The Impact of Aerobics on Body Image Perception of College Students

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Abstract: This study examines the correlation between individuals' judgments of their body image and their evaluation of the advantages of aerobic exercise. A descriptive comparative-correlational approach was employed to gather data from a heterogeneous sample of participants, encompassing their demographic characteristics, evaluation of the advantages of aerobics, and judgments of body image across many dimensions. The results indicate notable disparities in the evaluation of aerobics advantages according to age and gender, as older persons and males exhibit higher ratings across several areas. Furthermore, there is a notable association between participants' evaluation of the advantages of aerobics and their opinions of their body image, emphasizing the significance of overall well-being rather than physical attractiveness. The findings of this study highlight the need to implement customized treatments and inclusive initiatives aimed at fostering a positive body image and promoting engagement in physical exercise to enhance overall health and well-being.

Keywords: Physical Fitness and Health; Weight Management; Psychological Well-being.

1. Introduction

As an aerobics teacher, the researcher observes the significant relevance of this endeavor in China, since it serves as a comprehensive strategy to address a range of health and lifestyle issues. Primarily, it assumes a crucial duty in augmenting public health and promoting physical fitness (Liu, Wei, Zhang, Li, & Xu, 2023). In a nation contending with escalating prevalence of sedentary behaviors and the consequential health concerns regulating body weight, and enhancing total physical fitness. Additionally, the rapid urbanization and rigorous work routines prevalent in China have resulted in heightened levels of stress, hence highlighting the significance of aerobic activities in mitigating stress. Extensive research has demonstrated that engaging in regular physical activity has the capacity to reduce levels of stress hormones, improve mood, and foster mental well-being (Gravity Fitness, 2022).

Weight control is a crucial factor to consider, given the increasing prevalence of obesity in China. Aerobic workouts provide a viable method for the maintenance or attainment of a healthy body weight, hence diminishing the likelihood of developing problems associated with obesity. Moreover, the growing acknowledgement in China regarding the significance of mental health has highlighted the significance of aerobic exercise in enhancing psychological well-being. The intervention aids in mitigating symptoms associated with sadness and anxiety, improves cognitive performance, and enhances self-perception (Luo, Liu, Ye, Cai, Yao, Zhao, & Yu, 2023).

Social engagement and community-building play a pivotal role in the fabric of Chinese society. Engaging in collective cardiovascular activities, such as group fitness classes or team sports, fosters the development of social bonds and mitigates sensations of seclusion. In light of China's demographic shift towards an aging population, the implementation of aerobics is regarded as a proactive strategy in mitigating age-related health concerns such as cardiovascular illnesses, diabetes, and cognitive decline.

Aligned with the public health efforts of the government, the promotion of aerobics serves as a strategy to foster better lives among the populace. This initiative is in accordance with the endeavors aimed at promoting physical exercise, which is a component of a comprehensive campaign to foster a better lifestyle. Furthermore, it is worth noting that aerobic exercise has the potential to enhance the immune system, a topic that has gained significant prominence, particularly in periods characterized by health-related anxieties such as epidemics or pandemics. Regular physical activity in the workforce has the potential to yield heightened energy levels and enhanced productivity, so conferring advantages to both individuals and the overall productivity of the nation. China's cultural legacy encompasses various disciplines, such as Tai Chi and Qigong, that involve deliberate and measured aerobic motions and carry significant cultural value. The aforementioned customs are highly esteemed due to their significant impact on physical well-being, extended lifespan, and profound association with the cultural legacy of China. In conclusion, aerobic exercise is a complex and essential element of a well-rounded and health-conscious lifestyle in China. It contributes to both physical and mental well-being, promotes social interactions, and aligns with broader health and cultural objectives (Xinhua, 2021).

Meanwhile, generally, the concept of body image in China is shaped by a multifaceted interaction between cultural customs, evolving ideals of beauty, media consumption, and societal influences. Historically, Chinese culture has placed significant emphasis on virtues such as modesty and humility, which have played a pivotal role in shaping societal ideals of beauty. Consequently, these ideals have typically favored a thin and tiny physical appearance, which is commonly connected with notions of elegance. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of globalization and the dissemination of Western media has introduced novel conceptions of beauty that might prioritize individuals with taller and slimmer physiques, so contributing to the evolution of beauty standards (Stojcic, Dong, & Ren, 2020).

Various forms of media, including as television, magazines,
and social media, exert a substantial influence on the construction of beauty standards through the endorsement of products associated with physical appearance and body weight. This phenomenon has the potential to evoke both ambition and distress in relation to one's perception of their physical appearance. Social and peer influences exert influence, particularly among younger cohorts who may experience a sense of obligation to conform to specific standards of attractiveness (Liu, 2021).

In spite of the aforementioned societal influences, there is an increasing recognition of the significance of health and fitness in China, as seen by a considerable number of individuals who prioritize their physical well-being over mere aesthetic considerations. Consequently, there has been a notable transition towards linking a favorable perception of one's physical appearance with overall well-being, prioritizing health considerations over purely aesthetic concerns. The emergence of body positivity movements has presented a challenge to conventional beauty standards by advocating for self-acceptance irrespective of one's physical form or size. There are discernible generational disparities, wherein older cohorts tend to exhibit greater adherence to conventional values, while younger cohorts may display a higher susceptibility to the impact of globalized and diverse beauty norms. Moreover, body image impressions can be influenced by gender roles, which entail specific ideals for both males and females. The expansive and heterogeneous topography of China gives rise to regional disparities in cultural standards and conceptions of beauty, resulting in a rich mosaic of perspectives throughout the nation. Within this ever-changing environment, there is an increasing acknowledgment of the significance of advocating for body positivity, self-acceptance, and cultivating a balanced outlook on body image (Healthy China, 2023).

Alongside, however, the issue of body image challenges in China encompasses a complex array of factors that are firmly ingrained in societal, cultural, and media contexts. The media's representation of idealized beauty standards, which are defined by a slender physique, light complexion, and distinct facial attributes, plays a role in fostering impractical body ideals and dissatisfaction. The phenomenon of peer pressure, particularly prevalent among younger cohorts, exerts a substantial influence on individuals as they experience a compulsion to adhere to prevailing standards of appearance within their social networks. Societal norms frequently place emphasis on a slender physique and establish a correlation between specific physical attributes and notions of achievement and attractiveness. The growing influence of worldwide beauty standards in China, along with the commercialization of beauty products and services, contributes to the intensification of the aspiration for physical alteration (Niu & Wang, 2021).

The ramifications of body image difficulties are significant. These repercussions go beyond the physical domain and cover mental health aspects, including depression, anxiety, and reduced self-esteem. In certain instances, an individual's unhappiness with their body image can potentially result in the emergence of eating disorders and pose threats to their physical well-being. Social isolation may arise when individuals choose to disengage from social activities and interactions due to self-consciousness or feelings of inadequacy.

2. Significance of the Study

The study has the potential to benefit a wide range of individuals, groups, and organizations.

Aerobics Participants. The individuals who participated in the study may derive direct benefits from gaining a deeper understanding of their own opinions of body image and attitudes towards exercise. The cultivation of self-awareness has the potential to facilitate the making of well-informed decisions pertaining to physical exercise and body perception.

Body Image Advocacy Groups. The study's findings could potentially enhance the advocacy efforts of organizations and groups who are dedicated to promoting positive body image. It has the potential to offer empirically grounded backing for their endeavors and endeavors targeted at enhancing views of body image.

Educational institutions refer to establishments that provide formal instruction and learning opportunities to individuals. These institutions play a crucial role in imparting knowledge. Educational Institutions. The study's findings can be utilized by educational institutions such as universities, colleges, and schools to improve their curriculum and educational programs pertaining to physical education, mental health, and body image. The use of this approach has the potential to enhance the comprehensiveness of health and well-being education.

Fitness and Recreation Facilities. The findings of this study can be utilized by gyms, fitness centers, and recreation facilities to enhance the inclusivity and efficacy of their fitness programs. Gaining insight into the correlation among physical exercise, body image perception, and psychological well-being can facilitate the customization of fitness programs to effectively cater to the specific requirements of individuals.

Foundation for Further Research. The outcomes of this investigation can establish a fundamental groundwork for future scholarly inquiries within the domains of exercise science, psychology, and body image perception. Scholars have the opportunity to further investigate certain facets or intricacies of this association by utilizing the knowledge and insights acquired in this study.

General Public. Enhancing public awareness on the favorable effects of aerobic exercise on body image and psychological well-being can provide significant benefits for the general population. This understanding has the potential to serve as a catalyst for increased participation in regular physical activity, hence promoting holistic health advantages.

Healthcare professionals. The study's findings may offer valuable insights into the psychological elements of exercise and body image, which could be of help to medical practitioners, therapists, and psychologists. This understanding can enhance healthcare professionals' interactions with patients who are experiencing body image concerns or seeking exercise-related guidance for mental well-being.

Individuals with an inclination towards physical fitness. Those individuals who possess an interest in engaging in aerobic exercise or fitness regimens may acquire a more comprehensive comprehension of the possible advantages associated with such activities, extending beyond mere physical health. This includes an examination of their influence on body image and overall well-being.

Policy Makers. The study may be of significant value to public health authorities and policymakers in informing the
development of public health programs and policies pertaining to physical activity and body image. The information can contribute to decision-making processes concerning the inclusion of physical fitness in mental health programs.

Psychology Teachers. This study has potential benefits for psychology educators, as it can contribute to the enrichment of their curriculum, the cultivation of critical thinking skills, and the facilitation of classroom dialogues pertaining to body image and mental well-being.

3. Definition of Terms

Aerobics is a type of exercise that involves making rhythmic, continuous movements, usually at a modest to high level of intensity. Some of these routines are jogging, dancing, swimming, and cycling. They are meant to improve cardiovascular fitness and endurance.

Affective Body Image is how a person feels and thinks about their own body. It includes thoughts of happiness, sadness, satisfaction, or dissatisfaction with one's body.

Behavioral Body Image is how people act, behave, and make decisions about their bodies. It includes things like how often you work out, what you eat, how you look after yourself, and what you like to wear. All these things show how you feel about your body.

Body Image is how a person sees and feels about their own body and how it looks, including its size, shape, and general attractiveness. It includes both the things a person knows and doesn't know about how they feel about their body.

Cognitive Body Image is how a person thinks and feels about their body, such as if they think their body is healthy, fit, or beautiful or if they think it needs to be fixed.

Cognitive Function is improved through regular aerobic exercise. It is thought to improve cognitive skills like remembering, focus, and mental clarity. It has to do with how people feel about how exercise makes them smarter.

Perceptual body image is a person's subjective and aware view of how they look, including their size, shape, and certain body parts. It has to do with how a person sees themselves in a mirror or in a picture.

Physical Fitness and Health is improved through a person's physical health that they think come from doing aerobic exercise regularly. It looks at how people feel about having more energy, less tiredness, more stamina, and a general sense of physical well-being.

Psychological Impact is what happens to a person's mental and emotional well-being as a result of doing physical exercise. This includes a wide range of psychological factors, such as mood, self-esteem, satisfaction with the way your body looks, and general mental health.

Psychological Well-Being is the psychological benefits that people who do physical exercise get. This includes less stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as more emotional stability, self-confidence, and general psychological harmony.

Social Interaction affects a person relationships and social life. It includes subjective assessments of how doing aerobic exercises makes people feel like they have more friends, social support, and a sense of belonging.

Weight Management is a person's opinion of how well aerobic exercise helps them keep or get to a good weight and body composition. It includes personal assessments of how exercise helps people lose weight, keep their weight steady, or stop weight gain.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The data that was gathered, analyzed, and interpreted are presented in tabular form in this chapter.

1. Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows descriptive data on the frequencies and percentages of a sample of students who participated in aerobic activity. According to descriptive statistics, only 4% were female, while 36% were male. This means that the vast majority of the students who participated in aerobic activity are male students.

In terms of their age, the data that was tabulated showed that 79% of them were between 10 and 25 years old, and 21% were 26 and older, implying that the majority of the respondents are between 10 and 25 years old.

5. Conclusion

1. The significant majority of participants in the age range of 10 to 25, along with a significantly greater proportion of males (36%) compared to females (4%), highlights the significance of customizing interventions to cater to the distinct requirements and apprehensions of these demographic groups. This may involve exploring gender-specific strategies in light of the disproportionate representation observed.

2. The limited evidence of advantages across all measures of aerobics implies its capacity to have a favorable influence on several aspects of well-being, underscoring its comprehensive advantages beyond simply physical fitness. It is crucial to emphasize the significance of advocating for aerobic exercise, as it contributes to physical well-being and enhances psychological and social welfare.

3. The significant differences in aerobics advantages according to age and gender underscore the necessity for focused treatments customized for distinct demographic cohorts. The results of this study indicate that strategies aimed at encouraging aerobic exercise should be tailored and adjusted to cater to the diverse requirements and preferences of distinct age groups and genders.

4. The comprehensive examination of body image across several domains underscores the need for using diverse strategies in treatments designed to foster a favorable body image. This implies that therapies must encompass not just perceptual elements but also emotional, cognitive, and behavioral facets of body image.

5. The notable disparities in body image evaluations according to age and gender highlight the necessity for customized treatments to tackle the distinct obstacles and anxieties encountered by various demographic cohorts. In
order to effectively address body image among older students, treatments should prioritize the enhancement of emotional and cognitive components. Similarly, interventions targeting male students should address perceptual, affective, cognitive, and behavioral factors.

6. The observed correlation between the evaluation of aerobics advantages and the impression of body image implies that advocating for aerobic exercise might potentially have favorable outcomes in terms of body image. This highlights the capacity of aerobic exercise to improve physical well-being and foster a favorable perception of one’s own body, stressing the need to integrate exercise treatments into programs aimed at enhancing body image.

6. Recommendations

1. Design customized intervention programs that specifically target diverse age groups and genders in order to enhance the advantages of engaging in aerobics. It is important for these programs to effectively cater to the distinct requirements and concerns that have been discovered within each demographic group. This entails taking into account several elements, including age-related physical changes and gender-specific preferences.

2. Promote aerobics’ comprehensive advantages, highlighting its favorable impact on psychological well-being, social engagement, and physical fitness. This may encompass educational initiatives, workshops, and community gatherings emphasizing the diverse benefits of consistent aerobic exercise.

3. Use gender-sensitive techniques as crucial in the promotion of aerobics, as it acknowledges and addresses the diverse requirements and preferences of both male and female participants. This may encompass the provision of exercise courses that are specifically tailored to gender, the establishment of fitness facilities that are inclusive of all genders, and the customization of marketing materials to cater to a wide range of gender identities.

4. Develop comprehensive therapies targeting several body image components, encompassing perceptual, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. To foster a complete and positive body image, it is recommended to integrate many modalities, including body-positive education, cognitive-behavioral therapy approaches, and mindfulness practices.

5. Offer focused assistance to demographic groups that have been identified as vulnerable based on the evaluation, including older students and females. One potential approach to address specific body image problems and foster resilience is through the provision of specialist counseling services, peer support groups, or mentoring programs.

6. Incorporate aerobic exercise elements into pre-existing body image improvement programs that can be advantageous in leveraging the documented correlation between engagement in exercise and the perception of body image. Promote regular physical exercise as a component of individuals’ comprehensive self-care and body image enhancement techniques.

7. Promote community involvement and collaboration by fostering active participation and cooperation among various stakeholders, such as educational institutions, healthcare providers, fitness professionals, and community groups. The utilization of this cooperative method might expedite the creation and execution of all-encompassing intervention tactics that tackle the intricate interaction among aerobics, body image, and overall well-being.

References


