

## **Body Image and the Preference of Exercise in Everyday Life: A Study on Young Generation**

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### **Abstract:**

**Background:** There is a relationship between exercise type and body image. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century exercise has become a part of our everyday lives. In the contemporary era millions of people are constantly living with a dreadful feeling about how they look because they are not satisfied with their body image. The body image is the person's personal view about their body like their body size, body shape, weight as well as appearance, person can feel positive or negative about his/her body image. So, people are prefer to doing anaerobic and aerobic exercise on the basis of their perception of body image.

**Aim:** The objective of this paper is the preference of exercise in enhancing body image among youth.

**Methods and Theory:** As methodological issues, exploratory research design is used to examine the experience of body image and exercise type. The study is based on the quantitative in nature. For this present study English Bazar, Kaliyachalk – I and Kaliyachalk – II at Malda district in West Bengal has been chosen as study area. The study is conducted on 50 sample size those who were youth and age group were 18 – 26. The study resorts to purposive sampling. The study is based on the research technique of structured questionnaire and survey strategy. All data were analyzed by tabulation.

As theoretical issues, E. Goffman's 'Dramaturgical Approach' and C. H. Cooley's 'Looking Glass Self' was relied on to interpret the body image and exercise.

**Findings:** At present, Youth's body images are different on the basis of gender. Positive body image is noticeable in men and on the other hand negative body image is noticeable in women. So, when it comes to preference of doing exercise to body image enhancement, men and women have different reasons to doing exercise. Health improvement as well as increase fitness for men and lose weight for women. However, Women who more prefer to doing anaerobic exercise and men who more prefer to doing aerobic exercise.

**Conclusion:** Youth people who are conscious about body attractiveness, thus the preference of exercise is increasing to body image enhancement in everyday life since the preferences are differ on the basis of gender.

**Keyword:** Body Image, Self, Exercise Habit, Gender, Attractiveness

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Exercise is a very important part in everyday life. Exercise keeps people healthy, helps to increase fitness and with this exercise has a significant role to boosts immunity. So, next to nothing that exercise has considerable preference in everyday life because exercise reduces anxiety and depression as well as at the same time exercise has also plays a role in enhancing body image. That is exercise is very beneficial not only for health but also for human body. So, there is a relationship between exercise and body image.

There has been and continues to be a lot of research on the relationship of body image with exercise in the discipline of sociology, psychology, physical education and so on. Some scholar have explained the relationship between exercise type with body image, some have explained the relationship between exercise behavior and some have explained the relationship between exercise motivation.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the preference of exercise is going to be noticed because body is presenting through the kind of exercise. So in this point of view body modification is becoming a part of human existence. In the contemporary era millions of people are constantly living with a dreadful feeling about how they look because they are not satisfied with their body image. The body image is the person's personal view about their body like their body size, body shape, weight and appearance (Farrar, 2014). So, body image is the picture of our own body which we form in our mind and this concept was originated through the work of Paul Schilder in the year 1920. He was the first researcher to explain the concept of body image in psychological and sociological perspectives. He stated that body image is not only a cognitive construct, but it also reflects attitudes and interactions with others. Person can feel positive or negative about own body image. When a person feels

satisfied about own body, it is a healthy body image which is always positive. In compared to a negative body image, which is unhealthy. Where individuals are dissatisfied about their own body.

Although, many men and women are modify their own body through exercise, and which can be achieved by anaerobic and aerobic exercise, thereby enhancing their body image. So, now a days there is a preference of anaerobic and aerobic exercise to be noticed to enhancing body image. Many young people prefer aerobic exercise and many prefer aerobic exercise to enhancing body image.

The main objective of this paper is the preference of exercise to enhancing body image among youth.

The paper begins by examining the body image perception among youth in everyday life.

Secondly, to examine the preference of anaerobic and aerobic exercise among youth thereby enhancing body image.

## **II. BODY IMAGE AND EXERCISE TYPE: METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES**

Methodological and theoretical approaches to research in the area of body image and exercise type regarding the preference of exercise type to enhancing body image emerged from a wide variety of disciplines such as sociology, psychology, women's studies and more. These multidisciplinary based describe above, lead to the use of a variety of approaches for studying body image.

### **Methods and Data**

**Research Design:**In this paper Exploratory research design is used to examine the experience of body image and exercise type. The study is totally based on the quantitative in nature. Quantitative researchers are interested in understanding the phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity (Kothari, 2004).

**Research Strategy:**Researchers followed the survey strategy because the selection of the sample were very convenient and in connection with, the Questionnaire Survey approach is used in this study.

**Methods of Data Collection:**In studying body image and exercise type, Primary data are used in this study. Through the primary source Structured questionnaire were used and all questions were close-ended.

**Study Area:**For the present study English Bazar, Kaliyachalk – I and Kaliyachalk – II at Malda district in West Bengal, India has been chosen as a study area.

**Sample and Sampling:**Researchers have taken the 50 respondents those who were youth. So, the study is conducted on 50 young men and women in the age group of 18 -26 and this study resort to purposive sampling.

**Data Analysis:**For the present study all data were edited, pre-coded and tabulated. After the tabulation data were interpreted by univariate and bi-variate tables and in connection with this percentage distribution were performed.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Body image and exercise as subject if consider on the theoretical issue then have to see there are Symbolic Interaction Theory is deductively associated, as Looking Glass Self and Dramaturgical Approach. Symbolic Interaction theory is much related to understanding body image concern because Symbolic Interactionism focus on self and society. Symbolic Interactionism posits that how people are interact and also focus on the nature of interaction, social relationship and patterns of social action (Abraham, 1982). Two theoretical approaches of body image have been used to conceptualize the preference of anaerobic and exercise to enhancing body image. Theory of Looking glass self by Charls Horton Cooley and The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life by Earving Goffman each is describe briefly to understanding body image.

The Looking glass self to explain the mental picture of oneself and state that how person views themselves in the eyes of others in society, developed by American sociologist Charls Horton Cooley (Fedorowicz, 2015). The Looking glass self theory forecast that the perception of one's self as a reflection on the perception of others. So, next to nothing that the key features of Cooley's Looking Glass Self are social self and social interaction. Cooley mentioned the three principle dimensions in his theory of Looking Glass Self:

- How we imagine our appearance to others
- How we imagine others' judgement of that appearance
- Our personal feeling about that judgement (Abraham, 1982).

In body image context, Looking Glass Self understand that human body is not the individualistic issue but it is a social issue because the person can feel positive or negative about his/her own body and appearance as perception of others persons. So it can be said that the when a person do feel 'too fat' or 'too thin' about his/her own body then it is always effect of social interaction with others in society.

Contrary to Looking Glass Self, Dramaturgical Approach focus on the presentation of self in everyday life to the analyzing body image. In Symbolic Interactionism the Dramaturgical Approach is more relevance to understanding the body image, developed by Erving Goffman. Sociologist Erving Goffman drew on this idea to

explain the Front stage and Back stage model where he argues that the life is like theater and there are performers and audience are exist and in connection with all performance on these stages are real. Goffman posits that the Front stage is a stage where the performance is goes on and whither performers always make an impression to the audience through the performance. On the other side Back stage is a stage which is not visible but this type of stage is existed, whither performers are preparing to go to the front stage and on this back stage performers hiding the all dirty work (Collins, 1988).

Goffman's Dramaturgical approach is consistent with body image, implies that the life like a theater and there are performers and audience are exists on front stage and back stage. According to Goffman's dramaturgy, when a person presents his/her appearance, then he/she always tries to maintain the impression on the front stage. On the other side person has to do to maintain appearance is not presented in front of the viewer, always kept secret. So, next to nothing that on the front stage the person always present as confident, beautiful and skinny but as compared to on the back stage the person always be scared, confused, alone, and miserable (Boston, 2003).

### **III. BODY IMAGE AMONG YOUTH**

Body image is a 'multidimensional' concept because body image is discussed in both dimension of individual and society. Body image indicates the relationship of society with people, that is to say the body is a personal matter but social reality creates an ideal image of the body like muscular for men and thin for women. Therefore, society always portrays on ideal body image with attractiveness.

In the discipline of psychology and sociology the concept of body image originated through the work of Paul Schilder. Body image means self-image stated that the perception where individuals are aware of their self. So, Body image is a person's personal view of their body like their body size, body shape, weight and appearance (Farrar, 2014). Person can feel the positive and negative feelings about the body that revolve around the body image. Positive body image is the healthy body image where the person can feel positive about their body and on the other hand negative body image is the unhealthy body image where the person can feel negative about their bodies.

The current study focuses on youth's body image perception and after analyzing all the data, it can be says that at the present time, youth people are very much aware about body image like their attractiveness, height, weight, fitness but it differ on the basis of gender.

- There is differences to men's and women's body image perception.
- When it comes to body satisfaction youth people are mostly satisfied with their bodies. Men are totally satisfied with their bodies but on the other hand women are mostly satisfied with their bodies.
- In the case of unattractiveness, there is a gender difference can be noticed. Men who don't feel about unattractiveness with their appearances but women who feel slightly unattractive with their appearances.
- When it comes to happiness with current body fitness, height and weight among youth, both men and women are mostly and moderately happy with their body fitness. Apart from that the level of happiness with present height and weight, men are mostly and moderately happy, but the women who are moderately and slightly happy with their height and weight.
- There is a gender difference can be noticed in the comparison with others people among youth. Men who don't compare themselves with others but women are very rarely compare themselves with others.

However, body image perception has become very important among youth. Youth's body image is different on the basis of men and women. Nowadays men are totally satisfied with their body but on the other hand women are mostly satisfied with their body. In other words, the body satisfaction level of men is higher but in the case of women the body satisfaction level is comparatively lower.

There is a tendency to be unattractiveness with bodies among youth. Men don't feel the unattractive with their bodies, but women are slightly feel. So, not only the unattractiveness is more about the body, but also the difference between happiness through height, weight and fitness to be noticed. Both men and women are very happy with their body fitness. In the case of height and weight men are very happy with this but women are slightly happy.

Needless to say, body image perception in the contemporary era is creating a comparison with others where men compare themselves less with others but women compare more.

### **IV. PREFERENCE OF ANAEROBIC AND AEROBIC EXERCISE IN ENHANCING BODY IMAGE**

At present, the difference in body image perception between men and women is noticeable. Positive body image is noticeable in men and on the other hand negative body image is noticeable in women. So, when it comes to doing exercise to body image enhancement, the gender difference is very noticeable. There are two types of exercise namely anaerobic exercise and aerobic exercise.

Anaerobic exercises are those types of exercise in which short, intense bursts of physical activity are involved. Examples of anaerobic exercise are as follows: Weight lifting, Jumping rope, Gym, sprinting and so on. On the other hand, aerobic exercises are called as endurance-type exercise. Aerobic exercises that increase a person's heart and breathing rate over a sustained period. Examples of aerobic exercise are as follows: Running, Swimming, Cycling, Biking, Dancing, Yoga, Walking and so on. So, next to nothing that both types of exercise are beneficial for health, fitness, mental health as well as body image enhancement (Medical News Today, 2020).

However, it can be said that there is a relationship between body image and exercise type. So, the two types of exercise like anaerobic and aerobic are very important to enhancing body image. A. Littrell (2017), who draw his idea on the relationship between body image and exercise type. He posits that person participating some kind of exercise to enhance the body image. According to him individual with negative body image those who prefer aerobic exercise and on the other hand individual with positive body image who prefer anaerobic exercise.

Since the youth people are very much aware about their body image like their attractiveness, height, weight, fitness so, they have prefer to doing anaerobic and aerobic exercise on the basis of their healthy and unhealthy body image. After analyzing all the data to find out the preference of anaerobic and aerobic exercise, the findings are as follows:

- Youth people are prefer to doing exercise. In connection with the men who are most prefer to doing exercise than women.
- When it comes to general goal of exercise, men who are doing exercise for increase of fitness/strength as well as health improvement, but women who are doing exercise for lose weight.
- In the case of preference of anaerobic exercise, men who are slightly prefer, but women who totally prefer to doing anaerobic exercise. So, there is a gender differences to preferences of anaerobic exercise. Men who are prefer to doing gym, but on the other hand women who are prefer to doing jumping rope as anaerobic exercise.
- In the case of preference of aerobic exercise, men who are mostly prefer, but women who slightly prefer to doing anaerobic exercise. So, there is a differences to preferences of aerobic exercise. Men who are prefer running, but women who are prefer walking as aerobic exercise.

However, it should be noted that in the contemporary era youth people who prefer exercise to body image enhancement. The preference of doing exercise are high among men than women. Currently men who prefer exercise to increase fitness and health improvement but women who prefer exercise to lose weight. So, men and women have different reasons to doing exercise. In this context, it can be said that since the reasons for doing exercise are different on the basis of gender, there is also gender difference can be notice to the preference of anaerobic and aerobic exercise. Women who are totally prefer anaerobic exercise and on the other hand men who are slightly prefer anaerobic exercise. In this case, women are more prefer to play jumping rope as an anaerobic exercise. Apart from that Men who are mostly prefer aerobic exercise and on the other hand women who are slightly prefer aerobic exercise. In this case, men are more prefer to run as an anaerobic exercise. So it can be said that there is a gender difference is noticeable in the preference of anaerobic and aerobic exercise to enhancing body image among youth.

## V. CONCLUSION

The overall purpose of this study was to explore the preference of exercise to body image enhancement in everyday life. Body image which has become a special part of everyday life. Body attractiveness has become very important to people and the tendency of the exercise to maintain the attractiveness is also increasing. Exercise is not only an agency of health improvement and physical fitness but it has also become a means of body image enhancement, where gender difference is also noticeable in the case of anaerobic and aerobic exercise preference.

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