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Circus Arts in Ukraine (2015–2025): Critical Perspectives on Artistic and Educational Development

Abstract:

The relevance of this study is determined by the critical condition of circus arts in Ukraine, which, between 2015 and 2025, have faced systemic decline in both artistic production and professional education amid profound socio-political challenges. In the context of limited scholarly attention to contemporary circus processes, the topic acquires particular significance for art studies and cultural policy research. The research problem lies in the absence of an integrated analytical approach to understanding the interrelation between creative practices, educational systems, and institutional governance in Ukrainian circus arts during the contemporary period. Existing studies remain fragmented and do not adequately address the structural causes of stagnation and regression within the field. The scientific novelty of the study consists in its comprehensive critical analysis of circus arts in Ukraine within the unified framework of artistic and educational processes, combining historical reconstruction with institutional and art-critical perspectives. For the first time, contemporary developments are systematically interpreted in continuity with both Soviet and post-Soviet models. The subject of the study is the problem of the development of circus arts in Ukraine in the context of creative and educational processes from 2015 to 2025. The object of the study is contemporary circus arts in Ukraine as an artistic and educational system. The study aims to identify the causes and analyze the underdevelopment of circus arts within artistic and educational processes over the specified period. The research methodology is based on historical, analytical, comparative, art-critical, circusological, pedagogical, and institutional analysis methods. The study draws upon and generalizes the contributions of Ukrainian and international scholars and practitioners, including I. Lvova, D. Orel, Yu. Romanenkova, C. Stjernebjerg, D. Sharykov, and L. Shevchenko, whose works address circus pedagogy, directing, genre studies, and institutional development. The study examines the evolution of circus arts from the Soviet period to the present, identifies key factors contributing to decline — such as ineffective management, erosion of educational standards, and the withdrawal of state support — and evaluates their impact on artistic production and professional training. Particular attention is given to the transformation of educational institutions and the loss of ensemble-based creative traditions. The author concludes that the current stagnation of Ukrainian circus arts is systemic in nature and exacerbated by the absence of coherent cultural policy and long-term institutional responsibility. The preservation and revitalization of circus arts require a strategic focus on educational continuity, engagement of master practitioners, and the restoration of integrated artistic and pedagogical models.

Keywords: art management, art and culture, circus arts, circusology, circus genres, circus directing, circus product, creative process, creative project, teamwork, educational process.

Introduction

Academic research on the issue of circus art development is scarce, as domestic art critics have paid little attention to this issue, whereas practitioners have most often resorted to short interviews in popular magazines. These publications did not meet the requirements of scholarly

analysis. Most existing studies consider factors of individual circus genres in the context of the educational process, through the methodological and scientific components prism, without sufficient reference to how these processes are developing today. As a result, scholarly research on this topic is fragmented and incomplete.

One of the key issues in contemporary circus arts is the in-depth research and systematic examination of the development of its genres, as well as the critical analysis of the creative production process, which together form an integral part of circus studies, also known as circusology. Circus studies have been conducted only since 2017 at the Kyiv Circus Academy in response to the importance of this field and the scarcity of scholarly studies on circus genres. Interest in circus arts, with their diversity of genres, original circus programs, shows, and acts, has made comprehensive research into this art form particularly relevant today. Studying the contemporary state of circus arts in Ukraine from 2015 to 2025 is especially important, as this period saw both the development of new, original genres and the simultaneous onset of decline and regression. These processes have had a significant impact on the creative activities of the Kyiv National Circus, as well as on the artistic and educational practices of the Kyiv Circus Academy.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in its unique formulation of the research problem, which offers a critical analysis of the development of circus arts in Ukraine in the context of creative and educational processes from 2015 to 2025. For the first time, the study provides a detailed analysis of the development of circus arts in the Soviet era placing the particular emphasis on their development in the contemporary context. In addition, the work evaluates, and analyzes art-critical opinions and perspectives of theorists and practitioners published in periodicals.

The subject of the study is the problem of circus arts in Ukraine in the context of creative and educational processes in 2015–2025.

The object of the study is the development of circus arts today.

The study aims to identify the causes and examine the problem of the underdevelopment of circus arts within both the artistic and educational processes from 2010 to 2025.

To achieve this objective, the study addresses the following tasks:

- define the framework for the development of circus arts in creative and educational processes during the Soviet period;
- reveal the positive aspects of the post-Soviet process of the 1990s and early 21st century;
- explain the problems that began to predominate in 2015–2025.

The target audiences for which the research results are intended include both theorists and practitioners. With a clear and open research process in this field, the artistic process can be improved when its practitioners—directors, artists, and circus managers—pay attention to important comments in critical reviews and publications, as well as summaries of circus programs, noting obvious flaws and shortcomings. Art critics in circus studies also help theoretically refine and improve the development of such a complex form of artistic culture as circus.

Methods

The methodological framework of this study is grounded in general scientific approaches that are widely applied in humanities and art studies, particularly in research addressing the historical development of artistic practices and educational systems. These methods ensure

conceptual rigor, analytical consistency, and interpretive reliability in examining the evolution of circus arts in Ukraine within creative and educational contexts between 2015 and 2025.

The historical method is employed to reconstruct the development of circus arts as a culturally and institutionally embedded phenomenon. In general, this method allows researchers to analyze artistic processes in their temporal sequence and socio-historical conditioning. In this study, the historical method is applied to trace the formation of the Ukrainian circus system during the Soviet period, its transformation after independence, and the subsequent dynamics observed between 2015 and 2025. This approach makes it possible to identify long-term structural continuities and ruptures that have shaped both artistic production and professional education in circus arts.

The principle of historicity and chronological analysis serves as a methodological foundation for organizing the research material in a coherent temporal framework. As a general scientific principle, historicity requires phenomena to be examined in relation to the specific conditions of their emergence and development. In the study, this principle is implemented by structuring the analysis around distinct historical phases—Soviet, post-Soviet, and contemporary—allowing for a systematic comparison of institutional models, artistic practices, and educational strategies across different periods.

The analytical method is used to decompose the complex phenomenon of circus arts into its key components, including artistic production, educational processes, managerial structures, and state cultural policy. As a general research tool, analysis enables the identification of internal relationships and causal mechanisms within a system. In the study, analytical procedures are applied to examine the causes of decline and stagnation in circus arts, with particular attention to ineffective management decisions, institutional monopolization, and the erosion of state support mechanisms.

The method of synthesis complements analytical procedures by integrating disparate findings into a coherent conceptual interpretation. In general, scientific research, synthesis allows for the construction of holistic models that explain complex processes. In this study, synthesis is used to formulate generalized conclusions regarding the current state of circus arts in Ukraine and to outline possible directions for their future development by combining historical data, analytical insights, and critical evaluations of educational and artistic practices.

The comparative method is applied to identify similarities and differences between various models of circus development. As a general methodological approach, comparison facilitates the evaluation of national systems within broader international contexts. In the study, this method is used to contrast the Soviet and post-Soviet Ukrainian circus system with Western and non-European models of circus organization and education, thereby highlighting structural advantages, systemic deficiencies, and missed opportunities for adaptation.

The method of generalization is employed to derive broader theoretical conclusions from empirical observations and case-specific analyses. In scientific research, generalization allows individual findings to be elevated to the level of conceptual interpretation. In this study, generalization is used to formulate overarching assessments of the artistic and educational crisis in Ukrainian circus arts, situating these conclusions within the broader discourse of contemporary art criticism and cultural policy analysis.

The art-critical method is applied as a specialized analytical approach traditionally used in art studies to evaluate artistic phenomena through professional criteria such as form, composition, genre structure, performative quality, and aesthetic coherence. In the context of this study, the art-critical method is employed to assess the creative outcomes of circus productions in Ukraine between 2015 and 2025. It allows for the identification of artistic

degradation, stylistic simplification, and the loss of ensemble-based dramaturgy in contemporary circus performances, particularly in state-supported institutions.

The circusological method is used as a field-specific analytical tool aimed at examining circus arts as an autonomous artistic system with its own genres, techniques, professional traditions, and educational mechanisms. As a specialized methodological framework, circusology integrates elements of art criticism, pedagogy, and performance analysis. In this study, the circusological method is applied to analyze the evolution of circus genres, the transformation of professional training models, and the erosion of institutional continuity within Ukrainian circus arts during the studied period.

The historical-comparative method is employed to examine the development of circus arts across different historical and institutional contexts. As a specialized extension of comparative analysis, this method enables the evaluation of artistic and educational systems within specific temporal frameworks. In this study, it is used to compare the Soviet model of centralized circus organization and education with post-Soviet and contemporary Ukrainian practices, as well as with selected Western and non-European circus traditions, revealing structural imbalances and systemic misalignments.

The method of institutional analysis is applied to study circus organizations and educational institutions as structured systems governed by administrative, managerial, and regulatory mechanisms. As a specialized research method, institutional analysis focuses on power distribution, governance models, and decision-making processes. In this study, the method is used to examine the functioning of the Kyiv National Circus and the Kyiv Municipal Academy of Circus and Performing Arts, identifying the impact of administrative monopolization, ineffective leadership, and the absence of state cultural policy on artistic and educational outcomes.

The pedagogical analysis method is employed to investigate the structure, content, and effectiveness of professional training in circus arts. In educational research, this method allows for the evaluation of curricula, teaching strategies, and learning outcomes. In the study, pedagogical analysis is applied to assess changes in circus education, including the reduction of comprehensive training, the prioritization of competition-oriented preparation, and the marginalization of ensemble and repertory-based performance practices.

The method of expert interpretation is used to incorporate professional judgments derived from the author's long-term practical and academic involvement in the circus field. As a specialized qualitative method, expert interpretation allows for the contextualization of empirical observations within professional standards and disciplinary knowledge. In this study, the method supports the critical evaluation of artistic processes, educational reforms, and institutional decisions that are not fully documented in official sources but are evident within professional practice.

The prognostic (modeling) method is applied to outline potential directions for the future development of circus arts based on the identified trends and structural problems. As a specialized analytical tool, prognostic modeling enables the formulation of theoretically grounded scenarios. In this study, the method is used to propose conceptual prospects for restoring artistic integrity, educational continuity, and institutional responsibility within the Ukrainian circus system.

The methodological framework of this study combines general scientific and specialized research methods to ensure a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis of circus arts in Ukraine within the artistic and educational contexts of 2015–2025. General scientific methods provide a structured foundation for examining historical continuity, institutional dynamics, and

systemic transformations, while specialized methods enable in-depth analysis of circus arts as a distinct artistic and pedagogical domain.

The integration of historical, analytical, comparative, and synthetic approaches allows the study to reconstruct the evolution of circus arts, identify key factors contributing to their decline, and assess the consequences of managerial and educational decisions. At the same time, specialized art-critical, circusological, pedagogical, and institutional methods make it possible to evaluate creative processes, professional training models, and governance structures from an expert disciplinary perspective.

Taken together, this methodological synthesis ensures the validity of the study's findings and supports a well-grounded interpretation of both artistic and educational challenges facing contemporary Ukrainian circus arts, while also enabling the formulation of informed conclusions and future-oriented recommendations.

Literature Review

The existing body of scholarly literature on circus arts is characterized by thematic fragmentation and methodological specialization. Most studies focus either on the historical development of the circus, on pedagogical methodologies for individual circus disciplines, or on selected aspects of circus directing and management. While these works provide valuable insights into specific components of the circus system, they rarely offer an integrated perspective that connects artistic production, professional education, and institutional governance within a single analytical framework. This limitation is particularly evident in studies addressing the contemporary stage of circus development in Ukraine.

A significant group of sources is devoted to professional training and pedagogical methodologies in circus disciplines, forming an essential foundation for analyzing the educational dimension of circus arts. Horbachevskyi (2025) examines illusion and manipulation as specialized circus genres, offering a structured methodological guide for training illusionists within professional circus education. This work is valuable for the present study as it illustrates the persistence of genre-based specialization in Ukrainian circus education and highlights the technical and pedagogical requirements that must be supported institutionally to sustain artistic quality.

Kashevarov, Orel, and Sharykov (2021) address stage and technical training in circus genres, with particular emphasis on safety standards, arena organization, and equipment usage. Their research provides a comprehensive overview of the infrastructural and technical conditions necessary for professional circus practice. In the context of this study, this source is used to evaluate how the deterioration of material and organizational conditions has negatively affected both educational and artistic processes in Ukrainian circus institutions.

Further developing this line of inquiry, Kashevarov, Orel, and Sharykov (2024) focus on aerial gymnastics as a genre specialization, offering a detailed classification of apparatuses and training methodologies. This publication is particularly relevant for understanding the depth and complexity of contemporary circus pedagogy and for demonstrating the gap between advanced methodological knowledge and its inconsistent implementation within Ukrainian educational institutions during the period under study.

Orel's works occupy a central place in the literature on circus pedagogy. His article on formal and technical features of aerial gymnastics (Orel, 2018) provides a genre-specific analytical framework, while his later study (Orel, 2020) examines the challenges of teaching acrobatics in higher art education institutions. These studies are used in the present research to assess the transformation of educational priorities in circus training, particularly the shift from

comprehensive professional formation toward narrowly competition-oriented outcomes. Orel's instructional manual on acrobatics (Orel, 2024), as well as the joint publication on vaulting acrobatics (Orel & Sharykov, 2024), further reinforce the argument that Ukrainian circus pedagogy possesses a strong methodological base that remains underutilized at the institutional level.

Another important cluster of sources addresses circus studies (circusology) as an academic field and the broader cultural role of circus arts. Romanenkova (2018) discusses the place of circus studies within Ukrainian humanities, arguing for its recognition as an independent scholarly discipline. This work is fundamental for the present study, as it provides theoretical justification for treating circus arts not merely as entertainment but as a complex cultural phenomenon requiring systematic academic analysis. In her later work, Romanenkova (2020) explores the modern Ukrainian circus school as a tool of national cultural representation, emphasizing its potential role in the global cultural space. This perspective is used in the study to highlight the contrast between the symbolic cultural significance of circus arts and their current institutional marginalization.

The international dimension of circus studies is represented by Stjernebjerg (2017), whose master's thesis analyzes how contemporary circus revitalized the art form through innovative approaches to gravity, movement, and aesthetics. Although focused on non-Ukrainian contexts, this study provides an important comparative backdrop, allowing the present research to situate Ukrainian circus arts within broader global trends and to identify missed opportunities for creative and institutional renewal.

A separate group of sources is devoted to circus directing and artistic production, which are central to understanding the creative processes examined in this study. Lvova (2021) analyzes circus directing and show business within the entertainment industry, paying particular attention to marketing and public relations strategies. Her comparative approach, which contrasts Ukrainian practices with Western models, is used in the present research to contextualize managerial and promotional deficiencies in Ukrainian circus institutions.

Shevchenko's contributions further develop the theme of circus directing. Her 2023 study examines the current state of circus directing and its adaptation within higher education, while her instructional manual (Shevchenko, 2024) focuses on the role of tricks and arena imagery in constructing a circus act. These works are instrumental for analyzing how directing principles are transmitted—or distorted—within educational settings and how this affects the artistic coherence of contemporary circus productions. The collaborative manual on equilibristics (Shevchenko et al., 2024) complements this analysis by illustrating genre-specific directing and training practices.

The work by Sharykov, Orel, and Herasymenko (2023), which examines the uniqueness of Cirque du Soleil within the context of circusology, provides a valuable comparative case study. By analyzing a successful contemporary circus model, this source is used to contrast institutional strategies, artistic innovation, and educational integration with the Ukrainian situation, thereby reinforcing the study's critical conclusions.

Institutional context is further supported by materials from the Kyiv Municipal Academy of Circus and Performing Arts (*n.d.*), which serve as an empirical reference point for analyzing the organizational structure, educational programs, and official positioning of Ukraine's leading circus education institution. These materials are used to correlate formal institutional claims with observed educational and artistic outcomes.

Taken together, the reviewed literature demonstrates that while Ukrainian and international scholars have produced substantial research on individual aspects of circus arts—such as

pedagogy, genre specialization, directing, and cultural representation—there remains a notable absence of integrated studies addressing the interrelation of creative, educational, and institutional processes in the Ukrainian circus between 2015 and 2025. This gap directly informs the relevance and originality of the present study, which seeks to synthesize these dimensions within a unified analytical framework and to provide a comprehensive critical assessment of contemporary Ukrainian circus arts.

Results

The development of circus arts during the Soviet era had a centralized, state-controlled format. The state fulfilled the role of the primary sponsor and regulator, determining both the direction and the formats of its development. This system was particularly evident in the period from 1960 to 1992.

The artistic process revolved around stationary state circuses unified under the structure of the “SoyuzGosTsirk” (Union State Circus), the main operating company. This network included the circuses of the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR, the Russian SSR, the Georgian SSR, the Kazakh SSR, and other Soviet Union republics.

The educational process, which included training professional circus performers such as acrobats, jugglers, equilibrists, illusionists, and clowns, was also entirely supervised and funded by the government.

The artistic process involved the creation of mass circus acts, which comprised large-scale circus performances. This process was fundamentally different from the approach applied to the circus arts development in Western countries. In the West, circus traditions were primarily sustained through circus family dynasties and travelling tent circuses, rather than through centralized state institutions. In the West, state-supported and state-regulated circus art existed in Canada with *Cirque du Soleil* and in Hungary with the Budapest State Circus. However, it is worth emphasizing that professional circus education in these countries was largely organized through private studios, which were not always professional in nature. These studios often relied on members of circus dynasties or touring performers, whose involvement was typically short-term.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, during the period of independent Ukraine (1992–2015), the state did not establish a comprehensive strategy to ensure the structured development and functioning of circus arts in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the absence of such a strategy led to a tragic decline in the field. This includes:

This situation was characterized by several key factors:

- the absence of legislation regulating circus institutions, including their development, funding mechanisms, operational oversight, and the rights and obligations of these organizations;
- the absence of a clear strategic vision for the development of circus art, which would preserve the existing achievements in circus performance, professional expertise, established programs, and genres, as well as promote cooperation with Western models of circus development (France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Canada) and Eastern traditions (China, Mongolia, and India);
- the withdrawal of state control over the educational process at specialized institutions, specifically the Circus College, and the absence of a coherent developmental framework for its development. At that time, the curriculum encompassed not only circus disciplines but also vocal, dance, and stand-up training.

Initially, this vacuum was mitigated by the substantial achievements of the past, specifically those gained in both artistic and educational fields during the Soviet period. However, as Ukraine entered a period of socio-political instability and the state funding was critically reduced, the process of decline and stagnation in the circus arts field reached such a point at which meaningful change became virtually impossible. For instance, the state stopped commissioning major circus programs, and its neglect of professional circus performers (acrobats, aerialists, jugglers, clowns, illusionists, and equilibrists) resulted in the mass relocation and emigration of the leading artists to Western countries, where they could continue pursuing their professional careers and achieve financial independence.

A certain transformation took place in the Circus College, which was converted into a municipal institution and later reorganized as an academy. In this new format, the primary focus gradually shifted away from circus arts training toward vocal, directing, and theatrical. As a result, the circus department, despite certain positive aspects within the educational process, became effectively monopolized by a single family, the Pozdnyakovs. Being far from renowned circus performers, they succeeded in adapting the entire circus department of the Academy to serve their family's professional interests. Training was oriented almost exclusively toward participation in international competitions and employment in Western circus institutions. This model generated specific financial benefits through collaboration with impresarios representing various circus organizations, and this process unfolded with the full acquiescence of the administration of the Kyiv Circus Academy.

Admittedly, a small number of graduates from the circus department remained in Ukrainian circuses for a limited period. In most cases, however, they relocated to work in circus institutions abroad, including those in the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Hungary, Poland, and China.

The course of events could have taken a more positive direction, provided factors had been properly acknowledged and certain improvements implemented. The first concerned sustained engagement by the Ministry of Culture and Arts of Ukraine with the circus sector, particularly with regard to the financing and stationary state circuses operations, which in practice was scarce. The second factor is related to the Kyiv Circus Academy. Despite the arrival of new professional staff, specifically graduates of the 1990s with substantial expertise and experience in Western circus companies and productions, and despite the strengthening of the academic component of education, meaningful reform did not take place. Since 2016, bachelor's and master's degree programs have been introduced at the Academy, significantly enhancing the institutional status and academic quality of higher education in circus arts under the educational program Circus Genres. Despite these developments, they failed to produce systemic change. First of all, it was the unwillingness of the Pozdnyakov family to pursue professional development and innovation, including the creation of large-scale ensemble productions for graduating young circus artists. Instead, the educational process was reduced to a financially driven, self-serving model oriented toward the interests of a single family. It should be noted, however, that the Academy did periodically produce skilled professionals in specific circus disciplines.

Secondly, the appointment of a new Academy leadership at the beginning of 1999. It was a person who lacked fundamental knowledge of circus arts, as well as a clear understanding of, or willingness to develop, the educational process in this field. Their role was largely limited to formal administrative oversight of the circus program, a situation that effectively enabled the private interests of the Pozdnyakov family to persist without institutional challenge.

Notably, since 2017, the Department of Circus Genres at the Kyiv Municipal Academy of Circus and Performing Arts has begun to develop the field of circusology—research focused on the theory, methodology, and artistic practice of circus arts.

More than 30 scientific publications have been published in specialized scientific journals, both Ukrainian and international, with academic indexing. In addition, textbooks have been produced on topics including acrobatics (*Orel, 2024*), vaulting (*Orel & Sharykov, 2024*), aerial gymnastics (*Kashevarov et al., 2024*), equilibristics (*Shevchenko et al., 2024*), illusion and manipulation (*Horbachevskyi, 2025*), methods of teaching circus disciplines (*Sharykov, 2024*), and circus directing (*Shevchenko, 2024*).

Despite these achievements, the work largely went unnoticed and lacked support from the administration, even though the Department was the only one in Europe publishing its own professional literature on circus genres. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine, and shortsighted leadership policies have all contributed to a period of stagnation in the field.

It is worth emphasizing that on the surface, the development of the circus program at the Academy appears impressive. However, when delving deeper, numerous inconsistencies and failures become immediately apparent. The same applies to the artistic circus scene in Ukraine as a whole. At present, state circuses are both unprofitable and largely neglected, as the government is focused not on fostering art and culture but on the ongoing military conflict in the country.

Discussion

The results of this study are highly relevant in light of the current condition of circus arts in Ukraine, as they provide a structured and evidence-based understanding of the systemic problems affecting both creative production and professional education between 2015 and 2025. By integrating historical analysis, institutional assessment, and art-critical evaluation, the research clarifies the underlying mechanisms that have led to stagnation and regression within the circus sector. This relevance is further reinforced by the fact that the identified problems extend beyond isolated artistic failures and reflect broader structural deficiencies in cultural governance, educational policy, and managerial practice.

The findings contribute to the academic field by addressing a notable gap in contemporary circus studies, where recent developments have remained insufficiently examined. At the practical level, the results offer an analytical foundation that can be used by cultural administrators, educators, and practitioners to reassess existing strategies and to initiate informed discussions on the future development of circus arts in Ukraine.

During the research process, several interrelated problems were identified that significantly complicate the study and development of circus arts in Ukraine. The first problem is the scarcity of systematic academic research on contemporary circus arts. This deficiency is largely due to the reluctance of theorists—particularly art critics—to engage critically with ongoing processes in the circus field. Socio-political instability and the marginal status of circus arts within the hierarchy of cultural disciplines have contributed to a superficial or fragmented scholarly treatment of the subject.

The second problem concerns the position of practitioners themselves. Many artists and educators demonstrate limited willingness to critically reflect on the structural and artistic shortcomings of the field. As a result, professional discourse often remains confined to technical or performative aspects, avoiding broader questions of institutional responsibility, educational quality, and long-term artistic strategy. This lack of reflexivity weakens the potential for internal

reform and hinders the emergence of a cohesive professional community capable of advocating for systemic change.

The third problem relates to institutional and governmental factors. Due to the ongoing military conflict and broader socio-economic pressures, state authorities and administrative bodies overseeing circus institutions tend to deprioritize cultural development. Consequently, issues such as ineffective management, the erosion of educational standards, and the decline of repertory-based artistic production remain largely unaddressed. This administrative indifference exacerbates existing problems and reinforces the cycle of stagnation identified in the study.

The results of this study open several perspective directions for the further development of research on circus arts. One important avenue involves expanding comparative analysis between Ukrainian circus institutions and successful international models, particularly those that integrate artistic innovation, professional education, and sustainable management practices. Such research would allow for the identification of adaptable strategies capable of revitalizing the national circus system.

Another promising direction lies in the deeper exploration of circus education as a distinct pedagogical field. Future studies may focus on curriculum design, assessment methods, and the balance between artistic tradition and contemporary innovation. Particular attention should be paid to the role of ensemble-based training and repertory production, which historically constituted a core strength of Ukrainian circus arts.

Finally, further research should address the institutional and policy dimensions of circus development, including legislative frameworks, cultural funding mechanisms, and governance models. By combining art-critical, pedagogical, and policy-oriented perspectives, future studies can contribute not only to academic knowledge but also to the formulation of practical recommendations aimed at restoring the artistic and educational integrity of circus arts in Ukraine.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that both academic research and the broader development of circus arts in Ukraine—encompassing artistic production and professional education—are currently experiencing a pronounced phase of decline and stagnation. These processes are not episodic but systemic in nature and have been further intensified by the ongoing military conflict. The study demonstrates that the crisis of contemporary Ukrainian circus arts is rooted in long-term structural deficiencies rather than in temporary external disruptions.

The research identifies several interrelated underlying causes of this situation, including the absence of a coherent state cultural policy aimed at supporting circus arts, the lack of effective regulatory and institutional frameworks, and the erosion of a comprehensive educational model capable of sustaining professional continuity. The findings clearly indicate that short-term managerial or commercially oriented strategies are insufficient for preserving the artistic and pedagogical integrity of circus arts.

The results of this study provide a foundation for the further development of both academic research and practical initiatives in the field of circus arts. One perspective direction involves the application of the study's conclusions to comparative research, particularly in relation to international circus models that successfully integrate artistic innovation, professional education, and institutional sustainability. Such comparative studies may contribute to the formulation of adaptable strategies for revitalizing Ukrainian circus institutions.

Another important prospect concerns the development of evidence-based recommendations for cultural policy and educational reform. The research outcomes may serve as a conceptual basis for revising curricula, restoring ensemble-based training and repertory production, and strengthening the role of master practitioners in professional education. In the long term, these measures could facilitate the restoration of artistic continuity and the reestablishment of circus arts as a significant component of national cultural life.

The primary aim of the study—to identify the causes and examine the problem of the underdevelopment of circus arts within artistic and educational processes from 2010 to 2025—has been fully achieved. Through a comprehensive historical, analytical, and institutional examination, the research has revealed the key factors contributing to the current crisis condition of Ukrainian circus arts.

Each of the research objectives formulated in the Introduction has been addressed individually. First, the study defined the framework for developing circus arts during the Soviet period, demonstrating the role of centralized state support and structured professional education in sustaining artistic quality. Second, the research revealed the positive aspects of the post-Soviet period of the 1990s and early 21st century, highlighting the residual strengths inherited from the Soviet system and the initial potential for transformation. Third, the study explained the problems that became predominant between 2015 and 2025, including managerial inefficiency, institutional monopolization, and the withdrawal of state responsibility for cultural and educational development.

Thus, the study confirms that the preservation and advancement of circus arts in Ukraine depend not on short-term or market-driven considerations, but on the recognition, protection, and transmission of artistic and pedagogical achievements accumulated over decades. The engagement of experienced master practitioners and the restoration of institutional responsibility are identified as essential conditions for ensuring the future viability of circus arts as both an artistic practice and an academic field.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that is no conflict of interest.

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