



## IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

Pursuing intellectual, physical, and spiritual perfection is a principle that has guided humanity throughout history and is still relevant in our modern world. We can reasonably call this enduring pursuit ‘ideology’ of human development. Physical education is a prerequisite for achieving such perfection today. As a subject in educational systems on a global scale, physical education plays a leading role in the psychological, physical, moral, emotional, intellectual, and other aspects of children and adolescents’ development, as well as in shaping their personality and identity. **Scientific research aimed** to analyze certain ideological aspects of the development of physical education by identifying its characteristic features and specific functions, influenced by various factors—political, economic, socio-cultural, and others. **Scientific research methods** applied were analysis of literary sources, content analysis, and a systematic approach. A theoretical model for the retrospective development of physical education has been developed. **Results:** Following the theoretical model, some of the key ideological aspects in the development of physical education were examined. An attempt was made to provide a comprehensive analysis of its main goals, principles, ideals, and role in the evolution of human society while determining the fundamental nature of its structural and functional formation and development across different historical periods.

**Conclusions:** The presented scientific work on the relevant issues attempts to show and analyse the goals and concepts in the development of physical education from the point of view of its manifestation as a factor, phenomenon, and ideology. Future research in this direction would enrich the scientific experience, revealing more of the fundamental essence and significance of the educational paradigm in physical education.

**Key words:** physical education and sport, ideology, aspects, development, model

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, there are numerous theoretical and practical studies in sports pedagogy and physical education. Depending on their specific goals, these studies are mainly focused on its characteristic features, target aspects (knowledge, skills, competencies), societal prerequisites for its functioning (political, economic), and social dimensions (the influence of physical education on the formation, development, and improvement of students' personalities through active motor and cognitive activity, accompanied by emotional control and moral behavior), current issues in

physical education in the context of globalization, etc. However, relatively few studies have focused on physical education's comprehensive and multifaceted influence from the perspective of its ideological aspects and characteristics.

Pursuing physical and spiritual perfection can be considered ‘modern’ for all times and eras, found in various ideologies of human development. The ancient Greeks defined the state of moral, spiritual, and physical beauty as ‘kalokagathia’ (from the Greek word ‘καλοκαγαθία’). At the same time, the timeless phrase ‘Mens sana in corpore sano’ (translated from Latin as “Healthy mind, healthy body”) by the Roman poet of Antiquity, Decimus Junius Juvenal, firmly supports these views on human development.

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Today, considering physical education and sports as a social phenomenon and a subject within educational systems on a global scale, we can determine that it plays a leading role in the psychological, physical, moral, emotional, intellectual, and overall children and adolescents' development, as well as in shaping their personality and identity. Physical education, a compulsory subject in all students' general education, holds a timeless and strategically important place within the secondary education system (and beyond) (1).

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

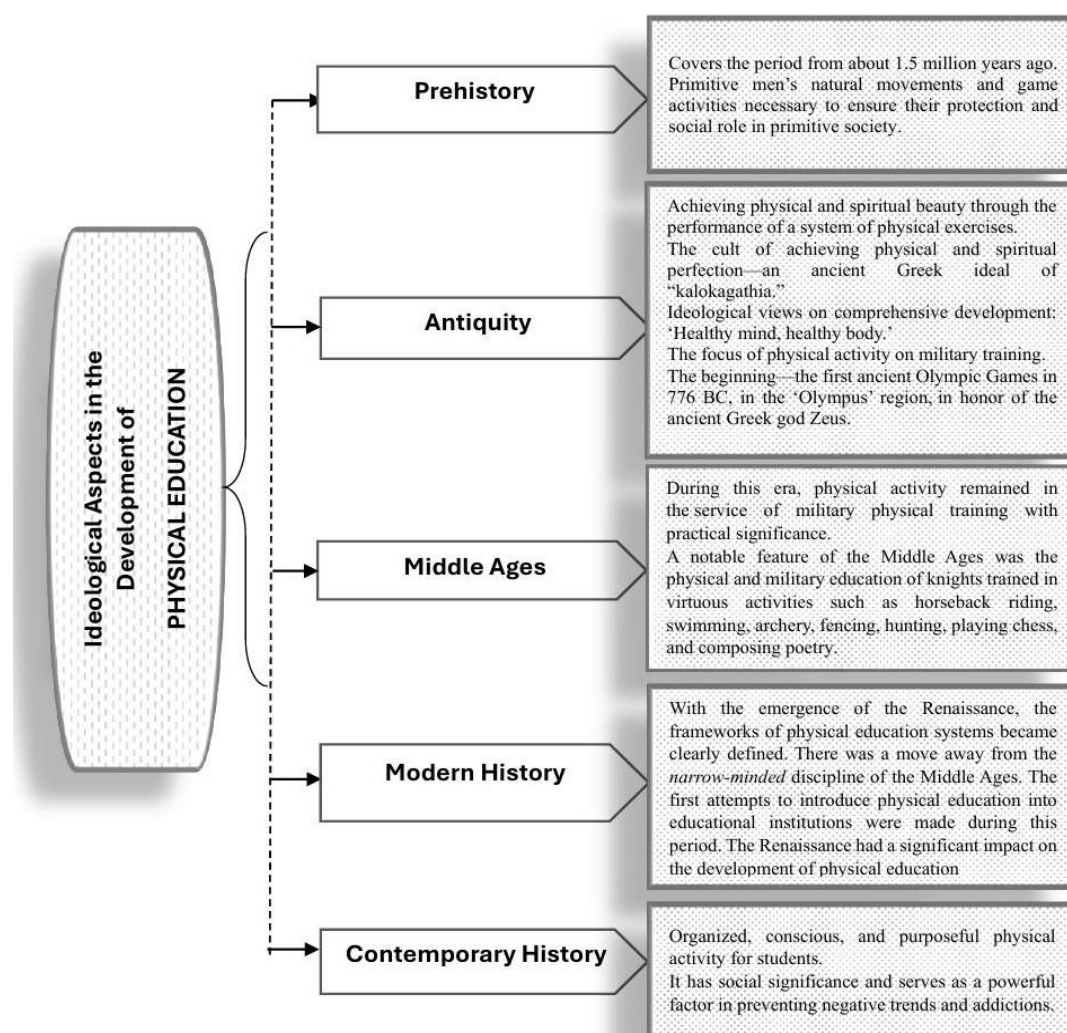
**Scientific research** aims to analyze certain ideological aspects of physical education development by identifying its characteristic features and specific functions influenced by political, economic, and sociocultural factors.

**Research objectives:**

1. To conduct a bibliographic study and theoretical analysis of literary and documentary sources related to the research problem.
2. To analyze the ideological aspects of physical education development from a historical perspective.

**The subject of the research** was the specific goals and concepts of physical education, viewed as a decisive and fundamental factor for the proper development of an individual, its functions as a social phenomenon with significant and enduring value, and its ideological dimensions from a historical perspective.

**Research Methods** - The following scientific research methods were applied: analysis of literary sources, content analysis, and a systematic approach. A theoretical model was developed, systematizing certain ideological aspects in the development of physical education, presented in (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Graphical model of the scientific research

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using the theoretical model, some of the main ideological aspects in the development of physical education were examined. An attempt was made to comprehensively analyze physical education's primary goals, principles, and ideals in human society and their fundamental role in its structural and functional formation and development in different historical periods (Figure 1).

It is undeniable that the emergence of physical culture, with physical education as its building and system-forming element, is closely connected to the rise of humanity. From a historical and retrospective perspective, physical activity and purposeful physical exercises and activities not only originated with the appearance of humans but also evolved and changed throughout different eras.

Basic primitive human activities (walking, running, crawling, squeezing through, climbing, jumping) that secure food, shelter, and survival are considered the beginning of purposeful physical activity. During the tribe system, the first educational interactions between people appeared. They were carried out through games that had a predominantly imitative and symbolic character (2).

At a later stage, the evolution and development of physical education passed through the era of Antiquity and the Ancient societies - Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, and the Ancient East. This period began in the VIII century BC and lasted until the V century AD. The ideological direction of physical activity during this era was military-applied training. Classic examples include Sparta and Athen's systems in Ancient Greece and the gladiator schools in Ancient Rome. Physical exercises in the first slave-owning states were used to reinforce class dominance. Different physical education systems emerged depending on individual states' political, economic, and cultural development. It was the era when the first schools appeared, like the pedotribe school in Ancient Greece, where physical training was conducted, and children learned gymnastics and the *palaestrae*, where they practiced jumping, running, and throwing javelins and discs (3). This supports the idea that achieving physical beauty and harmony in human development during that period was elevated to a cult (4). At that time, the first Ancient Olympic Games were initiated (776 BC, held in the region of 'Olympia') in honor of the ancient Greek god Zeus. Even then, the principles and ideological

views that physical education should be developed and refined alongside intellectual (mental) and moral education were established. The dimensions of physical education during the era of Antiquity can be viewed as an alternative to the concept of 'cultural hegemony' by Antonio Gramsci (the Italian writer, politician, and sociologist who first introduced this term). A civil society's beliefs, values, and customs could introduce and impose its worldview as a social norm (5). At that time, this was expressed as a dominant ideology aimed at achieving physical perfection. Even then, the great philosopher Plato stated that 'ignorant is the person who cannot read, write, or swim,' and his student Aristotle declared that prolonged physical inactivity irreversibly destroys a person (6).

During the Middle Ages, physical education remained in service to military affairs. A characteristic feature of this period was the physical and military training of knights, who were trained in the following virtues: horseback riding, swimming, archery, fencing, hunting, playing chess, and composing poetry. During that time, physical education became an integral part of societal development.

With the emergence of the Renaissance in the XIV century, physical education systems became clearly defined. Many humanists advocated for liberation from the narrow-minded discipline of the Middle Ages. Several prominent humanists made the first attempts to introduce physical education into schools: John Amos Comenius, who wrote 'The Great Didactic' and called for universal education, and Vittorino da Feltre, the founder of the modern 'green school,' with ideals of children's comprehensive physical development, etc.

The ideological views in the theory of Jean-Jacques Rousseau regarding natural and nature-based education for children had a strong impact. At that time, Johann Christoph Friedrich Guts-Muths published his first comprehensive books on physical exercises. Among them was 'Gymnastics for Youth,' published in 1793, where he outlines two primary forms of gymnastics - natural and artificial (7). The work was translated into various languages and spread to different European countries. In it, the author praises physical education as highly beneficial and defines it as enhancing a person's physical abilities and achieving beauty.

Some authors' opinions regarding the ideological aspects of physical education are of particular interest. They define it in two main directions - its development and functioning before and after World War II. In the years leading up to the war, physical education and its ideological views were primarily focused on military-applied training. However, after the war, the focus of physical education shifted to 'education' for a healthy lifestyle, which should be learned and developed in a lasting manner. A fundamental factor in this shift is mandatory physical education for all school students (8). Today, physical education has an organized and purposeful nature aimed at improving healthy lifestyles and the multifaceted development of students' personalities through systematic engagement in physical activities and sports (9-8). As a subject in the educational system, it evolves continually. By addressing health, educational, and moral tasks, educational goals are achieved, social functions are successfully implemented, and universal values are promoted among students (10-11). It can be said that the social significance of physical education today defines it as a 'social phenomenon.'

For even greater effectiveness, social applicability, and in search of solutions to existing problems, the following directions for development could be outlined:

- ✓ Focusing modern political influences on the development of physical education among students.

- ✓ Optimizing children and adolescents' physical activity regimen through physical education.
- ✓ Creating public attitudes toward a healthy lifestyle and motivation to engage in physical activities and sports (12).

Some authors define these directions as fundamental, with lasting (residual) societal influence (13).

The successful implementation of the aforementioned aspects of development is a critical factor in the prevention of smoking, alcohol use, and other issues. They also have lasting significance for overcoming adverse trends in adolescents' health. Nowadays, insufficient physical activity directly correlates with the manifestations of obesity, pulmonary and cardiovascular diseases, spinal deformities, flat feet, and others.

The attempt above for a brief retrospective analysis of physical education's main principles and functions throughout the centuries outlines the development and changes in its ideals. Society's continuous striving for physical improvement manifests as a complex social and cultural phenomenon, determined by political, economic, and societal influences, referred to in the scientific literature as physical culture (14) **(Figure 2)**.

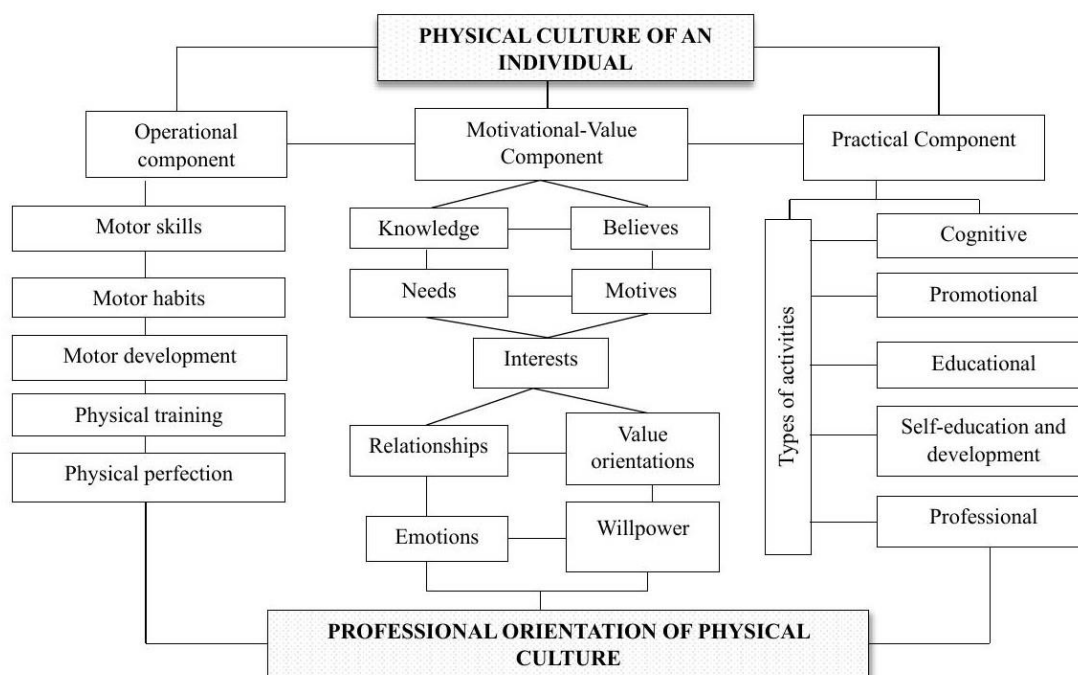


Figure 2. Physical culture of the individual (Marinov, T., 2014)

Physical education, as a fundamental element and a system-forming factor in the structure of physical culture, creates and develops motor skills and habits, shaping beliefs, needs, and interests. It serves as a means of developing the motivational and value-based traits of the individual—communication, willpower, emotions, and relationships. It acts as a supportive and developmental factor for people with disabilities, removing barriers in various situations and creating challenges. An essential characteristic of physical education is the opportunity it provides for the professional realization of adolescents and young people in fields related to sports, education, organization and management, healthcare, and many other areas associated with active physical activity.

## CONCLUSION

The presented scientific study on the relevant issues is a distinctive attempt to show and analyze the goals and concepts in the development of physical education from the perspective of its manifestation as a factor, phenomenon, and ideology. Future research in this direction would enrich the scientific experience, revealing more of its fundamental essence and significance within the educational paradigm.

Physical education started developing with the emergence of humanity, but it is not limited to just physical development; it also serves numerous other functions. It is a part of the overall culture of an individual and society as a whole.

As a subject, it has proven its place in educational systems worldwide. However, today, continuous efforts are needed to establish and improve it and to foster lasting positive attitudes toward engaging in physical activities and sports, not only among the youngest (children) but also among people of all ages.

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