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ŚRODKOWOEUROPEJSKIE CZASOPISMO NAUKOWE

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Częstochowa 2026

p-ISSN 2545-3211
e-ISSN 2657-4322

Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jana Długosza w Częstochowie
42-200 Częstochowa, al. Armii Krajowej 36A
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Nakład poniżej 100 egzemplarzy

SPIS TREŚCI

CONTENTS

Wstęp	7
Część I	
DZIEJE KULTURY FIZYCZNEJ I TURYSTYKI W POLSCE I NA ŚWIECIE	
Adam Michał SZULC	
The Sources and Documentation of a Century of Deaf Sport in Poland (1922–2022)	11
Źródła i dokumentacja stuletniej historii sportu Głuchych w Polsce (1922–2022) (Streszczenie)	11
Kseniya TSERASHKOVA, Andrei VASHKEVICH, Pavel DAROKHIN	
Football in the Byelorussian SSR in the light of the newspaper “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” in the 1950s–1980s	27
Piłka nożna w Białoruskiej SRR w świetle gazety „Fizkulturnik Białorusii” w latach 50.–80. XX wieku (Streszczenie)	27
Część II	
TEORIA I METODYKA WYCHOWANIA FIZYCZNEGO I SPORTU	
Mohammad Saeid KIANI, Leila NAZARI	
Designing a policy framework for utilizing sports capacities in promoting social health and organizing leisure time	57
Opracowanie ram polityki wykorzystania potencjału sportowego w promowaniu zdrowia społecznego i organizacji czasu wolnego (Streszczenie)	57
Vyacheslav ROMANENKO, Yuri TROPIN, Yuliya KOVALENKO, Volodymyr MIKHALSKYI, Valerii DZHERELII	
Object Size Detection and Sensorimotor Performance in Striking Martial Artists: An Exploratory Factor Analysis	79
Reakcja na zmiany wielkości obiektu i sprawność sensomotoryczna u zawodników sportów walki: eksploracyjna analiza czynnikowa (Streszczenie)	79
Maciej JAGUSZEWSKI, Weronika JAGUSZEWSKA	
Home Advantage Across Men’s and Women’s Team Sports in Poland Over the Last Decade	95
Przewaga własnego boiska w sportach drużynowych mężczyzn i kobiet w Polsce w ostatniej dekadzie (Streszczenie)	95

Część III

TURYSTYKA I REKREACJA

Parambir SINGH, Amrik SINGH, Amjad Imam ANSARI, Amanjeet BHALLA	
The Impact of Ethnicity, Thematic Representation and Heritage on Customer Loyalty: a Study on Tourism-Destined Food Outlets	115
Wpływ pochodzenia etnicznego, reprezentacji tematycznej i dziedzictwa na lojalność klientów: badanie punktów gastronomicznych przeznaczonych dla turystów (Streszczenie)	115

WSTĘP

W 2026 r. periodyk „Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe” ukazuje się dziewiąty rok. Jest kontynuacją tytułu „Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Kultura Fizyczna”. W trzecim numerze zostały zaprezentowane prace Autorów z różnych ośrodków naukowych w Polsce i na świecie.

W części I – *Dzieje kultury fizycznej i turystyki w Polsce i na świecie* – przedstawiono dwa artykuły dotyczące problematyki:

- źródeł i dokumentacja stuletniej historii sportu Głuchych w Polsce (1922–2022);
- piłki nożnej w Białoruskiej SRR w świetle gazety „Fizkulturnik Białorusii” w latach 50.–80. XX wieku.

W części II, zatytułowanej *Teoria i metodyka wychowania fizycznego i sportu*, przedstawiono artykuły dotyczące następujących zagadnień:

- opracowanie ram polityki wykorzystania potencjału sportowego w promowaniu zdrowia społecznego i organizacji czasu wolnego;
- reakcja na zmiany wielkości obiektu i sprawność sensomotoryczna u zawodników sportów walki: eksploracyjna analiza czynnikowa;
- przewaga własnego boiska w sportach drużynowych mężczyzn i kobiet w Polsce w ostatniej dekadzie.

W części III – *Turystyka i rekreacja* – zamieszczono artykuł odnoszący się do problemu wpływu pochodzenia etnicznego, reprezentacji tematycznej i dziedzictwa na lojalność klientów (badanie punktów gastronomicznych przeznaczonych dla turystów).

Pragnę złożyć serdeczne podziękowania Recenzentom za cenne i życzliwe uwagi, podnoszące wartość niniejszego periodyku. Dziękuję za współpracę Autorom publikacji zamieszczonych w czasopiśmie naukowym. Jednocześnie wyrażam nadzieję, że poszerzy się liczba Osób zainteresowanych publikowaniem własnych osiągnięć naukowych w kolejnych wydaniach „Sportu i Turystyki. Środkowoeuropejskiego Czasopisma Naukowego”.

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CZĘŚĆ I

DZIEJE KULTURY FIZYCZNEJ I TURYSTYKI W POLSCE I NA ŚWIECIE



Received: 23.10.2025
Accepted: 16.02.2026

<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/sit.2026.03.01>

Adam Michał SZULC*

THE SOURCES AND DOCUMENTATION OF A CENTURY OF DEAF SPORT IN POLAND (1922–2022)

How to cite [jak cytować]: Szulc A.M., *The Sources and Documentation of a Century of Deaf Sport in Poland (1922–2022)*, "Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe" 2026, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 11–26.

Źródła i dokumentacja stuletniej historii sportu Głuchych w Polsce (1922–2022)

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest analiza źródeł i dokumentacji stuletniej historii sportu Głuchych w Polsce w latach 1922–2022. Opracowanie ukazuje ewolucję form utrwalania aktywności sportowej osób niesłyszących – od kronik klubowych i prasy środowiskowej po współczesne archiwa cyfrowe. Zastosowano metodę historyczno-porównawczą, krytykę źródeł oraz analizę treści, łącząc perspektywę historyczną z kulturową. Podstawę badań stanowią materiały archiwalne, wydawnictwa jubileuszowe, periodyki Polskiego Związku Głuchych i Polskiego Związku Sportu Niesłyszących, a także zbiory prywatne i internetowe repozytoria. Analiza pozwoliła wyodrębnić trzy zasadnicze etapy rozwoju dokumentacji sportu Głuchych w Polsce: okres przedwojenny (1922–1939), powojenny (1945–1991) oraz współczesny (1992–2022). W każdym z nich sport osób niesłyszących pełnił funkcję nie tylko rehabilitacyjną, lecz także kulturotwórczą i integracyjną. Współczesna cyfryzacja źródeł otwiera nowe możliwości badawcze, umożliwiając szerszy dostęp do danych i rekonstrukcję nieznanych dotąd aspektów historii sportu Głuchych. Artykuł stanowi wkład w rozwój metodologii badań nad historią kultury fizycznej środowisk mniejszościowych. Opracowania źródłowe o charakterze referencyjnym, publikowane w latach 2021–2024 i uporządkowane chronologicznie, wraz z zawartymi w nich źródłami podstawowymi oraz indeksami nazwisk, stanowią podstawę dla przyszłych interdyscyplinarnych badań nad aktywnością sportową mniejszości Głuchych.

Słowa kluczowe: sport Głuchych, archiwa sportowe, źródła historyczne, Deaflympics.

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze the sources and documentation related to a century of the history of Deaf sport in Poland, spanning the years 1922–2022. The study traces the evolution of how Deaf athletic activity has been recorded – from club chronicles and community press to contemporary digital archives. A historical-comparative method, source criticism, and content analysis were employed, integrating historical and cultural perspectives. The research is based on archival materials, anniversary publications, and periodicals of the Polish Association of the Deaf and the Polish Deaf Sports Association, as well as private collections and online repositories. The analysis identified three main stages in the development of Deaf sport documentation in Poland: the interwar period (1922–1939), the postwar period (1945–1991), and the contemporary period (1992–2022). In each of these periods, Deaf sport served not only rehabilitative but also cultural, creative, and integrative purposes. The digitization of sources today opens new opportunities for research, enabling broader access to data and the reconstruction of previously unknown aspects of Deaf sport history. This article contributes to the development of methodologies for studying the history of physical culture within minority communities. The chronologically organized reference works published between 2021 and 2024, together with the primary sources and name indexes included, constitute a foundation for future interdisciplinary research on the sporting activities of the Deaf minority.

Keywords: Deaf sport, sports archives, historical sources, Deaflympics.

Introduction

Deaf sport in Poland constitutes an important and integral element of the national history of physical culture, while simultaneously reflecting the social and cultural transformations of the Deaf community. Although the origins of organized Deaf sport date back to the early 1920s, scholarly interest in this field has remained limited. Existing studies are often descriptive, commemorative, or community-based, focusing mainly on the activities of individual clubs or associations. There is still a lack of comprehensive analyses that would situate the development of Deaf sport within broader contexts of Polish physical culture, social policy, or cultural identity. The aim of this article is to present, organize, and critically discuss the main sources documenting a century of Deaf sport in Poland (1922–2022) and to identify their research potential. The study seeks to determine:

- what kinds of sources exist and how they have evolved;
- how credible and complete these materials are;
- to what extent they reflect the processes of institutionalization, education, and cultural consolidation within the Deaf sports movement.

The source base of this study is diverse and includes archival documents, official reports, and manuscripts held in institutional and private collections, as well as printed and electronic publications. Particularly valuable are periodicals such as *“Świat Głuchoniemych”* (1927–1929), *“Świat Głuchych”* (1959–1982),

“Świat Ciszy” (1982–2000), “Sport Niesłyszących” (since 2008), which provide a direct insight into the organizational, athletic, and cultural life of the Deaf community. Complementary materials include jubilee monographs, club chronicles, photographic collections, and contemporary online repositories such as the digital archives of the Polish Deaf Sports Association and the International Committee of the Deaf. These materials, taken together with literature published between 2021 and 2024, offer a comprehensive picture of the evolution of Deaf sport as both a social practice and a manifestation of cultural identity.

Methods and Research Problems

The chronological scope of this study covers the period from 1922 – the establishment of the first Deaf sports club in Poland (Warsaw Sports Club of the Deaf) – to 2022, which marks the centennial of organized Deaf sport. The analysis employs a historical-comparative approach, supported by source criticism and content analysis. These methods, grounded in the framework of physical culture studies, allow the integration of historical, sociological, and cultural perspectives in examining the development of Deaf sport. The sources were categorized into five main types:

- archival materials – including documents from national and regional archives, club records,
- personal collections of activists and athletes;
- printed sources – such as monographs, jubilee publications, and commemorative volumes;
- periodicals – including nationwide and local community press documenting the activities of the Deaf;
- scientific publications – studies on the history, and sociology of Deaf sport;
- electronic resources – digital archives, online databases, and websites preserving and disseminating information on Deaf sports events.

The analysis of these materials reveals three fundamental stages in the development of documentation and reflection on Deaf sport in Poland:

- the interwar period (1922–1939), when the first clubs and organizational structures were established;
- the postwar period (1945–1991), characterized by reconstruction, expansion of community journalism, and growing institutionalization;
- the contemporary period (1992–2022), marked by digitization, autonomous activity of the Polish Deaf Sports Association, and the emergence of new documentary and research tools.

Despite significant progress in recent decades, research on Deaf sport continues to face methodological and practical challenges. These include limited ac-

cess to dispersed archives and private collections, insufficient digitization, incomplete or fragmentary data, and difficulties in verifying information due to communication barriers. Addressing these problems requires interdisciplinary collaboration combining the methodologies of history, cultural studies, sociology, and disability studies. The integration of digital tools and visual analysis techniques opens new perspectives for understanding the multifaceted relationship between sport, cultural identity, and social integration within the Deaf community.

Results and discussion

Pre-second war period (1922–1939)

The oldest sources on the history of Deaf sport in Poland date from the interwar period (1922–1939). They concern the activities of sports clubs for Deaf individuals in Warsaw,¹ Lviv, Poznań, Bydgoszcz, Kraków, Wejherowo, Nowa Huta, and others, as well as the relations with the Deaflympics Games in the years 1924–1939. Valuable information is contained in community periodicals, among them the magazine “Świat Głuchoniemych” (1927–1929) and “Sport i Kultura Fizyczna Głuchoniemych” (1935–1937) – published as a socio-sport monthly, the organ of the Polish Deaf Sports Union. This is how the first issue of the magazine “Świat Głuchoniemych” read²:

From the first moments of independence, among the Deaf youth, work is in full swing. Societies and sports clubs are organized, associations and unions are formed. And among all this activity one domain has hitherto been neglected. We lacked our own periodical. [...] At the outset, we will publish all news concerning the life of the Deaf in the country and abroad, social and scientific articles [sport-related – author’s note].

The complement to the news about Deaf sport was the information contained in the Poznań periodical “Przewodnik Głuchoniemych” (The Deaf-Mute’s Guide) from 1933.³

Data contained in the aforementioned periodicals, as well as in the monograph “Głuchoniemi w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej” (The Deaf-Mute in the Republic of Poland) (1930)⁴ and the “Kalendarz-Informator Głuchoniemych” (The Deaf-Mute Calendar- Informant) (1933–1934)⁵ constitute not only factual sources but

¹ *Życie sportowe*, „Kurier Warszawski”, 8 November 1922, no. 307, p. 9.

² 1927 „Świat Głuchoniemych” 1927, no. 1, p. 1.

³ „Przewodnik Głuchoniemych”, Poznań 1933, no. 1–8, unpaginated, publisher: Polsko-Katolickie Towarzystwo Głuchoniemych w Poznaniu and Polski Związek Towarzystw Głuchoniemych.

⁴ K. Włostowski, S. Rysiński (eds.), *Głuchoniemi w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Polski Związek Towarzystw Głuchoniemych, Warszawa 1930, pp. 31.

⁵ J. Sapiejewski, K. Włostowski, H. Łabęcki, W. Dobrowolski (eds.), *Kalendarz-Informator Głuchoniemych Polskiego Związku Towarzystw Głuchoniemych na lata 1933–1934*, Warszawa 1933, pp. 112.

also evidence of the shaping of social and cultural identity of the Deaf community. These documents describe the creation and functioning of the first structures of Deaf sport in Poland—clubs, associations, and delegates' congresses—but also Deaf education.

An important link in the knowledge about the socio-sporting activity of Deaf people were documents of an institutional and organizational nature – among them, a small number of reports from the Polish Deaf Sports Association and from Deaf sports clubs.⁶ The preserved materials record the names of organizations – sports clubs – the dates of sporting and organizational events, the surnames of Deaf sport pioneers, the operating principles, as well as relations with foreign organizations such as the International Committee of the Deaf Sport.

The initiators of the creation of periodicals and the authors of articles were well-educated Deaf activists and athletes, originating from the Institute of the Deaf and Blind in Warsaw, including Kazimierz Włostowski, Henryk Łabęcki, and Henryk Konrad. A particularly valuable source is the family album of Henryk Konrad – founder and first president of the Warsaw Deaf Sports Club.⁷ This high personal archival value ensures a very high source credibility.

Publication activity was significantly hindered due to a lack of financial resources for journalism (especially during the Great Depression) and a lack of readership, illiteracy and deaf-muteness-related unemployment.

The analysis of sources encountered certain limitations due to incomplete or non-preserved club archives, the fragmentary nature of available data (often in the form of brief notices and announcements), and missing personal data, e.g., the first names of athletes and activists.

Postwar period (1945–1991)

This period saw intensive development of organizational structures within the Deaf community in Poland. During this time, the Polish Association of Deaf-Mute Sports was reactivated based on the model developed in the interwar period. In 1947, changes began to be introduced to the system of managing physical culture in Poland. By a resolution of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party on September 28, 1949, the Main Committee for Physical Culture was established, which remained under the direct supervision of the party apparatus.⁸ In 1950, as a result of reorganizing the

⁶ *Sprawozdania z zebrania Zarządu Polskiego Związku Sportowego Głuchoniemych*, „Świat Głuchoniemych” 1927, no. 1–12.; *Księga kasowa*, Polsko-Katolickie Towarzystwo Głuchoniemych w Bydgoszczy 1925–1950, unpaginated; *Sprawozdanie Zarządu Koła PZG w Bydgoszczy z lat 1965–1966*, Archiwum PZG Oddział w Bydgoszczy, 26 march 1966, p. 6.

⁷ Henryk Konrad– Commemorative family album 1922–1946, unpaginated.

⁸ J. Chełmecki, S. Wilk, *Wybór źródeł i materiałów do dziejów kultury fizycznej w Polsce w latach 1944–1984*, AWF Warszawa 1986, pp. 65–75.

autonomously operating Polish Sports Association of the Deaf-Mute, a Sports Association “The Deaf-Mute” was created, modeled after Soviet organizations. From 1952, Deaf sports were initially incorporated into the Polish Association of the Deaf-Mute and Their Friends (1946–1955), and subsequently into the Polish Association of the Deaf (from 1955). These organizations played a key role in combating illiteracy among deaf people, in integrating the community, and in promoting sport.

An important source of information about this period are the periodicals published by the aforementioned organizations: “Informational Bulletin of the Polish Association of the Deaf-Mute and Their Friends” (1954–1958)⁹, “Świat Głuchych” (1959–1982), “Świat Ciszy” (1982–1997; od 2000), “Nowy Świat Ciszy” (1998–1999).¹⁰ Valuable source materials also include anniversary publications of the Polish Association of the Deaf and of local sports clubs, containing reports of activities, competition result summaries, and photographic documentation, e.g. “WKSG Chronicle 1945–1985,”¹¹ “Księga kasowa Polsko-Katolickiego Towarzystwa Głuchoniemych w Bydgoszczy” (1925–1950),¹² or “50 lat Sportu Inwalidów Słuchu”(1972).¹³

From 1959 to 1970, a key figure in documenting the history of Deaf sports was Kazimierz Włostowski,¹⁴ the author of over 70 articles published in Polish Association of the Deaf periodicals. In the next decade, Szczepankowski made a significant contribution to the development of socio-sport journalism.¹⁵ In the years 1970–1990, he published about 20 articles devoted to the history and socio-cultural aspects of the lives of Deaf people. In 1976, he published a series of

⁹ https://polona2.pl/search/?filters=contributor-Corp:Zarz%C4%85d_G%C5%82%C3%B3wny_Polskiego_Zwi%C4%85zku_G%C5%82uchoniemych_i_Ich_Przyjaci%C3%B3w_C5%82_Instytucja_sprawcza_Wydawca,public:1,hasTextContent:0, Accessed: 20.09.2025.

¹⁰ Availability: National Library (Biblioteka Narodowa); Main Board of the Polish Association of the Deaf in Warsaw (Zarząd Główny PZG w Warszawie).

¹¹ *Chronicle Warsaw Deaf Sports Club (WKSG)* (photograph collection) – Main Board of the Polish Association of the Deaf, Warsaw, unpaginated.

¹² *Księga Kasowa. Polsko-Katolickie Towarzystwo Głuchoniemych w Bydgoszczy 1925–1950*, unpaginated.

¹³ K. Włostowski, J. Klimczewski, *50 lat Sportu Inwalidów Słuchu*, 1972 [unpublished work, unpaginated].

¹⁴ A. Szulc, *Kronika 100-lecia sportu głuchoniemych, głuchych i niesłyszących w Polsce*, vol. 2: 1992–2022, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2024, 504 p.; A. Szulc, *Chronicle of the 100th anniversary of deaf-mute, deaf and hearing impaired sport in Poland*, vol. 1: 1922–1992, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2025, 551 p.

¹⁵ A. Szulc, *Chronicle of the 100th anniversary of deaf-mute, deaf and hearing impaired sport in Poland*, vol. 1: 1922–1992, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2025, pp. 551.

short notes titled “Z kart stulecia”¹⁶ in the pages of the monthly magazine “Świat Głuchych”.

International activity was documented by materials of the International Committee of Deaf Sport in the form of reports from the congresses.¹⁷

Published articles and preserved documents constitute a key source of knowledge about the organizational history of Deaf sports in Poland. They confirm that sports activity was not only a tool of social and health rehabilitation but also a manifestation of cultural and communal identity. The limitations in publication-archival activity resulted from very poor premises, numerous relocations, the liquidation of many sports clubs, which led to the destruction or loss of archival documents.¹⁸ Staff shortages in club administrations and the low skill in archiving documentation and photographic material led to insufficient archiving of documents. The factual value is incomplete due to the inability to precisely determine dates, surnames, given names, and the structure of events. Descriptions of photographs are missing: place, year, people’s names.

Contemporary period (1992–2022)

The contemporary period encompasses three decades of development of Deaf sport in Poland – from the phase of separating sport from the structures of the Polish Deaf Association and the start of autonomous activity by the Polish Association of Deaf Sports, to the financial-legal problems of the Association (1997–2003),¹⁹ up to the dynamic activity of the successor – the Polish Deaf Sports Federation (Polish: Polska Federacja Sportu Niestyszących) (2004–2010), transformed into the Polish Deaf Sports Association (Polski Związek Sportu Niestyszących) (since 2010). The headquarters of the PFSN and the PZSN are located in Lublin.

Until 2009, sports results, reports from competitions, and announcements of sporting events were published mainly in the monthly “Świat Cisy” and in TVP Teletext (1993–2005).²⁰ Based on notes posted in the TVP Teletext, the notes by Edward Szwertner and Jarosław Janiec have survived, constituting

¹⁶ B. Szczepankowski, *Z kart stulecia*, “Świat Głuchych” 1976, no. 1, p. 20.; B. Szczepankowski, *Z kart stulecia*, „Świat Głuchych” 1976, no. 2, p. 20.; B. Szczepankowski, *Z kart stulecia*, “Świat Głuchych” 1976, no 3, p. 20.; B. Szczepankowski, *Z kart stulecia*, “Świat Głuchych” 1976, no. 6, p. 18.; B. Szczepankowski, *Z kart stulecia*, “Świat Głuchych” 1976, no. 4–5, p. 21; B. Szczepankowski, *Z kart stulecia*, Świat Głuchych” 1976, no. 12, p. 21.”

¹⁷ *Minutes*, 33rd Congress ICSD, Sofia, Bulgaria 1993, unpaginated.; *Minutes*, 30th Congress ICSD, Groningen, Holland, 1990, unpaginated .

¹⁸ K. Siniarski, *Historia i kultura Głuchych we Wrocławiu, 1948–2018*, Polski Związek Głuchych Oddział Dolnośląski, Wrocław 2018, p. 6 (85 p.).

¹⁹ *Sprawozdanie z działalności statutowej PZSG w okresie od 22 listopada 2003 do 25 marca 2006 roku*, p. 1 (p.7).; *Kierunek Tajpej*, “Sport Niestyszących” 2008, no. 1, p. 4.

²⁰ Jarosław Janiec– self-authored, based on: Telegazeta TVP .

a valuable source of information for contemporary research.²¹ Krzysztof Michałczuk made a significant contribution to the documentation of the sport movement.²² From 1993 to 2008, he published over 40 articles devoted to the activities of local sports clubs, chess and checkers tournaments, and sporting events both in Poland and abroad. Concurrently, from 1992 to 1997, Sławomir Łubiński conducted extensive journalistic work,²³ authoring over 40 reports from sporting events published in the community press.

Since 2009, after the self-dissolution of the Polish Deaf Sports Federation, the Polish Deaf Sport Association has been publishing the journal "Sport Niesłyszących,"²⁴ offering reports from sporting events, summaries of sports results, information about the Association's activities.

A significant source of knowledge about contemporary national and international sporting events can be also found in the chronicles of the Warsaw Deaf Club Sports Club (Mazovian Branch of the Polish Deaf Sports Association) and documents kept by the Main Board of the Polish Association of the Deaf in Warsaw. In these sources, the materials predominantly concern the Warsaw sports community, whose members often held organizational and representative roles.

Supplementing the knowledge about the social and sporting activities of deaf people are book publications and monographs, including: "Vademecum sportu niesłyszących" (1997),²⁵ "Wielkopolski Klub Sportowy Głuchych – Poznań, 75 lat sportu inwalidów słuchu w Wielkopolsce," Poznań 1925–2000,²⁶ "Dzieje ruchu społecznego głuchych w Wejherowie" (2017),²⁷ "Historia i kultura Głuchych we Wrocławiu" (2018).²⁸

²¹ Edward Szwertner – source created by the author.

²² A. Szulc, *Kronika 100-lecia sportu głuchoniemych, głuchych i niesłyszących w Polsce*, vol. 2: 1992–2022, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2024, p. 577 (624 p.).

²³ A. Szulc, *Kronika 100-lecia sportu głuchoniemych, głuchych i niesłyszących w Polsce*, vol. 2: 1992–2022, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2024., pp. 575–576 (624 p.).

²⁴ "Sport Niesłyszących", Wydawca: Polska Federacja Sportu Niesłyszących/Polski Związek Sportu Niesłyszących, (since 2008).

²⁵ M. Cichosz, M. Grajek, *Vademecum sportu niesłyszących*, vol. 1: *Historia sportu niesłyszących 1922–1997*, vol. 1–3, Warszawa 1997.

²⁶ Wielkopolski Klub Sportowy Głuchych – Poznań, *75 lat sportu inwalidów słuchu w Wielkopolsce*, Poznań 1925–2000, unpaginated.

²⁷ T. A., Świderski, *Dzieje ruchu społecznego głuchych w Wejherowie w latach 1932–2017*, Koło Terenowe Polskiego Związku Głuchych w Wejherowie, Wejherowo 2017, pp. 47.

²⁸ K. Siniarski, *Historia i kultura Głuchych we Wrocławiu, 1948–2018*, Polski Związek Głuchych Oddział Dolnośląski, Wrocław 2018, 85 p.

A valuable source of information also remains in private and institutional archives run by Aleksander Kubin,²⁹ Katarzyna Malinowskaj,³⁰ Marek Pater,³¹ Włodzimierz Adamiak,³² Jarosław Janiec.³³ and other Deaf sports activists.

The contemporary period is characterized by the digitization of source materials and the development of new forms of documentation. Key roles are played by online services, digital archives, and portals devoted to sports of Deaf people. Of particular importance are resources from public institutions such as the National Digital Archives (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe),³⁴ National Archives in Łódź³⁵ and Poznań³⁶ and Digital Local Repository CYRYL,³⁷ containing scans and descriptions of materials documenting the social, educational, and sporting history of Deaf people.

Since 2012, the Polish Deaf Sports Association online archive has been collecting and making available information about sports events and competition results organized by the Association.³⁸

In the international dimension, the resources of the Deaflympics International Committee, i.e. Deaflympics.com,³⁹ hold a particular value, enabling verification of data on the participation of the Polish team in the Deaflympics. This site serves as the central digital archive of the Deaflympics movement, providing access to competition results as well as personal and historical data. The portal's resources are unique in that they constitute the only cohesive repository documenting Poland's participation in the global Deaflympics movement, and thus a key tool in research on Deaf sports. Pinchas's monographs make a significant contribution to documenting the history of world sport.⁴⁰

²⁹ Aleksander Kubin – Chronicle of the Deaf Sports Club "Znicz" Rybnik [manuscript, unpaginated, private archive].

³⁰ Katarzyna Malinowska – Photo-chronicle of the Educational and Care Center no. 2 for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing in Wejherowo, unpaginated.

³¹ Marek Pater – self-authored: Association of Deaf People TON, Poznań.

³² Włodzimierz Adamiak – Photo-chronicle of the Inter-school Deaf Students' Sports Club, Poznań, unpaginated.

³³ Jarosław Janiec – president, Secretary General of the Polish Deaf Sports Association in Lublin

³⁴ Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, archive reference number: 3/1/0/14/49, and other.

³⁵ Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, <https://www.lodz.ap.gov.pl/>, archive reference number: 39/166/0/-/1272, and other.

³⁶ Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu, <https://poznan.ap.gov.pl/> archive reference number: 53/296/0/2.30/1190.

³⁷ Cyfrowe Repozytorium Lokalne CYRYL, <https://cyryl.poznan.pl/>, archive reference number: CYRYL_17_0_2_2_0001.

³⁸ <http://www.archiwum.pzsn.pl/>; <https://www.pzsn.pl/aktualnosci>. Accessed: 20.09.2025.

³⁹ <https://www.deaflympics.com/>. Accessed: 20.09.2025.

⁴⁰ R. Pinchas, *The History of the Deaflympic Games 1924–2018*, 2nd Edition, Kaykov Media, New York 2018, 371 p.

Archival Sources in Research and Publication Practice of Deaf Sport Studies

The previously mentioned source materials were used to develop and publish, between 2021 and 2024, a monograph summarizing a century of Deaf sport in Poland.

Published by the Publishing House of the Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa, the monograph by Pięta titled “Tennis in the World of Silence”⁴¹ summarized organizational and sports data related to table tennis competitions – both club and national teams – at the national and international levels, including the participation of Poles in the Deaflympics. To illustrate the sports results and descriptions of sporting events, the author used over 300 photographs, four monographs devoted to Deaf sport, materials from periodicals “Sport Głuchoniemych,” “Świat Ciszy,” “Świat Głuchych,” “Gehörlosen – Sport,” and the organizers’ reports from Deaflympic Games in Copenhagen (1997), Melbourne (2005), Taipei (2009), as well as World Championships (Sofia, 2008), European Championships (Ramat Gan, 1995; Częstochowa, 2011; Baden, 2015; Albena, 2019). An important documentary basis was Pięta’s own materials documenting his life experience as a coach of the Polish Deaf national team and players (Marek Rutkowski, Iwona Żyła) as well as chronicles, including those by Aleksander Kubin.⁴² Including a list of tables, photographs, and an index of names would increase the scholarly value of the monograph. Conversely, Szulc published the two-volume monograph “Chronicle of the 100-Year History of Deaf-Mute, Deaf, and Hearing-Impaired Sports in Poland. vol. 1: 1922–1992” (2021)⁴³ and “Chronicle of the 100-Year History of Deaf-Mute, Deaf, and Hearing-Impaired Sports in Poland. vol. 2: 1992–2022” (2024).⁴⁴ The author of both volumes used information contained in nearly 1,700 source materials, including archives, manuscripts, reports and communiqués, normative acts, and in compact and occasional publications, as well as periodicals of the Deaf community. A literature review up to 1939 showed that 190 articles appeared in the periodicals “Świat Głuchoniemych” (World of the Deaf), “Przewodnik Głuchoniemych” (Guide for

⁴¹ W. Pięta, *Tenis w świecie ciszy*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Humanistyczno-Przyrodniczego im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Częstochowa 2021, 273 p.

⁴² A. Kubin, *Kronika Klubu Sportowego Niesłyszących “Znicz” Rybnik*, unpaginated.

⁴³ A. Szulc, *Kronika 100-lecia sportu głuchoniemych, głuchych i niesłyszących w Polsce*, vol. 1: 1922–1992, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2021, 532 p.; A. Szulc, *Chronicle of the 100th anniversary of deaf-mute, deaf and hearing impaired sport in Poland*, vol. 1: 1922–1992, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2025, 551 p.

⁴⁴ A. Szulc, *Kronika 100-lecia sportu głuchoniemych, głuchych i niesłyszących w Polsce*, vol. 2: 1992–2022, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2024, 624 p.

the Deaf), and "Sport i Wychowanie Fizyczne Głuchoniemych" (Sport and Physical Education of the Deaf). After 1945, from the journals: "Biuletyn Informacyjny Polskiego Związku Głuchoniemych i Ich Przyjaciół" (Information Bulletin of the Polish Deaf Society and Their Friends), "Świat Głuchych" (World of the Deaf), "Świat Ciszy" (World of Silence), and "Nowy Świat Ciszy" (New World of Silence), 986 articles were used, covering topics such as:

- Deaf sports: basketball (reports from I and II PZG leagues, international matches), chess (reports from Deaf World Championships, PZG Championships, successes of Polish chess players), sport shooting, athletics, swimming, football, table tennis, and skiing;
- youth and sports education – school championships, youth swimming competitions;
- Deaf Olympics and international congresses;
- records and achievements: world and Polish records of the Deaf, successes of athletes and teams;
- history and development of sport for the Deaf in Poland;
- analyses and commentaries – reflections on results, team successes and defeats;
- special events – organizational reports, anniversaries, obituaries notes.

Both volumes of the "Chronicle of the 100-Year History..." are enriched with several dozen written testimonies or materials from Deaf and hard-of-hearing activists and athletes. The author used 544 online references to archival materials of the Polish Deaf Sport Association and the International Committee of Deaf Sport. Descriptions of sporting events are illustrated with 1,030 photographs and engravings depicting the Deaf sport and education community up to 2022. The information contained in 30 tables provides a detailed account of sports results, club structures, and winners of sports competitions. In total, the author memorializes approximately 5,000 individuals in the index of names who were involved in Deaf sport. In the English edition of the "Chronicle of the 100-Year History...", many names were supplemented based on recently acquired source materials, and surnames present in the Polish edition were standardized. An analysis of both monographs indicates that archives, community press, and the personal materials of Deaf athletes and activists constitute a crucial base for research on Deaf sport. Their systematic compilation and publication contribute not only to preserving the memory of athletic activity but also to developing methodologies for studying the culture and history of minority communities. They also help to fill gaps in Polish history of physical culture. The next thematic monograph is "Outline of the History of Deaf Athletics in Poland 1923–2023."⁴⁵

⁴⁵ A. Szulc, R. Śliwka, *Zarys historii lekkoatletyki niesłyszących w Polsce 1923–2023*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2023, 416 p.

Over 416 pages, the events of Deaf athletics competitions – Polish championships, European, World Championships, and Deaflympics – are documented in chronological order, with results compared to those of hearing athletes. The historical background of Deaf sport competition in Poland and worldwide is presented. The history of competition is based on 160 non-self-contained works, numerous monographs and occasional publications, as well as manuscript materials and reports. The work is enriched by about 70 online sources. The illustrative material and its captions come from roughly 40 written reports transmitted via social communication channels. The monograph includes 426 highly described photographs. The index of surnames memorializes over 1,200 organizers and participants associated with Deaf sport in Poland.

As for research problems, despite collaboration with the Boards of the Polish Deaf Sport Association and the Polish Association of the Deaf, the author faced difficulties in accessing institutional and private sources. Archives and private collections are dispersed across Poland. The lack of digitization and descriptions of photographs hindered or even made it impossible to reconstruct events and their protagonists. There are still gaps in reports from certain sports competitions. The absence of verbal contact hindered data verification.

Conclusion

The development of sources documenting Deaf sport in Poland reflects the organizational, technological, and cultural evolution of this community. From prewar internal publications and postwar club bulletins and chronicles, through environmental periodicals and anniversary publications, to modern digital archives and online repositories – each era left a characteristic imprint on the history of the sports movement of Deaf people. Of particular note are works that systematically organize and disseminate knowledge about the achievements of the Deaf community: W. Pięta's monograph "Tennis in the World of Silence", which provides a comprehensive picture of the development of table tennis for Deaf athletes at national and international levels, and Adam Szulc's two-volume "Chronology of 100 Years of Sports for the Deaf-Mute, the Deaf, and the Hearing Impaired in Poland" (vol. 1: 1922–1992; vol. 2: 1992–2022), the most extensive source to date on the history of Deaf sport in Poland. Both publications are based on a broad corpus of archival, press, and iconographic materials, including documents from the Polish Deaf Sport Association, the International Committee of Sport for the Deaf, and private collections of activists and athletes. The analysis of monographs indicates that archival materials, community press, and photographic documentation constitute a key base for research on Deaf sports. Their systematic processing and publication contribute not only to preserving

the memory of athletic activity but also to the development of methodologies in studies of culture and history of minority communities, filling important "white spots" in Polish sports history. However, the present study is not without its limitations. This work primarily draws on sources from within the Deaf community itself, consciously adopting a monographic perspective that focuses on the institutional development initiated by the Polish Sports Association of the Deaf-Mute. Consequently, the activities of potential Deaf athletes within sports clubs of national minorities (e.g., Ukrainian or German) in the Second Polish Republic were not explored here, as they represent a distinct and separate line of inquiry. Furthermore, the research has highlighted the significant challenges and fragmented nature of the archival base. While official state archives (such as the Central Archives of Modern Records or the State Archives in Łódź and Katowice) hold valuable but often sparse institutional records, the most comprehensive collections often remain in the form of unarchived, private "community archives" within local branches of the Polish Association of the Deaf (PZG). A full-scale, systematic query across all major state archives, though recognized as a fundamental next step, extends beyond the scope of this initial synthesis. Similarly, the underutilization of the daily press, both national and regional, is acknowledged as a constraint, primarily due to its limited digital availability and the labor-intensive process required for its manual review. Contemporary research on Deaf sport must therefore adopt an interdisciplinary approach that combines physical culture studies, history, sociology, cultural studies, and disability studies.⁴⁶ The integration of research methods from these diverse disciplines, alongside the future application of comprehensive archival queries and press analysis, allows for a fuller understanding of the complex relationships between sport, cultural identity, and social processes within the Deaf community.⁴⁷ Ultimately, the inclusion of digital tools, AI-based analysis, and visual methodologies offers new and essential opportunities for preserving, interpreting, and presenting Deaf sport as a vital component of Poland's cultural heritage.

⁴⁶ P. Kawalec, *Metody mieszane w kontekście procesu badawczego w naukoznawstwie*. "Zagadnienia Naukoznawstwa" 2014, 50/1(199), pp. 3–22, Toruń 2014; P. Rydzewski, *Materiały dydaktyczne dla studentów Wydziału Filozofii i Socjologii oraz doktorantów Szkoły Doktorskiej Nauk Społecznych UMCS* (<https://mojebadania.wordpress.com/2024/09/09/metody-badawcze-w-naukach-spolecznych-materialy-dydaktyczne/>). Accessed: 20.09.2025.

⁴⁷ A. Szulc, et al. *Model of the Performance Based on Artificial Intelligence-Fuzzy Logic Description of Physical Activity, Sensors* - 2023, 23 (3), no. 1117 (unpaginated).

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *The Sources and Documentation of a Century of Deaf Sport in Poland (1922–2022)*.

FUNDING

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *The Sources and Documentation of a Century of Deaf Sport in Poland (1922–2022)*.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Adam Michał Szulc: Conceptualization, Methodology, Original Draft. Data Curation, Investigation, Review & Editing, Analysis, Visualization, Validation. The Author approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Received: 13.12.2024

<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/sit.2026.03.02>

Accepted: 27.01.2026

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FOOTBALL IN THE BYELORUSSIAN SSR IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEWSPAPER “FIZKULTURNIK BYELORUSSII” IN THE 1950s–1980s

How to cite [jak cytować]: Tserashkova K., Vashkevich A., Darokhin P., *Football in the Byelorussian SSR in the light of the newspaper “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” in the 1950s–1980s*, “Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe” 2026, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 27–53.

Piłka nożna w Białoruskiej SRR w świetle gazety „Fizkulturnik Białorusii” w latach 50.–80. XX wieku

Streszczenie

Zgodnie z doktryną ideologiczną ZSRR sport miał służyć promocji osiągnięć ustroju socjalistycznego i radzieckiego modelu wychowania fizycznego zarówno na arenie międzynarodowej, jak i w obrębie Związku. Źródłami informacji były specjalistyczne wydawnictwa sportowe, działy sportowe w czasopismach i gazetach społeczno-politycznych, radio i telewizja, gdzie regularnie nadawano różnego rodzaju reportaże, felietony i wiadomości sportowe. Głównym wydawnictwem sportowym Białoruskiej Republiki był „Fizkulturnik Białorusii”. Opierając się na materiałach opublikowanych w gazecie, w opracowaniu przedstawiono analizę białoruskiej prasy radzieckiej jako źródła historii lokalnej piłki nożnej. Obejmuje ona okres od początku lat 50., kiedy powstała gazeta, a radzieccy sportowcy stali się stałymi uczestnikami wszystkich międzynarodowych zawodów, do końca lat 80., kiedy w warunkach polityki „Pieriestrojki” („Przebudowy”) i „Głasności” („Jawności”) środki masowego przekazu przeszły od radzieckiego paradygmatu intelektualnego do tematów skierowanych do masowego odbiorcy. W artykule przeanalizowano źródła pisane i wizualne dotyczące historii piłki nożnej w Białoruskiej SRR, publikowane w gazecie „Fizkulturnik Białorusii”, a także prześledzono tematy, które były najintensywniej poruszane na łamach czasopisma w latach 50. i 80. XX wieku.

Słowa kluczowe: białoruska piłka nożna, radziecka piłka nożna, prasa sportowa, karykatura piłkarska, kultura kibicowska, piłkarze, stadiony.

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Abstract

In accordance with the ideological doctrine of the USSR, sport was intended to showcase the accomplishments of the socialist system and the Soviet model of physical education both on the international stage and within the union. The means of information were specialized sports publications, sports sections in socio-political magazines and newspapers, radio and television, where various reports, features and sports news were regularly broadcast. The main Belarusian republican sports publication was "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ("Physical culturist of Byelorussia"). Drawing on material published in the newspaper, the research presents an analysis of the Belarusian Soviet press as a source for the history of local football. Covering the period from the early 1950s, when the newspaper was founded and Soviet athletes became constant participants in all international competitions, to the late 1980s, when, under the conditions of the "Perestroika" and "Glasnost" policies, the mass media underwent a transition from the Soviet ideological paradigm to topics aimed at the mass consumer. The article analyzes written and visual sources on the history of football in the Byelorussian SSR, published by the newspaper "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii", and traces topics that were most reflected on the pages of the periodical in the 1950s–1980s.

Keywords: Belarusian football, Soviet football, sports press, football caricature, fan culture, football players, stadiums.

Introduction

The First World War, the dissolution of the Russian Empire, the Civil War, as well as the political, social and economic circumstances of the formation of the USSR, and the establishment of a completely new Communist ideology led to the fact that the inclusion of Soviet football into international competitions was postponed. The football section of the USSR (which was the direct predecessor of the Football Federation of the Soviet Union) was created in the All-Union Council of Physical Culture of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union in 1934. It was reorganised into the Football Federation of the Soviet Union in 1959, after becoming a member of FIFA and UEFA. The Soviet football championship was first played in 1936.

After the Second World War, Soviet athletes became participants of the main international competitions: the World and European Championships and Cups, the Olympic Games. In 1946, the year after a successful tour of FC Dinamo Moscow in Great Britain, the USSR Football Federation joined FIFA, and in 1954 it became a member of UEFA. In 1951, the Olympic Committee of the USSR was established. In 1952 the Soviet Union team took part in the Summer Olympics in Helsinki for the first time, and in 1956 in the Winter Olympics in Cortina d'Ampezzo.¹ The start of participation in the international sports movement took place during the beginning of the Cold War and the Iron Curtain. According to USSR ideological doctrine, sport was to highlight the achievements of the social-

¹ *Futbol v SSSR [Football in the USSR]*, Moscow, 1988, 32 p.

ist system and the Soviet system of physical education. Top professional sport was oriented towards the international arena (foreign consumers, external ideological rivals). Mass amateur sports and physical culture addressed to the Soviet population mainly served the mobilization of the population and motivation to work.²

The printed media was one of the main instruments of propaganda. The central Soviet press was represented by newspapers "Sovetskiy sport" ("Soviet Sport", 1924-1928, since 1933, Moscow; until 1946 "Red Sport"), weekly "Futbol" ("Football", since 1960, Moscow; since 1967-1990 – "Football-Hockey"). Among the republican publications, the most developed was the sports press in the Ukrainian SSR: "Sportyvna hazeta" ("Sports Newspaper", 1934-1939, 1949-2008, Kyiv; since 1937 – "Ready for Labour and Defense", in 1938-1965 – "Soviet Sport"), "Fizkultura i sport" ("Physical Culture and Sport", 1922-1999, Kyiv; since 1965 – "Start"), "Teoriya i praktyka fizychnoho vykhovannya ta sportu" ("Theory and Practice of Physical Education and Sports", 1968-1990s, Kyiv).

Among the publications of other Soviet republics were "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ("Physical culturist of Byelorussia", Minsk, Byelorussian SSR, since 1951), "Fizkulturnik Uzbekistana" ("Physical culturist of Uzbekistan", Tashkent, Uzbek SSR, since 1934), "Sport" (Alma-Ata, Kazakh SSR, since 1959), "Lelo" ("Sports Newspaper", Tbilisi, Georgian SSR, since 1934), "Idman" ("Sport", Baku, Azerbaijan SSR, since 1935), "Fizkulturnik Azerbaidzhan" ("Physical culturist of Azerbaijan", Baku, Azerbaijan SSR, since 1938), "Sportas" ("Sport", Vilnius, Lithuanian SSR, since 1956), "Sporte" ("Sport", Riga, Latvian SSR, since 1955), "Ayastany Fizkulturnik" ("Physical culturist of Armenia", Yerevan, Armenian SSR, since 1956), "Spordilekht" ("Sports Newspaper", Tallinn, Estonian SSR, since 1958), as well as other publications: magazines, sports supplements to newspapers, and local sports newspapers.³

The main Belarusian Republican sports publication was "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ("Physical culturist of Byelorussia"), whose first issue appeared on June 1, 1951. The newspaper was published in the Russian language except in 1952-1962, when it was simultaneously published in Belarusian. From 1968 to 1991, the editorial office of the newspaper was subordinated to the Committee on Physical Culture and Sports under the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR and Belarusian Republican Council of Trade Unions.⁴

² A. B. Kolesnikov, *Fizkultura i sport v SSSR kak sotsial'naya "laboratoriya" konstruirovaniya ideala sovetskogo cheloveka* [Physical education and sports in the USSR as a social "laboratory" for constructing the ideal of the Soviet person], *Istoricheskiy kuryer* [Historical courier] 2021, no 6 (20), pp. 171–172.

³ Yu. O. Sazonova, *Sportyvna zhurnalistyka Ukrayiny: istoriya, evolyutsiya, transformatsiya: monohrafiya* [Sports journalism of Ukraine: history, evolution, transformation: monograph], Mykolaiv 2021, p. 174–175.

⁴ Sportivnaya panorama [Sports panorama], [in:] G. P. Pashkov and others (ed.), *Bielaruskaya entsyklopedyia* [Belarusian Encyclopedia]: In 18 volumes, vol. 15, Minsk 2002, p.120.

Research methods and problems

This article is devoted to the analysis of the newspaper as a source for researching the history of Belarusian Soviet football. The basis of the problematic and thematic analysis of the newspaper materials is a continuous review and selection of materials related to Belarusian football. The methodological basis of the research is the principles of objectivity, historicism, systematicity and the principle of value in history.

The chronological boundaries of the study cover the 1950s-1980s. In the early 1950s, Soviet athletes became regular participants in all international competitions, and a specialized sports publication appeared in the Byelorussian SSR that covered international, USSR-wide and republican (held in Byelorussian SSR) sports events. In the social and socio-economic development of the country, the studied period is associated with softening of the system after the death of Joseph Stalin (1953) and the further development of the processes of building a socialist society with a complete state monopoly of mass media. In the second half of the 1980s, under the conditions of the “Perestroika” and “Glasnost” policies, the mass media underwent a transition from the Soviet ideological paradigm to topics aimed at the mass consumer. In 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted the law “About the printed media and other media”, which eliminated the state’s monopoly of media and abolished censorship.⁵

Theoretical approaches to the study of sports as a propaganda instrument in the USSR (both within the union and in the international arena) are developed in monographs of R. Edelman,⁶ J. Riordan,⁷ J. Parks,⁸ M. Zeller,⁹ L. E. Holmes,¹⁰ C. Viñas,¹¹ J. Etty¹² and other authors. But their peculiarity is the focus on the central media and clubs of the USSR’s top league, while the peculiarities of the republican media and sports remain outside the scope of coverage. An important contribution to historiography is the research of Ukrainian historians

⁵ “Vedomosti Syezda narodnykh deputatov SSSR i Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR” [“Bulletin of the Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR”] 1990, no 26, art. 492, pp. 690–700.

⁶ R. Edelman, *Serious Fun: A History of Spectator Sports in the USSR*, New York 1993, 307 p.

⁷ J. Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society: Development of Sport and Physical Education in Russia and the USSR*, New York 1977, 435 p.

⁸ J. Parks, *The Olympic games, the Soviet Sports Bureaucracy, and the Cold War: Red Sport, Red Tape*, Lexington 2017, 205 p.

⁹ M. Zeller, *Sport and Society in the Soviet Union: The Politics of Football after Stalin*, translated by N. Challerger, London 2018, 336 p.

¹⁰ L. E. Holmes, *Win or Else: Soviet Football in Moscow and Beyond, 1921–1985*, Indiana 2024, 230 p.

¹¹ C. Viñas, *Football in the Land of the Soviets*, London 2022, 176 p.

¹² J. Etty, *Graphic Satire in the Soviet Union: Krokodil’s Political Cartoons*, Mississippi 2019, 266 p.

I. Svistelnik¹³ and Yu. O. Sazonova,¹⁴ who analyze sports media in the Ukrainian SSR and present trends in the development of the press in other union republics.

Due to the lack of special studies of the local sports press in the 1950s-1980s in Belarusian historiography, the article is based on newspaper materials. In addition to studying written sources for the preparation of the article, visual sources were also analyzed. In particular, more than one hundred and thirty caricatures on the topics of football players, fans and football infrastructure, and fifty photographs of stadiums were identified on the pages of the newspaper and used to study the display of domestic football in this media. The authors put forward the following research problems: 1. What sources on the history of football in the Byelorussian SSR were published by the newspaper "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii"? 2. What topics were most reflected on the pages of the periodical in the 1950s -1980s?

The structure of the article is determined by the topics of materials devoted to Belarusian football, where, along with the coverage of the matches, much attention was paid to ideological work with athletes and fans, as well as the condition of stadiums and other sports facilities. The newspaper contains not only written but also numerous pictorial sources: caricatures, drawings and photographs. The peculiarities of information transmission and ideological influence in the newspaper necessitated the analysis of football caricatures, which were actively used in the 1950s and 1960s, both as independent semantic objects and for visualization of publications.

The newspaper "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" as a source for the history of football

The newspaper contains various sources on the history of Belarusian football in the 1950s-1980s. Among the written sources were materials of analytical (correspondence, articles, reviews, reports), artistic, journalistic (essays, feuilletons, humorous) and epistolary genres (letters, telegrams), as well as legislative documents and other types of sources. Pictorial sources include photographs, drawings and caricatures. The newspaper published fixture lists, results and tables of the USSR Championship, Byelorussian SSR Championship, USSR Cup and Byelo-

¹³ I. Svistelnik, *Knyhovydannya ta periodychna presa u haluzi fizychnoyi kultury i sportu: monohrafiya* [Book publishing and periodicals in the field of physical culture and sports: monograph], Kyiv 2010, 148 p.

¹⁴ Yu. O. Sazonova, *Sportyvna zhurnalistyka Ukrainy: providni personaliyi ta osnovni hazetno-zhurnalni vydannya (XIX–XXI st.): monohrafiya* [Sports journalism of Ukraine: leading personalities and main newspaper and magazine publications (19th–21st centuries): monograph], Mykolaiv 2020. 256 p.; Yu. O. Sazonova, *Sportyvna zhurnalistyka Ukrainy: istoriya, evolyutsiya, transformatsiya: monohrafiya* [Sports journalism of Ukraine: history, evolution, transformation: monograph], Mykolaiv 2021, 276 p.

russian SSR Football Cup, as well as other football tournaments, reviews of important matches, results of meetings of the Presidium of the Byelorussian SSR Football Federation. Each football season featured preseason and postseason analysis. Essays on the history of football appeared regularly in separate articles.¹⁵

The first reports on football matches were different from today's standards of the genre. The authors did not include basic information: lineups, goal scorers and goal minutes, cautioned and sent off players, missed penalties, number of spectators present, names of referees. A fixed reporting standard was established quite late and may have been related to the demand for information from fans. For example, in the article "Game Score" the lineup of FC Dinamo Minsk was reported "at the request of the readers" (1975).¹⁶ Over time, the reports evolved into a more modern format. In the early 1980s, team lineups with substitutions and the basic information became mandatory. Along with the technical part, the literary part also developed: already in the 1950s, elements of match analysis were present in the reports, for example, evaluation of refereeing.¹⁷ From time to time, critical comments of the authors on the quality of the match appeared, they noted a neglectful approach of coaches, poor pitch quality and other issues.¹⁸ In the reports of the FC Dinamo Minsk games in the late 1970s, team compositions, the progress of the game, comments of players and analysts, as well as more literary writing appeared.¹⁹

¹⁵ *Za sorok let (1917-1957). Futbol v Belorussii [For forty years (1917-1957). Football in Byelorussia]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1957, no 77 (660), p. 3; no 78 (661), p. 3; *Dostoyaniye millionov [The wealth of millions]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1958, no 30 (718), p. 4; *Vpervyye... [For the first time...]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1968, no 63 (2209), p. 3; *U istokov belorusskogo futbola [At the origins of Belarusian football]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1959, no 62 (854), p. 3.; *Za godom god... [Year after year...]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1967, no 58 (1949), p. 2; "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1967, no 62 (1953), p. 2; "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1967, no 69 (1960), p. 2; "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 196, no 173 (2064), p. 2; "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1967, no 182 (2073), p. 2; "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1967, no 184 (2075), p. 3; "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1967, no 188 (2079), p. 2.

¹⁶ *Schet po igre [The score reflects the game]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1975, no 187 (4107), p. 4.

¹⁷ *Kogda sudya ne presekayet grubost [When a referee does not stop rudeness]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1955, no 47 (422), p. 3.

¹⁸ *Gosti prepodayut urok [Guests teach a lesson]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1960, no 75 (971), p. 4; *Futbolisty traktornogo zavoda – chempiony Minska [Footballers are Minsk champions]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1960, no 91 (987), p. 4; *Futbolisty... v pyli [Footballers... in the dust]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1975, no 144 (4064), p. 4.

¹⁹ *Eto – volya! [This is will!]*, "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1979, no 98 (5020), p. 1.

At the end of each tournament in the Byelorussian SSR, the results were analyzed in separate articles. This concerned not only the performances of professional teams, but also amateur tournaments (championship of the city of Minsk, veteran competitions, youth tournaments and others). The most serious volumes were allocated to the final materials about the performances of the FC Belarus and later FC Dinamo Minsk at the nationwide Soviet level. These articles were accompanied by statistics (lineups in all games, total number of matches and goals, number of spectators) and other information.

The outcome of the 1982 season, in which FC Dinamo Minsk became the champion of the USSR for the only time in history, was most vividly presented. Other successes of Belarusian football include third place in the USSR Championship in 1954 (at that time FC Spartak Minsk), 1963 and 1983. FC Dinamo Minsk became a finalist of the USSR Cup in 1965 and 1987. The club also represented the USSR in the UEFA Champions Cup (quarterfinalist in 1983/84), UEFA Cup (quarterfinalist in 1984/85) and Cup Winners Cups (quarterfinalist in 1987/88). Several Belarusian players from FC Dinamo Minsk played for the USSR national team, including Sergei Aleinikov and Sergei Gotsmanov who were in the lineup of the USSR for EURO'88 final vs the Netherlands. Aleinikov went on to become the only Soviet footballer to play in UEFA Cup final (for Juventus in 1990).

Unlike Dinamo Minsk, other Belarusian clubs never reached top Soviet levels. The closest was FC Dnepr Mogilev, which won USSR Second League (third tier of Soviet football structure), but failed to establish itself in the First league (finished 20th out of 22 and relegated). FC Dinamo Brest, FC Gomel, FC Neman Grodno and FC Vitebsk during the Soviet era mostly played in the Second League (third tier of USSR football).

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the coverage of the events of FC Dinamo, the flagship Belarusian team has occupied the main place in the newspaper: the team's return from the holidays, matches, interviews, advertisements of upcoming games became mandatory. The XXII Summer Olympic Games in 1980 in the USSR caused an increase in interest in sports in general, and in football in particular. From the end of the 1970s, the pages of "Fizkulturnik" published articles devoted to the training of athletes, preparation of infrastructure, equipment and even merchandise. The capital of the Byelorussian SSR hosted six games of the group stage and one quarter-final match of the Olympic football tournament, which were widely covered in the main sports publications of the country.

Ideological pressure on football players

The newspaper argued the advantage of training Soviet athletes and emphasized the role of party and political work in the sports environment. Victories

and achievements in sports were explained as an advantage of the entire Soviet education system. The ideal image of the Soviet man was broadcast in the mass media, consisting only of positive characteristics. An important feature of the athlete was “moral character”. In addition, the Soviet football player had to “constantly acquire knowledge”, have “high discipline in work and sports”. The newspaper published the names of the teams and the names of the players who did not correspond to the image of the Soviet athlete:

Some football players of the FC Dinamo masters team behave incorrectly in everyday life... [...] The public of the republic has repeatedly drawn attention to their behavior, but these athletes do not listen to criticism, and the sports organizations of Dinamo and the Institute of Physical Education have not taken proper measures to educate them.²⁰

Football players were criticized for their great popularity among fans. In the article “FC Belarus in the new season” the following was reported: “Having found themselves in the center of public attention, some of our football players imagined themselves to be stars of the first magnitude.” And they also quoted the names of the football players: “The goalkeeper Denisenko, the defenders Radunsky, Manko, who started the season well, came to such a position in the team.”²¹ The material of the senior teacher of physical education of the Minsk Law Institute “About the culture of speech of an athlete” notes as follows:

Among athletes there are many lovers of slang words. Their speech is peppered with such pearls that it is often simply incomprehensible to an inexperienced person what the speaker wants to say.²²

Attention was drawn to unsportsmanlike behavior and rough play, as well as bad habits.²³ The appearance and interest in fashion were also criticized.²⁴

²⁰ *Kultura sovetskogo sportsmena* [The culture of a soviet athlete], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1953, no 10 (176), p. 1.

²¹ “Belarus” v novom sezone [“Belarus” in the new season], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1961, no 2 (1003), pp. 3-4.

²² *O kulture rechi sportsmena* [On the culture of an athlete’s speech], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1953, no 59 (225), p. 3.

²³ *Etika sovetskogo sportsmena* [Ethics of the soviet athlete], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1951, no 41, p. 2; *Khuligany na futbolnom pole* [Hooligans on the football field], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1953, no 49 (215), p. 3; *Po materialam “Fizkulturnika Belorussii”* [Based on materials from “Fizkulturnik Belorussii”], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1953, no 50 (216), p. 3; *Borotsya s nekulturnostyu i khuliganstvom* [To fight against uncultured behavior and hooliganism], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1957, no 49 (632), p. 2; *O futbole i vospitanii* [About football and education], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1963, no 81 (1290), p. 2; *Nikakikh poblazhek khuliganam* [No mercy for hooligans], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”], 1961, no 71 (1072), p. 4.

²⁴ *Na temy mod* [On the topic of fashion], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1959, no 55 (847), p. 4.

During the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, the attitudes formed in pre-war times – amateurism, collectivism and high moral qualities – continued to be preserved in football. Both the most popular domestic football players (“star disease”) and “bourgeois”, “Western” athletes and sports officials acted as antagonists. In the 1980s, the newspaper became more focused on the readers’ needs. Since the second half of the 1980s, the amount of ideological material has noticeably decreased.

Football fans and the “correct” forms of team support in the stadium

Within the Soviet state, football was part of physical culture and a phenomenon around which an original subculture formed. Special importance was attached to football matches as a competition and a place for the release of social energy. Great attention was paid to the moral image of stadium visitors – this topic runs through the entire researched period. In the article “FC Belarus in the new season”, the senior coach of the team is indignant at the behavior of some fans:

...there are still fans of a “special kind”. Some of them drink vodka in the stands, drink to a goal or a miss, they whistle, curse, not paying attention to the fact that children and women are sitting nearby, and insult the referees and players. [...] Such “fans”, who interfere with spectators, referees, and players, must be educated both by administrative measures and, especially, by measures of social influence.²⁵

Whistling during games was especially disapproved. The author of the article “Cheering at the stadium should be a cultural thing” was disgusted by such a reaction of the fans:

Remember how some of the spectators had a rule of whistling when they entered the pitch. Needless to say, this lack of culture and savagery must be eradicated. [...] They talked about not throwing bottles at the players (on the stadium radio – note), but as for elementary culture, greeting visiting players with applause, to put it mildly, they were embarrassed.²⁶

The same criticism is heard in the article “You came to the stadium”:

Whistling and insulting shouts from the so-called “wits” accompany the decisions of the referees, the football player’s mistakes when performing this or that technique, etc. and so on.²⁷

²⁵ “Belarus” v novom sezone [FC Belarus in the new season], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1961, no 2 (1003), pp. 3-4.

²⁶ “Bolet” nado kulturno [You have support in a cultural way], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1964, no 33 (1347), p. 4.

²⁷ Vy prishli na stadion [You came to the stadium], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1985, no 210 (6822), p. 4.

Active fans were accused of being an obstacle to visiting stadiums:

...the majority of our team's fans sit at home watching TV only because of these hooligans in the stands. Is it really possible to go to our stadium with a wife?²⁸

At the same time,

...a lot of random people with a low cultural level end up there, who, having little understanding of football, see attending a match only as an excuse to drink and yell.²⁹

And they were also blamed for failures on the football field:

Inappropriate remarks and whistling at individual players throw them off balance. [...] Spectators turn the referee against the team, the players against the referee, and an unhealthy atmosphere is created on the field.³⁰

Another question raised by football fans was "How to deal with smokers, of whom there is a clear majority?" And immediately they offered to conduct an experiment at the Dinamo Minsk stadium with the allocation of sectors for those who do not smoke.³¹

Among the forms of support for teams on the football field, which were approved by ideological employees and ordinary spectators, thunderous applause, as well as "...banners calling for victory, flags with the colors of their favorite club" were offered. They also proposed to take the rules of behavior in the theater and create "...an impenetrable barrier to all kinds of violations of socialist morality."³² It was emphasized that raising a fan is a difficult task, which should begin at school, pioneer unit and Komsomol organization, and it will end in sports halls and stadiums – "exhortations on the radio and influence, in extreme cases, by the police and brigades of the people's squad."³³ In the article "In the museum" the disappearance of hooligan fans under socialism was generally announced.³⁴ Among the proposals to restore order are "equipping special satirical stands on the territory of the stadiums with portraits and lists of those who like

²⁸ *Khuliganam net mesta na tribunakh* [There is no place for hooligans in the stands], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1981, no 189 (5591), p. 2.

²⁹ *Na stadion, kak v teatr* [To the stadium, like to the theatre], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1986, no 3 (6865), p. 2.

³⁰ *"Bolet" razumno* [To support for the team wisely], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1959, no 59 (851), p. 4.

³¹ *Na stadion, kak v teatr* [To the stadium, like to the theatre], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1986, no 3 (6865), p. 2.

³² *Vy prishli na stadion* [You came to the stadium], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1985, no 210 (6822), p. 4.

³³ *Trenirovka vyderzhki* [Endurance training], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1961, no 33 (1034), p. 3.

³⁴ *V muzeye* [In the museum], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1961, no 94 (1095), p. 4.

to play pranks", as well as "strictly punishing and fining hooligans who prevent people from watching football or relaxing at the stadium."³⁵

A well-known place for informal meetings of football fans in Minsk was the so-called "Birzha" ("Exchange") near the Dinamo stadium. Such gatherings caused dissatisfaction and were repeatedly criticized in the newspaper.³⁶ The author, a retired member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, I. Pavlov, was excited by the activity of the fans:

Between games (and immediately after games), groups of football fans gather at the stadium. There are heated debates. Assumptions, predictions, criticism, advice without an address – there is no end to it. Such "forums" can sometimes be lengthy. [...] How should we react to these spontaneously arising conversations?³⁷

In the material "Hooligans and drunkards – get out of the stands!" a senior inspector of the Leninsky Police Department of Minsk gives the names and surnames of the fans who misbehaved in front of the representatives of the law enforcement agencies:

Here is a worker at the Bolshevik plant, Vladimir Peshkov. On May 2, during a football game, he made noise at the stadium, pestered the spectators, used foul language, and swore. He was drunk and was sentenced to seven days of arrest. [...] Nikolai Turgin does not want to work. He doesn't miss football matches. However, he apparently loves to overcome obstacles and climbs into the stadium over the fence. [...] Bus depot worker Nikolai Karnatsky and driver of the same depot Georgi Tarasik felt cramped in the stands during a football match on May 12. They decided to express their feelings at a closer distance from the players, ran onto the pitch and headed towards the players with loud screams.³⁸

Despite constant criticism of football fans, reports in the media about specific incidents involving fans on the territory of the USSR are an exception. For example, the article "From the courtroom: "Fans"" was reprinted from the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union. It reported that on November 3, 1988, a group of fans (about 200 people) came from Moscow to Vilnius for the match between FC Zalgiris and FC Spartak Moscow. A group of twenty people boarded a trolleybus heading towards the stadium and blocked the exits. When the members of the Lithuanian SSR cycling team, Romuald Blakewich and Kestutis Stakenas, tried to get out of the bus, the hooligans threw fists and bottles at

³⁵ *Vy prishli na stadion* [You came to the stadium], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1985, no 210 (6822), p. 4; *Na stadion, kak v teatr* [To the stadium, like to the theatre], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1986, no 3 (6865), p. 2.

³⁶ *Karikatura* [Caricature], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1961, no 28 (1029), p. 3.

³⁷ *"Bolet" nado kulturno* [You need to support the team wisely], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1964, no 33 (1347), p. 4.

³⁸ *Khuliganov i pyanits – von s tribun* [Hooligans and drunkards – out of the stands], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1961, no 41 (1042), p. 4.

them: "Stakenas stumbled from the blow from the bottle. Then they started kicking him. His comrade was also beaten." The court found both FC Spartak Moscow fans guilty of hooliganism causing bodily harm, sentencing 17-year-old evening school student Andrey Kulikov to 2.5 years and 18-year-old unemployed Uladimir Iofe to three years of imprisonment. Execution of the sentence was postponed for two years.³⁹

At the same time, only ideological work on the pages of the newspaper and police inspections at the stadium were not enough, and in 1983 the order "On strengthening the responsibility of football team leaders, coaches, referees, doctors, instructors, stadium workers during football matches of the championships and Cups of the Byelorussian SSR and the USSR at the stadiums of the republic" was published. The newspaper explained that the order contained a number of recommendations of the football department of the Sports Committee of the Byelorussian SSR and the republican football federation aimed at ensuring order and discipline in stadiums. However, no details were given on the pages of the newspaper.⁴⁰

In the second half of the 1980s, with some liberalization of the printed media, letters from readers who were dissatisfied with the actions of the police at the Dinamo Stadium appeared in "Fizkulturnik". The article "Respect the fan" quotes a letter from a member of the Union of Journalists of the USSR Rzhetskaya from Borisov:

Tell me where, in what document on the fight against drunkenness and alcoholism it is written that people who come to the stadium are to be searched. In Minsk they do this without any hesitation. I walked with a small bag made of fabric like plastic. Suddenly, at the entrance to the stand, a policeman grabbed it, began to touch it, and looked inside. I had fan stuff there: an umbrella, a newspaper, binoculars, a couple of sandwiches for the return trip by train. I asked why they were searching me, who gave them this right? Response: "If I want to, I'll force you to take out everything, maybe you have a bottle there." The journalist was also outraged by the fact that "...after the match the police do not allow you to take an autograph from your favorite footballer. Although the players themselves willingly give them to fans."⁴¹

The article "Why don't people go to the stadium" contains excerpts from a letter from a FC Dinamo fan with a ten-year experience: "...at the entrance you are greeted by a reinforced police squad. I, of course, have nothing against this. But the suspicion of some policemen simply starts to irritate and humiliate your human dignity. At the sector you are greeted by double security: there was one

³⁹ *Iz zala suda: "Bolelshchiki"* [From the courtroom: "Fans"], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1989, no 55 (7667), p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Za poryadok i distsiplinu na stadionakh* [Supporting order and discipline in stadiums], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1983, no 13 (5925), p. 2.

⁴¹ *Uvazhat bolelshchika* [Respect the fan], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1986, no 99 (6961), p. 4.

at the entrance and then immediately in front of the sector entrance. For what? Haven't I been checked already before I got to the sector? Are there too many extra people in the stadium, passing here for free? And again you feel the complete distrust of these inspectors." Among the big disadvantages, as noted by the fan, are the closed buffets and the absence of a separate sector for people who do not smoke.⁴²

Women's football coverage

Until the end of the 1980s, women's football was mentioned in the newspaper only episodically in connection with the international agenda. As the article "Arguments for doubters" reports, in November 1987, the first city women's tournament organized by "Znamya yunosti" ("The Banner of Youth") newspaper took place in Minsk. In February 1988, the Minsk city team participated in inter-city competitions in Kaunas, where they faced teams from Lithuania and Moldova. Women's football teams were created at Lokomotiv Stadium. Having won the first republican tournament on a standard 11 vs 11 pitch (teams from Minsk, Mogilev and Brest participated), the women footballers of the "Orbita" sports club took part in the nationwide tournament in Kashira, Moscow region, where the strongest teams of the USSR participated. Next, new teams were created and football tournaments were held in Mogilev and Grodno, and the second "Znamya yunosti" tournament was held in Minsk, where the "Orbita" team won.

In 1990, three Belarusian teams took part in the USSR women's football championship, as reported in the article "Women's football in all seriousness": FC Nadezhda (Mogilev) and FC Niva (Grodno) – in the top league, FC Elektronika (Minsk) – in the first. The best result was achieved by Mogilev players, who came fifth. Among the results of the season, the entry of Belarusian women into the USSR national team, which in 1991 was supposed to participate in the European Championship for the first time, is mentioned. The author of the article, the referee of the republican category Sharbur, proposes that the football federation of the Byelorussian SSR should create another committee for women's football, which was supposed to take control of the opening of training groups for girls in the children's and youth sports schools, the organization of the women's championship of the republic and other events.⁴³

⁴² *Pochemu ne idut na stadion* [Why they don't go to the stadium], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1989, no 189 (7801), p. 3.

⁴³ *Zhenskiy futbol na polnom seryeze* [Women's football in all seriousness], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1990, no 241 (8103), p. 4.

Condition of stadiums and other sports facilities

The newspaper contains information about the construction of football stadiums in Minsk, as well as in other Belarusian cities and towns. Much coverage was given to several reconstructions of the main arena of the republic – the Dinamo Stadium. The reconstruction of the Dinamo Stadium before the XXII Summer Olympic Games of 1980 was recorded in detail.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the newspaper repeatedly reported on the bad pitch condition or other issues of the Minsk stadiums Krasnoye znamya, Sputnik, Lokomotiv, Belarusian State University, Pishchevik and other stadiums and pitches. Stadiums in regional capitals were not in the best condition either: Vitebsk Stadium and its reserve pitch, the stadium of the fine cloth factory in Grodno, the city stadium and the Lokomotiv stadium in Gomel. There was information about the problems of the stadiums in Dobrush, Dokshitsy, Rechitsa, the Metallist stadiums in Baranovichi and Lokomotiv in Zhlobin, the stadiums in the villages of Bragin and Ostrino, as well as in other rural areas.⁴⁴

In the 1970s, the Belarusian football grounds were in “stagnation” according to the newspaper. This was how the situation in Vitebsk was described: “For many years, FC Dvina has not had their own training ground, and matches have been played at the stadium, which, in the end, has fallen into complete disrepair, and this year FC Dvina, apparently, will be forced to host rivals not in their hometown, but in the stadiums of Orsha and Novopolotsk.” Conditions in Mogilev were not the best: “The team of FC Dnepr Mogilev is also in a difficult situa-

⁴⁴ *Zabroshennyi stadion* [Abandoned stadium], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1951, no 33, p. 4; “Kruglosutochnaya rabota” stadiona [“Round-the-clock operation of the stadium”], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1955, no 57 (432), p. 4; *Gde byl stadion, tam burenka pasetsya* [Where there was a stadium, there a cow grazes], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1960, no 60 (956), p. 3; *Gde nuzhno vlast upotrebit* [Where power should be used], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1969, no 99 (2486), p. 4; “Zhlobinskaya sirota” [“Zhlobin orphan”], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1968, no 198 (2344), p. 3; *Pastbishche, bazarnaya ploshchad ili stadion?* [Pasture, market square or stadium?], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1951, no 23, p. 2; *Stadion-nevidimka* [Invisible stadium], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1965, no 70 (1488), p. 2; *Novyye khozyayeva...* [New owners...], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1958, no 78 (766), p. 2; *Stadion stroitsya* [The stadium is being built], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1964, no 43 (1357), p. 2; *Khleboroby stroyat stadion* [Grain growers are building a stadium], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1966, no 112 (1749), p. 2; *Stadion pod ugrozoy* [The stadium is under threat], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1966, no 54 (1691), p. 3; *Kazhdomu kollektivu – stadion ili ploshchadku* [A stadium or a site for each team], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1965, no 61 (1479), p. 2; *A yesli prislushatsya k Mayakovskomu* [And if you listen to Mayakovsky], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1968, no 91 (2237), p. 2.

tion in this regard – it also does not have its own training ground.” The conditions for football in Grodno were described as follows: “FC Khimik players conduct training sessions at a suburban base, which does not yet meet the necessary requirements.”⁴⁵

Reports from Bobruisk said there were 17 football pitches, however, as stated by a member of the presidium of the Mogilev Region Football Federation: “...only two can be used for games and fruitful training sessions (FanDOK and Spartak stadiums).” The main venue for training was the stadium of the factory named after Dzerzhinskiy, which fell in disrepair:

The football pitch, which does not have drainage, has become completely unusable due to heavy exploitation and non-compliance with maintenance rules. The FanDOK stadium is under a threat of demolition: according to the master plan for the development of the city, a highway is to be built on the territory of the stadium.⁴⁶

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were 131 stadiums in Byelorussian SSR, of which 20 were in Minsk.⁴⁷ As of 1983, there were 135 stadiums and 3,650 football pitches in the Republic.⁴⁸ At the joint meeting of the Sports Committee of the Byelorussian SSR and the presidium of the football federation of the Republic, following the results of the 1979 season, the situation in the teams of the second league was again criticized. In particular, FC Dvina Vitebsk, FC Dnepr Mogilev, and FC Gomselmash Gomel had difficulties both with infrastructure and personnel, as well as with the training process. This is how the situation in FC Dvina was described:

The professional team still does not have their own training ground outside of the city. [...] The pitch of the football stadium in Vitebsk does not stand up to criticism.⁴⁹

The Mogilev sports committee was accused of issues regarding infrastructure: “The planned construction of a complex of football pitches in Mogilev, a ‘football town’ and a training ground for FC Dnepr team is not being done.”⁵⁰ The biggest achievement of Belarusian clubs other than FC Dinamo Minsk in USSR competitions was the promotion of FC Dnepr Mogilev under the coach Anatoly Baidachnyi to the first USSR league. Unfortunately, in the 1983 season, the

⁴⁵ *Zadacha ostayetsya prezhney* [The task remains the same], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1978, no 5 (4671), pp.1, 3.

⁴⁶ *V roli pasynka, ili o baryerakh na puti razvitiya futbola v Bobruyske* [In the role of a stepson, or about barriers to the development of football in Bobruisk], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1978, no 77 (4743), p. 3.

⁴⁷ *Kak sluzhish lyudyam, stadion?* [How do you serve people, stadium?], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1981, no 133 (2521), p. 3.

⁴⁸ *Kachestvo – tema aktualnaya* [Quality is a topical issue], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1983, no 108 (6020), p. 4.

⁴⁹ *Podarite boleshchikami ulybki* [Give the fans smiles], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1979, no 226 (5128), p. 3.

⁵⁰ *Pochemu “Dnepr” techet vspyat?* [Why does the Dnieper flow backwards?], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1979, no 227 (5129), p. 2.

club returned to the second league, where it played until the collapse of the USSR. In February 1989, FC Dnepr Mogilev became the first economically sustainable club in the Byelorussian SSR.⁵¹

During the 1980s, the newspaper continued to publish materials about the difficulties of Belarusian clubs participating in the second Soviet league. Often journalists paid attention to FC Dvina Vitebsk, that did not have "... basic conditions for educational work with football players."⁵² In 1980-1986, Dinamo Stadium in Vitebsk was closed for reconstruction:

When playing away vs FC Dvina, the rivals were forced to book tickets to Novopolotsk. It was here that the team from Vitebsk held home matches.⁵³

And their bus was "breathing its last breath."⁵⁴ In the 1982 season, the matches were moved to Polotsk, where the attendance was even worse:

In the match reports, in the column "number of spectators", the eye-piercing number "100" became familiar.⁵⁵

The stadiums of the Byelorussian SSR championship participants were in a poor condition as well. In 1974, an article "Geese... on the football pitch" appeared in the newspaper. It was dedicated to the stadium of the FC Shakhtyor football club from Soligorsk. The condition of the stadium, whose construction began back in 1965, was described as follows:

The first thing that caught my eye was huge geese that were peacefully nibbling, browsing the grass in the center of the pitch. [...] Goals as such also do not exist. The stands... present a pitiful sight. They began to subside, and the walls of the utility rooms became covered with huge cracks.⁵⁶

In 1977, in the material for the Miner's Day, it was reported that the stadium in Soligorsk was already completed and operational.⁵⁷

In the column "Readers write to us" a football fan named Shapovalov talks about the stadium in Rechitsa: "The stadium is becoming more and more ne-

⁵¹ *Komanda uchitsya schitat* [The team learns to count], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1989, no 28 (7640), p. 3.

⁵² *Pereotsenka tsennostey* [Revaluation of values], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1982, no 16 (5668), p. 4.

⁵³ *Lyubopytnyy "pasyans"* [A curious "solitaire"], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1982, no 243 (5905), p. 3.

⁵⁴ *Staryye problemy novogo sezona* [Old problems of the new season], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1983, no 32 (5944), p. 3.

⁵⁵ *Ozhidaniya i realnost* [Expectations and Reality], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1983, no 214 (6226), p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Gusi... na futbolnom pole* [Geese... on the football field], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1974, no 149 (3815), p. 3.

⁵⁷ *Gorniyaki na stadione* [Miners at the stadium], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1977, no 169 (4599), p. 1.

glected every year. But alcohol lovers found shelter there.” The spectator describes football matches for the championship of the city in 1975 as follows:

There is no information at the stadium (it is impossible to even find out who is playing). The referee runs in the pitch in a training suit, and the linesmen are random people who are involved in performing these duties a minute before the start of the match.⁵⁸

In response, a special correspondent of the newspaper went to the city:

The stadium of the Rechitsadrev Factory makes a pitiful impression. The sports season is in full swing, but the running tracks are torn up, there are no fences, not a single sports poster or stands. There is a footpath across the entire football field, and the goals are dumped in the far corner of the stadium.⁵⁹

A report from 1975 “Homeless” stadium” contains information about Neman Stadium in Mosty:

Over the summer, the stadium fell into a deplorable state without supervision. [...] The wooden stands on one side had to be demolished due to the emergency condition.⁶⁰

In the seasons of 1986 and 1987, the Mosty team played in the championship of the Byelorussian SSR, but could not continue on the republican level. In 1988, it participated in the championship of the district and region:

These competitions are not advertised anywhere in the city, matches are often canceled due to teams not showing up, not all games are attended by referees, and conflict situations arise.⁶¹

The special correspondent of the newspaper reports on the neglected state of the stadium in Novogrudok:

...fans crowd lonely at the edge of the sports ground. Because the benches in the stands, which had seen more than one generation in their lifetime, could not withstand the usage load and collapsed almost two years ago.⁶²

The questions raised were answered by the first secretary of the Novogrudok district committee of the Communist Party of Belarus, who said that the renovation of the stadium would be included in the plan for 1981.⁶³

⁵⁸ *Pozabyt, pozabroszen...* [Forgotten, abandoned...], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1975, no 139 (4059), p. 3.

⁵⁹ *Neuyutno v Rechitse futbolu* [Football feels uneasy in Rechitsa], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1976, no 106 (4282), p. 2.

⁶⁰ *“Besprizornyy” stadion* [“Homeless” stadium], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1975, no 225 (4145), p. 2.

⁶¹ *Gorkaya pilyulya* [A Bitter Pill], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1988, no 194 (7556), p. 2.

⁶² *Trevoga nad stadionom* [Alarm over the stadium], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1980, no 210 (5362), p. 3.

⁶³ *Po materialam FB: “Trevoga nad stadionom”* [Based on materials from FB: “Alarm over the stadium”], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1980, no 249 (5401), p. 2.

In 1981, the newspaper reported on the Gorodskoi stadium in Borisov:

A grassy dirty running track, unpainted benches in small stands, a barn-like administrative building. The only decent place is the football pitch.⁶⁴

The situation of football pitches and playgrounds in Baranovichi (1988) caused concern: “According to statistical reports, there are more than 10 of them. But can the empty land plots behind the factory, the parking lot and other places be considered to be football pitches?” The ongoing renovation of the main sports arena of Baranovichi – Lokomotiv stadium was described as follows:

... the reserve pitch, where the games of the Byelorussian SSR championship are held, does not stand up to criticism. The pitch is very tough, and one has to wonder how referees still allow games to be played here. [...] Only beer lovers, having placed rows of bottles under the bench, drink to their heart’s content.⁶⁵

In 1991, journalists reported that the grandstand at the capital’s “Traktor” stadium was in a state of emergency.⁶⁶

Football caricature

In addition to written sources, the newspaper contains pictorial sources: caricatures, drawings and photographs. Pictures were most often used to illustrate editions dedicated to holidays. Caricature was an important component of ideological work. It was especially actively used in the 1950s and 1960s, and after the 1970s it gradually became an exception. Sports in the caricature of the USSR in the 1950s and 1980s were more humorous than satirical. Of course, sports, including football, were an integral part of Soviet propaganda, but one must take into account the context of the late USSR, where more and more spheres of private life fell out of ideological control.

Purely humorous caricatures touched the sphere of everyday life and human relations. They could make fun of misunderstandings in connection with football terminology, for example, a wife is surprised by her husband’s negative reaction to the fact that a football player gets into the “post” several times, and yet considered to be a “loser”, or a fan uses the football term “send off the pitch” in relation to women who, in his opinion, talk loudly.⁶⁷ The subject of humor were

⁶⁴ *Futbolom yediny...* [Football alone...], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1981, no 144 (5546), p. 2.

⁶⁵ *V nezavidnom odinochestve* [In unenviable solitude], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1988, no 154 (7516), p. 3.

⁶⁶ *Chto luchshe – basseyn ili stadion?* [What is better, a swimming pool or a stadium?], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1991, no 127-128 (3670), p. 2.

⁶⁷ *Karikatura* [Caricature], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1966, no 70 (1707), p. 3; *Vokrug chempionata mira po futbolu* [Around the World Cup], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1966, no 147 (1784), p. 4.

funny or, on the contrary, inventive actions of football players on the pitch, foul play, problems with team organization, extremely active reaction of fans both at the stadium and at home. A picture in which a wife wants to go to play hockey, and a husband to play football, or the spouses cannot draft a “cultural program” – a trip to the theater, because of the world cup – is a typical humorous plot.⁶⁸ The universal passion for football was illustrated, also through the images of atypical fans, for example, old cabbies.⁶⁹ As a comic technique, the appearance or age of football players is used, for example, to show those who have been playing for too long (through beards) or football veterans (through big bellies).⁷⁰

Television, which at that time became common in everyday life and a source of information about the world, including sports, played an important role in broadcasting football-themed images. Thus, the connection “television – football” was one of the symbols of free time, at least for the male part of Soviet society. Extreme popularity of football was mocked in the form of the game’s symbolism (usually in the form of a ball) in unusual situations, such as in a picture where a fan is tested by an optometrist and asked to “read” balls of different sizes, or in an X-ray room when it turns out that the fan literally has a football heart, or in the football player’s family, the baby’s clothes are in the shape of a ball.⁷¹ The ball is also shown as a road sign as a place where fans gather. Typical phrases or images of culture are associated with the football context in a comical way, for example, the expression “don’t beat a lying person” coming from the goalkeeper’s mouth, or the giant head of brother of Chernomor from Pushkin’s “Ruslan and Lyudmila” placed in the goal.⁷²

The caricature in the “no comment” genre, which was new at the time, was frequently used for the football theme. A traditional Soviet caricature usually requires a caption, without which it is difficult to understand the plot, and the drawing itself is more like an illustration than a full-fledged work. The caricature

⁶⁸ *Karikatura [Caricature], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1966, no 188 (1825), p. 4; Karikatura [Caricature], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1966, no 140 (1777), p. 3.*

⁶⁹ *Karikatura “Trenirovka pered matchem” [Caricature “Training before the match”], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1965, no 62 (1480), p. 4.*

⁷⁰ *Karikatura “Ottsy i deti” [Caricature “Fathers and Sons”], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1959, no 41 (833), p. 4; Karikatura “Futbol” [Caricature “Football”], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1959, no 53 (845), p. 4.*

⁷¹ *Bez slov [Without words], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1967, no 49 (1940), p. 4; Karikatura “V rentgenkabinete” [Caricature “In the X-ray room”], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1958, no 42 (730), p. 4; Karikatura “V semye futbolista” [Caricature “In the family of a football player”], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1977, no 209 (4639), p. 3.*

⁷² *Karikatura [Caricature], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1979, no 202 (5104), p. 3; Veselyi karandash [A merry pencil], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1986, no 115 (6977), p. 3.*

of the “new wave” operates with internationally understandable images, for understanding of which only a graphic depiction is enough. Football, as an international phenomenon, has become a fruitful topic for such caricatures. As an example, we can cite a plot where the “wall” is built from players in the shape of bricks, across, instead of vertically, as it is in reality, or football players attack with several balls at once.⁷³

One can even find manifestations of regional patriotism, which is rare for a sufficiently unified Soviet caricature. This is expressed in the desire for success for a club or national team. For example, in one of the cartoons in the caption, the author is worried that the USSR Cup will finally get to Minsk. There are caricatures in the genre of “positive humor” addressed to individual Minsk teams, such as FC Spartak and FC Dinamo.⁷⁴ The picture dedicated to FC Dinamo uses a technique traditional for Soviet caricature, which is very rare, however, in the sports theme – humanization, or the creation of an anthropomorphic creature. In this case, such a creature is represented by the Dinamo Stadium itself, which throws up a player of his team. This is a kind of metonymy in the graphics.⁷⁵ Specific events in football were relatively rarely caricatured and were usually associated with a positive, exceptional occasion. For example, in the picture of 1966, a policeman is carrying a television into a booth so as not to miss a broadcast from England. It was this year that the World Cup took place, when the USSR team achieved its best result in the history of the world championships (fourth place).⁷⁶

A separate version of the caricature was a “friendly” cartoon. Such cartoons usually do not make fun of the hero, but are presented as an illustration of his positive qualities. In the case of the Soviet caricature, these are caricatures of Eduard Malofeev or (less often) of Eduard Zarembo and Mikhail Mustygin, the absolute stars of Belarusian football in the 1960s Malofeev, for example, is shown with a cannon that shoots balls, thus playing with the ambiguous definition of “scorer”.⁷⁷ The genre of “positive humor”, characteristic of Soviet post-

⁷³ *S ulybkoy [With a smile]*, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1978, no 87 (4753), p. 4; *Veselyi karandash [A merry pencil]*, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1979, no 120 (5042), p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Karikatura “Pervoklassniki” [Caricature “First-graders”]*, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1957, no 1 (584), p. 3.

⁷⁵ *Karikatura [Caricature]*, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1963, no 1 (1210), p. 4.

⁷⁶ *Karikatura [Caricature]*, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1966, no 140 (1777), p. 3.

⁷⁷ *E. Malofeev [E. Malofeev]*, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1963, no 91 (1300), p. 4; *E. Malofeev [E. Malofeev]*, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1966, no 135 (1772), p. 4; *E. Zarembo [E. Zarembo]*, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1963, no 38 (1247), p. 4; *Bezuslovno, Mustygin! [Of course, Mustygin!]*,

war caricature, continued to be found in the 1960s and 1970s, although in the 1950s a similar phenomenon was criticized in other works of art (the so-called "fight against the veneering of reality").

It would be a mistake to perceive a football-themed caricature only in the context of humor. The Soviet caricature was always perceived by the state as an effective means of propaganda, of fighting against a class or international enemy, or against "certain shortcomings". The fight against shortcomings was manifested in the definition of those phenomena, usually everyday ones that did not fit into the Soviet ideology. Despite, at times, universal prevalence of certain phenomena, they were defined as separate, random, exceptional. It was not the system as a whole that was criticized, but its specific manifestations (sometimes without names and places, but described in an ambiguous way as "some" or "individual"). Accordingly, the primary role was played not by a humorous, but by a satirical caricature, whose purpose was to define and stigmatize the vices of society.

In the Byelorussian SSR, there were practically no propaganda cartoons on international football topics. Rather, the idea of sports outside of politics, a phenomenon that unites nations, dominated. Therefore, local newspapers actively reprinted caricatures of foreign authors known as friends of the USSR. For example, the Danish cartoonist Herluf Bidstrup.⁷⁸ They also used reprints from more neutral publications ("France Football", "Sport im Bild" from the East Germany, "Stadion" from Czechoslovakia and others).⁷⁹ But sometimes football events related to "big politics" made it to the pages of the newspaper. For example, a cartoon with the image of Francisco Franco, who scores into the goal

"Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1963, no 1 (1210), p. 3; E. Malofeev [E. Malofeev], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1963, no 91 (1300), p. 4.

⁷⁸ *Karikatura "Bolelshchik"* [Caricature "Fan"], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1957, no 49 (632), p. 4; *Karikatura* [Caricature], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1961, no 33 (1034), p. 3.

⁷⁹ *Inostrannyi yumor* [Foreign humor], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1956, no 35 (514), p. 4; *Iz inostrannogo yumora* [From foreign humor], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1957, no 96 (679), p. 4; *Iz inostrannogo yumora* [From foreign humor], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1957, no 98 (861), p. 4; *Iz inostrannogo yumora* [From foreign humor], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1958, no 23 (711), p. 4; *Iz zarubezhnogo yumora* [From foreign humor], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1958, no 75 (763), p. 4; *Iz inostrannogo yumora* [From foreign humor], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1958, no 102 (790), p. 4; *Iz zarubezhnogo yumora* [From foreign humor], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1959, no 82 (874), p. 4; *Iz zarubezhnogo yumora* [From foreign humor], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1961, no 74 (1075), p. 4; *Iz inostrannogo yumora* [From foreign humor], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1966, no 68 (1705), p. 4.

of Spain ("From the position of the right defender"). It was connected with the events at the European football championship in 1960, when the Spanish national team refused to play against the USSR.⁸⁰

One of the topics of the football satire was the disrespect from the representatives of the authorities or the organization that was responsible for the financial support of their own team or simply fans. The cartoons featured images of football stadiums that were in a state of neglect.⁸¹ For example, farm animals play football at the Lokomotiv stadium in Mogilev, cows, horses and geese graze day and night at the stadium in Dokshitsy, in another caricature the footballers of the collective farm team play on a pitch where the grass is waist-height and the ball is not visible, or on another – a football player mows tall grass in the stadium.⁸² Another variant of satire was related to bureaucracy, e.g. when one football player keeps all the results of the team, or the coach turns to the lost and found office to find good strikers there, or instead of taking care of the game, the chairman of the football club solves a crossword puzzle.⁸³

A football player had to be a role model both on and off the pitch. Therefore, the cartoon criticized, firstly, inappropriate behavior on the pitch, namely reckless play, or the use of a foul language.⁸⁴ Such behavior was considered to be hooliganism. In life outside of sports, a footballer was also supposed to be a role model for others. For example, "stylish" athletes ("stilyagi"), football players who enjoyed a lot of press attention were ridiculed.⁸⁵ Drunkenness and tobacco

⁸⁰ *Karikatura "Ispaniya"* [Caricature "Spain"], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1960, no 44 (940), p. 4.

⁸¹ *Karikatura "Dym koromyslom"* [Caricature "Smoke is huge"], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1957, no 11 (594), p. 3; *Koltovich ne razreshayet* [Koltovich doesn't allow], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1957, no 14 (597), p. 4.

⁸² *Karikatura "Futbol'noye sostizaniye" v Mogileve* [Cartoon "Football competition" in Mogilev], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1951, no 18, p. 4; *"Kruglosutochnaya rabota" stadiona* ["Round-the-clock operation of the stadium"], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1955, no 57 (432), p. 4; *Uchastok vydelen* [The plot has been allocated], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1965, no 115 (1533), p. 2; *Veselyi karandash* [A merry pencil], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1981, no 228 (5630), p. 4.

⁸³ *Karikatura* [Caricature], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1962, no 51 (1156), p. 4; *Karikatura* [Caricature], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1966, no 154 (1791), p. 3; *Karikatura* [Caricature], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1965, no 167 (1585), p. 4; *Dlya nikh doroga v kommunizm zakryta* [For them the road to communism is closed], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1961, no 83 (1084), p. 4; *V muzeye* [In the museum], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1961, no 94 (1095), p. 4.

⁸⁴ *Karikatura* [Caricature], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1965, no 167 (1585), p. 4; *V muzeye* [In the museum], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1961, no 94 (1095), p. 4.

⁸⁵ *Na temy mod* [On fashion topics], "Fizkulturnik Byelorussii" ["Physical culturist of Belarus"] 1959, no 55 (847), p. 4; *Talanty... i poklonniki* [Talents... and admirers], "Fizkulturnik Byelo-

smoking were criticized as unworthy of a Soviet sportsman.⁸⁶ Football fans were also depicted in satirical cartoons. These are the mentioned “stilyagi”, or excessively aggressive fans.⁸⁷ Phenomena that are not directly related to sports are ridiculed through football images. For example, in one of the caricatures a drunkard and a hooligan are presented as a midfielder, striker and in an offside.⁸⁸

Thus, the football theme, probably the most popular in the sports media, is widely represented both in the caricature of the USSR as a whole, and in the Belarusian caricature of that time, in the form of both humorous (and free from ideological stereotypes), and satirical (in connection with the propaganda role of sports as an activity and as a form of “peaceful competition” with capitalist countries) caricature.

Results and discussion

The sports press of Belarus developed typically (with only rare exceptions) for other Soviet republics, with the existence of specialized sports media where local football was widely covered and separate sections in socio-political newspapers. Such unification was also emphasized by the name of sports newspapers: in the Byelorussian, Uzbek, Armenian and Azerbaijani SSRs these were “Fizkulturniks”. Throughout its existence, the republican press remained primarily a publication about local sports, which did not directly compete with such central media as “Sovetskiy sport” and “Futbol-Hockey”. Although the republican media tried to pay attention to foreign competitions as well, the information was provided not systematically in the sections “The manners of bourgeois sports” and “Their manners”, published in the sections “From around the world”, “Events, chronicles, facts”, “Abroad”, “Pages of History” and “Football mosaic” or, at best, in more or less regular reports from major international competitions, and rarely included analytics.

The circulations of the central and republican press were also incomparable. For example, the circulation of the central newspaper “Sovetskiy sport” from 1963 to 1973 increased from 900 to 3,600 thousand copies. The circulation of the magazine “Fizicheskoye obrazovaniye i sport” (“Physical Education and

russii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1959, no 57 (849), p. 4; *Veselyy karandash* [A merry pencil], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1984, no 1 (6563), p. 4.

⁸⁶ *Karikatura* [Caricature], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1962, no 58 (1163), p. 3.

⁸⁷ *Dlya nikh doroga v kommunizm zakryta* [The road to communism is closed for them], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1961, no 83 (1084), p. 4.

⁸⁸ *Tri prevrashcheniya gore-futbolista* [Three transformations of a failed football player], “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” [“Physical culturist of Belarus”] 1962, no 26 (1131), p. 4.

Sport”) from 1963 to 1973 increased two and a half times, and the weekly “Futbol-Hockey” – four times.⁸⁹ In 1980s, the newspaper “Sovetskiy sport” reached a circulation of 4 million copies and in this indicator was among the leaders of world sports publications.⁹⁰ At the same time, the indicators of the republican sports press also increased: from 1962 to 1973, the circulation of “Sportyvna hazeta” (Ukrainian SSR) increased from 50 to 300 thousand copies, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” (Byelorussian SSR) – from 30 to 100 thousand, “Fizkulturnik Uzbekistana” – from 25 to 101 thousand copies.⁹¹

During the period under research, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” remained the only specialized sports media in the republic, unlike in Ukraine, where the tradition of sports media was more developed and characterized by greater diversity. However, the newspaper covers a wide range of sources concerning the history of Belarusian football. “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” provides information about the matches of the Belarusian football teams, the training and personnel, ideological work and propaganda in relation to football players and fans, infrastructure (stadiums, football pitches, other facilities), notable football players and coaches. The newspaper materials provide the basis for research into the origin and development of Belarusian football journalism.

Conclusion

The newspaper’s formation took place during the period of the “Khrushchev Thaw”, when the policy of de-Stalinization of society was proclaimed. Despite the activation of public life in the Soviet Union, the sports press remained one of the main instruments of propaganda. This period was also characterized by the processes of Russification, and Russian was chosen as the language of the newspaper (“Fizkulturnik” was simultaneously published in Belarusian in 1952–1962). During the “Era of Stagnation”, the circulation of central and republican publications continued to increase. In “Fizkulturnik”, changes in the genres of publications occurred: the number of informational and analytical articles increased, the use of feuilletons and humoresques noticeably decreased. Caricatures, which were especially actively used in the 1950s and 1960s, gradually be-

⁸⁹ I. Svistelnik, *Knyhovydannya ta periodychna presa u haluzi fizychnoyi kultury i sportu: monohrafiya* [Book publishing and periodicals in the field of physical culture and sports: monograph], Kyiv 2010, p. 56.

⁹⁰ K.A. Alekseev, *K probleme periodizatsii istorii sportivnoy zhurnalistiki v Rossii* [On the Problem of Periodization of the History of Sports Journalism in Russia], “Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta, Yazyk i Literatura” [“Bulletin of St. Petersburg University. Language and Literature”] 2018, vol. 15, issue 2, p. 181.

⁹¹ I. Svistelnik, op. cit., p. 56.

came an exception after the 1970s. At the same time, the importance of photography, including sports reporting, gradually increased. More noticeable changes emerged in the second half of the 1980s, when letters from readers (including critical ones) appeared in the newspaper, and the genre of interviews with athletes actively developed and became more informal, which indicates that the editorial board was striving to become closer to its recipients.

In the late 1980s, under the conditions of the “Perestroika” and “Glasnost” policies, with the weakening of ideological control, “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” moved away from highly specialized sports topics. At this time, the newspaper acquired the characteristics of a popular publication. Topics unrelated to sports and physical education appeared on its pages (interviews with winners of beauty contests, articles on crime, racketeering, and alcoholism), and coverage of karate and bodybuilding, which were popular at the time, expanded. The turn of the 1980s and 1990s was a period of fundamental transformations in the history of Belarusian statehood: on July 27, 1990, the Declaration on State Sovereignty of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted, and on September 19, 1991, the country became the Republic of Belarus. In 1992-1995, the newspaper adjusted the name and was published as “Fizkulturnik Belarusi” (instead of Byelorussii previously), and since 1995 it has been called “Sportivnaya Panorama”.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Football in the Byelorussian SSR in the light of the newspaper “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” in the 1950s–1980s*.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Football in the Byelorussian SSR in the light of the newspaper “Fizkulturnik Byelorussii” in the 1950s–1980s*.

AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTIONS

Kseniya Tserashkova: Supervision, Conceptualization, Resources, Investigation, Original Draft.

Andrei Vashkevich: Investigation, Data Curation, Review & Editing.

Pavel Darokhin: Investigation, Analysis, Visualization. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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CZĘŚĆ II

TEORIA I METODYKA WYCHOWANIA FIZYCZNEGO I SPORTU



Received: 6.07.2025
Accepted: 11.11.2025

<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/sit.2026.03.03>

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DESIGNING A POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR UTILIZING SPORTS CAPACITIES IN PROMOTING SOCIAL HEALTH AND ORGANIZING LEISURE TIME

How to cite [jak cytować]: Kiani, M.S., & Nazari, L. (2026). Designing a policy framework for utilizing sports capacities in promoting social health and organizing leisure time. *Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe*, 9(3), 57–78.

Opracowanie ram polityki wykorzystania potencjału sportowego w promowaniu zdrowia społecznego i organizacji czasu wolnego

Streszczenie

Sport może przyczyniać się do rozwoju społecznego poprzez wspieranie jakości życia, uczestnictwa społecznego oraz kapitału społecznego. Celem badania było opracowanie ram polityki wykorzystania potencjału sportu w organizacji czasu wolnego i promowaniu zdrowia społecznego. Badanie miało charakter jakościowy i opierało się na półstrukturyzowanych wywiadach z 13 nauczycielami akademickimi i ekspertami w zakresie zarządzania sportem i polityki społecznej, dobranymi celowo. Dane analizowano z wykorzystaniem podejścia teorii ugruntowanej, obejmującego kodowanie otwarte, osiowe i selektywne. Wiarygodność i spójność analizy wsparto poprzez weryfikację ustaleń przez uczestników, niezależne równoległe kodowanie oraz dokumentowanie decyzji analitycznych. W wyniku analizy opracowano zintegrowane ramy polityki obejmujące uwarunkowania przyczynowe, kontekstowe i interweniujące, proponowane strategie oraz przewidywane konsekwencje. Do kluczowych elementów modelu należały pozycja kulturowa i akceptacja społeczna, uwarunkowania społeczno-kulturowe i zasobowe, czynniki środowiskowe i demograficzne, rozwój infrastruktury oraz strategie społeczne i motywacyjne. Przewidywane konsekwencje obejmowały aspekty ekonomiczne, behawioralne i społeczno-kulturowe. Zaproponowane ramy stanowią koncepcyjną podstawę rozwoju polityki czasu wolnego opartej na sporcie, ukierunkowanej na wspieranie zdrowia społecznego i uczestnictwa społecznego. Konieczne są dalsze badania nad możliwością zastosowania modelu oraz oceną jego przewidywanych efektów w praktyce.

Słowa kluczowe: dobrostan społeczny, tworzenie polityki, rekreacja, zarządzanie sportem, turystyka.

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Abstract

Sport may contribute to social development by supporting quality of life, social participation, and social capital. This study aimed to develop a policy framework for utilizing sport capacities in organizing leisure time and promoting social health. A qualitative design was used, based on semi-structured interviews with 13 faculty members and experts in sport management and social policymaking selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using a grounded theory approach involving open, axial, and selective coding. The credibility and consistency of the analysis were supported through member checking, independent parallel coding, and documentation of analytical decisions. The analysis resulted in an integrated policy framework comprising causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, proposed strategies, and anticipated consequences. Key elements included cultural position and social acceptance, sociocultural and resource-related conditions, environmental and demographic factors, infrastructure development, and social and motivational strategies. The anticipated consequences concerned economic, behavioral, and sociocultural outcomes. The proposed framework provides a conceptual basis for the development of sport-based leisure policies aimed at supporting social health and participation. Further research is needed to evaluate its applicability and anticipated outcomes in practice.

Keywords: social health, policy making, leisure, sports management, tourism.

Introduction

In recent decades, increasing attention has been paid to the social dimensions of health, including social participation, social cohesion, social networks, and social capital. Contemporary conceptualizations of health recognize social health as an important dimension of overall well-being alongside physical and mental health. Social health encompasses the quality of social relationships and meaningful human connections, including experiences of belonging, social integration, and interaction within the broader social environment (Doyle & Link, 2024). Within this broader social dimension of health, social capital is closely related to physical activity, with social cohesion, social participation, social trust, reciprocity, and social networks playing important roles in facilitating participation in physical activity (Gao et al., 2025). Alongside physical activity, leisure time has increasingly attracted attention as an important context for health promotion and social interaction. The way leisure time is used can influence opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and health-related behaviors. In this context, physical activity during leisure time can serve not only health-related purposes but also important social functions by providing opportunities for enjoyment, interpersonal connection, and interaction with peers. Research on leisure-time physical activity suggests that perceived needs related to health, enjoyment, achievement, and social connection can contribute to sustained participation (Rahimi & Asefi, 2023). Sport, as an organized and socially embedded form of physical activity, can therefore be considered an important resource for

structuring leisure time and creating opportunities for individual and social development.

At the national level, although programs in public sports, school sports, and health promotion through physical activity have been implemented, the absence of coherent, interdisciplinary, and contextually grounded policy frameworks may limit the systematic use of sports capacities for leisure management and social health promotion. This need for an integrated policy approach is particularly relevant in the Iranian context, where evidence has highlighted important associations between social capital and health-related outcomes. For example, recent evidence from a large cohort of Iranian youth indicates a substantial burden of major depressive disorder and shows that higher levels of social capital—including participation, trust, and social cohesion—are associated with a lower likelihood of depression (Savari et al., 2025). In addition, a systematic review and meta-analysis has reported a considerable prevalence of depression among Iranian children and adolescents, underscoring the importance of preventive and health-promoting interventions for younger populations (Bazargan et al., 2023). Against this background, leisure time, particularly among young people, represents an important context for preventive and health-promoting interventions. Purposefully structured leisure activities, including accessible and socially supportive sports participation, may provide opportunities for social interaction, development of interpersonal skills, and strengthening of social connections.

Leisure time provides an important context for engaging in health-promoting activities, including physical activity. However, participation in physical activity does not occur automatically and may require appropriate behavioral and social interventions. In this regard, social marketing approaches have been examined as a means of promoting physical activity by addressing behavioral factors and designing interventions that encourage voluntary participation in health-related physical activity (Rohani et al., 2021). Accordingly, effective leisure-time policy should consider not only the availability of sports opportunities but also strategies that can encourage individuals to initiate and maintain participation. In this context, sport and physical activity can be considered important components of leisure-time organization, particularly when activities are designed to be enjoyable, challenging, and engaging. Evidence from university physical education settings suggests that challenging, exploratory, and enjoyable activity experiences can increase students' situational interest and engagement in physical education (Lobo, 2025). Therefore, the organization of leisure-time sport should consider both the availability of opportunities and the attractiveness and engagement potential of activities in order to encourage sustained participation.

Beyond its role in promoting physical activity, sport can contribute to the organization of leisure time through cultural, social, and psychological dimensions. From a cultural perspective, sport as a collective phenomenon has the potential to create a sense of belonging and social cohesion and to guide individuals in groups and teams toward common goals. These interactions can strengthen individual skills such as cooperation, discipline, and respect for rules, while also reducing isolation and loneliness and strengthening social bonds. Sport can also provide a structured social environment in which interpersonal relationships and behavioral norms are developed. Recent systematic evidence indicates that prosocial and antisocial behaviors are important dimensions of the social experience of sport, highlighting the role of the sporting environment and its social dynamics in shaping behavioral outcomes (Zhu et al., 2025).

At the same time, the increasing prevalence of sedentary lifestyles, particularly among young people, has highlighted the need for accessible and attractive opportunities for physical activity during leisure time. Addressing this need requires attention not only to individual participation but also to the broader system through which sport opportunities are planned, managed, and delivered. Research on sport delivery systems indicates that sport participation should be considered across interconnected levels, ranging from sport policy and management to the provision of facilities and users' participation, as differences in the objectives and organization of sport facilities can shape the broader delivery of sport opportunities and their relationship with participation, health, well-being, and social capital (Kumar et al., 2018).

Despite the potential benefits of sport and physical activity, ensuring appropriate opportunities for participation remains an important policy concern. From this perspective, effective leisure-time sport policies should consider how sport opportunities are organized and delivered, with particular attention to the availability, organization, and accessibility of appropriate facilities. Such an approach can help align policy-level objectives with facility provision and users' opportunities to participate, thereby strengthening the overall delivery of sport as a component of leisure-time policy. However, participation opportunities are not distributed equally across population groups. Evidence from systematic reviews indicates that adolescent girls may experience multiple barriers to physical activity participation, including limited support from peers, family, and teachers, lack of time, and environmental factors. Gender-responsive approaches, supportive environments, and safe and attractive opportunities have therefore been identified as important considerations for promoting physical activity among adolescent girls (Duffey et al., 2021).

Socioeconomic conditions may also influence access to and participation in organized sport. A systematic review and meta-analysis found evidence of socioeconomic disparities in sport participation among children and adolescents,

with those from higher socioeconomic-status households being more likely to participate in sport and spending more time participating. These findings highlight the importance of considering socioeconomic inequalities when developing policies aimed at improving equitable access to organized sport (Owen et al., 2022). In addition to socioeconomic conditions, educational settings represent another important context for promoting physical activity among young people. Evidence from systematic reviews indicates that school-based physical activity interventions can produce modest short-term increases in physical activity among children and adolescents, although maintaining these effects over longer periods remains challenging. Accordingly, schools can serve as an important setting for supporting physical activity participation as part of broader, long-term strategies involving families, communities, and other stakeholders (Moeller et al., 2024).

Ensuring equitable participation also requires the creation of safe, inclusive, and accessible environments that respond to the needs of different segments of society, particularly women, girls, older adults, and persons with disabilities. The International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport recognizes participation in physical education, physical activity, and sport as a fundamental right for all and emphasizes the provision of inclusive, adapted, and safe opportunities for participation without discrimination (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015). Accordingly, leisure-time sport policies should consider equal access and the specific needs of groups that may face barriers to participation. Beyond equitable access and participation, sport and physical activity can also contribute to local economic development when they are appropriately organized and supported. Investment in sport-related infrastructure and activities can generate employment opportunities, support local businesses, and create economic opportunities associated with sport events and related services. Evidence from the legacy of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games illustrates how well-planned sport events can contribute to job creation, strengthen local small and medium-sized enterprises, and generate broader local development benefits (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2025). From a policy perspective, attention to local capacities and the social and economic characteristics of each region can therefore help improve the effectiveness and sustainability of sport-related programs.

Sport and leisure activities can provide structured opportunities for sustained participation and social connection. Evidence from research on leisure behavior in Iran indicates that systematic engagement in leisure activities, together with recreation specialization, is associated with place attachment, including dimensions such as social bonding and place identity (Heidari et al., 2021). These findings suggest that the organization of leisure-time sport may

contribute to creating meaningful and sustained connections between individuals and recreational environments. From this perspective, well-organized sport and leisure programs can provide a supportive context for participation and social connectedness, particularly when opportunities for regular and meaningful engagement are available. The role of sport in addressing social vulnerabilities and promoting social inclusion has also received increasing empirical attention. Recent systematic evidence suggests that sport-based interventions can provide psychological, physical, and social benefits for vulnerable youth and may support social reintegration and the prevention of delinquent behavior, particularly when programs are sustained, participatory, and supported by trained staff and inter-institutional collaboration (Irujo-Compains et al., 2026). More broadly, recent evidence indicates that organized sport participation is associated with positive social outcomes among children and adolescents, including stronger interpersonal skills, prosocial behavior, and a greater sense of belonging (Wade et al., 2026). From a broader social and cultural perspective, sport can therefore provide an important context for social interaction and the development of social cohesion. A scoping review of research examining sport and physical activity found broad support for a positive relationship between sport or physical activity participation and social cohesion, while also highlighting the importance of context and the way social cohesion is conceptualized and measured (Moustakas & Wagner, 2023). More recent evidence likewise indicates that social cohesion is associated with physical activity and that social engagement can contribute to healthier behavioral patterns, suggesting that sport and physical activity settings may provide valuable opportunities for strengthening social connections (Chan et al., 2024).

Beyond the provision of facilities and opportunities for participation, the social environment surrounding sport and physical activity can also influence the broader outcomes of leisure-time participation. Sport activities can bring individuals together in shared and structured settings, creating opportunities for social interaction, cooperation, and the development of social connections. Evidence from research in the sport and physical activity context indicates that sport can provide opportunities to support social cohesion, while dimensions such as social relationships, trust, belonging, participation, and connectedness are closely related to sport and physical activity participation (Moustakas & Wagner, 2023). In addition, empirical evidence indicates that higher levels of neighborhood social cohesion are associated with greater physical activity, highlighting the relevance of social cohesion to policies aimed at promoting physical activity (Chan et al., 2024). Therefore, leisure-time sport policies should consider the social environment surrounding participation alongside the provision of physical opportunities.

Research on sport-related socialization has also examined factors that influence the development of students' socialization through sport (Vaseq Foad & Zamani Nukaabadi, 2024). Recent research has further examined the relationship between participation in sports during leisure time and mental health, supporting the relevance of sport participation as a component of health-promoting leisure policies (Mahmoudi et al., 2025). From a rights-based perspective, access to sport, recreation, and leisure is particularly important for persons with disabilities. Existing evidence has examined the right to sport, recreation, and leisure for persons with disabilities from national and international human-rights perspectives, supporting the importance of equitable access and participation (Naderian et al., 2023). However, despite this growing body of evidence addressing socialization, mental health, social cohesion, and equitable access, the existing literature does not appear to provide a comprehensive policy framework that simultaneously considers sports capacities, leisure-time organization, and social health promotion within the Iranian context. This gap provides a rationale for developing an integrated framework based on empirical evidence from relevant stakeholders.

Given the breadth and importance of the subject, there is a need for a comprehensive and systematic study that examines the capacities of sport for organizing leisure time and develops a coherent theoretical and practical policy framework aimed at promoting social health and addressing social harms. Drawing on empirical evidence from semi-structured interviews with relevant experts and adopting a scientific and applied approach, this study seeks to address the identified gap in the literature and provide a coherent and applicable framework for policymakers, managers, and practitioners in the fields of sport and social health. Such a framework can contribute to more effective policy development and implementation and support sustainable social development and continuous improvement in quality of life.

Methods

Research design and ethical considerations

The present study used a qualitative approach to develop a policy framework in the field of sports management and social policymaking. A grounded theory approach was used to generate a conceptual framework inductively from the empirical accounts of experts. The study relied exclusively on semi-structured expert interviews; no separate corpus of policy or other documents was systematically sampled or analyzed.

Formal ethics committee approval was not obtained for this study. All the participants were adults and participation was voluntary. Before each interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the intended use of the data, confidentiality, their right to withdraw, and audio recording. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants. No names or directly identifying information are reported.

Participants and sampling

The study population included professors, researchers, and experts in sports management and social policymaking. The participants were selected purposively based on their practical experience and specialized knowledge. Eligibility criteria included: (1) scientific and research experience related to sports management, social policymaking, or leisure planning; (2) practical experience in sports policymaking or management; and (3) the ability to provide informed strategic perspectives on the research topic.

The final sample comprised 13 participants. Recurring concepts were observed from the ninth interview, and the authors considered data saturation to have been reached by the eleventh interview. Two additional interviews were conducted to assess whether further relevant concepts emerged.

Data collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews using open and flexible questions. The interview guide covered four main areas: individual experiences in sports policy and management; barriers and opportunities in sports management; perspectives on improving social health through sport; and relationships among organizations, institutions and stakeholders involved in sport and leisure. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Supplementary field notes and researcher observations were recorded alongside the interview transcripts.

Data Analysis and Methodological Rigor

Interview data were analyzed using a grounded theory framework involving open, axial, and selective coding. During open coding, transcripts were examined line by line to identify initial concepts and codes. During axial coding, codes were grouped into categories and subcategories based on conceptual relationships, conditions, and consequences. During selective coding, the main categories were integrated into the final policy framework. Analysis proceeded iteratively, with concepts progressively organized into higher-order categories and relationships.

The credibility and consistency of the analysis were supported through member checking, independent parallel coding, and documentation of analytical decisions. The preliminary findings were presented to the participants to assess whether they adequately reflected their views. Coding was reviewed independently by multiple researchers to assess consistency in the identification and categorization of concepts. The stages of transcription, coding, category development, and model construction were documented to provide an auditable record of the analytical process.

Results

Participant Characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic and professional characteristics of the study participants. A total of 13 professors and experts in sport and social policy participated in the study. Of these, 9 were male and 4 were female. The age range of the participants was between 37 and 55 years. In terms of academic rank, the sample ranged from assistant professor to full professor. The participants represented a range of areas of expertise, including sport management, sociology of sport, sport psychology, sport marketing, and social policy. The teaching experience of the participants ranged from 8 to 27 years, and some had experience in executive management or policy consulting in national and provincial institutions. Participants also varied in reported socio-economic status and in additional professional characteristics, including membership in scientific councils and participation in international collaborative projects. Overall, the sample included individuals with diverse academic and professional backgrounds relevant to the study topic.

Table 1
Demographic and professional characteristics of the participants

Participant Code	Gender	Age (years)	Academic Rank	Area of Expertise	Teaching Experience (years)	Managerial / Policy-making Experience	Socio-economic Status	Other Relevant Characteristics
P01	Male	47	Associate Professor	Sport Management – Policy-making	18	Member of the National Sport Planning Committee	Middle	Editorial board member of a specialized journal
P02	Female	41	Assistant Professor	Sociology of Sport	12	Research consultant in the Ministry of Education	Upper-Middle	Experience in international collaborative projects

Table 1 (cont.)

Participant Code	Gender	Age (years)	Academic Rank	Area of Expertise	Teaching Experience (years)	Managerial / Policy-making Experience	Socio-economic Status	Other Relevant Characteristics
P03	Male	53	Full Professor	Physical Education Management	25	Former Dean, Faculty of Sport Sciences	High	Author of multiple policy-related publications
P04	Male	45	Associate Professor	Social Policy	15	Member of the Municipal Advisory Committee	Middle	Field experience in urban sport projects
P05	Female	39	Assistant Professor	Physical Education Pedagogy	10	Cultural advisor at university	Middle	Contribution to women's health promotion projects
P06	Male	48	Associate Professor	Sport Event Management	16	Director of national sport festivals	High	Reviewer of national sport research projects
P07	Male	50	Assistant Professor	Sport & Public Health	14	Member of the National Social Health Taskforce	Middle	Experience in health-related community projects
P08	Female	44	Associate Professor	Sport Psychology	13	Head of a sport psychology advisory unit	Lower-Middle	Professional background in athlete counseling
P09	Male	42	Assistant Professor	Sport Marketing	9	Consultant to private sport industry	Middle	Collaboration with professional sports clubs
P10	Male	55	Full Professor	Human Resource Management in Sport	27	Member of the University Promotion Committee	High	Supervisor of more than 30 PhD dissertations
P11	Female	37	Assistant Professor	Sociology of Leisure	8	Researcher at the Social Studies Center	Middle	Projects focusing on youth leisure activities
P12	Male	49	Associate Professor	Sport Policy	20	Former Provincial Director of Sport	High	National-level executive background
P13	Male	46	Assistant Professor	Physical Education & Recreation Management	15	Member of the National University Sport Council	Middle	Active member of scientific sport associations

Note: P01–P13 denote anonymized participant codes.

Overview of the Analytical Framework

The analysis resulted in an integrated framework describing the relationships among the main categories identified in the interview data. The categories were organized into causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and anticipated consequences, with sport-based leisure policy-making for social health promotion representing the central phenomenon of the framework. Table 2 summarizes the main categories, subcategories, and related concepts identified during the coding process.

Table 2

Categories and subcategories identified through the grounded theory analysis

Paradigm component	Main category	Subcategory	Illustrative codes / concepts
Causal conditions	Cultural position	Sports culture	Values and norms related to sport; belief in health through sport; interest in sport and physical activity
		Lifestyle	Mechanization of everyday life; industrialization and reduced physical activity; physical inactivity
		Attitudes	Policymakers' attitudes towards sport; attitudes towards leisure; parental attitudes
	Social acceptance	Social relations	Sports groups; sports NGOs; peer groups
		Social value	Social status; friendship; socialization through sport
Contextual conditions	Sociocultural context	Culture building	Media promotion; organizational support; recognition of sport as a component of health
		Public participation	Private-sector involvement; coordination of sports organizations
		Social persuasion	Promotion of leisure-time sport; family encouragement; motivation to participate
	Software resources	Knowledge resources	Knowledge about sport; public awareness; awareness of the social role of sport
		Human resources	Qualified coaches; supportive managers; trained physical education professionals
Intervening conditions	Architecture of sports facilities	Hardware resources	Sports facilities
		Design and construction	Facility quality; affordability; equipment in parks and sport facilities
		Operation and use	Facility location; facility design; lack of facilities in underserved areas
			Economic viability; maintenance; utilization of existing facilities

Table 2 (cont.)

Paradigm component	Main category	Subcategory	Illustrative codes / concepts
Intervening conditions	Environmental factors	Social differences	Social class; social restrictions
		Significant others	School support; family and peer influence; role modelling
	Demographic characteristics	Individual characteristics	Age; gender
		Socioeconomic characteristics	Income; education; quality of life
Strategies	Infrastructure development	Facilities	Construction and completion of facilities; provision of facilities in underserved areas
		Executive measures	Skilled workforce; interinstitutional coordination; regulation of sport-space provision
	Intrinsic and social incentives	Cultural incentives	School/university sport; media promotion; neighborhood sports initiatives
		Collective incentives	Internalization of social values; inclusion of vulnerable groups; social safety
Anticipated consequences	Economic	Job creation	Local economic development; sport-related employment; income generation
		Development	Quality of life; welfare; potential health-related economic benefits
	Behavioral	Individual	Reduced aggression; reduced depression; enthusiasm; self-confidence
		Social	Reduced delinquency; reduced substance use; reduced local/ethnic prejudice
	Sociocultural	Social capital	Social interaction; social acceptance; community dynamics
		Cultural effects	Role modelling; participation culture; promotion of sport-for-all

Causal conditions

The causal conditions identified in the analysis comprised two main categories: cultural position and social acceptance. Cultural position included sports culture, lifestyle, and attitudes towards sport and leisure, whereas social acceptance reflected social relations and the perceived social value of sport. These conditions shaped how sport was perceived and positioned within leisure-time and social-health policy.

Contextual Conditions

The contextual conditions comprised three main categories: sociocultural context, software resources, and hardware resources. The sociocultural context included culture building, public participation, and social persuasion. Software resources referred to knowledge and human resources, whereas hardware resources concerned the availability, quality, affordability, and equipment of sports facilities. Together, these conditions formed the broader context in which sport-based leisure policies could be developed and implemented.

Intervening Conditions

The intervening conditions comprised architecture of sports facilities, environmental factors, and demographic characteristics. Architecture of sports facilities included issues related to facility design, location, maintenance, and use. Environmental factors included social differences and the influence of significant others, while demographic characteristics included individual and socioeconomic characteristics such as age, gender, income, and education. These factors were identified as potentially influencing the implementation of the proposed policy framework.

Proposed Strategies

Two main groups of strategies were identified: infrastructure development and intrinsic and social incentives. Infrastructure development included the construction and completion of sports facilities, provision of facilities in underserved areas, development of a skilled workforce, interinstitutional coordination, and appropriate regulation. Intrinsic and social incentives included school and university sport, media promotion, neighborhood sports initiatives, internalization of social values, inclusion of vulnerable groups, and strengthening social safety.

Anticipated Consequences

The anticipated consequences were organized into economic, behavioral, and sociocultural outcomes. Economic consequences included potential local development, employment, income generation, and broader welfare-related benefits. Behavioral consequences included potential changes in aggression, depression, delinquency, substance use, and other individual or social behaviors. Sociocultural consequences included social interaction, social acceptance, social capital, role modelling, and the promotion of a culture of participation and sport-for-all. These consequences should be interpreted as anticipated out-

comes identified through the qualitative analysis rather than as effects demonstrated in the present study.

Integrated Policy Framework

In line with the aim of this research, the categories identified in the analysis were organized within a paradigmatic model describing the relationships among the main components of the proposed policy framework (Figure 1). "Sport-based leisure policymaking for social health promotion" was considered the central phenomenon. Other categories were classified as causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and anticipated consequences.

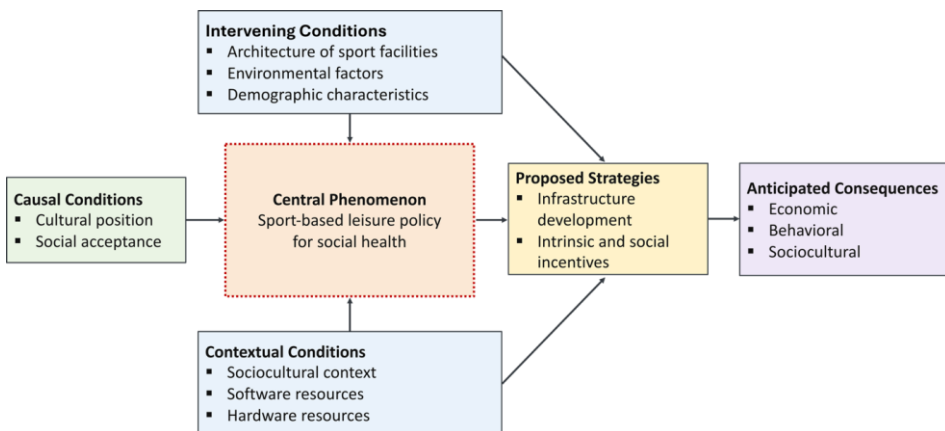


Figure 1

Integrated policy framework derived from the axial coding analysis

Based on the extracted concepts and the analysis performed, the final framework for the policy-oriented use of sports capacities in organizing leisure time was developed as a conceptual model. The model integrates causal, contextual, and intervening conditions with proposed strategies and anticipated consequences, illustrating the relationships among policy, structural, and social factors identified in the analysis.

Discussion

Interpretation of the Integrated Policy Framework

In line with the overall goal of this research, which was to design a policy-based framework for utilizing the potential of sport in promoting social health

and regulating leisure processes, the findings showed that sport, regardless of its physical function, as a social institution can play a mediating role in psychological, cultural, and institutional dimensions. Qualitative analyses indicated that the formation of effective policies requires accurate identification of cultural, structural, and motivational drivers in the target society (Rohani et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the role of sport in supporting social development, particularly among younger generations, was highlighted. Recent systematic evidence indicates that sports participation among children and adolescents is associated with positive social outcomes, including stronger interpersonal skills, prosocial behavior, and a greater sense of belonging (Wade et al., 2026).

Contextual and Structural Barriers to Sport-Based Leisure

One of the key results of the research is that the lack of attention to targeted planning in the field of leisure not only creates the ground for deviant and harmful behaviors, but also causes a breakdown in communication between sports, educational, and cultural institutions. This gap, in a contemporary society that is struggling with physical poverty and the decline of social participation, can lead to the formation of an inefficient and unhealthy leisure lifestyle. Accordingly, the formulation of comprehensive policies in the field of leisure requires a multidimensional approach that simultaneously addresses the reform of cultural attitudes, the improvement of infrastructure, and the creation of social motivation. The results also show that in the absence of a coherent and systematic framework, the potential capacities of sports in social management are ignored. Therefore, the development of policy frameworks should be based on active interaction between relevant institutions (such as education, municipalities, the Ministry of Sports, and cultural institutions) and strengthened through the participation of elites in the fields of sports and social health. If implemented coherently, such policies may contribute to reducing social harms, improving equity in access to sport, and supporting quality of life. In examining the policy-making capacities for utilizing sport as an effective tool in leisure management and promoting social health, one of the key elements is the role of the attitudes of decision-making institutions and families towards sport. In this framework, the formation of a supportive and strategic view at macro-management levels towards the multiple functions of sport can provide a platform for the development of preventive policies in the field of social harms. At the micro level, the attitude of parents and families towards sport, especially in the form of leisure time for adolescents and young people, has a significant impact on behavioral modeling, socialization, and prevention of deviations.

These attitudes, along with the facilitating role of grassroots institutions and informal sports groups, can contribute to social motivation, a sense of belong-

ing, and the development of social capital through sports participation. Recent qualitative evidence suggests that informal sports can provide young people with opportunities to develop social networks, trust, and a sense of community, while also illustrating the challenges that some young people may experience within organized sports settings (Nesse et al., 2024). These considerations should therefore be incorporated into the proposed policy model. However, the realization of these goals also faces obstacles that are rooted not only in the physical level of infrastructure, but also in deeper layers of the social and economic structure of society. The imbalance in the geographical distribution of sports venues, suboptimal design of recreational spaces, poor maintenance of equipment, and the lack of principled utilization of existing capacities, especially in underserved areas, are considered to be the main challenges. These shortcomings are reinforced by social constraints such as gender discrimination, class inequality, and cultural barriers to the free participation of all segments of society, especially women. As a result, achieving policy goals in this area requires a multidimensional view of leisure-time sports that simultaneously considers infrastructural, cultural, gender, and class issues.

During adolescence, educational institutions, and especially schools, can provide an important setting for encouraging and supporting participation in sport and physical activity. From a policy perspective, the effective use of schools requires appropriate facilities, accessible opportunities, and programs that are integrated into the broader organization of leisure time. Kumar et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of considering the links among sport policy, facilities, participation, and users' health, well-being, and social capital. In addition, the social environment surrounding adolescents, including family and peers, can influence their opportunities and motivation to participate in physical activity. Therefore, sport-based leisure policies should consider not only the availability of facilities and programs but also the supportive social environments in which young people make decisions about their leisure-time activities.

On the other hand, personal and social factors such as age, gender, economic status, and cultural status play an important role in limiting individuals' access to sports opportunities. For example, women may face cultural constraints and lack of appropriate sports spaces that limit their participation in sport. Also, more vulnerable populations, such as the elderly or low-income groups, benefit less from the benefits of sports in their leisure time due to lack of facilities and economic constraints. These multiple and intersecting barriers require in-depth examination and careful policy-making to reduce inequalities in access to and utilization of sports capacities.

Policy and Implementation Strategies

The findings indicate two broad areas of implementation: infrastructure development and social and motivational incentives. Infrastructure-related strategies include building and maintaining sports facilities, improving access in underserved and deprived areas, completing unfinished projects, providing appropriate equipment, employing specialized and motivated personnel, and strengthening coordination among relevant institutions. These measures should be supported by appropriate planning and regulations to improve the availability and effective use of sports facilities.

The second area concerns cultural, software, and social implementation mechanisms. Cultural strategies include promoting positive attitudes towards sport, educating families about its social and health-related value, incorporating sport into extracurricular programs in schools and universities, and using the media to encourage participation. Software-related strategies include specialized training for coaches and sports managers and stronger cooperation between social and sports institutions. In addition, family and community-based incentives, support for sports NGOs, internalization of the social values of sport, and measures aimed at improving participation among vulnerable groups may strengthen engagement in sport-based leisure activities. Together, these strategies require coordinated participation by families, schools, public and private institutions, and sports organizations to improve access and reduce inequalities in participation.

Anticipated Social, Health, and Economic Implications

The proposed framework suggests that sport-based leisure activities may contribute to a range of social, behavioral, and health-related outcomes. The participants associated sport participation with stronger social interaction, social acceptance, community engagement, and a greater sense of belonging. Local sports activities were perceived as providing opportunities to build relationships, strengthen social connectedness, and support the development of social capital. The participants also identified potential reductions in selected social and behavioral problems, including violence and aggression, problematic technology use, depressive symptoms, delinquent behavior, tobacco and alcohol use, and local or ethnic prejudice. In addition, role modelling by prominent athletes and the promotion of a culture of participation and sport-for-all were identified as potential cultural consequences of sport-based leisure.

The framework also points to possible economic and health-related implications. The development of sports infrastructure and related activities may support local economic activity, employment, and access to recreational services. At the same time, improved opportunities for regular participation in sport and

physical activity may contribute to better physical and mental health and, in the longer term, may have implications for healthcare use and economic productivity. These potential effects should, however, be interpreted as anticipated consequences of the proposed framework rather than as outcomes demonstrated in the present study.

Leisure time can provide an important context for creativity, skill development, and physical, psychological, and social well-being when appropriate opportunities and supportive conditions are available. Conversely, insufficient access to constructive and accessible leisure opportunities may limit the potential benefits of leisure-time activities. Evidence from a scoping review indicates that physical activity and exercise interventions show promising effects for youth mental health, including reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety (Pascoe et al., 2020). Accordingly, sport-based leisure policies may be considered as one component of broader strategies for promoting health and well-being among young people.

Limitations and Future Research

The findings should be interpreted in the light of the qualitative design and purposive sample of 13 experts. The proposed framework reflects the participants' perspectives and has not yet been empirically validated or evaluated in implementation settings. Future studies should examine the applicability of the framework in different populations and regions and assess whether the proposed strategies are associated with the anticipated social and health outcomes.

Conclusions

The findings indicate that the effective use of sport in leisure-time policy requires coordinated attention to infrastructural, cultural, social, and motivational factors. Based on the perspectives of the participating experts, the study proposes an integrated policy framework linking causal, contextual, and intervening conditions with implementation strategies and anticipated economic, behavioral, and sociocultural consequences. Key policy priorities include equitable access to sport facilities, appropriate human resources, educational and community-based initiatives, social and motivational incentives, and stronger coordination among public institutions, sports organizations, schools, families, and other relevant stakeholders.

The proposed framework provides a conceptual basis for the development of sport-based leisure policies aimed at supporting social health and participation. However, its anticipated consequences should be regarded as propositions derived from the qualitative analysis rather than as empirically demonstrated

effects. Further research should therefore evaluate the applicability of the framework in different populations and settings and examine whether its proposed strategies are associated with improvements in participation, social connectedness, and health-related outcomes.

STATEMENT OF ETHICS

Formal ethics committee approval was not obtained. The authors report that, under the institutional procedures in place at the time, formal ethics review was not sought for this type of non-interventional qualitative study. All participants provided informed consent.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Designing a policy framework for utilizing sports capacities in promoting social health and organizing leisure time*.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Designing a policy framework for utilizing sports capacities in promoting social health and organizing leisure time*.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Mohammad Saeid Kiani: Conceptualization; Methodology; Software; Validation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Resources; Data Curation; Writing – Original Draft; Writing – Review and Editing; Visualization; Supervision; Project administration; Funding acquisition.

Leila Nazari: Conceptualization; Methodology; Software; Validation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Resources; Data Curation; Writing – Original Draft; Writing – Review and Editing; Visualization; Supervision; Project administration; Funding acquisition.

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Received: 5.06.2025
Accepted: 13.11.2025

<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/sit.2026.03.04>

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OBJECT SIZE DETECTION AND SENSORIMOTOR PERFORMANCE IN STRIKING MARTIAL ARTISTS: AN EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

How to cite [jak cytować]: Romanenko, V., Tropin, Y., Kovalenko, Y., Mikhalskyi, V., & Dzherelii, V. (2026). Object Size Detection and Sensorimotor Performance in Striking Martial Artists: An Exploratory Factor Analysis. *Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe*, 9(3), 79–94.

Reakcja na zmiany wielkości obiektu i sprawność sensomotoryczna u zawodników sportów walki: eksploracyjna analiza czynnikowa

Streszczenie

W sportach walki o charakterze uderzeniowym zawodnicy muszą szybko przetwarzać informacje wzrokowe i precyzyjnie na nie reagować. Celem badania była eksploracyjna analiza zależności między wskaźnikami sensomotorycznymi i percepcyjnymi, w tym reakcją na zmiany wielkości obiektu, w zadaniach o różnym poziomie wymagań poznawczych. W badaniu uczestniczyło 25 mężczyzn uprawiających sporty walki o charakterze uderzeniowym (wiek: $18,4 \pm 3,5$ roku; staż treningowy: 8–10 lat). Zastosowano następujące typy testów: Size Test, Visuomotor Choice Reaction, Reaction RMO Pro, Reaction Go/No-Go, Spatial Perception oraz STMemory. Zmienne pogrupowano w dwa zestawy zadań o niższych i wyższych wymaganiach poznawczych, a następnie przeprowadzono oddzielne eks-

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ploracyjne analizy czynnikowe metodą Principal Axis Factoring. W zestawie o niższych wymaganiach poznawczych przedstawiono eksploracyjne rozwiązanie dwuczynnikowe. Najwyższy ładunek na PA1 uzyskał Spatial Perception (Etap 1) ($0,87$; $h^2 = 0,76$), a Size Test uzyskał ładunek $0,72$ ($h^2 = 0,54$), natomiast Reaction RMO Pro (Etap 1) łądował się głównie na PA2 ($-0,65$). W zestawie o wyższych wymaganiach poznawczych uzyskano rozwiązanie jednoczynnikowe; najwyższy ładunek uzyskał Spatial Perception (Etap 4) ($0,85$; $h^2 = 0,73$), a STMemory (Etap 5) uzyskał ładunek ujemny ($-0,67$; $h^2 = 0,45$). Wyniki wskazują, że Size Test współzmienia się z innymi wskaźnikami percepcyjnymi i sensomotorycznymi.

Słowa kluczowe: percepcja wzrokowa; sporty walki; testy psychofizjologiczne; zdolności poznawcze; czas reakcji.

Abstract

In striking martial arts, athletes must rapidly process visual information and respond precisely. This study explored the latent structure of sensorimotor and perceptual measures, including responses to changes in object size, across tasks differing in cognitive demands. Twenty-five male striking martial artists participated (age: 18.4 ± 3.5 years; training experience: 8–10 years). Testing included the Size Test, Visuomotor Choice Reaction, Reaction RMO Pro, Reaction Go/No-Go, Spatial Perception, and STMemory. Variables were grouped into lower- and higher-demand task sets. Separate exploratory factor analyses using Principal Axis Factoring were performed. In the lower-demand set, an exploratory two-factor PAF solution was examined. Spatial Perception (Stage 1) loaded highest on PA1 (0.87 ; $h^2 = 0.76$), followed by the Size Test (0.72 ; $h^2 = 0.54$), while Reaction RMO Pro (Stage 1) loaded primarily on PA2 (-0.65). In the higher-demand set, a single-factor solution was obtained; Spatial Perception (Stage 4) showed the highest positive loading (0.85 ; $h^2 = 0.73$), whereas STMemory (Stage 5) loaded negatively (-0.67 ; $h^2 = 0.45$). These exploratory findings indicate that Size Test performance covaries with spatial-perceptual and other sensorimotor measures, with patterns differing by task demand.

Keywords: visual perception; martial arts; psychophysiological testing; cognitive abilities; reaction time.

Introduction

The ability of martial artists to process visual information during competitive bouts enables them to anticipate opponents' actions and respond in a timely manner. The quality of visual input affects the efficacy of decision-making in competitive scenarios. Practical combat experience enhances athletes' repertoire of visual patterns and corresponding actions, which in turn improves response speed (Korobeynikov et al., 2023; Mann et al., 2007; Tropin et al., 2021). Skilled athletes display distinctive characteristics in visual information processing, often involving the use of peripheral vision. For instance, football players gather visual cues not only through foveal (central) vision but also by optimally engaging peripheral vision (Williams & Davids, 1998). Peripheral vision allows visual information to be processed outside the central area of gaze and plays an important role in visually guided behaviour in dynamic environments (Vater et al., 2022). In striking martial arts, experts can use gaze-anchoring strat-

egies that support the use of peripheral visual information (Hausegger et al., 2019). More generally, visual reaction time increases with stimulus eccentricity under controlled conditions (Schiefer et al., 2001).

Research has demonstrated that elite athletes perform with remarkable accuracy and success in fast-paced, complex sporting tasks (Starkes & Ericsson, 2003). Achieving elite-level performance requires strong cognitive abilities. Athlete perception is shaped by the interplay between the physical characteristics of sports stimuli and the athlete's perceptual and cognitive capabilities (Gray, 2014). Perceptual-cognitive expertise in sport is shaped by sport-specific experience and the ability to extract task-relevant visual information efficiently (Mann et al., 2007; Gray, 2014). According to information processing theory, an increase in incoming information significantly elevates cognitive load, thereby necessitating greater cognitive resource allocation (Frey, 2018). High-level athletes possess more specialized cognitive resources and exhibit greater cognitive processing efficiency compared to less experienced athletes and non-athletes (Podrigalo et al., 2023; Wei et al., 2017).

Martial arts practitioners operate in environments that demand rapid situational assessment and effective responses (Martínez del Quel & Bennett, 2019). As in any combat sport, the primary objective is to execute effective offensive and counteroffensive techniques while avoiding counterstrikes that necessitate highly developed visuomotor coordination. Visuomotor coordination refers to the brain's ability to receive and analyse visual information and respond with coordinated motor actions (du Toit et al., 2011). Athletes with well-developed visuomotor coordination are more capable of performing timely combinations of hand and foot strikes from appropriate distances (Myroshnychenko et al., 2020; Putra et al., 2023).

Psychophysiological tests involving visual stimuli assess visual sensitivity and reaction latency (Kalén et al., 2021; Romanenko et al., 2022). This study hypothesized that skilled martial artists' responses to object size variation are primarily driven by cognitive factors, particularly attention retention, size memory, and visual change recognition. Consequently, the aim was to explore the latent structure of sensorimotor and perceptual measures, including responses to object size changes, across tasks differing in cognitive demands.

Materials and Methods

Participants

The study involved 25 male athletes specializing in striking martial arts (mean age = 18.4 years, SD = 3.5; age range: 15-23 years), each with 8-10 years

of consistent training experience. All participants were informed about the nature and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without providing a reason. At the time of data collection, all participants were in good health. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Committee on Bioethics and Scientific Research of the Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture (Protocol No. 24, August 27, 2025), prior to participant recruitment and data collection. Written informed consent was obtained from all adult participants. For participants under 18 years of age, written informed consent was obtained from a parent or legal guardian, and assent was obtained from the participants before testing. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and applicable national ethical regulations.

Procedure

Psychophysiological testing was conducted using tablet-based applications developed for iOS platforms. The following tests were used: Size Test (reaction to object size change), Visuomotor Choice Reaction, Reaction RMO Pro (reaction to a moving object), Reaction Go/No-Go, Spatial Perception, Test STMemory (short-term visual memory). Previous studies have provided validation evidence for the Visuomotor Choice Reaction, Reaction RMO Pro, Reaction Go/No-Go, and Spatial Perception tests (Romanenko et al., 2022, 2024a, 2024b, 2025). The Size Test and Test STMemory have also been applied in previous peer-reviewed studies of cognitive and psychophysiological characteristics in athletes (Tropin et al., 2026).

Size Test – participants were required to respond immediately to increases or decreases in the size of a visual object (an outline square). The object gradually increased (up to 1.5×) or decreased (to 0.5×) in size. Premature responses were marked as errors. A total of 20 trials were completed.

Visuomotor Choice Reaction – the test included four stages. The First Stage – response to coloured stimuli; the Second Stage – response to coloured stimuli under distracting visual signals; the Third Stage – response to 3D geometric figures; the Fourth Stage – response to 3D geometric figures under distracting visual signals. Participants completed 10 trials per stage (40 trials in total).

Reaction RMO Pro – participants completed three stages of increasing difficulty. The task involved stopping a blue circle at a designated location. The stimulus appeared and moved from random screen positions at a constant speed. In Stage 1, the stimulus moved slowly; in Stage 2, the speed increased 1.5 times, and in Stage 3, distracting objects were introduced (with random motion, colour, speed, and brightness), increasing the visual processing load. Each stage comprised 20 trials (60 trials total).

Reaction Go/No-Go – participants responded with both hands. A visual stimulus (a blue circle) increased in size from zero to match a white circle. Two scenarios followed: the stimulus either disappeared or continued growing. Participants were to respond only when the stimulus exceeded the white circle's boundary. A total of 20 trials were performed.

Spatial Perception – the test involved comparing pairs of geometric figures across four stages: the First Stage – 2D shapes (e.g., square, rhombus, hexagon, circle, triangle) rotated randomly; the Second Stage – 3D shapes (e.g., cube, cylinder, sphere, hexagonal prism, octahedron) rotated in 3D space; the Third Stage – rotating 3D shapes followed by a stationary comparison; the Fourth Stage – same as Stage 3, but with visual distractors present. Participants indicated "Correct" if the figures matched or "Incorrect" if they differed. Each stage consisted of 20 trials (80 trials total).

Test STMemory – the short-term visual memory test included five stages of 10 trials each. In Stage 1, the first five trials required a response to a single monochromatic stimulus by remembering its location and selecting the correct circle. In subsequent trials and stages, the number of simultaneously presented and differently coloured stimuli increased by one per stage. By Stage 5, participants were required to memorize the positions of five stimuli and respond accordingly.

The test results were divided into two groups. The Size Test results were included in both groups due to their relevance across cognitive load levels. Group 1 included test stages with minimal cognitive load: Stage 1 of Visuomotor Choice Reaction (response to simple coloured stimuli); Stage 1 of Reaction RMO Pro (slow-moving visual stimulus); Stage 3 of Test STMemory (memorization of 3 visual stimulus locations); Stage 1 of Spatial Perception (recognition of 2D geometric shapes). Group 2 included test stages with high cognitive load: Stage 4 of Visuomotor Choice Reaction (3D geometric shapes with visual distractors); Stage 3 of Reaction RMO Pro (faster stimulus with visual distractors); Stage 5 of Test STMemory (memorization of 5 visual stimulus locations); Stage 4 of Spatial Perception (3D shape recognition with distractors). Additionally, Reaction Go/No-Go, characterized by substantial cognitive demands, was included in this group.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis of the collected data was conducted using RStudio (version 2024.12.1+563) and Numbers (version 14.4). Descriptive statistics are presented as the mean, standard deviation, first and third quartiles, and median. To explore the latent structure of the psychophysiological indicators, separate exploratory factor analyses were performed for the two task sets using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF). PAF was used to estimate latent factors based on the shared variance among the observed variables. Factor retention was evaluated

using the eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion and parallel analysis. For the lower-demand task set, two eigenvalues exceeded 1 (1.93 and 1.60), suggesting a two-factor solution according to the Kaiser criterion; however, parallel analysis did not support factor retention. Therefore, the two-factor solution for this task set was treated as exploratory and interpreted cautiously. For the higher-demand task set, both the eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion (first eigenvalue = 3.04) and parallel analysis supported a one-factor solution. An oblimin rotation was applied to the two-factor solution; rotation was not applicable to the one-factor solution. Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to assess whether the observed correlation matrix differed significantly from an identity matrix (Johnson & Wichern, 2007), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was calculated to assess sampling adequacy. Given the small sample size ($n = 25$), the factor-analytic results were considered exploratory and potentially sample-sensitive.

Results

The analysis of psychophysiological indicators in combat sports athletes revealed consistent patterns across tests assessing reaction speed, spatial perception, and short-term memory. The results were grouped into two sets based on the type and sequence of psychophysiological tasks. The first group consisted of test tasks characterised by a relatively low level of cognitive load. This group included the reaction to changes in object size (Stage 1), the visuomotor choice reaction (Stage 1), the reaction to a moving object (Stage 1), the spatial perception test (Stage 1), and the short-term visual memory test (Stage 3). Descriptive statistics for these psychophysiological indicators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
First Group of Psychophysiological Performance Indicators

Tests	Mean	SD	1st Quarter	Median	3rd Quarter
Size Test (ms)	854.4	82.3	795.6	841.8	889.3
Visuomotor Choice Reaction (Stage 1) (ms)	627.4	63.7	588.8	600.1	672.3
Reaction RMO Pro (Stage 1) (ms)	30.4	17.6	19.51	25.68	33.5
Spatial Perception (Stage 1) (ms)	634.6	105.1	570.2	631.4	671.0
Test STMemory (Stage 3) (%)	95.3	3.6	93.3	96.7	96.7

Note: Size test – reaction to object size change; Visuomotor Choice Reaction – choice reaction; Reaction RMO Pro – reaction to a moving object; Spatial Perception – spatial perception; Test STMemory – short-term visual memory.

Similarly, the second group of tests, which required a higher degree of cognitive control and selective attention, showed longer mean reaction times and lower accuracy in tasks involving short-term visual memory (Table 2).

Table 2
Second Group of Psychophysiological Performance Indicators

Tests	Mean	SD	1st Quarter	Median	3rd Quarter
Size Test (ms)	854.4	82.3	795.6	841.8	889.3
Visuomotor Choice Reaction (Stage 4) (ms)	870.2	91.6	816.7	849.7	929.8
Reaction Go/No-go (ms)	334.4	30.3	312.8	329.1	354.0
Reaction RMO Pro (Stage 3) (ms)	29.4	12.8	21.9	28.6	33.2
Spatial Perception (Stage 4) (ms)	724.0	106.6	645.7	715.0	776.7
Test STMemory (Stage 5) (%)	82.5	8.7	78.0	82.0	88.00

Note: Size test – reaction to object size change; Visuomotor Choice Reaction – choice reaction; Reaction Go/No-go – differentiation reaction; Reaction RMO Pro – reaction to a moving object; Spatial Perception – spatial perception; Test STMemory – short-term visual memory.

To identify the latent structures underlying these results, exploratory factor analysis was performed separately for each group of indicators. For the lower-demand task set, Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(10) = 23.41$, $p = 0.0093$, and the overall KMO value was 0.59. Two eigenvalues exceeded 1 (1.93 and 1.60), whereas parallel analysis did not support factor retention. Accordingly, the following two-factor PAF solution is presented as exploratory and should be interpreted cautiously. For the higher-demand task set, Bartlett's test was also significant, $\chi^2(15) = 41.32$, $p < 0.001$, and the overall KMO value was 0.74. Both the eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion (first eigenvalue = 3.04) and parallel analysis supported retention of one factor. The results of the factor analysis for the first group indicate that the *Size test* demonstrated a strong loading on factor PA1 (0.72) and a weak loading on PA2 (-0.16), with the factors explaining 54% of the variance in the variable. The Visuomotor Choice Reaction (Stage 1) showed a weak loading on PA1 (0.36) and a moderate positive loading with PA2 (0.59), with the factors explaining 48% of the variance. The Reaction RMO Pro (Stage 1) displayed a weak positive loading on PA1 (0.11) and a relatively strong negative loading on PA2 (-0.65), with 44% of the variance explained. Spatial Perception (Stage 1) demonstrated a strong positive loading on PA1 (0.87) and a weak loading on PA2 (0.07), accounting for the highest variance (76%) among the variables. Short-term Visual Memory showed a weak loading on PA1 (-0.31) and a moderate positive loading on PA2 (0.53), with 38% of the variance explained (see Table 3).

Table 3

Factor Analysis Results – First Group

Tests	PA1	PA2	h²	u²	com
Size Test	0.72	-0.16	0.54	0.46	1.1
Visuomotor Choice Reaction (Stage 1)	0.36	0.59	0.48	0.52	1.6
Reaction RMO Pro (Stage 1)	0.11	-0.65	0.44	0.56	1.1
Spatial Perception (Stage 1)	0.87	0.07	0.76	0.24	1.0
Test STMemory (Stage 3)	-0.31	0.53	0.38	0.62	1.6

Note: Size test – reaction to object size change; Visuomotor Choice Reaction – choice reaction; Reaction RMO Pro – reaction to a moving object; Spatial Perception – spatial perception; Test STMemory – short-term visual memory; com – complexity of the variable (i.e., the number of factors the variable loads on); h² – communality; u² – uniqueness.

The complexity indicators (com) for Visuomotor Choice Reaction (Stage 1) and Test STMemory (Stage 3) suggest that the results of these tests are influenced by two factors. In contrast, the outcomes of the remaining tests are associated with a single factor: Size test and Spatial Perception (Stage 1) load solely on PA1, while Reaction RMO Pro (Stage 1) loads exclusively on PA2. Notably, factor PA1 exhibited a higher loading (Sum of Squared Loadings = 1.51), indicating that it accounts for a greater proportion of variance compared to PA2 (Sum of Squared Loadings = 1.09). The inter-factor correlation ($r = -0.01$) indicated a negligible association between PA1 and PA2.

The factor model for the first group yielded the following fit indices: Root Mean Square of Residuals (RMSR) = 0.01; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 1.808; Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) = -3.19.

The results of the factor analysis for the second group reveal that the Size Test and Visuomotor Choice Reaction (Stage 4) both show substantial loadings on factor PA1 (0.59), with communalities ($h^2=0.35$) for each variable (Table 4).

The highest proportion of variance explained ($h^2=0.73$) and the strongest factor loading on PA1 (0.85) were found in the Spatial Perception test (Stage 4), suggesting that this test is highly representative of the latent construct. Conversely, Test STMemory (Stage 5) demonstrated a substantial negative loading on PA1 (-0.67), indicating an inverse relationship: the higher the short-term visual memory performance in Stage 5, the shorter the reaction time values in other tests such as Go/No-go, Size test, Choice Reaction (Stage 4), and Spatial Perception (Stage 4). The Reaction RMO Pro (Stage 3) exhibited the lowest proportion of variance explained (23%) and a relatively moderate loading on PA1 (0.48), suggesting a weaker association with the identified factor. The factor model for the second group yielded the following fit indices: Root Mean Square of Residuals (RMSR) = 0.07; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)

= 0; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 1.182; Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) = -22.70.

Table 4
Factor Analysis Results – Second Group

Tests	PA1	h ²	u ²	com
Size Test	0.59	0.35	0.65	1
Visuomotor Choice Reaction (Stage 4)	0.59	0.35	0.65	1
Reaction Go/No-go	0.64	0.41	0.59	1
Reaction RMO Pro (Stage 3)	0.48	0.23	0.77	1
Spatial Perception (Stage 4)	0.85	0.73	0.27	1
Test STMemory (Stage 5)	-0.67	0.45	0.55	1

Note: Size test – reaction to changes in object size; Visuomotor Choice Reaction – choice reaction; Reaction Go/No-go – response inhibition; Reaction RMO Pro – reaction to a moving object; Spatial Perception – spatial perception; Test STMemory – short-term visual memory.

Discussion

At the cognitive level, all types of sports are characterized by a strong involvement of executive functions and attention (Kalén et al., 2021; Polevaia-Secareanu et al., 2025; Tropin et al., 2023). Team sports significantly demand sustained attention due to the duration of matches and the precision of responses required (Heppe et al., 2016; Williams & Davids, 1998). Martial arts rely heavily on motor vigilance and speed, as well as on sustained attention and self-regulation (Bajkowski & Cynarski, 2024; Volodchenko et al., 2017). Evidence suggests that martial arts training may influence specific components of executive function. In particular, judo training has been shown to affect neurocognitive indices of response inhibition in preadolescent children (Ludyga et al., 2021). A systematic review has shown that athletes engaged in open-skill sports (e.g., team sports, combat sports) demonstrate higher levels of executive functions than those participating in closed-skill sports (e.g., gymnastics, swimming, athletics, archery, shooting) (Heilmann et al., 2022; Lai et al., 2024; Ren et al., 2025).

Visual perception is determined by two types of processes: the light falling on the retina and the attention shaped by task conditions (Ware, 2020). Vision is one of the key senses for gathering environmental information, and its importance is universally acknowledged in various activities. Specific visual skills are critical to performance in many sports (Wang et al., 2022; Omar et al., 2017). Visual information is essential for executive functions, as the eyes collect data that the brain processes to form a clear understanding of the environment (Knöllner et al., 2022; Mahlangu et al., 2024).

Athletes' visual skills are commonly divided into two main categories: visual "hardware" and visual "software." Hardware refers primarily to optometric and ocular functions such as visual acuity, depth perception, accommodation, fusion flexibility, colour vision, and contrast sensitivity, whereas software encompasses perceptual-cognitive and visuomotor processes such as visual reaction time, peripheral awareness, and eye–hand–body coordination (Poltavski et al., 2021).

The study of martial artists' responses to object size changes was conducted using the "Size test" application developed in Swift 5. This test requires the athlete to react instantly to any changes in the size of an object (a contour square), which may slowly increase (up to 1.5 times its size) or decrease (down to 0.5 times). Unlike classic reaction time tests that involve instantaneous stimulus presentation, this test gradually changes the size of the visual stimulus. The animation of object resizing was implemented using the *curveEaseInOut* function, which enables acceleration-based animation. This reflects real-world physical processes, where objects typically begin movement with acceleration due to applied force analogous to a martial artist initiating motion toward an opponent. Motion perception is a crucial aspect of human cognition, encompassing the detection of spatial and temporal changes in object positions (Barton, 2021). In the "Size test," the visual stimulus gradually changes its size, requiring perceptual attention and sensitivity to visual information flow. The faster an athlete detects the size change, the better their visual discrimination. The average reaction time recorded in this study was 854.4 ms, indicating complex cognitive processing and a greater need for information accumulation prior to decision-making. Previous studies (Romanenko et al., 2024a; Romanenko et al., 2025) have similarly demonstrated that increased cognitive load impacts reaction times in martial artists.

An analysis of reaction time values under increased cognitive load revealed that results generally worsened across most tests. An exception was found in the moving object detection test. In the second set of results, a slight improvement in reaction time was observed at the third testing stage (29.4 ms) compared to the first stage (30.4 ms). This pattern was also reported by Romanenko et al. (2024a), who hypothesized that improved reaction time at stage three was related to the visual stimulus speed ($v = 94.5 \text{ mm/s}$), which aligns with the motor patterns of striking martial artists and is more favourable for adaptation. Reaction time deterioration in the second group of results is attributed, first, to the presence of distracting visual stimuli and, second, to increased test complexity. For example, the fifth stage of the short-term visual memory test required remembering the location of five visual stimuli, while the fourth stage of the spatial perception test involved reacting to dynamic three-dimensional geometric shapes. This group also included results from the Go/No-Go test, performed with both hands and requiring significant attention and a balance of excitatory and inhibitory processes (Romanenko et al., 2024b).

As noted above, the two-factor PAF solution for the lower-demand task set should be regarded as exploratory, because parallel analysis did not support factor retention, although two eigenvalues exceeded 1. Within this exploratory solution, PA1 was characterized mainly by strong loadings of Spatial Perception (Stage 1) and the Size Test, suggesting a visual-perceptual dimension. PA2 was characterized by positive loadings of Visuomotor Choice Reaction (Stage 1) and Test STMemory (Stage 3), together with a negative loading of Reaction RMO Pro (Stage 1), indicating a pattern involving choice reaction, short-term visual memory, and moving-object response. Because lower Reaction RMO Pro values represent better performance, the negative loading indicates that higher PA2 scores were associated with shorter moving-object response times. However, the sign of a factor loading reflects the direction of association with the latent factor and should not itself be interpreted as a positive or negative contribution to performance. The choice reaction at the first stage of the Visuomotor Choice Reaction test reflects the processing of colour stimuli (Romanenko et al., 2022).

According to the present results, performance in the Size Test was associated with broader perceptual and sensorimotor processes in skilled martial artists. Sensitivity to changes in object size may be relevant to maintaining attention to an opponent's actions, controlling distance, and selecting an appropriate moment for action. Therefore, the Size Test may be considered an exploratory tool for characterizing and monitoring visual-perceptual performance in combat-sport athletes rather than as a validated predictor of future athletic success. Podrigalo et al. (2023) emphasized that the Size Test is accessible, specific, informative, cost-effective, and suitable for monitoring the condition of combat-sport athletes. Korobeynikov et al. (2023) identified associations between cognitive functions and the specific work capacity of elite boxers, including attention, visual perception speed, and operational and logical thinking. Further longitudinal research is required to determine whether Size Test performance has predictive value for athletic development or competitive performance.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The main limitation of this study is the small sample size, which may limit the stability and reproducibility of the exploratory factor solution. In addition, the sample included only male striking martial artists, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Finally, the cross-sectional and exploratory design does not allow conclusions regarding causality or the predictive value of the assessed measures for future sports performance.

Cognitive skills play an important role in sports performance. The observed patterns of sensorimotor responses across tasks with different cognitive demands may be useful for coaches and practitioners when characterizing percep-

tual and sensorimotor performance in experienced martial artists and may inform the design of future training and longitudinal studies. Further research in larger and more diverse samples is needed to determine whether these measures have predictive value for athletic development or performance.

Conclusions

Exploratory factor analysis indicated that performance in the Size Test co-varied with spatial-perceptual and other sensorimotor measures. In the exploratory two-factor solution for the lower-demand task set, the Size Test loaded substantially on the same factor as Spatial Perception, whereas the higher-demand task set showed a single-factor structure involving the Size Test, Spatial Perception, visuomotor choice reaction, response inhibition, reaction to a moving object, and short-term visual memory. These findings suggest that responses to changes in object size are related to broader perceptual and sensorimotor processes. Given the small sample size and exploratory design, these results should be interpreted cautiously and require confirmation in larger samples.

STATEMENT OF ETHICS

The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Committee on Bioethics and Scientific Research of the Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture (Protocol No. 24, August 27, 2025), prior to participant recruitment and data collection. Written informed consent was obtained from all adult participants. For participants under 18 years of age, written informed consent was obtained from a parent or legal guardian, and assent was obtained from the participants before testing. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and applicable national ethical regulations).

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Object Size Detection and Sensorimotor Performance in Striking Martial Artists: An Exploratory Factor Analysis*.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Object Size Detection and Sensorimotor Performance in Striking Martial Artists: An Exploratory Factor Analysis*.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Vyacheslav Romanenko: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Investigation, Original Draft.
Yuri Tropin: Original Draft, Methodology, Analysis; Resources.

Yuliya Kovalenko: Review & Editing, Visualization, Validation.
Volodymyr Mikhalskyi: Methodology, Review & Editing, Analysis; Supervision.
Valerii Dzherelii: Analysis, Data Curation, Visualization; Project administration.
 All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Received: 23.10.2025

<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/sit.2026.03.05>

Accepted: 9.03.2026

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HOME ADVANTAGE ACROSS MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TEAM SPORTS IN POLAND OVER THE LAST DECADE

How to cite [jak cytować]: Jaguszewski, M., & Jaguszewska, W. (2026). Home Advantage Across Men's and Women's Team Sports in Poland Over the Last Decade. *Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe*, 9(3), 95–111.

Przewaga własnego boiska w sportach drużynowych mężczyzn i kobiet w Polsce w ostatniej dekadzie

Streszczenie

Przewaga własnego boiska jest dobrze udokumentowanym zjawiskiem w sporcie, odnoszącym się do lepszej gry drużyn występujących na własnym terenie w porównaniu z drużynami grającymi na wyjeździe. Chociaż efekt ten został opisany w licznych dyscyplinach, okresach i krajach, niewiele badań jednocześnie analizowało wiele dyscyplin oraz obie płcie w ramach jednego kontekstu krajowego. Celem niniejszego badania było przeanalizowanie przewagi własnego boiska w męskich i żeńskich dyscyplinach zespołowych w Polsce w ciągu ostatniej dekady oraz porównanie jej wielkości przed i po pandemii COVID-19. Dane zostały zebrane z 11 męskich i 7 żeńskich lig najwyższego szczebla w Polsce. Przewaga własnego boiska została oszacowana za pomocą metody Pollarda, wyrażonej jako procent punktów zdobytych przez drużyny gospodarzy w stosunku do wszystkich możliwych punktów. Istotna przewaga własnego boiska została zaobserwowana w większości dyscyplin zarówno wśród mężczyzn, jak i kobiet, przy czym wyższa przewaga własnego boiska występowała częściej w męskich rozgrywkach. Wyniki te są zgodne z wcześniejszymi badaniami. W niektórych dyscyplinach wystąpiły zauważalne różnice pomiędzy dwoma badanymi okresami. Oprócz wpływu pandemii COVID-19, zmiany w przepisach sportowych oraz modyfikacje struktur ligowych mogły wpłynąć na zmiany przewagi własnego boiska w czasie w różnych dyscyplinach sportowych, zarówno w męskich, jak i żeńskich ligach w Polsce.

Słowa kluczowe: koszykówka, piłka nożna, piłka ręczna, hokej, rugby, piłka siatkowa, piłka wodna.

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Abstract

Home advantage is a well-established phenomenon in sports, referring to the superior performance of teams playing at home compared to those playing away. Although this effect has been documented across numerous sports, time periods, and countries, few studies have examined multiple disciplines and both sexes simultaneously within a single national context. The present study aimed to analyse home advantage across men's and women's team sports in Poland over the last decade and to compare its magnitude before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected from 11 men's and 7 women's top-tier team sports leagues in Poland. Home advantage was quantified using Pollard's method, expressed as the percentage of points earned by home teams out of all possible points. Significant home advantage was observed in most sports for both men and women, with higher home advantage observed in most men's competitions. These findings align with previous research. Substantial differences between the two time periods were observed in certain sports for both sexes. In addition to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, recent changes in sports rules and modifications to league structures may have influenced changes over time in home advantage across various sports in both men's and women's Polish leagues.

Keywords: basketball, football, handball, hockey, rugby, volleyball, water polo.

Introduction

Home advantage is a well-documented phenomenon referring to the performance benefit teams experience when competing on their home ground. This effect has been discussed in the scientific literature since the 1970s (Schwartz & Barsky, 1977; Edwards & Archambault, 1979; Courneya & Carron, 1992) and remains a relevant topic of study in the 2020s (Gómez-Ruano et al., 2021). Historical records indicate that home advantage has existed as far back as the late 19th century in the English men's soccer (football) league (Pollard, 1986).

Multiple factors are known to contribute to home advantage, including crowd support, rule changes, and psychological aspects (Pollard, 2008). Moreover, contextual variables such as country (Pollard & Gómez, 2014a), sport discipline (Jamieson, 2010), level of competition (Prieto et al., 2013), and gender (Pollard & Gómez, 2014b) may influence the magnitude of this effect.

Most research on home advantage has focused on men's soccer across various countries (mainly in Europe) and time periods (Pollard, 2006; Pollard & Gómez, 2009, 2014a). However, the phenomenon has also been examined in other team sports, including basketball (Pollard & Gómez Ruano, 2013; Alonso Pérez-Chao et al., 2024), volleyball (Yu et al., 2020) and handball (Marquina Nieto, 2025), but predominantly in men's competitions.

Despite this extensive body of research in men's sport, home advantage has also been documented in women's sports. It has been studied primarily in separate disciplines and often simultaneously with men's results (Pollard & Gómez, 2012, 2014b; Prieto et al., 2013; van Meurs et al., 2023). While most studies report a greater home advantage in men's competitions, significant effects have

also been observed in women's sports. Gender differences in home advantage have been hypothesised to stem from variations in crowd size and intensity, professionalisation of leagues and social-psychological factors such as responses to pressure – factors that systematically differ between men's and women's competitions (Courneya & Carron, 1992; Pollard, 2008).

In recent years, research on home advantage has focused on the unique circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The absence or reduction of crowd support during that period has provided a valuable opportunity to better understand the influence of fans (Almeida & Leite, 2021; Arboix-Alió et al., 2021; Jaguszewski, 2021; Sedeaud, 2021; Dellagrana et al., 2023; van Meurs et al., 2023; Alonso Pérez-Chao et al., 2024; Jaguszewski et al., 2025).

Only a few studies have analysed home advantage in multiple team sports (Pollard, 1986; Pollard & Pollard, 2005; Jamieson, 2010; Gómez et al., 2011). However, these investigations were conducted exclusively on men's competitions and were limited to leagues from North America, England, and Spain. To date, only one study has presented home advantage data for both men's and women's team sports simultaneously across multiple countries (Pollard et al., 2017), highlighting the need for further research in this area.

Despite extensive empirical evidence for home advantage, theoretical understanding of how contextual factors such as national sport systems and gender shape home advantage across multiple team sports remains limited, even in European countries. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to examine the magnitude of home advantage in men's and women's team sports in Poland over the past decade, within a theoretical framework that considers crowd support as a key component of home advantage. Based on the existing literature and the identified research gaps, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: A significant home advantage exists in top-level Polish men's and women's team sports leagues.
- H2: The magnitude of home advantage may vary across different team sports in Poland for men's and women's competitions.
- H3: The magnitude of home advantage differs between Polish men's and women's leagues within individual team sports.
- H4: The magnitude of home advantage does not differ between the periods before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, in matches played with crowd support, analysed separately for Polish men's and women's leagues.

Materials and methods

Materials and data

The inclusion and exclusion criteria for data collection followed those used in previous studies (Pollard & Gómez, 2014a; Pollard et al., 2017), with the pri-

mary exclusion criterion being the lack of data for at least two full seasons within the study period (especially no data at all). Unusual exclusion criteria included inconsistencies in sources (e.g., when the sum of individual match results did not match the league table) and the absence of home games, e.g. in softball matches were played only at selected neutral venues. Sports with very few teams in Polish leagues (e.g., women's field hockey) or seasons with fewer than 15 matches were excluded due to the disproportionate impact a single team could have on home advantage outcomes. Walkover matches (games awarded by default) were also excluded, as no actual competition took place. Finally, only regular season games – typically played in a round-robin format – were included in the analysis. Playoff matches were excluded because they are not consistently implemented across all sports, and in cases where they are used, the allocation of home and away games is often unequal between teams. Such an imbalance may undermine the consistency of the data set and affect the reliability of home advantage assessment.

Data were primarily collected from the Flashscore website (Flashscore, 2025), which provides results for multiple sports. Flashscore has been widely used in previous academic studies as a reliable source of historical match results. When data were unavailable on Flashscore, supplementary sources, including Wikipedia (Wikipedia, 2025) and websites dedicated to Polish leagues in less popular sports, were consulted (Polish floorball, 2025; Polish water polo, 2025; Regional football, 2025; Regional sport; 2025). Overall, data from 11 team sports were gathered for men's competitions and from 7 team sports for women's competitions. The dataset covers two distinct four-season periods: the pre-COVID-19 pandemic Period 1 (2015/2016 to 2018/2019 seasons in most sports) and the post-pandemic Period 2 (2021/2022 to 2024/2025 seasons), when fan attendance returned to normal. Results are presented separately for men's and women's sports within these periods, as well as combined across the entire eight-season timeframe.

Methods

Home advantage was calculated using Pollard's method (Pollard, 1986), which presents the percentage of home teams' wins or points earned out of all possible wins or points. Home advantage calculated according to this method was denoted as HA in this work. An HA value amounting to 50% denotes no home advantage; values above 50% signify home advantage, while values below 50% (which are rare) indicate a home disadvantage.

To further explore differences in home advantage between the two examined periods and between men's and women's results, two indexes were introduced: Home Advantage Difference (HA_D) and Home Advantage Relative Differ-

ence (HA_{RD}). Home Advantage Difference measures the difference between two HA values as it was also calculated as follows:

$$HA_D(\%) = HA_1 - HA_2$$

where HA_1 and HA_2 represent home advantage values for two different results (e.g. men's vs women's leagues or different time periods). HA_D provides a straightforward measure of the difference in home advantage, expressed in percentage points (p.p.), and is useful for direct comparisons between two values. Meanwhile Home Advantage Relative Difference measures the difference between two HA values relative to the baseline of no home advantage ($HA = 50\%$). It is calculated as follows:

$$HA_{RD}(\%) = \frac{|HA_1 - HA_2|}{\max\{HA_1, HA_2\} - 50\%},$$

where HA_1 and HA_2 represent home advantage values (calculated by Pollard's method) for two different results, e.g. for men's and women's leagues or for different time periods. The HA_{RD} index yields positive values only when at least one HA value exceeds 50%, which is typical in empirical research on home advantage. Additionally, if both HA values are above 50%, HA_{RD} remains below 100%, which is very likely in practice, as most home advantage values in team sports exceed 50%. The interpretation of HA_{RD} is that values greater than 50% indicate a substantial difference in home advantage, implying that the 'real' home advantage was at least twice as large in one case compared to the other.

Validity and reliability

The construct validity of the home advantage (HA) measure is supported by its widespread use in previous research across multiple sports and countries (Pollard, 1986; Gómez et al., 2011; Pollard et al., 2017), ensuring that it accurately reflects the phenomenon of home advantage. HA_D and HA_{RD} indexes, developed for this study to compare HA between sexes and across time periods, are conceptually consistent with HA and allow meaningful relative comparisons and clearer results' description.

Reliability is ensured through the use of official league results and the application of standardized calculation procedures across all included sports and seasons even though scoring systems differ between sports. Table 1 summarizes how home advantage was calculated in each investigated sport, highlighting consistency with prior studies and comparability between disciplines.

Table 1

Calculation of home advantage (HA) across different team sports, including outcome measures and scoring systems

Sport	Outcome measure	Scoring system	Definition of home advantage (HA)
American foot-ball, basketball	Win/loss	Binary outcome; overtime included	HA (%) = Number of home teams' wins divided by total number of matches
Futsal, soccer/football	Points	Loss = 0 pts; Draw = 1 pt; Win = 3 pts	HA (%) = Number of home teams' points divided by total number of points
Rugby	Points	Loss = 0 pts; Draw = 2 pts; Win = 4 pts	HA (%) = Number of home teams' points divided by total number of points
Volleyball	Points	Loss in three or four sets = 0 pts; Loss in five sets = 1 pt; Win in five sets = 2 pts; Win in three or four sets = 3 pts	HA (%) = Number of home teams' points divided by total number of points
Field hockey, floorball, handball, ice hockey, water polo	Points	Regulation loss = 0 pts; Overtime/shootout loss = 1 pt; Overtime/shootout win = 2 pts; Regulation win = 3 pts	HA (%) = Number of home teams' points divided by total number of points

Statistical methods

Home advantage results across the eight examined seasons for both men's and women's sports in Poland are presented in a bar chart. Also HA, HA_D and HA_{RD} values, along with comparisons between sexes and time periods for each sport, are summarized in tables.

To test H1, i.e. if home advantage exists (HA is statistically significantly greater than 50%), a one-sided test for one proportion (Greń, 1978) was applied separately for men's and women's competitions across the entire eight-season period. This test compares the observed HA value and the number of games played against the baseline of 50% (no home advantage). The test yields a *u* statistic and corresponding *p*-value.

Differences between sports (H2) were examined descriptively by reporting HA values separately for men's and women's leagues, without formal statistical testing, in order to provide an overview of variation across disciplines.

Differences between men's and women's competitions (H3) and between the two examined periods separately for men's and women's leagues (H4) across team sports in Poland were tested using a two-sided test for two proportions (Greń, 1978). The test produces a *u* statistic and *p*-value.

Statistical analyses were performed using TIBCO Software Inc. (2017, Statistica data analysis software system; version 13; available at <http://statistica.io>). The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Among the examined sports in the top Polish leagues with crowd support over the eight-season period, men's soccer showed the highest home advantage (HA = 57.92%), while volleyball had the highest home advantage (HA = 55.79%) among women's sports. The lowest home advantage results in Poland were noticed for American football (HA = 52.61%) in men's sports and in ice hockey (HA = 52.17%) in women's sports.

Overall across all 11 men's sports and 7 women's sports analysed in the best Polish leagues, HA exceeded 50%, indicating the presence of this phenomenon. Statistical testing using the test for one proportion confirmed a significant home advantage ($p < 0.05$) in 9 out of 11 men's sports and 4 out of 7 women's sports. No significant home advantage was detected ($p > 0.05$) in men's field hockey and American football, as well as in women's futsal, floorball, and ice hockey. These sports exhibited relatively small sample sizes (≤ 314 games), which were lower than those of the other sports analysed (Table 2, Figure 1).

Table 2

Home advantage in the top Polish men's and women's leagues across different sports in matches with crowd support in years 2015–2025, its significance and comparison between sexes

Sport	Men			Women			Comparison between sexes		
	HA	n	p^1	HA	n	p^1	HA _D (p.p.)	HA _{RD}	p^2
American football	52.61%	230	0.2148						
Basketball	56.20%	2016	<0.0001	55.12%	996	0.0006	1.08	17.42%	0.5744
Field hockey	53.87%	224	0.1230						
Floorball	53.73%	510	0.0465	52.44%	314	0.1949	1.28	34.46%	0.7185
Futsal	56.01%	1543	<0.0001	52.78%	242	0.1949	3.23	53.73%	0.3471
Handball	55.66%	1494	<0.0001	55.30%	1184	0.0001	0.36	6.35%	0.8523
Ice hockey	54.68%	1624	0.0001	52.17%	216	0.2611	2.51	53.63%	0.4865
Rugby	56.19%	557	0.0018						

Table 2 (cont.)

Sport	Men			Women			Comparison between sexes		
	HA	n	p ¹	HA	n	p ¹	HA _D (p.p.)	HA _{RD}	p ²
Soccer/football	57.92%	2408	<0.0001	54.03%	1176	0.0029	3.89	49.08%	0.0274
Volleyball	55.00%	1720	<0.0001	55.79%	1134	<0.0001	-0.79	13.65%	0.6778
Water polo	53.91%	447	0.0495						

Notes: HA – home advantage, n – number of games, p¹ – p value obtained from a one-sided test for one proportion (testing significance of home advantage), p² – p value obtained from a two-sided test for two proportions (comparing two HA results), HA_D – Home Advantage Difference – difference between HA in men’s and women’s sport (HA_{Men} – HA_{Women}), HA_{RD} – Home Advantage Relative Difference. Bolded p values indicate statistical significance (p < 0.05).

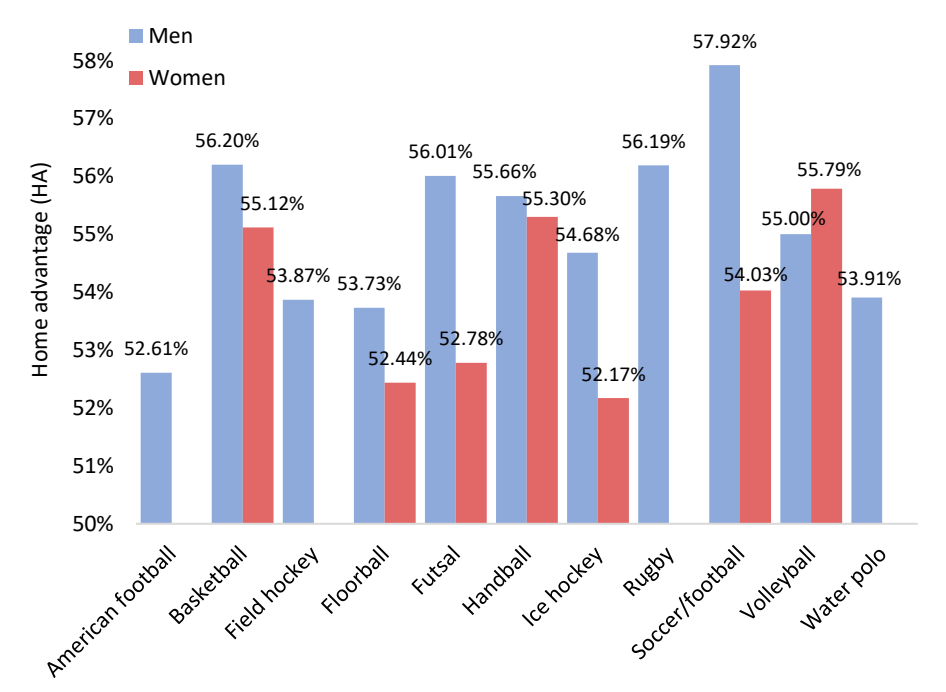


Figure 1
Home advantage across different team sports in top Polish men’s and women’s leagues during matches with crowd support between 2015 and 2025

Home advantage was higher in women’s competition than in men’s only in volleyball, by 0.79 p.p.. In the other six sports with results available for both sexes, home advantage was higher in men’s competitions. The largest difference

favouring men was observed in soccer, with a difference of 3.89 p.p. and a HA_{RD} value of 49.08%, which was statistically significant ($p = 0.0274$). Substantial differences ($HA_{RD} > 50\%$) favouring men were noted in futsal (3.23 p.p., $HA_{RD} = 53.73\%$) and ice hockey (2.51 p.p., $HA_{RD} = 53.63\%$), although these differences were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). In the remaining sports, differences between men's and women's home advantage did not exceed 1.28 p.p., were not substantial ($HA_{RD} < 50\%$), and were not significant ($p > 0.05$) (Table 2, Figure 1).

Home advantage in men's sports was higher in Period 1 than in Period 2 in 4 of the 10 sports where comparisons were made. In men's basketball, HA decreased significantly over time by 9.05 p.p. ($p = 0.0001$), representing a substantial change ($HA_{RD} = 86.11\%$). Conversely, substantial, but not significant ($p > 0.05$) increases in HA were observed in men's American football (by 2.69 p.p., $HA_{RD} = 72.12\%$) and floorball (by 3.18 p.p., $HA_{RD} = 57.71\%$). In the remaining men's sports, changes between periods were neither substantial ($HA_{RD} < 50\%$) nor significant ($p > 0.05$) (Table 3).

Table 3

Home advantage in men's and women's Polish leagues across different team sports compared between two time periods

Sport	2015-2019 (Period 1)		2021-2025 (Period 2)		Comparison between periods		
	HA	n	HA	n	HA_D (p.p.)	HA_{RD}	p
Men							
American football	51.04%	96	53.73%	134	-2.69	72.12%	0.6870
Basketball	60.51%	1056	51.46%	960	9.05	86.11%	0.0001
Field hockey			53.87%	224			
Floorball	52.33%	286	55.51%	224	-3.18	57.71%	0.4747
Futsal	57.90%	613	54.77%	930	3.13	39.62%	0.2255
Handball	56.29%	766	55.08%	728	1.21	19.24%	0.6379
Ice hockey	54.46%	904	54.95%	720	-0.49	9.90%	0.8438
Rugby	54.94%	233	57.10%	324	-2.16	30.42%	0.6123
Soccer/football	57.80%	1184	58.05%	1224	-0.25	3.11%	0.9011
Volleyball	55.54%	818	54.51%	902	1.03	18.59%	0.6681
Water polo	53.82%	231	54.01%	216	-0.19	4.70%	0.9679
Women							
Basketball	54.17%	576	56.43%	420	-2.26	35.15%	0.4788
Floorball	54.53%	184	49.49%	130	5.04	111.26%	0.3784
Futsal			52.78%	242			
Handball	57.81%	676	52.49%	508	5.32	68.12%	0.0683

Table 3 (cont.)

Sport	2015-2019 (Period 1)		2021-2025 (Period 2)		Comparison between periods		
	HA	n	HA	n	HA _D (p.p.)	HA _{RD}	p
Ice hockey			52.17%	216			
Soccer/football	54.66%	648	53.27%	528	1.39	29.83%	0.6343
Volleyball	57.01%	628	54.28%	506	2.73	38.94%	0.3575

Notes: HA – home advantage, n – number of games, HA_D – Home Advantage Difference – difference between HA in two examined periods (HA_{Period1} – HA_{Period2}), HA_{RD} – Home Advantage Relative Difference, p – p value obtained from a two-sided test for two proportions (comparing two HA results). Bolded p values indicate statistical significance (p < 0.05).

Home advantage in women’s sports was higher in Period 1 than in Period 2 in 4 of the 5 sports compared. Substantial decreases in HA over time were observed in women’s floorball (by 5.04 p.p., HA_{RD} = 111.26%) and handball (by 5.32 p.p., HA_{RD} = 68.12%), with a trend toward statistical significance in the latter (p = 0.0683). In women’s soccer, volleyball, and basketball, changes between periods were neither substantial (HA_{RD} < 50%) nor significant (p > 0.05) (Table 3).

Discussion

In this study, the highest home advantage (HA) in men’s sports was observed in soccer (HA = 57.91%), which aligns with findings from previous research (Pollard, 1986; Jamieson, 2010). The second- and third-highest HA values were recorded in men’s basketball (HA = 56.20%) and rugby (HA = 56.19%). Both sports have also demonstrated high HA values (HA > 60%) in other studies (Jamieson, 2010; Gómez et al., 2011; Pollard et al., 2017). In contrast, the lowest HA values in men’s sports in this study (HA < 54%) were found in field hockey, American football, floorball, and water polo. Similar patterns were observed in earlier research, where HA in these sports never exceeded 57.30% (Pollard, 1986; Gómez et al., 2011; Prieto et al., 2013; Pollard et al., 2017). Overall, these results indicate that HA varies between sports as these differences persist across different time periods and countries.

The difference between men’s and women’s soccer was statistically significant, amounting to 3.89 p.p. in the present study. This finding is consistent with previous literature, which also demonstrated a higher HA in men’s compared to women’s soccer in all examined European countries, with an average difference of 5.80 p.p. from 2004 to 2010 (Pollard & Gómez, 2014b) and 2.79 p.p. across 65 countries between 2011 and 2015 (Pollard et al., 2017). In other sports, differences between sexes were also generally in favour of men (Pollard et al.,

2017; van Meurs et al., 2023), consistent with the patterns observed in the present work.

Although no significant difference between the two examined periods was observed in men's soccer in this study, it is noteworthy that the home advantage in the Polish men's soccer league (HA = 57.92% in 2015-2025) has decreased compared with earlier periods reported in previous research (HA = 63.29% in 1998-2004 (Pollard; 2006); HA = 61.47% in 2006-2012 (Pollard & Gómez, 2014a)). Similar decline in HA over time has also been documented in other European countries (Pollard, 1986, 2006; Pollard & Gómez, 2014a), suggesting that this may represent a global trend worthy of further investigation. In contrast, in women's soccer, the home advantage in the Polish league over the last decade (HA = 54.03%) was similar to that reported from 2004 to 2010 (HA = 53.49%) (Pollard & Gómez, 2014b).

The present findings highlight some meaningful differences in how home advantage has evolved over time across the sports analysed and between sexes. One major global factor coinciding with the analysed periods is the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected both everyday life and the sporting environment (Wang & Boros, 2021; Dambrun et al., 2023), including home advantage (Arboix-Alió et al., 2021; Alonso Pérez-Chao et al., 2024). Although crowd effects were not directly analysed in the present study, as only seasons with full fan attendance were included, the pandemic may nevertheless have contributed to the observed fluctuations in home advantage through broader and more complex mechanisms. In this context, the discussion focuses on interpreting the significant (or at least substantial) changes over time in home advantage within the individual sports analysed.

The largest difference in home advantage (HA) between the two examined periods (exceeding 9 p.p.) was observed in men's basketball. An unusually high HA value of 60.51% in Period 1 (2015-2019) significantly decreased to just above 50% in Period 2 (HA = 51.49%). This significant decline is not immediately explainable, but recent rule changes may have played a role. Modifications implemented by FIBA over the past decade (FIBA, 2025), such as the expansion of video review and the introduction of automatic unsportsmanlike fouls during the final two minutes of the game and overtime, could have affected referee decisions and game dynamics. Also changes in relegation rules and the reduction of league size from 17 to 16 teams starting from the 2018/2019 season in the Polish men's basketball league, may also have contributed. In contrast, HA in women's Polish basketball league remained relatively stable, suggesting that rule changes may impact men's and women's competitions differently.

A substantial increase in home advantage was observed in men's American football. However, this finding should be interpreted with caution due to the limited sample size (data only from two seasons in Period 1). Additionally, the

current league was newly established in 2021 through the merger of two former leagues. With the league still evolving in terms of the number of teams and competition format, (Flashscore, 2025; Wikipedia, 2025) alongside rising professionalism and popularity, these factors may explain the observed increase in home advantage over time.

In men's floorball HA increased substantially over time, whereas in women's floorball it decreased below the threshold indicating no home advantage (49.49%). Recent rule modifications, such as allowing play with the stick above knee level under safe conditions and applying 5-minute penalties without contact for dangerous stick movements, may have contributed to these trends. Moreover, the league format in both men's and women's Polish leagues changed in the 2019/2020 season from a group stage format to a single-league structure (Flashscore, 2025; Polish floorball, 2025). These factors combined with relatively small sample sizes likely influenced the observed changes in home advantage.

In women's handball, a substantial decrease in HA was observed between the examined periods. Rule changes introduced in 2022, such as the allowance of resin-free balls and the reduction of the passive play limit from 6 to 4 passes (IHF, 2025), may have influenced home advantage. Additionally, the league format was modified in 2022/2023 season in the Polish women's league, splitting teams into a championship and a relegation league after the round-robin phase to determine the final standings. These structural adjustments may also have contributed to the observed decrease in HA.

Limitations and future research directions

Limitations of the study include the unavailability of data for certain, less popular sports, as well as differences in league structures and sample sizes across analysed sports and seasons. Ideally, more uniform competition formats and comparable number of matches would have allowed for more reliable comparisons both within and between sports. However, achieving such consistency was not feasible and remained beyond the authors' control.

Another limitation is that the study period encompassed the COVID-19 pandemic, which likely affected home advantage in ways that could not be fully controlled. To minimise this impact, data from the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 seasons, when competitions were disrupted by pandemic, were excluded from the analysis.

Future research should expand the presented approach to other countries and, where possible, to additional sports, in order to enable cross-national comparisons of home advantage across multiple team sports. It would also be valuable for future studies to investigate specific mechanisms underlying home ad-

vantage, such as crowd size, officiating, and psychological responses to pressure, with particular attention to potential sex differences. Collecting more standardised data across sports and seasons would strengthen comparative analyses and improve understanding of how home advantage evolves in modern team sports.

Practical implications

The results of this study demonstrate that the influence of playing at home varies across sports and between sexes, with important implications for coaching and performance planning. Coaches and performance staff should take these sport- and sex-specific differences into account when preparing for matches, managing player rotation, and setting performance expectations for home and away teams. In sports where home advantage is consistently high, leveraging familiar environments and crowd support may be particularly beneficial, whereas in sports with lower home advantage, performance strategies may be more consistently applied across different venues.

The observed changes in home advantage over time suggest that modifications to competition formats, rule changes, and increasing professionalism may all contribute to shifts in results. Understanding how structural factors, such as league size, scheduling, and relegation systems, influence home advantage can help support more informed decision-making aimed at maintaining fairness and spectator interest in team sports. Policymakers should also consider the broader competitive implications of rule changes, particularly when implementing reforms across different sexes and sports.

Summary

This study examined home advantage across team sports in Poland, considering differences between sexes and temporal variation. The findings indicate that home advantage is not a uniform phenomenon, but varies systematically across competitive contexts and over time. These results contribute to the literature by identifying sex and sport as important dimensions in understanding home advantage. From a broader perspective, the findings underscore the relevance of contextual and structural factors when interpreting performance outcomes in team sports.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Home Advantage Across Men's and Women's Team Sports in Poland Over the Last Decade*.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Home Advantage Across Men's and Women's Team Sports in Poland Over the Last Decade*.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Maciej Jaguszewski: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration.

Weronika Jaguszewska: Conceptualization, Validation, Investigation, Writing – Review & Editing, Visualization.

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CZĘŚĆ III

TURYSTYKA I REKREACJA



Received: 21.07.2024

<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/sit.2026.03.06>

Accepted: 08.09.2025

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THE IMPACT OF ETHNICITY, THEMATIC REPRESENTATION AND HERITAGE ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: A STUDY ON TOURISM-DESTINED FOOD OUTLETS

How to cite [jak cytować]: Singh, P., Singh, A., Ansari, A.I., & Bhalla, A. (2026). The Impact of Ethnicity, Thematic Representation and Heritage on Customer Loyalty: a Study on Tourism-Destined Food Outlets. *Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe*, 9(3), 115–131.

Wpływ pochodzenia etnicznego, reprezentacji tematycznej i dziedzictwa na lojalność klientów: badanie punktów gastronomicznych przeznaczonych dla turystów

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł koncentruje się na roli stylu życia, nawyków żywieniowych i pochodzenia etnicznego mieszkańców regionu Dżammu w kształtowaniu powtarzalnych zachowań związanych z wyborem restauracji. W obszernym przeglądzie literatury trend spożywania posiłków poza domem z rodziną wzrósł i pobudził przedsiębiorczość restauracyjną. Kilka badań ponownie odzwierciedliło związek między pochodzeniem etnicznym, reprezentacją tematyczną i dziedzictwem. Jak wspomniano, w literaturze brakuje informacji na temat lojalności i preferencji kulinarnych klientów w kontekście Indii, dlatego niniejsze badanie koncentruje się na lokalnej ludności i jej lojalności wobec ulubionych restauracji w oparciu o ich pochodzenie etniczne i kulturę, starając się uzupełnić istniejącą literaturę, a także zrozumieć wpływ wspomnianych zmiennych na lojalność rdzennej ludności Dżammu. Aby zbadać symetrię i rozkład danych, stwierdzono, że skośność i kurtoza

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mieszczą się w granicach. Opracowano kwestionariusz, który należało przeanalizować w SmartPLS, a także zbadać powszechne błędy metodyczne i niezawodność opracowanego narzędzia. Wszystkie wartości okazały się mieścić w zakresie. Na koniec, w celu przetestowania hipotez, przeprowadzono analizę regresji wielokrotnej, która wykazała, że uzyskane wartości są istotne statystycznie.

Słowa kluczowe: pochodzenie etniczne, dziedzictwo, punkty gastronomiczne, lojalność klientów, gościnność.

Abstract

This paper focuses on the role of lifestyle, eating habits and ethnicity of the people of Jammu region influencing repeat behaviour towards the choice of restaurants. Taking into account an extensive literature review, the trend of dining out with one's family has increased and boosted restaurant entrepreneurship. A few studies revealed the relationship between Ethnicity, Thematic Representation and Heritage. As mentioned, there is a lack of information in the literature regarding the customers' loyalty and their culinary preferences in the context of India, hence this study targets the local population and their loyalty towards their favourite restaurants based on their ethnicity and culture in an attempt to contribute to the existing literature and also to understand the influence of the said variables on the loyalty of the indigenous population of Jammu. In order to examine the symmetry and distribution of data, skewness and kurtosis were found well within the limits. An administered questionnaire was developed and run through SmartPLS in addition to examining the common method bias and reliability of the instrument developed. All the values were found to be well within the range. Finally, to test the hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was run and the values obtained were found to be statistically significant.

Keywords: ethnicity, heritage, food outlets, customer loyalty, hospitality.

Introduction

An increase in the number of people who prefer to dine out has met with an equating response from the restaurant and eatery business. The present generation has shown an exponential increase in the number of diners who prefer to dine out on every occasion possible (Jin et al., 2015). As mentioned, due to an increment in the number of diners, there exists a massive competition among the eateries that are competing to retain and increase the number of patrons to sustain in this dynamic business which is influenced by the return behaviour of the customer, which is inclusive of plethora of cultural factors (Williams et al., 2010). People's preference for cuisine depends on their likes and dislikes which in turn is dependent on the value system, thinking and beliefs they have developed in years of their upbringing and social interaction (Ansari & Singh, 2023). The reputation of a restaurant highly depends on the loyalty of its patrons. Restaurant businesses have long relied on the taste of the food they are serving to the guests and it is important to remain in the business. People cherish the food they are aware of. Ethnicity plays a vital role in influencing their choice of eateries (Festivalia et al., 2017). To keep in the race of this business, it is imperative

to understand and analyse the needs of the prospective customers keeping in mind their culture and ethnicity. Just like the taste of food is important so is the understanding of customer loyalty from the perspective of physical environment and tradition (Zhang et al., 2019). Kivela & Crofts (2006) express a need for inclusion of these aspects into studies on restaurant marketing that aims customer loyalty. They further highlight that tourists prefer and enjoy the food and beverage of their choice served to them in a restaurant that reminds them of their ethnicity and culture. Adding unique characteristics to the outlet is not only beneficial to ensure revisiting of the existing customers but it also attracts new ones. Repeat purchase intention of the customer or the revisit to the outlet can be ensured by giving an everlasting culinary experience to the customer. The same is significantly influenced by the use of authentic recipes, cooking style, and presentation. An edge over the competitors can be gained by improving on the authenticity of food and ambience of the restaurant. This would retain the existing clientele and attract new customers (Lai et al., 2013). For ensuring the existence of hospitality establishments, one must take into account customer satisfaction. Attracting new clientele can be expensive up to five times more than keeping the existing ones. Fulfilling expectations sets the satisfaction levels of the restaurant and further experiences keep them elevated (Ansari et al., 2024). In other words, high levels of satisfaction among patrons must always be a central concern for any hotel model that seeks lasting profitability, increased sales and improved competitive positioning. What is particularly important for the restaurant is the quality of the environment and food, making both customers satisfied and the brand image positive. Price fairness does not affect brand image though it contributes to satisfaction levels among buyers. In addition to brand image, good services are also vital for the restaurant businesses seeking guest satisfaction. In today's highly competitive hospitably industry, restaurants have emerged as popular eating places that do not only offer food but experiences too. Instead of just dining, they provide customers with immersion settings, decoration in line with a given theme, as well as moments to remember (Ansari et al., 2023). This is important for the general performance of theme restaurants since it helps them understand how customer satisfaction level could be improved. The likelihood that satisfied customers will return not only boosts the profits of a business at the moment but also has critical effects on how much the company will continue making afterwards. In this regard, both owners and supervisors of restaurants need to know what motivates clients' satisfaction in these firms as the most important aspect.

The role of culture and ethnicity

Ethnicity and customer loyalty

Being convinced to return to a service provider after being overwhelmingly contented by the quality of service provided to the customer is loyalty (Zameer et al., 2019). In the service business, world customer loyalty is the apex factor of importance as it usually is the goal of a service-providing business, which sustains and thrives in business just by orienting itself with the focus on the same. Especially in the mushrooming and thriving dynamic business of ever-increasing eateries and restaurants, a business that focuses on the loyalty of customers and patronage of the customers sails through the toughest of the competitions (Irianto & Kartikasari, 2020).

Customer loyalty is very important and always remains as the resultant expression of the customer's content. A restaurant that satisfies the lifestyle needs of the customer may prove to be a favourable place to dine in his or her opinion thus, needs would influence the opinions of the customer (Singh & Ansari, 2024). While studying customer loyalty, the study of behavioural evaluation among diverse ethnic groups has gained pace lately, indicating its importance (Kivela & Crofts, 2006). Cultural ethnicity behavioural and mental likeness of a group of people makes them different from others. Thus, ethnicity plays a vital role in influencing customer loyalty, which can be derived as a corollary from Hofstede's study which defined that people from the same ethnicity would be comfortable and cohesive with each other and would share common preferences. Huang & Crofts (2019) suggest that people with like minds would get positively influenced by the preferences that were set according to their ethnicity and would display negative or restrictive behaviours when exposed to service styles of a different ethnicity, which would otherwise be welcomed by people belonging to the same place. This would imply that irrespective of the location the customer would prefer the service styles from the place of their origin, be it about their eating habits or joining people from the same origin to dine with. Thus, we propose:

Thematic representation and customer loyalty

Thematic representation encapsulates the favourability of the atmosphere of a place and its décor (Bitner, 1990). The guests' perception of the environment he or she is subjected to influences their repeat buying behaviour (Shamah et al., 2018). The décor and ambience impact customer loyalty significantly and the better the ambience, the more favourite the restaurant becomes (Ryu et al., 2012). The better the physical environment of a restaurant, the more favourably it is perceived as and consequently; the customer will become more loyal to the

restaurant. Amofah et al. (2016) explained the physical atmosphere as a super-set of cleanliness of décor, floor and room and appropriate decoration and temperature. Cao & Kim (2015) also add the staff attire to this. All of this tends to influence the customer's feelings (Chen & Lee, 2018). When the question is about dining and food, food quality and tastes are the fundamental markers. However, to influence the repeat purchase behaviour of a customer, having a soothing, comfortable and pleasant atmosphere is additionally vital (Wall & Berry, 2007). Customers return to a place that appeals to them aesthetically, which includes a great ambience, creative, beautiful and spatial design and layout and thematically appropriate decorations and artefacts (Bitner, 1990). Re-visit intentions of the customers are positively influenced by the pleasant and welcoming environment of the restaurant. Thus, we propose:

Heritage and customer loyalty

The term "heritage" encompasses a broad range of items (food, handicrafts and artefacts), sites (theme restaurants, locations), and traditions (cooking styles, occasions), both physical and non-physical, that pass down the line from one generation group to the others. Historic structures, objects, cultural practices and landscapes have meaning and worth. They hold value and importance for a certain group of people. This fact defines these things as cultural heritage assets. Various areas and destinations are highlighting their heritage to attract more and more customers for tourism purposes so that the inflow of customers or guests increases and helps create loyal customers towards the destination (Mo et al., 2023). To create a loyal customer, the heritage should offer a rich mixture of flora and fauna, history and diverse culture (Dassanayake, 2022). Customer needs and desires can also lead to customer loyalty when the satisfaction level is achieved. It can be either through traditional values, authentic food items or culture. The customer, if they get disappointed once, then they may not return and a negative word of mouth will lead to other customer loss also. To create a brand value, one must adhere to traditional values, culture and authenticity. Places which are associated with heritage or provide insight into a cultural heritage attract more customers and thus help create loyal customers in the future. Heritage (traditional food, cooking styles, theme representations, occasions, etc.) offers the customers insight into cultural values so that they can understand and feel the actual atmosphere of the place (McIntosh, 1999). Heritage showcases a destination's historical culture and serves as a means to attract visitors to cities. To attract more and more customers or to create loyal customers, the manager of a particular place must promote the outlet or place as promotion helps in attracting customers. The steps taken by outlet managers help create loyal customers and also increase the competition on the market to promote destination and culture.

Research gap and relevance

Service quality has been a major identifying factor for customer loyalty as far as food outlet business is concerned (Zameer et al., 2019; Irianto & Kartikasari, 2020). It is Kivela & Crotts (2006) who mention that there is a requirement to explore the effects of ethnicity on the loyalty of customers as this is a novel and developing research horizon in this field. In addition to this, people belonging to a common ethnicity patronize a particular restaurant (Huang & Crotts, 2019).

The customer usually repeats their visit to the restaurants that offer comfortable environment to dine (Bitner, 1990; Shamah et al., 2018). Ryu et al. (2012) specify that the restaurant ambience positively and significantly affects the loyalty of the customer, which is supported by the fact that favourable physical environment attracts the customers (Amofah et al., 2016). Various studies direct the attention towards the comfortability, pleasantness, creativity and attire of the servers and the positive effects of the same on customer loyalty (Chen & Lee, 2018; Wall & Berry, 2007). The comfortability of the environment leaves the scope to research the effect of thematic representation of the food outlet on customer loyalty. Highlighting the destination, offering a mix of history and diverse culture attracts customers (Dassanayake, 2022; Mo et al., 2023). McIntosh (1999) also provides an insight into this topic as integrating heritage with food and atmosphere gives an authentic experience to the customer. The portrayal of heritage includes food cooking styles, artefacts, etc. Various components of heritage are included by food outlet owners to attract customers as described in studies, which paves the way for the research on the effects of heritage on customer loyalty.

Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Ethnicity significantly affects customer loyalty.

H2: Thematic representation significantly affects customer loyalty.

H3: Heritage significantly affects customer loyalty.

This study describes and investigates the effect of various aspects of culture on the customer loyalty. This paper explores the effects of ethnicity, thematic representation and heritage on the loyalty of the customers who are the patrons of particular food outlets. This study encompasses the physical attributes of the restaurant by means of thematic representation, and tradition by means of heritage, thus, adding value to the earlier literature by addressing the questions arising from the gaps mentioned by Shamah et al. (2018) and Kivela & Crotts (2006) who state that physical attributes, ethnicity and culture should be studied in order to understand customer loyalty for sustenance of restaurants in the business.

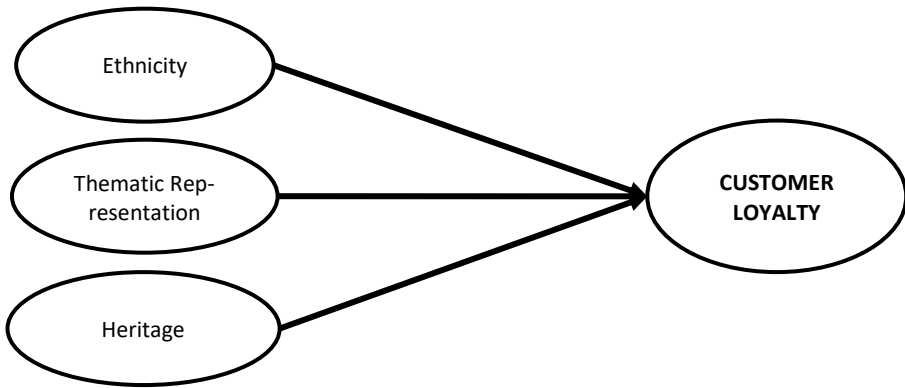


Figure 1

Conceptual model of study

Source: prepared by the authors

Research methodology

Sampling and data collection

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the influence of ethnicity, culture, customs and traditions, and heritage on customer loyalty in various food outlets in Jammu and Kashmir, India. A vast number of people prefer to dine out as a recent trend. It is practically better to identify a set of prospective respondents. Since the population of respondents is unidentified so non-probability sampling is used (Acharya et al., 2013). A combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling is utilized to capture responses from respondents of the study areas. A set of questionnaires was distributed to 362 respondents in various food outlets of the study area. Hence the response rate was 77.07%. A total of 279 data entries were collected, out of which 224 data entries were error-free. For the PLS-SEM analysis, sample sizes of 251, 155, and 113 are typically regarded as sufficient; precise appropriateness varies according to the model's complexity and the required degree of statistical power. The sample size should be at least ten times the number of outer model linkages pointing to any latent variable. According to a commonly accepted rule of thumb, the sample size of 224 is an acceptable range for the PLS-SEM (Putu Gede Subhaktiyasa, 2024; Fauzi, 2022). This method is chosen based on the logical choice made as the fact that the respondents were repeat customers of the eateries. The questionnaire was prepared from relevant literature and primary data was collected by a survey method that enables a researcher to collect relevant responses (Goundar, 2012).

Table 1

Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic variables		n = 224	Percent
Gender	Male	164	73.21
	Female	60	26.78
Age	18 - 24	79	35.26
	25 - 34	52	23.21
	35 - 44	35	15.26
	45 - 54	33	14.73
	55 & above	25	11.16
Material status	Single	155	69.19
	Married	69	30.80
Education	High School	68	30.35
	Bachelor's Degree	59	26.33
	Master's Degree	45	20.08
	Professional Degree	23	10.26
	Others	29	12.94
Annual income	up to 10 lakhs	82	36.60
	10 – 14 lakhs	67	29.91
	15 – 19 lakhs	45	20.08
	20 –24 lakhs	18	8.03
	25 lakhs or more	12	5.35

Source: prepared by the authors

Data analysis and results

Measurement model

Table 2 presents the measuring model's results based on the PLS method. Internal consistency and convergent validity are assessed in light of the investigation's findings. While average variance extracted (AVE) is used to compute convergent validity, composite reliability (CR) is used to measure internal consistency. Fornell & Larcker (1981) proposed that the value of CR should be at least 0.7 in order to establish internal consistency. An AVE value of less than 0.5 is undesirable since it cannot explain more than half of the variation by item or variable (Henseler et al., 2009). In order to get at an AVE value of 0.5, a number of variables are removed.

Table 2
Measurement model

Constructs	Indicator Items	Loading	AVE	CR
Customer Loyalty	C1	0.801	0.586	0.886
	C2	0.745		
	C3	0.803		
	C4	0.739		
	C5	0.787		
	C6	0.676		
	C7	0.796		
Ethnicity	E1	0.775	0.701	0.934
	E2	0.884		
	E3	0.867		
	E4	0.780		
	E5	0.879		
	E6	0.822		
	E7	0.848		
Heritage	H1	0.887	0.744	0.946
	H2	0.878		
	H3	0.887		
	H4	0.944		
	H5	0.940		
	H6	0.777		
	H7	0.697		
Thematic Representation	TR1	0.855	0.819	0.966
	TR2	0.909		
	TR3	0.907		
	TR4	0.945		
	TR5	0.930		
	TR6	0.905		
	TR7	0.883		

Note: AVE – average variance extracted, CR – composite reliability.

Source: the authors' own work

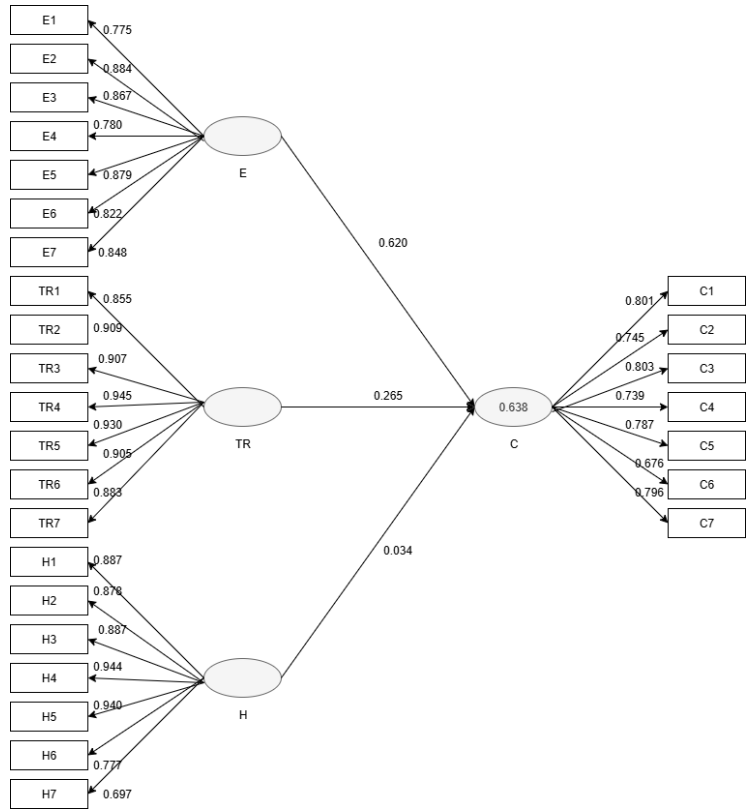
Composite Reliability (CR): Composite Reliability, also known as construct reliability, measures the consistency between related items within a scale, similar to Cronbach's alpha. The metric helps assess the reliability and coherence of the scale items (Netemeyer et al., 2003). The value of internal consistency among constructs should be greater than or equal to 0.7 ($CR \geq 0.7$) (Hair et al.,

2021). Table 2 depicts that the constructs are reliable as their value is greater than 0.7, as prescribed by Hair et al. (2021).

Table 3
Discriminant validity

Construct	Customer Loyalty	Ethnicity	Heritage	Thematic Representation
Customer Loyalty	0.765			
Ethnicity	0.764	0.837		
Heritage	0.587	0.778	0.863	
Thematic Representation	0.549	0.443	0.270	0.905

Source: the authors' own work



Note: E – Ethnicity, TR – Thematic Representation, H – Heritage, C – Customer Loyalty

Figure 2
Structural model result
Source: the author's own work

Discriminant Validity (DV): Discriminant validity is shown by proofs that measure ideas which are not supposed to be strongly linked, and have low connections. In real tests, discriminant validity numbers should be lower in worth compared to convergent validity numbers (Hubley, 2014). The value of a measure of distinction between constructs should be greater than 0.5. It is acceptable when: $AVE > 0.5$ $AVE > MSV$ (Chauhan, 2015). As per the table above, it is found that the value of all constructs in case of composite reliability (CR) is > 0.7 , which denotes it to be significantly reliable as it suffices the value which is ≥ 0.7 as given by Hair et al. (2021).

Table 4
Results of the hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	Standard deviation	t-statistics	p-value	Decision
E > C	0.632	0.102	6.107	0.000	Supported
H > C	0.026	0.099	0.342	0.732	Not supported
TR > C	0.265	0.083	3.202	0.001	Supported

Source: the authors' own work

In this study, three hypotheses were developed and tested. According to Pangarso et al. (2020) the p-value should be less than 0.05 and the t-statistics value should be higher than 1.96 (using a 5% confidence level). Two hypotheses were found to be supported with p-value less than 0.05. The impact of ethnicity (H1) on customer loyalty turned out to be significant. Similarly, thematic representation (H2) has a significant influence on customer loyalty. On the contrary, the study shows that heritage (H3) does not impact customer loyalty in a significant way.

Scope for future research

This study relies on self-reported metrics from a particular geographic area (such as a city or tourism sector), so its results may not be as generalizable as planned. The impact of thematic differences might be isolated in future studies using experimental (between-group) designs. Likewise, behavioural outcomes (real revisit or referral) could be validated through longitudinal tracking. Furthermore, comparing establishments that represent various ethnic groups and locations known as cross-cultural validation would help clarify how novelty-seeking or familiarity bias modulates outcomes.

Cross-Cultural Comparison: It is important to look at how customer loyalty differs between cultural groups in Jammu. We should explore the effects of fac-

tors like language, religion, and income levels. These intersect with cultural values to shape loyalty behaviour in unique ways.

Qualitative Exploration: Speak to customers from different backgrounds. Ask them questions about their experiences with hospitality services. Do they like the service? Do they trust the company? Find out! Learn about their culture. See how their culture impacts their views of satisfaction and loyalty.

Longitudinal Studies: Studies need to be done over time to see changes in customer loyalty. How do cultural shifts, politics, and the economy in Jammu affect loyalty? Tracking this gives key insights into how diverse cultures impact customer behaviour. Research can gain insight by studying how culture, ethnicity, and customer loyalty interact in Jammu's hospitality sector. This understanding can lead to better marketing tactics and services tailored for varied customer groups. The study covers significant areas that aid in this deeper understanding.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes how ethnicity, cultural heritage, and theme representation significantly impact patron loyalty in restaurants business that cater to tourists. The results show that patrons are captivated by culinary offerings but they are also greatly impacted by the authenticity and cultural stories they include. When carefully included into food service settings, ethnic identity and cultural components strengthen perceived authenticity, create emotional bonds, and make for a more engaging eating experience. Furthermore, thematic representation through staff presentation, menu design, and décor is an essential means of reaffirming cultural narrative and identity, which strengthens client interaction and encourages repeat business. The study examined ethnicity, themes, and tradition's effects on customer loyalty. We found that ethnicity and thematic representation significantly influence customer loyalty while heritage does not support customer loyalty to the same extent. This highlights cultural factors' importance when understanding and boosting loyalty on a market. Going ahead, businesses should adopt strategies respecting and reflecting their customers' cultural diversity to build stronger relationships and sustained loyalty with them. Although background, ethnicity, and theme representation can have a big impact on consumer loyalty, how honestly and respectfully organizations use these factors in their marketing and customer service determines how much of an impact they have. In an increasingly varied marketplace, brands may foster stronger emotional connections, improve consumer loyalty, and achieve sustainable success by comprehending and embracing cultural variety. Since this study reveals the significance of ethnicity and thematic representation on the customers' loyalty towards their preferred restaurant, these can be used as pro-

motional tools by various stakeholders. Marketers can focus on specific ethnic groups to develop promotional materials for the restaurant that can attract people's patronage (Osti & Goffi, 2021). By doing so, they can either explore an unexplored niche market with ethnic décor and cuisine as demanded or can attract clientele that have the same demands. Authorities that are responsible for making policies and tourist operators can play their role in encouraging customer engagement through promoting ethnically driven food fests and other events (Jang et al., 2012). This practice can attract different ethnic groups and hence boost the restaurant business by means of improving loyalty. Thematic representation which is mostly inclined towards the décor of the restaurant that makes the clientele comfortable can be an efficient tool for the restaurant managers. The managers can plan the layout and décor in a manner that depicts the dining ambience and culture of the ethnic group in focus. This practice can stimulate the nostalgia and infuse belongingness in the diners, significantly influencing their perception of comfort and loyalty (Kim & Jang, 2016). Thus, ethnicity and thematic representation can become important ingredients beginning with the policy making and finishing with the restaurant décor. This can enhance the restaurant businesses catering to ethnic clientele by attracting new diners and also strengthening the loyalty of existing ones. Thematic representation, such as interior design, music, staff outfits, and traditions, enhances the perceived authenticity of the food and the dining experience as a whole rather than serving as decoration. Through a favourable image, this synergy reinforces loyalty by increasing the experience of fulfilment beyond what either menu or ambient quality alone might offer. Structural equation modelling and reviews of related evidence offer the findings leading to major insights.

STATEMENT OF ETHICS

This study was conducted in accordance with the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the School of Hotel Management & Tourism, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *The Impact of Ethnicity, Thematic Representation and Heritage on Customer Loyalty: a Study on Tourism-Destined Food Outlets*.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *The Impact of Ethnicity, Thematic Representation and Heritage on Customer Loyalty: a Study on Tourism-Destined Food Outlets*.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Parambir Singh: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – Original draft, Writing – Review.

Amrik Singh: Visualization, Supervision, Project administration, Writing – Original draft, Conclusion.

Amjad Imam Ansari: Methodology, Software, Formal analysis, Data curation, Writing – Original draft.

Amanjeet Bhalla: Conceptualization, Investigation, Resources, Writing – Original draft

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