. This indicates that message for a particular purpose might not serve the function of information for another purpose. When there is information on the changing rules guiding Olympics Games, then participating country should not be kept in the dark.

Verifiability should also be watch word when message or information is to be communicated at the Olympics Games. For any information or material or symbol or logo to be fully relied upon and for decision making it must be subjected to some test of reliability. This also affects the confidences of the recipient, thus the actions generate through this should always lead to the same result when repeated.

Finally, all the information needed for communication should be available. It should totally convey an entire idea, that is, it must concern all aspects of the subject matter. It must contain appropriate details for the user. In essence it must be adequate for taking effective control, action and decision as well as for providing valuable details needed for an improved sports environment.

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