

SPORT PEDAGOGY AND DIGITAL MARKETING

PEDAGOGIA SPORTIVA E MARKETING DIGITALE

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Abstract

Sporting activity represents, in an increasingly important way, one of the main tools useful for pursuing satisfactory levels of psycho-physical, social and educational well-being for each individual. In this perspective it appears necessary to analyze what are the fundamental elements of sports sciences understood in their pedagogical meaning. Furthermore, this research contribution aims to consider the dimension of digital marketing applied to sport with a totalitarian perspective, able to analyze both the socio-economic implications and those of a purely socio-educational nature.

L'attività sportiva rappresenta, in modo sempre più importante, uno dei principali strumenti utili a perseguire livelli di benessere psico-fisico, sociale ed educativo soddisfacenti per ogni individuo. In tale prospettiva appare necessario analizzare quali siano gli elementi fondamentali delle scienze sportive intese nella loro accezione pedagogica. Inoltre, tale contributo di ricerca si pone l'obiettivo di considerare la dimensione del digital marketing applicato allo sport con una prospettiva totalitaria, in grado di analizzarne sia i risvolti socio-economici, che quelli di natura prettamente socio-educativa.

Keywords:

Sport Pedagogy, Well-Being, Digital Marketing, Socio-Educative Dimension

Pedagogia Sportiva, Benessere, Digital Marketing, Dimensione Socio-Educativa

1. Reference Framework

Sport is regarded as an essential moment for the person's physical and psychological well-being. Sport is a social phenomenon that helps us feel good; if sport is a form of entertainment

for children, it becomes a form of discipline for adolescents and young people, a model to rebuild principles and values to which to refer in life.

Modern sport was born in the Nineteenth century with the establishment of popular games by the English nobility; these events led to the systemic rationalization of sports practices through the general involvement of the population.

During the Twentieth century, sport underwent radical changes: new organizational models replaced the obsolete practices of the previous century, and contemporary sport appeared as a highly complex and diversified phenomenon. A gradual and irreversible evolution, which, while managing to preserve traditional elements, increasingly evolved into a form of entertainment and media show, acquiring great economic and political power.

Sports events, thanks to the amplification by the media, have been converted into entertainment shows capable of influencing growing masses of spectators; the broadcasting of events through the television has led sponsors to invest huge amounts of budget, giving rise to a particular form of marketing that has increased market opportunities and potential.

Some sports, which at the beginning of the 1970s were considered secondary or amateurish, were developed and professionalized by focusing on the spectacular nature of the events and the strong interest they attracted.

The constantly growing financial resources gave rise to a phase of development based exclusively on economic concepts, turning sports organizations into efficient business models capable of spreading and promoting not only sports concepts, but also the sale of products and services.

The new allocation of economic and financial resources increasingly oriented towards sports entertainment has made sport an effective marketing model capable not only of commercializing itself, but also the actors that make up the model itself. Young athletes approaching sports practice are increasingly attracted by the economic benefits of sports performance. This has created a break with the past, depriving sport of its essential function, which is educational and social.

2. Sport: a tool at the service of Education and Training

Contemporary sport should be committed to recovering its pedagogical function, this is why it is necessary to spread the culture of sport and not that of the sport show; institutions and non-profit organizations that are committed to spreading these contents know quite well the formative role that sport should assume and spread.

An educational value that allows children to play, understand the use of rules and respect for their companions, only in a later stage, namely adolescence; sport should become an objective to be pursued through training and physical culture.

The first role of sport should be to train people and then athletes; its educational role should be fundamental, and the coach should be a central figure in motivating and spreading the healthy values conveyed by sport.

In this way, sport can help us overcome our limitations and chase our dreams, assuming a social function.

The social function of sport becomes even more fundamental in this era of deep changes, where many children are fragile and insecure. This insecurity, which is the result of the pandemic and digital evolution, makes our children more and more alone and vulnerable.

Sport forces us to live in groups and in harmony with others, the human being must live in an inclusive way, so we must cultivate and increase our sense of belonging and our spirit of comparison.

At this point, it would be useful to reflect on what the interconnections between sports pedagogy and sports marketing might be. At a first superficial analysis, we might say that the two disciplines have no specific link, but this wrong way of interpreting reality would lead us to think that no link exists between physical education and sports as well. It should be noted, however, that digital native children experience their first encounter with sport either through a device or through television, which is why sports marketing tends to induce unconscious needs and desires in these potential new consumers.

The sports industry has several markets to propose to this well-defined and homogeneous target. The products offered range from video games, to free time management, and to the choice of practicing a discipline or not.

Sports pedagogy has the task of understanding these new involvement models, and of preparing new methodological approaches capable of attracting and orienting people. New models that do not focus only on the technical education of the sport practice, but that are able to go beyond involvement, setting the new coaches as points of reference to build a life path based on the values of sports ethics.

3. Sport, Pedagogy and Digitization: a new perspective

As long as modern sport is centered on business models, sport pedagogy and sport marketing will continue to interact in a conflicting way, feeding continuous tensions.

The pedagogical function refers to teaching by sharing knowledge, with the real goal of turning theory into sport practice; pedagogy intervenes with the art of teaching and with the need to bring sport closer to people by pursuing goals related to social well-being. A sports training professional will not be able to avoid understanding the new languages and new models of sports entertainment, which are globalized and widespread systems.

The vision of the student is highly influenced by this new perspective; it will be up to the educator to overcome these misleading beliefs, pushing the student out of his or her comfort zone, predisposing him or her to change perspective, and giving sport a social function again. While numerous studies show that imitation is a form of learning for children, the sports educator should use this process of imitation for a systematic and elaborate exploration of the phenomenon. If the rules change, it is important to observe these constructs and their applicability in the sport environment, especially for beginners.

In this context, we suggest not only teaching the internal logics of sport, but also incorporating the external logics, i.e., aspects that influence the teaching of sport. It is essential that sports educators understand the conflicts that may arise when the goals and guidelines of Sports Pedagogy are opposed to the interests and influences of sports marketing.

By understanding the ambiguities of the hegemonic discourse on the social significance of sport, and the spontaneous questioning of conduct examples provided by prestigious athletes and coaches by the media, a framework of cognitive and moral references can be developed, which will be tested and improved over time.

Having not been a systemic evolution, the digital revolution becomes difficult to be understood by those who did not seize it when it began.

Information and transformations are too fast to be received and applied in a short time. This is why, in this historical moment, it becomes fundamental to refer to the educational sciences, from philosophy to sociology up to psychology, in order to transfer and acquire new knowledge and new models.

The human being is not predisposed to change; the new models have changed the paradigm of learning.

If it is true that the didactic models and the role of the teacher to transfer digital knowledge must be reviewed in a pedagogical key, it is also true that the digital marketing knowledge becomes fundamental for sports pedagogy teaching professionals.

Social media have globalized the communication model where the forms of dialogue, the forms of expression, have been standardized; the new trend will be to have a single form of language. For the digital natives, the widespread use of social media is becoming increasingly globalized and integrated, turning the new generations into a single global tribe, which, while maintaining its own language identity, will use the same communication model.

We have all entrusted our digital identity to social media, and the most widespread in Europe and in the world have the following users:

- Facebook: 2.80 Billion
- Instagram: 1 Billion
- Snapchat: 249 Million
- Twitter: 330 Million
- Linkedin: 575 million.

These social media, which we can define as mature, all have a well-defined target in terms of age range, as well as widespread geographic penetration; this suggests that digital marketing activities using these systems, with their continuous search for engagement, i.e. their ability to provoke reactions, will have a decisive influence on our choices and our lives.

In marketing, engagement can be defined as the ability of a product or service to establish strong and long-lasting relationships with its users, and this can be applied to the choice of a brand or a sport.

This new empathy model has made it possible for a 10-year-old child in Italy to have his/her choices influenced and conditioned by an English or American tik-toker as if he/she were a compatriot, because, having globalized relationships and dialogue, they are in tune regardless of their language.

Digital marketing using algorithms applied to our interests will be able to create a sort of bubble in which we are offered contents and solutions, a virtual world that tends to exaggerate the

concepts. Athletes will have tutorials and contents at their disposal that will allow them to increase their sports culture, while non-athletes will tend to be more and more isolated.

However, we must never confuse culture with tools, and we must follow this principle because the spreading of sports culture must take place first of all through traditional models such as teaching and the sport practices; then, the new coaches will have to use digital tools to attract, involve and influence people, putting tools at the service of culture and not vice versa.

A useful application could be the crowdfunding, a tool increasingly used by both amateur and professional sports teams, which seek to raise funds useful for building links with the community and fans.

Fundraising campaigns must always have a social motivation and a rehabilitation or integration purpose in order to be promoted through social media.

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