Original Article

Equality of the genders in Physical Education: The Students' Perceptions

KATERINA ZARAVIGKA¹, VASSILIS PANTAZIS²

^{1,2}Human studies, Hellenic Open University, University of Thessaly, GREECE.

Published online: September 21, 2012

(Accepted for publication September 10 2012)

DOI:10.7752/jpes.2012.03052; <http://dx.doi.org/10.7752/jpes.2012.03052>

Abstract:

There continues to be an on-going discussion on the issue of gender equality. Despite the fact that there are fewer inequalities between both genders, several researches on the issue verified that, even, young people continued to reproduce stereotype perceptions and that gender inequalities remained obvious. In this research, we tried to investigate the concept of equality between both genders in taking Physical Education by interrogating high-school students about their perceptions of their gender. In seeking the factors, which influenced the formation of students' perceptions in the educational environment, we studied the curriculums and syllabuses of the Physical Education modules for the High School students as well as their education, we asked the instructors for their perceptions and the expectations of. Our research was based on data which was collected and analyzed using questionnaires distributed to the students of two High Schools within the greater area of Athens in Greece. One hundred-forty nine valid questionnaires were collected and analyzed in order to extract the research results which we present and comment on in this paper.

Keywords: Physical Education, gender, education, perceptions, equality, participation.

Introduction

Gender in Education is a topic which, especially the last two decades, has occupied the academic and research community both internationally and in Greece. Scientific thinking has developed aimed at keeping record of the current situation; and presenting research findings. These findings related to the main factors of the educational process particular to the distinction and the relationship of equality and, finally, by providing useful conclusions and recommendations.

In Greece, investigations on students' attitudes to gender were limited or, even, non-existent for educational items such as Physical Education (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakos, 1996; Vitsilaki-Soroniat, 1997; Deliyanni-Kouimtzi & Sakka, 1998; Deliyanni, Sakka, Psalti, Frosi, Arkoumani, Stogiannidou & Sygkollitou, 2000; and Frosi 2008). We were prompted by the research gap to investigate the students' perceptions in relation to gender in Physical Education.

Physical Education in Nowadays School- Objectives

Physical Education is part of the school's structure and the Greek educational system *«is a basic mission for the State and has the objective to train Greeks in moral, spiritual, vocational and physical training education»* (Constitution of Greece, Article 16, paragraph 2). This concept is not identical to physical activity because it contains a broader view and focuses on the whole child, including cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects.

Curriculum Physical Education

Physical activity is the content, product and result of the Physical Education Curriculum which is consistent with the Interdisciplinary Unified Framework for the Greek Studies Programme, DEPPS (curriculum integration or thematic teaching). It is constructed from a single approach to either grade education or the training programme. This common approach includes learning objectives; teaching methods; and educational assessment etc.

Some of Physical Education's main objectives are to enhance the student's health; to learn kinetic skills; and, above all, to acquire positive attitudes to physical pursuit after finishing school (lifelong exercise). In addition to investing in the students' lives, an implicitly obvious key objective is the inclusion and integration of the child through respect for the rules of Physical Education activities.

The purpose of Physical Education, in education, is «to contribute primarily to the physical development of pupils and also help mental and spiritual cultivation and the harmonious integration into society» (Government Gazette, No. B. No.304/13-03-03: sex, Annex, Volume II, p. 4281). As stated in the Curriculum, the priority is to develop students' motor skills and through them to cultivate their natural abilities and enhance their health. Largely, however, the reproduction, through the school system, of the society's values and beliefs are being transferred through the so-called para-programma or hidden curriculum which acts, in parallel, to the official curriculum.

Teachers' Expectations and Perceptions relating to Sex

Many researchers supported the view that schools were institutions which bred social inequalities (Bernstein 1977; Delamont 1980; Gogou-Critikou 1994; Giagkoumidis 1997). The disparities are not only economic but, also, class or racial aspects of social structure. In contrast, it concerns both sexes since school plays the traditional division of roles which leads to a relationship of power exercised by men towards women. The family environment is the one which, from the moment of birth, teaches and forms the gender roles. However, it is the school environment which gives them the roles of social content and stereotypes of male or female roles are becoming more stringent (Romao 1985; Kantartzis 1996).

Equality is one of the issues which are being investigated in education since, in school subjects, students' performance determines, usually, their education and, then, their professional choices. Through these choices gender inequalities are manifested, since boys choose mostly science and girls choose theoretical directions, especially those of humanities. Usually, science studies lead to jobs with high social status and the humanities to occupations related to care provision with lower social status (Dimitropoulos et al. 1985; Vitsilaki-Soroniati 1997; Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou 1997).

Teaching methods; teachers' general attitudes and practices; and their expectations of their students are able to influence the students' choices because children tend not only to respond but, also, to externalize their teachers' expectations (Clifton et al. 1986; Maccoby 1980 in Kakavoulis 1997). The children's performances rely heavily on their daily interactions with teachers. In such a context, often, verbal initiatives from girls are discouraged because they are interpreted as «noisy» or «aggressive» behaviour. Corresponding actions from boys can be evaluated and rewarded by verbal fluency, they indicate, also, the boys' «leadership» abilities (Spender 1988).

The teachers' expectations of for boys, even if they are underperforming, remain the same. Their belief is, that, in the future, boys have a job with significant responsibilities and authority; it remains unlikely, however, that girls, even when they have high performance, expect to pursue jobs with fewer responsibilities (Clifton et al. 1986). This causes boys to reinforce the choice of professions prestige. Consequently, the girls' ambitions are being underestimated and they are pushed to choose professions, «traditionally female», which are linked to lower social status (Stanworth 1986).

When teachers talk about the school performances of boys and girls they show the different way that they think about gender. When boys do not have good performance in lessons, it seems that it is caused by the lack of effort. If they score high grades, it is the natural consequence of their increased capabilities. However, unless they succeed due to luck or a lot of effort, when girls fail, it is due to their reduced capacity, (Dweck 1980 to: Stanworth 1986). It depicts a standard image of students' behaviour as part of Greece generally, where intelligence is an element of masculinity and discipline and study are components of female identity. However, a Greek teenage girl is not only obedient, serious or kind but she can perform, also, well in school and be oriented in higher education too (Frosi & Deliyanni-Kouimtzi 2008).

Consequently, in the academic field, there is clarity on the importance and the weight of the teachers' perceptions and expectations on professional children's futures. The teachers' expectations reflect the diversity of behaviours in terms of performance and options towards boys and girls; boys are more favoured. These expectations tended to be verified by students who were affected significantly by the image being constructed by their teachers (Frosi & Deliyanni-Kouimtzi 2008). The teachers might struggle to make them understand that equality of gender was true at all levels. Furthermore, the teachers had to understand that any departure from that logic could become a barrier to the children's future. Teachers should have been well aware of being the «holders» of educational change and not being neutral, stereotypes of society and passive transmitters of messages.

Students' perceptions in relation to Gender

The formation of identities is related directly to perceptions, attitudes and values. The gender identities become apparent through studying its effects on attitudes, perceptions and future expectations in relation to performance issues and occupational choices; gender relationships; and the design of adulthood.

D. Reay's case study of a 3R class in a London (1997:98) primary school revealed that power relations between the genders were more complex and contradictory than the content of the new concept, namely that girls did better than boys (Maragkoudaki 2008). In this study, the girls occupied different positions in relation to traditional feminine identities. However, in many cases, girls behaved in a way which strengthened the existing powers of boys at their expense.

Whilst the results of several surveys concluded that, compared to boys, girls achieved higher pass rates in their exams. Classroom boys and girls continued to be taught many lessons on gender relations based on old perceptions and this worked against gender equality. Sue Heath (1999:293) argued that there was a need for research to show how to deal with sensitive issues of gender identity in a context which was in favour of feminism (Maragkoudaki 2008:41-42).

The Gymnastics Academy, University of Thessaly, Greece, conducted a survey of students of primary and secondary education on the subject: «*Fair play in Physical Education: effects of gender, age and incentives for participation*». The results of this research showed that gender had a significant effect on the following factors: (1) respect for classmates; (2) art of winning; and (3) cheating. Consideration of the averages showed that, compared to girls, boys had higher scores on the factors of "the art of winning and cheating" and lower scores on "respect teammates" (Papageorgiou & Hassandra Chatzigeorgiadis & Gymnastics Academy 2008: 164 -165).

In conclusion, with regard to gender differences, we noted that, compared to girls, boys seemed to have more frequent adverse social and ethical behaviours girls. This was attributed not only to broader gender social stereotypes within the context of sports but, also, to the different expectations of teachers of Physical Education for boys and girls. According to Licht and Dweck (1983), teachers of Physical Education tended to reward girls more often for positive social behaviours, whilst they reprimanded boys less for antisocial behaviour. According to Bredemeier (1984) since, in sports, there are stereotypes, which encourage the adoption of different authorities among men (individualism and contest) and women (sociability and cooperation), the issue of differences in ethical and social dimensions is complex (o.p: 166).

We found that men's and women's social identities were constructed within the school and the family and that, if women was the only objective, substantial change in gender relations and equality could not become a reality. Kenway (1996), stated that, unless men and boys changed, there would be no improvement in women's and girls' living conditions. Therefore, now, the aim of feminist practice was to promote changes in education which affected male identities. Consequently, in this sense, the planned interventions sense included actions which led boys and girls to broaden their identities and change values; perceptions; representations; expectations; and cultures which, until now, they regarded as typical for only one sex or the other.

Interventions Aimed at Equality

The above reinforces the importance of interventions to change teachers' perceptions, attitudes and practices. We observed, also, the importance of intervention in relation to gender issues; in education, this was a prerequisite in promoting changes aimed at achieving gender equality. It was a necessary fact that teachers be trained in this direction and that the state should undertake the task.

Very aptly, Deliyanni-Kouimtzi (2008b) observed that, in Greece, education had a contradictory image regarding to the issue of gender equality. Also, education reflected the cloudy face of Greek society which faltered between patriarchal structures and innovative legislations; between women's desire for change and independence; and the mechanisms by which the male population resisted these changes. In relation to education policy, it was argued that, over the last two decades, cares for formal gender equality had been promoted through of similar legislation which eliminated discrimination against girls. However, the educational policy was looking away from the real inequality, which had grown in the educational process, and towards the teaching methods and ideologies which had carried teachers and children with them.

The educational system transferred a variety of instruments and practices. It reproduced and maintained a network of beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and representations which were the substrate of dichotomies of unequal hierarchy and evaluations. Schools of general and technical education, universities - particularly schools of teachers' education - might be the sites of intervention and a means for social change.

Methodology

Purpose of research - Cases – Sample

Through the investigation of students' perceptions, the survey was designed to highlight the possibilities and limits of equality resulting in equal participation for Physical Education students in Greek high schools in. Also, our aim was to determine whether or not the provision of equal opportunities and learning

opportunities in Physical Education was valid. Furthermore, in the treatment and participation of boys and girls, we sought ways to eliminate any existing disparities and effects of discrimination.

However, the basic assumption, which initiated this study, was that, in the context of education in schools, Physical Education had the most striking features of teamwork, cooperation and tolerance in relation to the diversity of the children's skills. These differences arose either from their sex or the variety of natural and physical abilities.

During the survey and without indicating that there were limitations, the participants expressed their personal experiences, notions and beliefs. For this survey, we used a questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part was demographic data, whilst the second comprised of twenty-six closed questions. In order to control the responses, we used a four-level Likert scale whereby, by completing filling, one (1) stated that the subject did not agree at all, (2) stated almost agrees, (3) stated moderate agreement and four (4) showed absolute agreement.

In each survey, the basic question was whether or not the questions were well founded since the aim was to extract accurate results. Therefore, we used the coefficient of internal consistency alpha Cronbach ($\alpha = 0.715$) to test the reliability of the questionnaire was used. Also, we used the method of principal components to check the validity of the questionnaire conducted. As for the factors which emerged, we ignored those with an eigenvalue less than 1.00. At random, the research's preceding pilot study took a sample of twenty (20) high school students. In addition to its responses, we included a determination of the degree of difficulty in understanding the questionnaire.

The surveys' populations were 2009-2010 school year students who attended high school from first to third grade in the greater area of Athens. In selecting the sample, we used Cluster Sampling to distribute the questionnaires to a designated number of students. Since the research dealt with gender issues, we sought deliberately an even number of respondents of each sex to strengthen the reliability and validity of the results.

Research Results

The sample size consisted of 149 high school students, including 74 boys and 75 girls, who agreed to take part in the research by, voluntarily, completing the questionnaire. Overall, we issued 170 questionnaires and received back 155 completed questionnaires of which 6 were incomplete. Therefore we achieved a very satisfactory response rate of 91%. Also, the occupation data and parents' educational level showed that the majority of children came from urban families in which 80% of mothers were working in similar occupations to men (except military and free lancers) and, compared to their husbands, their education levels did not lag at all.

Initially, in our research, we wanted students to express their general opinions about Physical Education. Whilst 96.6% of the sample responded positively, 80.5% said «very». Regardless of their gender, the children confirmed to us that they were knowledgeable about the benefits of exercise and its importance to every human's life. When they were asked if there was separation into male and female sports, the answers of both genders did not differ significantly. A high concentration (42.3%) was located in «little» choice, whilst there were low values on the end-point scale of responses. The respondents agreed that, although there was separation, it did not seem to be particularly intense.

In response to the question «in your opinion, the separation in male and female sports is correct», girls answered negatively at a greater rate than boys. However, 32.3% of girls accepted this distinction. This suggested that, indeed, there were limits to gender equality in physical education. This concept could be interpreted by linking sports with physical force or with the role models being promoted by the media or the attitudes of teachers of Physical Education. However, in this case, the extreme value ("high") was very low (16.2% boys and 11% girls). This indicated that there were limited sexist views on gender segregation. It showed, also, that whilst girls, in first grade of High School, believed that there was no separation into male and female sports, this percentage decreased to 40% (10% + 30%) in third grade High School girls. This reduction could lead us to conclude that younger girls, who had come only from Elementary school, had different experiences than the grown up students who completed High School. Consequently, girls denied limiting their roles to sexist defined ones and, often, in areas such as sports, boys rejected stereotyped notions of gender.

This was reinforced by the answers which the children gave to the question «*Girls feel inferior when it is applied to them to participate in the so-called 'male' sports like football.*». Specifically, 66.7% of girls declared "no" to "bit." This, too, was boys' opinion for (56.8%: «no» and «little»). Furthermore, 88% of girls and 58.4% of boys rejected stereotyped characterization «tomboy». At the same time, considering the percentages of responses per class and gender, we observed that girls made up their minds as they grew up. Although a small percentage of 6% (3% + 3%) of girls, in first grade, believed that exercise was not in the «nature» of women, this percentage increased to 28% (5% + 25%) of third grade high school girls.

In any case, the vast majority of both genders considered that Physical Education and exercise were in women's «nature». This view was reinforced by the fact that most children declared that there were sports in which girls did better than boys. Also, in response to the question «*In your opinion are boys trying to impress girls by showing of their athletic abilities*» 78.7% of girls responded positively rate, with the «very much» option reaching 52%. Boys confirmed that opinion by responding positively to the question at a rate of 70.2% which was slightly less than the girls,

In response to the statement «*Boys have a greater desire to be leaders in groups than girls*», we noted that, indeed, 77.1% of boys and 65.3% of girls agreed that boys showed trends for reproducing chiefly the stereotype of male – leader – protector against women. Furthermore, boys did not seem to notice any differences in the opportunities of exercise from those which were given to girls. Specifically, 59.5% of respondents believed that the differences in exercise either do not exist at all (23%), or there were few differences (36.5%). Girls' perceptions on this matter were somewhat different. Particularly, though their 53.4% degree of agreement to the question, i.e. 6.1% less than that of boys, it seemed that girls, who believed that there were no equal opportunities in exercise, were very few at only 14.7%.

In addition first class high school boys, at a percentage of 38% (26% Average, 12% Very), believed that there were different opportunities in exercise. This percentage was increased to 54% by third class high school boys in. Children, at an overall rate of 51.7%, believed, also, that the lack of physical ability made the Physical Education course more difficult (24.2% of children answered «very»). However, this view was not followed by the answers to subsequent questions. Furthermore, we found that children did not believe that differences in natural abilities should be a reason for the classes to be separated on the basis of abilities and a percentage of 58.4% confirmed this view by stating that separate sections would not improve the course.

On the same question, there was a notable difference in the percentages of first to third grade boys. Whilst, in first grade, 31% believed that Physical Education would be better if it was divided into sections according to the abilities of children regardless of their gender, this percentage increased to 54% in the third grade. The common preferences and confidence of children with no discrimination of any kind were confirmed by the fact that 70.5% of respondents expressed a negative view on the separation of sections by gender and 67.5% responded positively to the existence of mixed classes in physical education. Consequently, girls argued more strongly (82.6%) than boys (54%) that mixed sections made the lesson more interesting.

In response to the questions «*Would you choose to be in a group consisting mainly by boys*» and «*Would you choose to be in a group consisting mainly by girls*» we noted that, at a rate of 77%, boys wanted to be in a group with boys rather than with girls. Almost the same applied to girls since 78.7% wanted to be in a group with girls and 61.3% did not want to be in a group with boys. Therefore, we noted that both sexes preferred to be in groups with individuals of the same sex.

In the same context, it seemed to match the answers to the question «*When a girl will not do well in a sport in Physical Education, boys help them?*». Girls, at a very large rate of 68%, answered that boys would not help them (45.3% no), and boys declared, also, that there was solidarity between the sexes at a rate of 65.5% (31.1% no). Also, 81.9% of children (56.4% very and 25.5% average) answered that fun and not victory was the most important reason to participate in a sport is, i.e. it improved their physical health and participation at group events (socialization). For this reason, 61.1% of respondents answered that the criterion for selection of mates was friendship rather than ability in this sport. It is important to note that only 14.8% of the children chose mates with their ability as the main criterion.

Moreover, in response to the question «*In your opinion is there a different behaviour of the teacher of physical education for boys and girls*» boys and girls seemed to coincide in their view that their teachers implemented equality in practice. In particular, 63.7% of respondents considered that there is no difference in the behaviour of their teachers to them. Nevertheless, 17.4% believed that there was a great difference. Also, 67.6% of boys and 77.4% of girls stated that teachers of physical education did not impose boys participating in sports which might be considered to be identified to sex (girly sports).

Simultaneously, 78.4% of boys and 70.7% of girls believed that strength and speed were the factors which determined good performance in physical education. Similarly, in response to the question «*In your opinion is there power and speed difference between boys and girls*» a very high percentage - 77.1% boys and 65.3% girls responded positively. Therefore, children linked these abilities to gender rather than to individual skills and exercise. Finally, Table 1 below details the overall results of the research.

Table 1: Research Results

	No	Little	Average	Very
In your opinion exercise helps men and women equally to maintain good health?	2,5%	0,7%	16,1%	80,5%
Is there a separation into male and female sports?	15,4%	42,3%	32,9%	9,4%
In your opinion is the separation of sports in male and female, correct?	31,5%	29,5%	25,5%	13,4%
Is physical exercise in the nature of women?	6,7%	20,1%	32,9%	39,6%
Are strength and speed important factors for a good performance in physical education?	10,1%	15,4%	36,2%	38,3%
In your opinion is there a difference in strength and speed between boys and girls?	5,4%	23,5%	28,9%	42,3%
Do you think that the lack of natural (physical) skills of some children make the conduct of physical education difficult?	13,4%	34,9%	27,5%	24,2%
Do you think that physical education would be better if it was divided into sections according to the abilities of children (regardless of gender)?	43,6%	14,8%	16,1%	25,5%
Do you think that physical education would be better if it was divided into sections involved only boys or only girls?	51,0%	19,5%	14,8%	14,8%
Mixed physical education departments make the lesson more interesting?	40,9%	27,3%	17,4%	14,1%
Are there different fitness opportunities for boys and girls in gym class?	14,8%	13,4%	16,1%	55,0%
In your opinion is there a different behaviour of the teacher of physical education for boys and girls?	41,6%	22,1%	18,8%	17,4%
It is the enjoyment of the game, regardless of the outcome (victory or defeat), the reason why you participate in any sport?	6,0%	12,1%	25,5%	56,4%
Would you choose to be in a group consisting mainly of boys?	19,5%	22,8%	17,4%	40,3%
Would you choose to be in a group consisting mainly of girls?	27,5%	22,1%	17,4%	32,9%
The involvement of your friends in a group is your criterion for participation in this group?	14,8%	24,2%	33,6%	27,5%
Boys have a greater desire to be leaders in groups than girls?	14,8%	13,4%	16,1%	55,0%
Is there a sport activity that girls are better than boys?	10,7%	16,8%	24,8%	47,7%
If girls try more will they be as good as or better than boys in gym class?	15,4%	16,1%	28,2%	40,3%
When a girl is not doing so well in a sport at the gym class, the boys help them?	38,3%	27,5%	21,5%	12,8%
In your opinion are boys trying to impress girls by showing off their athletic abilities?	12,1%	13,4%	24,2%	50,3%
Is it better for girls to participate only on "girlish" and boys only on "boyish" sports?	44,3%	27,5%	16,8%	11,4%
If you play with children of the opposite sex in physical education, classmates laugh at you?	60,4%	24,8%	6,0%	8,7%
Girls feel inferior when it is applied to them to participate in the so-called «male» sports, like football?	27,5%	34,2%	26,2%	12,1%
Is it applied to boys to participate in sport that are not so "boyish", like dancing?	42,3%	30,2%	22,1%	5,4%
In your opinion girls that are good at sports are "tomboys"?	73%	12,1%	9,4%	5%

Conclusion

During the examination of specific concepts we found that girls seemed to understand: (1) the value of physical education in their development; (2) the contribution of fitness in health; and (3) to distance themselves from older stereotyped positions. The schoolmates adopted the same views. This position was reinforced by the children's view that physical education was undoubtedly in the nature of women and not a privilege only of the male sex. Moreover, it appeared that children were of the opinion that a girl who participated in sports would not be characterized as "tomboy." This meant that they accepted the equal status of women in sports.

At the same time, in relation to sports, children's gendered perceptions were characterized by a belief in equality in participation, whilst accepting the separation of men's and women's sports. From the investigation of children's perceptions of the division of sports into male and female, children responded that, although there was some separation, it did not appear to be significant. On the other hand, respondents argued that this distinction was real and seemed to be correct. This led to the conclusion that, although children understood the need for equal participation of all in sports, stereotypes to the limits and possibilities of equal participation of women continued to exist in society; in the socialization of children in school; in education; and in the family. As yet, these stereotypes had not been eliminated.

Furthermore, results showed both genders agreed that boys liked to show off their strength and abilities through sports and the absolute desire to be leaders in sports teams. At the same time, although in some answers their choices seemed to be different, it looked like children desired to be part of mixed groups where there was no distinctions i.e. gender. This fact was interpreted in various ways. Both girls and boys did not want to separate their paths in accordance with the capacities of children, although in carrying out the course of physical education, the lack of physical capacity was a limiting factor.

This opinion was confirmed by the children's answers that mixed exercise classes made the lesson more interesting and demonstrated their disagreement to separate sections by gender. They argued not to make fun of their classmates who play with children of the opposite sex; however, they did not want to be in groups consisting mainly of representatives of the other sex. More often, children chose groups based on friendship rather than the players' abilities. The thrill and fun of the game was more important than victory. At the same time, boys considered that there was no difference for training chances in gym class, whilst girls considered that there were differences. As for the fitness opportunities which they were given during their participation in gym class, girls seemed to have a different understanding from their classmates.

Consequently, like boys did in sports, girls needed to feel more confident about their capacities to participate equally. This was found in a research study on female students in Canada «What do girls expect from high school physical education» (Gibbons & Humbert 2008) which showed that, compared to boys, girls had different experiences when participating in gym class. They argued that teachers showed a preference for sports played by boys, which limited their range of undertaken activities.

With regard to the students' perceptions of teachers' attitudes - in view of gender - children agreed that their Physical Education teachers did not vary their behaviour depending mostly on gender. However, girls argued that they felt that, in physical education lessons, they were not given the same fitness opportunities as boys. Furthermore, it appeared that teachers did not require boys to participate in activities which were not considered so masculine. From this, it was understood that teachers had a neutral attitude towards equality issues. Moreover, children assumed that, in Physical Education, strength and speed were important factors of assessment.

Therefore, both teachers and children were unclear about the aims, objectives and evaluation of the Curriculum. Therefore, the Ministry of Education's instructions for equality should not be left in the "drawer" but rather they need to get out there and be put into practice to deliver the expected results. At the same time, it appeared that students seemed to go hand in hand demanding equality. To many, inconsistencies in some of their answers led to the following proposals to remove restrictions and improve equal opportunities at school.

Based on these findings it seems that there is a requirement to reform Curriculum and content of textbooks. These should suggest, also, specific methods of promoting and implementing equality in school life. The question, however, is not the Ministry of Education's proposals but their final implementation in schools. Therefore, it is necessary that there should be a pilot implementation of each new intervention; teachers training in these; and the choice of teaching methods such as the method of non-exclusion and methods to enhance cooperation, and the acceptance of differences. Also, there is a need for financial support from the Ministry of Education to upgrade Physical Education classes by providing equal educational facilities and sports material.

In addition, all the country's Departments of Physical Education and Sports (University for Physical Education teachers) should have courses based on gender so that future teachers test their limits on formal and informal education. However, there is the need, also, for their implementation on training programmes and awareness of educational issues related to gender. Together, these should be reinforcement with incentives to encourage girls to participate in activities within Physical Education and claim their leadership roles. Finally, in respect of sensitization towards equality, it is crucial that the media highlights the participation of women in different sports and ceases the promotion of the socially-old fashioned way.

References

- Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research and Critique*. (revised ed.). London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Clifton, R., Perry, R., Parsonson, K. & Hryniuk, S. (1986). Effects of Ethnicity and Sex on Teachers' Expectations of Junior High School Students. *Sociology of Education*, 59 (January), 58-67.

- Constitution of Greece, Article 16, paragraph 2.
- Delamont S. (1980). *Sex Roles and the School*. London: Routledge
- Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, B. (2008). *Summing up the research: Factor Gender in Greek reality*. Athens: K.E.T.H.E.
- Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, B. & Sakka, D. (2008). Gender identity in puberty. In Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, B., Karastergiou, S. & Frosi, L. (Eds), *Gender and educational reality in Greece: Promoting equality in genders in Greek educational system* (pp 102-135). Athens: K.E.T.H.E.
- Dimitropoulos, E., Theodosiou, D., Papadimitriou, A., & Papathanasiou, P. (1985). *Educational and professional decisions of students in final year: Social group case: Insights of a problem*. Thessaloniki: Salto.
- Frosi L., Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, B. (2008). Perceptions and Expectations of Genders in Education. In Deligianni, B. (Ed), *Teachers and Genders* (pp. 123-127). Athens: K.E.T.H.E.
- Frosi, L. (2008). Teachers and gender: Perceptions, Expectations, Precisions. In Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, B., Karastergiou, S. & Frosi, L. (Eds), *Gender and Educational reality in Greece: Promoting intermissions for equality of genders in the Greek Educational system* (pp. 58-73). Athens: K.E.T.H.E.
- Giagkoumidis, P. (1997). School and its roll to labor market. In Deligianni, B. and S. Ziogou. (Eds) *Gender and School* (pp 195-209). Thessaloniki: Vantias.
- Gibbons, S. & Humbert, L. (2008). *What are Middle School girls looking for in Physical Education?* Canadian Journal of Education, 31(1), 167-186.
- Gogou-Critikou, L. (1994). *Social Interactions- Social Representations*. Athens: Poria.
- Government Gazette (1996), No. B., No. 304/13-03-03 sex, Annex, Volume II, p. 4281.
- Kakavoulis, E. (1997). Gender stereotypes and educational system. In Deligianni, B. and Ziogou, Z. (Eds). *Gender and School* (pp. 22-29). Thessaloniki: Vantias.
- Kantartzis, E. (1996). *Boys and Girls in school: Attitudes and perceptions of teachers for the role of the two genders*. Athens: Modern Education.
- Maragkoudaki, E. (2008). *Gender Identities, forming procedure and ways of expression in school*. (Vol. I). Athens: K.E.T.H.E.
- Papageorgiou, M.; Hassandra, M. & Chatzigeorgiadis A. (2008). *Insights in Physical Education and Sports*. (Vol. 6). T.E.F.A.A: University of Thessalia.
- Romao, I. (1985). Changing the perception of teachers and students for the rolls of the two genders. In Conference Notes: *Equality and Education* (pp. 44-61). Thessaloniki.
- Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, D. (1997). Professional and Educational options of the two genders: the role of school orientation. In Deligianni B. and S. Ziogou (Eds). *Gender and School* (pp. 82-85). Thessaloniki: Vantias.
- Spender, D. (1988). Talking in Class. In Spender, D. & Sarah, E. (Eds.). *Learning to Lose, Sexism and education*. London: Women's Press.
- Stanworth, M. (1988). *Gender and Schooling*. London: Hutchinson.
- Vitsilaki-Soroniati, Cr. (1997). The role of genders in refining educational and professional ambitions. In Deligianni, B. & Ziogou, S. (Eds). *Gender and School* (pp. 103-105). Thessaloniki: Vantias.
- Wright, C. (1987). Black Students – White Teachers. In Troyna, B. (Ed). *Racial Inequality in Education* (pp:109-126). London: Tavistock.