

Discussion

In our country, educational process contains in service and pre service training. In public establishment in service training includes two groups. The first group is the new staff and the second group is the staff still working. The aim is to teach the changes in the work and to learn changes. But, the studies on in service training is not successful and are thought to remain on a theoretical level (G. Hüseyin, 2000). Although in service training is thought to be necessary in our country, activity level is not enough. There are two reasons why in service training activities are not popular. First reason is that labor cost is not reflected in and the second reason is that additional training is not reflected in employee rights (A. Tufan, 2002).

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF ESTEEM AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE IN WOMEN SPORTS PRACTICE

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Abstract

Aim: The research starts from the assumption that women, in their desire to improve their physical appearance resort to various methods and means, among these physical exercise being the more beneficial one. The objectives of this paper are to identify to what extent the improvement of the physical self brings with itself the increase of self esteem of the women who exercise.

Methods: By using the method of the questionnaire along with the Rosenberg test to evaluate the self esteem of the women in sports practice.

Discussions and conclusions: It was concluded that physical exercises done at least twice a week have an effect on the mind of the women by improving the physical self but also their self image.

Keywords: physical self, self image, self esteem , physical activities

Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to analyze the relationship between self esteem and physical exercise such as aerobics in women. The self is defined as "an organized collection of beliefs and feelings about ourselves (R. Baron et al., 1998,) and it can be treated as a central mental scheme of the self, its essence or identity, it being the way we categorize both our outer conduct and our inner condition". It also comprises the notion of the physical self containing elements such as: physical looks, the proportionality of the segments of the body, the attitude, muscular tonus, corporality.

For P. Popescu-Neveanu (1978,) self consciousness is the primary condition for self-regulating activism, selectivity and creative intervention in the environment, based upon models or images of objective reality. Self image represents the central part of self organization, which, in its turn, is considered to be the main structure of the psyche. Self adequacy is a central concept of the image of the personality, thus, an adequate personality has a positive self image, feels capable, wanted, accepted, knows and accepts itself (M. Epuran et al., 2001).

Body image refers to the way one sees oneself but also to the way one believes one is perceived by the

others (P. Iluț, 2001). The physical self determines the degree of acceptance of one's own body (R. Stevens, 1996.). There is an ideal self image and a real one; the ideal image is the image desired by the woman who exercises and self esteem marks the discrepancies existing between an ideal physical self and the real one and it is the result of a lengthy process. When the difference between the ideal physical self and the real one is big, then personal adaptation has a lot to suffer (K. Gergen, 1991.).

The solutions to diminish the differences between the ideal and the real physical self come from various areas, and in the recent years plastic surgery gained a lot of ground but the range of offers of non-invasive procedures in the area of body aesthetics has also diversified. In a competition with all these aesthetics offers on the market, physical exercise has also diversified quite a lot, its advantage consisting of the connection between the physical self, the outer (what is there to be seen) and inner self, the one which is felt and lived by the women and an improvement of the physical self through various procedures (such as the non-invasive body aesthetics ones) does not bring with itself an increase of self esteem as well. Thus, in a competition with all these types of activities, body

education centres offer a diversified range of ways to practice physical exercise, using various methods and means and their customers are aware that in order to find the balance between the desired self and the image they have about themselves physical activity is one of the solutions, though not the easiest one, compared to the non-invasive body modelling procedures, but more efficient due to the implicit effect it has on the psyche. The new types of gymnastics practiced in these centres consider the relationship between physical effort and the psyche of the subjects, focusing on breathing methods, relaxing of the muscles, mental relaxation. Amongst these we have: Pilates, core & balance, yoga. Even if initially leisure time sports is an alternative for health and aesthetics (A.Dragnea & S. Mate-Teodorescu, 2002, the envisioned objective is to find inner balance, to eliminate stress and discontent regarding the reflected physical image as well as to accept oneself and manage the anguish concerning physical looks (J-P. Famose & Guerin, 2002,).

Due to the very common incidence of depression (A. Ehrenberg, 1998), taken as an overall phenomenon in modern society (especially in the past ten years), we feel that yet another additional "tool" used to prevent the negative effects of low self esteem is very useful. Low self esteem leads to a psychological fall and to isolation from the rest of the people. People tend to compare themselves with others similar to them from the point of view of their personal image, admitting the importance of self esteem as far as efficiency and mental health are concerned, thus constantly trying to increase it. Nevertheless, self esteem is a very weak predictor of social performance, as it has no positive consequences later on. People with low self esteem can have a pleasant physical appearance, but they may not see this, as they may be pessimists and negativists in regards to every detail. The value of one person does not arise from his/her performances in a certain field, but from his/her overall behaviour, actions and past potentialities. A negative self image increases the risk of eating disorders such as bulimia or anorexia. People with high self esteem prove to be perseverant when facing failures, and sometimes they conduct themselves better in certain social situations. People with positive self esteem are happier and less depressed. Depression is tightly connected to low self esteem, this being the main reason why it is important to have positive self esteem.

We want to find out to what extent physical activities carried out in body education centres contribute to the improvement of the image the subjects have of their physical appearance and implicitly on their self esteem. The relationship between physical effort and the physical self is highlighted, along with the desire to reach a balance between the inner self and the outer self through their own efforts.

The tasks and the objectives of the paper

The tasks of the paper are:

- to identify to what extent physical exercises done in body education centres have an effect on the improvement of self image,

- if there is a relationship between low self esteem and the desire to change

- who are the persons that want changes as far as their exterior look is concerned,

- what are their favourite types of activities,

- the frequency of the physical activity practice,

- what are the body parts subjects want to remodel with the help of physical exercise.

The purpose of the research

The matter of study of this research consists of the relationship between practicing physical activities and the self image of the subjects. We want to find out to what extent aerobics contributes to the improvement of the image the subjects have of their body, how long they have been practicing for and what short or long term effects it had on their body, what their expectations were and to what extent were they met by the aerobics classes offered.

The relationship between physical effort, improvement of self respect, gaining of a better self image though avoiding the resort to plastic surgery or to pharmaceutical- therapy means is highlighted, in order to improve the outer image and patience, the will to achieve a balance between the inner self and the outer self by one's own efforts.

Hypothesis

Practicing of physical activities with the purpose to improve the physical self has a positive effect on the increase of self esteem.

Research methods used

We used the self esteem test drawn up by M. Rosenberg (1965, 97), presented in a short version (Stephan & Stephan-1984, 45) as the subjects had to choose between the variants "I totally agree", "I agree", "I disagree", "I totally disagree", depending on how they appreciate that the sentences that followed characterize them.

We put together a questionnaire (de Singly, 198, 69) consisting of 15 questions that highlight some of the aspects of physical exercises such as aerobics, like: the reasons for practicing, frequency of weekly attendance, the psychological effects of practicing, remodelling of certain parts of the body, the positive influence on the person's own self, improvements of the physical image etc.

Organizing the research

The research was carried out during an 8 month period of time in a body education centre in Timișoara. Of the 20 people taking part in the physical activities, for 7 of them the activity was a new one, meaning a new start and marking the desire for change and the rest of 13 were long term practicants of physical activities. The physical activities on offer varied from: step, dance, tae-bo, pump, body sculpt to Pilates, core & balance and yoga.

The subjects

The sample group put together with the agreement of the subjects consisted of 20 female subjects, starting from the assumption that part of them have as motivation for practicing these activities certain problems they faced in their personal lives, such as: a sedentary lifestyle, small depressions, some

medical disorders (treatable), the improvement of their etc. The following personal information on the subjects physical appearance, overweight, the need to socialize, results from studying the sample group:

Age	Subjects	Percentage	Education	Subjects	Percentage
21-29 years	13	65%	University	8	40%
30-38 years	7	35%	Post-university	12	60%
Total	20	100%	Total	20	100%

Table no.1

The subjects taking part in this study are young women with high education, with a desire to change their physical appearance. These changes of their physical appearance reflect low self esteem. Most of these women are not married (75%) and they are career women, with positions reflecting their studies (95%).

Civil status	Subjects	Percentage	Profession	Subjects	Percentage
Married	4	20%	Unemployed	1	5%
Single	15	75%	IT engineer	1	5%
Divorced	1	5%	Economist	15	75%
Total	20	100%	Teacher	2	10%
			Councillor	1	5%
			Total	20	100%

Table no. 2

Results

a. Practicing sports

The frequency with which the subjects practice physical activities is of 3-4 sessions per week for 55% of them, 1-2 sessions for 35% and only

b. The effects of exercising on the body

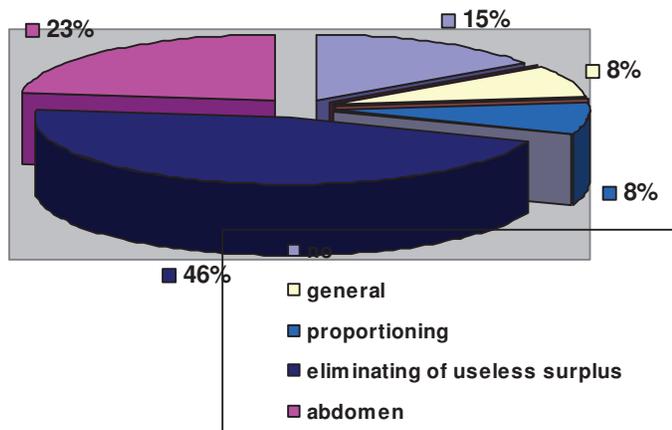
If upon the initial testing we had a higher percentage of subjects wanting to lose weight (45%), upon the final one, after 8 months of training, we find that the subjects have started to come out of pure pleasure, clearly revealing an improvement in the attitude of the Also, there is a desire for body change, the changes varying from a flat abdomen (34%) to strengthening of the buttocks (21%), thighs (15%) but also of the entire body (24%).

Ever since they started to attend the gym, some persons may not have noticed any change in their physical

10 % of the subject come with regularity 5-6 times per week.

subjects, as well as a positive change in regards to their self esteem due to the socializing factor of this kind of physical activity and to becoming more acquainted with the practice, so the reasons show first of all the need and the desire for general change (40%) and improvement of the outer appearance (30%). appearance (15%) while others noticed improvements of their looks under various forms: loss of weight (46%), strengthening of the abdominal muscles (23%), harmonization through graduation (15%) or a general state of well being (8%).

Image no. 1: General physical change



c. **The effects of practicing exercises on the psyche.** As for the psychological effects physical activity has had on the subjects, on the initial test they said physical activity offered them a state of tranquillity, most likely felt at a body level, later on inducing a state of psychological calmness and nervous discharge.

Upon the final test the subjects become aware of the other effects physical activity may have on them, so the percentage reflecting their self confidence as far as overcoming their own limitations is on the increase, as the subjects prove once again that they have learned to

d. Self image

Upon the initial testing, it is observed that 5% of the subjects have a less positive opinion of themselves and another 5% have a rather negative opinion, the

overcome their own problems. In the chart below one can see to what extent physical practice has had any effects on the psyche, self confidence being the most important one (41%), followed by overcoming their own limitations (31%) and self acceptance.

percentage of the subjects content with themselves being of 70% and 20% of them being very happy with themselves.

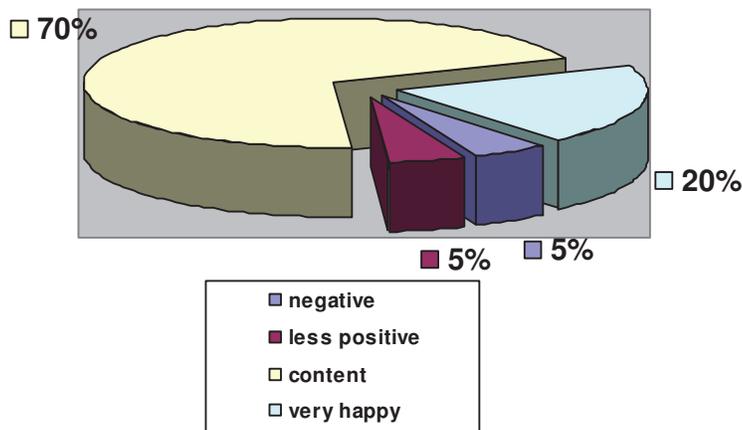


Image no. 2: Initial testing

Upon the final testing, after 8 months of training, one can observe a shift in the extremities of the values (negative and very happy) due to the fact that the 5% of the subjects with a negative opinion of themselves has disappeared and the 20% of those feeling very happy with themselves dropped to 15% but this is not a

negative aspect, quite to the contrary, as we can relate it to self acceptance and to the fact that one can permanently work on one's physical self, looking for changes. The percentage of those subjects with a positive opinion of themselves increased by 1+ percent, going up to 80%.

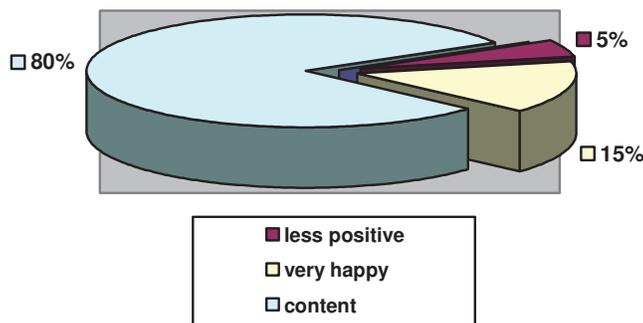


Image no. 3: Final testing

e. Self esteem. The Rosenberg test

Upon the initial testing, as far as the Rosenberg method is concerned (see info in the addendum), the sample group mainly consisted of subjects who displayed self esteem values comprised between 27 and 32, the top value being 40. The result of the initial test showing

this percentage underlines the fact that the subjects with a pleasant physical appearance (none of the subjects showed any form of disharmony, obesity, etc) nevertheless felt they were too thin or too fat, this being perceived only by themselves and reflect their

image of themselves. This only helps prove that there are discrepancies between the real image perceived by the rest of the world and self image. Upon the final testing one can note real improvements of the values of

the Rosenberg test, the values being comprised between 27 and 34 (an increase by 2 points of the maximum value recorded upon the initial testing:

No.	Score	Initial testing		Final testing	
1	27	6	30%	1	5%
2	28	7	35%	1	5%
3	29	3	15%	5	25%
4	30	2	10%	5	25%
5	31	1	5%	3	15%
6	32	1	5%	3	15%
7	33	0	0%	1	5%
8	34	0	0%	1	5%
9	Total	20	100%	20	100%

Table no. 3

Conclusions

The advances in technology have allowed for the old practices of gaining an aesthetic, healthy and strength physical appearance guided on lots of training and controlled eating habits to be replaced nowadays with plastic surgery (invasive), body modelling (non invasive) or even pharmaceutical (medicines) techniques. But the advantage of physical training is that besides the transformations on the physical self, changes also take place at the level of the self image, leading to an increase in self esteem. High self esteem is an important factor in maintaining a balance between the body and the psyche, and the physical activities with a direct impact on body changes can prove to be a mean to obtain this balance.

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This improvement is reflected in the chart below, showing a significant increase of the upper end values, compared to the inferior ones recorded upon the initial testing. In six of the cases one can note an involution of the self esteem index, which can be accounted to those persons who have not noticed any changes in their physical appearance while training or to those who have recorded a state of well being, but with no consequences on their self esteem, but only on their self image.

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