



RESEARCH PAPER

Assessing the Role of Low Body Image as a Risk Factor for developing Addictive Behavior towards Exercise among Regular Exercising Women of Higher Socioeconomic Status

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ABSTRACT

This study delved into the complex relationship between body image and obligatory exercise in physically active women. Data collection was carried out by recruiting 150 female gym-goers from Lahore, aged 19-45. Demographic questions, International Physical Activity Questionnaire (SV), Obligatory Exercise Questionnaire and Body image related 10 items were adopted from 3 different body image scales were used to calculate demographic characteristics of person, her last week physical activity, their exercise behavior and body image score respectively. Findings of the study revealed that those physically active women who showed higher scores in obligatory exercise exhibited more dissatisfaction with their body image. However, the study further unearthed a surprising trend towards the active women with a high prevalence of feeling obligated to exercise. This suggested that for many, exercise goes beyond mere health benefits, becoming intertwined with body image concerns and potentially even a sense of compulsion.

KEYWORDS Body Image, Body Shape, High Socioeconomic Women, Obligatory Exercise

Introduction

Obligatory exercise behaviour and body image dissatisfaction is the bigger concern among women.

A distinct phenomenon known as obligatory exercise is defined by an intense desire to exercise that can frequently be powered by internal pressures or an intense concern of the unfavourable effects of non-compliance (Pasman & Thompson, 1988). Conversely, obligatory exercise has been linked to several health benefits such as improved cardiovascular health, mental wellbeing and general quality of life (Pasman & Thompson, 1988). Regarding obligatory exercise, Smolak and Murnen (2008) has showed that obligatory exercise behaviors were associated with higher levels of stress, higher risk of injuries and disruption in social and professional domains. These results therefore had a negative impact on people's general well-being. Furthermore, obligatory exercises have been linked to unfavourable perceptions of one's physical appearance and negative body dissatisfaction, which worsens the psychological consequences on people (LePage et al., 2012). Women in particular may face additional challenges as a result of the ways that society's standards and expectations for the feminine form have moulded and continue to affect the behaviors associated with obligatory exercise (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Research indicates that internalizing false body ideals, fear of gaining weight, and social norms are the main drivers of the obligatory exercise (Smolak & Murnen, 2008). The consistent frankness to cultural magnificence guidelines and the adoration of a particular body shape, which is habitually built up by media pictures, may energize a craving for

slimness and the requirement for obligatory exercise to accomplish or keep up with the socially recommended body shape (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Besides, body image is an individual's emotional assessment of their actual appearance and is a significant part of mental well-being (Striegel-Moore et al., 2002). Improved self-esteem and general life satisfaction have been related to positive body image, which thus elevates adaptable ways of behaving connected with wellbeing (Davis et al., 2020; Oktan & Şahin, 2010). Then again, negative body image or displeasure with one's actual appearance, has been connected to dietary issues, tension, and distress (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). A study conducted by Striegel-Moore et al. (2002) found that social guidelines produced by the media, impacts from companions and family, and individual encounters all altogether affect how individuals see themselves. Women specifically may grip ridiculous standards because of social assumptions encompassing body shape, which can prompt unfortunate tendencies like strict eating regimens or forced practice as well as a drive for accomplishment (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Getting a comprehension of the complex subject of body image is critical to improving psychological well-being through the execution of methods that restrained the impeding impacts of cultural pressures on the large prosperity of people.

Although obligatory exercise conduct and body image have been entirely inspected, substantially more review is important to understand the puzzling relationship between these two factors, particularly as they apply to women who work out every day from higher economic status. While obligatory exercise and body dissatisfaction have been presented to have adverse consequences previously, the collaboration of these two components in a particular summit has not gotten as much consideration as possible. By tending to this deviation, we can acquire a higher comprehension of the complicated connections that exist between the way of behaving of the obligatory exercise and the impression of body image among this particular gathering of higher fiscally favored ladies as well as how to fit emotionally supportive links and mediations to their innovative conditions explicitly.

Literature Review

The distrustful body image that influences individuals around the world, particularly women, has been associated with various conduct and mental issues. One part of these practices that has been considered in late exploration is the effect of physical activity and obligatory exercise on the advancement of body image convictions.

Past examinations have shown the complicated connection between women's physical activity, obligatory exercise and body disappointment. As per a concentrate by Ruiz-Turrero et al. (2022), even in situations when they additionally report more significant levels of physical activity, women who report more significant levels of obligatory exercise are likewise bound to connect more significant levels of body image disappointment. Additionally, Brown and Tiggemann (2016) found that females who scored higher on obligatory exercise conduct likewise had more significant levels of body image dissatisfaction, in any event, when they were physically active. This suggested that the advantages of obligatory exercise could surpass any possible constructive outcomes on one's body image.

Besides, Jones et al. (2004) offered important involvements by showing that ladies who scored higher on the required activity scale likewise showed a bigger longing for thinness and a more basic assessment of their bodies. These findings explained the inconvenient impacts of thorough workout schedules on women's self-view of their bodies as well as the nuanced association between obligatory exercise and unfortunate body image. Moreover, ladies who felt under the gun to exercise likewise revealed more elevated levels of body disappointment and a powerful wish to be slim, as per a meta-analysis done in 2006 (Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006). This showed that it is so significant to address body image qualms by thinking about all individual's specific exercise intentions and practices.

Adding to this collection of work, Cuesta-Zamora et al. (2022) showed that self-empathy-placed treatments that upheld fundamental physical activity schedules prompted a huge decrease in women's obligated practicing tendencies and an expansion in their body fulfillment. This exhibited the possible feasibility of the developments intended to have an impact on the way that ladies who regularly participate in the obligatory activity had an outlook on their bodies and how they worked out. Grogan (2021) likewise underscored the meaning of empowering natural and adjusted approaches to exercise and body image upkeep by stressing how media representations and cultural standards might worsen the body for ladies who take part in the obligatory exercise.

In summary, these studies demonstrated the significance of assisting women in engaging in intuitive and beneficial activity in order to lessen the detrimental impact that obligatory exercise has on their body images of their bodies. These studies also showed that in order to accomplish this goal, customized interventions are required.

Material and Methods

Design of the Study

In this investigation, a cross-sectional study approach was used.

Sample and Population

150 adult females of middle-upper socioeconomic background were participated in this research as participants. The age range of the participants was in between 18 to 45. Notably, most were regular attendees of fitness classes at different gyms in Lahore. Convenience sampling was employed to select these participants. The participation of the participants was voluntary.

Instruments

Following instruments were used for purpose of data collection:

Demographic Section

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants, the study collected 12 demographic variables. This included age, physical measurements (height, weight, BMI), resting heart rate, occupational details (job, working days), educational background, marital status, household income, social standing, and average screen time.

International Physical Activity Questionnaire (I-PAQ)

The physical activity of the participants was assessed using the scale developed by Craig et al. (2017) International Physical Activity Questionnaire (I-PAQ). Seven items on it dealt with vigorous, moderate and normal physical activity behavior of last week. There were three categories for physical activity: low, moderate, and high.

Obligatory Exercise Questionnaire (OEQ)

The obligatory exercise behaviour of the participants was investigated using the scale developed by Thompson and Pasman (1991) obligatory exercise questionnaire. The five-point Likert scale on which the 10 items were rated ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Body Image Questionnaire

The body image was assessed utilizing 10 items which were obtained from the previous questionnaires used in the previous studies (Awad & Voruganti, 2004; Reas et al.,

2002; Untas et al., 2009). Each question had a five-point Likert scale, categorically differing to concur as the potential responses clearly.

Data Collection

Data was gathered from six fitness clubs throughout Lahore that targeted middle class and upper class English speaking female members. They made vocal announcements outlining the goals of the study and requesting voluntary participation. Clear instructions were given for filling out the questionnaires to reduce errors. To further encourage participation, researchers personally spoke with interested parties at each facility. When potential volunteers reacted to the announcements or one-on-one recruitment attempts, they were given questionnaires, which were either easily accessible at the centers or directly given to them. Strict secrecy of participant information was guaranteed throughout the procedure, and it took about 15 minutes to finish the questionnaire on average.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS (IBM Corp, 2017). Simple linear regression and descriptive frequency test were utilized.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Regression Coefficients of Obligatory Exercise on Body Image of Physically Active Women's

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	<i>B</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>P</i>
Body image	Obligatory Exercise	.75	.76	.53	.571	.000

Note. *N* = 150, *P* < .05

The regression coefficients of obligatory exercise on physically active women's body image are reported in Table 1. The dependent variable was body image, whereas the predictor variable was obligatory exercise. Regression analysis results showed that obligatory exercise had a strong positive impact on body image ($\beta = 0.76$, *SE* = 0.53, *R*² = 0.571, *p* < .05). The *R*² value of .571 indicates 57.1% variance in the body image. The findings showed that those physically active women who showed higher scores in obligatory exercise exhibited more dissatisfaction with their body image. These results were likely to suggest a negative impact of obligatory exercising behavior on body image of the exercising women.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics frequency table of Physical Activity, Body Image and Obligatory Exercise in Women.

Characteristics	<i>N</i>	%
Physical Activity		
Low activity	1	.7
Moderate Activity	52	34.7
High Activity	97	64.7
Body Image		
No concern	14	9.3
Mild	89	59.3
Moderate	43	28.7
Concerned	4	2.7
Obligatory Exercise		
No Concern	1	.7
Moderate	37	24.7
Highly Concerned	112	74.7

Table 2 showed the noteworthy findings about physical activity that were obtained from the whole sample size in women who were physically active. Only 1 participant

reported low level of physical activity, which suggested that women are mostly involved in physical activity. 52 participants with the percentage of 34.7%, revealed moderate levels of physical activity and majority of participants (64.7%, n = 97) reported that they were highly physically active.

In case of body image, analysis revealed a significant result in physically active women. 9.3% of respondents (n = 14) showed no concern about body image, as indicated by participants who said that they feel no concern. Majority of respondents (n = 89, 59.3%) reported mild concern about the body image. Nearly half of the physically active women said that they have moderate concern about their body image while only 4 participants (2.7%) showed much concern in body image.

Furthermore, significant concerns were showed by the participants in view of obligatory exercise. Only 1 participant revealed that she had no concern about obligatory exercise, showing that obligatory exercise is significant in physically active women. 24.7 percent of women (n = 37) showed moderate concern about obligatory exercise. While majority of participants (n = 112, 74.7%) revealed that they are highly concerned about obligatory exercise.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to look into the relationship between obligatory exercise and the way physically active women perceive their body image.

The significances of this study exhibited that ladies with more significant levels of physical activity and obligatory training additionally showed more elevated levels of body image disappointment. This finding is reliable with a few other explorations that have endless time again shown a negative connection between women impression of their bodies and obligatory exercise (De Young & Anderson, 2010; Serier et al., 2018). Along these lines, Tylka and Homan (2015) found that among physically active women, obligatory exercise routines were connected to an ever-evolving expansion in body image disappointment.

Moreover, a concentration by Turton et al. (2017) found that obligatory activity is a dependable sign of how delightful female competitors are with their bodies. These outcomes lend reliability to the assumption that individuals' views of their bodies are fundamentally affected by their inspiration for working out. Furthermore, a meta-analysis directed in 2006 offered more confirmation of the negative relationship between women's interest in body degrading and their requirement to work out (Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006). These findings showed that female player's assessments of their bodies are harmed by the requests for obligatory exercise, highlighting the need to address hidden influential reasons to advance positive body image in exercise conditions.

Conclusion

The investigation concluded that obligatory exercise is connected to an impressive level of body image disappointment among physically active women. Especially, those with lower body image scores additionally showed higher outcomes when it came to obligatory exercise. These findings featured the meaning of the remedies focused on tending to the fundamental drivers of inspiration in exercise circumstances. Over the long haul, interventions that highlight establishing steady exercise conditions and natural inspiration may essentially reduce issues with body image and general wellbeing in this population.

Implications

Concerning obligatory exercise and intervention strategies, there is an impressive relationship between physically active women and their negative body image. By tending to obligatory exercise propensities and working on the motivator parts of activity, it is possible to bring down body image concerns and lay out a positive relationship with exercise. Experts

ought to lay out inviting conditions where freedom and pleasure precede appearance-driven goals. This ought to be noticed, especially at wellness centers and sports offices. Expanding information on the adverse consequences of obligatory exercise on mental well-being is significant to elevating a decent way to deal with exercises and eventually, upgrading by and large well-being and body image fulfillment in physically active ladies.

Recommendations

Future examinations ought to take a look at the different parts of the obligatory exercise and what it means for the body disappointment of physically active women. Longitudinal examinations can give insight into how people's mentalities toward their bodies change after some time, as well as how their commitments to exercise change. Complex bits of knowledge on individuals' abstract reactions to obligatory exercise and what it means for their body image can be acquired by utilizing subjective strategies. Furthermore, assessing the progress of drives that stress obligatory exercise propensities might offer helpful procedures for advancing great body image in physically active women.

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