

GENDER FEATURES OF SELF-DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOLCHILDREN'S PHYSICAL CONDITION

Krutsevich T.Yu., Marchenko O.Yu.

*National University of Physical Culture and Sports of Ukraine
Universities Ukoopspilka "Poltava University of Economics and Trade"*

Abstract. *Purpose:* to study age and gender features of schoolchildren's attitude to their physical "self". *Material:* in the research pupils of 5-11 forms (n=365) participated. They were: 177 boys and 188 girls. Individual profile of personality's physical "self" was studied. For this purpose test-questionnaire was used and self description of physical condition. *Results:* it was found that self assessment of schoolchildren's physical condition was too high. It was in average 80–85% from maximal indicator. It was also found that by all indicators sportsmen had higher self-esteem. For development of boys and girls' individual abilities and bents, overcoming of gender-role stereotypes it is necessary to have knowledge about sex and gender specificities of schoolchildren's physical development as well as about their influence on self esteem and formation of physical qualities. *Conclusions:* we showed that it was possible to correct physical education curriculum and its implementation in educational process.

Key words: schoolchildren, gender, self description of physical condition, physical education, boys, girls.

Introduction

At present study and understanding of gender problems take one first places in different scientific branches. Analysis of documents, scientific observations, materials of sociological questionings permit to say that modern state of physical culture demonstrates contradictory picture in sphere of gender equality in physical education in Ukrainian physical education system. At present there is a problem of typical for physical culture instructors command pedagogic administrating (sometimes destructive forms of interaction with pupils) not correspondence to demands of modern humanistic-oriented system of physical education [3].

Recent years there have been being conducted a lot of researches, devoted to perfection of physical education content [6, 7, 9, 12, 13]. One of such problems, in specialists' opinion, is reduction of interest to traditional forms of physical culture. In particular, in our previous works we underlined low level of pupils' motivation for physical culture and sports, absence of opportunities of training forms' choice, discontent of traditional physical culture forms [8, 14, 15]. Studying of motivation for physical exercises' practicing and place of personal physical culture in value hierarchy of modern youth were in works by O. Marchenko (2009, 2010); G. Gonchar (2011); O. Rymar, O. Kutsenko (2011); S. Korol (2012) et al. Influence of social factors, which condition formation of children's and adolescents' interest to physical culture and sports trainings are described in works by I. Omelyanenko (1999), N. Sinkevych (2000), G. Bezverkhnia (2004), A. Moskaliova (2005). We think that at present stage of scientific researches, in context of physical culture reformation it is necessary to pay attention to youth's age and gender characteristics for formation of motivation for physical culture and sports practicing. Rather important is gender aspect of axiological paradigm: as on to day it is impossible to identify physical culture values only with masculine ones. The latter is stereotype thinking and makes impossible modern humanistic-oriented physical education system [29, 33]. However, among available scientific materials we did not find works, which would elucidate gender characteristics of value orientations' formation as well as formation of motivations, schoolchildren's demands in sphere of physical culture and sports. Results of gender strategies in educational space are short-term and sometimes unexpected. Inveterate ideas about gender roles do not correspond to economic, political and social demands of society. Modern epoch conditions demand in re-understanding of traditional approach to schoolchildren's physical education for searching of optimal approaches and overcoming of gender determined social deformations. It is quite urgent for Ukrainian present life. Idea of appearance and physical qualities includes knowledge about own constitution, body sizes, physical condition, physical gender distinctions (D. Fidlander, 1995). Settings for attitude to own body are formed on the base of existing in society culture. They are mastered by a child through estimation and statements of surrounding people [4]. Thus, we can say that among factors, influencing on self-regulation, one of the most important places belongs to physical "self". Content of physical "self" (like "Self" in general) changes in the process of personality's individual progress. Image of body

is formed in ontogeny, depending on motor experience, on assessments of surrounding people, on social-cultural standards and on general “self” conception [2].

E. Erikson notes that physical qualities of adolescents, which are the basis of physical “self”, are possible assumption about formation of its identity and “self” conception in general [22, 23]. M. O. Mdivany (1991) writes that physical “self” has own structure and content [8]. But in connection with formation of boys and girls’ sex-role stereotypes, physical “self” can partially change. The existing status of the problem’s solution; its importance for organization of schoolchildren’s physical education’s differentiation justify importance of this topic for scientific research.

Purpose, tasks of the work, material and methods

The purpose of the research is to study age and gender features of schoolchildren’s attitude to their physical “self” and influence of physical “self” indicators on their self-esteem.

We studied: schoolchildren’s attitude to own physical “self”; gender distinctions in different age boys and girls’ understanding of own physical condition; individual profile of personality’s physical self. We used test-questionnaire by Ye.V. Bochenkova “Self-description of physical condition”, which is a modified version of well known methodic by A. M. Prykhozhan [4].

The questionnaire contains 70 statements, which relate to sphere of human physical development. The questionnaire determines 10 indicators of physical condition and indicator of general self assessment. They are: health, coordination of movements, physical functioning, structure of body, sport bents, physical “self”, appearance, strength, endurance, self esteem.

In the research pupils of 5-11 forms (n=365) participated. They were: 177 boys and 188 girls. From all respondents, 38 practice definite kind of sports (swimming, basketball, athletic, wrestling, thae-quan do). Other schoolchildren attend ordinary physical culture lessons and do not practice sports additionally.

Assessment of results was fulfilled by correlating of the received results with generally accepted standards of personality’s self assessment.

In compliance with these standards we used self esteem scale by the following indicators:

- Very high level (too high)– 75–100% from maximal quantity of points;
- High self-esteem– 60–74% from maximal quantity of points;
- Average level– 45–59% from maximal quantity of points;
- Low self-esteem – less than 45% from maximal quantity of points.

Results of the research

In table 1 we give results of self description of our respondents’ physical condition. (See table 1).

By our data practically by all scales mean digital values of 10-12 years’ boys and girls differ rather substantially. Boys assessed their condition higher than girls by some indicators. But by such indicators as “sport abilities” and “physical activity” 5 form girls assessed themselves higher than boys. Such result can be explained by girls’ wish to practice professionally the chosen kind of ports and to win competitions. It should be considered that sport classes were researched. We saw that in average boys and girls’ results were from 70% to 85% from maximal points. It witnesses about too high self assessment of own physical fitness. Separate analysis of results by 11 scales of self description shows that boys self assessment was higher by many indicators than the girls’ one. It concerns also such indicators as “body slimness” and “appearance”.

Table 1. Mean values of indicators of questionnaire “Self description of physical condition” (% from maximal quantity of points)

No	Groups of respondents	Sex	Quantity of respondents	Indicators										
				Health	Movements' coordination	Physical activity	Body slimness	Sport abilities	General physical "self"	Appearance	Strength	flexibility	Endurance	Self esteem
1	5 form	b	n=15	86,11	89,81	81,30	97,04	81,67	87,78	74,07	79,44	85,00	81,67	86,53
		д	n=28	74,70	83,93	89,58	85,71	84,52	82,14	71,43	73,81	83,53	92,66	83,11
2	6 form	b	n=23	83,24	81,52	76,09	88,89	81,52	81,64	75,97	74,88	76,45	78,02	84,51
		g	n=17	76,96	81,05	73,53	83,99	72,71	82,03	70,10	65,36	67,48	58,50	79,41
3	7 form	b	n=15	81,81	76,11	73,89	73,89	73,15	81,67	79,26	73,52	72,78	80,00	80,69
		g	n=12	81,08	80,79	71,30	81,94	71,76	85,19	85,42	75,93	71,53	64,58	87,85
4	8 form	b	n=22	86,84	90,66	83,59	94,95	88,89	92,93	90,15	90,91	83,21	87,12	84,75
		g	n=21	77,08	70,37	67,86	71,69	62,04	74,47	69,58	67,33	69,05	57,94	75,20
5	9 form	b	n=38	80,43	83,48	77,41	91,08	76,17	81,07	80,04	78,80	72,51	80,26	81,14
		g	n=26	75,72	78,85	78,95	78,63	74,25	77,24	79,59	68,70	70,73	67,74	82,85
6	10 form	b	n=12	76,91	74,31	79,40	84,72	69,21	68,98	73,61	66,67	62,50	62,27	78,30
		g	n=15	78,33	70,37	52,78	78,33	57,04	72,04	77,59	54,26	68,89	40,74	83,89
7	11 form	b	n=25	80,42	86,89	77,22	89,33	76,67	78,44	76,33	78,11	73,00	74,22	81,75
		g	n=30	80,83	82,69	72,78	76,39	70,37	72,59	77,78	68,24	69,63	59,26	83,13
8	SHG	b	n=35	79,40	68,10	52,54	82,54	60,24	78,49	83,65	65,40	63,97	49,92	86,55
		g	n=35	79,40	68,10	52,54	82,54	60,24	78,49	83,65	65,40	63,97	49,92	86,55
9	AG	b	n=16	85,42	93,75	87,85	75,69	83,33	80,56	77,78	91,32	76,74	78,82	85,42
		g	n=16	85,42	93,75	87,85	75,69	83,33	80,56	77,78	91,32	76,74	78,82	85,42
10	T	b	n=11	83,14	77,27	79,29	80,30	74,75	78,79	71,97	73,99	75,51	74,75	78,60
		g	n=4	80,21	90,28	83,33	79,86	75,69	79,17	81,94	65,97	84,72	80,56	87,50

Notes: SHG – special health group, AG athletic gymnastic, T – Thae quan do, b – boys, g – girls.

The highest indicator of 10-12 year old boys was by scale “Coordination of movements”– 90.7% from maximal. Other marks: “body slimness”– 96.7%, “health”– 87.8%. They were evident too high self assessment of physical qualities, which determine physical “self” of adolescent. The lowest indicators were by scale “appearance” (72%) and “strength”– 75.6% (from maximal indicator). 10–12 years’ girls related the highest points to scale “endurance” (92% from maximal indicator), “physical activity” (89.3% from maximal indicator) and “slimness” (86.5%). The lowest indicators girls marked in scales “flexibility”– 67.4% and “strength”–65.3%.

Further we shall analyze the results of questionnaire “Self description of physical condition”, which we obtained in testing of 13-15 years age boys and girls. Comparison of results by 8 scales (from 11 proposed scales) showed that 7 form girls assessed their physical abilities higher than boys. Their highest indicators were by scale “strength”– 90.9%, “appearance”– 89.5% (from maximal points). The lowest indicators were marked by scales “physical activity”– 71.3% (from maximal points) and “sport abilities”– 73.7% (from maximal points). We again see evidently too high self esteem of 7 form girls and very low level of physical activity and too low self assessment of their sport abilities.

13–15 year old boys with age had subjectively better attitude to own structure. It is confirmed by the fact that indicators by scale “body slimness” – 94.9% (from maximal points) and “general physical “self”–92.9% (from maximal points) were the highest as well assessment of their strength, which unrealistically for this age, increased and became – 90.9% (from maximal points).

Concerning indicators by scale “strength”, we have the following picture: gender distinction in this physical quality’s self assessment in favor of boys can be explained by existing in society ideas, that strength is purely male quality. Increase of boys’ points by this scale can be result of increasing of constitutional-physiological difference between boys and girls. But it is sooner a result of influence of sex-role stereotypes on adolescents’ self assessment.

It is interesting that by scale “general physical “self” boys’ indicator is also too high (85.1% – 92.9% from maximal points). With it the lowest indicators of physical self were by scales “sport abilities” and “physical activity”.

General level of senior pupils' (15-16 years' age) self assessment becomes more realistic than the same of junior schoolchildren. The boys' self assessment of own constitution subjectively is the highest. Girls have more demanding approach to self assessment of their constitution and have lower points. It can be explained by more realistic self assessment. Practically equal percentage boys and girls have in assessment of "health" (76–80% from maximal indicator). "Physical activity" was assessed equally low by girls and boys. Self assessment by scales "strength" and "endurance" was higher in boys. But "appearance" was higher assessed by 10-11 form girls than by boys.

In our research we also compared indicators of physical condition self description of boys, who practice and do not practice sports. The received results witness, that by all indicators sportsmen have higher self esteem. Comparison of girls' results (those, who practice and do not practice sports) showed that by all indicators self assessment is higher in girls, who practice sports. Analysis of self assessment indicators and percents from maximal points permitted to find results of general self assessment of our respondents' physical condition (see tables 2, 3).

Table 2. General self assessment of physical condition (boys)

Respondents' group	General quantity of respondents	Too high		High		Average		Low	
		Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%
5 form	(n=15)	6	40,00	9	60,00	-	-	-	-
6 form	(n=23)	2	8,70	19	82,61	2	8,70	-	-
7 form	(n=15)	1	6,67	10	66,67	4	26,67	-	-
8 form	(n=22)	11	50,00	11	50,00	-	-	-	-
9 клас	(n=38)	10	26,32	18	47,37	10	26,32	-	-
10 form	(n=12)	-	-	7	58,33	4	33,33	1	8,33
11 form	(n=25)	5	20,00	15	60,00	5	20,00	-	-
Athletic gymnastic	(n=16)	6	37,50	8	50,00	2	12,50	-	-
Thae-quan do	(n=11)	3	27,27	6	54,55	1	9,09	1	9,09

Table 3. General self assessment of physical condition (girls)

Respondents' group	General quantity of respondents	Too high		High		Average		Low	
		Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%
5 form	(n=28)	9	32,14	12	42,86	7	25,00	-	-
6 form	(n=17)	3	17,65	7	41,18	7	41,18	-	-
7 form	(n=12)	2	16,67	7	58,33	3	25,00	-	-
8 form	(n=21)	3	14,29	8	38,10	8	38,10	2	9,52
9 клас	(n=26)	4	15,38	12	46,15	8	30,77	2	7,69
10 form	(n=15)	-	-	3	20,00	11	73,33	1	6,67
11 form	(n=30)	1	3,33	16	53,33	13	43,33	-	-
Special health group	(n=35)	-	-	20	57,14	15	42,86	-	-
Thae-quan do	(n=4)	1	25,00	2	50,00	1	25,00	-	-

Boys of average school age have inadequate high and too high general self assessment of own physical condition. The girls of this age have lower level of general physical condition self assessment. If to compare boys-sportsmen with boys not sportsmen we see that general level of sportsmen's self assessment is much higher.

Comparing self assessment levels of boys and girls we can say that senior school age girls have more objective attitude to self description of own physical "self". In answers of our respondents (both boys and girls) the highest indicators were in scales "self esteem", "appearance", and "health". The lowest indicators were in scale "endurance".

In the whole we can state that with age self assessment of schoolchildren's physical condition becomes more differentiated. Especially it is noticed in senior school age girls. Boys also have changes but insignificant.

Discussion

Results of our research of age and gender features of schoolchildren's attitude to their physical "self" coincide with results of scientific research of Ye.V. Bochenkova [4]. She also studied self assessment of boys and girls. By her results boys' self assessment of their physical abilities was higher than girls. But general self assessment of girls was too high. General level of all respondents' self assessment in researches by Ye.V. Bochenkova was too high. In study of age peculiarities of physical condition's self description it was noted that junior school age girls (10-12 years' age) indicators of self description was higher, comparing with indicators of senior school age girls (15-17 years' age) in 8 indicators from 11. With it general self assessment of boys was higher than girls'. Such results coincide with data, received by Ye.P. Ilyin. The author notes that senior pupils – boys in the whole are more content with their appearance and assess it higher than girls [5].

V.P. Sytnikov also writes that boys assessed their body characteristics much higher than girls. They give great value to their physical "self" [20]. But such scientists as M.Yu. Stepanova and D.A. Federiakin affirm by results of their study of junior schoolchildren's self description that self assessment and level of demands have no gender distinctions in junior school age. They also write that children's physical development weakly influence on self assessment in 7-10 years' age. It contradicts the results of our previous researches.

Conclusions

It was found that self assessment of schoolchildren's physical condition is of too high character. It is in average 80–85% from maximal indicator. Results of our research witness that schoolchildren's physical condition's self description has gender and age peculiarities. Results of our research prove that with age girls' self assessment becomes more differentiated. But analyzing research materials we found influence of sex-role stereotypes' influence on our respondents' self assessment of their physical "self". We can affirm that for development of boys and girls' individual abilities and bents, for overcoming of sex-role stereotypes it is necessary to have knowledge of sex and gender peculiarities of schoolchildren's growth as well as about their influence on self assessment and formation of physical qualities. In our research we also compared indicators of physical condition's self description of sportsmen and not sportsmen. It was found that by all questionnaire indicators self assessment of sportsmen and sportswomen are higher than indicators of boys and girls, who do not practice sports.

Results of our research will permit to correct physical education curriculum and implement it in educational process. Our further researches will be devoted to study of gender characteristics and interconnection of boys' and girls' self assessment with objective indicators of physical qualities' development. For more detail analysis of schoolchildren's physical condition's self description it is planned to study correlations between indicators of boys and girls' physical condition's self description and determination of age and gender distinctions.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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Information about the authors:

Krutsevich T.Yu.; <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5273-6760>; tmfv@ukr.net; National University of Physical Education and Sport of Ukraine; Fizkultury str. 1, Kiev, 03680, Ukraine.

Marchenko O. Iu.; <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2902-5960>; can@uccu.org.ua; Poltava University of Economics and Trade Koval str. 3, Poltava, 36014, Ukraine.

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