Chapter 18
The Portuguese Football Federation's New Paradigm During COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Sport is probably the main form of physical activity. Football (i.e., soccer) is often mentioned as the most popular sport. Not surprisingly, the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) consistently registers the largest number of participants among 60 sport federations that are recognized by the Portuguese Government. To enhance quality, FPF created the Portugal Football School (PFS) aimed to promote education and applied research in parallel to knowledge transfer. The targets are players, managers, clinical professionals, nutritionists, and media. Until the emergence of the current pandemic, COVID-19, the educational model followed the traditional classroom setting for teaching and learning. This chapter's focus will be only on the PFS Education area and presenting results related to the PFS courses and participants in the pre-COVID-19 period and during COVID-19 pandemic time.

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INTRODUCTION

World Health Organization (WHO) recently announced an abnormal number of pneumonia cases of unknown origin, initially cataloged as flu, in Hubei Province, Wuhan City, China (Biswas et al., 2020). Few weeks later, in January 2020, the disease was recognized as a public health emergency (Li & Lalani, 2020; World Health Organization Organization, 2020). To prevent the progression of the disease, almost all national governments decreed lockdowns that are being kept has a crucial public health action to control its effects (Atalan, 2020). All these produced a tremendous impact in sports.

Football is the most popular sport in the world and represents an important part of the world sports industry (Cayolla & Loureiro, 2014; Sourav, 2020). The Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) is the largest Portuguese sports organization. The FPF has its range of action in terms of football, futsal and beach football and its mission is to coordinate, streamline, develop and organize football in all its dimensions and categories. In order to carry out this mission, the FPF and its associates have always been committed to educating and qualifying their different sports agents. The FPF has had a huge development in recent years, both in terms of infrastructures (e.g., the City of Football) and sports results, with international achievements at the highest level.

The Portugal Football School (PFS) is the FPF education and research unit. It consists of three main areas: Education, Research, and Knowledge Transfer. The PFS aims to educate and qualify the different stakeholders beyond coaches and referees. This is a differentiating factor of the PFS in relation to other national and international sports organizations as it includes leaders, players, health professionals, media, and society in general. In this chapter our focus will be only on the PFS Education area. This unit's pedagogical activities, since its creation and until the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, mostly adopted a classroom teaching model. The pandemic has radically changed the teaching paradigm (Li & Lalani, 2020). This chapter presents results related to the PFS courses and their participants in the pre-COVID-19 period and during the COVID-19 pandemic times. Finally, recommendations are proposed, and conclusions presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand and Consumer-brand Relationships

A brand exists in the minds of consumers (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998) and the relationships with consumers and brands are proven in the most varied scenarios (Fetscherin, Cayolla, Guzmán, & Veloutsou, 2016; Fetscherin, Guzman, Veloutsou, & Cayolla, 2019). In a sports context, markedly emotional, brand love reflects one of the extreme characteristics of the consumer attachment to the brand (Ahuvia, 1993, 2005; Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). Regardless of the market in which it operates, any company wants to be positively perceived by consumers (Keller, 2016). In addition, a brand that is distinguished and recognized in the market before a whole set of players is one of the greatest assets of any company (Davcik, da Silva, & Hair, 2015). Despite the lack of consensus on the definition of brand (Jones & Bonevac, 2013), a brand reflects a complex entity providing meaning to the product to which it is linked, either in terms of the characteristics facilitating the consumer's decision-making process, or in terms of a set of associations created in the minds of consumers (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998). A strong brand is supposed to generate commitment and loyalty (Veloutsou, 2015), by building

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