

**GENDER PROBLEMS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION.  
HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS**

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**Purpose:** historico-philosophical analysis of gender issue in physical education and clarification of the meaningful characteristics of the category "gender" in the field of physical culture and sports.

**Material and methods:** to achieve objectives of the research and for generalization the experience of those scientists who investigate educational problems of the gender approach, modern approaches to development and improvement of physical education we used such theoretical research methods as analysis, comparison, generalization, systematization, theoretical modeling.

**Results:** the historical aspect of the beginning of the gender approach in physical education has certain differences and features that makes it a separate area of gender cognition according to which all pedagogical and socio-cultural aspects of youth physical education can have a gender dimension. The necessity of distinguishing and interpreting the gender approach as a definition in political, public

and social environments is theoretically grounded, its significance for physical training and sports is indicated, and a new term is suggested for use in research, which allows characterizing it as an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral definition, extrapolated, interconnected and corresponding to the development of physical education and sports in the countries of developed democracy.

**Conclusions:** according to the results which were obtained during the research and the theoretical and methodological papers of the gender problem the necessity and expediency of the development and introduction of the gender component in the physical education of modern schoolchildren as an essentially new and progressive direction of the axiological significance of physical culture is justified. The essential and substantive characteristics of the category "gender" in the field of physical culture and sports in the context of psychological and pedagogical research are given.

**Keywords:** gender, gender approach, physical education, physical culture, sports, history.

## **Introduction**

During the past decade gender issue is always the focus of attention of the modern European community which forms gender and legal space taking into account the gender aspect of the countries that join it. But gender (parity) democracy is important not only for international recognition but also for development of the internal dynamics of the Ukrainian State which is moving for a long time towards ensuring equality of all members of society as an integral part of national obligations reflected, particularly, in the Law "Pro zabespechennia rivnyh prav i mozhlyvostei zhinok ta cholovikiv" ("On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men") [15]. The new Law of Ukraine "Pro osvitu" ("On education") provides a rule on the students' obligation to acquire gender competence which is the ability to realize equal rights and opportunities. In particular the document provides for the expansion of the practice of including a gender component in educational programs, the introduction of a gender approach in general documents in the field of education

and training on gender equality and establishing of a professional community [29,24,25].

Due to this, the purpose of the national education is now proclaimed the priority of personal orientation to the child's development as a subject of his or her own life, creative and self-sufficient personality that keeps with the relevant principles of the gender approach to education [36]. Doctor of psychological sciences, professor Kikinezhdi A.N. rightly observes that the most accordant with our time and perspective for the formation of a gender culture among children and young people is the renewal of traditions and the introduction of innovations in the context of the heritage of outstanding Ukrainian humanist teachers V.Sukhomlinsky, G.Vashchenko, A. Makarenko, Mr. Dragomanova, K. Ushinsky, etc. [17]

Particularly relevant nowadays we consider the possibility of realization the gender approach in physical education which is dealt with activity that contributes not only to the formation of physical, moral and mental qualities of the individual but also through systematic specially organized motor activity helps to identify gender differences in the educational process by defining the role of the physical education in the gender socialization of students.

Systematic analysis of the global scale of scientific knowledge and international experience in gender studies shows certain theoretical advances in coverage of this issue. The problems of formation of gender culture of youth are investigated by T. V. Govorun, O. M. Kikinezhdi, O. B. Kis, N. M. Lavrinenko, P. Kravets, O. A. Lutsenko, O. S. Tsokur and other scientists [2, 7, 17, 29]. An important contribution to the development of a gender approach in pedagogical education belongs to O. A. Voronina (problems of developing the theory and the methodology of gender studies, determining the place and the role of gender education in the system of professional students training) [5]; L. V. Shtylova (development of methodical programs for teachers on the issue of introduction of gender education and personal development in secondary school) [43]; I. S. Klotsyna (outlining the ways of gender socialization of the individual taking into account age features, developing of gender workshop for students to overcome gender

stereotypes) [18, 19]. The intelligence of A. L. Vorozhbitova (2008) represents the gender approach to the professional activity of a specialist in physical culture [6]. The works of N. N. Kuinji and E. D. Laponov (2005), N. V. Kozlovskaya (2006), S. A. Chubarova (2007), V. D. Ereemeeva (2008), L. V. Tarasenko (2007) [29] are devoted to the implementation of the gender approach in education and training. Legal experts and politicians in Ukraine also deal with gender issues and they are developers and scholars of gender in the modern domestic legal doctrine of N.M. Onishchenko, I.V. Suslova, S.V Bereza [31].

Current studies by I. V. Evstigneeva (2012) are proved that the main criteria of gender education of primary school students in the process of physical education are cognitive, emotional-value, motivational and behavioural [14]. O. V. Vashchuk (2011) substantiated particularities of teenager attitude to physical education class taking into account gender identification [40]. G. F. Dulmukhametova (2011) proved the existence of barriers to the implementation of gender differentiation of the primary education of pupils in the educational process [13]. A. S. Damadaeva (2010) didn't find general common factors in the analysis of studies of gender differentiation and socialization in sports [12]. The work of V. I. Lukashcuk notes that sport as an activity forms an androgynous personality type of women and leads to increasing masculinity of men [28]. Gender features in the choice of sports, the manifestation of psychophysical and boys and girls motor abilities were studied by M. Slingerland, L. Haerens, G. Cardon, L. Borghouts (2014), B. Antala, V. Dancikova (2012), Wenchao Li (2013) ), E. Miloshova (2012), J. Sedlacek, P. Jankovsky, M. Zvonar (2012), S. Stavrev, V. Tsvetkov (2012) [29, 46, 51, 52, 53].

But despite the considerable amount of work on the problem it must be stated the lack of systematic and comprehensive approach to studying the historical bases for the origin of the gender approach to the development of the physical education of children, teenagers and youth that determined the relevance of our study.

**The purpose of this article** is to study the historical bases of the gender approach in physical education and discover the substantive characteristic of the category «gender» in the field of physical culture and sport.

## **Material and methods**

The paper concentrates on such complex of methods as speculative methods (analysis, comparison, generalization, systematization, theoretical modeling) that were studied with the view to generalization the experience of scientists who are studying the gender approach in education and personal development, modern approaches to the development and improvement of the system of physical education and identify the problem field of research;

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## **Results of the research**

The gender approach in the field of physical culture and sports has certain features that makes it a separate area of gender knowledge of structural and functional approaches according to which all pedagogical and socio-cultural aspects of physical education of youth can have a gender dimension. Studying the history of physical education of youth through the prism of gender, Ukrainian and foreign scientists insist on the relationship of gender, differentiated and personality-oriented approaches as the basis of the humanizing the educational process [23, 39].

The deepening into the history of philosophy and pedagogy leads to the conclusion that all the great and outstanding educators in general were both well-known philosophers and on the contrary almost every great philosopher is usually completed the “construction” of its philosophical system by ethics the main content of which was the teaching of morality, the theory of education and upbringing [31].

Take, for example, ancient philosophers, Thales and Democritus, Socrates and Plato, Aristotle and Parmenides. Were they just philosophers? Did not they see life? Were not they interested in the fate of a man, his education and upbringing? Of

course, they were and they saw. Their ethical views are pure (theoretical) pedagogy. Only with the difference that it was expressed at the appropriate categorical level, systematized in accordance with the general worldview of that time [31, 41]. Since ancient times in the society there was unequal value of men and women motivated by their different nature because the woman was “always explicitly or implicitly coded in the concepts of emotion, sensuality, body” which always received negative polarization being in antiquity the opposite of the greatest values: spiritual and rational which represented the male principle [2, 25, 29]. In particular, in ancient times, Plato of Athens (427-347 BC) introduced the concept of “androgynes” expressing the idea of gender equality. His attitude towards the woman was contradictory. On the one hand, the thinker thought she was beneath the creature. On the other hand, in the ideal state he described the woman could participate in all affairs in a line with the man. These ideas will be realized in the works of many experts including gender psychology [2, 29]. Aristotle Stagiret's reflections (384-322 BC) on the relationship between husband and wife in the family, on the limitation of the population for harmonious relations in society, on the division of labor are still of interest [2, 25, 29]. He considered that success in the state could only be with a small population, so that men under 37 years of age and women under 18 years of age were not allowed to have children. The history of philosophy in which pedagogy and psychology have developed for a long time, shows that boys education was different from girls education in all periods of development of the society [42].

Physical education as a specialised field of social activity separated from physical labour appeared more than 8,000 years ago. Physical education as a specialised area of social activity separated from physical labour appears more than 8,000 years old. At this time gender and age rites of initiation were associated with the boys and girls' transition into adulthood. Before that they had to get appropriate knowledge and skills of tribal life and to acquire the necessary physical and moral adulthood [22, 23, 26, 29].

Taking into account the problem of this study it was traced the historical, pedagogical and cultural background of the origin of the gender approach in

education based on retrospective analysis. In general, physical education in ancient times existed in Spartan and Athenian systems. During the period of prosperity of Hellenic culture in Greece there were two poleis with different systems of physical education, which became a model for other of ancient Greece Sparta and Athens [26]. According to traditions and laws a Spartan woman had to go to the gym as well as men to keep fit to the benefit of state and family. From a child girls like boys and with the boys did physical exercises and at the same time girls were with naked body. Women, wives and mothers were involved in upbringing boys as brave warriors and girls as patriots of Sparta who were ready to sacrifice. Physical education was based on running, wrestling, discus and javelin throwing and was compulsory for both sexes.

Ancient Egypt (from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennia BC) had a sufficiently high level of family education. Relations between a woman and a man in the family were based on egalitarian basis so both boys and girls were given equal attention. Until the age of four mother taught her children at home, then boys and girls attended a comprehensive school. Except studying the science young boys of upper classes did physical exercises like swimming, shooting or running. History shows that even at that time boys' and girls' types of physical activity were different. Egyptian boys played more often active games, competed in strength and agility when girls not neglecting such activities loved dancing [9, 10, 26].

In the history of ancient India (the 6<sup>th</sup> A.D. and the 8<sup>th</sup> A.D.) women of the Vedic epoch enjoyed greater rights than women of Greece, Rome and the Mediterranean countries.

The relations between the sexes in ancient China are expressed by the means of analogy, metaphor and symbols. They clearly embody the features of the natural and social order in one person. Yin and Yang symbolize complementarity, interdependence and mutual transformation. The classification of Yin and Yang is relative. The borderline between Yin and Yang varies depending on the sex, age and status of the people. In regard to the man the woman is in a subordinate status but in regard to the son and the servant she is in the dominant status of mother and mistress.

Ancient Chinese mythology confirms that every human body contains both male and female elements. C. Jung said that in collective unconsciousness of each individual there were two different archetypes “soul” (anima) that personified the female principle (obscure feelings, mood, ability to love, sense of nature, etc.) and “spirit” (animus) physical strength, initiative and rationality [44]. A man should express his feminine qualities with masculine ones and a woman should show her masculine qualities as well as feminine ones. If these necessary attributes stay undeveloped, the result will be unilateral growth and personality functioning. Only the combination of soul and spirit ensures the harmonious development of the individual [45].

Physical education in the Middle Ages is even more divided from working practice and military activity. Thus, in the early period of feudalism different religious trends which in general (with the exception of Buddhism) had negative attitude to physical education also had an impact on it.

The period of the Renaissance (the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries) was determined the appearance of theoretical treatises of writers, humanists, utopian socialists, teachers and doctors on the organization of physical education. By the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century there were the first attempts of introducing physical education to the school day. The foundation for the development of natural science basis of physical education were works on anatomy and biomechanics of Leonardo da Vinci (1452 - 1519), on anatomy of Andrea Vesalius (1514 - 1564) and physiology of William Harvey (1578 - 1657) [9, 10, 32 ].

Thus, in the ancient world the system of upbringing children of different sexes was based on a differentiated approach which was based on the traditional division of social roles of men and women in society, the removal of women from activities outside the family home. First of all, physical education was aimed at preparing the child for the role of a man or a woman.

A great contribution to the development of physical education of the New Age (the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>centuries) belongs to the Czech teacher J. A. Comenius (1592-1670) who developed and proposed a classroom system of education and also believed that girls should be educated together with boys. The scholar recommended to build the



process of learning, education and physical development using a system of pedagogical observations taking into account the age and individual characteristics of children [37].

The analysis of different pedagogical systems showed that in general until the 18<sup>th</sup> century the public education of girls was not given much importance as the main task of women was procreation. And, only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century public figures, philosophers and representatives of natural sciences began to consider the possibility of purposeful education of girls not only for family life, but also for public [42]. Further development of humanities and natural sciences during the age of Enlightenment led to the fact that all famous teachers, doctors and philosophers began to consider physical education as an integral part of the comprehensive education of a member of society. By contrast with ancient times physical education for girls was paid more attention.

Thus, the facts show that at different stages of human development, attitude toward physical education of both sexes was changing but the main thing was a differentiated approach which was based on the traditional distribution of social roles of men and women in society.

J. J. Rousseau developed the theory of sex-differentiated education the main idea of which was due to relationship between behavior and person's life strategy according to his biological sex. This means acceptance of priority of biological sex over social [43].

J. J. Rousseau in his works emphasized that it is impossible to consider that one sex is better than the other and at that time it is impossible to balance them. The purpose, methods and approaches to the upbringing of boys and girls should be different because biological gender differences contain different emotional, cognitive and personal characteristics. Based on these postulates the scientist considered necessary to introduce differentiated education of boys and girls from the first days of their life [3].

In the 16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> centuries Ukrainian theory and practice of physical education were developed to a considerable degree under the influence of works of Russian

educator, anatomist and physician P. F. Lesgaft (1837-1909). In the fundamental work “Guide to physical education for school-age children” he substantiated the concept of physical education [27]. He insisted that the systems of physical education subordinate to the laws of physiology. Alongside the development of physiology physical exercises should be constantly revised and improved [23]. P.F. Lesgaft implemented his pedagogical views in the process of training physical education teachers [27].

In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in many countries around the world much attention was given to the problem of women’s education and their participation in different types of physical activity. During the Modern Age in Western European philosophical and anthropological thought the physical education of the younger generation especially women became a relevant task for the governments of European countries, including Ukraine. However, among the main tasks of women's education in our country there was not the education of a freeman. First of all, the woman was the progenitor and that is why taking care of her health was important. And, at the same time, a large number of different, often controversial theories of sex emerged in world science in this period [2, 21, 29].

In the late of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the situation in society changed in many Western countries such as France, England and the United States, movement for the liberation of women became popular. But despite the fact that feminists achieved the right to participate in municipal elections and be school teachers, it can hardly be said that women became equal to men [2, 29].

Thus, the above changes in our and Western European culture penetrate into the wider social context and build the foundation of social relations, that became background of social relations in society. As for physical education it received the status of a school subject all over the world. Therapeutic physical training was accepted in medicine and the study of different psychical phenomenon that occurred under the influence of physical activity begun [9, 10]. Sports events began to have an emotional impact on a person as well as art. People of different classes and different sexes found in physical culture the means to protect their own interests. In most

publications and statements of the time, there was a very substantial reservation that exercise should not harm femininity [7, 29].

In the early of the 20<sup>th</sup> century problems of psychology of sex and intersexual relations were not studied in our country because psychological science in Ukraine was going through institutionalization which was succeeded by scientific and organizational transformations. Naturally there were not any domestic publications on the psychology of sex during this time period and the attention of scientists was focused on the work of foreign scholars as S. Freud, K. Jung and many others. The status and role of woman in society, her psychological characteristics in comparison with the men's characteristics at this time were mainly statesmen, philosophers, representatives of natural sciences rather than psychologists [34].

Further development of physical education in the 20<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> centuries characterized in accordance with sociocultural and humanistic oriented changes in the life of our society. Professor Oksana Vatsiba studying the history of the development of physical culture and sports in Ukraine found out that the first fundamental works on the theoretical basics of physical education and sports training appeared in the early 1930s. Among them there were synthetic works on theory of sports training by H. Hoske "Trenirovka k sorevnovaniiam" (Kharkiv, 1929), D. Kradman "Zhenshchina v sporte" (Kharkiv, 1931) [4].

There are fundamental changes in the historical social roles of man and woman, image transformation of femininity and masculinity and formation of gender culture of people. Feminist views historically preceded gender processes. Widely accepted in the 1960s and 1980s they demanded to improve women's status and protect their rights [21]. These processes which are too polarized and focused on the problems of only one sex took on their role of overcoming significant disbalance of social and sexual relations and drawing attention to the world community to the women's problems [20].

The evolution of gender development, its historicity has certainly positive importance because it breaks the established social mentality of the men's dominant role and women's minor role in almost all spheres of public life including physical

culture and sports. At this time women are actively involved in sports which is an area where the social conditioning of femininity and masculinity, traditional gender stereotypes and gender-based behavior are very noticeable. For example, until 1952 only cavalymen were allowed to compete in the Olympic equestrian sport. And, only before the Olympics in Helsinki restrictions on gender and professional features were lifted. However, there are still certain restrictions but they are characterized as more male or female.

In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gender research became active and reached a new level. Three fundamental studies contributed to a kind of revolution that took place in the psychology of gender roles and the emergence of a “new psychology of sex”. These are the works of E. McCobby and K. Jacqueline, J. Mani and A. Erhard who showed the power of the socialization effect and S. Bem who proved the inability to oppose the traditional psychology of masculinity and femininity [29, 47].

After analyzing 1,600 studies of psychological gender differences conducted over seven years, E. McCobby and K. Jacqueline came to the conclusion that there are not fundamental innate differences in the psychological characteristics of men and women in many areas of research where these differences were previously recognized; the same differences that young children have are insufficient to justify the traditional inequality of gender social roles that exists in bourgeois society [2]. According to the journal “Psychological Abstracts” 30,000 works on the problem of gender differences were published during the 1950s-1980s [2, 7, 29].

During the 1960s and 1970s of the last century in foreign psychology and during the 1990s in Ukrainian psychology works that include such concepts as “gender”, “gender analysis”, “gender approach”, “gender socialization”, etc. began to appear [25, 29]. Gender psychology established itself as a separate branch of psychological knowledge which contributed to the emergence of research in the field of gender differences to the new level of study. In spite of common perception the word “gender” was borrowed from grammar and introduced into the science of behavior not by American feminists but by the eminent sexologist John Mani in 1955 (Money, 1955). He is the first who introduced the concepts of gender, gender

identity, gender role to describe the inner state of the individual from the point of view feeling like a man or a woman. Mani and his colleagues began to develop a model of the process of forming a person's male or female gender or acquiring qualities typical of both sexes when they combined available information with the results of their own clinical research. As a result the term “gender” was included in the scientific context first of all to emphasize not the natural but the socio-cultural cause of intersex differences. One of the most authoritative sociologists of our time the Englishman Anthony Giddens explains that “gender” is not physical differences between a man and a woman but socially formed features of masculinity and femininity. According to him gender means social expectations about behavior that are study as appropriate for men and women [8]. The Ukrainian “Encyclopedia of Education” states that gender differences are not a biological difference between men and women but a socio-psychological difference between women's and men's roles played in society by its members [35]. Analysis of the genesis of gender approaches gave an opportunity to determine that for a short time of its existence it was developed in almost all branches of Ukrainian science. So we have to talk about the feasibility and necessity of its introduction in the process of physical education of youth.

It is stated the different interpretation of gender by systematizing the emergence and interpretation of definitions of “gender” from a historical standpoint as a result of the interpreting of literary sources on the problems of treatment of this concept. It should be pointed out that the concept of “gender” can be considered as a historical and social category. The natural gender hierarchy is associated with a functional role model of behavior. Therefore, gender being a culturally and historically determined phenomenon is determined rather socioculturally than biologically. It is also interpreted as a field of ideas about the personal and behavioral characteristics of male and female [24, 25, 29]. E.P. Illin in his work “Stat I gender” referring to foreign authors noted that the concept of “gender” contains features due to biological nature while “gender” provides for those aspects of male and female the causes of which are not known yet [16]. Due to this by contrast with sex gender is a

psychological phenomenon that belongs to the acquired forms of behavior and attitudes associated with biological sex [7]. It should be noted that the definitions of gender in various fields of social knowledge have not yet received well-established and generally accepted interpretation which at last shows an insufficient level of development of the analyzed scientific field. Using a defensible content of gender definitions it has systematized and expanded its interpretation of the introduction of physical culture and sports. Thus, it is theoretically substantiated a need of providing and interpretation the gender approach as a definition in political and social medium, it is pointed out its importance for physical education and sports and proposed for use in research a new term that allows it to be characterized as interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral concept extrapolated, interconnected and appropriate to the development of physical culture and sports in developed democracy. It is claimed that this concept should be understood as *socially modeled behavioural models of women and men extrapolated to different areas of social relations, in the context of our study - the relationship in the field of physical culture and sports* [24, 25].

### **Conclusions / Discussion**

Thus, the development of physical education was historically determined by both social and biological and physiological factors. They include interconnected components that have a significant impact on the stages of formation of physical culture of the individual in its axiological significance. It provides the integrity of the process of forming a gender approach in physical education, completeness at each stage, the succession of stages which is achieved in accordance with the age features and balance of natural, social and cultural aspects of physical culture and dominant activities. Thus, gender issues in physical education became deeper in understanding, wider in sphere of its application, in addition, there were new aspects of its realization [31]. The evolution of gender development, its historicity has certainly positive importance because it breaks the established social mentality of the men's dominant role and women's minor role in almost all spheres of public life including physical culture and sports. After analyzing a large number of scientific and popular science psychological sources I.S. Klotsyna notes that "...most psychologists who

have published research on the problem of differences between men and women assume that the anatomical and physiological differences between people of different sexes naturally have to identify differences in their psychological sphere. According to the professor most of these works cannot be considered gender-oriented despite the fact that their name even includes the word “gender” [18, 19, 33]. She explains that this position of psychologists is due to deep-rooted notions that gender is an essential difference not only at the level of human manifestation as an individual but also at such levels as personality, subject of activity, individuality [18, 19]. A group of scientists headed by I. V. Groshev consider this statement quite controversial. As a result, according to the researcher nowadays the world literature has more than 50,000 works in which the authors state the presence of gender differences in various areas of human ontogenesis [11, p. 10]. After analyzing about 4,000 sources, I. V. Groshev found out a statement of more than 2,500 gender differences [11]. Along the same line of thought, it should be noted that the individual psychological properties of man since he was born are organized into certain programs due to which social factors immediately after birth and possibly before birth, in utero, “come across” rather specific human biology than amorphous human biology [11, p.29]. Therefore, the influence of sex on human development (in this case, a direct impact on the development of physical qualities) is quite important. It cannot be changed because sex is a given determined since birth. To amplify that point it was analyzed the works of outstanding scientist-psychologist B.G. Ananiev who studied sexual characteristics as individual characteristics of man and their connection with the peculiarities of his social behaviour: “Sex is one of the fundamental coordinates of individuality which permeates all human properties especially the coordinate of gender and age variability which has a genetic, constitutional innate program and a naturally determined disposition of people in behaviour and activity” [1, p.169]. It is no surprise at all that physical culture and sports are associated with the manifestation of a person’s physical abilities and they are determined to a high degree by his biological sex. However, studying this problem it was found that it is impossible to ignore biological or social factors, they must be considered in close connection [24,

25]. The study revealed that during organizing the process of physical education of children, teenagers and young people it is necessary to take into account biological sex as a basis for differentiation of motor state (amount, intensity, orientation, etc.) and gender characteristics of interests, needs, motives, values can have both individual and group level of manifestation.

**Prospects for further development in that process.** This study does not spend pass the problem of studying the gender approach in physical education of schoolchildren but raises a number of issues concerning the means and methods in physical education for the formation of individual physical culture of the individual.

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