

# Current issues of training specialists in the field of physical culture and sports in European countries

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## ABSTRACT

The issue of training specialists in the field of physical culture and sports in European countries is becoming increasingly important due to various geopolitical, cultural, and political challenges of our time. The aim of this study was to examine contemporary trends in the training of specialists within the field of physical culture and sports, to identify both pedagogical and global challenges that these specialists face, and to explore potential solutions to address these challenges effectively. The study employed a combination of analytical, descriptive, and theoretical methods, analyzing reports and documents on the quality and challenges faced by European educational institutions and sports organizations. The findings highlighted the need to improve the overall state of development of physical culture and sports in European countries based on the principles of innovative pedagogical activity, effective management, and international cooperation. Additionally, these results can serve as theoretical, methodological, and practical resources for further research on the policies and training of specialists in physical culture and sports both in Europe and globally.

## KEYWORDS

Training Specialists; Physical Culture and Sports; Pedagogical Activity; Educational Institutions; European Countries

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The modern policy of European countries is aimed at improving the quality of training specialists in physical culture and sports, as this area has cultural and social significance. The popularization of this area contributes to the development of health care, human capital development, and the formation of an international brand in the field of sports. However, the coronavirus pandemic that began in 2019 caused many negative processes that affected the level of sports segment development in all its forms, including the training of specialists.

Due to the decline in demand for sports events, the popularity of sports competitions, and inadequate conditions, the issue of sports development took first place. An important factor was the training of qualified specialists who should receive effective training and use the method of problem-based learning to implement their own practical skills. Therefore, the search for an effective system for modernizing the training of physical education specialists is aimed primarily at finding and creating innovative pedagogical techniques, tools, and means that can improve the level of knowledge of future employees and create an additional motivational aspect. In this regard, the European Union countries contribute to funding this sector. In addition, there are numerous scientific studies on the possibility of optimizing the curriculum and finding effective means for further development of physical education and sports. The experience of Ukraine is quite interesting since, in 2022, the war broke out. This led to an aggravation of the humanitarian and cultural crisis due to the lack of potential opportunities for conducting classes and organizing sports competitions.

The use of means of integrating international sports organizations worldwide into a single cooperative system can create an effective mechanism for ensuring the implementation of the practical skills of specialists in the field of physical culture and sports. The development of an information environment that will actualize important issues of physical culture and sports not only in Europe but also throughout the world is equally important in the current conditions. The implementation of such a policy will require the involvement of several internal resources of each European country and the promotion of physical culture and sports in general. As a result, such a policy will be able to strengthen the healthcare sector, solve the problem of training specialists in the field of physical culture and sports, and become a tool for the development of international cooperation on a cultural basis.

The issue of training specialists in physical education and sports has been studied by scholars from the following angles:

- curriculum optimization;
- public administration support;
- information popularization of this segment.

Budevici-Puiu & Manolachi (2021) agree with this and notes that in such circumstances, it is necessary to create additional sections and opportunities fostering the realization of sports talents and competitions among the population. Stepanchenko & Briskin (2019) stated that for effective training, it is necessary to use the problem-based learning method. This method can enhance the level of training of coaches and qualified specialists by using real examples of applying their own knowledge (Lipnická et al., 2019).

According to Fastivets et al. (2021), the most challenging issue is that due to the events of 2019, the number of practical classes has decreased. As a result, the training of modern specialists has been negatively affected, so effective methods should be sought to offset the consequences of this problem. The study by Dzvinchuk & Ozminska (2020) is equally essential, as they found that the availability of infrastructure is one of the key factors for improving the quality of sports competitions and organizing relevant training. In some European countries, according to Kalenchuk et al. (2023), there is a wide range of infrastructure for sports. However, in urban-type settlements and even in some cities, there is a lack of such facilities. Therefore, it requires intervention by the public administration to develop and improve sports infrastructure. Forostian (2023) believes that building such infrastructure will facilitate public health policy. It will also strengthen the policy of physical culture and sports development in the current global environment. According to Iurii (2020), an essential factor in the popularization of physical culture and sports is the integration of the media and their active work in this direction. In recent years, as Kozin (2021) notes, the production of sports-related materials, popularization, motivation, and training materials has decreased significantly. This has created a conditionally free market for corporate organizations.

Nevertheless, given the development of the corporate sector, Romanchuk & Danylevych (2019) argue that, in this case, additional state funding for the media could have a positive impact on the sports culture. The war in Ukraine has caused significant fluctuations in the physical culture and sports sector. Kalenchuk et al. (2023) note that the Ukrainian experience includes the involvement of various international sports organizations to support their own athletes, hold qualification classes, etc. Thus, among scholars, the issue of training specialists in the field of physical culture and sports remains a controversial issue and needs to be addressed. It will be based on the modernization of state involvement in this sector and the optimization of educational institutions' activities.

This study aims to analyze the peculiarities of training specialists in the field of physical culture and sports in European countries, as well as to identify key issues and provide relevant recommendations on how to address these issues. An essential focus of the research is to outline the experience of Ukraine since the country faced one of the largest crises in sports and was able to find additional effective tools that contribute to the overall development of this area, as well as to create appropriate tools to improve specialists' training. The article analyzes the peculiarities of theoretical and practical aspects of training specialists in physical culture and sports. The primary objectives of the study are to examine contemporary trends in the training of specialists within the field of physical culture and sports, to identify both pedagogical and global challenges that these specialists face, and to explore potential solutions to address these challenges effectively.

## **2. METHODS**

The study of the issues of training specialists in the field of physical culture and sports in Europe and Ukraine, in particular, was carried out based on analytical reports and analysis of modern documents on the quality and problems of European educational institutions and sports organizations. The search and synthesis methods were used to analyze all these documents and systematize the issues that have arisen in recent years. The research methodology is based on the identification of theoretical problems regarding the functioning of physical culture and sports, as well as further analysis of the key challenges of the modern world for European countries within the studied area. The final stage involved identifying ways to solve such problems and finding optimal solutions that can contribute to improving the overall situation with the training of specialists in physical culture and sports. The article employs an analytical method used for analytical reports of European sports organizations. These reports indicated the main challenging factors in supporting athletes, coaches, and sports culture specialists (Philipsen et al., 2019).

In addition, the study focused on the experience of Ukraine as a country that faced the largest humanitarian and sports crisis in Europe due to the war. The analysis of the Ukrainian sports infrastructure and management helps to identify the main means and ways to optimize the quality of training in a crisis. The authors paid attention to the modern means of education and training specialists. They also considered theoretical and practical aspects of the possible use of technologies and tools that would contribute to the effective training of specialists. The research methods in this paper are of a descriptive and theoretical nature, which are based on the practical analysis of specific

reports of European educational institutions and sports organizations' activities. The employed research methodology made it possible to outline the research outcomes.

### **3. RESULTS**

The development of culture and sports is one of the oldest and most important spheres of human activity. However, in recent years, this industry has faced a series of challenges and issues that require practical solutions and the support of European Union countries to achieve common goals. During 2019-2020, the spread of the coronavirus pandemic led to the closure and postponement of most sports events indefinitely, significantly reducing the popularization of sports not only in Europe but also worldwide. In 2021 and 2022, new challenges arose in the development of the sports industry, primarily due to environmental issues, a lack of qualified personnel, and available state and international funding.

In particular, in early January 2023, the highest temperatures were recorded in several European countries during winter sports competitions, which posed a significant obstacle. According to the British meteorological station Met Office, such occurrences happen once every few years. Furthermore, the escalation of the war in Ukraine in 2022, as well as its intensification in 2023 and subsequent years, will create challenges for financing the culture and sports sector for European countries.

Considering these negative trends, the need for optimizing pedagogical activities and improving the qualifications of future specialists in the field of physical culture and sports should be based on existing issues (Voitovych et al., 2018). First and foremost, pedagogical activities should consider the opportunities for using practical experience and interactive technologies to achieve positive results. According to research by several European scientists, the most effective method is the modern practice of problem-based learning, which allows professionals to apply their acquired knowledge in practice (Rubacha & Siritova, 2019).

Therefore, it is essential to recognize that improving specialist training should involve specialized sports infrastructure, such as sports fields, special facilities, stadiums, etc. Additionally, the absence of specific bureaucratic constraints regarding the use of such infrastructure, the establishment of effective control, and access to these facilities on a cost-free basis are vital factors.

Essential factors in the training of specialists in the field of physical culture and sports should include:

- optimization of pedagogical practice;
- conducting relevant research and encouraging certain educational organizations to provide special grants;
- training for professional development.

International cooperation is utilized along with a series of scientific conferences to promote and improve the quality of education in European Union countries. However, the support from governments and international organizations is currently insufficient. It is necessary to increase the focus on forming corporate social responsibility for these entities by the government. Overall, the most common practice involved the integration of sports stores, as well as several associations and corporations, such as Puma, Adidas, and certain European organizations such as the International Rowing Federation (FISA), the International Cycling Union (UCI), and the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF). In 2022 and 2023, they organized numerous events to support athletes, participated in educational programs, and developed effective means to enhance the quality of pedagogical training.

In the context of escalating global political, ecological, and cultural crises, funding remains a critical factor for improving the quality of specialist training. However, for the European Union, considering the funding burden, a practical solution would be to engage the corporate sector in this endeavor under favorable credit terms, offering a range of privileges and opportunities to operate based on fundamental cultural principles. Implementing such a practice will contribute to addressing global challenges in the preparation of specialists in the field of physical culture and sports. Ukraine's experience in fostering the qualification enhancement of future coaches and sports industry professionals during the war is an essential aspect of this issue.

In Ukraine, amidst war and socioeconomic crises, cooperation processes are underway to strengthen the economic protection of athletes and specialists dealing with this issue. In general, the main issues in the preparation of specialists in physical culture in European countries and specifically in Ukraine are outlined in Table 1. The table highlights key issues to be addressed for further resolution.

The problems presented in Table 1 relate to the general situation in the development of physical culture and sports. However, they directly affect the pedagogical training of specialists (Mytskan & Ivanochko, 2021). The experience of Ukraine is considered in the context of the war in Ukraine in 2022 since the majority of cultural areas, including sports, do not receive sufficient

funding. These problems are exacerbated by the cultural crisis that arose from the war and are at their peak. Europe and Ukraine have common pedagogical features regarding the qualitative development of the education system for workers in physical culture and sports.

The most important aspect of training should include:

- international cooperation and knowledge exchange between coaches and athletes;
- practical activities through sports competitions;
- opportunities to involve teaching staff in designing and conducting experimental research;
- creating an adequate scientific basis for such research.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of issues in training specialists in the field of physical education in European countries and Ukraine

Question/issue	European countries	Ukraine
Financing	Limited budgets for training	Insufficient budget and corruption
Technical support	An access to modern equipment is not always possible	Outdated equipment, lack of technologies
Syllabuses	The need for modern syllabuses	Outdated syllabuses, a need to update them
Pedagogical training	The need for continuous learning	Poor qualification of teachers
International cooperation	Limited exchange of experience	Low volume of international cooperation
Sports infrastructure	Some countries are lagging behind	Abandoned infrastructure
Athletes' health	Issues of doping and injuries	Issues with medical support and doping
Social recognition	Lack of professional recognition	Low status of specialists within the society

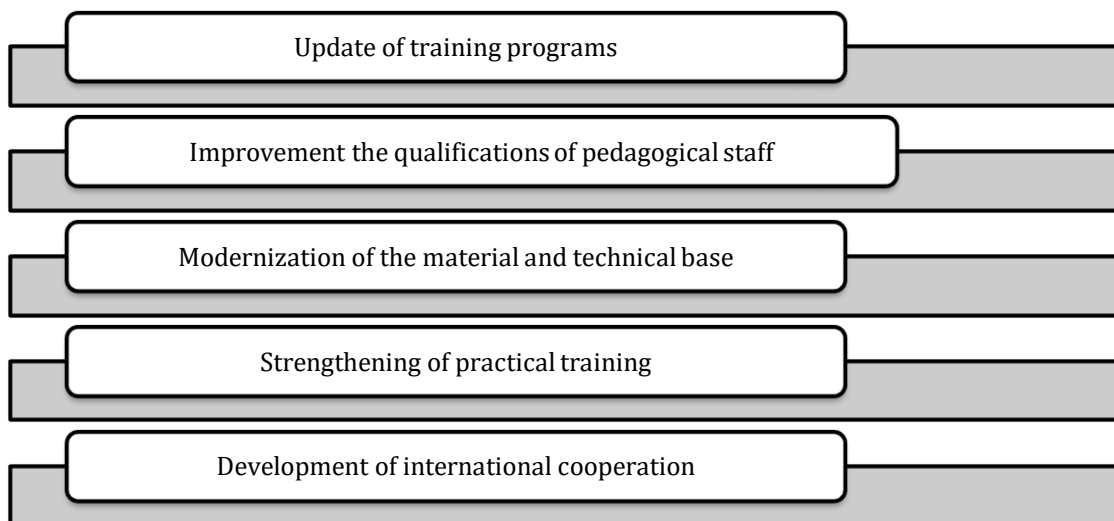
*Source: Compiled by the authors*

An important direction in improving the qualifications of employees may be the use of modern practices, such as relevant, interactive technologies based on the conduct of classes and the use of games to develop specific skills of future athletes or improve students' health.

The use of digital technologies and remote communication channels is an urgent issue of the present time in the training of specialists in physical culture and sports (Budevici-Puiu & Manolachi, 2021). They can directly affect the quality of such activities and strengthen the role of the curriculum. The introduction of distance learning can be continued based on theoretical material, knowledge exchange, the creation of special scientific conferences, the possibility of promptly organizing

scientific and practical conferences, as well as international and group projects (Ustimenko, 2019). Furthermore, modern experience in applying digital technologies can be used to create digital libraries and other digital materials to develop teaching materials. Both students and teachers can use these materials (Khoruzha et al., 2020). This practice of creating digital libraries is widespread among European countries. In particular, such digital libraries are available at universities in Germany, France, and Scandinavian countries.

The ways to improve the practice of training specialists in physical culture and sports in Europe and Ukraine can be implemented through high-quality state support, improving the methodology of educational activities, and strengthening the role of curriculum optimization (Verboncu & Şavga, 2018). Overall, this issue requires a comprehensive solution, which is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The ways to improve the training of specialists in sports and physical culture

*Source: Compiled by the authors*

The suggested ways to improve the training of specialists in physical culture and sports will be able to solve the issue of the professional competence of future specialists and minimize further risks. In addition, public administration policies and international education in the context of ensuring practical cooperation are becoming increasingly important. The creation of joint competitions and the spread of the practice of organizing such activities will have a positive socioeconomic effect. Besides, they will also influence other educational sectors. Application of digital technologies and the creation of relevant scientific databases, the introduction of digital communication channels can be used to improve the competence of physical education and sports



specialists, as well as other disciplines (Moldovan, 2020). Therefore, a comprehensive solution to this issue should be carried out based on leading educational institutions, private authorities, and public administration to improve the professional competence of future specialists, which will become a vital tool for popularizing the sports culture.

Consequently, it can be stated that the modern development of physical culture and sports has faced significant socioeconomic and geopolitical challenges. The lack of funding, the development of international cooperation, and the improvement of professional qualifications can catalyze progress (Protsenko et al., 2016). The introduction of digital technologies and the use of digital education principles can globalize this issue in the educational segment of European countries and Ukraine. They can also create favorable conditions for the transformation of modern policy in training specialists.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The findings of our study indicate that the current development of physical culture and sports requires qualitative modernization and searching for innovative ways to solve key issues in European countries. According to Zayed et al. (2019), the development of culture and sports is a tool for exchanging international experience, an instrument for improving diplomatic cooperation, and an effective method for promoting healthy lifestyles. Based on these principles, the need for the development of physical culture and sports should be fulfilled by finding additional funding sources. These sources could be sports stores, certain multinational corporations, relevant broadcasts, and the dissemination of sports policy among youth during 2022 and 2023. Such features will stimulate the development of sports in Europe and in Ukraine, given the difficulty of implementation due to the global war.

In European countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, sports are one of the most essential disciplines in educational institutions, where they teach a variety of sports: skiing, football, mountain hiking, etc. The opportunity to train children and young people in sports will be an effective method for building a healthy human capital in the country (Vorontsov & Ushakova, 2019). This practice is possible in other European countries, and it can be achieved through an effective information policy, which requires further discussion.

The issue of staff qualifications should become one of the crucial means of optimizing physical education and sports policy. Forostian (2023) found that during 2022-2023, a significant number of methods and practices to improve professional qualifications emerged, and demand for

relevant teachers increased. All these factors contribute to the general trend of improving and developing the field of physical culture and sports. However, the training of specialists, coaches, and teachers should be one of the key areas of modernizing this policy. Further research should analyze the quality of funding, incentives, and encouragement of public administration methods for professionals. Additionally, a study of the education sector can be an effective tool for identifying critical problems, as it can lead to innovative means of improvement.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

We can draw several conclusions from the study regarding the current problems of training specialists in the field of physical culture and sports. First of all, it is vital to create an effective educational environment, as well as to optimize curricula that will be truly effective and improve the quality of knowledge. The modern method of educational training is the method of problem-based learning. This method gives the best results and allows specialists to enhance their knowledge and professionalism by solving a specific issue. For this reason, in European countries, it is necessary to use real cases and training programs aimed at the possibility of actual participation of physical education and sports specialists in relevant competitions, organization of training, etc. The involvement of such specialists as the creation of their own coaching teams, possible participation in competitions, and understanding of a clear hierarchy and competitive grid will strengthen the role of training specialists.

The article analyzes the key problems and ways to solve the problem of the unsatisfactory state of development of physical culture and sports in European countries. In particular, the experience of Ukraine shows that even in times of humanitarian and economic crisis, the involvement of international sports organizations can stimulate the improvement of the quality of athletes and sports specialists. In addition, the participation of such companies and organizations can help to organize various competitions to popularize sports. As for the curriculum, revision of the composition and structure of such an educational syllabus will involve the use of different interactive technologies and opportunities to implement them in practice. Only through the principles of problem-based learning and practical activities the level of training can be improved. However, the physical culture and sports policy should be popular among young people, as they are a key human resource for sports.

Thus, the study shows that in 2022 and 2023, European countries will face particular challenges in the training of physical education specialists. Nevertheless, considering the experience

of Ukraine, which has experienced the largest crisis in its history, there are opportunities to improve this situation through optimal educational, public, and corporate policies.

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All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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