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## The Education of the Self and Feminine Body Aesthetics through Physical Exercise and Effective Communication

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### Abstract

Efficient communication and systematic practice of physical exercise may increase self-esteem and lead to the identification of new relation formula by which the human beings to be able to display their potential and qualities more easily. It is the need for belonging what determines women to constantly adapt their discourse, ways of interacting and physical appearance. Physical exercise helps in reducing social and individual tensions, gives back self-esteem, the ability to make responsible decisions, to communicate and to cope with social pressure, irrespective of status, level of culture or environment.

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### Introduction

Among the most important aspects of socializing are personality development and the identification of the self. Sport plays a major role in this respect, as it is a critical factor in self-esteem, in lowering the stress level and even in enhancing efficiency at all levels. The analyses provided by the literature in the field have often emphasised the positive effect of the physical exercise on the human psyche, especially for persons suffering from behaviour disorder. More recent theories assert that sports activities are associated with a low level of deviant behaviour and a high level in social and academic performance.

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### 1.1. Middle-aged woman socializing through physical culture, at the world's level

In the Western countries, women practising physical exercise face a psychological conflict between the wish to succeed and the need to comply with the feminine body models (in this respect, see the promotion of the “top-model” body type in the media, which creates a superficial pattern of femininity and induce physical and psychic discomfort in women belonging to other social categories).

In the Eastern countries, there is a different approach to feminine models. The woman, with her varied social roles, regards physical activity as a way of forming an appropriate framework of creating and maintaining social relationships. This helps her develop team spirit and solidarity. The interaction at social level develops physical practices and, at the same time, the personality of the individual. Eysenck considers that personality is a structure which is more or less stable (Eysenck, 1970, in Holdevici, 1993), whilst Rioux (1980, in Epuran, 1993) asserts that a person who aims for performance should possess the following features:

- balanced personality; wish for self-improvement;
- high energetic level pushing the individual towards self-affirmation;
- high level of ability to cope with frustration;
- emotional stability and possibility to adapt to new social conditions.

It is difficult to grasp analytically and experimentally all the psychic and social particularities which result from women's practice of physical activities. For example, through the activity carried out in the sports hall, the introvert woman receives the day-by-day events with increased subjectivity compared with the extrovert woman who does not practise sports activities systematically. As the questionnaire proposed in a complex research study, the attitudes, habits and rules acquired in the sports or fitness halls may be transferred towards different social spheres and may induce many a positive effects on women's personality. In this circumstance, the self-control level and behavioural self-regulation increase.

*Extrovert* women manifest a higher volitive activation in the critical moments of the sport game, in social life, in day-by-day crisis situations, whilst in abiding by the rules, they tend to become more creative and sometimes chaotic in respecting the schedules.

Another feature worth considering is *stress tolerance*. Physical activity represents the most effective way of avoiding stress. This concept emerges from Selye's physiological studies (1974), in which it is described as a general adaptation syndrome which characterises the organisms' reactivity to stress. Stress tolerance represents the organism's ability to fight the stressing factors. It may be a personality trait, but also a temporary occurrence (Ciucurel, 2006).

The change intervened in *family roles* brought to the fore numerous psychological transformations at the level of family structure and its modes of operation and, inherently, at the level of the individuals' psycho-sexual identity. This change was indeed necessary, but neither women, nor men have been fully prepared for it.

“Women found themselves in the position to give up a cultural pattern without having a replacement for it. They realised that, before imposing certain values on men, before reconsidering their role in the family, they needed to become aware what they really wanted to do. This was the critical point, as the roles have become more and more ambiguous, the couple's cohesion decreased, while dissensions increased. Women then realised that it is important to have desire for change, but it is more important to know how to replace what you have changed. They did not take into consideration men's reaction to their new requirements; they did not empathetically guess their possible expectations in the new circumstances and their actual possibilities to provide women what they were expected to. This way, modern woman found herself in the position to balance between her need for independence and the wish to stick to older values.” (C. Ciupercă)

This block may be avoided by making up a varied social timetable which involves sports activities, adapted in accordance with individual's needs. In this particular case, the woman who moves away from the traditional society, even when she is 35 to 45 years old, may target personal accomplishment, thus avoiding social crisis and physical senescence by getting involved with a group with sports preoccupations. This way, she may benefit from efficient communication, may be able to discover and overcome difficulties and pseudo-limitations and may be

involved in various combinations of social, physical and psychic stimuli. We are witnessing a positive change in the feminine psychological profile, a new, more balanced self, primarily determined by the recovery of beauty.

The period of time between 35 and 45 years of age is characterised for women by the keen need to set towards exterior and/or to practise their professional role. They also feel an urge to share their experience, which is why this period is also known as “the master’s period”.

2. Sources of Evidence

If, in the past, women had a limited role in what social climbing was concerned, and physical culture was taboo, today, women’s emancipation has brought a new status at the social level. Present-day culture promotes the image of a woman who has attained sports performance inasmuch as professional and personal achievements and has turned into a role model for other women.

The following tables present statistics with reference to the education, social involvement and systematic practice of physical activities, for American, Eastern and Western European women, in various time frames.

Table 1. Synthetic table of women statistics at the world level, in various moments in time, from the perspective of social context

YEAR /CONTINENT	Higher education %	Social involvement (Jobs) %	Systematic practice of physical activities %
1950 /America	5	11	10
2011 / America	30,1	41,7	30
1950 / Eastern Europe	2,5	4	1,5
2011 / Eastern Europe	35	40	18
1950 / Western Europe	7	10	5
2011 / Western Europe	40	70	31

Graphical representation: *Women's Social Position in Different Time Periods*

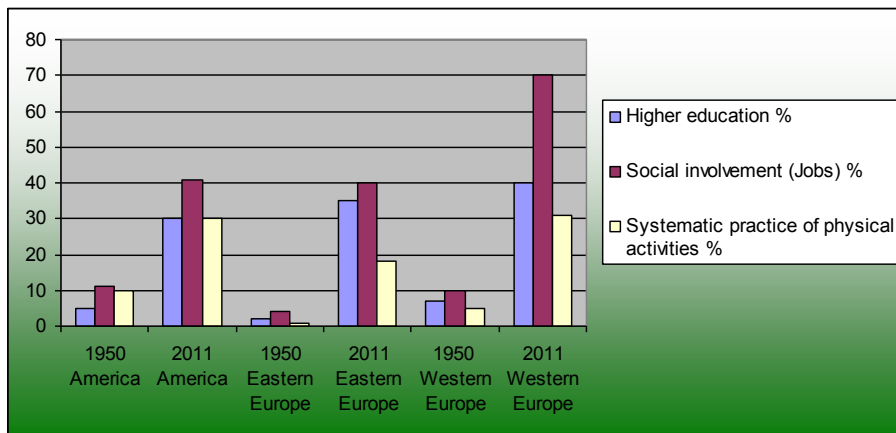


Fig.1

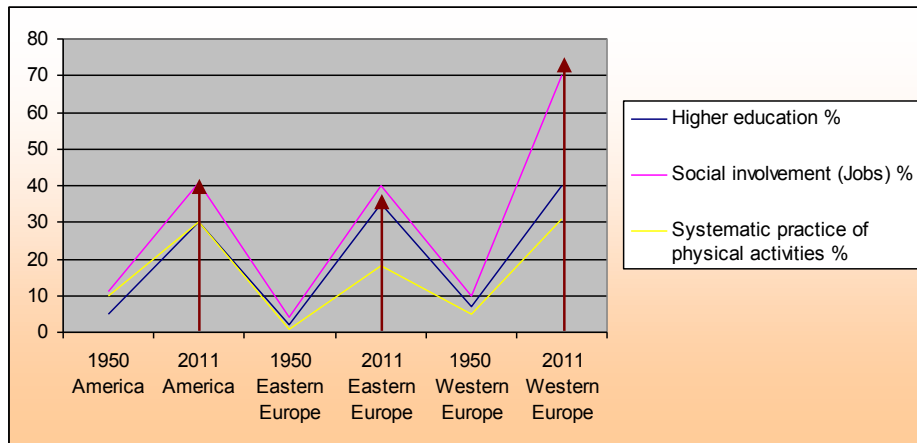


Fig.2

## Conclusion

Today, at the world's level, there is a tendency towards women's self-assessment with regard to personal and professional accomplishments. This aspect is possible only in a socializing process in which the woman becomes aware of her own value especially in relation to others. Her ideas and thoughts about herself are determined by previous experiences in which success or failure in attaining goals and fulfilling tasks are of the essence. The realistic and positive self-image develops women's ability to make responsible decisions, to communicate and cope with the pressure from the social group, irrespective of their culture, environment or status.

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