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The Axiological Potential of Sport as a Means of Rehabilitation and National Identity in Wartime: A Comprehensive Review

Olena Kuznietsova, ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0536-421X>

[E-mail kuz_lena@ukr.net](mailto:kuz_lena@ukr.net)

Educational and Scientific Institute of Health Care National University of Water and Environmental Engineering, Rivne, Ukraine

Abstract

Background. The main problems of axiology and communication in sports are focused on the transformation of moral values, adaptation to the challenges of martial law and the transition to transparent business communications and the club system. The problem of interaction between state executive bodies and public associations and the population of the region remains poorly studied in the scientific literature, in addition, a systematic review does not synthesize the results of all aspects of sport as an important platform for shaping the image of the state, international communication and a way to draw attention to global social problems, which is especially relevant in war conditions. The need for a comprehensive consideration and systematization of these acute issues confirms the relevance of the research topic.

Aim consists in the theoretical justification of the use of sport as a means of affirming Ukrainian identity, patriotic education and countering propaganda in wartime, as well as an effective tool for the physical and psychological recovery of veterans and civilians.

Material and methods. The study is based on a systematic approach to clarifying theoretical, methodological and practical aspects of the axiological potential of sport as a means of rehabilitation and national identity in wartime. The following research methods were used in the work: document analysis, information-analytical, theoretical generalization, abstraction method, case study elements.

Results. In the activities of organizations, the emphasis is shifting from purely sporting achievements to general health promotion, physical training and psychological resilience as vital skills (as opposed to purely sporting results). Physical culture is becoming a tool for social adaptation and recovery, rather than just leisure or sport.

Conclusions. It is shown that the axiology (theory of values) of veterans' sports faces problems of rethinking the purpose of physical activity, the conflict between rehabilitation and performance approaches, as well as the difficulties of translating new meanings into society. Among the key value and practical challenges, the deficit of motivation, accessibility barriers and lack of specialized personnel stand out. It is established that local government plays an important role in creating favorable conditions for the development of sports infrastructure at the local level, and communities are of key importance in supporting the initiatives of public organizations, contributing to the formation of a favorable socio-cultural environment for physical activity and sports events. The implementation of the university's tasks for the development of veteran sports demonstrates the constructive, purposeful path of the higher education institution towards the establishment of humanistic values, psychological recovery and full social integration of defenders through the disclosure of the life-affirming and rehabilitation potential of physical culture.

Key words: war veterans' sports, public organizations of the Rivne region, ethical foundations of physical culture and sports, moral principles, humanistic sports environment, international competitions, sports management.

1. Introduction. Sport during war ceases to be simply a sphere of competition and turns into a powerful tool of sports diplomacy, humanitarian communication and mobilization of international support, uniting the world community around the values of peace and solidarity. The sports arena becomes a platform where a state that has suffered aggression can broadcast

its values and attract resources. International competitions and sports initiatives draw attention to humanitarian crises, destroy borders in the information space, provide comprehensive support and contribute to the physical and psychological rehabilitation of veterans [12; 15].

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted as a basis a draft law on war veterans' sports [18], which officially establishes the development of veterans' sports as a direction of work of the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs. The law clarifies the term "war veterans' sports", defines the role of national sports federations and physical culture and sports societies in the development of veterans' sports on the basis of agreements with the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs, provides for their participation in competitions and events for veterans and their family members, and regulates the cooperation of the Ministry with local authorities and sports organizations [8]. This law is an important step towards creating an effective system of rehabilitation of defenders, where sport becomes a tool for returning to peaceful life, as stated on the website of the Ministry of Veterans' Affairs (<https://mva.gov.ua/>).

The management of physical education and sports under martial law focuses on psychological resilience, rehabilitation, supporting the health of the population through adapted programs, ensuring the safety of training, using innovations for distance learning and training future specialists who meet the challenges of modernity and adapting physical education programs [7; 27]. This requires reorientation of funding, programs and infrastructure (buildings become shelters, sports become a form of rehabilitation), adaptation of the regulatory framework and strengthening cooperation between the state and non-governmental organization (NGO) to support the military and youth [5; 14; 15].

Therefore, today the main problems of axiology and communication in sports are focused on the transformation of moral values, adaptation to the challenges of martial law and the transition to transparent business communications and the club system. The problem of interaction between state executive bodies and public associations and the population of the region remains poorly studied in the scientific literature, in addition, a systematic review does not synthesize the results of all aspects of sport as an important platform for shaping the image of the state, international communication and a way to draw attention to global social problems, which is especially relevant in war conditions. The need for a comprehensive consideration and systematization of these acute issues confirms the relevance of the research topic.

Research Objective consists in the theoretical justification of the use of sport as a means of affirming Ukrainian identity, patriotic education and countering propaganda in wartime, as well as an effective tool for the physical and psychological recovery of veterans and civilians.

Research Problems

1. To analyze information, analytical materials, strategic development programs, scientific developments on the study of the values (axiology) of sport as a symbol of the invincibility of the nation, the unity of society, the presentation of Ukraine in the international arena and the formation of a patriotic worldview.

2. To identify mechanisms through which sports communities create a barrier-free environment, establish communication and help veterans find new goals in civilian life (using the example of the practical implementation of regional and territorial approaches).

3. To identify successful practices of implementing the axiological potential of sport as a means of rehabilitation at the local level. An example of implementation at the National University of Water and Environmental Engineering (NUWEE), Rivne.

Research Hypotheses is based on the assumption that the systematic involvement of combatants in veteran sports provides effective biopsychosocial rehabilitation and strengthens national identity if:

- Sports activities are based on an axiological approach, where the main value is not only physical results, but the formation of internal stability, respect and brotherhood.

- Veterans' sports are integrated into state policy as an element of sports diplomacy and national-patriotic education, which demonstrates to society and the international community the indomitability of the Ukrainian spirit.

- The veteran's identity is transformed when combat experience and trauma are reinterpreted through sporting achievements, transforming the image of the "victim" into the image of the "winner".

- The principle of "equal-to-equal" is implemented, creating a safe socio-cultural environment for overcoming isolation and integrating the veteran into civilian society.

2. Research materials and methods

The research is based on a systematic approach to clarifying theoretical, methodological and practical aspects of the axiological potential of sport as a means of rehabilitation and national identity in war conditions. To achieve the outlined goal and solve the tasks set, the following research methods were used:

- document analysis method (study and analysis of regulatory legal acts, reports, programs of development strategies); information and analytical method (search, processing and synthesis of data from the global information network "Internet"; method of theoretical generalization (formation of general conclusions based on analysis);

- abstraction method (determination of the essence of the regional, territorial approach to the implementation of the axiological potential of sport as a means of rehabilitation and national identity in war conditions);
- case study elements (analysis of an example of the regional, local, local levels for the practical component of the implementation of the axiological potential of sport as a means of rehabilitation and national identity in war conditions).

2.1. Participants. Members of non-governmental organization in the Rivne region; war veterans; higher education students and university teachers.

2.2. Procedure / Test protocol / Skill test trial / Measure / Instruments

The literature search protocol for the article according to international standards, such as the PRISMA checklist, included queries in the Google Scholar profile search engine (with search settings in Ukrainian and Polish), on the website of the V. I. Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine (catalog "Scientific Periodicals of Ukraine") and the scientist's own search profile page on the NBUV portal <http://irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/ASUA/0079398>; BazHum (Polish database of humanities and social sciences) and the Scopus, Web of Science databases.

Inclusion criteria: research period: 2014–2026 (special focus on publications 2022–2026). One document published in 2010, by Zofia Żukowska, Ryszard Żukowski [30], was subject to analysis as the most significant in our study. By type of document study: scientific articles in professional publications of Ukraine, articles in scientific collections of Poland in English, regulatory acts and documents. Exclusion criteria were abstracts of conference reports (up to 2 pages), journalistic reports, articles on rehabilitation outside the context of war or sports. Due to the linguistic features of local databases, the search was carried out by separate thematic blocks and their combinations:

Block 1: Ukrainian professional publications and Google Scholar

- "axiological potential of sport" – "rehabilitation" – "war";
- "sport" – "national identity" – "veterans";
- "adaptive sport" – "values" – "rehabilitation of military personnel";
- "physical rehabilitation" – "patriotic education" – "war conditions"

Block 2: Polish scientific collections (BazHum, Google Scholar PL)

- "potencjał aksjologiczny sportu" – "rehabilitation" – "wojna";
- "sport" – "tożsamość narodowa" – "Ukraine";
- "sport adaptacyjny" – "wartości" – "rehabilitation weteranów";
- "dyplomacja sportowa" – "Fair Play" – "Sports Ethics".

Block 3. Web portal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and websites of Ministries.

The legislative framework of Ukraine was studied on the topic of the study: on the official web portal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine – <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua>; the regulatory and legal framework of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine – <https://mva.gov.ua/normativno-pravova-baza-1>, as well as on the official website of the Ministry “VETERAN PRO” <https://veteranpro.gov.ua/> – rehabilitation and resocialization of veterans (rehabilitation, psychological assistance, sports competitions and events, etc.); documents and information on adaptive sports and national-patriotic education on the official website of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine – <https://mms.gov.ua/>; documents of the Rivne City Council – <https://rivnerada.gov.ua/>. A separate analysis was conducted of news blocks about competitions and physical culture and health events of the all-Ukrainian and international levels on the official web portals of the Ministries, the website of the National University of Water and Environmental Engineering.

Due to the specifics of the ministries' internal search systems, the search was conducted using direct target terms: "physical rehabilitation of veterans", "adaptive sports", "national-patriotic education", "veteran sports", "sports development strategy", "state identity".

The selection process included four stages:

1. Found through database searches (N = 142) – Scientific Periodicals of Ukraine (Vernadsky); N = 54 – Google Scholar (UA/PL); N = 62 – Polish Bases (BazHum); N = 26 – website documents.
2. Duplicates and sources that did not pass the filter by years (2014–2026) were removed: N = 98 were saved (44 were removed).
3. Texts were evaluated by titles and annotations: N = 42 (56 were rejected due to inconsistency with the topic of axiology or war).
4. The final number of sources included in the scientific review: N = 30: 11 – articles in professional collections and scientific journals of Ukraine, 1 – qualifying scientific work, 7 – official documents from web. portals, information from official websites; 11 – Polish scientific collections and articles.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

Data were obtained from each included publication according to a standardized scheme of comprehensive analysis, covering value orientations, moral and ethical norms, humanistic dimension, social rehabilitation and identity markers, and are divided into the following categories:

1. Socio-axiological aspects: consideration of sport as a phenomenon that unites people, erases social boundaries and serves as a tool for cultural exchange [26 et al.]; value meanings of sport,

such as the formation of a sense of "brotherhood", mutual support; analysis of the principles of "fair play", justice, responsibility and respect for the opponent, social reintegration of veterans [23; 25; 30 et al.], studying how the desire to win, overcoming the limits of the human body and personal growth shape motivation [26 et al.].

2. Adaptive and rehabilitation indicators: data on the impact of physical activity on reducing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, restoring motor functions and the level of psychological resilience [7; 10; 13; 29, etc.].

3. Identification markers: the role of sports events and achievements as tools for strengthening national consciousness, patriotism and representing Ukraine in the international arena [15; 23, etc.].

4. Issues of modern sports: analysis of threats that call into question the values of sports (for example, commercialization, doping, inequality and excessive cruelty) [3; 11; 20, etc.].

2.3.2. Artificial intelligence

In this research, artificial intelligence (AI) was used for two specific purposes. AI was used to further linguistically improve the manuscript, ensuring proper English grammar, style, and clarity of presentation of the results. It is important to emphasize that all AI tools were used solely as aids under human supervision. The final interpretation of the results, classification of errors, and conclusions were determined by human experts in the fields of pedagogy and axiology. The AI tools served primarily to enhance the efficiency of data processing, pattern recognition, and linguistic improvement, and not to replace human judgment in the analytical process.

3. Research results

3.1. In times of war, sport acquires new value dimensions, becoming an instrument of national identity, psychological resilience and social rehabilitation [1; 10; 18; 19; 21; 22; 23; 26]. Although, the main axiological aspects are still the preservation of health and physical recovery of veterans [12; 13; 14; 15; 24; 27]. Let us reveal the axiological aspects of the role of sport in times of war:

1. Sports diplomacy and advocacy: performances in the international arena allow you to directly address millions of spectators, remind of the struggle for freedom and mobilize global humanitarian or military support [10; 15; 22].

2. Drawing attention to the truth: sports grounds become a platform for demonstrating indomitability, exposing aggression and lobbying for international sanctions against sports representatives of aggressor countries [13; 22].

3. Rehabilitation and integration of veterans: adaptive sports serve as the main tool for the physical recovery and return of wounded soldiers to a full-fledged civilian life [12; 13; 22] in Ukraine combine state support, adaptive technologies and international experience for the physical and mental recovery of veterans [8; 16; 17; 18; 24]. They help stabilize the emotional state, restore mobility after serious injuries and find themselves in society again [14; 19].

4. Formation of international partnerships: joint training camps, competitions and international sports missions (for example, the Ukrainian experience, adapted by the Council of Europe) build strong horizontal ties between peoples [15; 22]. Sport during wartime acts as a powerful tool of sports diplomacy, uniting the world community around the values of peace and solidarity [17; 27]. International competitions and sports initiatives draw attention to humanitarian crises, break down boundaries in the information space, provide comprehensive support, and contribute to the physical and psychological rehabilitation of veterans [15; 24].

Thus, within the framework of the meetings of the Council of Europe's Enhanced Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), the event "Youth Perspective for Safe and Healthy Sport" was held, organized in the context of the implementation of the Council of Europe's Framework Concept for a Youth Perspective. Young representatives of the member states discussed ways to strengthen the participation of young people in the formation of sports policy and decision-making in the field of sports [22].

5. Adaptive Sports Centers: Regional spaces implement comprehensive rehabilitation projects on a peer-to-peer basis [1; 11; 12; 13]. Here, veterans work according to personalized programs developed taking into account the specifics of injuries and amputations.

3.2. The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine unites NGO and sports federations for cooperation and dialogue and opens up new opportunities for the development of adaptive sports and barrier-free space in Ukraine [1; 12; 24]. All-Ukrainian sports federations of Ukraine and representatives of the NGO "M 13", including a resident of Ryazan, a veteran of the Russian-Ukrainian war Oleksandr "Teren" Budko, signed Memorandums of Cooperation. The purpose of cooperation: the development of adaptive sports, the involvement of veterans, military personnel and people with disabilities in sports events, as well as the formation of an inclusive and barrier-free environment.

The Rivne territorial community joined the Active Communities project to implement the European model of sport – a system in which sports clubs operate according to the principles of NGO: transparently, openly and with a focus on development, communication and new opportunities for everyone [1]. In Rivne, a NGO "Veteran Sports Club "The Impossible Does Not Happen" was created, which includes participants in hostilities and persons with disabilities as a result of war, as well as war veterans – volunteers and members of their families. Currently, it has almost 100 participants who participate in competitions or do sports for the sake of their

health. The priority areas of work are: ensuring physical activity of Rivne residents; holding sports events in Olympic, non-Olympic, adaptive sports, veteran sports, sports for persons with disabilities of various nosologies; strengthening the material and technical base, purchasing expensive equipment, etc. [12; 19, p. 31].

The NGO "Veteran Sports Club "The Impossible Does Not Happen" took part in the competition announced by the Department of Social Policy of the Rivne City Council and submitted a project focused on the development and popularization of veteran sports, physical rehabilitation, and the return of Defenders to civilian life. For the implementation of the events, the veteran sports club will receive financial support from the budget of the Rivne city territorial community, which is provided for by the City Social Program "Social Protection of Defenders of Ukraine and Their Family Members" for 2026 (<https://rivnerada.gov.ua/portal/view-content/22002>). The club members – Mykhailo Sikorsky, Pavlo Korytniuk and other veterans, at meetings with higher education students, the institute's teaching staff and peers, emphasize that they dream of involving even more former military personnel in an active lifestyle, inspire the wounded to adapt through sports, and prove that sports successes unite Ukrainian society within the country and show veterans as winners and leaders [12].

Special attention deserves Pavlo Korytniuk – a graduate of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Health Care of the NUWEE, a Master of Sports of Ukraine in para-powerlifting. On November 29, 2025, at the "Victory of the Invincible" tournament, Pavlo Korytniuk won three gold medals in endurance and functional strength disciplines. On December 1, 2025, at the All-Ukrainian competitions among veterans "Gart", Pavlo won another gold medal in the para-powerlifting section. In the weight category up to 82 kg, he showed the maximum result in the bench press – 155 kg, taking 1st place (ESIHC Profile <https://nuwm.edu.ua/nuwm/struktura/navchalno-naukovi-instytuty/nni-oz/novyny-ta-oholoshennia/>).

At the All-Ukrainian rating strongman competitions "Victory of the Invincible", which took place in Khmelnytsky region on July 18, 2026, Rivne veterans won 22 medals. Rivne was represented at the tournament by athletes from the veteran sports club of the NGO "The Impossible Does Not Happen": Volodymyr Klymov, Pavlo Korytniuk, Roman Fedorchuk, Oleksandr Shkinder, Ivan Androschuk, Anatoliy Bolotnyuk, Oksana Royko and Ilona Derelo. The club's athletes competed in traditional adaptive disciplines adapted to the nature of the injuries of servicemen: kettle bell snatch (weighing 16, 24 or 32 kg), rowing on the Concept2 simulator (at distances of 100 m, 500 m and a sprint for 100 seconds), as well as in the barbell bench press weighing 50, 70 or 100 kg. The joint strong result of the team allowed the Rivne

veterans to become one of the most successful participants of the entire tournament. Large-scale competitions united defenders from different parts of Ukraine, proving that sport is one of the most effective means of physical recovery, psychological rehabilitation and return to active life. The event was held with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine.

The main mass of international triumphs of Pavlo Korytnyuk (in particular, winning four gold medals at the Strong Spirit's Games in Madrid) fell at the end of 2025, for which in January 2026 he was officially awarded the Order "For Courage" of the III degree and awarded the title of Master of Sports of Ukraine. Pavlo Korytnyuk's participation as part of the National Team in the international competitions Strong Spirit's Games became a key platform for Ukrainian cultural diplomacy, which radically changes the perception of Ukraine in the world. Veterans shift the focus from the image of a "victim country" to the image of a "nation of winners". The performances of veteran athletes demonstrate to the world the resilience of Ukraine and form national pride, broadcast to the world the strength of the Ukrainian spirit, and integrate Ukrainian veteran sports into the global context.

The NGO Center for Initiatives "Return Alive" (<https://cbacenter.ngo>) became a co-organizer of adaptive sports festivals. The events are held for military personnel, veterans and their families. Public and state organizations, including the Department of Youth and Sports of the Rivne City Council, the NGO "Veteran Hundred", the Badminton Federation of Rivne Region and others, joined the festivals. The festivals are dedicated to the memory of fallen soldiers from the Rivne region. The team of the veterans' department of the Center for Initiatives "Return Alive" not only helps with the organization of the event, but also provides equipment for adaptive sports. The latest events of the Center for Initiatives "Return Alive" in 2026 are focused on the development of adaptive sports and the rehabilitation of veterans, in particular, an open wheelchair basketball match in Ivano-Frankovsk in July 2026. Mixed teams of veterans, coaches, and players of BC "Hoverla" met on the field. The special guest of the event was American expert in adaptive sports and participant of the Invictus Games sports festivals Anna Walker, who provided organizational and advisory assistance in holding the event.

Active public activities, assistance in finding and selecting specialists to restore psycho-emotional and physical health are carried out by the NGO "Rehabilitation Center "Lesot" in Rivne [19].

3.3. Today, the adaptation of veterans through the higher education system is one of the national priorities of Ukraine. A modern university should transform into a full-fledged "entry point" to a new professional trajectory of a veteran. Among the 10 interrelated priority areas

that will ensure the comprehensive development of the National University of Water and Environmental Engineering by 2030 [16], in accordance with the research topic, let me focus on area 2.9. "Social responsibility and veteran reintegration". Its goal: strengthening the role of the university in community life and supporting veterans.

Key areas of participation of the NUWEE in this process [13]:

Veteran Development Center: one of the first such centers in Ukraine has been opened at the university. It provides comprehensive support to former military personnel and their families, offering, in particular, physical adaptation services.

Training of professional coaches: The Educational and Scientific Institute of Health has implemented the educational and professional program "Coaching in Sports of War Veterans", and also teaches adaptive physical culture to graduate specialists who will work with defenders in a quality manner.

Practical rehabilitation at competitions: students and teachers of the university regularly act as co-organizers, assistants and create recovery zones (massage, taping) at regional and all-Ukrainian veteran events (for example, "League of the Invincible", "Victory of the Invincible").

Sports achievements of veteran students: veterans who are educated at the National University of Physical Education and Sports in the specialty "Physical Culture and Sports" are active participants and winners of competitions, popularizing veteran sports by their own example [13].

The university's teachers are actively studying and implementing international experience in the social and educational integration of military personnel and veterans, drawing on the best practices of NATO countries, in particular the USA and the EU [17]. The main focus is on transforming higher education institutions into powerful centers of reintegration. Thus, during the internship of the NUWEE teachers at Florida State University, a series of important meetings dedicated to the social and educational integration of military personnel took place. One of the key stages of the visit was the study of the best US experience in the field of supporting veterans and their families based on the FSU university space. During the visit, it was established that the American ecosystem offers ready-made, time-tested tools:

Adaptation and mentoring: development of special adaptation programs, step-by-step checklists and the institute of mentoring ("peer-to-peer") for an easier and barrier-free return of veterans to the educational process after a long break.

Simplification of procedures ("Single Window"): creation of clear, optimized algorithms for obtaining financial aid, benefits, individual study schedules and quick resolution of organizational issues without unnecessary bureaucracy.

Community and employment: formation of a strong internal community of veteran students, development of an alumni network and establishment of direct connections with employers for further successful careers [17].

During the meeting, future vectors of bilateral cooperation, opportunities for exchange of experience between specialists from both universities, as well as methodological support in the creation of modern veteran hubs were discussed [8]. Thus, the university plays a key role in the development of veteran sports, integrating veterans into public life through physical rehabilitation, professional training of coaches, and organization of competitions.

4. Discussion

Scientists note the growing interest in the problems of sports, but recommend further study, taking into account transformational processes in society, new technologies in sports training and changes in the status of sports as a social institution. In the scientific literature, the phenomenon of sports as a special form of human existence of a value nature is analyzed by specialists from various fields of knowledge, which has provided us with versatile material for philosophical understanding of this issue [4; 23, etc.]. Axiology of sports is a section of the philosophy of sports that studies the system of moral, spiritual, cultural and social values that are formed in the process of physical activity. It explores why sports are significant for a person, how they affect society and what ideals they promote [4; 9; 10; 21, etc.].

In modern conditions of social development, physical culture and sports are considered not only as a sphere of health promotion and skill formation, but also as important mechanisms of influence on the moral and ethical state of society. Ethics in the sphere of physical culture and sports: this is a norm of behavior, a set of moral principles, values and rules that regulate the activities of sports institutions, clubs, federations, as well as athletes, coaches, judges, fans and other participants in the sports process [26, p. 66]. In this regard, the task of integrating ethical norms into the activities of sports organizations is becoming more relevant. O. P. Zakorko et al. argue that one of the leading approaches is the development and implementation of ethical codes of sports organizations that regulate the standards of behavior of participants in the sports process – athletes, coaches, managers and fans. Such documents emphasize the principles of honesty, equality, respect for the opponent, rejection of any manifestations of discrimination and corruption [26, pp. 67–68]. The authors note that "the use of social marketing tools that promote the popularization of humanistic values through sports events, mass media and advertising campaigns is of particular importance. Participation in social initiatives, charitable projects and projects to support vulnerable groups of the population strengthens the reputation of a sports organization as a responsible entity" [26, p. 68].

In particular, scientists [2; 6] studied the phenomenon of leadership in sports teams. Leadership qualities as an axiological problem are a question of the values that underlie leadership, namely: responsibility, honesty and trust. They determine why people believe in a leader and why they follow him. The work of scientists notes that Leadership plays the role of the main tool for transplanting ethical, moral and physical values from the coach or captain to the entire team, ensuring the harmonious development of the personality [2; 6].

The study by E. Sivokhop, V. Bilogur, N. Semal [21] demonstrates the development of ethical and axiological standards that integrate the principles of fair play, inclusion and social responsibility in the digital and real sports environment. At the same time, new socio-cultural models are being formed that combine national traditions and global practices, creating a favorable environment for social integration and cultural exchange [21, p. 233]. Meanwhile, scientists argue that the axiological culture of youth is multidimensional, and its development requires a systemic integrative approach. In the studies, the authors emphasize the problem of the gap between value awareness and real behavior, which indicates the need to introduce a significant axiological component into youth professional training programs [20; 30, p. 153; 173].

Relevant information on how sports competitions are used for international dialogue can be found in the publication by V. Kozma [10]. The work analyzes sport as a tool of international communication, shaping the image of the state and a means of drawing the attention of the world community to the problems of war, violence and human rights violations. Special attention is paid to the moral and ethical aspects of the participation of athletes in international competitions in conditions of armed conflict [10]. The article proposes an approach to understanding sport not only as a sphere of competition, but also as an ethical and political space within which social values and international narratives are formed.

An analysis of the structure of external communications of the physical health centers of the population "Sport for All" of Ukraine was conducted [11]. Within the framework of our study, the work is also relevant because the centers actively work with war veterans. They organize physical culture and health activities, create special inclusive spaces and develop adaptive sports for physical and psychological rehabilitation. In the work, the author identified the main communicative barriers. The most common are technical (27.7%), associated with the unsatisfactory state of technical equipment, social (28.7%), caused by social inequality, and barriers associated with the lack of external communications specialists (28.7%) [11, p. 5]. In accordance with the specifics and conditions of the centers' activities, certain practical recommendations were provided to improve external communication. Such as creating your

own website (or page on a social network), which will contain all the information necessary for consumers and partners; introduce the position of a specialist who will be responsible for the formation of a rational system of external communications of centers; introduce into the strategic planning process mechanisms of SWOT analysis and stakeholder analysis of the state of the system of external communications of centers; introduce into the strategic planning process a model of the structure of external communications of centers [11, p. 6].

Polish researchers have traditionally considered sport as an important pedagogical and axiological tool. Their works focus on the inadmissibility of participation by representatives of aggressor countries, the militarization of sport, and the need to adhere to Olympic values. Studies of the moral aspects of sport in Poland and other countries of the world focus on the study of the values of Fair Play, ethical codes of athletes and coaches, and the development of moral competence of young people [4].

The concept of Fair Play is a fundamental principle of modern humanistic sports and Olympism, promoting respect for the opponent, compliance with the rules and refusal to win at all costs [30]. The works of Zofia Żukowska were fundamental for the Polish academic community. She devoted her works to the pedagogical functions of sports, arguing that Fair Play is the main moral guideline not only on the field, but also in everyday life [30, p. 153, 173, etc.]. Her colleague R. Żukowski developed this idea in the context of the philosophy of Olympism [30, p. 165, 182, etc.]. She created a number of works on the pedagogy of physical culture. Among her famous works is the monograph "Fair Play in sports and Olympics: a chance or utopia" [30]. She has proven that the principles of Fair Play should be an integral part of youth education. Her research emphasizes that fair play teaches moral choices, respect, and forms socially acceptable values that are applied in everyday life, not just sports, the principle of fair play as a support for preventive measures to strengthen youth facing a crisis of values [30].

Jolanta E. Kowalska emphasizes [9; pp. 39–50] that the humanistic values of sport in the spirit of fair play allow the development of socially acceptable attitudes. They can be the source of a hierarchy of values for a young person who will navigate in everyday life situations [9; pp. 39–50].

Scientists A. Ziółkowski and colleagues from the Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sports have developed a unique diagnostic tool for assessing moral behavior: the Questionnaire of Sports Ethics. This test contains 52 statements that classify the moral profile of athletes, coaches and sports activists according to 5 ethical codes. The work is

described in detail in the publications on Questionnaire of Sports Ethics – a Tool for Assessing Moral Behaviour in Sport [28].

A study of adolescent moral competence: In a large-scale study published on the medical portal PubMed (with the participation of 827 adolescents from the Greater Poland Voivodeship), Polish scientists studied how professional and amateur sports affect the level of moral development of young people using the Lind's Moral Competence Test [4].

Meanwhile, Y. Pelekh (2025) argues that the axiological culture of youth is multidimensional, and its development requires a systemic integrative approach. The study emphasizes the problem of the gap between value awareness and real behavior, which indicates the need to introduce a significant axiological component into the vocational training programs of youth [20].

Thus, in the context of the existing study, comparing the conclusions with literary sources and theories of other authors allowed us to highlight the axiological potential of sport in wartime conditions. Despite the results obtained, a number of issues remained outside the scope of this work that determine the vectors of future Polish-Ukrainian research: studying the role of joint sports projects in the preservation and mutual enrichment of the cultural code of Ukrainian and Polish youth, health protection, rehabilitation of athletes and the establishment of moral principles. It is also important to conduct longitudinal studies on the evolution of Fair Play values among student sports youth of both countries in the context of European integration.

5. Conclusions

1. Today, sport appears as a socio-political and value phenomenon, in which issues of ethics, international responsibility and humanitarian position intersect. The participation of athletes in international competitions in these conditions acquires not only sporting, but also moral and ethical significance, since their behavior, statements or silence can be perceived as a form of positioning regarding war and state actions. The axiology (theory of values) of veterans' sports faces problems of rethinking the purpose of physical activity, the conflict between rehabilitation and performance approaches, as well as the difficulties of translating new meanings into society. Among the key value and practical challenges, the deficit of motivation, barriers to accessibility and the lack of specialized personnel are highlighted.

In addition, the following axiological problems have been identified for the topic of the study, such as:

Changing value priorities and health: Due to the systemic public health crisis and the destruction of infrastructure, the focus has shifted from achieving higher sports results to the basic need for survival and preserving the psycho-emotional state of people.

Definition of justice and inclusion: The issue of ethical attitude towards veterans, protection of the rights of adaptive sports and inclusion of people who have survived traumatic events in social sports projects is acute.

Psychological barrier: Lack of previous sports experience in a significant part of veterans and lack of a general culture of physical recovery in society.

Identity problem: Difficulties with accepting a new physical condition and adapting sports skills after severe combat injuries or amputations.

2. Local governments play an important role in creating favorable conditions for the development of sports infrastructure at the local level, and communities are key in supporting NGO initiatives, contributing to the formation of a favorable socio-cultural environment for physical activity and sports events. In NGO activities, the emphasis is shifting from purely sports achievements to general health promotion, physical fitness and psychological resilience as vital skills (as opposed to purely sports results). Physical culture is emerging as a tool for social adaptation and recovery, and not just leisure or sports.

3. The implementation of the tasks of the National University of Veterans' Sports Development demonstrates the constructive, purposeful path of the higher education institution towards the establishment of humanistic values, psychological recovery and full social integration of defenders through the disclosure of the life-affirming and rehabilitation potential of physical culture. Throughout a number of events and programs, the university demonstrates that even in difficult conditions (wartime challenges and limited resources) it is possible to effectively work on achieving global goals through local actions.

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