

Review

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PROMOTION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE SPORTS MARKET MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: This text reviews the book in the form of a monographic publication entitled Promotion and Public Relations in the Sports Market - A Marketing Perspective. The growth of the sports market requires a more serious scientific approach to the analysis of its segments, but also a better insight into the specifics of its development, given that they are the basis of the application of promotional resources. The following analysis is based on the fact that promotion is an integral part of marketing, then that scientific literature in the field of changing promotional potentials on the sports market is not sufficiently represented in Serbia and neighboring countries, and that there is a need to publish at an academic level. After a short review of the existing literature that contains the terms promotion, marketing, and sport in the title, the latest edition of the mentioned monographic publication is highlighted. The reasons are in the adequate selection and optimal combination of marketing and promotional topics, then in the structure that indicates a scientific approach, and in the positioning of the key communication potentials in the sports market concerning the segment, and thus its particularities. The aim of this article in the form of a review is to point out the significant contribution of the mentioned monographic publication to the academic environment and to the practice of the sports market.

Keywords: promotion, PR, sports market, marketing, communications

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Introduction

The sports market is experiencing significant growth, both in the primary and secondary segments. The sports market is projected to generate a total revenue of USD 2.65 billion in 2025 worldwide. This market segment is expected to have a compound annual growth rate (CAGR 2022-2027) of 9.62%, resulting in a projected market size of \$4.17 billion by 2027 (Statista Market Insights 2024). Therefore, the need for analyses, especially scientific in this area, is growing, which results in the appearance of new publications with topics related to the economic aspects of this market. One such topic is marketing and promotion in sports. In our region², the first significant book dealing with marketing in sports, which can be said to have been written at an academic level, is the book *Marketing in Sport* (Tomić, 2001) 2001, published in Serbia. In the same year, the book *Management and Marketing in Sport* appeared (Ljubojevic, 2001). Three years later, *Sports Marketing* (Gašović, 2004) appeared, and in 2009, the same author published *Marketing of Sports Organizations* (Gasovic, 2009). After a long time³, in 2018, the book *Marketing in Sport with Elements of the Sports Industry* (Ratkovic and Dasic, 2018) was published, which is used at faculties, both in Serbia, as well as in Montenegro and Croatia. In addition to it, a book that is also a faculty textbook is *Marketing in Sport* (Alčaković, et al., 2019) by a group of authors from 2019.

In the Republic of Croatia, the books *Public Relations - Theory and Practice* (Tomic, 2016) and *Strategic Management of Sports Communication* (Tomic, et al., 2019) were published by a group of authors, group of authors⁴. The books of these authors are included in this analysis, although the titles do not contain the keywords promotion, marketing, and sport, because, in most of the content they talk about promotion on the sports market, that is, its primary segment. Before these editions, the

² Hronology related to Serbia, Montenegro, and Croatia is primarily summarized here.

³ In 2005, the book *Marketing in Sport, Sports Promotion and Marketing Mix* by Professor Duško Tomić was published, however, it remained the focus of the part of the academic community that studies this area for a very short time.

⁴ In 2021, the first author also published the book *Management and Communication in Sport*, however, the search for significant publications presented here was based on the words marketing, promotion, and sport, and publications with the keyword management are excluded, regardless of whether they are in this title is related to communication (which is considered in certain circumstances to be synonymous with promotion, as in the case of the previous book by the same author), because it is a broad term that, in addition to the searched terms, includes a large number of others.

book *Sports Marketing and the Sports Industry* (Novak, 2006) by Ivan Novak was published in 2006. Pored navedenih značajnijih izdanja, pojavljuje se još jedno, a to je *Sportski marketing grupe autora iz 2020. godine* (Kos Kavran, et al., 2020). Namely, by the rules of work at individual higher education institutions, professors must prepare materials for courses, and this publication, which is offered in online form, appears at the Međumura Polytechnic in Čakovec and is highly visible and thus significantly cited in scientific journals. works. However, as the mentioned publication is still in the form of a script, regardless of the mentioned qualities, it cannot be put on a par with other publications, but it should certainly be taken into account as a serious work.

Author Popović is the author who published the book *Communication and Promotion in Sport in Montenegro* (Popović, 2018). The second edition was published in 2022. (Research was done according to Cobbis.)

The common feature of the aforementioned publications is the simultaneous theoretical and practical approach and the possibility of using them as textbooks at higher education institutions. In addition, in terms of content, these publications cover a wider range of topics to an extent that is suitable for formulating subjects in both undergraduate master's and doctoral studies. They were chosen based on the above parameters, as well as through the keywords marketing, promotion, and sport. However, one more should be added to this list of important publications, regardless of the narrower focus of the content. We are working on the book *Marketing of a Sports Event - Olympic Games 4.0* (Trkulja, 2022) 2022, authored by Miloš Trkulja, which is based on a work by the same author from 2008 entitled *Marketing of a Sports Event - Olympic Games* (Trkulja, 2008).

Each of the publications highlighted here as significant includes a review of the communication and promotional aspects of the sports market, however, they are dealt with largely within the scope of known promotion techniques, with public relations being singled out as a particularly significant communication potential. As it was noticed as one limitation that is increasingly serious considering the growth above of the sports market, there is a growing need for a more comprehensive scientific approach to the analysis of promotion in sports. Bearing that promotion is an integral part of the modern marketing approach, the authors Ratkovic and Penzevic create content they will call *Promotion and public relations in the sports market - a marketing perspective*. In addition to considering the promotional aspects of the sports market, not neglecting the fact that the potential of integrated marketing communications derives from marketing resources, they divide this market according to logical criteria into primary and secondary parts, considering that the

growth of the second directly depends on the growth of the first, but also on the trends that come from the macro influence. However, as the primary segment is the basis for the creation of the secondary segment, they define a set of specifics in this part, and in the context of marketing and promotion, thus distinguishing public relations as a key means of communication in the first segment of this market.

The mentioned monographic publication, which has been accepted for use in the form of a textbook at the Faculty of Sports of the University "Union - Nikola Tesla", is a work that will certainly significantly enrich the library fund of higher educational institutions, which is the reason for the analysis of its content in the rest of this text. The contribution of this book is reflected in two directions, one of which is related to the education of future experts in the field of marketing, promotion, and public relations in sports, while the other is aimed at practitioners who are already performing tasks related to the aforementioned fields. The reason for this is the content, which includes both theoretical and practical references to the field of promotion in sports. The theoretical approach involves the presentation of key and related phenomena, terms, and processes, as well as concepts and instruments from the field of promotion in sports, but also related fields such as marketing and public relations. On the other hand, the practical contribution is in the applicability of the presented content, both through the simplification of the mentioned procedures and processes, and through the presentation of a large number of current and relevant examples.

Review

The content of the book *Promotion and Public Relations in the Sports Market - A Marketing Perspective* begins with a preface in which the authors give an overview of the upcoming topics, as well as an explanation for whom and why this publication is intended. Following the announcement, the approach used to present the content is from broader to narrower, as is logical, or at least present in the material that aims to educate students. On the other hand, and bearing in mind the monographic characteristics of this work, the authors Ratković and Penezić have divided the content into six units that cover key topics for understanding the application of promotional tools and strategies in the sports market, which are rounded off in such a way as to provide a complete picture of challenges, limitations, and advantages of possible ways of their implementation.

Bearing in mind that the subtitle of this book emphasizes the marketing perspective, it is necessary to look back at the reason for this approach to the treatment of topics

that fall into the field of promotion in the sports market. Namely, and as the authors observe, promotion is not synonymous with marketing, but rather a part of it, and the one that is the most transparent to the target groups, but also to the general public. Also, it should be emphasized that this applies to everyone, not just the sports market. Nevertheless, in the sports market, there is a partial explanation (though not a justification) why promotion is used as a synonym for marketing, which represents an area much wider and more complex, both than promotion and any other integral part of it, regardless of whether it is we are talking about the marketing mix (which includes promotion as an element), or another concept, procedure, and instrument. That explanation is found in the fact that in the primary segment of the sports market, some elements of marketing are applied much more often than in other types of markets, and they belong to promotional techniques, that is, they are part of promotional strategies, which are therefore the most represented. Here we should refer to another useful explanation given by the authors of this book, which is the division of the sports market into primary and secondary parts. The primary segment, the one in which the most common choice of marketing potentials has been shown to fall on promotional techniques and strategies, and includes athletes, sports organizations, sports media, i.e. sports events, sponsors, etc.

Without the primary part, the secondary part would not exist, even to a significant extent, even though its participation is very significant in the overall sports market. In the secondary segment of the sports market, all manufacturers and traders of sports clothing, props, and equipment, as well as the fitness industry, participate, as well as participants such as medical institutions that provide rehabilitation services to athletes and others. Bearing in mind this division, the authors of the book use an innovative approach to identifying and studying the application of promotion in the sports market, which is one of the key contributions that are the backbone of the presented content. Ratković shows his knowledge of the complex issues of marketing in several of his publications, such as the books *Marketing Strategies* (Mileno- vić and Ratković, 2009) and *Marketing* (Mileno- vić and Ratković, 2021), but also through narrower analyses aimed at other types of markets such as banking and postal (Ratković, et al., 2017). Pointing to the development of marketing from a focus on the product to a focus on employees (Ratkovic, et al., 2012), as well as the importance of good relations with customers (Ratkovic, et al., 2011) and employees (Rat- ković, 2009), Ratković enters into details of the modern marketing approach, which later in its publications directs its application to the sports market. As the task of modern marketing is to create good and long-term relationships with customers, the aforementioned analyses are considered a prerequisite for the achievement of this goal, which Ratković emphasizes by looking at building relationships with customers

as a strategy that will improve the modern concept of marketing (Ratkovic, et al., 2013).

After clarifying the basic concepts, as well as those that are controversial, which unfortunately are too many, both in the field of marketing and the field of promotion, but also in public relations and the field of sports, then clarifying the key procedures, as well as the framework for the application of promotional potentials, the authors after the first chapter in which they present all of the above, they point to the importance of sports in modern society. The next segment of the issue is the chapter that refers to the opium of communication with the factors of the sports environment. The authors start from the fact that they consider communications as a means of achieving competitive advantage, which Ratkovic deals with in other publications as well (Garaca, et al., 2013). By identifying the factors of the environment, that is, participants in the sports market, they point out subjects with whom communication should be established as a process, one part of which is precisely promotion. The participation of promotional potentials in the communication process depends on the relevance of the factors surrounding the sports subject, but certainly, communication is the basis of promotion. In this chapter, the authors clearly show the key subjects with whom a relationship should be established, both in the primary and secondary segments of the sports market. Through a detailed analysis, from the aspect of the internal and external environment, highlighting public relations as an important segment of communication in the primary market, they lay the foundations for the presentation of promotional potentials in the rest of this book. Most of the analysis in this chapter is directed towards communication with the target consumers of products and services, with the suggestion that researching their characteristics is an extremely important activity. It is precisely concerning the characteristics of the target groups that a communication plan should be created (Jotanovic, et al., 2017) and taking into account organizational and other preconditions (Dasic and Ratkovic, 2022).

In the continuation of the content, in the following chapter, they go into topics about the media, emphasizing the importance of the modern information and communication environment. Current trends in the global sports market show that social media are taking the place of mainstream media, but this process is accompanied by great challenges and limitations that stem from the fact that no one has yet dealt with them in the literature from a scientific point of view. This chapter leaves room for more detailed analyses of the problems of today's media, but the authors of this book provide a good basis for researching their potential and implications on the sports market. This approach allows other authors and researchers in this field to make their contribution that will be based on the questions raised here,

as well as on the framework through which the key topics need to be addressed further. At the same time, and which represents a significant contribution that is evident in the rest of the book, as well as before this chapter, Ratkovic, and Penezic emphasize the importance of the principles and traditional (but not outdated) approach to the analysis of promotional potential that they connect with marketing and other related areas, which is the sports market singled out as important. In this part of the monograph, the findings of the author's earlier works, such as the study Contemporary challenges of media management (Penezic, 2023), are summarized and important for her, especially useful in the context of global challenges faced by media companies, but also indirectly by other actors that they undoubtedly have influence. It is about these other important related areas that they talk about in the fourth chapter, where they establish the connection between the main marketing potentials that can be used and promotional purposes. In addition to the elements of the basic pattern of the marketing mix, throughout the chapter, they emphasize the role and importance of employees in the sports market. The importance of employees in the marketing context has been known for a long time and emphasized in many works by the author of this book (Ratkovic, 2009).

As a significant part of the activities in the sports market is realized through the direct participation of employees, their role in promotion becomes more important. In the primary sports market, they also consider athletes as employees, and in the secondary market, they highlight their promotional potential in the fitness industry. Here is also a review of the specifics of the sports market, considering the multiple roles of employees, then the participation of sports events, as well as the large share of the just mentioned fitness industry and its growing trend, both in the world and in Serbia. Following these, but also other specificities that arise precisely from the nature of the sports market (Ratkovic and Dasic, 2023), the authors talk about the identified promotional potentials that are relevant in the primary and secondary segments.

The key feature of promotion in today's global sports market is the integration of all possible promotional potentials that arise not only from a set of promotional techniques but also from other resources, the most represented of which are those from the field of marketing. This is clearly emphasized in the fourth chapter, from the analysis of the marketing aspects of the sports product (Ratkovic, et al., 2023) to all other elements of the marketing mix, which is another contribution of this publication. As it is about integrated marketing communications in the sports market, this contribution to the fund of written material is even more significant. One of the explanations is that globally famous athletes are significant influencers who exert a promotional influence more than any other influencers. That influence is multiple,

and starts from the role of employees in their promotion (Dasic, et al., 2021), through the promotion of the sports organization to which they belong, to the promotion of various socially responsible topics. Such a multiple role of famous athletes cannot be ignored but must be coordinated in such a way as to contribute to the overall effect of the promotion of the sports organization, but also of the athlete himself, given that he represents the product on which certain marketing activities are carried out. Therefore, athletes, as one of the specifics of the application of promotion in the sports market, have potentials that belong to integrated marketing communications, which Ratković and Penezić observed and emphasized, and which represents a significant theoretical contribution of this publication, given that there are still no analyzes that this way they show the role of athletes in the context of these communications.

In the next chapter, which is also the most extensive, which is quite expected, the authors write about promotional techniques, which leads to the core of the title of this book. From advertising, through personal selling, then sales promotion and direct marketing, they come to public relations (Ratkovic, et al., 2022), publicity and sponsorship (Ratkovic, 2023), as well as other promotion techniques. In this chapter, for each of the mentioned promotional techniques, where it can be evaluated in general, they emphasize in which part of the sports market they are used more. Thus, for public relations and publicity, they point out that their role is crucial in relation to other promotional potentials in the primary sports market, especially when they are in the path of a crisis situation. Also, in the same segment of the sports market, they point out the use of sponsorship, because it represents a significant basis for the functioning of the primary segment of the market. However, from the aspect of marketing analysis, sponsorship does not play a significant role with big and well-known clubs, as well as with athletes, except for its basic function, which is financing, while for smaller participants in the primary sports market, the role of sponsorship is also significant in terms of marketing. Namely, in the case of smaller, or less well-known participants in the primary sports market, the role of sponsor, in addition to financing, has other important connotations for analysis, such as image transfer, the method of choosing the subject of sponsorship, etc. Of course, this also exists with larger participants, but it is represented and significant to a much lesser extent, given that the objects of sponsorship are already globally positioned, and it seems that they often choose sponsors and transfer their image to them. Considering that this is the approach to explaining the ambiguous role of sponsorship, it can be concluded that the authors of this publication delve into the issues of the topic in detail, to identify the hidden potential of promotion. At the same time, and bearing in mind the representation and importance of public relations and sponsor-

ship in the primary sports market, they explain that precisely these promotional potentials are used in a much broader sense in practice and that they are so significant that they deserve a separate analysis in publications of this form, which would only deal with them. In this sense, they emphasize that in the context of the functioning of the primary sports market, it is precisely public relations that represents an area that is on the same level as marketing, and that as such it must be given its deserved place, both in theory and in practice. The explanation why this promotional potential is classified as a series of promotional techniques in this book, or chapter, is found in the marketing approach to the content they deal with because this approach allows processing a larger number of topics that have implications for the topic of promotion in the sports market. As this monograph is planned to be used as a textbook, this topic had to be treated in this way.

The application of promotional techniques is presented in this book through a strategic promotion framework that correlates with the overall marketing strategy of a sports organization or any other participant in the sports industry. The presented strategic framework applies to other markets as well and includes both traditional and digital media infrastructures. The authors respect the well-known strategic principles of implementation of promotional potentials but respect the specifics of the sports market. As a greater number of specificities are present in the exemplary segment of this market, the known strategic frameworks must be modified accordingly. The fact presented in this book is that public relations is the most used compared to other promotional potentials (the authors note well that this promotional potential should not be called a technique, although it consists of a large number of techniques), or maybe better to say that they are the most useful tool in crises, which are not rare in this market, it shows that the authors know the sports market well, as well as promotional strategies. Additionally, what confirms the above is the approach to explaining publicity in the sports market. They see this promotional potential as both a cause and an outcome of certain activities. When they talk about publicity as a cause, they refer to certain crises, such as scandals caused by athletes, which result in negative publicity. The first activity undertaken in that case, which falls within the domain of communications and promotion, is public relations. In cases where publicity is a consequence, it can arise as a result of public relations, which is expected to be positive, or as a result of any other activity, that does not belong to the domain of promotion or communications, but which contributes to the image of the sports entity. Therefore, the authors clearly explain the nature of the emergence of publicity, pointing out its dual importance, as well as the connection with public relations, but also with all other activities of the sports entity that can improve, but can also damage the image.

In the last chapter, the authors provide a broader view of public relations, placing them in the context of social responsibility, and the opportunities that the sports market can provide. In addition to the aforementioned parallels with social responsibility, they also show the relationship with public relations and sponsorship, as well as with other topics that are closely related to the sports market. This chapter differs from the others because it is much more theoretically and conceptually oriented, but it rounds off the impression of this publication in the direction of a monographic form, given that the authors provide a kind of summary, as well as concluding considerations, on the selected topics. At the same time, it is enriched with new insights from practice, highlighting those dimensions that today are important to see and understand adequately since they are dominantly present in the practical implementation and achievement of success in this field.

The special value of the book is represented by the analysis of recent examples from everyday sports (practice), which are contextually selected for a reason and skilfully presented. They complement each of the individual chapters previously discussed, making the mosaic of topics it covers whole and authentic.

Conclusion

The growth of the sports market requires continuous monitoring of all the factors that make up this market, both from a practical and an academic point of view. Following this need, a scientific approach to the analysis of the application of marketing and promotion in sports is necessary, which includes relevant publications at a scientific level. This paper provides information on important publications in the field of marketing and promotion in the sports market from Serbia and some neighboring countries but also provides a detailed review of the last published book entitled *Promotion and Public Relations in the Sports Market - A Marketing Perspective*.

This book represents a significant contribution to the fund of theoretical resources on the topic of promotion in sports in a broader sense, but also a contribution to the practical benefits that can be achieved based on the presented topics. A large number of examples illustrate each of the described chapters, which puts the theoretical characteristics of this publication in the context of real and current practice. Therefore, this monographic publication can be useful both for students of faculties studying promotion in sports, marketing in sports, and public relations in sports, as well as practitioners in the sports market, i.e. managers who aim to improve the image of the sports entity they work for. However, this book can also help anyone engaged in scientific research work in the field of promotion and public rela-

tions in sports, given the significant number of presented concepts and the highlighting of significant relationships between key phenomena and processes in the sports market that take place in the context of promotion either which segment of it. The way of thinking and connecting that the authors of this book gave through its content, represents an innovative approach to the study of all important topics related to promotion in the modern sports market. Bearing in mind the above, it can be concluded that the book *Promotion and Public Relations in the Sports Market* is a marketing perspective of current content with an innovative approach combining theory and practice.

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