COMPARING SOCIAL PHYSIQUE ANXIETY AND PHYSICAL SELF-
PERCEPTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS REGARDING EXERCISE
PARTICIPATION ¹DÜZENLİ OLARAK EGZERSİZE KATILAN VE KATILMAYAN
ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN SOSYAL FİZİK KAYGI VE KENDİNİ
FİZİKSEL ALGILAMA PUANLARININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI*Hakan KOLAYIŞ¹, İhsan SARI¹, Nurullah ÇELİK²**¹⁻² Sakarya University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Sakarya / Turkey*

Öz: Spor bilimleri alanındaki birçok araştırmada, egzersize katılımın fizyolojik ve psikolojik etkileri farklı örneklem grupları ile ele alınmıştır. Bu konuda yapılan araştırmalar egzersize katılımın farklı birçok etkisini ortaya koyması açısından önemlidir. Bu bağlamda, bu araştırmanın amacı düzenli olarak egzersize katılan ve katılmayan üniversite öğrencilerinin sosyal fizik kaygı ve kendini fiziksel algılama puanlarının karşılaştırılmasıdır. Düzenli olarak egzersize katılan ve katılmayan toplam 626 üniversite öğrencisi (Yaş: 21.44 ± 2.19) gönüllü olarak araştırmaya katılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak Sosyal Fizik Kaygı Envanteri ve Kendini Fiziksel Algılama Envanteri kullanılmıştır. Normal dağılımı test etmek için Kolmogorov-Smirnov Testi kullanılmış ve verinin normal dağılım göstermediği belirlenmiştir. Bu nedenle iki grubun karşılaştırılması için Mann-Whitney U testi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre düzenli olarak egzersize katılan grup ile düzenli olarak egzersize katılmayan grup arasında sosyal fizik kaygı ve alt boyutları açısından anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır. Öte yandan, düzenli olarak egzersize katılan grubun istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olarak daha yüksek spor yeteneği, fiziksel kondisyon ve kuvvet puanına sahip olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kendini Fiziksel Algılama, Sosyal Fizik Kaygı, Egzersiz

Abstract: Physiological and psychological impacts of exercise have been a matter of scientific studies and those impacts have been put forward in many ways with the studies done in different sampling groups. Studies to be done in this field are important for determining the various functions of exercise on individuals in different sampling groups. The purpose of this research was to investigate whether the levels of Social Physique Anxiety and Physical Self-Perception of university students differ according to exercise participation. The study was composed of 626 student volunteers ($\bar{X}$ age: 21.44 ± 2.19). The Social Physique Anxiety Scale and The Physical Self-Perception Profile Inventory were completed by the participants. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was used to detect whether the data showed a normal distribution or not. It was found that there was not a normal distribution in the data. For this reason, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare experimental and control groups. It was found that exercise participation had no significant effect on Social Physique Anxiety and its sub-dimensions for the sampling group of this research. On the other hand, exercising had a positive effect on sport ability, physical condition and strength.

Key Words: Physical Self-Perception, Social Physique Anxiety, Exercise

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(1) *Corresponding Author: Hakan KOLAYIŞ, Sakarya University Faculty of Sports Sciences, Sakarya/Turkey hakankolayis@sakarya.edu.tr Received: 03.09.2016 Revision Date 09.12.2016 Accepted: 21.12.2016 Type of article (Research -Application) Conflict of Interest: / None "None of Ethics Committee"*

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INTRODUCTION

Behavioural changes in physical activity have become a subject of psychology and social psychologists have supported the need to find out the elements and structures that cause and specify these changes (Hagger et al., 2011: 1299-1300). Self- perceptions of individuals related to physical contexts, including social physique anxiety (SPA), are associated with their entire evaluative perception of their self in physical contexts, known as Physical Self Concept (PSC) (Hagger et al., 2010: 305). Hart et al. (1989) indicated that SPA is a sub-type of social anxiety. In this context, SPA arises from the prospect of interpersonal evaluation of an individual's physique. According to Crawford and Eklund (1994), anxiety related to the perceived social evaluation of one's body or physical appearance is defined as SPA. Complying with others' perception gives rise to concerns, particularly about behaving according to situational norms, being worried about social approval or disapproval, being concerned about others' perceptions and evaluations or feeling anxious about others' evaluation of one's own physical appearance (Çağlar et al., 2010: 742).

People choose to exercise for different reasons ranging from achieving or sustaining physical appearance to less visual concerns like health and obtaining a desired social identity. People are believed to obtain recog-

nition, rewards and attention thanks to being athletic. According to Leary (1992), individuals take part in exercise for personal or social concerns (Brown, 2002: 220).

Researches showed that the physical self is an important psychological outcome, correlate and determinant of participation in physical activity (e.g. Fox, 1997; McAuley et al., 2002; Schneider et al., 2008; Hagger et al., 2010). Physical self-perception (PSP) is a form of self-concept that is likely to be affected by participation in physical activity. It is possible to say that components of one's PSC have a positive relation with physical activity and sport-related behaviours. For example, Raudsepp, Liblik and Hannus (2002) concluded that physical self-perceptions are significant correlates of physical activity and fitness. Likewise, studies conducted by Sonstroem et al. (1992), Page et al. (1993) and Aşçı, (2005) mentioned an increase in physical activity participation if an individual has more favourable perceptions of physical capacity. With regard to gender, males were found to have more favourable PSP compared to females. Particularly in certain self-concept domains such as perceived sport competence, physical attractiveness, physical condition and strength and entire physical self-appraisal, males were reported to have more favourable self-perceptions than females (Arazi & Hosseini, 2013: 11).

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Previous studies such as Hagger et al., 2010; Hagger et al., 2007 and Kowalski et al., 2001 showed that SPA is linked with self-presentational perceptions such as self-esteem and self-perception. In Leary and Kowalski's (1990) model explaining the link between SPA and the concern of an individual with negative presentation of the physical self in evaluative contexts, people with a low physical self-concept are expected to have an increase in SPA. Therefore, researchers have pointed out that PSC has a negative relation with SPA (e.g. Hagger et al., 2010; Martin et al., 1997).

The theoretical prediction mentioned about the effects of physical activity on individual's subsequent behaviour and self-presentational outcomes posits an effect on perceptions of individuals' own capabilities and self-efficacy. This approach points out that engaging in physical activity is a self-presentational strategy resulting in the improvement of perceptions regarding individual competence and a corresponding decrease in the discomfort associated with perceived negative physical evaluation such as SPA (McAuley et al., 2002: 223). In the light of the explanations stated above, the purpose of this research was to investigate whether the levels of SPA and PSP of university students differ in regards to exercise participation.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 626 students consisting of 353 male (Xage: 21.76 ± 2.30) and 273 female (Xage: 21.04 ± 1.97) participated in the study voluntarily. Of these students, 330 (Xage: 21.77 ± 2.17) exercised regularly, while 296 (Xage: 21.08 ± 2.15) did not.

Measures

"The Social Physique Anxiety Scale" (SPAS), which was created by Hart et al. (1989) and adopted into Turkish by Mülazimoğlu and Aşçı (2006), consists of 12 items and two subscales (Feeling of Discomfort and Expectation of Negative Evaluation). The items elicited responses on a five point Likert scale: (1) not at all (2) slightly, (3) moderately, (4) very and (5) extremely (Hagger et al., 2010: 308). The lowest score is 12 while the highest score is 60. As the scores obtained from the scale increase, so does one's anxiety over one's appearance.

The Physical Self-Perception Profile (PSPP) Inventory was designed by Fox (1990) and adopted into Turkish by Aşçı et al. (1995). The scale measures individuals' beliefs about their physical capabilities. The PSPP contains 30 items that form five dimensions. These dimensions are: general physical self-worth, sports competence, physical condition, at-

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tractive body and strength and musculature (Ransdell et al., 2001: 121). The inventory has expressions for each item defining two types of people. Participants are required to choose one of these two options they are most like and the degree to which they resemble this type. They choose expressions like “Exactly true for me” or “rather true for me” for grading this similarity. The answers are scored from one (low physical self-perception) to four (high physical self-perception) (Gençay and Akkoyunlu, 2012: 318). Each sub-dimension of PSPP has six items, therefore the overall scores range from 6 to 24.

Procedures

The purpose of the study was explained and the principle of voluntary participation in the study was stated to the participants. Students were contacted by the researchers in face-to-face interactions in fitness centers. The researchers explained the aim of the research and requested the athletes to take part in the research. While the students in the regular exercise group were chosen among the students who exercise at least one year with regularity,

the control group consisted of students who do not regularly exercise.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of data, the SPSS 17 packet program was used. Significance level was determined to be 0.05. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was used to detect whether the data show a normal distribution or not. This test found that there was not a normal distribution in the data. For this reason, one of the non-parametric tests, the Mann-Whitney U test, was used to compare the groups.

RESULTS

Results showed that the mean score for the individuals who exercise regularly for feeling of discomfort was 11.71 ± 3.76 , for expectation of negative evaluation, 17.04 ± 5.48 and for SPA, 28.75 ± 7.92 (Table 1). As for the individuals who do not regularly exercise, the mean score for feeling of discomfort was 12.07 ± 3.51 , for expectation of negative evaluation, 17.41 ± 5.71 and for SPA, 29.48 ± 7.82 (Table 1).

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of SPA Regarding the Exercise Participation

State of Exercise Participation		Feeling of Discomfort	Expectation of Negative Evaluation	Social Physique Anxiety
Exercise Regularly	Mean	11.71	17.04	28.75
	N	330	330	330
	Sd.	3.77	5.48	7.92
Not Exercise Regularly	Mean	12.07	17.41	29.48
	N	296	296	296
	Sd.	3.51	5.71	7.82

The mean score for the individuals who regularly exercise competence was 16.87 ± 3.30 , for physical condition, 16.47 ± 3.23 , for body attractiveness, 15.80 ± 2.90 , for general physical self-worth, 16.10 ± 2.83 and for strength, 16.55 ± 3.09 (Table 2). For the individuals

who not do regularly exercise, the mean score for sport competence was 14.85 ± 3.35 , for physical condition, 15.03 ± 3.12 , for body attractiveness, 15.76 ± 2.97 , for general physical self-worth, 15.93 ± 2.85 and for strength, 15.48 ± 3.27 (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of PSP Regarding Exercise Participation

State of Exercise Participation		Sport Competence	Physical Condition	Body Attractiveness	General Physical Self Worth	Strength
Exercise Regularly	Mean	16.88	16.47	15.81	16.10	16.55
	N	330	330	330	330	330
	Sd.	3.30	3.24	2.91	2.83	3.092
Not Exercise Regularly	Mean	14.85	15.03	15.76	15.94	15.49
	N	296	296	296	296	296
	Sd.	3.35	3.13	2.97	2.86	3.28

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No significance differences between the two groups were found in “feeling of discomfort about one’s physique” ($U = 45343.50$, $p>0.05$), “the expectation of negative evaluation of one’s physique by others” ($U = 47592.50$, $p>0.05$) or “social physique anxiety” ($U = 45846.00$, $p>0.05$), (Table 3).

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Table 3. Comparing SPA in Terms of Exercise Participation

Sub Scales	Status	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Feeling of Discomfort	Exercise regularly	330	302.90	99958.50	45343.50	.12
	Not exercise regularly	296	325.31	96292.50		
	Total	626				
Expectations of Negative Evaluations	Exercise regularly	330	309.72	102207.50	47592.50	.58
	Not exercise regularly	296	317.71	94043.50		
	Total	626				
Social Physique Anxiety	Exercise regularly	330	304.43	100461.00	45846.00	.18
	Not exercise regularly	296	323.61	95790.00		
	Total	626				

According to the results of the Mann-Whitney U test of the PSPP, the “body attractiveness” ($U = 47811.50$, $p>0.05$) and “general physical self-worth” ($U = 46949.50$, $p>0.05$) scores did not significantly differ between the students who regularly exercise and those who do not. However, there was a significant difference in “sport competence” ($U = 32075.00$, $p<0.05$), “physical condition” ($U = 36242.50$, $p<0.05$) and “strength” sub-dimensions of the PSPP ($U = 38830.50$, $p<0.05$) which was in favour of those who participated in regular exercise (Table 4).

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Table 4. Comparing PSP in Terms of Exercise Participation

Sub Scales	Status	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Sport Ability	Exercise regularly	330	364.30	120220.00	32075.00	.00*
	Not exercise regularly	296	256.86	76031.00		
	Total	626				
Physical Condition	Exercise regularly	330	351.67	116052.50	36242.50	.00*
	Not Exercise regularly	296	270.94	80198.50		
	Total	626				
Body Attractiveness	Exercise regularly	330	316.62	104483.50	47811.50	.65
	Not exercise regularly	296	310.03	91767.50		
	Total	626				
General Physical Self Worth	Exercise regularly	330	319.23	105345.50	46949.50	.40
	Not exercise regularly	296	307.11	90905.50		
	Total	626				
Strength	Exercise regularly	330	343.83	113464.50	38830.50	.00*
	Not exercise regularly	296	279.68	82786.50		
	Total	626				

*p<0.05

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research showed that doing regular exercise partly contributed to PSP of university students, whereas there was not any significant change in SPA scores. There was not any significant difference for body attractiveness and general physical self-worth

in regards to doing regular exercise. In contrast, regular exercise appeared to enhance university students' perception of their sport competence, physical condition and strength.

Lindwall and Lindgren (2005) conducted experimental research in order to investigate the effectiveness of an exercise intervention programme on PSP and SPA in a group of adolescent Swedes who did not do regular

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physical activity. The participants in the experimental group joined the activities twice a week; the intervention consisted of exercises and discussions that lasted around one hour. Although Lindwall and Lindgren's research (2005) concluded that positive effects of the exercise intervention programme on the physical self were unclear, their overall results supported the positive effect of exercise on PSP and SPA.

In another research study that aimed to investigate the impact of a nine-month physical activity intervention program on physical self-concept among sedentary adolescent females, the authors concluded that the physical activity intervention did not lead to enhanced physical self-concept among the participants (Schneider et al., 2008: 10). It was stated in another study that practising six weeks of aerobic dance enhanced body attitudes and physical self-perceptions. This research indicated positive psychological contribution of aerobic dance activities for adolescents who have a poor image of themselves (Burgess et al., 2006: 57).

CONCLUSION

It can be said that not many studies have examined the relationship between participation in physical activities, SPA and PSP. Gökçe et al. (2010) compared SPA of individuals who do and do not do physical activity and concluded

that individuals who regularly exercise have significantly lower SPA scores. Similarly, Baştuğ et al. (2011) examined the effect of eight weeks of aerobic exercises on various variables and concluded that this exercise program contributed to increased perception of their appearance and self-confidence. This research showed the importance of physical activities for individuals to be happier with their physical appearance.

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