

Master's program "sport anthropology" as a new approach for teaching and research in sport sciences

Abstract

The article discusses the content and the structure of a new teaching program at Russian State University of Physical Education, Sport, Youth and Tourism (RSUPE) and the main directions of its development in the system of sport education in Russia. Sport anthropology, or Anthropology of Sport, is a fast developing interdisciplinary branch of scientific knowledge, which embraces many different approaches and methods: anthropological, genetically, psychological, physiological, sociological, etc. It builds a bridge between biological and cultural anthropology, and includes a lot of topics interesting not only for specialists in sport science and training but also for the general public. Among the most important issues are the following: influence of physical activity and different kinds of sports on growth and development of children (gender, age, ethnic aspects); obesity epidemics in the framework of changes in modern lifestyle; morphological and functional adaptations in sports of high qualification; genetic polymorphic systems associated with morph functional characteristics of athletes in different sport specializations; secular trends in sports – directions and differences from the general pattern, etc.

Keywords: master's program, sport anthropology, biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, genetics, interdisciplinary approach

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Introduction

The course "Sport Morphology" has always been an important part in teaching of sport science in Russia. Among the founding fathers of sport morphology such academics as Mikhail Ivanitsky, Anna Gladysheva, Boris Nikityuk and some others can be named.

However a necessity in new, interdisciplinary approach and methodology appeared in recent years. This approach could be realized in the framework of anthropology, an integrative science, which combines knowledge about different varieties of human physical and cultural experiences. One of the first book of this kind appeared in 1995.¹ Since 2010's Anthropology of Sports became quite a popular subject. Several books were published on this subject.^{2,3} At the latest inter-Congress of the international Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES), held in Dubrovnik in 2016, a special panel on Anthropology of Sports (Panel 542) was organized by Elena Godina & Robert Malina.⁴ And finally, in 2017 a new IUAES commission was established with the approval of the Executive Committee and the General Assembly of IUAES.⁵

Description of the program

Sport is an activity that brings together physical, emotional and psychological features of humans along with their cultural traditions, social background, moral values etc. In 2013 a new Master's Program "Sport Anthropology" was introduced at the Department of Anatomy and Biological Anthropology of Russian State University of Physical Education, Sport, Youth and Tourism. This is a unique innovative program, which only exists in RSUPE [<http://www.sportedu.ru/>] among all other Russian Universities. Students who choose this program may have resident or correspondent courses. The studies last for two years require 120 credits and end with the defense of Master's thesis (MA).

The context of this program is an integration of knowledge from humanities and natural sciences. Core courses read in this program include basics in human evolution, ethnic studies, human anatomy and morphology, growth and development, genetics, biogeography and aging, visual and gender anthropology, etc. An important part of the studies consists of learning and mastering of methods used in anthropological investigations, including anthropometry, somatotyping, bioimpedance and many others. Students also acquire basic knowledge of statistical analysis with such packages as "Statistica" and SPSS, which will help them in data analysis for their dissertations. The subjects of their dissertations also requires the knowledge in some specific kinds of sport.

The main goal of the Master's program is to prepare highly qualified specialists for their further activities in the field of scientific research or in sport training and teaching. For their career as sport scientists or physical educators, students need to master the skills of conducting interdisciplinary research and projects, to be able to use the innovative technologies and methods, to learn how to process and present their results.

Target audience

Graduates of the Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education and Physical Culture and other neighboring fields of knowledge. Objects of the professional activity of graduates from the Master's program are the following ones: humans and society in cultural diversity; sport as a mean of intercultural communication in the global world; state politics and sport; role of physical activity in human evolution; ethnic diversity and sport; sport practices in different cultures; gender differences and sport; genetics and sport selection; biological characteristics of highly qualified athletes in different kinds of sport; modeling of "ideal" athletes; the impact of physical activity on growth and maturation; ethical and bioethical principals in sport, etc. Graduates from the

Master's program are prepared to two kinds of professional activity: conducting of scientific research and pedagogical career.

They should be able to solve the following tasks

In the field of scientific research: professional activity in accordance with fundamental and special knowledge in academic institutions and universities, in municipal and state administration where higher education in anthropology is required; development of research projects with data collection (including field studies), further analysis and summarizing of the obtained results based on modern technologies and interdisciplinary approach; creating of databases for different purposes; conducting of applied research; practical application of the results in fundamental studies; writing up the results, publication and editing of research papers in peer-reviewed editions; preparation and conducting of scientific meetings and conferences; preparation of analytical reviews and reports, etc.

Pedagogical activity

Teaching in professional educational institutions of secondary and higher education; development of educational programs for different levels of teaching, tutorials and textbooks in the framework of their specific knowledge and education.

Competencies

The study of the program contributes to the formation of the following competencies

Competences of general cultural level: Ability to abstract thinking, analysis and synthesis; Readiness to act in non-standard situations, to be socially and ethically responsible for the decision-making; Motivation to self-development and self-realization of one's creative abilities; Ability to use professionally modern technological appliances, computers, software etc.; Readiness to organizing of a research projects and to leading it; Ability to logical speech and discussion based on clear arguments, both in oral and written form, in Russian and some foreign language/s; Ability to formulate research goals and tasks, as well as means of their achievement; Ability to acquire new knowledge and skills via IT and to use this knowledge for practical purposes.

Competences of general professional level: Ability to formulate and discuss in oral and written forms in Russian and foreign languages the problems of professional activity for their solving; Readiness to lead the group of project workers in a specific professional field, being tolerant to social, ethnic, confessional and cultural differences; Ability to understand the importance of humanistic values for the preservation and development of modern civilization; Readiness to accept and fulfill moral obligations towards the environment, other people and the own self; To possess a vast knowledge in the field of human sciences, and be able to understand the processes developing in modern social, humanitarian and biological disciplines; To possess the adequate skills for creative work, to be able of critical thinking and evaluation of the results of one's own work.

Competences of specific professional level: In scientific research: To possess a vast knowledge in the field of history, theory and methodology of sociocultural and biological anthropology; To be able to apply the results of anthropological research for practical needs of the society; To possess practical professional skills in collecting anthropological data, including field and archive studies, museum and library work; To be able to introduce programs of anthropological studies, to collect,

understand and analyze anthropological; and ethnological information; To possess skills for creating anthropological data bases, working with modern IT packages for better understanding of obtained results; In pedagogical activity: To be ready to use anthropological knowledge for teaching; To have skills for development of educational programs in the field of sport anthropology; To be able to teach methodology of anthropological studies to a new generation.

Practical significance: The competences of the Master's program are aimed at the ability of graduates to introduce innovative methods to meet the society needs in the field of sport, physical culture and education: to promote new approach in the development of sport science; to introduce innovative technologies in the field of sport selection and training.

To show the scope of subjects covered by the Program, the titles of several dissertations are given in the list:

- a. Morph functional characteristics of highly qualified female basketball players;
- b. Anthropological criteria of successful rehabilitation in patients with vertebral injures;
- c. Association of some polymorphic genetically systems with morphological and functional characteristics of combat athletes;
- d. Tourism as a sport: comparison of somatotypes and body structure in sportsmen specializing in different kinds of tourism;
- e. Anthropological criteria of successful rehabilitation in patients with shoulder joint injures;
- f. Growth and development of young riders;
- g. Sambo wrestlers living in Altai Mountains: ethnic and professional differences.

Conclusion

The importance of the new program consists in giving new interdisciplinary approaches for problem-solving in the field of physical culture, education and sport training. It brings together methodology from different scientific disciplines: anthropology, genetics, psychology, physiology, sociology, etc. It builds a bridge between biological and cultural anthropology, and includes a lot of topics interesting not only for specialists in sport science and training but also for the general public.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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