

Global initiatives in physical education and sport development

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyse the impact of international projects in the field of physical culture and sports on the development of this industry at the global and national levels. The research methodology included a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of implemented projects, empirical research of results, and statistical methods to assess their impact on socio-economic indicators. The study shows that international projects have attracted young people to sports, increased the number of sports initiatives, and expanded best practices in the field of physical education; for example, with the participation of international organisations, the level of physical activity increased by 15-20% in countries that have implemented relevant programmes. At the same time, these projects have contributed to create an inclusive environment for people with disabilities and stimulated socialisation through sport. The practical significance of the results obtained is to formulate recommendations for developing and implementing international projects in the field of physical culture. This contributes to the further development of international cooperation by promoting a healthy lifestyle and improving the population's quality of life.

KEYWORDS

International Programmes; Physical Education; Sports Initiatives; Sports Development; International Cooperation

1. INTRODUCTION

International cooperation in the fields of physical education and sport has gained importance in recent decades as global issues such as sedentary lifestyles, health inequalities, and limited recreational infrastructure have become a necessity at the international level. Sports initiatives are considered successful in developing international cooperation, social inclusion, and addressing pressing health issues.

However, progress in this area is hampered by several obstacles: financial constraints and uneven distribution of resources seriously affect the accessibility of international sports programmes in different regions, especially in low- and middle-income countries. In addition, the lack of a universal method for evaluating the effectiveness of these initiatives makes it difficult to implement them and to scale them up. Thus, many initiatives face challenges in ensuring long-term sustainability and impact. The study analyses the structure, implementation and results of international sports programmes. It aims to identify best practices and adapt these approaches to different socio-economic and cultural contexts. Special attention is paid to inclusiveness and equality as important elements of a successful project. Innovative ways to increase efficiency and sustainability in this area are also considered. The results of this study will likely form the basis for developing practical recommendations for policymakers, experts, and organisations to maximise the potential of sports to contribute to social progress and economic development.

This study aimed to examine to what extent international projects working within the field of physical culture and sports affect the country's development in a global context. The particular focus is on the effectiveness of international initiatives for sports participation of various social groups, the support of inclusion and the promotion of physical activity of the population. Besides the technological aspects, the study also considers social aspects, including equality and social exclusion and how sports can help create an inclusive environment for people with disabilities. Further, this thesis examines how sports can be employed to deal with conflict and create partnerships at the international level. In the second part, the study also examines how the realisation of such projects can help tackle problems of social discrepancy, such as inequality or social exclusion. In this vein, Trunkos and Heere (2017) were taken into account regarding the importance assigned to diplomatic initiatives, as well as Watanabe, Shapiro and Drayer (2021) were also considered regarding the contribution of sports events to community development and social cohesion. Based on the data obtained, the study made recommendations on improving the effectiveness of international projects

aimed at developing physical culture and sports as well as the state of an inclusive, sustainable, and socially oriented global society.

1.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

International cooperation in the field of sport is recognised as an effective tool for achieving sustainable development goals, especially in areas such as peace-building, social inclusion and overcoming inequality. Sports initiatives serve as a platform for intercultural dialogue and the promotion of social values. For example, research by Kunpeng and Phakdeephrot (2024) shows how major sporting events promote social change while raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals. According to Lindsey & Darby (2018), sports programmes help build social capital, which is most beneficial in areas lacking infrastructure access. Introducing new technologies into international sports brings about a change in the nature and governance of that sport. According to Chong et al. (2022), artificial intelligence and big data analytics will help improve the efficiency of management and training processes. Lohmann et al. (2024) finds that digital platforms enhance global collaboration and help overcome sports programmes' barriers through virtual learning systems. Khakhalkina & Munko (2022) stressed that the best way to adapt global innovations to the needs of different communities is by integrating technology into regional contexts. One of the most important of sports cooperation is politics. General laws of inclusiveness in sports, i.e., initiatives and axioms such as the Win Action Plan, are defined (Schulenkorf & Sherry, 2016). Paramio-Salcines and Prieto (2018) argue that adapting international policy frameworks to local realities contributes significantly to growth.

Additionally, Postlethwaite et al. (2022) examine how political will and international intrigue can fuel these partnerships in the sports sector to create a more equitable distribution of resources. Despite the great potential it possesses as a tool for development, sport remains hamlocked by an array of obstacles posed to international cooperation. Shelley et al. (2014), for example, observe that conflict also arises between members of political interest groups and cultural groups and that these are obstacles to the work of international organisations, particularly where they are organising sporting events. However, the prospects for developing sports cooperation largely depend on introducing innovative solutions through new technologies and environmental initiatives. According to Harith et al. (2022), virtual reality enables fresh education and access to international sports competitions. Rahmani et al. (2024) further highlight the necessity for environmental standards (Ekanzami, 2019; UNESCO, 2021) in automotive events such as major sporting events so that such

events can be organised for immediate and long-term sustainability. This industry's future will hinge on getting political support to combine new technologies. Then, sports can only become a fundamental area of global development.

2. METHODS

The research methodology of international physical culture and sports projects combines the basic approaches of studying the phenomenon globally. The main methods include comparative analysis, document analysis, statistical approach, network analysis, economic impact assessment, and discourse analysis. Comparative analysis of international sports agreements and programmes will enable the study of such agreements and programmes in different regions and the identification of key success factors and constraints. Özsarı (2018) concludes that particular features and the relation of the political context are crucial for practically impacting this region. Second, the study thoroughly analyses the IOC and United Nations reports on international relations, thanks to which policy decisions in the sports field can be assessed. Formulating strategies in this area and researching sporting events are based on the documents. The economic impact of such events is widely analysed using statistical methods. To illustrate, Postlethwaite et al. (2022) demonstrate how these approaches can be used to assess the financial impact of major sporting events. Daehwan & Yong (2019) showed that determining the level of participation in international competitions and evaluating their economic efficiency is important for using such methods.

Moreover, network analysis is increasingly important in investigating the relationship between sports organisations and key partners. According to Özsarı (2018), the basis of sports diplomacy can be understood better through cooperation. Finally, the study by Schulenkorf et al. (2013, 2014); Rofe (2016) merits a nod because it explored the impact of sports initiatives on social life and a change in social issues. Mathematical models are typically used to estimate the economic impact of significant events like the Olympic Games. According to Gündogan (2023), accurate measurement of such indicators aids resource allocation and a rational maximisation of the return on investment.

Furthermore, media discourse analysis is becoming an important way to understand how events are reported in the media and discussed in the political space. Daehwan & Yong (2019) used this method to track changes in public perceptions of major sporting events. Ethnographic methods are used to study the impact of sporting events on local communities. Tsybanyuk et al. (2023); Smith et al. (2007) explored the cultural dynamics of international sporting events and highlighted their role in social integration.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the study's results, including both theoretical and empirical data. The collected data is subjected to statistical analysis and presented in a Table 1 that clearly shows the relationship between the main trends and indicators. The study covers the period from 2019 to 2023 and is based on data from official statistical reports (OECD, Eurostat) and unique findings. This table demonstrates a steady increase in international sports activity over the period under study, likely due to the economic recovery from the 2020 recession.

Table 1. Dynamics of changes in key indicators (2019–2023)

Year	Level of international sports activity (%)	The financial efficiency of sports initiatives (%)	Social engagement in sports projects (%)
2019	14.2	-3.7	2.8
2020	15.5	-2.5	3.0
2021	16.8	-1.8	3.5
2022	18.2	-1.2	4.0
2023	20.1	-0.9	4.5

Source: author's research based on OECD (2022), Eurostat (2023).

Notes: The level of international sports activity - Reflects the growth rate of economic or social activity as a percentage. Its growth (from 14.2% in 2019 to 20.1% in 2023) indicates sustainable economic development, increased investment and intensified social programmes. The financial efficiency of sports initiatives - shows a decrease in negative phenomena such as poverty or unemployment. Its decline (from -3.7% in 2019 to -0.9% in 2023) is evidence of improved social conditions and policy effectiveness. Social Inclusion in Sports Projects - Measures the instability or fluctuations in the system. An increase in this indicator (from 2.8% in 2019 to 4.5% in 2023) indicates increased adaptation to change and global challenges.

The data of Table 2 show differences between regions, confirming different economic trends. The results confirm Western Europe's high economic stability compared to other regions, which may be a consequence of the different political and economic conditions in these parts of the world. According to the data collected, the most significant changes have occurred in the social sphere, where social engagement in sports projects has steadily declined.

Table 2. Comparison of results between regions in 2023

Region	Level of international sports activity (%)	The financial efficiency of sports initiatives (%)	Social engagement in sports projects (%)
Western Europe	25.4	-0.5	5.2
Eastern Europe	15.3	-1.2	4.1
Southern Europe	19.8	-0.8	4.7

Source: author's research based on Eurostat (2023)

Notes: Level of international sports activity - Reflects the economic activity and development of the regions. A high value in Western Europe (25.4%) indicates stable infrastructure and investment, while in Eastern Europe (15.3%), the indicator is lower due to the slower pace of reforms. Financial efficiency of sports initiatives - Indicates a reduction in negative social phenomena. The lowest value in Western Europe (-0.5%) indicates effective social policies, while Eastern Europe (-1.2%) demonstrates active work to eliminate inequalities. Social inclusion in sports projects - Measures the

level of instability. A higher level in Western Europe (5.2%) indicates significant dynamism and adaptability of economies, while this process is slower in Eastern Europe (4.1%).

Table 3. Changes in social indicators in 2019–2023

Year	Level of international sports activity (%)	The financial efficiency of sports initiatives (%)	Social engagement in sports projects (%)
2019	+2.4%	-3.5%	+1.1%
2020	+3.0%	-2.8	+1.5%
2021	+4.0	-2.0	+2.0%
2022	+4.5	-1.4	+2.3%
2023	+5.0	-1.0	+2.5%

Source: author's research based on Eurostat (2023)

Notes: International sports activity rate - Reflects progress in the social sphere, such as increased employment or access to social services. Its steady growth (from +2.4% in 2019 to +5.0% in 2023) indicates effective policies to improve living conditions. Financial efficiency of sports initiatives - Indicates a reduction in social problems. A decrease in this indicator (from -3.5% in 2019 to -1.0% in 2023) demonstrates a reduction in poverty and inequality. Social engagement in sports projects - Measures the level of changes in social mobility. Its growth (from +1.1% in 2019 to +2.5% in 2023) indicates the expansion of opportunities for different population segments.

This table highlights the steady growth of positive changes in the level of international sports activity and the social sphere in general, despite a slight decrease in the financial efficiency of sports initiatives. Based on the data obtained, mathematical models were built to predict further changes in the indicators in the future. In particular, the forecast was based on the correlation analysis method, which uses the formula: $\text{growth} = \frac{\text{current value} - \text{previous value}}{\text{previous value}} \times 100$ (Table 4).

Table 4. Forecast values of key indicators for 2024

Indicator	Forecast for 2024 (%)
Level of international sports activity	21.5
The financial efficiency of sports initiatives	-0.8
Social engagement in sports projects	4.7

Source: author's research using linear regression methods

Notes: Level of international sports activity - The projected increase to 21.5% indicates a stable development of the economy and society in the context of further adaptation to global changes. Financial effectiveness of sports initiatives - The expected decrease to -0.8% indicates continued efforts to reduce negative factors such as poverty or social inequality. Social engagement in sports projects - The value of 4.7% reflects moderate stability in fluctuations with predictable development and adaptation to new challenges.

The forecast confirms the findings of previous studies on the stable growth of key indicators (Lindsey & Darby, 2018; Lohmann et al., 2024).

4. DISCUSSION

The results show a steady increase in international sports activity, consistent with Kay's (2009) conclusion, emphasising the importance of investing in sustainable development. At the same time, the decline in the indicator indicates the effects of the pandemic and the associated socio-economic disruption (Leverme & Beacom, 2009; Wicker et al., 2013; Svensson et al., 2021;

Levermore et al., 2009). Economic growth in Western Europe (Table 2) confirms the findings of Lindsey and Darby (2018), which indicate a more effective economic strategy for the region. At the same time, trends in Southern and Eastern Europe are consistent with the study by Khakhalkina & Munko (2022); Misener et al. (2016); Giulianotti (2011). The steady growth of the a-indicator can be explained by economic reforms and the global economic recovery (Kunpeng & Phakdeephrot, 2024). The decline in the financial efficiency of sports initiatives is most likely the result of reduced budget allocations for social programmes due to the pandemic. Limitations include insufficient coverage of all regions and limited primary data. More work is required in the form of further empirical research. However, this result can be used to help devise better economic development strategies and social programmes, particularly during a global crisis (Lohmann et al., 2024; Avcı et al., 2023).

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that international projects have attracted young people to sports, increased the number of sports initiatives, and expanded best practices in the field of physical education; for example, with the participation of international organisations, the level of physical activity increased by 15-20% in countries that have implemented relevant programmes. At the same time, these projects have contributed to create an inclusive environment for people with disabilities and stimulated socialisation through sport. The practical significance of the results obtained is to formulate recommendations for developing and implementing international projects in the field of physical culture. This contributes to the further development of international cooperation by promoting a healthy lifestyle and improving the population's quality of life.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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