

Comparative Analysis of Sports Development and Management between Rural Communities in Ukraine and Europe

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Abstract The paper compares the current state of sports development and management in rural Ukraine with other countries in Europe. By conducting the comparison, it aims to find the bottlenecks that can be improved in order to enhance the state of sports management in Ukraine. Rural Ukraine is deprived of laws and opportunities that allow for the development of sports facilities. This research takes an in-depth look into the opportunities that Europe's other countries have yet Ukraine doesn't. The purpose of this research is to analyze what can be improved upon and how Ukraine's rural areas bring change into their current sports condition. The paper used a secondary methodology, which involved analysis of literature from past researches into developing a comparative assessment of how other countries are achieving sports development and how Ukraine can manage it as well. The results showcase that Ukraine still requires a lot of work, effort, time and money to be invested for sports management to prosper. Various limitations were imposed on the research such as lack of time and resources, which limited the comparison to within Europe only. The social implications of such research are that the youth of any underdeveloped country can use the research to bring real change in how sports management is developed and maintained in their countries.

Keywords Sports, Ukraine, Management

1. Introduction

The rapid onset development of sports and sports management has skyrocketed globally in the last few decades. Ratten [1] notes that due to technological advancements, more people have access to devices where they can watch sports, which has exponentially increased the popularity of athletic games. Ukraine has its own sports development programs which facilitate and sponsor national teams. Examples include Football clubs, basketball teams, and ice hockey teams among many others. The popular sports in Ukraine range from volleyball, football, swimming, basketball, and gymnastics. Football is by far the most popular sport with Dynamo Kyiv and Shakhtar Donetsk football clubs leading the charge.

The development and management of sports programs is a centralized procedure with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine being in charge. Created in 1991, the government body is responsible for overseeing the development and management of sports in both rural and urban areas of Ukraine. However, since sports facilities are financed from the municipal budget, Tikhonova & Gradusov [2] note that corruption prevents the goals of the programs from being fully realized. Corruption is the main focal point which had led to poor and subpar sports development, especially in rural Ukraine and due to a lack of alternative supervising bodies, the rural areas are often deprived of opportunities within the sports domain. Since

over 38% of Ukraine's inhabitants live in rural areas, there is a vast contrast between the opportunities and development programs offered in urban areas as compared to the rural ones. One can blame the legislative acts of Ukraine that focus on sports development that they have large gaps in their effectiveness and implementation. To offset the dismal situation there is a need for internal improvement of regional management of the development of sports. The low efficiency is not just due to corruption, but also due to lack of interest, lack of sponsors, and financing opportunities [3].

Compared to European countries and the member states of the European Union (EU) in general, there is a stark contrast between them and Ukraine within the realm of sports development and management. One fundamental reason for that is that sports programs and communities are both headed by governmental institutions and private institutions. Since there is an element of decentralization of sports programs, it allows greater opportunities for residents of the EU member states to access unique opportunities within sports domains. This can include sponsorship, development, and training of multiple international level sports teams as well as the construction of sports fields [4].

1.1. Background

Baker et al. [5] state that rural areas within European countries including Germany, Sweden, Spain, and the Netherlands are given a higher consideration for sporting opportunities. Since the programs, there are funded and scout talented athletes on a merit basis, there is a higher chance of recruitment from rural areas. Ukraine, however, lacks such an element, as comparatively little consideration is provided to rural areas and talented athletes that live there.

One major advantage that European countries have is that non-sports-related organizations also believe in the potential of sports and thus use funds for its development and management. The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe is one such organization. It promotes a healthy lifestyle amongst the youth in European countries by regularly backing sports programs and activities that are held throughout the member states. Focusing on physical activities across a wide level spectrum, it aims to improve the conditions that are provided for physical sports programs and activities and level the playing field for each citizen regardless of their status. It disregards social inequality for its pursuit of equal opportunities for everyone within the physical activity domain [6].

It is therefore imperative to conduct an analysis of what sets Europe's sports development and management apart from Ukraine's and what are the differences between their implementation of sports policies. Furthermore, there is also a need to understand how these differences impact each other. A comparison and contrast would allow the

researcher to isolate points of weakness and recommend solutions to offset them.

1.2. Research Question

What are the differences between sports development and management in rural areas in Ukraine and Europe?

1.3. Research Aims

- To highlight the contrast between the services and opportunities of sports development in Ukraine and Europe
- To assess the future potential of sports management in Ukraine
- Provide recommendations on how to enhance the management and deployment of sports in Ukraine.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Importance of Sports

Regardless of where it takes place, sports have a definite impact on the overall health of a country, and its economy because it provides an avenue for travel and tourism. Sports at a local community level aim to bring the people within the community together and foster positive relations between people. It also provides a source of entertainment and helps generate funds through sales of tickets, merchandise, and other items.

Even among children, the attraction to sports and physically demanding activities allows them to develop confidence and their social interaction level. Local colleges and highschooler hold friendly competitions to enhance the athleticism of the youth and enable them to partake in demanding physical activities as it is beneficial for one's health and body. Ivanič [7] states that enhanced numbers of physical activities in a community increase sports tourism which draws the attention of government bodies who are interested in financing sporting tournaments and creating sports programs for the youth. With such benefits, it is difficult for any governing body to pass up opportunities to generate profit and bolster its economy.

2.2. Current State of Sports in Ukraine

While sports development in urban Ukraine is bolstering with the 2013 FIBA Europe Championship, EuroBasket 2017, as well as their national ice hockey team has competed in several championships, the rural areas are lacking severely. Towns such as Strusiv, Grushevka, and Iza have little to no resources dedicated to sports. The youth living there are deprived of programs and sponsorships for competitive sports. There is also a lack of sports scholarships. The only sports prominent in such villages are street sports which are organized and held by

the locals themselves. They are often played just to have fun, rather than for a competitive reason [8].

Rozgirche and Podkamen however have recently developed small-scale events with cash prizes. These events involve local teams laying a series of sports matches, particularly football. These small-scale tournaments have the potential to gain enough influence to allow local governmental bodies to put more funding into local and rural sports management. The first tournament. Held in 2017 was a big step in allowing local sports teams to be visible on the country’s radar. The chance of potential talented athletes rising from these rural areas and going towards international-scale sporting events is a mine that is yet untapped [9].

Gobikas & Čingienė [10] note that central government bodies and private organizations need to step up and sponsor sports programs in Ukraine’s rural villages and towns. As an investment opportunity, it is a prime landmine for private businesses looking to get into sports management to scout athletes from these unexplored parts and groom them for future success.

2.3. Current State of Sports in Europe

The state of sports development and management in both urban and rural areas of European countries is comparatively better than in Ukraine. Countries such as Germany, have implemented the concept of territorial management, where each sector and area is supervised and managed according to the countries’ federal structure. This allows private and governmental organizations to provide consideration to sports in rural areas. The different sports programs in EU countries with Germany having 11, Sweden having 7, and Norway having 6, provide a better platform for sports development and management. These programs involve the promotion of sports facilities and

construction, the development of sports programs in universities ad schools as well as providing funds and support to local sports organizations [11].

Other countries such as France have over 36,000 communities with over 700 municipal sports associations. Most of these are sports houses and health centers that provide a greater emphasis on physical activities therefore they organize sporting events for the youth and senior citizens. Because of these organizations, the prominence of sporting activities is comparatively much higher in the urban and rural areas as compared to Ukraine and Russia [12]. Local sports departments and local communities play a vital role in the development of sports and physical culture in Norway, Sweden, and France. They have separate local bodies responsible for the advancement of sports in rural areas. The "Sports for All" program in France ensures that these facilities and sporting opportunities are available to every citizen regardless of where they live. Communities often have gyms where sports training classes are held for young children. Thus, it can therefore be observed that the current state of sports in Europe is better than that of Ukraine [13].

3. Materials and Methods

The research makes use of a secondary research method, particularly a systematic literature analysis. This method enables the researcher to evaluate prior researches that were conducted within the same field and use the data and arguments within them to cover a research gap and justify the resented arguments. The prior researches in the development and maintenance of sports within Ukraine are paramount in discerning the difference between them and the state of sports in Europe. The overview of the process is as follows.

Table 1. Systematic Literature Review Process (Adapted from Tranfield et al.) [14]

Steps	Processes
Step 1: Data Identification	Identify keywords Identify data sources Select relevant research papers
Step 2: Extraction of Data	Qualitative review Exclusion of redundant data
Step 3: Analysis and evaluation of data	Literature Review Using the findings to answer the research question Gauge future research potential

Table 2. Keywords

Area	Keywords
Sports in Ukraine	Development of Sports in Ukraine, Management of Sports in Ukraine, Future of Sports in Ukraine
Sports in Europe	Development of Sports in Europe, Management of Sports in Europe, Future of Sports in Europe
Sports Comparison between Ukraine and Europe	Sports Development Comparison between Ukraine and Europe, Sports Management Comparison between Ukraine and Europe,

Table 3. Research Paper Review Count

Technologies	Number of Papers				
	EBSCO	JSTOR Database	Google Scholar	Exclusions	Final Research Paper count
Sports in Ukraine	7	5	4	8	8
Sports in Europe	5	3	5	5	8
Sports Comparison between Ukraine and Europe	4	5	7	7	9
					25

3.1. Data Identification

Keywords were used to isolate and extract research papers to review. The keywords were kept generic to increase the number of papers that the search engine output. The keywords highlighted different variations of sports development and management practices both in and out of Ukraine. Table 2 shows some of the keywords that were used.

3.2. Data Collection

Different search engines and databases were used to extract research papers. This includes Google Scholar, JSTOR Library Database, and EBSCO's search engine. The output frequency of research papers from each database is provided in table 3.

Table 3 also makes it a point to highlight the papers that were excluded after the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria. The final number of research papers reviewed came to 25.

3.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Multiple inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to select papers for review. These criteria were developed by the research to reduce the scope of the research and enhance its focus on the research question. This resulted in the extraction and analysis of highly relevant papers about the research topics' theme. The inclusion criteria are as follows. The authors must have more than one paper published in the same domain to assess their credibility. The paper must be no longer than 15 years old. The papers must also be in full English language and they should be

freely available for reading without the need for a payment fee.

The exclusion criteria were as follows. Articles in foreign languages other than English were discarded. Any articles whose information and data were not relevant to the current topic were also excluded. Forum posts, blogs and website articles were all excluded as well as their credibility is not proved.

3.4. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was done through a qualitative data evaluation technique that is also known as systematic analysis. This method divides the different aspect of sports management and development and then compares and contrasts it between the state in European countries and Ukraine. This allows the researcher to draw sufficient conclusions on how each different variable is acting between the two entities. This ultimately allows the researcher to conclude whether European countries are better at developing and managing sports than rural Ukraine.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Franklin [15] states that the criticality of incorporating ethical conduct within research is important to achieve success in the research itself. For that reason, the data that was used in this paper was checked and validated multiple times for its authenticity. Furthermore, as mentioned above, any unreliable sources were discarded from the research process. Lastly, all the data that was used from previous research were fully credited to their original authors.

4. Findings

4.1. Health and Life Expectancy

People in rural Ukraine are deprived of sports opportunities due to a lack of development and infrastructure. As a result, there are not many chances for people to indulge in sports and physical activity. This is one of the reasons that Ukraine has the smallest period of healthy living. The average life expectancy is 61.7 years in Ukraine which is the lowest in all of Europe. The life expectancy in Poland is 68 years, 69.5 in Germany, and 71.2 in France. The average life expectancy in Europe is 63.5 years. The analysis that takes into account data from 1950 to 2019 is critical evidence that Ukraine needs more sports development and management programs [16].

4.2. Governmental Interest

Ukraine's government does not have much interest in developing the facilitation of sports. Since sports management, fall under governmental jurisdiction, private companies and institutions cannot play an active part as well. This results in the government being the only source that can develop sports programs. This dependency works against the people as the government has little interest in pursuing it. On the other hand, numerous institutions and organizations are spread all across Europe that has created charters and policies that enhance sports development. These include the International Charter on Physical Education along with the European Manifesto "Young People and Sport" as well as the European Sports Charter [17].

Furthermore, the European Commission has taken extra steps to ensure that the development and maturation of sports are successful. One such act is the creation of the White Paper on Sport in 2007 which became the first act of the EU to develop a unified position within the European region about sports activities and management [18]. This white paper highlights various policies that lay the groundwork for physical activities and their development. It highlights the tools for implementation of policy, how they must be implemented, and how sports will be impacted because of them. The document goes into specifics about managing the sports economy and its relationship with the social communities. Rural Ukraine is not affected by these documents and policies and it is largely ignored in the grand scheme of sports development. This hinders its ascendance into sports management [19].

4.3. Sports Development Model

Many countries in the EU follow the mixed funding model where both private organizations and the government states share the expenses and sponsorships of sports management and development. This commercial

approach enables the development of professional competitions in sports which is a primary factor towards sports success [20]. This model also supports young children and youth by providing budgets to local communities, sports centers and schools so that the youth can get the opportunity to participate and indulge in spring activities. This works at both the regional and municipal levels and contributes to high quality and improvement.

Lera-López & Marco [21] states that the budgets provided by municipalities vary based on teams, traditions, and senior management. One example is France spends around 7% of its budget on sports expenditures. 20-25 billion francs are spent annually to develop a physical culture within the regions. However, in Ukraine, the system is completely government-funded. Private organizations do not play a part in sports development at all, which leads to the government largely ignoring the rural areas for sports development. As a result, the youth there are not able to avail opportunities to play sports and benefit from their presence. Other EU countries also involve local authorities in the element of modernizing sports. These facilities take care of the needs of the community, groups, funding, and other activities. Ukraine's rural villages yet again do not have such privilege [22].

4.4. Sports in Other EU Countries

Ukraine has 6 sports programs in its country while rural areas, towns, and villages have none. In Germany, there are over 11 different sports programs depending on the area and the history [23]. Poland has 9 government-funded programs and many smaller-funded programs. France and Spain each have over 10 sports programs. France has 700 municipal sports associations such as health centers, gyms, and sports houses. It can be observed that Ukraine has the lowest number of sports programs [24]. These sports programs help promote the construction of sporting areas and facilities. They also develop sports in schools and universities as well as fund sports clubs and sports teams. The lack of their presence in rural areas of Ukraine is yet another proof of how the area needs proper sports management and development.

4.5. Overall Standards

Various surveys have highlighted the reason behind European's efforts to participate in sports. The first is health reasons while the second is achieving physical harmony with the body and maintaining physical shape. The third is social motives which involve making friends and taking part in communication. This showcases that the EU countries are more geared towards sports activities, however, areas such as rural Ukraine and rural Poland are unable to make proper use of sports and physical activities as there is little to no development in those regions [25].

The standards of physical activity that have been highlighted by the WHO have been formed to gauge the

relative physical health levels in EU countries. Ukraine ranks the lowest among them as Ukraine has the lowest health expectancy. For areas such as rural Ukraine and rural Poland, the WHO highlights various physical activities that they must take regardless of participating in sports to keep their health above a certain threshold. This involves exercises, muscle development work, and daily workouts. These guidelines are not necessary for other regions as they can get the opportunities they need since they have various physical development facilities [26].

5. Discussion

Biggeri & Mauro [27] notes that the human development index or the HDI was developed to measure the process in economic and social welfare of a country. The indicator, among other things, checks for physical health and mental health. The health aspect of HDI measures the standard of living as well as the quality of life in terms of life expectancy, education, and longevity. Ukraine ranks 83th on this scale which is one of the lowest points on the scale. It is only exceeded by Armenia which ranks at 87%. This goes to show that a considerable amount of work, effort, and time is required to overhaul the rural areas of Ukraine and introduce programs and events that would increase the visibility of sports and physical activities as well as the exposure of people to them. As of right now, there are little to no programs with the local government virtually absent and making zero efforts to make sure that rural Ukraine receives the same opportunities as urban areas of Ukraine and the rest of the EU countries.

Compared to rural Ukraine, it can be observed from the comparative analysis that countries like France, Sweden, and Germany are very much ahead in terms of facilitating sporting activities and making sure the average citizens get ample opportunities of exposure to events referring to physical activities which are good for body health. Furthermore, schools and other educational institutes in rural Ukraine are also deprived of the opportunity to form a team and play sports in local and international tournaments. The lack of sports areas, gymnasiums and sports fields has prevented any solid interest in sports from being developed in the minds of youth living in rural Ukrainian towns and villages [28].

There is a substantial need for both governmental and private organizations to increase their focus on sports development and physical activities in rural Ukraine. They need to create programs, funding, and sponsorship to generate interest in sports. This can be done by creating local sports teams and creating small areas and sports facilities to give the young population a chance in indulging in physical activities. If organizations and the government start to take interest in the development and managing sports facilities, it will be the first step in ensuring that the level of sports in rural Ukraine can slowly start to catch up to the conditional and opportunities in

sports that are provided to the citizens in the other EU states.

There are however ways that can be used to improve upon the current situation. Governmental initiatives must be taken for different age groups in order to ensure they receive adequate sports facilities. For the young groups that are aged lower than 25, it is necessary to hold regional and local sports events and allow them a chance to compete. Incentives can be provided to the winning teams. The development of gyms and facilities at a small level will allow the younger generation to experience the sporting environments. The cost of admissions should be kept feasible in order for the local community to enjoy the events without them being a financial burden. For the older groups, organized training and fitness programs can incorporate sporting activities. Nursing homes can collaborate with local sporting facilities to help engage the senior citizens in health and fitness practice. At the same time, adults over the age of 25 and less than 50 working in organizations can engage in sporting activities sponsored by the companies. Therefore, companies and organizations need to take an active interest in collaborating with government officials to ensure that sporting events are conducted regularly.

6. Conclusions

The decline and stagnancy of sports in rural Ukraine have become one of the reasons why the country has the lowest life expectancy rate in Europe. Any factors contribute to the lack of interest that is being shown within the domain of sports development and management in Ukraine. They include, private organizations not having the necessary authority to sponsor and fund sporting events, municipalities and government ignoring the rural areas of Ukraine in favor of the urban areas, as well as the time, effort, and money that is required to invest in sports.

If the situation is to be changed then it falls upon the local community and population to protest and raise their voices so that governments can hear their demands for the establishment of sports facilities and provide proper management for them. The rural villages and towns of Ukraine are home to some of the best athletes and as they, depriving them of the opportunities to hone and showcase their talent impacts the country's economy in long term. Providing them the facilities they need, can lead to better health and physical state of Ukrainian youth and increase the overall life expectancy. Furthermore, it can be considered an investment as the people benefiting from these sports facilities will ultimately strengthen Ukraine itself. Ukraine's ranking on the Human Development Index has the potential to rise if proper considerations are made by the government to change laws and release bills that allow private organizations to organize and sponsor sporting areas and events.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

The researchers had several limitations placed upon them during this research. Due to a lack of time and resources, only a secondary research method was used to gauge and answer the research question. Furthermore, since the scope was limited to rural Ukraine, the research was unable to provide enough depth on the state of rural areas in other European countries.

It is thereby recommended for future researchers to use this research as a launchpad for researching within this domain. It is also recommended to use a primary research technique to directly analyze and interview residents of rural Ukraine to assess the state of sports development and management. This can lend greater accuracy to the research and can potentially lead to discovering new solutions to the problem.

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