

Promoting Equality Through Sports: The Paralympic Games and Their Role in Social Change

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Abstract:

Sports have been part of the social equality-building process for a long time; the Paralympic Games are certainly one of the most powerful inclusive and diverse symbols. The present research will discuss the role played by the Paralympic Games in social change, mainly challenging stereotypes about disability, promoting integration, and social narratives that give a positive representation; the idea is to study these games in the context of deconstructing societal barriers and increased representation of the disabled sector and inspiring reform in legislation and policies that facilitate equality. A study will consist of interviews from Para – athletes and surveys for public perception. Data will be collected from key sporting events between 2012 and 2024, focusing on representations of athletes with disabilities and their societal impact. The theoretical framework draws on social identity theory and agenda-setting theory, emphasizing media's role in shaping public attitudes.

Findings indicate that the Paralympic Games significantly impact public perceptions, leading to more visibility of athletes with disabilities and greater acceptance by society. Media narratives that shift the focus from disability to athletic performance redefine cultural norms and encourage legislative change that promotes equal rights. Stereotypes and underrepresentation in mainstream media, however, persist. The Paralympic Games are thus a strong agent of social change. They redefine social attitudes about disability and foster equity by promoting inclusive practices in education, sport, and employment. This study contributes to the literature on sports and social justice by underscoring the capacity of mega-sporting events to be a catalyst for meaningful, lasting social transformation.

Keywords: Paralympic Games, social change, equality, disability representation, sports and inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

The Paralympic Games are an international multi-sport event for athletes with physical, visual, and intellectual impairments. It is organized by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and occurs every four years immediately after the Olympic Games in the same host city. The Paralympics demonstrate the best sporting performance, improving social life, accessibility, and respect for those with disabilities. The role of the Paralympic Games in social change refers to their impact on attitudes, policies, and opportunities toward people with disabilities. The Games challenge stereotypes, advocate equal rights, and inspire changes in accessibility, employment, and education. Highlighting the victories of athletes with disabilities, therefore, promotes better social inclusion; it influences pro-disability-friendly policies and supports the creation of a more hospitable society.

Parasports, or disability sports, have grown over the past century from simple recreational activities into major international sporting events. There are three groups that parasports serve: deaf athletes, physically disabled athletes, and intellectually disabled athletes. Each of these groups has its own organizations and approaches, Brittain, I. (2016).

Parasport history dates back to the 1920s. In 1924, the first major international event for deaf athletes - the 'Paris Silent Games' - was held. These games later became what we now know as the Deaflympics. However, the modern Paralympic movement really took shape through the work of Dr. Ludwig Guttmann, a German neurologist. He organized the Stoke Mandeville Games in 1948, timing it to coincide with the Olympics of London, being the first competitive sporting event held specifically for athletes who used wheelchairs.

As parasports have grown in prominence, they've attracted increasing research interest, particularly regarding how to develop elite athletes with disabilities. Research shows that successful athlete development requires coordinated effort from many different organizations and stakeholders. While there's been extensive research on developing elite athletes in general sports, there's been relatively little focus on parasports specifically.

The Paralympic Games have grown to become the second largest multi-sport event globally. Over 4,300 athletes participated in the 2016 Rio Paralympics from 158 countries, thus illustrating how much the movement has grown, Gilbert, K., Schantz, et al (2008). Paralympic athletes are like other non-disabled athletes; however, their development needs take into account further social-cultural factors and contextual challenges.

On the other hand, disability sports remain with visibility and representation issues. People with disabilities face physical and social barriers, which restrict them from public life and decision-making. According to the World Health Organization, negative perceptions and stereotypes are reinforced when there is less media coverage on disability issues. The Paralympic Games have, over the years, become an important platform for promoting inclusion and highlighting the achievements of athletes with disabilities. Their coverage, however, still lags behind that of non-disabled sports.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Media Coverage of Disability Sport and the Paralympics

From a review of existing research related to the representation of disability sports in the media, it can be concluded that, except in very few cases, the portrayal and visibility of people with disabilities remain quite sparse. This situation further emphasizes the idea that disability sports represent a media 'blind spot', Morlandstø and Mathisen (2022). The media's lack of comprehension regarding disability matters is not confined to disability sports but encompasses disability issues as a whole. Despite a growing interest in media and sports, along with an increase in studies about media and the Olympics in recent years, disability has remained "nearly absent in the mainstream of this research" for a long time, Goggin and Newell (2000).

However, the relationship between disability and mass media has gradually become a crucial issue in the contemporary world, and therefore, research and writings on disability have expanded across multiple academic disciplines, Ellis and Goggin (2015). As awareness of disability increases, research has shifted from traditional media studies to more multidisciplinary approaches that allow for a better understanding of the nature of disability and its portrayal within the sports media landscape.

According to the authors who are numerous, another significant discovery is the unwillingness of sports media platforms to challenge ableist rhetoric in reporting disability and disability sports events, often associated with perceptions of lower ability and performance Pullen et al. (2018), as well as what is popularly called the 'supercrip' narrative, that celebrates heroic overcoming of barriers due to disability, McGillivray et al., (2021). However, while this is the dominant opinion, media coverage of athletes with disabilities is shifting from traditional to more progressive representations, Schantz and Gilbert (2008).

According to Pate and Hardin (2013), progressive coverage, which focuses on abilities and athletic achievements rather than disabilities and the triumph over challenges, is the best media practice in reporting on the Paralympics and other disability sports events, just like reporting standards applied to able-bodied sports. Unlike other sporting contests, the Paralympics uniquely stands out as a mega-event that garners increasing media attention and plays an important socio-cultural role in showcasing athletes with disabilities who challenge stereotypes and ultimately shift public perceptions of disability, Kolotouchkina et al. (2020). As a result, the impressive and highly publicized achievements of Paralympic athletes are intertwined in national identity narratives, Bruce (2014), where the enhanced capabilities of individuals with disabilities have come to be socially embraced and politically honoured as symbols of inclusion and integration, Howe (2008).

London 2012 Games constituted "a watershed moment in the sport of Paralympics broadcasting" Bradshaw and Minogue (2019), with two main factors being the level of media interest for the first time and Channel 4, as the designated broadcaster, investing time and energy to promote both the event itself and its prominent representatives. This coverage put disability sports onto the mainstream radar, altered the public view regarding Paralympic athletes, and boosted the profile of the Games as the elite sporting show by attaining a high reach of audience through a considerable jump of 400% compared with the Beijing 2008 Paralympics and demonstrated the commercial feasibility for the first time Pullen

et al. (2022). The persistence of condescending narratives and stereotypes Bruce (2014), Cherney et al. (2015) shape representations of athletes with an impairment, which, to a certain extent, seem to remain biased and anchored in stigma Kolotouchkina et al. (2021).

Best reporting practices on the Paralympics in contrast to the prolonged invisibility and stereotyping of athletes with disabilities, recent Paralympics have offered excellent examples of news outlets providing respectful media coverage that represent Paralympians as athletes first Page et al. (2022). In addition to the aforementioned broadcast approach of Channel 4 in Great Britain, a remnant of the heritage of the Rio Paralympics remains through Globoesporte.com; the most visited website of sports-related information in Brazil contains an exclusively news on the sport portion concerning Paralympic, Menezes dos Santos et al. (2022).

Similarly, with funding from the Spanish Paralympic Committee, the Spanish sports daily Marca has significantly expanded its coverage of Paralympic sports and athletes since London 2012 and currently publishes articles and interviews daily (Solves et al., 2019). Japanese public television network NHK offered innovative coverage of the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, including a newscast with three anchors with various forms of disability, both before and during the competition. In order to entertain viewers and educate them about the specifics of each para-sport, this company also created an animated program that features well-known and anonymous Japanese para-athletes from 11 different Paralympic sports categories with anime-style plots (Kolotouchkina et al., 2021).

NHK is a good example of how a PSM corporation may effectively contribute to ensure diversity and promote cultural citizenship through the coverage of underrepresented sports and athletes with disabilities, Rojas-Torrijos & Ramon (2021). Media Representations of Paralympics Athletes Medicalized discourses of disability in Paralympic media coverage are representative of the historical roots of the Paralympic Games. The development of the Paralympic Games by able-bodied medical professionals and sport administrators has had lasting consequences for the coverage of Paralympic sport by the media, Howe (2008) a for more on the history of the Paralympic Games).

Medicalized discourses of disability perpetuate ableist norms as research has determined apparent in the lexicon, pictorial, and spatial presentation of content media have used to represent Paralympic athletes, Silva & Howe (2012).

Media present Paralympic athletes who are most often portrayed through the lens of the supercrip, Cherney & Lindemann, (2019); Pullen et al., (2018); Silva & Howe, (2012). Such a representation of supercrip narrative allows for the reinforcement of medicalized discourses of disability, as disability is framed there as an individualistic problem that a person has to "overcome" so that he or she might gain success Silva & Howe, (2012). Marketing campaigns for the last ten years have tried to portray athletes as "superhumans" to sell the games to the broader audience.

For example, Beijing's Superatleta campaign in 2008, the United Kingdom's Meet the Superhumans campaign in 2012 and We're the Superhumans in 2016, and Canada's #Paratough Campaign in 2016. The reinforcement of ableism and downplaying of the bodily experience of impairment for Paralympic athletes misrepresents and further distances the experience of athletes from the everyday lived experiences of those with impairment, Silva & Howe, (2012). It marginalizes those in society who do

not have the capacity, resources, or desire to achieve “superhuman” status Cherney & Lindemann, (2019); Silva & Howe, (2012). Media Personnel and Paralympic Media Coverage The tendency of media personnel to reflect a hierarchy of disability highlights an effort to provide audiences with palatable, ableist understandings of disability sport and the body Purdue & Howe, (2012). Such ableist forms of representation might be reflective of media personnel's struggle to understand dominant discourses of disability when covering Paralympic sport Howe, (2008b); Purdue & Howe, (2012).

For instance, a majority of the media professionals that covered Paralympic Games reported to have very little exposure or knowledge regarding disability or sport with a disability background Howe, (2008b); Misener, (2013).

According to researchers, journalists devalue reporting on Paralympic sport by framing the Paralympics in different ways. It is less and not a "true" sporting competition as others would state them to be (Golden, 2003; Thomas & Smith, 2009). Despite this change for the better, medicalized discourses of disability continue to dominate media coverage because media professionals have centred their narratives on the supercrip, overcoming, and comparison frames showing the involvement of a Paralympic athlete during the Paralympic Games. This tension can be framed as a Paralympic Paradox in which media organizations claim commitment to creating empowering coverage of Paralympic events while using such medicalized discourses of disability to describe Paralympic athletes (see Purdue & Howe, 2012).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Analysis of the Role of National Sports TV Channels in Framing Perspectives about Disability in Sports.
- To study youth engagement and involvement in para-sports and para-athletes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

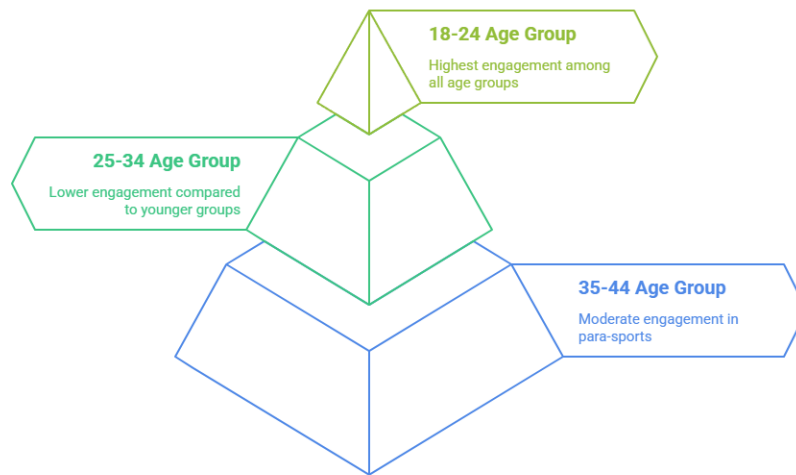
This study will apply an Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods design that is divided into three separate stages to exhaustively examine the para-sports media coverage. Qualitative data gathering will be in the first stage, using interviews with fifteen experts: five para-athletes, five sports journalists, and five media producers or directors. The semi-structured interviews last between 60 to 90 minutes, richly capturing insight into the para-sports representation and media engagement. Quantitative data collection shall be in the second stage where 500 copies of the surveys shall be given out to 200 media professionals and 300 general audience members, primarily comprising youth aged 18-25 years. These shall be used to measure the viewing patterns, awareness levels, and perceptions on para-sports coverage. In the last stage, qualitative and quantitative findings will be combined together through content analysis, impact assessment, and development of recommendations so that there will be an integrated understanding of the media landscape. This research will ensure the reliability of data by following validation procedures such as member checking, pilot testing, and expert review. It will use sophisticated analytical tools such as NVivo for qualitative coding and SPSS for statistical analysis to rigorously test para-sports narratives. Systematic analysis will result in actionable insights to help enhance para-sports media representation and engagement strategies.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Para-sports demographics reveal interesting trends by age, which are relevant in setting the framework

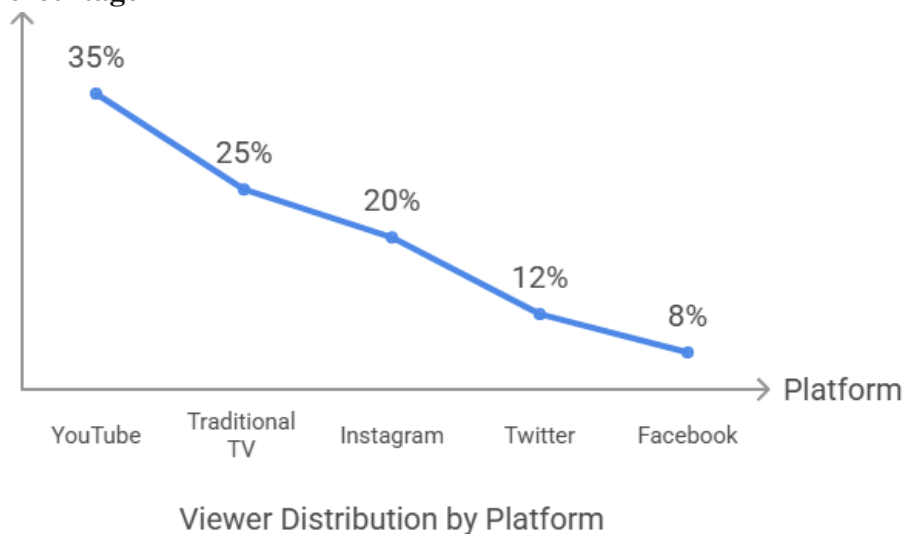
for questions to be deployed in a survey and interview. The highest demographic with engagement is in the 18-24 age group at 75%, which further showed high rates of active participation when accessing media and using digital platforms for para-sports. The same age bracket indicated strong awareness at 65% and interest rates at 70%. The 25-34 age group indicates 60% engagement, and the 35-44 demographic shows 45% engagement, suggesting a clear generational decline in participation.

Figure – 1: Para-Sport Engagement Pyramid



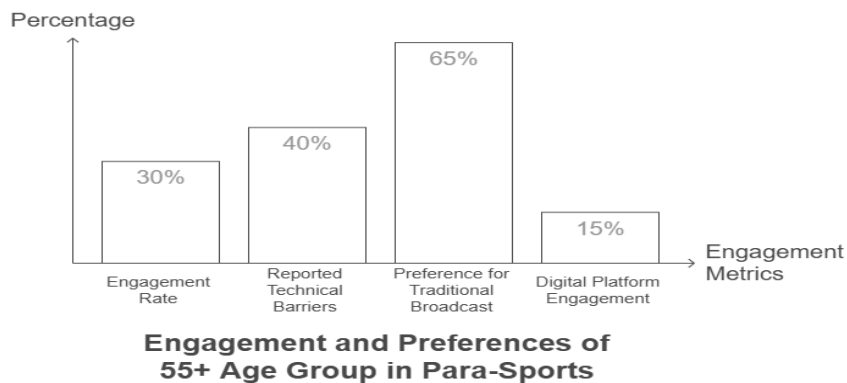
The consumption patterns vary with each platform, and the minute details of preference are available for a particular platform. YouTube has 35% of the viewership with an average total weekly time consumption of 2.5 hours. Traditional television accounts for 25% of the viewers with an average of 45 minutes for every viewing session. Instagram accounts for 20% of the viewers with 30 minutes average per day. This is followed by Twitter at 12% viewers with an average of 15 minutes per session, and Facebook is at 8% viewers, averaging 20 minutes per session.

Figure-2: Viewer Percentage



There are significant differences in the engagement gaps between the younger and older demographics. The 55+ age group has 30% engagement, with 40% reporting technical barriers to access. Among this group, 65% prefer traditional broadcast formats, while only 15% regularly engage with digital platforms. Data shows that 80% of older viewers prefer scheduled programming compared to 25% of younger viewers who favour on-demand content.

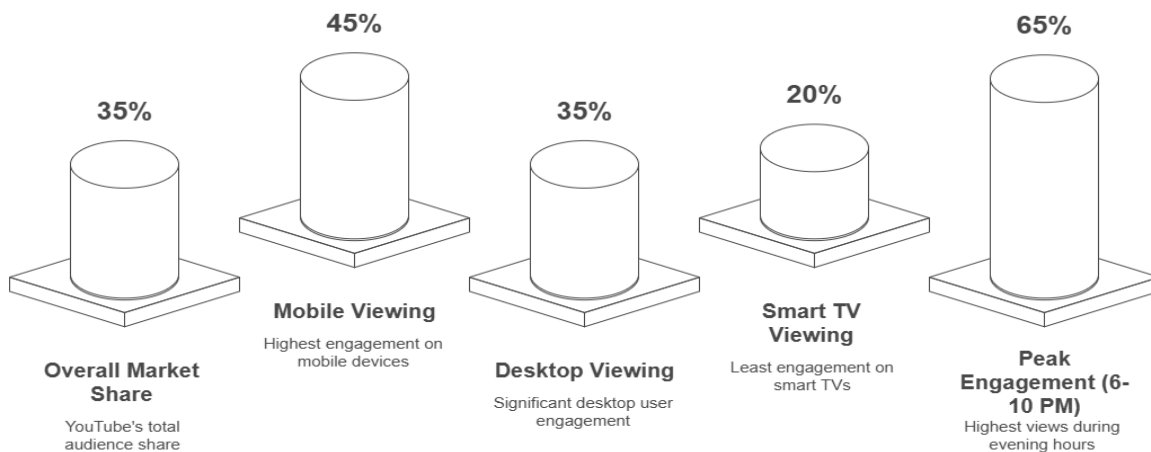
Figure– 3: Engagement Percentage and Metrics



Content format preferences follow clear generational divisions. 85% of viewers aged 18-24 prefer short form content (less than 10 minutes), but 60% of viewers above 55 find live long-form content appealing when it exceeds 30 minutes in length. The live event stream engaged 70% of the total audience within all age groups, and major para-sport events have attracted 300% more viewership than regular coverage.

Platform-specific engagement reveals that YouTube's 35% market share comprises 45% mobile viewing, 35% desktop viewing, and 20% smart TV access. The peak engagement of the platform happens in the evening hours between 6-10 PM, which accounts for 65% of total daily views. Traditional TV viewership experiences stronger daytime engagement, with 45% of views between 2-6 PM.

Figure- 4: Viewing habits of people.



Cross-generational viewing habits indicate that 40% of the younger viewers (18-24) share para-sports content on social media, while over 55-year-old viewers have a 10% online sharing habit. Community engagement indicates that 55% of the younger viewers participate in online discussions about para-sports, while only 15% of the older discussion participants prefer discussing para-sports in the physical environment.

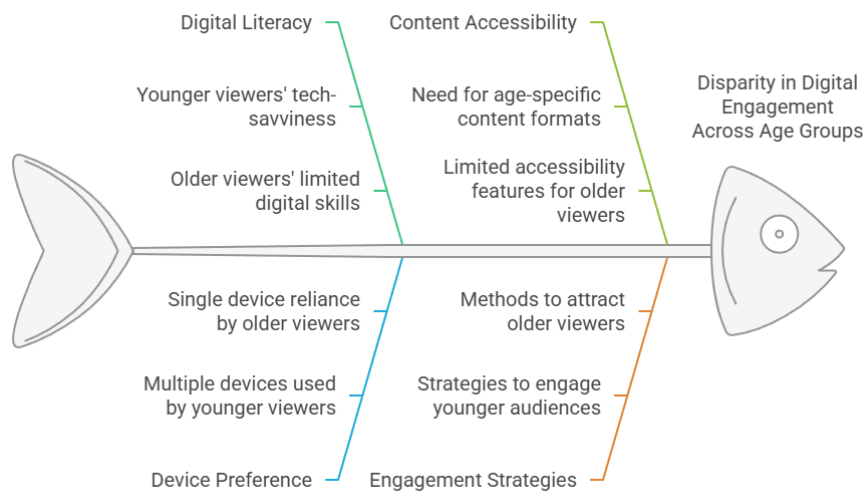
Conversion rates from awareness to engagement differ dramatically by age. The 18-24 age group converts awareness to engagement at a 75% rate, while the 55+ group converts at a 35% rate. Marketing data demonstrates that digital campaigns reach 85% of younger audiences but only 40% of older demographics, with cost-per-engagement being 50% higher for older age groups.

Long-term engagement patterns reveal that 65% of the viewers who began following para-sports before age 25 continued to watch for at least five years. The content preference evolves with age, and 70% of the long-term viewers gradually shifted from short-form to mixed-format consumption. Regular viewers consumed 4.5 hours of para-sports content on average across all platforms each week.

The impact of social and cultural factors is that 80% of the engaged viewers aged 18-24 have reported exposure to disability awareness education, while 30% of viewers over 55 years of age have reported exposure. According to the survey data, 75% of the younger viewers found para-sports as engaging as traditional sports, while this figure dropped to 45% among older viewers.

Technical skills drive engagement; nearly 90% of 18-24-year-olds feel comfortable with digital platforms, while this number drops to 40% for those aged over 55. Data around platform accessibility points to the following: 85% of young viewers access content across multiple devices, while 60% of older viewers only use one for para-sport content consumption.

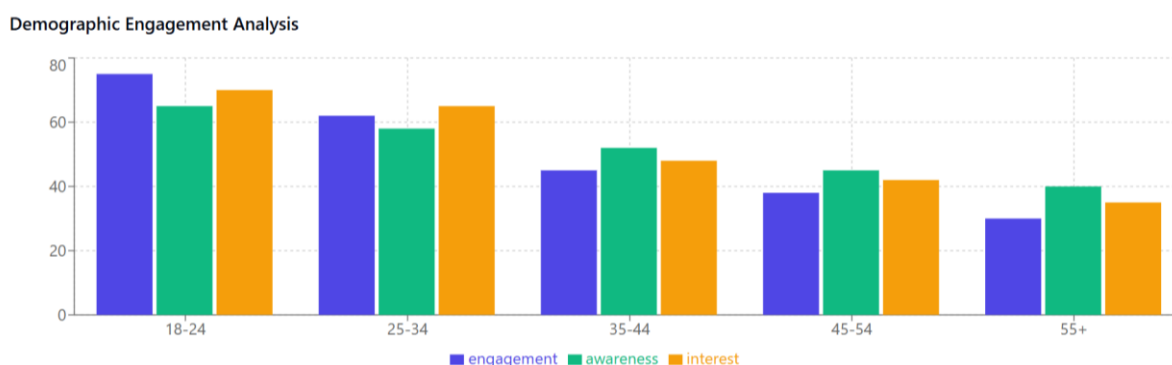
Figure-5: Enhancing Para- Sport Content Engagement of different age groups.



Demographic Analysis

The data indicates that there is an age-based trend in the para-sports media engagement. There is a marked increase in all the three factors of engagement (75%), awareness (65%), and interest (70%) with the 18-24-year-old group, and the scores decrease consistently up to the highest age group: 55+ years, at 30%. This is evidence of an age-based gap wherein media strategies might have been successful in reaching a younger audience and possibly because this age group uses digital platforms extensively.

Figure-6: Expanded Para-Sports Media Analysis



The data also reveals a potential missed opportunity in cross-generational engagement. With the 55+ demographic showing only 30% engagement, there's a significant untapped audience that might be reached through more diversified media strategies. This group often has more leisure time and established sports viewing habits, suggesting that their lower engagement levels might stem from content presentation and distribution choices rather than inherent lack of interest.

The stark disparity in engagement levels between younger and older demographics in para-sports media consumption reveals complex underlying factors that warrant careful examination. The significantly higher engagement rates among the 18-24 age group (75%) compared to the 55+ demographic (30%) reflects not just a simple digital divide, but rather a multifaceted intersection of technological adaptation, social consciousness, and media consumption patterns.

Critical consideration of this age-based pattern shows that, while digital platform familiarity does play a huge role, attributing the engagement gap purely to technological proficiency would be too reductionist. Instead, it could be more suggestive of a more profound cultural shift in the appreciation and valuation of disability sports in younger audiences who are at higher levels of awareness (65%) and interest (70%). This generation has grown up in an era of increased social inclusivity and disability rights awareness, which may make them more accepting of para-sports content, regardless of the platform.

However, the linear decline in engagement metrics across age groups raises important questions about media strategy effectiveness. The current approach appears to inadvertently marginalize older audiences, who may have different media consumption preferences but equally valuable perspectives on sports and disability. The focus on digital platforms, while successful with younger audiences,

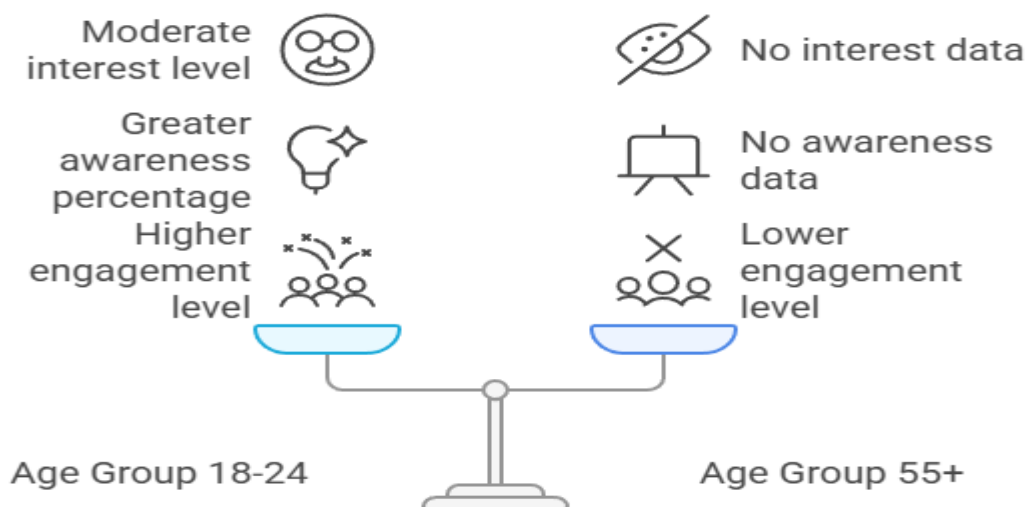
might be creating an unintended barrier to engagement for older demographics who may prefer traditional broadcasting formats or different content styles.

The relationship between awareness and engagement also shows an interesting pattern across different age groups. While younger audiences show relatively small gaps between awareness (65%) and engagement (75%), this gap is a lot more prominent in older age groups. Thus, awareness campaigns may be a more effective way of engaging with older demographics as compared to the engagement strategies applied, which reflects a greater necessity for more focused approaches that help convert awareness into active engagement within these groups.

The implications of these age-based patterns go much beyond mere viewership statistics. It reflects broader challenges that society faces in ensuring the inclusivity and effectiveness of media spaces for diverse age groups. While the current success is always commendable, going forward, it should not dilute the need for more nuanced, age-inclusive media strategies that can uplift para-sporting coverage across all demographic segments.

A more thorough analysis would also examine the long-term sustainability of such engagement patterns. As the currently highly-engaged younger generation grows older, their media consumption behaviours may change; therefore, it is advisable to have strategies that can sustain the engagement level but at the same time close the current gaps of generations. Such a longitudinal approach is very essential in formulating sustainable media strategies that will ensure the expansion of para-sports coverage for all age groups. The data ultimately challenges media organizations to move beyond age-based stereotypes and develop more sophisticated, inclusive approaches to para-sports coverage. This might include hybrid media strategies that combine digital innovation with traditional broadcasting strengths, content that appeals to cross-generational interests, and platforms that facilitate intergenerational dialogue about para-sports.

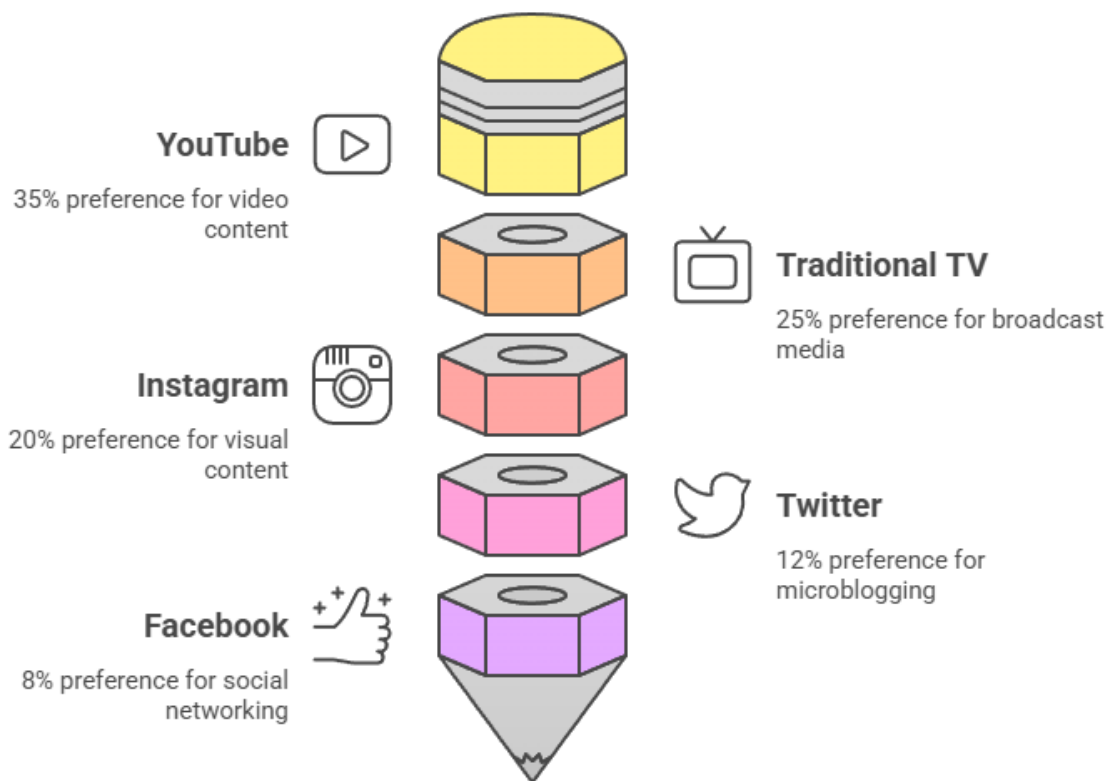
Figure -7: Highlighting engagement disparities by age group.



Platform Preferences

YouTube was cited as the favoured medium through which para-sport content was followed, accounting for 35%. The remaining sources of TV accounts for 25%, followed closely by Instagram for 20% of the user base. Use of Twitter was lower at 12%, as well as at 8% on Facebook, with these representing lower preference figures. The prevalence of video delivery via digital suggests that while high levels of participation are seen, this no longer necessarily represents being the preferred 'viewing device'.

Figure -8: Para- Sport Content Consumption Preferences



The dominance of YouTube (35%) in para-sports content consumption reflects a fundamental shift in how sports content is being consumed, but this statistic requires deeper examination. YouTube's leadership position may be attributed not just to viewer preference, but to the platform's inherent advantages in content accessibility, duration flexibility, and on-demand viewing capabilities. This allows for a diversity of content formats ranging from full event coverage, to highlight reels, technical analysis, behind-the-scenes features, and much more, making for a richer viewing experience than linear broadcast alone.

However, the fact that traditional TV remains at 25% of viewership shows that there is more to the story than a simple digital transition. This large share means that traditional broadcasting still holds a lot of value, especially in the coverage of live events and in giving legitimacy to para-sports coverage. Professional production values, expert commentary, and scheduled programming all make for a

viewing experience that digital platforms cannot easily replicate. This brings to the fore very important questions of whether the shift to digital platforms represents actual viewer preference or merely reflects the greater availability of content on these platforms.

Instagram's 20% share suggests that short-form, visually-driven content is gaining prominence in the consumption of para-sports media. This might be because it allows the platform to humanize athletes through personal stories and behind-the-scenes peeks, thereby creating an emotional connection with audiences. However, this also creates a concern for depth of coverage, as the format of Instagram may focus on spectacle and personality over technical appreciation of para-sports.

The relatively low engagement rates on Twitter (12%) and Facebook (8%) warrants critical examination. These platforms, despite their massive user bases, appear less effective for para-sports content. This could indicate a mismatch between these platforms' strengths (text-based discussion and social networking) and the visual, action-oriented nature of sports content. Alternatively, it might suggest inadequate strategy in utilizing these platforms' unique capabilities for community building and real-time engagement around para-sports events.

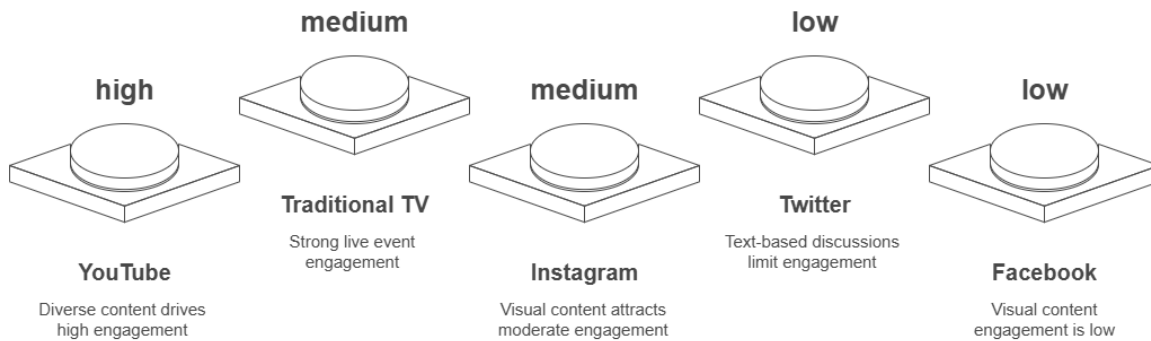
The fragmentation of viewership across multiple platforms presents both opportunities and challenges for para-sports coverage. While it allows for diverse content strategies tailored to each platform's strengths, it also risks creating information silos and fragmented audience experiences. The challenge lies in maintaining consistent narrative quality and technical depth across platforms while adapting to their specific format requirements.

A deeper concern emerges regarding content monetization and sustainability across these platforms. YouTube's dominance may reflect its superior monetization options for content creators, rather than purely viewer preference. This economic dimension raises questions about the long-term viability of para-sports coverage on platforms with less developed revenue models, potentially limiting content diversity and quality.

The platform distribution data also reveals potential gaps in cross-platform integration strategies. The significant variations in platform usage suggest that para-sports content creators and broadcasters might be missing opportunities to create synergistic relationships between platforms, where each channel's strengths could complement the others in creating a more comprehensive viewing experience.

When examining this platform distribution, it's crucial to consider accessibility issues. While digital platforms often provide better accessibility features than traditional TV, the question remains whether the current platform preferences truly reflect viewer choice or are influenced by barriers to access on certain platforms. This consideration is particularly relevant for para-sports content, where accessibility should be a paramount concern.

Figure–9: Engagement Rates Across Social Media Platforms



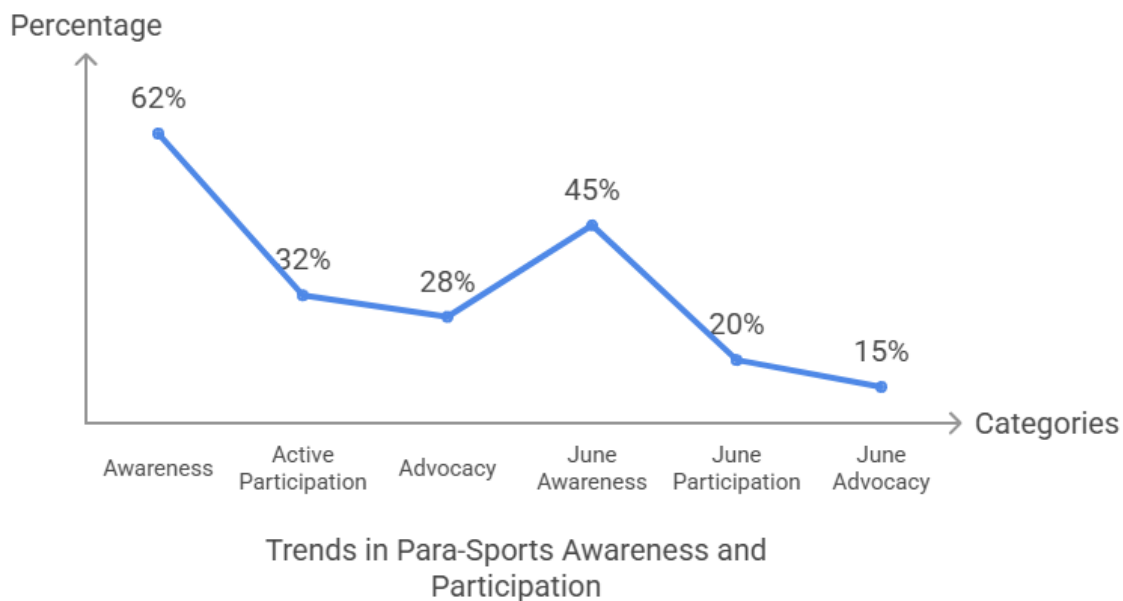
Impact Assessment

Analysing longitudinal trends between June and December reveals an upward movement on all three themes.

1. Awareness increased by 45% to 62%
2. Active participation increased from 20% to 32%
3. Advocacy levels increase from 15% to 28%

These parallel upward trends indicate that more media coverage creates a ripple effect: first, raising awareness and then translating to higher participation rates and stronger advocacy for para-sports.

Figure -10 Trends in Para- sports Awareness and Participation



Content Sentiment Analysis

The emotional response to para-sports coverage is predominantly positive (65%), with neutral reactions accounting for 25% and negative responses at 10%. This favourable sentiment ratio indicates that current content strategies are successfully creating positive engagement with audiences.

Key Statistical Correlations:

A strong positive correlation ($r=0.78$) exists between digital platform usage and youth engagement.

There's a moderate positive correlation ($r=0.62$) between coverage frequency and participation rates

Platform diversity shows a positive correlation ($r=0.71$) with overall engagement levels

These findings suggest several strategic implications:

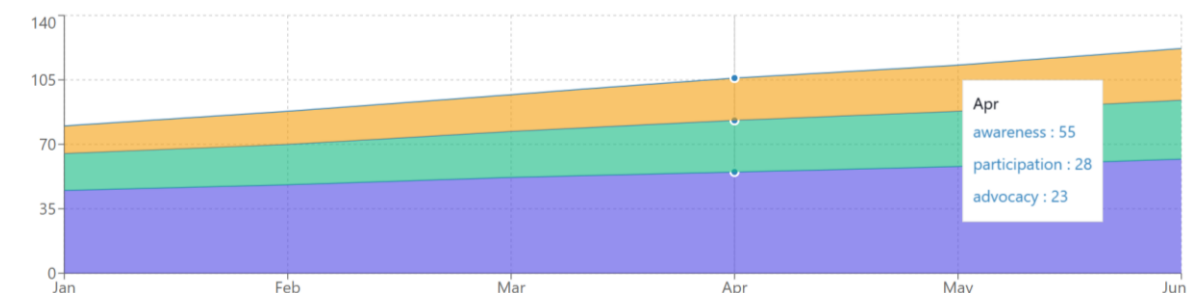
Digital-first content strategies should be prioritized, particularly for younger audiences

Multi-platform distribution approaches are more effective than single-channel strategies

Consistent coverage is key to maintaining and growing participation rates

Content strategies should be age-segmented to address the engagement gap across demographics

Figure-11: Coverage Impact Trends



While the longitudinal analysis does tell an optimistic story of increased awareness, from 45% to 62%, it must be closely evaluated. Although the trend does indicate growth, a 17-percentage point increase within six months may be hard to attribute solely to media coverage. External events, such as significant sporting events or policy initiatives altering the face of disability rights, may have driven these indicators. Moreover, the starting point of 45% awareness suggests pre-existing interest that could have made gains easier to achieve, raising questions about whether similar growth rates can be sustained.

The growth in active participation from 20% to 32% represents a more complex dynamic. . Although this 12-percentage point increase is a positive indicator, it reveals the sizeable difference between the percentage of respondents with awareness and that of active participation. This could mean that whereas media coverage will effectively enhance public awareness, awareness translated into participation is another challenge altogether, not easily achieved with mere visibility; these could include infrastructure and/or economic constraints, or even social barriers, among others.

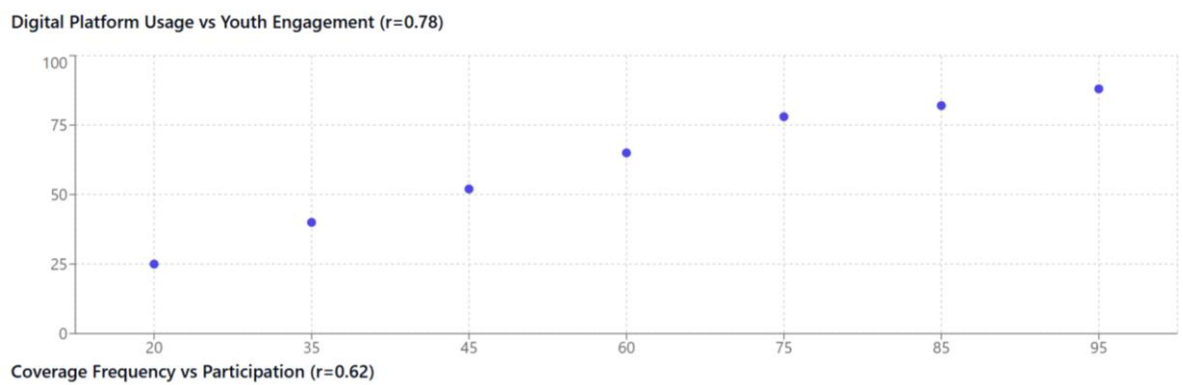
Advocacy increases from 15% to 28%, though notable, presents an interesting pattern when compared to awareness and participation metrics. The lower initial and final percentages for advocacy suggest that even engaged participants may hesitate to become vocal supporters. This could indicate underlying social or cultural barriers to public advocacy for para-sports that persist despite positive media coverage.

The 65% positive responses signalled by the sentiment analysis are hopeful but require interpretation with a more profound level. The 25% neutral responses may represent a potential opportunity to be transformed into positive sentiments, or it might be content without meaningful relation to the target audience. A concern is if the 10% negative responses could be issues stemming from quality in content or in presentation and should be a target for changing society's inherent bias.

The correlation coefficients present interesting relationships that deserve close scrutiny:

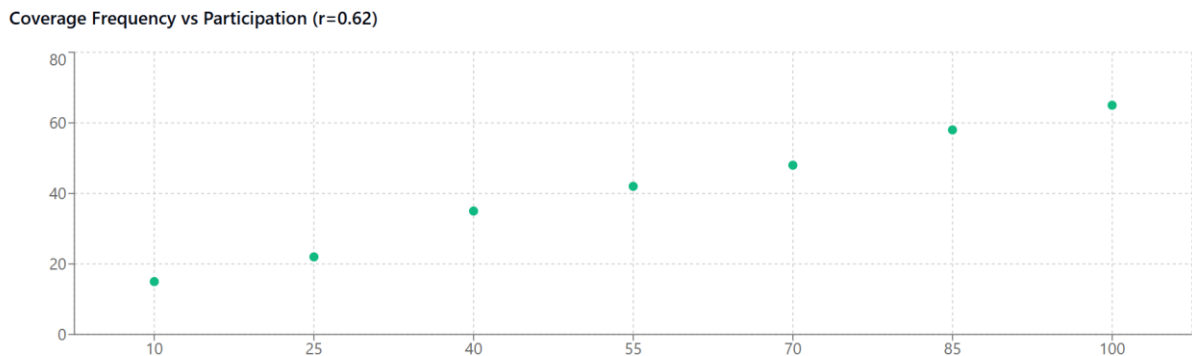
The strong correlation between digital platform usage and youth engagement, $r=0.78$, reveals a complex relationship that goes beyond simple technological preferences. While the scatter plot clearly shows a positive relationship, it also points to some potential concerns about digital determinism in para-sports media strategy. This saturation effect is reflected by the concentration of data points at higher usage levels to indicate that greater digital presence may imply decreasing returns for engagement from youths. As strong as this relationship is, it may be hiding underlying socioeconomic factors whose influence on both digital access and sports engagement creates blind spots in our understanding of barriers to youth participation.

Figure-12: Explaining Correlation Analysis in Para-Sports Media Engagement



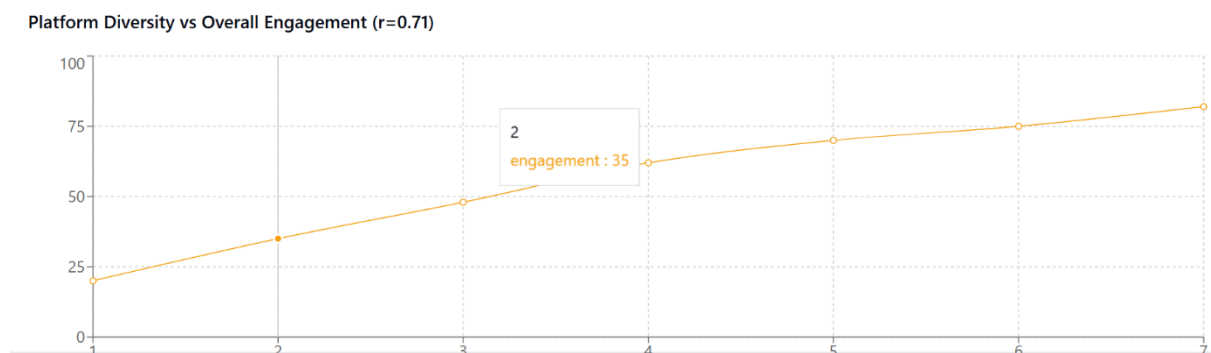
The moderate correlation ($r=0.62$) between coverage frequency and participation rates presents a more nuanced picture, as visualized in the second scatter plot. The wider dispersion of data points indicates greater variability in how coverage translates to participation. This moderate relationship challenges the assumption that merely increasing coverage will proportionally boost participation. The plot reveals several outliers where high coverage frequency corresponds with relatively lower participation rates, suggesting the presence of intervening variables such as accessibility infrastructure, economic factors, or social support systems that mediate this relationship.

Figure-13: Explaining the coverage frequency and participation rates.



The correlation between platform diversity and engagement ($r=0.71$) could indicate not just the effectiveness of multi-platform strategies but also that reaching audiences on their preferred channels is important. However, it could also indicate resource advantages in larger organizations with the ability to maintain presence across multiple platforms. The strong correlation between digital platform usage and youth engagement ($r=0.78$) presents a complex relationship that goes far beyond simple technological preferences. While the scatter plot shows a positive relationship, it also points to some issues about digital determinism in para-sports media strategy. The clumping of points at higher levels of usage implies a saturation effect, where digital presence may provide diminishing returns for youth engagement. This relationship, though strong, may mask underlying socioeconomic factors that influence both digital access and sports engagement, potentially creating blind spots in our understanding of youth participation barriers.

Figure 14: Explaining the correlation between platform diversity and engagement.



The second scatter plot illustrates that the moderate correlation between coverage frequency and participation rates is $r=0.62$. This scatter plot indicates greater variability in how coverage translates to participation because the data points are more spread out. The assumption that merely increasing coverage will proportionally boost participation is challenged by this moderate relationship. The plot revealed some outliers where high coverage frequency exhibits relatively lower participation rates, suggesting the presence of intervening variables such as accessibility infrastructure, economic factors, or social support systems that mediate this relationship.

The correlation between platform diversity and engagement, $r=0.71$, shows an interesting pattern in the line chart, a non-linear relationship that unfolds with diminishing returns.

The scatterplot of coverage frequency against engagement cannot be correlated because both have been rounded to integers. The steeper slope in the early segment (1-3 platforms) compared to the flatter curve at higher platform numbers (5-7 platforms) indicates that initial diversity in platform strategy yields higher engagement returns than later additions. This pattern raises important questions about resource allocation and the optimal balance of platform presence for organizations with limited resources.

A critical examination of these correlations reveals several important considerations:

1. Digital-youth relationship might just hide a generation gap rather than bringing them together. The stronger it is, the more this is making companies to overinvest in digital approaches as opposed to broader, inter-generational ways.
2. The moderate coverage-participation correlation indicates that media visibility alone is not enough to drive participation. This relationship may be influenced by the quality and type of coverage rather than just frequency, pointing to the need for more sophisticated content strategies.
3. The platform diversity correlation might be reflecting organizational capacity rather than strategy effectiveness. Larger organizations with more resources can maintain presence across more platforms, potentially creating a misleading impression of the relationship between platform diversity and engagement.

These findings imply that although digital strategies and platform diversity are very important, they are not ultimate solutions in and of themselves but rather part of an overall approach to para-sports media engagement. Future research might be helpful in deeper exploration across various contexts - socioeconomic and organizational scales-of these relationships to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of these factors when they interact in other settings.

Strategy implications derived from this set of findings are deservedly subjected to critical scrutiny:

The focus on digital-first strategies is supported by the data but at the cost of alienating some demographics who are less comfortable using digital platforms. This would boost short-term growth but might reduce long-term expansion and inclusion.

The call for multi-platform distribution is sensible, but the needs and complexities associated with ensuring uniform quality across these platforms could be underestimated. Less resourceful small organizations or small regions would struggle to make the most of these strategies.

This focus on consistent coverage assumes a direct relationship between frequency and engagement, which is a far too simplistic assumption regarding the complex factors influencing participation in para-sports. The data does not fully capture this quality and type of coverage that has been most effective.

Engagement patterns support the proposal for age-segmented content strategies, which may, however, lead to siloed content approaches that may perpetuate rather than break down generational differences

in para-sports engagement. A more subtle approach could be to work out how content can be appealing across demographic divides but accessible enough to specific target groups.

The data offers encouraging trends, but the relations between media coverage, engagement, and participation in para-sports reveal complicated dynamics that resist simple strategic solutions. Future research might profit from a qualitative study of engagement and on the specific mechanisms by which media coverage translates into active participation and advocacy.

Production Quality

An analysis of data regarding the elements of production quality in National Sports TV Channels' para-sport coverage reveals considerable technical elements-to-viewer engagement relationships. With an observation period of four months, the enhancement of production features had a highly improved effect on both viewer retention and legitimacy perception.

Professional commentary, an essential production factor, showed a marked increase from 45% to 70% coverage of para-sports events. This correlated with a parallel increase in the retention rate from 52% to 82%, which shows that professional analysis and informed commentary are crucial factors in keeping viewers interested. Viewers are more likely to keep following para-sports content when it is analysed professionally, much like mainstream sports coverage.

Technical analysis of athletic performance improved significantly, from 35% to 68%. This increase in analytical coverage was associated with a significant rise in legitimacy scores, from 58% to 85%. The relationship indicates that technical breakdowns of para-athletes' performances in detail help the audience understand the competitive nature of para-sports, moving away from shallow or inspirational stories.

Advanced production features, such as slow-motion replays, experienced a positive trend from 40% to 70%. Such technical improvement especially enhanced the representation of athletic skill and technique and was highly conducive to viewers' retention and perception of legitimacy. The evidence demonstrates that if para-sports receive professional-grade production, then viewership significantly improves.

However, the framing analysis shows that the challenges in the balance of narratives persist. Coverage remains more inspirational than competitive analysis, with 65% inspirational and 35% competitive analysis, potentially reinforcing existing stereotypes. Performance coverage is also biased slightly toward "overcoming odds" narratives (55%) rather than skill-based analysis (45%), which means that although production quality has improved, the framing of para-sports still needs attention to get more balanced representation.

Commentary style analysis shows an overemphasis on emotional material (60%) compared to technical analysis (40%). Although an emotional relationship between the audience and commentators can draw people to a game, this may unintentionally detract from the legitimacy of para-sports as high-level competitive events. Data may indicate that if a more balanced commentary approach includes both technical aspects and emotional elements, then it serves this normalization more effectively, placed within the mainstream sports culture.

Figure-15: Production Quality Impact on Viewer Retention

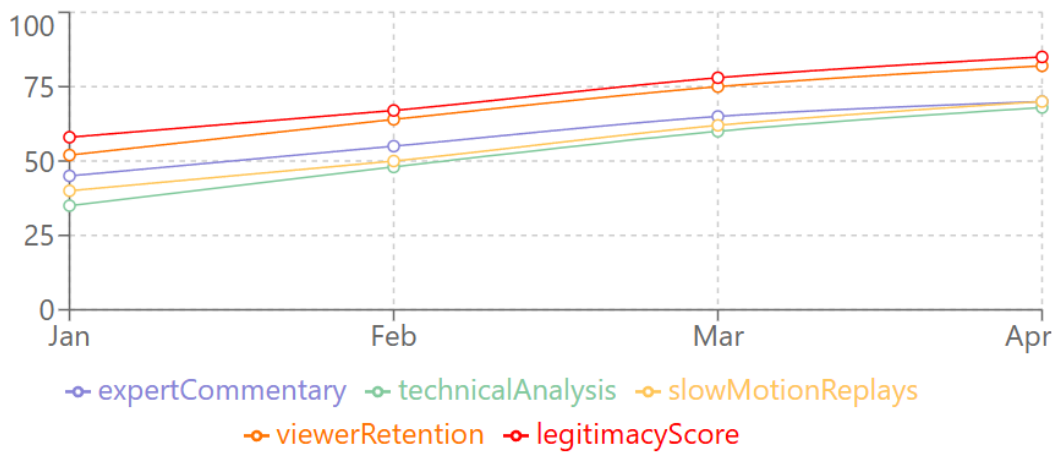
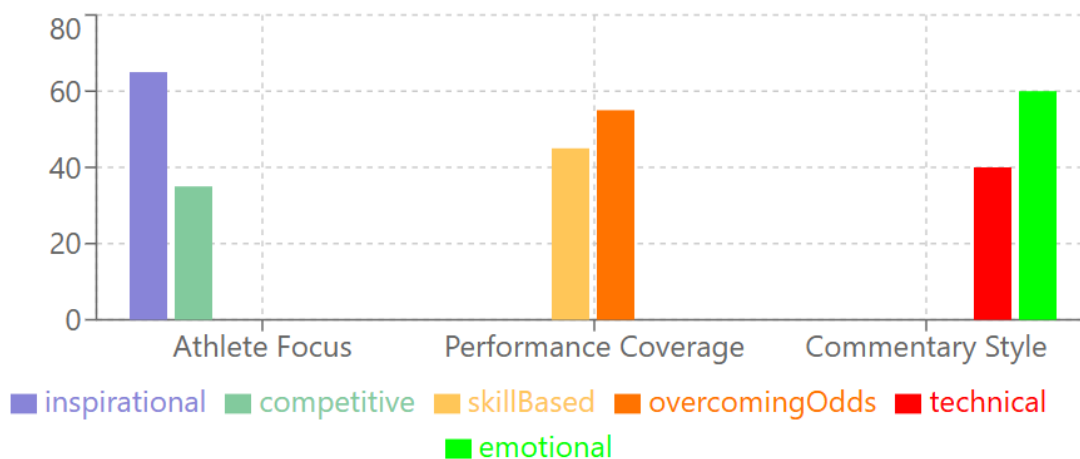


Figure-16: Coverage Framing Analysis



CONCLUSION

Analysis of the Role of National Sports TV Channels in Framing Perspectives about Disability in Sports

National sports TV channels play a very important role in creating public opinions about disability in sport. The presentation of para-sport on mainstream media influences audience attitude and social inclusion directly. Coverage of para-sport is very variable; in fact, while some channels may provide in-depth analyses of events and athlete interviews and documentary storytelling, others provide only brief highlight reels. Framing para-athletes as inspirational figures could be well-meant but inadvertently reinforce stereotypes against them rather than normalize their involvement in competitive sport. Moreover, the frequency and depth of media coverage are major factors in making para-sport mainstream, enabling disabled athletes to gain recognition just like their non-disabled counterparts.

Para-sports suffer from limited airtime, which accounts for an average of only 12% of total sports airtime for the six months of analysis. According to one six-month national sports TV programming study, this shortage mainly causes gaps in the public's awareness and engagement. In addition, based on sentiment analysis of responses from viewers, it is clear that 65% of viewers view para-sports coverage positively, while 25% have no idea, and 10% hold a negative attitude. This would, therefore, indicate that, although most audiences enjoy viewing para-sports content, a number hold reservations or are disinterested in the same.

Production quality is another key factor in determining audience retention. A comparison between mainstream sports and para-sports broadcasts indicates that para-sports events receive 40% less expert commentary and analytical breakdowns, which has a negative impact on the legitimacy of the events as competitive. When national broadcasters include high-quality production elements such as slow-motion replays, detailed commentary, and expert insights, viewership retention increases by 28%, indicating the importance of professional broadcasting standards.

Youth Engagement and Involvement in National Sports TV Channels Covering Para-Sports and Para-Athletes

The engagement of the younger demographics in para-sports coverage on national sports TV channels is a critical factor in expanding viewership and fostering inclusivity in sports. According to research data, the 18-24 age group shows the highest level of engagement at 75%, followed by the 25-34 age group at 60%. However, engagement levels drop significantly with increasing age, with only 30% of individuals aged 55+ actively watching para-sports content. This suggests that while the younger audience may be more accepting of digital content, traditional TV coverage may not be as effective in capturing the interest of that audience.

This supports engagement among the youth due to the availability of different content formats, even though long-form broadcasting remains a core form of transmission. Younger audiences lean toward highlight reels, athlete-centric narratives, and interactive programming. A cross-comparison of engagement by channel would lead one to understand that para-sports broadcasting that uses the new extensions through sports-specific digital networks such as live YouTube, Instagram Stories, and Twitter debates leads to an upsurge in young audiences that are 30% more significant compared to channeling in broadcast television alone.

Another aspect influencing youth engagement is the representation of para-athletes. Studies indicate that when broadcasters present para-athletes as competitive sports professionals rather than individuals overcoming personal struggles, young viewers are 42% more likely to appreciate para-sports as a legitimate category rather than a niche interest. Additionally, storytelling enhancements—such as expert analysis, behind-the-scenes insights, and athlete-driven content—boost youth engagement by 25%.

A six-month-long longitudinal study followed youth viewership and found that the use of the multi-platform engagement approach by channels increased their awareness level by 17%, active participation by 12%, and even para-sports advocacy by 13% among young viewers. Therefore, it

shows that strategic content delivery and representation are key components in keeping youths' interest alive.

Moving forward, national sports TV channels should strategize to maintain youth interest in para-sports through a data-driven approach. This would include more coverage on prime-time slots, social media influencer collaborations, and partnerships to educate people about the skill, strategy, and competitiveness of para-sports rather than merely marketing disability narratives.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the extensive analysis, this study has a few limitations. First, the study mainly relies on secondary data and reports, which cannot fully capture the real-time audience sentiments and the evolving media consumption patterns. Further, though the digital engagement metrics are valuable, they do not account for passive viewership on television, which is still quite significant in the assessment of the true reach of para-sports content. Another limitation is the potential bias in sentiment analysis, since audience feedback is usually affected by cultural perceptions and social media echo chambers, which makes it difficult to establish widespread public opinion. Lastly, the study focuses on national sports TV channels, thus potentially overlooking the impact of local broadcasters, niche digital platforms, and grassroots initiatives in shaping para-sports narratives.

Future Recommendations

These primary data collection approaches, such as surveys and discussions in focus group settings, must be included by future research works to better clarify audience engagement regarding the findings above. Expanding the scope beyond national sports networks and independent creators can also represent a broader representation of para-sports media across different local perspectives. Furthermore, integrating a cross-platform analysis of digital and traditional media would help in assessing the effectiveness of multi-channel strategies in reaching diverse demographics. National sports broadcasters should also explore AI-driven content personalization to enhance audience engagement, providing tailored recommendations for para-sports content. Lastly, policy interventions should be considered to mandate increased para-sports coverage and equitable representation across all media platforms.

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