

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Stefanova Petrova PhD
St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo
for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD)

Scientific area: 1. Pedagogical sciences

Professional field: 1.2. Pedagogy (Media Pedagogy)

University: St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia

Faculty of Education Sciences and Arts

Department: Preschool and media pedagogy

Topic: The role of public relations (PR) in football to foster media literacy

Doctoral student: Dimitar Radoslavov Penev

Research supervisor: Prof. Bozhidar Mihailov Angelov DSc

1. DATA ON THE DOCTORAL STUDY, PhD THESIS, AUTHOR REFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS

1.1. Data for the Doctoral Study

By Order No. RD-20-1122 of 28.06.2019 of the Rector of St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, Dimitar Radoslavov Penev is enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the area of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy, scientific specialty Media pedagogy, at the department “Preschool and media pedagogy” with the topic of the dissertation work “The role of public relations (PR) in football for the education of media literacy”, with supervisor Prof. Bozhidar Mihailov Angelov DSc.

Dimitar Penev was dismissed with the right of defense by Order No. RD-20-1112 of 24.06.2022 of the Rector of St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. The

doctoral student has fulfilled his obligations according to the individual study plan, he has passed all the exams in the compulsory and optional disciplines.

According to Art. 74, para. 1 of the Law on Higher Education, Art. 24, paragraph 2 and paragraph 6 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Art. 63, para. 2 and para. 6 of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia all administrative procedures have been followed.

1.2. Dissertation and abstract data

The dissertation is structured in an introduction, four chapters, conclusion, conclusions, Handbook of football PR, scientific contributions, publications on the topic of the dissertation, literature and appendices. The text of the dissertation research is 158 pages long, of which 135 pages are the main text, 6 pages of sources, 14 pages of appendices, 2 pages of scientific contributions and 1 page of described publications. The theoretical rationale and data from the achieved results are visualized in 9 tables and 28 diagrams. The bibliography contains 105 titles, of which 79 are in Cyrillic, 15 are in Latin, and 11 are Internet sources.

1.3. Relevance and importance of the problem

In his dissertation “The role of public relations (PR) in football for the education of media literacy”, Dimitar Penev develops a significant topic – about media literacy as an educational strategy that is aimed at all spheres of public space. The relevance of the problem stems from the fact that the formation of media literacy is considered, analyzed and presented from different aspects, where the research fields of the social phenomenon “football” and the role of media relations and sports journalism intersect. In this context, the conduct of such research is timely and necessary, because it is associated with the development of

competences regarding the possibilities of modern football PR for media literacy education.

A handbook of football PR has been compiled as a key factor in positive relations between football clubs, the media and the public, and fostering media literacy.

In this sense, the topic chosen and developed by doctoral student Dimitar Penev is of current importance and meets the needs of modern society.

1.4. Organization and methodology of the research

In the introduction, the doctoral candidate justifies the choice of the topic and convincingly presents the importance and practical significance of the research issue. Precisely formulated aim, object, subject, tasks, and hypothesis outline the parameters of the dissertation research design.

Four main paragraphs are included in the first chapter of the dissertation entitled “PROGRAMMATIC ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH”. The first paragraph presents the relevance of the issue and the need to determine the main parameters of the activity and problems of football clubs in Bulgaria, to identify and define the significant goals of experts in this professional field for effective communication with the public space is justified. The second paragraph covers the nature and specificity of some basic concepts that are necessary for the experimental work. The starting point in the third paragraph is the presentation of the “Conceptual parameters of the study” - goal, object and subject of research. The hypothesis and tasks of the research are clearly and accurately formulated.

The second chapter of the dissertation is entitled “THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM AREA”. It is structured in three paragraphs, each of which has its own subsections. In the first paragraph, based on the analyzed specialized scientific sources and official documents, Dimitar Penev makes a retrospective of the football game, its appearance and development in our

country. Special attention is paid to the game of football and business relations. Football and football clubs as a unique environment for communication and business relations are presented, as well as the position and characteristics of PR in football.

In the second paragraph, a conceptual interpretation of media literacy is presented. Conceptual studies of our and foreign authors, of European and national normative documents regarding media literacy as part of the key competences defined by the Council of the EU have been studied and analyzed. Perceived as an educational strategy, it is aimed at all spheres of public space. In this context, the main factors for the application of media literacy in different national contexts, as well as the “knowledge-communication” relationship, based on the historiography of media literacy, are also analyzed. It pays attention to education and training in media literacy and the availability of competences that help learners to be able to correctly interpret the content of each type of media.

Special attention is paid to the relationship between media literacy and media pedagogy.

In the third paragraph, the doctoral student explores football reality as an environment for realizing the relationships between clubs, media and public space.

In the fourth paragraph, the role of the PR specialist as a mediator between the football players and the football space is discussed. A multi-aspect analysis of the football PR specialist's communication with the football players' families is presented in depth – on a psychological, sociological, cultural level. These theoretical generalizations have the character of a contributing moment in scientific issues.

In the third chapter of the dissertation, Dimitar Penev presents the methodological and organizational parameters of the research. It is realized in the period 05. 2019 - 02.2023. The proof of the purpose, the object, the subject and the

hypothesis, which are well formulated, is achieved through a complex of research methods:

Analysis of literary sources on the studied issue.

The survey method, including: Survey of PR specialists, sports journalists, football players and supporters of football clubs, Survey of the orientations of PR specialists as intermediaries in the relations between professional football clubs, media and public space, Survey of the orientations of journalists from leading media, Survey of the orientations of professional football players, Survey of the orientations of supporters of football clubs.

Interviews with owners, sponsors, members of governing and supervisory boards of professional football clubs, coaches and managers; Interview with professional football players and their girlfriends and wives regarding their relationships in the context of the positive/negative professional realization of the athletes.

Observing the reactions of the respondents when filling out the questionnaires and when choosing the answers from the interview; Monitoring the activities of members of management boards, owners, sponsors and sports-technical and executive directors of professional football clubs (direct and indirect monitoring through their media coverage);

Statistical methods for information processing.

The organization, methodology and phasing of the research are presented in detail and very well oriented in the conducted research process.

The presented methodology is reliable, ensures the collection, processing and systematization of the necessary information, solving the tasks and proving the determined hypothesis.

In the fourth chapter of the dissertation, Dimitar Penev presents a detailed, analytical and visual analysis of the results of the research. This chapter is differentiated into five paragraphs and I consider it to be of value because of the

way the results are presented and the statistical processing methods used. A precise statistical and comparative analysis of the data was made.

The analysis is cogent and well-argued, very well supported with tables, charts and graphs, enabling performance trends to be tracked.

In the conclusion, doctoral student Dimitar Penev synthesizes the results of the performed theoretical-experimental activity.

The thesis about the need to optimize the relationships between professional football clubs, the media and the public space is convincingly confirmed. A significant contributing point in the dissertation research in the direction of educating media literacy is the compilation of a Handbook of football PR, as a main factor for positive relations between football clubs, the media and the public.

The presented dissertation is the original work of Dimitar Penev. The report on the similarity of the text of the doctoral dissertation in an anti-plagiarism prevention system proves that the similarity coefficients obtained after the application of the anti-plagiarism program do not exceed the regulated values, rather they approach the low levels, which proves the originality of the dissertation work.

The doctoral student presents six publications that have scientific value, are thematically and content related to the dissertation work. They shape the image of the doctoral student as a specialist in the field of football PR with high media and communication competence.

All the requirements of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia for the number of publications for awarding the Doctor degree.

2. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

I accept the contributions mentioned by doctoral student Dimitar Penev. The achieved results and the main contributions of the conducted research can be summarized as follows:

2.1. Contributions of a scientific and theoretical nature

1. The results of the theoretical research on the history and traditions of the “football” phenomenon, its current aspects in the public space have been studied, analyzed and systematized: Football-communication, Football-business, Football clubs and public space.

2. Modern understandings of sports, respectively football as a significant public product, are presented and the specifics, functions and importance of PR in it are examined in detail in the context of media literacy training opportunities.

3. Valuable trends characterizing the content parameters of the “football” phenomenon and the public space are derived: Football and communications, Football and business, Football clubs and public space.

4. Along with the practical orientation, the present work also poses some theoretical problems related to clarifying certain types of interactions between football clubs, the media, the public space: mediating functions of football PR, management and football experts with supporters (in different age groups), relations at an internal club level, between the sports club and the players.

2.2. Contributions of a research and applied nature

1. An author's methodology was developed and approved for researching the orientations of different groups of respondents: PR specialists, as mediators in the relations between professional football clubs, the media and the public space; sports journalists from leading media; professional football players; supporters of football clubs.

2. A competence-oriented model of the Handbook of football PR has been developed, as the main factor for positive relations between football clubs, the media and the public, and the cultivation of media literacy.

3. The main parameters of the activity of the football clubs in Bulgaria have been established, with the aim of overcoming the problems and achieving a positive image, reputation of a sports club, athlete or sports organization, as well as to increase the potential audience of football.

4. The individual from society or the group – a sports fan – is placed in the foreground, and the influence of various factors that are exerted on him/her has been studied, with the aim of forming socially acceptable communication.

Conclusion

The PhD thesis of Dimitar Penev is comprehensive, complete and meets the requirements for the design of pedagogical research, the results achieved have scientific and applied value, the conclusions drawn are logical and meaningful.

Evaluating the qualities of the dissertation, the abstract and the publications on the subject, I confidently assert that they meet the scientific and technical requirements, are also in accordance with the scientometric criteria for the minimum national requirements for the activity of the candidate for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD) in Area 1. Pedagogical sciences.

The achieved results give me the reason to propose to the respected Scientific Jury my **positive vote** for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD) to Dimitar Radoslavov Penev, in the area of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy, scientific specialty Media pedagogy.

24/08/2023

Signature:

(Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Petrova PhD)