

Review

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE MAJOR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR PR IN MACEDONIAN AND TURKISH FOOTBALL CLUBS

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Abstract: With the emergence of social media platforms, due to the opportunities they offer, public relations represent an important link in the successful management of every sports club. To investigate the presence of the major social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok in this research, the profiles of 30 football clubs competing in the First Macedonian Football League and the First Turkish Football Super League in the 2022/23 season were analyzed. In order for the data source to be objective, we applied the following research methods: observation method, analysis method, comparative analysis and synthesis method. After analyzing, we came to the conclusion that:

Macedonian football clubs dominate the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram with their presence, while only one club uses the Tik Tok social network in its public relations strategy, which shows us that the Macedonian clubs do not follow the trends of the emergence of new social media platforms, i.e. that they are present on those platforms that have been around for a long time and are in decline. While this is not the case for football clubs from the First Turkish Super League. There, in addition to the presence on the social media platforms Instagram and Facebook, a large presence and monitoring of trends is observed on the Tik Tok social media platform, which represents a big difference in the successful management of public relations through social media platforms, between football clubs from the first leagues from Macedonia and Turkiye.

Keywords: *PR, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Macedonian Football League, Super Turkish Football League*

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Introduction

The development of technology and the Internet as well as the revolution of social networks have changed human habits, the speed of updating information and access to it. According to public relations experts, this progress has helped in terms of faster communication with the interested public, but it also represents a challenge due to the much greater education and awareness of the users they need to reach. Today, public relations specialists as professionals are required to actively use social networks and simply contact the public and the media through them. Social platforms, forums, blogs and the virtual world serve their users not only to talk with loved ones and entertain users, but also allow direct communication with stores and organizations. The trend of using social platforms has not bypassed sports clubs either. They allowed clubs to have two-way communication with their fans, which was not so developed before their appearance. In this way the clubs got the opportunity to hear the wishes of the fans or the suggestions they have regarding the club. Most clubs, international and domestic, are active through various social platforms where they have their official profiles. Football is one of the most popular sports around the world, so football clubs have their fans in different countries, not only in the countries they come from. Social platforms have proven to be an excellent medium that will satisfy the needs of fans and enable better work and functioning of the club's public relations. The modern way in which sports clubs communicate with fans, as well as with other members, through their official club profiles is a reflection of their organizational culture (Šimić, D. 2018, p.18). Football as the most important side business in the world, mostly due to its popularity today, imposes the need for clubs today much more than before, to direct their attention to their members and supporters, satisfying their needs for daily and accurate information, and in that central successful management of public relations on social platforms plays a role today. The question is whether football would have reached today's popularity, if the clubs did not understand the importance of communication with the public, which expects from them verified and timely information about the happenings on the field, as well as off it.

The importance of public relations in football clubs

Most organizations are facing various types of crises in recent years. Of course, football organizations are no exception. It can even be said that they are much more affected by crises because one bad result or a bad atmosphere in the club can result in dissatisfaction and pressure from the external public that surrounds the club. Survival and recovery depends on how the organization manages public relations in those moments. Especially since crises are unexpected, they can happen at any moment and result in negative publicity for a football club that has been built for a long time. More

importantly, crises also affect reputation. Once a damaged reputation means a loss of support from the public and the environment, and with it comes a decrease in income, and clubs often fall into even greater crises. With the advent of the Internet, clubs are trying to create and develop their own club media, whereby traditional media may be excluded from the communication process in the future. The reason for such a change in the introduction of new media as part of the club can be sought in the enabling of direct communication with fans offered by new social media such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and others. Professional football clubs today have found a way to enable the establishment of official social communication channels compared to previous traditional media where communication was not regular, such as the direct communication between the club and the fans today. News reaches the public quickly and accurately without using traditional means of communication, and each club is individual. If the club's public relations department makes an effort to inform the external and internal public about the latest events and, in addition, to cultivate the reputation and build a positive image for the club, it will result in a larger number of followers and much more attention and then it can attract new fans and sponsors and thus meet its budget. Sports PR communication offers the football organization the opportunity to show the general public why it is different from others.

Public relations through social networks

The digital world has changed communication within organizations and between organizations and their target groups (Cutlip, Center, Broom, 2003, p.25) Public relations is very important for organizations, especially in recent decades with the emergence and popularity of social networks. Today, almost all sports organizations and athletes communicate through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc. Social media and digital platforms are the most common, most used forms of information and communication among the younger population, both in all other areas and in sports. Meerman Scott considers social media as the main tools of marketing and PR teams today (Meerman Scott, 2011, p.13). Social platforms are an environment that is based on the contact that is based on the work and exchange of information of a series of people or corporations and interaction to the desired results of success through a way of sharing (Vural, Bat, 2010, p. 3350). Information about players, coaches and events that used to take days and weeks can now be found in seconds. The element of interaction in online sports media is even more important. The Internet enables a constant, almost real-time conversation between consumers and service providers. Millions of fans who participate in the sports communication process can now participate in countless ways. They can have quick feedback from sports clubs, quickly buy sports equipment, participate in sports-related games online and chat with other fans on sports weblogs

(Schultz, 2005, p.33) Social platforms as a tool for communication in public relations, represent an essential part in today's activities of football organizations in image creation and communication with the public. Research shows that the average sports fan spends between 1-2.5 hours a week visiting their favorite club's social media, which shows the importance of social media public relations for an organization and how quality social media content can really impact the image and business of clubs (Kuzma, Bell, Logue, 2014, p.730). Public relations specialists are in charge of managing the social media profiles of players and sports organizations. Professionals in charge of this position monitor profile statistics and publish specific content based on them in a timely manner. Posting photos during the match, recording clips of certain important moments for those who are not in front of their televisions at that moment and want to follow a sporting event, SMS notifications about any player injuries, changes during the match, information about the final line-up before the start of the match is part of the tasks of professionals dealing with public relations. These are all information that will attract the attention of the audience on online platforms, which can also be easily shared further and create even more interest in them. Through the unique content they publish, clubs allow users to experience the world inside the club, which has an impact on their loyalty and building the club's brand.

Subject and objectives of the research

The subject of the research is the official social platforms profiles of the Macedonian First League football clubs and the Turkish First Super League football clubs.

The main goal of the research is to investigate the presence of social platforms among football clubs from the First Macedonian League and football clubs from the First Turkish Super League, as well as to make a comparison between football clubs from both leagues in terms of presence.

Methods

In order for the data source to be objective, we applied the following research methods: observation method, analysis method, comparative analysis and synthesis method. For a sample of respondents in this research, 30 football clubs are included, which compete in the First Macedonian Football League and the First Turkish Football Super League in the 2022/23 season.

Results and Discussion

The results gathered from the above searches are presented in two separate tables representing the main areas of findings:

- Presence on the social platforms Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok of football clubs from the First Macedonian League in the 22/23 season;
- Presence on the social platforms Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok of football clubs from the First Turkish Super League in the 22/23 season;

Table 1. Presence on the social platforms Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok of football clubs from the First Macedonian League in the season 22/23

TEAM			
 FC SHKUPI	+	+	-
 FC TIKVES	+	+	-
 FC SKOPJE	-	+	-
 FC STRUGA	+	+	+
 FC POBEDA	+	+	-
 FC BREGALNICA	+	+	-
 FC ACADEMY PANDEV	+	+	-
 FC SILEKS	+	+	-
 FK SHKENDIJA	+	+	-
 FC RABITNICKI	+	+	-
 FC MAKEDONIJA GP	+	+	-
Total	10	11	1

Source: author's work, 2023;

Table no. 1 shows the presence of football clubs from the First Macedonian League in the 22/23 season on the social platforms Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok. From the obtained data, we can conclude that almost all clubs, 10 of the total number of 11, are present on the social platform Facebook, while on the social platform Instagram all

clubs have their own profile. Following trends and using social platforms that are popular among the population is not a practice for Macedonian football clubs. After the analysis, the presence of the Tik Tok social platform was observed only at one club from the First Macedonian League, that is at FC Struga.

Table 2. Presence on social platforms Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok of football clubs from the First Turkish Super League in the 22/23 season

TEAM			
 ANTALYASPOR	+	+	-
 GALATASARAY S.K	+	+	+
 ADANA DEMIRSPOR	+	+	-
 ALANYASPOR	+	+	-
 ANKARAGÜCÜ	+	+	+
 BEŞİKTAŞ J.K	+	+	+
 FATİH KARAGÖMRÜK S.K	+	+	-
 GAZİANTEP F.K 	+	+	-
 GİRESUNSPOR	+	+	+
 HATAYSPOR 	+	+	-
 İSTANBUL BAŞAKŞEHİR F.K	+	+	+
 İSTANBULSPOR A.Ş.	+	+	-
 TRABZONSPOR	+	+	+
 KONYASPOR	+	+	+
 KASIMPAŞA S.K	+	+	-
 FENERBAHÇE S.K	+	+	+
 SIVASSPOR	+	+	+
 KAYSERİ S.K	+	+	+
 ÜMRANİYESPOR	+	+	+
Total	19	19	11

Source: author's work, 2023;

Table No. 2 shows the presence of football clubs from the First Turkish Super League in the 22/23 season on the social platforms Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok. Unlike the Macedonian teams, the Turkish clubs recognize the importance of presence on social platforms, where all 19 clubs are present with their own profiles on the social platforms Facebook and Instagram. The greater number of them, i.e. a total of 11 clubs are present on Tik Tok, while 8 of them do not have a profile on the same network.

Conclusions

Public relations and the role of PR managers in the last decade represent an indispensable element in sports communication in football clubs, which aim to acquire and maintain relations with fans. Social platforms greatly contribute to achieving a better relationship between clubs and fans, resulting in successful public relations management. Prompted by the topicality of the topic, we investigated the presence of social platforms among football clubs from the First Macedonian League and the First Turkish Super League, where the profiles of a total of 30 clubs from both leagues were analyzed, on social platforms Facebook, Instagram and the new popular platform among users Tik Tok. So from here we can conclude that:

Macedonian football clubs dominate the social platforms Facebook and Instagram with their presence, while only one club uses the Tik Tok social platform in its public relations strategy, which shows us that the Macedonian clubs do not follow the trends of the emergence of new social platforms, i.e. that they are present on those platforms that have existed for a long time and are in decline. While this is not the case for football clubs from the First Turkish Super League. There, in addition to the presence on the social platforms Instagram and Facebook, a large presence and monitoring of trends is observed on the Tik Tok social platform, which represents a big difference in the successful management of public relations through social platforms, between football clubs from the first leagues from Macedonia and Turkiye.

This paper will contribute and deepen the knowledge about public relations in sports and sports communication in football clubs through social platforms. The presented analyzes and conclusions can serve as information about the state of relations with the public through social platforms among Macedonian football clubs, which are particularly lagging behind in that regard compared to the other clubs that were the subject of comparison in this paper. These conclusions can be very significant for everyone involved in sports management, from all generations of employees in the sports sector, for those who perform the function of PR managers in clubs and for those who are involved in this kind of communication through social platforms.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, V.A. and D.P.; **Resources**, V.A. and D.P.; **Methodology**, V.A.; **Investigation**, V.A. and D.P.; **Data curation**, V.A.; **Formal Analysis**, V.A. and D.P.; **Writing – original draft**, V.A. and D.P.; **Writing – review & editing**, V.A.

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