

**WORLD AND NATIONAL FITNESS TRENDS 2019***Vorobiova Anastasiia*^{1ABCD}*¹National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sport,
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Abstract

The sphere of fitness develops dynamically and is one of the most profitable in the world and, as a result, investment attractive. Nevertheless, the competitive ability of a fitness club depends on the speed with which the new directions are introduced in it and what range of services they provide to clients. That is why it is important to be able to foresee the most popular trends and the ways of their adaptation to a concept of a particular fitness club.

The objective - comparison of world and national trends and an attempt to evaluate tendencies of fitness industry development in Ukraine.

Methods. The research is based on the analysis of sources of literature as well as thoughts of experts concerning perspectives of fitness development in Ukraine.

Results. The comparison of the world and national (the USA, China, Spain) trends of 2018 has allowed to discover that world trends reflect the USA trends by 95% and only by a half – trends of the other represented countries. It is connected with the fact that in the research for revealing of the world trends out of representatives of 41 countries – 91,3 % respondents are from the USA. The author does not highlight this in the original article. The present fact proves the necessity of research of national trends specifically and not to focus on the «world» tendencies, as they reflect development prospects mostly in one country (USA). This statement is true and for the trends of 2019, because the study of this issue in Spain coincides with the results of the world rating only by 60 %.

Conclusions. Such researches have not been conducted in Ukraine, but specialists stress the growth in the popularity of such directions in the future: child fitness, fitness for older adults, experienced and educated fitness professionals, exercise and weight loss, securing safety and quality of fitness services, nutrition guidance (trends are presented in no particular order). In general, fitness professionals consider the necessity of forming fitness culture among the population of various cities and villages of all the regions in Ukraine to be an overriding necessity for the development of the fitness sphere.

Key words: fitness, trend, development, perspective, world trends, national trends.

Introduction

The sphere of fitness develops dynamically [13], that is why the cycle of existence (from the origin to expansion to the peak of popularity and to decline) of one direction of fitness may take less than 10 years. This is connected, in the first place, with the development of additional fitness equipment, on the basis of the use of which the new directions of fitness appear. Thus, in Ukraine relatively recently they have started to use platform Proceados, SUP-platform, ViPR, TRX Rip, suits for EMS fitness, which leads to the appearance and development of new fitness directions, though some of them have been actively developing abroad for a long time. Instead some fitness directions lose their actuality

(for example, shaping), but continue to exist in small towns of Ukraine.

Tendencies change quickly that is conditioned upon a commercial orientation of the fitness industry [4]. In order to be competitive fitness clubs and fitness trainers have to permanently follow novelties and to implement them. In the sphere of fitness, it is simply impossible to once study one fitness direction and to use it in trainings throughout the life, because clients also become more educated and demanding and show a strong dislike for monotony and easily change a trainer, a club or a direction of trainings.

Every year, starting from 2006, specialists of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)



conduct an electronic poll of lead specialists in the sphere of fitness from around the world in order to find out which types of fitness would be popular next year.

The first such research has been published by Walter Thompson in November 2006 [6], in which he described the trends of the following year 2007. That year Top-10 reached such directions: exercise programs for child and teen obesity, special training program for older adults, educated and experienced fitness professionals, functional fitness, core trainings, strength trainings, personal trainings, mental fitness, exercise and weight loss, outcome measurements.

Similar researches have also been conducted in certain countries: Spain (2017–2019), China (2018), Hungary (2013) [3-5, 9-11. Nowadays there is a question of a geographic growth of specifically national studies of fitness trends as every country has its own specificity, historical and cultural particularities and preferences [2].

World tendencies in the fitness sphere we cannot apply to Ukraine by 100 %. If in the 90s of XX century the gap in the fitness industry in Ukraine was 20 years behind the world, then with the development of the Internet technologies, easier information accessibility, this gap has become smaller, but still often exceeds 5 years for big cities in Ukraine, say nothing of little towns and the countryside, where the fitness culture is lacking at all.

That is why there is the necessity of the research of the state of fitness industry in Ukraine and the perspectives of its development.

For the first time the most comprehensive attempt to evaluate the state of fitness industry in Ukraine in 2017 has been conducted by FitnessConnectUa [15], informational and analytical platform of monitoring, study and forecasting in the sphere of fitness. And already in 2018 the results of their researches have been taken into account in annual international report European Health & Fitness Market [1]. In pan-European rating Ukraine has occupied the eleventh position by the quantity of fitness clubs and the twelfth position by the quantity of consumers.

The fitness market in Ukraine is only shaping, because the consumers of fitness services are less than 3 % of Ukrainian population. That is why Ukraine has a great potential for fitness industry

development. Specialists of FitnessConnectUa [15] think that providing that economic conditions and tax environment are favourable the quantity of fitness consumers could be doubled.

However, a major study on forecasting of future fitness trends in Ukraine has not been conducted yet.

The objective – to compare world and national trends and tendencies of fitness development.

Methods

The research is based on the analysis of sources of literature as well as thoughts of experts concerning perspectives of fitness development in Ukraine. Scientific articles and statistical information have been analyzed for the comparison of the world trends of fitness development with the national ones. Due to the fact that a national research of fitness trends in Ukraine has not yet been conducted, data from Spain, China and the USA has been taken for the comparison. Extracts, which have been presented in the analyzed papers, are described in the discussion of the research, and are also presented in details in the primary sources.

Results and discussion

In 2019, for the thirteenth time, an enquiry of lead specialists concerning fitness directions which will be the most popular has been conducted. Two thousand and thirty-eight experts from Australia, Great Britain, India, Italy, Canada, China, Germany, Russia, Singapour, the USA, Taiwan, France and Japan have responded to it. The qualification of respondents is proven by the following facts: 27 % of them have the experience of 10–19 years, and 33 % – over 20 years; the annual wages of 45 % of the respondents totals over 50 000 USD, including 9 % with the income over 100 000 USD; 69 % of the respondents work full time, 25 % – less than 20 hours per week. Besides, representatives of various organizations (private business or private practice (35 %), medical centres (20 %), commercial fitness centres (17 %), recreation centres (13 %), etc.) and professions (personal trainer (18 %), specialist on remedial gymnastics (13 %), director in the sphere of fitness or health (10 %), professor (9 %), specialist on health related fitness (7 %), health professional (6 %), etc.) [8] have responded to the poll.

Thirty-nine possible trends have been suggested, among which the new have been: virtual



reality, social workers, unlimited membership, but none of them has reached the top twenty. The names of some directions have been specified or changed: trainings in large groups to group trainings; dance trainings – trainings with dance elements; wellness coaching – health/wellness coaching; exercises with the use of applications for mobile phones – smartphone exercises applications (because clients use applications on other devices); worksite health promotion – worksite health promotion and wellness program. Strength training has been removed from the questionnaire due to the fact that this is a very broad term. Licensure for fitness professionals has replaced a more abstract position of «educated, certified, and experienced fitness professionals».

The twenty of world fitness trends of 2019 [8] look in the following way:

1) *wearable «smart» technologies* (trackers, SMART watch, GPS-devices);

2) *group trainings* (more than 5 people in a group);

3) *high-intensity interval training* (High-Intensity Interval Training – HIIT – intervals of high-intensity work change each other with short periods of rest);

4) *training programs for older adults* (determined by world tendencies concerning the growth of duration of work capacity and life);

5) *body weight training* (combination of concentric moves with eccentric and neuromotor moves in various planes without additional weights);

6) *licensure for fitness professionals* (certification programs allows employers to evaluate easily the quality of professional competencies: expertise, knowledge and skills);

7) *yoga* (including various kinds);

8) *personal trainings* (includes testing, defining aims and trainings immediately with a trainer in a club, on-line, at home or at the workplace);

9) *functional fitness* (includes strength trainings and other types of activities for improvement of balance, coordination, strength, endurance for the daily routine; some of the respondents have underlined that they combine this concept with fitness programs for older adults or rehabilitation programs);

10) *Exercise is Medicine* (Exercise is Medicine – EIM – global initiative concerning the healthcare, which is directed at encouragement of medical workers to evaluation of physical activity and the

appropriate recommendations, as well as sending patients to professional trainers);

11) *Health / Wellness Coaching* (Health / Wellness Coaching is directed at building habits of healthy lifestyle, using the strategies of interference behavioral changes and considering values, needs, mindset, short- and long-term aims of a client; it is conducted individually or in small groups and includes support of a coach, goal setting, recommendations and motivation);

12) *exercise and weight loss* (combination of physical exercises with nutrition programmes; in 2019 a special accent is on the combination of diets, drug substances, lessons on food cooking with physical exercises);

13) *smartphone exercise apps* (visual and sound accompaniment to performing exercises, tracking progress and many other functions);

14) *myofascial techniques and mobility equipment* (includes rollers for self-massage, abatement of pain in trigger points, alleviation of muscular discomfort, strain and cramps, myofascial release, increase of blood flow, assistance in returning to normal activity);

15) *worksite health promotion and wellness program* (this program is realized at the initiative of employers for the gain in health and well-being of employees, integrated with systems of evaluation and reporting on the state of health, expenses and productivity);

16) *outcome measurements* (this tendency is based on attempts to define, trace and notify about training results for evaluation of the efficiency of a program, documenting the successes in a change of habits related to the negative way of life; development of technologies promotes enhancement of this trend);

17) *outdoor activities* (comprise outdoor trainings: group walks, travels or organized tourist groups; may be short twenty-four-hour events or planned excursions for a week);

18) *licensed fitness professionals* (regulation of quality of fitness services with the help of licensure in certain countries);

19) *personal trainings in small groups* (a switch from the personal training «one-on-one» to trainings in small groups (2–5 people), that allows to lower the cost of a training for a client, but increase it for a trainer);



20) *post-rehabilitation groups* (programs of trainings which are created especially for patients with chronic illnesses such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, Parkinson's disease and stroke recovery, who have already passed rehabilitation in medical centres; they also can include post-traumatic disorders that can be observed in soldiers – combat veterans).

In comparison with the year 2018 the three leaders are still the same, but high-intensity interval trainings moved from the first place to the third and wearable technology – from the third to the first. Three directions which have been presented among the trends in 2017, but have not been popular in 2018, – smartphone exercise apps (13th place), worksite health promotion (15th place) and outcome measurements (16th place) – have reached the Top-20. A new direction in 2019 will be post-rehabilitation groups (20th place), which have been in the rating only in 2011 at the 18th position, but have been called «Medical fitness / Clinical

integration», which is close to the definition of EIM (Exercise is Medicine).

Nevertheless, as it has already been said, the world trends will not correspond to the national ones. Thus, for example, outdoor programs are popular enough in Ukraine, but they have a seasonal nature, and training programs for older adults, which have occupied the fourth place in the world rating, are practically insufficient at the market of fitness services in Ukraine. A prominent accent on the certification and licensure of fitness professionals is made all around the world while in Ukraine the process of establishment of the Unified fitness standard [14] has just begun and the only criterion is the presence of a higher education degree in the field of fitness and recreation or certificates on completing different courses. That is why there is a sense in conducting similar researches in certain countries.

Vanessa Kercher [2] has tried to compare researches conducted in China [3] and Spain [10] in 2018 with the results obtained in the USA (Table 1).

Table 1

**Comparative Analysis of Fitness Trends of the World, the USA, China and Spain in 2018
[2, Revised and Enlarged]**

№	Trends-2018			
	World	United States	China	Spain
1.	High-intensity interval training	Group training	Strength training	Educated, certified, and experienced fitness professionals
2.	Group training	High-intensity interval training	Wearable technology	Functional fitness
3.	Wearable technology	Wearable technology	Youth sports*	Exercise and weight loss
4.	Body weight training	Strength training	Body weight training	High-intensity interval training
5.	Strength training	Body weight training	Outdoor activities	Personal training
6.	Educated, certified, and experienced fitness professionals	Educated, certified, and experienced fitness professionals	Core training	Body weight training
7.	Yoga	Yoga	Group training*	Outcome measurements *
8.	Personal training	Personal training	Physical and medical education*	Smartphone exercise apps*
9.	Fitness programs for older adults	Fitness programs for older adults	Educated, certified, and experienced fitness professionals	Fitness programs for older adults
10.	Functional fitness	Functional fitness	Walking and jogging*	Group personal training
11.	Exercise and weight loss	Exercise and weight loss	Worksite health promotion*	Core training
12.	Exercise is Medicine	Exercise is Medicine	Licensure for fitness professionals	Multidisciplinary working teams*
13.	Group personal training	Group personal training	Smartphone exercise apps*	Seeking new market niches*

Table 1 continuation

14.	Outdoor activities	Outdoor activities	Children and exercise for the treatment or prevention of obesity*	Strength training
15.	Flexibility and mobility rollers	Flexibility and mobility rollers	Yoga	Group training*
16.	Licensure for fitness professionals	Licensure for fitness professionals	Sports nutrition guidance*	Wearable technology
17.	Circuit training	Circuit training	Personal training	Specific exercise programs for the ill*
18.	Wellness coaching	Wellness coaching	Fitness social clubs*	Outdoor activities
19.	Core training	Core training	Exercise and weight loss	Circuit training
20.	Fitness for sport	Indoor cycling*	Outcome measurements*	Exercises for prevention of and recovery from injuries*

Note: * – trends which have not featured the world rating

If to analyze the data of Table 1, it is possible to notice that the results of the world study in 2018 are practically identical with the results of the USA. This can be explained by the fact that in the world research of fitness trends of 2018 [7] have taken part 4133 respondents from 41 countries: Australia, Argentina, Barbados, Bermuda, Brazil, Great Britain, Venezuela, Greece, Ecuador, Egypt, Israel, India, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Canada, Kenya, China, Colombia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Germany, New Zealand, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, South Korea, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Singapore, the USA, Thailand, Taiwan, Philippines, Finland, Chile, Switzerland, Sweden, Jamaica and Japan. Although at the same time, according to the data of V. Kercher [2], 3775 respondents have been from the USA, that makes 91,3 %. By the way, this information W. Thompson has not mentioned in his articles [8]. That is why the world trends are in point of fact in their majority reflect the USA trends. As a difference it is possible to mention the 20th position of the trends in the USA in 2018 = cycling, which has not featured in the world rating. The other positions are identical. This underlines the necessity of study of national trends once again.

Let us analyze the situation presented in national researches of China and Spain. Only 10 fitness trends of China and 13 trends of Spain coincide with the world tendencies. Among the national trends that are not presented in the world rating – 3 trends are common for China and Spain: outcome measurements, group trainings, smartphone exercise apps. As for the «unique» tendencies, in China it is youth sports, physical

and medical education, walking and jogging, worksite health promotion, children and exercise for the treatment or prevention of obesity, sports nutrition guidance, fitness social clubs; in Spain – multidisciplinary working teams (doctors, physical therapists, nutritionists and experienced certified professionals in the sphere of physical training and sports), seeking new market niches, specific exercise programs for the ill, exercises for prevention of and recovery from injuries. In such a way it is possible to observe that in Spain a significant attention is paid to a rehabilitation direction of fitness, while in China this tendency is practically missing. That means that the national trends better represent tendencies of a certain country and will not coincide with the world trends (though it happened to be that the world trends are practically the USA trends).

The results of a study of fitness trends of Spain in 2019 have already been published [11]. This year the most popular directions there have become: educated, experienced, qualified professionals, functional fitness, exercise and weight loss, personal training, high-intensity interval training, body weight training, training under the guidance of professional fitness trainers, training programs for older adults, core trainings, outcome measurements, multidisciplinary working teams, strength trainings, group personal trainings, seeking new market niches, children and exercise for the treatment or prevention of obesity, exercises for prevention of and recovery from injuries, smartphone exercise apps, circuit trainings. And again 8 out of 20 positions of the national rating do not coincide with the world ones.



As to Ukraine, as it has already been stated, such researches have not been conducted here, but at the conference «The Current State of Fitness Industry in Ukraine and Perspectives of Its Development» and at the presentation «Research of the Market of Fitness Services in Ukraine», which have been held on 26th of June 2018 in Kyiv, experts and practical men specified some positions that have to be developed in Ukraine and that will be able to become trends in the future.

Thus, the vice president of Ukrainian Fitness Association Vadym Gumenyuk [12] emphasizes 4 main categories: consumer market trends, in which he underlines that children are our future and that is why it is necessary to actively develop youth sports and fitness; labour market trends, in which there is a redistribution and an incremental growth of experts responsibility and a change in a role of a fitness trainer; infrastructure trends, in which the necessity of the state and private partnership and the development of municipal initiatives with the legislative support of the state are stressed; fitness trends, in which the most popular type is exercise and weight loss.

Vladyslav Syla, the head of the “Ukrainian New Health Technologies Centres” Association [16], puts an emphasis on the fact that consumers of fitness services are becoming more conscious and that is why, first of all, it is necessary to pay attention to the quality and safety of fitness services. Also he points out the perspectivity of development of fitness directions for older adults, but stresses the fact that Ukrainian clubs, unfortunately, are not ready to provide quality services for them. Dmytro Chorny, the founder and the head of a chain of fitness clubs “Malibu” [16], which has implemented free memberships for senior citizens, does not agree with this statement. He underlines that the mentality of the older generation becomes the main obstacle for the development of this direction, especially on a paid basis.

The head of an international office “FitCurves” Iryna Kravtsova [16] has marked the necessity of co-operation with the Ministry of Health, especially when it is concerned with working out the nutrition guidances, as far as, in her opinion, traditions of nutrition in each individual family influence the nation’s health the most. A partner of the company group “Sport Life” Maksym Zaretskyi [16] has also stressed that the fitness mission is to guarantee

the nation’s health and that is why it is necessary to expand the fitness culture to the maximum in every city of Ukraine. He has also mentioned the problem of trainers’ certification, which has also been discussed by other specialists.

The conference has not been ineffective as by its result at the beginning of 2019 the presentation of the initiative of the Unified fitness standard of Ukraine development has taken place [14]. This is a shared project of National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sport and the analytical and consulting platform FitnessConnectUa.

If to analyze thoughts of Ukrainian experts, it can be seen that they draw more attention to problems, the solution of which will give a positive impulse to development of fitness in Ukraine. As for possible trends, there are only certain hypotheses.

Conclusions

Dynamic development of the fitness sphere requires of fitness clubs and fitness trainers to constantly follow novelties and implement them in their activity in order to stay competitive.

Specialists of the American College of Sports Medicine annually, beginning from 2006, conduct a poll among experts from different countries with the aim of defining trend directions in fitness for the next year. The results are annually published in ACSM’s Health & Fitness Journal, and specialists from the whole world orient themselves at them. But a more detailed study of an excerpts of respondents has shown that in 2017, while establishing trends for 2018, 4133 people from 41 countries have responded to the poll, but 91,3 % of them are representatives of the USA. That is why the results of the study reflect a picture of popular directions in the USA by 95 % (only one direction, which occupies the 20th position, does not correspond with the world trends), but not in the whole world.

This is proved by considering identical national researches which have been conducted in China and Spain, which coincide with the world ones only by half and have their own peculiarities typical for each country. We can say for sure that the world trends will not reflect the situation in Ukraine, that is why the necessity of conducting similar studies in our country with attracting lead experts from different regions of Ukraine exists.

In Ukraine they have now actively started to study the sphere of fitness and possible perspectives of development, and also they have started the making of the Unified fitness standard that will allow to improve the quality of services and favour the shaping of fitness culture and healthy lifestyle among the population in both regional and district cities and in the countryside.

The following researches will be connected with a more detailed study of the situation in Ukraine concerning the perspectives of fitness industry development.

Conflict of interest

The research is based on the analysis of scientific papers concerning the world and national trends in the sphere of fitness with the author's interpretation of the results as well as the data of reports of the lead fitness experts in Ukraine. Some of the points may be generalized or omitted due to the fact that they have not been of any interest to this research. In order to avoid misconceptions, it is recommended to take a look at the primary sources, the citations to which are made in the text.

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