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The Media Coverage of Arab Football Players in Relation to Their Support for the Palestinian Cause (Gaza) and Its Impact on Public Opinion-Perspectives of Physical Education and Sports Students at Ziane Achour University-

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Abstract: The media landscape witnessed significant coverage of various sports events, sparking extensive discussions about the opinions and stances of Arab football players. These players declared their solidarity with Gaza in the face of Israeli aggression during the ongoing conflict, impacting the formation of diverse public opinions, especially among sports students at the University of Djelfa. This research paper aims to examine and document these effects, a descriptive analytical study of the attitudes of sports students regarding the decisions and stances of Arab football players, whether at the national, Arab, or international levels.

KEY WORDS: Media; Athletes; Gaza; Stance; Students.

الملخص: عرفت الساحة الإعلامية في الآونة الأخير ظاهرة مستجدة على المستوى الرياضي، سواء الساحة المحلية أو العربية أو على الصعيد الدولي، وهي مواقف وآراء لاعبي كرة القدم العرب المساندة للشعب الفلسطيني في كفاحه ضد الاحتلال الإسرائيلي، في الحرب الدائرة رحاها في غزة منذ 70اكتوبر 2023 إلى يومنا هذا، وقد أثارت هذه الظاهرة الكثير من النقاشات، وأسالت الكثير من الحبر، في مختلف منابر الإعلام المختلفة، بين من يحاول التبرير لهذه المواقف ومساندتها بشدة، وبين من يرى في ذلك مبالغة وإقحاما للرياضة في شؤون سياسية بحتة، وأحاول في هذه الورقة البحثية أن تناول هذا الموضوع، وذلك عبر رصد آراء طلبة الرياضة بجامعة زيان عاشور، وسبر مواقفهم واتجاهاتهم حول هذا الموضوع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإعلام، الرياضيين، غزة، موقف، طلبة.

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1-Introduction:

In an era where athletes are increasingly praised for their involvement in social issues, the positions of Arab football players in support of the Palestinian cause in Gaza stand out. This media interaction has garnered significant attention, reflecting a crucial phase in the history of sports. These stances highlight a unique moment in sports history, as players evolve into public figures taking positions contributing to social and political issues. While media coverage of Arab athletes' positions supports the Palestinian cause, questions arise about its impact on public opinion.

However, the greater interest lies in the influence of this interaction on the community of physical education and sports students. The analysis focuses on how they receive this media interaction and whether it motivates their social participation and increases political awareness through sports.

Based on this inquiry, the research seeks to explore the actual impact of athletes' positions on students and their community. The focus is on analyzing the psychological and social aspects of this impact, shaping the views and behaviors of students in the field of physical education and sports.

The research poses the following questions:

• How does media coverage of Arab football players' supportive positions for the Palestinian cause in Gaza affect the shaping and direction of public opinion? • Does this influence contribute to forming new models or values in sports for the general public?

2- Hypotheses of the Study:

- -1There is a significant and positive impact on shaping and directing public opinion through media coverage of Arab football players' supportive positions towards the Palestinian cause (Gaza).
- 2- This influence plays a role in shaping new sports models or values for the general public.

3-Reasons for Choosing the Topic:

1-The close connection to sports and Ārab football players, enhancing students' interest in this field and providing an opportunity to analyze the role of sports in social and political matters.

- 2-This topic can contribute to understanding the relationship between sports and society, and how political issues such as the Palestinian cause impact players and fans.
- 3- By understanding the impact of athletes' positions on public opinion, students can contemplate the role of sports in shaping social and cultural awareness.
- 4- Interest in equality and justice: Students may see this topic as an opportunity to study athletes' positions in support of equality and social justice issues.

4-Study Objectives:

- 1-Investigate students' reactions to Arab football players' solidarity positions with the Palestinian cause and how it influences their opinions and personal stances.
- 2-Analyze the role of social and traditional media in conveying and impacting these positions on students' attitudes.
- 3- Examine the impact of these positions on the integration of the Palestinian cause in discussions and debates among students at the university.
- 4- Evaluate the potential influence of these positions on the political or social transformations of students and how it affects their engagement with the issue.

5- Importance of the Study:

This topic holds several significances from our perspective, including:

- 1-Expanding social and cultural awareness: This subject provides an opportunity to understand the impact of athletes as influencers in society, contributing to the students' broadening awareness and understanding of the social role of sports and media.
- 2-Facilitating dialogue and public discourse: This topic encourages students to engage in discussions and reflections on the social roles of athletes and the role of media in conveying and impacting public opinion.
- 3-Enhancing political awareness: It contributes to raising political awareness among students, helping them understand the role of sports and media in the political arena and how they can influence public opinion on crucial issues.
- 4-Promoting cross-cultural interaction: By understanding the impact of sports positions on cultural and political issues, this topic can

contribute to enhancing cultural interaction and exchange between different cultures.

6- Definition of Concepts and Terms:

6-1 Media Coverage:

* Linguistic definition:

It refers to the comprehensive handling of an issue.

* Technical definition:

"The coverage of events and issues by the media, encompassing reporting and analysis" (Ali, 2020)

There is diversity in media through various channels, from public television to social media, all playing a crucial role in shaping public opinion and conveying information. A United Nations report on media freedom indicates that economic and technological shifts impact professional journalism, limiting its ability to fulfill its role as an essential part of the democratic system. In the context of media diversity, "the importance of multiple media outlets and diverse platforms for expressing different perspectives is emphasized, contributing to ensuring human rights, promoting social interaction, and fostering dialogue." (Guasmi, 2015), The media is concerned with covering sports events. Sports media focuses on the sporting aspects and disseminates facts related to sports events (Malik, 2021).

6-2-Football:

The football is a team sport played between two teams, each consisting of eleven players using a round, inflated ball with specific international dimensions. "The game is played in a rectangular field with specified dimensions, and there are goals at each end." (Hilal, 2017)

6-3-The Palestinian issue

refers to the political, historical, and humanitarian conflict in Palestine, "starting from 1897 with the First Zionist Congress until the present time. This issue is a fundamental part of the Arab-Israeli conflict, resulting in crises and wars in the Middle East region." (Al-Sayyid, 2010)

6-4The concept of public opinion:

A-Linguistically:

Naama Abadi defines the concept of "public opinion" as "the opinion of a group connected by a mutual link regarding a controversial issue that concerns the interest and perhaps the fate of that group" (Ismail,p50).

B- In terms of terminology:

in the terminology of political scientists and media, Dr. Ahmed Abu Zeid defines" it as majority of the group that is not surpassed or obscured by another opinion, and this occurs at a specific time regarding an issue that concerns the group and openly or implicitly sparks discussion within the framework of this group" (Ibrahim, 2013)

7-Previous and Similar Studies:

Study 1: Ragheb Jawad Aldallu (2005)

Title: Public Attitudes Towards Communication Channels and Methods Used in the Al-Aqsa Intifada

During the Al-Aqsa Intifada, there were clear trends among the public in using various communication channels and diverse methods to express support and solidarity with the cause. Social media played a significant role in spreading awareness and calling for participation in supportive events, conveying events and updates about the situation in the region. Images and videos played a crucial role in capturing attention and conveying the message. The results of this study include:

- 76.3% of the public consistently follows communication channels and methods.
- The preferred channels are television, followed by radio, newspapers, friends, neighbors, loudspeakers, posters, and mosque imams.
- No specific time is designated for the public to follow communication channels and methods.
- Approximately 78.3% of the public believes that communication channels fulfill their function, and they trust mass communication methods more than direct communication methods.
- Key suggestions for improvement include: selecting appropriate personalities for addressing the audience, allowing space for different opinions, and incorporating visuals into topics.

Study 2: Sama Walid Mohammed Lahluh, Emad Saleh Abdul-Haq

Title: The Role of Media in Disseminating Sports Culture among Palestinian University Students in the West Bank

The study aimed to understand the role of media in disseminating sports culture among Palestinian university students in the West Bank. The researchers conducted the study on a sample of 650 male and female students from scientific and humanities colleges in Palestinian universities in the West Bank. The researchers used the descriptive survey method to align with the nature and objectives of the study. To collect data, they prepared a tool consisting of 48 items distributed across six domains: cognitive, social, health, competitive, cultural, and national.

The Results of the Study: Media Role in Disseminating Sports Culture among Palestinian University Students in the West Bank The study revealed that the overall degree of the media's role in disseminating sports culture among Palestinian university students in the West Bank was moderate, with an average response of 3.38%. The results indicated no statistically significant differences at a significance level of ($\alpha \le 0.05$) across domains and the overall degree of the media's role in disseminating sports culture among Palestinian university students in the West Bank concerning the variable of gender.

Third Study: Mirza (2014)

Mirza's study aimed to:

Understand the public's attitudes towards the role of sports media in deepening awareness among sports audiences.

The study's sample comprised 884 individuals, randomly selected, including 547 males and 337 females. The results showed statistically significant differences in the types of sports that the audience is interested in based on variables such as gender, age group, profession, nationality, and the extent of their engagement in sports activities. The study also revealed that the sports media program in the United Arab Emirates effectively contributes, with a high impact, to instilling sports values among the sports audience. However, it highlighted a negative role of sports media, particularly in terms of its significant influence on increasing media sensationalism, leading the audience to adopt behaviors contrary to societal norms.

8-The methodological procedures used in the study: 8-1- Questionnaire Design:

"Survey studies are considered the essential foundation for building the entire research, representing a fundamental and crucial step in

scientific research. Through surveys, researchers can experiment with their research methods to ensure their safety, accuracy, and clarity (Muhtar, 1995)"

We prepared a questionnaire focusing on the Arab athletes' stances toward the Palestinian cause and its potential impact on physical education and sports students. The questionnaire includes questions that open the door for students to express their opinions and evaluate these stances. The sample was selected, and the questionnaire was distributed randomly to ensure broad coverage of opinions.

Subsequently, we collected and analyzed the data, comparing responses to understand trends and orientations among students. Finally, a report was prepared summarizing and analyzing the results, including conclusions and recommendations based on the obtained data.

8-2- Study Methodology:

The methodology is the organized approach that includes several scientific steps. To achieve the study's objectives, we adopted the descriptive-analytical methodology, allowing us to describe and classify positions and responses in a detailed and precise manner." This helps in creating a comprehensive and clear picture of athletes' interaction with this issue and its impact on public opinion "(Belqasim Slatniyah, 2004).

8-3- Defining the Study Population and Sample:

8-3-1-Study Population:

Students at the Institute of Physical Education and Sports for Ziane Ashour in El Djelfa.

8-3-2-Study Sample:

The study sample is fundamentally crucial in many theoretical and practical studies, providing a significant saving of time, effort, and money. A limited number of students were chosen, and questionnaires were distributed to them with specific characteristics representing their community for study scrutiny

In order to assess the whole based on a part, attention must be paid to the method by which this part is chosen to obtain the most accurate results" (Ghanem, 2008)

In our selection of the study sample, we opted for a simple random sample, specifically conducting the study on students of the Institute of Physical Education and Sports. The sample size was determined to be 36 students.

8-4-Study Fields:

8-4-1-Spatial Field: The study was limited to students of Physical Education and Sports at Ziane Ashour University in El Djelfa.

8-4-2-Human Field: The study included 37 students of Physical Education and Sports in its three departments (Educational Sports Activity, Elite Sports Activity, Adapted Sports Activity).

8-5-Study Tools:

To collect data on the study subject, the researcher selected the appropriate tool. The study tool serves two purposes:

- 1. Facilitating the collection of information and facts related to the study topic.
- 2. Ensuring that the researcher adheres to the broad framework of the research topic.

For this study, we used a questionnaire directed at students of Physical Education and Sports, consisting of 10 questions.

8-6-Variable Identification:

- **Independent Variable:** The media coverage of Arab athletes' positions supporting the Palestinian cause (Gaza).
- **Dependent Variable:** The public opinion of Physical Education and Sports students.

8-7-Data Collection Tools:

Every scientific research requires a scientific tool that the researcher relies on for the accuracy and validity of any topic or study. Therefore, we prepared a questionnaire targeting students of Physical Education and Sports at Ziane Ashour University.

To explore their opinions about the positions of Arab football players towards the Palestinian issue and how it affects public opinion, the questionnaire is defined as a common research tool. It poses a set of questions aimed at gathering information related to the research topic. Its benefits include being economical in terms of time and costs. "One of the positive aspects of the questionnaire lies in collecting suitable information for the research, helping the researcher in their study and paving the way for them to develop a concept understood by everyone. However, drawbacks include the loss of personal contact with sample individuals and the difficulty in verifying information, as the obtained information remains relatively subjective." (Shalabi, 1992).

9-Study Difficulties:

- 1.Difficulty in finding reliable and diverse sources about the positions of Arab football players towards the Palestinian issue, which may affect the research quality.
- 2.Complications in analyzing the opinions and observations of students of Physical Education and Sports and transforming them into understandable results, especially when opinions are diverse. Diversification and presenting various perspectives aim to ensure diversity of opinions and experiences among participating students, reflecting the diversity of society and their different experiences.

10-Statistical Tools:

We used the following statistical methods to analyze the study results:

- Calculation of percentage ratios for recurrence.
- Arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) .
- Calculation of the statistical Chi-square test (χ^2) .

11-Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results:

I will settle for five questions out of ten

First Question:

Does the positions of athletes in supporting political issues affect your personal attitudes, such as the issue of Gaza?

Table No. 1 The extent to which students are influenced by the positions of athletes

Answers	Frequency	(%)	Calculated	К2	Significance	(\mathbf{df})
			K2	Tabulated	Lovel	
Yes	27	75				
Sometimes	5	13.88	28.26	07.81	0.05	02
No	4	11.11				
Total	36	100				

11-1-Presentation and Analysis of Results of Table 01:

From the results obtained in Table 01, it becomes clear that 75% of the sample individuals, equivalent to 27 students, acknowledge that the positions of athletes in supporting political issues, such as the Gaza issue, influence their personal attitudes. Meanwhile, 13.88%, or

5 students, admit that sometimes such political issues affect their personalities, inspire their thinking, and raise their awareness. Furthermore, 11.11% of the students, totaling 4, assert that there is no impact. Through statistical processing by calculating χ^2 , it is evident that there is a significant statistical difference between those influenced by such political issues on their personalities and those who are not influenced. This is in favor of the higher value, as the calculated χ^2 value is 28.16 with a degree of freedom of 2 (df), and a significance level (α) of 0.05, which is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value of 7.81. Hence, it is statistically significant.

11-1-1-Discussion of the First Ouestion:

Students believe that the positions of athletes in supporting political issues can inspire thinking and raise awareness of these issues. However, the actual impact depends on the extent to which these positions and the issue itself affect their feelings and personal beliefs. In general, the political positions of athletes can be inspirational and reflect values and principles with which they may agree or disagree. When athletes, in general, discuss issues like supporting Palestinians, it can enhance awareness of the issue and stimulate discussions around it. It may stimulate thinking and influence their personal theoretical perspectives, but not necessarily change them entirely.

-The Second Question:

Do you believe that athletes' support for the Palestinian cause should be part of their role as public figures?

Table No 02								
Answers	Frequency	(%)	K 2	K2(t)T	1 (\$\omega\$	(\mathbf{df})		
Yes	27	75						
Sometimes	5	13.88	21.49	07.81	0.05	02		
No	4	11.11						
Total	36	100						

Table No 02

11-2- Presentation and Analysis of Results of Table No 02:

Through the results obtained in Table 02, it becomes clear that 69.44% of the sample, equivalent to 25 students, acknowledge that athletes' support for the Palestinian cause should be part of their role as public figures. Meanwhile, 19.44%, or 07 students, believe it could

be part of their role as public figures without affecting the Palestinian cause. Additionally, 11.11% of the students, or 04 students, see no connection between sports and politics, advocating for keeping them separate.

Statistical processing through calculating χ^2 reveals a significant statistical difference between those who see athletes' support for the Gaza cause as part of their role as public figures and those who do not see it as an obligation. The calculated χ^2 value is 21.49 with a degree of freedom (df) of 02 and a significance level (α) of 0.05, which is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value of 7.81. Therefore, it is statistically significant.

11-2-1-Discussion of the Second Question:

Students view each athlete as having the freedom of opinion and expression. They can choose to support issues they deem important to them. However, whether supporting political issues should be part of their role as public figures depends on various considerations, such as personal values, social implications, and their relationship with the public and the public image they seek to maintain. This varies from one athlete to another and depends on their personal choices and the extent of their willingness to engage in political issues.

Some believe that athletes should use their fame and public positions to support humanitarian and political causes, considering them public icons who can have a significant impact on the audience and make a difference in the world with their positions.

This depends on personal considerations for the athlete and their willingness to express their own perspective and personal, social, and professional commitments.

-Question Three:

Do you believe that athletes should avoid expressing their political opinions to maintain their public image?

Table No 05								
Answers	Frequency	(%)	K 2	K2(t)T	1 (\$\omega\$	(\mathbf{df})		
Yes	21	58.33						
Sometimes	8	22.22	10.16	07.81	0.05	02		
No	7	19.44	10.10	07.61	0.03	02		
Total	36	100						

Table No 03

10-3-Presentation and Analysis of Results:

Based on the results obtained in Table 03, it is evident that 58.33% of the sample, equivalent to 21 students, believe that athletes should avoid expressing their political opinions to maintain their public image. Meanwhile, 22.22%, or 08 students, occasionally see the necessity of avoiding the expression of their political opinions to preserve their relationships and images. Additionally, 19.44% of the students, totaling 07, believe that athletes should not necessarily avoid expressing their political opinions. The decision depends on the individual and their specific circumstances.

Through statistical processing, by calculating Chi-square (χ^2), it is revealed that there is a significant statistically difference between these perspectives. This is in favor of the larger value, as the calculated χ^2 value is 10.16 at a degree of freedom of 02 (df) and a significance level of 0.05 (α), which is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value of 7.81. Therefore, it is statistically significant.

11-3-1-Discussion of the Third Ouestion:

Students perceive that this depends on the preferences of the athlete themselves and their willingness to engage in political discussions. Some athletes choose to distance themselves from politics to maintain their business relationships or public image. In contrast, others choose to express their political opinions because they feel a social responsibility to the issues they believe in. The decision depends on the individual and their unique circumstances, as well as what they deem appropriate for themselves and their athletic career path.

-Question Four:

Do you feel that athletes' support for the Palestinian cause increases public awareness of it?

Answers	Frequency	(%)	K2	K2 _(t) T	1 (g	(\mathbf{df})
Yes	32	84.21				
No	4	15.78	21.76	3.84	0.05	01
Total	36	100				

Table Number 04:

11-4-Presentation and Analysis of Results:

It became clear from the results obtained in Table 04 that 84.21% of the sample, equivalent to 32 students, believe that athletes' support

for the Palestinian cause increases public awareness of it. Meanwhile, 15.78%, or 4 students, do not see athletes' support for the Palestinian cause as increasing public awareness. Through statistical processing, by calculating Chi-square (χ^2), it is evident that there is a significant statistically difference between those who support and, consequently, increase awareness, and those who do not support. This is, of course, in favor of the larger value, as the calculated χ^2 value is 21.76 at a degree of freedom of 01 (df) and a significance level of 0.05 (α), which is greater than the tabulated χ^2 value of 7.81. Therefore, it is statistically significant.

11-4-1-Discussion of Question Four:

Students responded that athletes' support for social and political issues, such as the Palestinian cause, can draw attention to these issues and increase awareness. When athletes use their platforms to raise awareness about these issues, their voices can reach a wide audience and contribute to shedding light on important issues from diverse perspectives.

When athletes speak out or express their support for issues like the Palestinian cause through social media or in media interviews, their voices reach a large audience that loves and respects them. This type of support can pique people's interest and encourage them to research and understand more about the issue and its impact.

The attention drawn by athletes can contribute to stimulating public dialogue and discussion about these issues, thus increasing awareness.more about the issue and its impact, as the attention drawn by athletes can contribute to stimulating public dialogue and discussion about these issues, thus increasing awareness.

-Question Five:

Do the stances of athletes influence your decisions related to watching the sporting events they participate in?

Answers	Frequency	(%)	K2	K2(t)T	1 (α	(df)
Yes	10	3377				
Sometimes	6	22.22				
No	20	19.44	10.16	07.81	0.05	02
Total	36	100				

Table Number 05

11-5-Presentation and Analysis of Table 05 Results:

Through the results obtained in Table 05, it became clear that 27.77% of the sample, equivalent to 10 students, believe that athletes'

attitudes influence their decisions related to watching sports events in which they participate. Meanwhile, 16.66%, or 6 students, believe there is no impact of athletes' attitudes on their decisions, and 55.55%, or 20 students, believe there is no influence. Statistical processing through the calculation of the chi-square (χ 2) reveals a significant and statistically meaningful difference between these two perspectives. The calculated χ 2 value is 8.66 with 2 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.05 (α), surpassing the tabulated χ 2 value of 7.81. Therefore, it is statistically significant.

11-5-1-Discussion of the Last Question: Not directly, but ethics and sports behavior can be influential at times. The ethics and sports behavior of athletes can play a role in decisions to follow sports events, but the fundamental decision depends on the sport itself and its excitement, regardless of the athletes.

Conclusions:

The impact of Arab football players supporting the Palestinian cause through the media can have deep and comprehensive dimensions. When players use these platforms to express solidarity with Palestine and social issues, they become influential voices capable of shaping perspectives and directing attention to these issues.

This phenomenon is not just an expression of support; it is also about raising awareness and changing sports models and values. By using these platforms, athletes can play a more significant role in shaping public discussions and motivating youth to engage in broader issues. This has been achieved through the first hypothesis, as the orientations of Arab football players supporting the Palestinian cause can have a significant impact on directing public opinion. They are public figures, and as such, they can play an influential role in conveying a specific message and attracting people's attention.

This can affect physical education and sports students if they see players as role models in social justice issues, encouraging deeper reflection on issues of justice and equality. These discussions contribute to the development and enhancement of social awareness and community participation. Consequently, positive changes in societal behaviors and value models may emerge from these discussions. The impact that Arab football players supporting the

Palestinian cause can exert may contribute to building new models or reinforcing sports values in the perspectives of physical education and sports students.

Players represent icons for young people, and their supportive positions on social issues may reflect values such as justice, solidarity, and equality, inspiring students and influencing the formation of their personal values.

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