



World student games as cultural resource and student community mobilizing factor

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Abstract

Objective of the study was to survey the students' motivations for the cultural resource mobilizing and contributions to the 2023 FISU World Student Games.

Methods and structure of the study. We run, for the purposes of the study, a digital questionnaire survey (on CAVI platform, with the survey data mathematically processed by D.V. Shkurin using Vortex software tools) of a representative student sample (n=333); and analyzed contents of the personal accounts in the VKontakte social network (n=368) of students from 18 universities in the Sverdlovsk Oblast in December 2020 through January 2021. The survey and content analysis were designed to profile the values and priorities, personal and social problems, physical education and sports commitments, and attitudes to the 2023 FISU World Student Games, potential contributions and perceived regional and federal benefits of the event.

Results and conclusion. One of the key conditions and factors for success of the upcoming major event is the commitment of the student community for preparations and hosting services, its interest and activity. The gender-specific survey data showed that women are apparently more interested in the international cooperation sensitive projects; men in the physical education and sports service infrastructure progress; with both of the gender groups equally interested in the youth physical education and sports encouragement initiatives. As for the negative and pessimistic opinions on physical education and sports on the whole and the 2023 World Student Games in particular, their origins need to be explored by special qualitative surveys. The 2023 World Student Games are expected to provide a great impetus for the sporting community and the national Sporting Life Norm project, and in general for the student cultural resource mobilizing initiatives in the homeland.

Keywords: *World Student Games, student community, cultural potential, self-actualization, resource, physical education, sports, gender.*

Background. The 2023 FISU World Student Games offer an immense multidimensional resource and solutions for multiple physical education and sports projects and missions since their core objective is national health as a fundamental social value. The traditional university projects including the professional education, research, social and managerial ones, are geared to shape up the students' world overviews and healthy lifestyle with the relevant healthy values and priorities. Social benefits of major sports events generally depend on how well the student communities are prepared for active contributions to the events.

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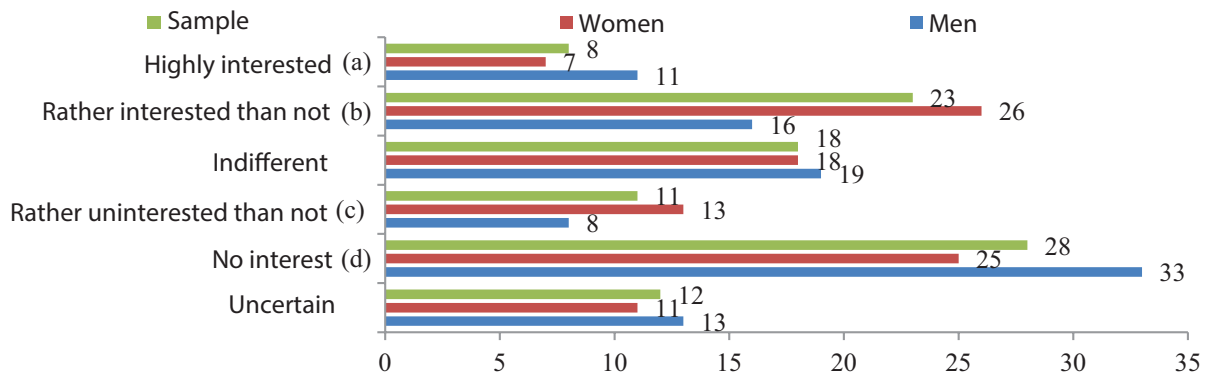


Figure 1. Gender groups' attitudes to the upcoming 2023 FISU World Student Games: 2020 survey

Note: Interest ratio (K): men: -0,366; women -0,231; total sample: -0,277. $K = (2a+b-c-2d)/100$

Results and discussion. The social survey of the mid-Urals student communities made it possible to portray their socio-cultural resource. The survey generally found the students' agendas being dominated by the happiness-related factors critical for the lifestyles, priorities, values and life strategies on the whole. Health and physical fitness needs were unsurprisingly ranked among the top-five key values (by 63% of the sample) with self-reliance, independence and freedom (66%); and loyal friends; love and family (64% each).

As far as the personal problems are concerned, most of the sample was found to rely on themselves (90% of responses), families (60%) and friends (43%). The sample estimated the problem-solving role of the relevant educational and government institutions and industries (including instructors, teachers, university managers, business leaders, youth organizations, etc.) as negligible – it accounted for 10% of responses in total, including 2.1% contribution of the federal and regional governments and 1.8% of trade unions.

The social portrait generated by the survey and content analysis gives an insight to the potential motivations and cultural resource mobilizing options of the student community. Thus the test of leisure-time activity found that the healthy lifestyle related values

are associated with the physical education and sports practices and contributions to the sports events mostly by supporting activity (mentioned by 10% in the 2020 survey).

It should be emphasized that the pandemic-related self-isolation period has radically changed the leisure-time activity, with the active physical education and sports practices ranked number 9 in the class activity list (versus 37% and 39% in 2020 and 2016, respectively) – down from the multiannual rank 4 - after music, trekking tours and hobbies. In 2020, the students reported a higher engagement in the Internet surfing, social media news, reading fiction, and online friendly communication.

Nevertheless, 34% of the sample reported giving now more time to the indoor/ outdoor physical education and sports practices than before the pandemic; whilst 39% reported no changes in this domain; with the finding indicative of the physical education and sports being ranked mostly among the instrumental values. The terminal component, however, was rated at 17% of the sample prepared for active contributions to the physical education and sports / healthy lifestyle advocacy (versus the social account content statistics that showed this share even higher at 20%; compared to only 12% in 2016). Note that the account content

Table 1. Attitudes to the physical education and sports and major events including University Games: social account content statistics, group %

Response options	Men	Women	Sample
Interested in the major international and Russian sports events	33	34	33
Physical education and sports devotee	32	19	27
Physical education and sports interest limited by only supporter activity	26	24	25
Interest in student sports	17	24	20
Professional athlete	14	21	17
Interested in the top-ranking events like University Games	8	18	12
Average	1,30	1,42	1,35



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Response options	Men	Women	Sample
Great impetus for the federal and regional sports and physical education and sports infrastructure development projects	35	26	29
Great boost for the image of Russia and its role in the global sports movement	21	30	27
Good impetus for the national professional and amateur/ health sports	27	24	25
Facilitates the international cooperation	8	19	16
Provides special physical education and sports motivations for many people	14	14	14
Heavily promotes sports and athletic successes	6	10	8
Russian team success will add to the people's patriotism	4	8	7
No interest in the event and physical education and sports on the whole	34	30	31
Physical education and sports sector needs everyday growing support rather than haste prior to major international sports events	18	21	20
Doubt that the event hosting costs will be paid back	14	14	14
Average	1,83	1,98	1,93

statistics also found a gender gap in attitudes to the physical education and sports and University Games, as verified by analysis of the texts and audio/ video uploads in the feed: see Table 1.

The gender groups were found equally interested in sports competitions, although the men more often posted updates on the healthy lifestyle and popular sports, whilst the women showed more interest in the student sports and personal sports accomplishments plus Russian University Games. Of special interest for the study were the students' attitudes to the upcoming 2023 FISU World Student Games: see Figure 1.

Dominance of the negative interest values are indicative of the mostly indifferent attitudes to this mega-event, with the men's group more polarized i.e. showing the higher shares of the highly interested and uninterested than the women. The passively supporting plus uncertain shares were found virtually gender-equal at around 33% of the groups. They may be still expected to join the active supporter community at the 2023 World Student Games provided their cultural resource is duly mobilized for the relevant missions. This mobilization may be facilitated by special student engagement programs, PR/ promotion campaigns with special contributions scoring systems: see Table 2.

Conclusion. One of the key conditions and factors for success of the upcoming major event is the commitment of the student community for preparations and hosting services, its interest and activity. The gender-specific survey data showed that women are apparently more interested in the international cooperation sensitive projects; men in the physical education

and sports service infrastructure progress; with both of the gender groups equally interested in the youth physical education and sports encouragement initiatives. As for the negative and pessimistic opinions on physical education and sports on the whole and the 2023 World Student Games in particular, their origins need to be explored by special qualitative surveys. The 2023 World Student Games are expected to provide a great impetus for the sporting community and the national Sporting Life Norm project, and in general for the student cultural resource mobilizing initiatives in the homeland.

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