The Relationship Between Gender and Body Image Satisfaction and Self-Esteem in Relation to Exercising

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Introduction

• The perception of self and body image by men and women has had an impact on the health of individuals.
• Men tend to achieve self-esteem through achievements, power status, and control while women tend to achieve self-esteem through desirability and attractiveness.
• Low self-esteem has been found to predict increased vulnerability to body-image dissatisfaction in a student population indicating that there is a positive relationship between body image and self-esteem (Markham et al., 2005).
• Differences in gender and gender stereotypes result in different concerns for men and women in body appearance, body esteem and appreciation, self-esteem, and results in different motives for exercising for each gender.
• Body image perception and body esteem are common factors in an individual participating in exercise habits and the difference between positive and negative body image perception can influence one’s behavior significantly and have a large impact on one’s self-esteem, exercise habits, and overall well-being.
• Previous studies have assessed the differences between sex in body image, assessed college students’ health-related behaviors and its relationship to body image and self-esteem, as well as assessed whether regular exercise is associated with a more positive body image and a higher self-esteem.
• their weight and physical appearance and lower self-esteem compared to men.
• In addition, the more active the participant was in exercising the more positive their body image perception was.
• It has been widely known in society that women mainly want to exercise to lose weight and fill into society’s body image portrayal of how a woman should look which ultimately affects their body appreciation and self-esteem.
• Women have a greater body dissatisfaction and greater body focus than men, and they are more likely to exercise to lose weight to feel better physically and mentally (Davis and Cowles 1991).

Research Question

How does gender influence body image satisfaction and self-esteem in an individual’s motive to exercise?

Hypothesis

There will be a positive relationship between gender and self-esteem in level of exercise participation with females demonstrating lower self-esteem compared to males resulting in a higher level of exercise.

Methods

• A total of 50 participants (18 males (36.0%) and 31 females (62.0%)) were surveyed all from the CSI campus.
• The participants of this study were undergraduate PSY 350 and PSY 100 students. Students in PSY 350 completed the questionnaires on the first day of class in their PSY 350 classroom.
• Students in PSY 100 that participated in the study signed up through the SONA System during the spring 2020 semester and completed the questionnaires at the Social Psychology Lab room located at the CSI campus.
• Participants were not offered any compensation for participation.
• The survey consisted of five questionnaires (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Body Shape Questionnaire, Body Appreciation Scale, Body Esteem Scale, and Fredrick & Ryan’s Motives for Physical Activities Measure - Revised (1993)) and a brief demographic section.

Results

• Gender and days of exercise were analyzed using an univariate 2 x 3 ANOVA with the days of exercise being categorized as either no exercise, low exercise, and high exercise for each individual questionnaire and its subscales.
• The BSQ had a significant main effect for gender, F (1,39) = 7.0, p = .012.
• The subscale Interest/Enjoyment from the MPAM questionnaire and its subscales.
• A significant main effect for exercise days, F (2, 39) = 3.215, p = .05.
• A significant main effect for exercise days was found for the subscale of Competence. F (2, 39) = 3.158, p = .05.
• There was a significant main effect for exercise days, F (2, 39) = 3.553, p = .038, and a significant interaction for the subscale Social. F (2, 39) = 4.525, p = .017.

Discussion

• When participant’s read the demographic question asking how many days on average they do exercise per week and how many hours per week do they exercise it seems many of the participants of the study did not understand the questions.
• It seems that participants got confused when putting how many hours a day they would exercise as the amount of hours most participants put down did not match up with the number of days they had written down.
• Many participants put down a small amount of hours that did not correlate with the number of days they had written down resulting in the study to be shifted from using hours as an indicator to exercise level as an indicator (no exercise, low exercise, and high exercise).
• The small number of male participants and the wide range of means found between the levels of exercise opens up for future research on the social reasons for why males exercise and what they consider exercising to be.

Limitations

• The only participants were college students. Physiological Reports, 110(2), 469-474. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2045838412464021