

Impact of Sports Caricature in Building a Public Opinion towards Sports Issues in Egypt

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Abstract

This paper aims at finding out if sport caricature plays a role in affecting the public opinion or not. This is measured through some sport caricatures that describe some sport issues. Some researchers have reached the conclusion that caricatures affect the public opinion socially and politically. Generally, caricatures are very helpful when describing complicated issues as they make it easier for people to understand what is going on around them. To address the research questions, the researcher conducted a survey. It included eight caricatures representing eight general sport issues. A total of 253 participants (56.2%) completed the whole survey. The main technique for obtaining qualitative information was a semi-structured depth-interview with open questions on various issues related to sport caricatures. A total of 13 interviews were conducted. The researchers made another interview with a selected a group of participants who are interested in sport caricature and were willing to participate in the research voluntarily. The majority of the respondents found sport caricatures very expressive of the sport issues they represented and found them the most important issues at the Egyptian sport field recently. It was also found out that sports caricatures have a great impact upon the public opinion.

Key Words

Sport caricatures, sport cartoons, public opinion, communication, political cartoons.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the role played by sport cartoons in affecting the public opinion through highlighting some sport caricatures that depict some sport issues and problems. Significantly, the review of literature describes

that there is limited research on the role of sport cartoons in shaping and forming public opinion. So, this study will fill the gap of the literature.

Different researchers consider cartoons important for building and reflecting the public opinion on the social

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issues (Everette, 1974; Vinson, 1967; Caswell, 2004). They are seen as “both opinion-molding and opinion-reflecting” (Caswell, 2004, p. 14). Besides, cartoons are used as frameworks to examine the political life of nations (DeSousa & Medhurst, 1982). Cartoons describe the complicated events and issues in an easy way which makes it understandable for educated and non- educated people in the nations (Abraham, 2009)

According to Coupe (1969), “like all the journalists, the cartoonist is concerned with the creation and manipulation of public opinion” (p.82) because cartoon is used to express opinions of public (Ashfaq, 2008). Recently, Abraham (2009) acknowledged that cartoon communication is used for government propaganda, public catharsis; therefore cartoon research has been given a great attention as it is a powerful medium for communication.

Other scholars have shared the same view that cartoons are considered social and political commentary (Pieper & Clear, 1995) and provide a safe avenue for

expressing opinions (Conners, 1995). The main aim of cartoons is to influence readers in different ways. Caswell (2004, p. 15) sees cartoons as “rhetorical devices, persuasive communication analogous to print editorials and op-ed columns that are intended to influence readers.” The cartoonist or caricaturist as an image constructor has the goal of purposefully condensing often very complex meanings “into a single configuration, a striking image” (Streicher, 1967, p. 434). Within a much abbreviated amount of space, they interpret nations, figures and events (Streicher, p. 438).

Editorial cartoons occupy a very small portion of an editorial page. Through them, complex events and issues are easily interpreted (Coupe, 1969; Williams, 1997). DeSousa and Medhurst (1982) identify four main functions of editorial cartoons: an entertainment function, as it makes people laugh at the situations it embodies; the function of reducing aggression, as it reduces people’s anger and an aggression against leaders in the nations; an agenda- setting function, through providing

readers with a sense of the most salient issues and topics in society; and a framing function, the product of its spatial limitation and therefore its need to distill complex social issues into a single frame that captures the essence of an issue.

Most of the studies on political cartoons aimed to highlight the functions and nature of political cartoons. For instance, Streicher (1967) investigated the role of political cartoons in relation of public opinions during impeachment trial proceedings of American President Clinton regarding Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr affair. Similarly, Baldry and Thibault (2006) studied political cartoons as a major representor of the public opinion. Morris (1992) also used the structuralist approach to investigate political cartoons as a tool of visual rhetoric in the democratic process. In addition to this, Delporte (1995) investigated cartoons ridiculing the Dreyfus affair of French President during the period 1894-1906. Likewise, Feldman (1995) analysed the content of political cartoons on the basis of symbolic themes regarding portrayal of six

Japanese prime ministers. Moreover, Seymour-Ure (2001) predicted that cartoons will be always influential medium in British society.

Cartoons Sporting-themed cartoons were rare before 1820. But in the years between 1820 and 1860, they accounted for almost 15% of all political cartoons. These 'sporting political cartoons' likened political events to any one of a constellation of games and sports.

In the 1890s, cartoons started to appear side by side with sporting events presenting visual details about athletes, managers, trainers, and fans. It is not exactly known when caricature took the accurate form of 'Sport Cartoon'. Sports themes have long been intermixed with other genres. In the mid- 1800s, American editorial cartoonists started to use sport cartons to describe Presidential elections in in an indirect way through sport caricature ts, including "a horse or foot race, a boxing match, a game of brag (an early version of poker), pool or bagatelle, a cock fight, hunting, fishing, a bull fight, or (by 1800) a baseball game." By the later nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries, there was an overlap between sports cartoons and other general terms such as "editorial," "gag," and "domestic." Finally, a cartoon's placement in the sports section did not necessarily determine its content (Sports Cartoons in Context: TAD Dorgan and Multi-Genre Cartooning in Early Twentieth-Century Newspapers, McCrory, 2008)

To conclude, the cartoons in general work as platform for a multidirectional object-driven analysis that draws from 'traditional' textual sources as much as the images. Newspaper Sport Cartoons were of the first media products that carried different meanings, i.e., interpretive, symbolic, and condensed meanings around sport. (Making Fun of Sport: James Fitzmaurice, Robert Ripley, and the Art of Sport Cartooning in Vancouver, 1907-1918, ROBIN ANDERSON)

Research model and hypothesis:

Based on the preceding review, the research model and its hypothesis are shown in Fig. 1. In general, sport caricatures are useful to form the public

opinion. The hypothesized relationship is discussed in the following section.

Sport Caricatures and the public opinion:

It was observed that 75% of selected Pakistani respondents believe that cartoons have become an integral part of the newspapers. The importance of political cartoon communication throughout the world cannot be denied as 69% respondents think that political cartooning is an effective way of communication (see table 1). It is a light way of communication through which the harshest message can be conveyed in a very mild tone that people don't get frustrated. As Koetzle and Brunell(1996) stated that "editorial cartoons are oriented towards extreme interpretations of campaign events, they are free to discuss, investigate and lampoon topics that are... generally left untouched by the media at large" (p. 96).Cartoon communication is considered as the 'bomb throwers'(Javed, 1998) and portrait of anti-portrait'(Saeed, 2003).Political cartoons also influence the pre-existing image on the readers' mind as 67% people feel that

cartoons can play an important role in building their opinions and pre-existing images of any issue or personality (Ashfaq, 2013)

According to Sani et al., (2012), cartoons are used to accomplish communicative tasks in Nigerian print media and the cartoons are creatively used to set agenda thereby providing political commentary and debate in witty and artful fashion through which social realities are mirrored in the nation's wider socio-political arena. Therefore, their study has shown that the cartoon in general forms a formidable medium of communication through which the media set social agenda by attaching relevance to importance of issues and events through recurrent coverage aimed at shaping the people's understanding of the issues to bring positive change in society. Thus, Nigerian political cartoons serve as agent of setting social agenda used by the media specifically to build up public attention, reorient people and initiate social and political reforms in Nigeria. However, this paper posits that the political cartoons constitute a potent

multimodal genre comprising linguistic and non-linguistic devices to convey meaningful messages; this requires more theoretical input to make the genre more comprehensible to the reading public. Thus, the authors propose the following hypotheses:

H1. Sport Caricatures have an impact upon the public opinion.

Methods

The research was conducted in the period between the 1st of November and the 15th of December, 2013. The current research focused on sport caricatures because most of the previous researches have focused on political cartoons and their influence upon the public opinion, without shedding the light on sport caricatures except very few researches.

The main ideas of the questions in the survey were borrowed from Ayesha (2013) questionnaire relating to the role that political cartoons play in building a public opinion. Other researches were of great use for forming the questions of the survey such as Abraham (2009). All the questions borrowed from other previous researches were edited to adapt

the issue of the current research. Other statements were added by the researcher himself.

To address the research questions, the researcher conducted a survey. It consists of two parts: To ensure accuracy in data collection, the first part put a filtering question at the beginning of the questionnaire. It asks the user whether he/she is interested in sport caricatures or not. In case the answer is "Yes", the user continues the questionnaire and

sees the rest of the items. If the answer is "No", the user was thanked and the survey discontinues. The researcher thus ensures that all the responses are from participants who are interested in sport caricatures so the answers to the questionnaire are honest. After the application of this procedure, the number of correct responses appropriate to the nature of study illustrated in table (1) as follows:

Table (1)
The number of correct responses appropriate to the nature of study

Statement	Number
Total number of responses	450
Number of users who are not interested in sport caricatures.	197
Number of users who are interested in sport caricatures.	253
Net number of net correct responses appropriate to the study nature	253

In the second part, the sport caricatures were put at the beginning of the survey to ask whether the respondents found each of these sport caricatures expressive of the issue it represented or not and whether these problems represent that latest issues in Egyptian Sport or not.

The eight caricatures represented eight general sport issues. The first sport caricature represents the issue of the repetitive failure from the side of The Egyptian Football Union to plan for the qualification of the Egyptian team to the World Cup; the second issue represents the crowds' attack during the

football match and assaulting the players; the third issue represents the high fanaticism between the ultras of the different Egyptian clubs; the fourth issue represents the pausing of the sport activity in Egypt and having irregular sport competitions; the fifth issue represents the disagreement between the Egyptian clubs around selling the rights of broadcasting their matches either individually or in groups; the sixth issue represents the impact of the conflict between the Egyptian Ministry of Sport and the Egyptian Olympic Committee upon the Egyptian sport; the seventh issue represents the difficulties that the Egyptian clubs put in front of the professionalism of its promising players abroad; the eighth issue represents the bad negative influences of indulging the Egyptian sport in the political conflicts.

The research model has two constructs, each having items that are gauged by Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). Eight questions measured the public opinion using 5- point Likert - type scales. The Sport caricatures measure included 5 questions with the five-point Likert-type scales used for each item.

A positivist research philosophy was utilized with a quantitative approach to

validate the research proposed framework. An online survey was constructed using Qualtrics.com, with measures for the variables tested. A link of the online survey was sent by e-mail and through Facebook social groups, relating to different Universities in different countries, to 450 students and others interested in sport activities at all the different governorates in Egypt which brought a various sample. A total of 253 participants (56.2%) completed the survey.

The main technique for obtaining qualitative information was a semi-structured depth-interview with open questions on various issues related to sport caricatures. A total of 13 interviews were conducted. Data collection was stopped after theoretical saturation seemed to have been reached; that is, new insights into the phenomena being examined were no longer gained. We chose interviewees to represent various types of actors in sport caricatures, who would have an adequate knowledge of quality and environmental issues in this industry. We guaranteed data confidentiality and the informants' anonymity in order to enhance trust and reduce the chance that interviewees might try to play the role of 'good subjects' by telling interviewers what they thought

they wanted to hear. Interviews were performed at the place where interviewees worked. Interviews lasted approximately 2 h on average. Two co-authors recorded the interviews and took notes. Interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed verbatim. Interview transcripts were checked for accuracy by the interviewees. The questions were linked to the relationship between the variables analysed in this paper.

The researchers made another interview with a selected a group of participants who are interested in sport caricature and were willing to participate in the research voluntarily.

Results:

Most of the respondents found sport caricatures very expressive of the sport issues they represented and found them the most important issues at the Egyptian sport field recently as shown in table (2):

Table (2) Effectivity of Sport Caricature

Title of Caricature	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Caricature	It expresses the issue of the repeated failure of the Egyptian Football Union to plan for the rise of the National team to the World Cup.	59.5%	%٣٤.٥	%٣.٢	%٢.٤	%٠.٤
	This caricature makes me feel that this issue is one of the sports issues that have the most masses recently.	%٥١.٢	%٤٢.٠	%٥.٢	%١.٦	%٠
Second Caricature	This caricature expresses the issue of the masses breaking in the football playground during the matches.	%٤٧.٦	%٣٦.١	%٧.١	%٦.٠	%٣.٢

Follow Table (2) Effectivity of Sport Caricature

Title of Caricature	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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	This caricature makes me feel that this issue is one of the sports issues that have the most masses recently .	%٤٧.٢	%٣٦.٩	%٨.٧	%٥.٦	%١.٦
Third Caricature	This caricature expresses the issue of the increasing fanaticism between the ultras of the Egyptian clubs.	%٧٥.٠	%١٨.٣	%٤.٤	%١.٢	%١.١
	This caricature makes me feel that this issue is one of the sports issues that have the most masses recently.	%٦٢.٧	%٢٨.٢	%٧.١	%٢.٠	%٠
Fourth Caricature	This caricature expresses the issue of pausing the sporting activity and the irregularity of the sports competitions in Egypt.	%٤٤.٨	%٣٣.٣	%١٠.٣	%١.٠	%١.٦
	This caricature makes me feel that this issue is one of the sports issues that have the most masses recently .	%٣٨.٩	%٣١.٧	%١٧.٥	%١٠.٣	%١.٦
Fifth Caricature	This caricature expresses the issue of the disagreement between the sports clubs around selling the broadcasting rights of their matches.	%٥٣.٢	%٣١.٣	%١٠.٣	%٤.٤	%٠.٨

Follow Table (2) Effectivity of Sport Caricature

Title of	Statements	Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
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Caricature		Agree				Disagree
	This caricature makes me feel that this issue is one of the sports issues that have the most masses recently .	%٤٣.٠	%٢٩.٠	%١٦.٢	%١٠.٢	%١.٦
Sixth Caricature	This caricature expresses the pressure practiced upon sport as a result of the conflict between the Ministry of Sport and the Olympic Committee.	%٥٤.٨	%٢٩.٨	%١١.٠	%٤.٠	%٠.٤
	This caricature makes me feel that this issue is one of the sports issues that have the most masses recently.	%٤١.٣	%٢٨.٢	%١٩.٨	%٩.٥	%١.٢
Seventh Caricature	This caricature expresses the obstacles that face the promising players from the side of the Egyptian clubs when they think about outside professionalism.	%٦٤.٤	%٢٥.٩	%٦.٠	%٣.٢	%٠.٥
	This caricature makes me feel that this issue is one of the sports issues that have the most masses recently .	%٥٠.٠	%٢٥.٨	%١٦.٣	%٧.٥	%٠.٤

Follow Table (2) Effectivity of Sport Caricature

Title of Caricature	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Eighth Caricature	This caricature expresses the negative and dangerous impacts upon sport as a result of mixing politics with the Egyptian sport.	78.7%	20.6%	0.2%	0.6%	0%
	This caricature makes me feel that this issue is one of the sports issues that have the most masses recently .	67.3%	29.0%	8.0%	7.3%	0.4%

To test the proposed theoretical model, the study employed the warp PLS 3.0 technique, which works in a similar manner for other programs such as LISREL or EQS but is more appropriate with small samples (Camisón and López, 2010). The two stages in which to apply PLS are measurement and structural model.

Measurement model

The first step in evaluating a research model is to present the measurement model results to examine the indicator reliability internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity Hair et al. (2011). A measurement model is used to evaluate individual, construct reliability, convergent and discriminant

validity to discover the extent to which the measures have adequate internal consistency (Table 1). Factor loadings were used to assess individual reliability. We followed Hair et al. (2010) recommendation that factor loadings should be equal to or above 0.50. All the factor loadings were above the minimum value required. These loadings are significant (p < 0.001). As shown in Table 1, Cronbach’s alpha for all measures exceed the recommended threshold value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011). Therefore, all measures are robust in terms of their reliability. Henseler et al. (2009) pointed out that composite reliability is more suitable for PLS-SEM. In our study the composite reliabilities range from 0.850 to 0.886, which are above the

0.70 cut-off (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

To assess convergent validity, according to Fornell and Larcker(1981), AVE was calculated for each constructs in our proposed model (see Table 3). Since all construct's AVE are above the 0.50cut-off, therefore, the results support convergent validity. Discriminant validity is considered in two steps. First, the For-nell and Larcker criterion is used to test whether the square root of a construct's AVE is higher than the correlations between it and any

other construct within the model. As shown in Table 5, each construct shares more variance with its own block of indicators than with another latent variable. Second, the factor loading of an item on its associated construct should be greater than the loading of another non-construct item on that construct. The results presented in Table 5, indicate that all indicators loaded on their own construct more highly than on any other, supporting that the constructs are distinct.

**Table (3)
Factor loadings, reliability and convergent validity.**

Construct/ Indicators	Indicator Loadings	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
S Caricature		0.850	0.777	0.538
s caric1	0.192			
s caric2	0.270			
s caric3	0.311			
s caric4	0.300			
s caric5	0.276			
P Opinion		0.886	0.852	0.501
p opin1	0.160			
p opin2	0.185			
p opin3	0.172			
p opin4	0.197			
p opin5	0.165			
p opin6	0.171			
p opin7	0.172			
p opin8	0.198			

Table (4)
Correlations among I .vs. with Square Roots of AVEs

Construct	S Caric.	O Opini
S Caric.	0.733	0.536
P Opini	0.536	0.703

Table (5)
Loadings and cross-loadings of measurement items

Items	S Caric	P Opin	P value
s caic1	0.515	-0.069	<0.001
s cari2	0.724	-0.036	<0.001
s caric3	0.836	0.061	<0.001
s caric4	0.806	0.048	<0.001
s caric5	0.743	0.100	<0.001
p opin1	-0.295	0.631	<0.001
p opin2	-0.024	0.732	<0.001
p opin3	-0.012	0.679	<0.001
p opin4	0.032	0.779	<0.001
p opin5	0.209	0.650	<0.001
p opin6	-0.114	0.675	<0.001
p opin7	0.106	0.678	<0.001
p opin8	-0.090	0.782	<0.001

Structural model assessment

Since the measurement model evaluation provided evidence of reliability and validity, the structural model was examined to evaluate the hypothesized relationships among the constructs in the research model (Hair et al., 2013)

As shown in Fig. 1a, the model explains 31% of variance for public opinion. To test the Hypothesis, we tested the structural equation model in

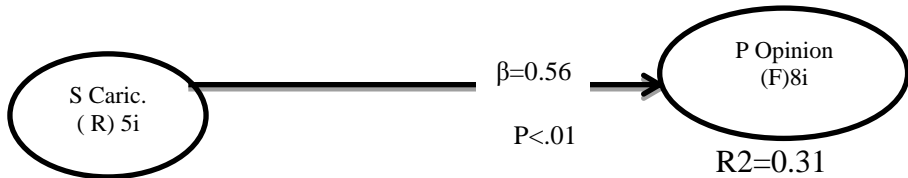
Fig. 1a. The results show that hypothesized relationship is supported. Coefficient between Sport caricatures and Public Opinion is significant ($\beta = 0.56, p < 0.001$), thus supporting the Hypothesis.

Furthermore, Cohen (1988) effect size f^2 defined as “the degree to which the phenomenon is present in the population” was used to further examine the substantive effect of the research model. Cohen

(1988) suggested 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 as operational definitions of small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. Thus, our model suggested that both Sport Caricature ($f^2 = 0.441$) and Public opinion have a large effect size.

The study tests the predictive validity of the structural model following the Stone–Geisser Q^2 . According

to Roldán and Sánchez-Franco (2012), in order to examine the predictive validity of the research model, the cross-validated construct redundancy Q^2 is necessary. A Q^2 greater than 0 implies that the model has predictive validity. In the main PLS model, Q^2 is 0.311 for Sports Caricatures that is positive and hence satisfies this condition



Discussion

The aim of this study was to propose and empirically tests a model to examine whether sport caricature influences the public opinion. The findings of this study acknowledge that Sport caricature plays an important role in building the public opinion. Cartoons are considered vital for forming a public opinion on different social issues from the view of different researchers (Everette, 1974; Vinson, 1967; Abraham, 2009). Besides, they are also considered “both opinion-moulding and opinion-

reflecting” (Caswell, 2004, p. 14). According to DeSousa & Medhurst (1982), cartoons are a good way through which the political lives of nations can be examined. Cartoons have the power to orient the public’s understanding of social issues through their limited space (Abraham, 2009)

Researches in Sport Caricature are very limited. Most of the researches related to caricature (cartoon) measure the influence of political caricature on public opinion and communication, which was a great drive for the idea of this

research to measure the influence of sport caricature on building the public opinion. According to Ashfaq & Bin Hussein (2013), it was observed that 75% of selected Pakistani respondents believe that cartoons have become an important part in the newspapers. They found out that 69% of the respondents think that political cartooning is an effective way of communication. It was found to be an easy way of conveying the most difficult messages in an easy way that would make people entertain it.

One other important finding of their paper is that they reached the conclusion that 67% of the selected respondents confessed that political cartoons are important for establishing their opinions and images of any particular issue. On the other hand, some people view that cartoon doesn't constitute any important role in their life in particular or in the whole society in general because. They claim that it addresses only those who are educated and who can understand well the message that these cartoons convey because of the captions and the inner dialogues that

they contain. The captions are a good reason for negating the impact of cartoon on the majority of Pakistani people. (Ashfaq 2013). However, Javed Iqbal (cartoonist) commented that the caption is a necessity for any cartoon because it helps readers to understand the cartoon in the right way that the cartoonist means. At the same time, he adds that the caption should be short so as not to make the cartoon lose its interest.

(Personal Communication, April, 2012). Javed Iqbal (cartoonist) confirms that cartoons are the source of forming the public opinion and that cartoon should be a source of education. Because cartoons are made according to people's interest, so most of it are usually on the politics and personality oriented. (Ayesha Ashfaq, Political cartoonists versus reader, 2013)

Sani et al., (2012) reached the conclusion that cartoon is simply an important means communication through which the media set social agenda by attaching relevance to importance of issues and events through recurrent coverage aimed at shaping the

people's understanding of the issues to bring positive change in society. According to their findings, Nigerian political cartoons are important for building up the public attention; therefore it has initiated a political reform in Nigeria. The most important problem faced when analysing political cartoons is attributed to the lack of definite supportive theories (Wigstont, 2002). Thus, this paper offers theoretical insight through the use of agenda setting theory to provide a better understanding of how political cartoons are used to describe the most arguing issues in society.

Generally, given that the cartoons are communicative and social artefacts, future studies should also focus on the feasibility of sports cartoons towards understanding a particular social phenomenon and how they can be harnessed to build and shape public opinion.

Afifi (2010) conclusion corresponds with mine in this paper. He concluded that caricature has clarified that sport, as a social regime, has acquired an extra strength and importance; which increased the interest of the public

opinion to the extent that it exceeded other social and cultural events such as the Annual Opening of the International Book Fair. He extracted also that the sport caricature has confirmed that the regional sport event has controlled the public opinion which margined the regional political events.

Finally, findings from my study imply that sport cartoon plays a critical role on the public opinion. The persons who are interested in sport caricature confirmed that they build their opinions in different sport issues through the sport caricatures they see in the newspapers every day.

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