

The social impact and factors influencing the «Phygital football – everyone plays» festival

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Abstract

Objective of the study was to scientific and empirical validation of the social impact of phygital football festivals at the local level.

Methods and structure of the study. The Kursk region was selected as the pilot location for the implementation of the project «Social and Sports Festival «Phygital Football — Everyone Plays!» (Festival) in 2024. The project was supported by experts from the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, who provided scientific, methodological, informational, research, and analytical assistance.

Results and conclusions. During the execution of the project, the following social impacts were observed: a surge in interest in phygital football among young people, with students continuing to play friendly matches between their departments after the official competitions, thanks to the dissemination of information about the new sport through meetings with university leaders, the involvement of renowned athletes as promoters, and the participation of girls, including international students. The emotional aspect of digital football, the chance to engage in digital sports regardless of geographical location, and the potential for students to participate in regular physical activity and mass sporting events in the face of contemporary social challenges.

Keywords: *phygital football, schoolchildren and students, social and sports festival, social effects, development determinants.*

Introduction. The modern younger generation (phygital generation Z) is characterized by psychological and physiological characteristics (virtual life, digitalization of education and communications, passive recreation with gadgets, low physical activity, decreased physical development and fitness), which lead to deterioration of their health [4].

The modern younger generation (phygital generation Z) is characterized by psychological and physiological characteristics (virtual life, digitalization of education and communications, passive recreation with gadgets, low physical activity, decreased physical development and fitness), which lead to deterioration of their health [4].

The current situation determines the need to develop phygital sports in educational organizations (EO),

combining classical and computer sports. Such integration will resolve pedagogical and social problems of involving students in regular physical activity, balance the ratio between digital and traditional types of their leisure and sports activities [1, 2]. Phygital football is currently gaining popularity among school and university students. It combines playing with a ball in a virtual environment and on a sports field, and opens up opportunities for the implementation of communication and cooperation skills of those involved, as well as the demonstration of their physical abilities.

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Methods and structure of the study. The Kursk region was chosen as the experimental site, where



the project «Socio-sports festival «Phygital football - everyone plays!»» (Festival) was implemented in 2024 in order to attract students to participate in phygital football competitions to improve their psychophysical health, successful socialization and self-realization in the context of modern challenges. Scientific, methodological, informational, research and analytical support for the project was provided by representatives of the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics. The project was implemented in educational organizations (schools, secondary vocational schools, universities) of urban and rural settlements of the Kursk region (more than 10000 participants) the final matches were held at the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics. The project «Socio-sports festival «Phygital football - everyone plays!»» included the following stages of implementation: informational and research, operational and practical, scientific and methodological and analytical.

During the information and research stage the following were defined:

- target groups of participants: schoolchildren, students, families of refugees, internally displaced persons (DPR, LPR, Zaporizhia and Kherson regions);
- project geography (educational and physical education and sports organizations of urban and rural settlements of the Kursk region);
- development prospects (football is the most popular sport in the Kursk region, which determines the successful development of phygital football in urban and rural settlements, however, the expected increase in the number of people involved in phygital football determines the training of specialists in this sport);

- sociological research: questionnaire No. 1 of project participants to identify interest in phygital football competitions, both in physical and digital formats; questionnaire No. 2 of Festival participants on satisfaction with the phygital football competitions held and improving the quality of the Festival, allowing for an analysis of the project promotion in the Kursk region;

- the optimal direction for the development of phygital football in the region, taking into account the SWOT analysis of the organization and promotion of the project, which allowed identifying the weaknesses and risks of the project, developing solutions that contribute to the successful promotion of the project. More than 10,000 respondents took part in the sociological study within the framework of the project: 45% of males (teenagers, young men and men) and 41% of females (teenagers, girls and women) took part in the 1st survey, 57% and 43%, respectively, in the 2nd survey.

Results of the study and discussion. The study presents the results of the analytical stage of the project «Socio-sports festival of the Kursk region «Phygital football - everyone plays!»», namely, a comparative analysis of sociological surveys, a summary of the results of the project promotion, identification of qualitative and quantitative indicators and social effects of the Festival for the development of phygital football in other subjects of the Russian Federation.

In survey № 1, low recognition of phygital football as a sport was revealed: only 9% of students answered the question «What is phygital football?». After the Festival, an increase in the level of knowledge was re-

Table 1. Analysis of the sociological study of project participants

Nº	Questions	Nº questionnaires	gender	No	Play	Look	Play and Look
1	Do you like football?	1	male	23%	16%	8%	10%
			female	30%	4%	4%	5%
		2	male	5%	30%	10%	12%
			female	12%	8%	9%	14%
2	Do you like virtual FIFA football matches?	1	male	8%	27%	3%	12%
			female	28%	14%	2%	6%
		2	male	3%	29%	5%	15%
			female	12%	20%	4%	12%
				Viewer	Athlete	Judge	Volunteer
3	In what capacity would you like to participate in the competition?	1	male	29%	17%	3%	0%
			female	39%	10%	2%	0%
	In what capacity did you take part in the Festival competitions?	2	male	12%	36%	1%	2%
			female	17%	28%	1%	3%



vealed - 62% of respondents answered correctly (Table 1).

As the results showed, male respondents initially spend more time playing computer games (the figures at the initial stage were quite high and the increase was small). After the Festival, female respondents showed a great interest in cyber football, which shows the exciting format of phygital football.

The survey revealed that before the Festival, respondents did not want to take part in competitions, possibly due to their limited knowledge of this sport. The final survey revealed a large increase (especially among female respondents) in those who took part in phygital football competitions and want to compete in this exciting and fascinating functional-digital format. A comparative analysis of the responses to the question of the 1st survey, «In what capacity do you want to participate in the phygital football competitions?» and the 2nd survey, «In what capacity did you participate in the Festival competitions?» showed the following results:

- 68% of respondents wanted to be spectators (29% male and 39% female), 27% of respondents took part as spectators (12% and 17%, respectively), which indicates that respondents switched to other groups;

- 27% wanted to be athletes (17% male and 10% female), 64% took part in the competitions (36% and 28%, respectively). It should be noted that in survey #2, the answers to this question showed that phygital football, which includes a digital part (cyber game), captivates girls and young women so much that they happily move to the sports ground to play mini-football (the physical part of phygital football) to finish the match. In confirmation of the survey results, the formation of female phygital football student teams, including foreign students, was recorded.

Analysis of respondents' answers to this block of questions showed a large increase in athletes, which was facilitated by the following factors:

- meetings of the project organizers with the heads of educational organizations with a presentation of «Phygital Football» to promote information within organizations;

- viral dissemination of information about the Festival among students of the Kursk region (exciting format of the games, positive emotions from victories were passed on to friends in other educational organizations);

- media publications «Phygital Football Festival in the Kursk Region».

To confirm this, let us consider the answers of the Festival participants to the question «From what sources did you learn about the phygital football tournament in the Kursk region?». The largest increase in the transfer of information about the Festival occurred between the participants themselves: 19% of male and 15% of female respondents learned about the competitions from friends.

In second place in terms of information transfer were social networks, which was facilitated by the work of the project team promoters in the VK group «Phygital football - everyone plays» (15% and 16%, respectively), and female respondents communicated more, learning information on social networks. It is also worth noting the dissemination of information about the competitions from coaches, since football is the leading sport in the Kursk region, coaches distributed information between coaches and students.

The involvement of parents in recommendations to children about phygital football competitions indicates, on the one hand, a desire to involve children in a new sport, and on the other, trust in the project team, promoting functional-digital activity in the context of modern challenges. The prolonged effect of the project «Phygital Football - Everyone Plays!» was already revealed at the first stage of the Festival:

- after the official competitions in secondary vocational and higher education institutions, friendly matches between students in phygital football continued;

- the heads of the educational institutions, seeing the interest of students in the competitions, began to plan the introduction of phygital football into the curricula and sections.

To the next question «Did you like the events organized within the framework of the Festival?» the respondents divided their opinions between the answers: I liked it very much and it was exciting (27% and 26%; 9% and 12%, respectively). Noting the large increase in this festival of participants, it is worth emphasizing that for them this format was exciting. At the same time, boys, young men and men showed a greater desire to increase the number of competitions in the Festival formats.

The analysis of the second questionnaire showed how the attitude of the Festival participants to the phygital football competitions changed (Table 2).

Males are seriously interested in this sport (34%); 47% of participants are ready to recommend phygital



Table 2. Attitude of Festival participants to competitions

Nº	Questions	gender	Yes, I want to get serious about it	The spectators liked to support the team	No, it hasn't changed
1	Has your attitude towards phygital football changed after participating in the festival?	male	34%	16%	5%
		female	18%	17%	10%
			Yes	I want to create my own team	Involve your relatives
2	Would you recommend your friends to participate in this event in the future?	male	47%	11%	2%
		female	32%	6%	2%

football to their friends; 11% want to create their own phygital team. 18% of females are seriously interested in phygital football; 32% are ready to recommend it to their friends and 6% of participants are ready to create their own phygital team.

The results obtained indicate the positive impact of the Festival events, which contributed to the development of students' interest in functional-digital sports (phygital football), increased physical activity, improved health, and the development of team spirit, determination and the will to win.

Conclusions. The social effects of the project «Socio-sports festival of the Kursk region «Phygital football - everyone plays!»» include the following:

- rapid development of interest in phygital football among young people, when after the official competitions students continued to play friendly matches between faculties, which is due to the dissemination of information about the new sport through meetings of the project team with university leaders, the involvement of famous athletes-promoters;

- involvement of girls, including foreign students, which is explained by the exciting format of phygital football, where the digital part (cyber game) aroused sports excitement in girls and the desire to continue sports competition on the sports field (mini-football); as well as the rules of the unrated phygital football tournament, taking into account the psychophysical fitness of athletes;

- the emotional background of phygital football, which contributed to the development of international communication between students from different countries;

- the opportunity to engage in phygital sports regardless of geographic affiliation. In particular, at the Festival competitions, teams from rural schools beat teams from city schools that were professionally involved in classic football.

Thus, the introduction of a social and sports model for involving schoolchildren and students of the Kursk region in mass sports through phygital football contributed to the greater involvement of students in regular physical activity, participation in mass sports events in the context of modern social challenges.

The socially oriented sports festival of the Kursk region «Phygital Football - Everyone Plays!» is a clear positive demonstration of innovative mechanisms for successful socialization, adaptation and integration of participants into modern society, which are the basis for the idea of holding phygital competitions.

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