



Personality and Exercise as Predictors for Body Image

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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews previous research on the topic of personality, exercise and body image. Studies have suggested associations between personality dimension and body image, but these have not been conclusive yet. This study was performed in order to examine if personality and type of exercise can be used to predict body image, as well to investigate in the new topic of pole dancing and if it affects body image appreciation. The study used a correlational cross-sectional design with one dependent variable which was body image and three independent variables, the gender of the participant, the type of exercise and the five personality dimensions. The study showed that neuroticism was negatively associated with body appreciation, extraversion and conscientiousness was positively associated with body image, exercise has a significant effect on body image appreciation. The results are consistent with the suggestion that gender predicts body image and raises further questions on how the personality dimensions are associated with the type of exercise.

Keywords: Personality; Exercise; Neuroticism; Extraversion

INTRODUCTION

There are many factors that can influence a person's perception about their body image and body appreciation. To some extent, these factors are internal and include the type of personality the person holds, other factors are external and include the type of exercise the person choose, if one exercises. Can the person's personality and type of exercise be used to predict how the individual perceive their body image and the level of body appreciation?

The concept of body image was proposed in the field of psychology around the close of the 19th century. The original conceptualization of body image was thought as an expression of meanings and emotions which were stimulated by body activity and in the research field many investigators have used questionnaires to test one's satisfaction with their

physical appearance and the relation to body image. However, from the 19th century to the present time, there exist two very distinct conceptualizations of body image, each one is framed within opposing metatheories which results to very different methods. Therefore, one concept is in the field of general psychology and the other concept is developed within the field of psychodynamic psychology. In order for this study to be more comprehensive the relation of body image, personality traits, exercise and type of exercise, as well age and gender will be discussed.

Body image is in generally conceptualized as a multidimensional self-attitude toward one's body, particularly its appearance.

In addition, body image refers to how people behave, think and feel with regard to their own physical attributes. In a different article Cash, argues that there are three facets of

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body image and each of them should be distinguished from each other. The three facets Cash, proposed are examined-evaluation, affect and investment. Body image evaluation refers to one's physical attributes and evaluative thoughts and beliefs for their appearance in relation to how satisfied or dissatisfied the individual is with them and these evaluations stem from the individuals' self-perceived discrepancies from internalized physical ideals. Body image affect refers to discrete emotional experiences that these self-evaluation may elicit in specific situational contexts [1].

The last and most unique attitudinal dimension of body image is the individual's cognitive-behavioral investment and attention on one's appearance as well behaviors that involve the management or enhancement of appearance. Additionally, positive body image research is found within the field of positive psychology, which was established by the work of Seligman and it focus on enhancing human strenghts and positive attitudes.

Research on clinical and subclinical eating disturbances among women, has shown that body image is in great importance. Research has found that gender is a salient factor in body image development and research on the relation of body image and gender is limited and focused on the evaluative dimension of body image. In a review Jackson did and it was later supported by large sample surveys, she found that women throughout their life span are more discontent with their body image and their bodily appearance due to feelings and thoughts of themselves as being overweight, even from woman who were at average weight levels. Nevertheless, there are a few studies who did not observed gender differences on a global body image evaluation.

On the other hand, a significant amount of researchers and feminist scholars have stated that it is the cultural norms and expectations that lead women to be psychologically invested and attentive to their physical aesthetics and that could result in undermining their own well-being and it is thought as a great contributor to developing psychological problems and in some cases eating disorders. Previous research on body image has shown that, relative to men, women are more behaviorally and cognitively invested in their appearance. In addition, women exhibit greater cognitive differentiation than men in their awareness and perceptions of their body. Relatively few studies have found no gender difference in body-image investment. Body-image affect is the least studied component of body-image attitudes. Although the "affective" dimension has often been equated with evaluative body image, recently it refers more specifically to the experience of discrete emotions, such as dysphoria, *vis-a-vis* one's appearance in particular situational contexts, however only a few studies have search for it.

Personality is also another factor in how one perceive their body image. Among the hierachical models about personality, the one that is most widely used and accepted is the five-factor model of personality which is composed of the "big five" dimensions of openness to experience (to closedness to experience), extraversion (to introversion), agreeableness (to antagonism), conscientiousness (to lack of direction) and

neuroticism (to emotional stability), as stated by John and Srivastava and it is a tool that is used to explain individual differences in personality at a broad level of abstraction and it shows good cross-cultural applicability. In addition, this model provides specific characteristics for each of the big five dimensions in which the individual belongs. Thus, neuroticism is explained in terms of the individual being emotionally unstable, self-conscious and vulnerable, openness to experience is described as the tendency to be perceptive, creative, use of fantasy and appreciation of aesthetics, conscientiousness is characterised by the norm of the individual to be self-disciplined, the need to be ordered as well aachievement oriented, extraversion as the individual's tendency to sociable, assertive, energetic and in general a personal who experiences positive affect and agreeableness which describes the individual's tendency to be kind, generous, trustworthy and altruistic.

Moreover, the big five dimensions have been widely used to predict behavioral and attitudinal outcomes in a wide range of the individual's life such as, interpersonal relationships, occupational success and satisfaction, educational expecations and outcomes, health and longevity. Studies until today have reported strong associations between neuroticism and poor emotional well-being and weaker associations between extraversion and more positive emotional health. Unfortunately, other big five dimensions do not show the same association with measures of health. According to the available literature neuroticism is linked with negative body appearance evaluation and lower body appreciation. It is important to note that association between neuroticism and body image could be affected by external variables such as family appearance focus and gender role orientation. The other big five dimension, extraversion have also been report to be associateed with positive appearance evaluation and more positive body apreeciation, however those association tend to be weaker than those for neuroticism. In addition, research does not provide hard evidence the there is an association of the personality traits of openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness with measures of body image.

Personality also interacts with health and physical activity as well the type of exercise the individual choose to perform. However, until today the literature has not been combined to test the subject as a whole, with a few expectations. Physical activity is a concept comprised by a collection of behaviours, thus limited research has been done on personality and specific physical activities. Studies at present have tested have focused on an aerobic form of exercise and have found that higher extraversion is associated with strength training as well aerobic conditioning and dancing. Other findings suggest that individuals with less extraversion were more possible to engage in activities such as gardening and home improvement, however the above findings are more applicable to men rather than women. Another study also provides evidence that extraversion, neuroticism and conscientiousness are the personality dimensions who are related to exercise behavior and adherence and that exercisers are more extraverted and less neurotic than thenon-exercising individuals.

In a multivariate analysis on the same study, both extraversion and conscientiousness are thought to be good predictors of exercise behavior. Overall, the results of the meta-analysis of the previous study suggest that extraversion and conscientiousness are correlated with physical activity attitudes and perceptions of control/self-efficacy over physical activity. The above relationship suggests that extraversion and conscientiousness can affect attitudes regarding physical activity attitude.

Supportive findings were also provided from Segatto and Lafreniere, which suggest that neuroticism can predict body image dissatisfaction in exercisers and non-exercisers, as well in the low-frequency exercise group, neuroticism was positively associated with extrinsic motivation and internal motivation, which suggests that individuals with high scores of neuroticism may perform exercise as a result of anxiety and guilt of not exercising rather than for positive feelings and feelings of pleasure. In general, neuroticism is associated with a tendency toward negative affect in self-report measures and this might have resulted in individuals who were higher in neuroticism reporting poorer body esteem in the study of Segatto and Lafreniere.

It is well known that exercise has a strong psychological, social and physiological benefits for young and older individuals. Exercise is defined by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), as a planned, structured, repetitive physical activity that is done to condition the body in a specified component of fitness and physical activity is defined as any bodily movement that causes skeletal muscle contraction and increases energy expenditure (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Within the definition of exercise, physical activity and fitness are also defined by the centers for disease control and prevention (2010).

Exercise can result in increased vitality and in an "improved orientation, improved motivation toward self-care, responsibility and social improvement, higher scores in fluid intelligence and improved cognition". Other study like the one Pender performed asserted that "a well-planned physical activity program can increase aerobic capacity by 20 to 30 percent, improve cardiorespiratory endurance, enhance muscle strength and improve flexibility" as well Halfman and Hojacki suggested that "exercise helps to improve the quality of life. Many feel that this benefit alone is adequate to stimulate a personal commitment to exercise".

It is interesting to note that despite the existence of group exercise classes that are available to gyms, such as pole dancing and aerobic classes, most participants tend to be female, with little literature examining this relation. Pole dancing was introduced in the recent years as a recreational and fitness activity. Fitness pole dancing classes are set up as any other exercise class and in composed by warm up, main exercises and cool down.

Pole dancing is usually refer to as pole fitness in order to emphasize the strength and training that is needed in order to perform tricks on the pole. Pole fitness is marketed as an activity that facilitates the individual to create of a positive relationship with their body and in general promotes positive body image.

Pole dancers when describing their positive body experiences in pole fitness, participants shared that pole fitness helped them to love their bodies.

The effect of gender being a factor on exercise choice is explained by Johansson, which proposed the term "gendered spaces", that describes how exercisers shape their bodies and identifies by defining what is feminine and masculine at the gym. Those standards are established through social norms and results to females avoid lifting weights and men avoiding aerobics and focus on lifting heavy weights, because that is the social norm and the gender expectations and individuals could face social ridicule if they do not engage in their "gendered space"; Johansson, resulted to that when social norms are being followed, selection of exercise relates to closely to gender and this male and female divide relates to gender and social norms relating to the history of group exercise.

The current study aims to investigate how the big five personality dimensions and exercise can be used to predict body image of the participants. Moreover, the aim of the study was provide supporting evidence for the hypothesis that personality dimensions would be correlated with body image, personality and exercise would significantly predict body image, gender and exercise would significantly predict body image and last that pole dancers would have a better body image than all other participants.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

In order to perform this study, participants were found in the settings of pole dance studios, gyms and fitness related studios, as well people on street and thought the use of social media, as well with the use of the "snowball system". In this study, there were 75 participants. Most participants were females (N=53, p=70, 7) and males (N=22, p=29, 3). Participants age range from 17 to 58 years with mean age 26, 9 years. Participants were allocated in three groups. The first group were participants who were doing pole dancing at least 3 times a week (N=25, p=33, 3) two of them were males and 23 were females, the second group were participants who performed other type of exercise (N=25, p=33, 3) 11 of them were males and 14 were females and the third group were participants who did not do any form of exercise (N=25, p=33, 3) 9 of them were males and 16 of them were females.

Materials

In this study two questionnaires were used. The first questionnaire was the body appreciation scale-2 which is the improved version of the body appreciation scale of the same researchers and it measures the relation between body appreciation and other body-related and eating characteristics which can be linked with eating disorders, psychological wellbeing and overall personality characteristics in terms of body image. The body appreciation scale-2 is a ten-item scale with Likert measuring from 1 to 5, with 1=never, 2=seldom, 3=sometimes, 4=often and 5=always.

Participants had to circle the answer in which they felt was closer to their needs and beliefs at the specific time they took the test, as well they were advised to answer honestly as they questionnaires were anonymous. In addition, the body appreciation scale-2 was translated in Greek for the purpose of this study as it had not been used before in the Greek context. The translation of the questionnaire was performed by the author and was then revised and tested by the supervisor and a second professor in the department who served as a panel of experts. The translation was checked in regards to proper use of the language in order to avoid any interpretation and linguistic mistakes. The second questionnaire that was used was the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) which measures personality with the use of a 50-item Likert type scale, with 1=very inaccurate, 2=moderately inaccurate, 3=neither inaccurate nor accurate, 4=moderately accurate, 5=very accurate.

Moreover, participants were advised to describe themselves as they generally are now, not as they wish to be in the future, as well to describe themselves as they honestly see themselves right now, in relation to other people they know of the same gender and roughly the same age. Participants were again informed that the questionnaire were to be in absolute confidence. The original translation of the questionnaire was provided by Dr. Georgios Lyrakos for his research, thus the method they used was that the questionnaire was translated from the English to the Greek language and back. More specifically, a bilingual translator familiar with the theoretical concepts of social support translated the instrument. A back-translation was carried out by two translators.

One of them completed a "blind" back-translation, which means that the blind translator was not familiar with the theoretical concepts of social support, in contrast to the other translator who was. Discrepancies were finally decided by the three translators. Additionally, the data was checked to see if the scales reached a satisfactory internal consistency. For each subscale of the IPIP (10 items per dimension) the Cronbach's α was very good in most cases, reaching values beyond 0.70. The Cronbach's α for extraversion was 0.74, for agreeableness was 0.71, for conscientiousness 0.800 and for imagination 0.70. Only the emotional stability subscale reached a value of 0.69, which is close to 0.70 and is a well acceptable value. Finally, the body image scale reached a Cronbach's α of 0.90, showing very good internal consistency of the scale [2].

Procedure

The research focused on the relation of personality traits and exercise on how individuals view their body image. Two questionnaires were used in order to perform the study, the body appreciation scale-2 in Greek and the international personality item pool. Participants were approached in the facilities of pole dancing studios and gyms, as well on the street and with the use of the snowball system and through the use of social media participants could complete the questionnaire either on paper or online. Participants were able to complete the questionnaires in one of the settings above or in the privacy of their homes, however in each situation participants were informed about the purpose of the

study, they were informed about anonymity and therefore, by completing the questionnaire they agreed to participate in the study and was used as a consent form. Inside the questionnaires it was asked from the participants to complete their age, gender, relationship status, education, if they had children and if they performed regular exercise, which meant at least 3 times a week a form of aerobic/strength training for at least 30 minutes at a time. Moreover, participants were asked to complete the IPIP questionnaire by choosing circle 1 if the statement is very inaccurate or they strongly disagree, circle 2 if the statement is moderate inaccurate or they disagree, circle 3 if the statement is neither inaccurate nor accurate or they were neutral on the statement, circle 4 if the statement is moderately accurate or they agree and circle 5 if the statement is very accurate or they strongly agree [3].

In the body appreciation scale-2 participants were advised to complete the questionnaire by choosing the statement that expressed them the more at the specific time with 1=never, 2=seldom, 3=sometimes, 4=often or 5=always. Consent forms were not given as the questionnaires guaranteed participants anonymity. Pens and papers were given to the participants which it approached in person. Participants did not have a time limit to complete the questionnaires, however participants who completed the questionnaires in less than 15 minutes were excluded in order to prevent false answers however, no participant fall in this time limit. Finally, the questionnaires were collected and the data were examined with the use of SPSS program with the specific guidelines from the tutor and with the use of ANOVA analyses and correlational analyses.

Design

This study used a correlational cross-sectional study design with the use of questionnaires. The dependent variable was body image and the independent variables were three, gender of the participant, exercise and personality dimensions of the participant [4].

Proposed Analysis

The data of this study was processed with SPSS v.20. Before the performance of all the statistical analyses, the total score for each of the five personality dimensions (10 items provided the total score for each personality dimension) and the total score for body image (the scores of the 10 items of the scale were summed up) for each participant was produced. Items were reversed when necessary. In all cases, high scores on the questionnaires indicated high scores on each personality dimension, as well as a positive body image.

Normality Tests

In order to explore whether the data were normally distributed, a series of tests of normality were run. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that all the variables were normally distributed apart from the personality dimension of extraversion ($p=0.03$). For the body image scores were normally distributed ($p=0.20$) and so were for the 4 personality dimensions: For agreeableness $p=0.08$, for

conscientiousness $p=0.20$, for emotional stability $p=0.09$ and for imagination, $p=0.08$.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were obtained for each variable. The tables below show the descriptive statistics for all the

variables that were explored in each case. The first table shows descriptive statistics for each of the continuous variables investigated for this study (Table 1).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for scores on the five personality dimensions and body image.

Variable	Mean	Std. deviation	Score range
BAS total	37.16	6.78	29
Extraversion	35.89	6.51	26
Agreeableness	40.65	5.35	25
Conscientiousness	32.93	7.62	35
Emotional stability	29.07	6.71	36
Imagination	39.27	5.3	23

It seems that, on average, participants scored the highest in the agreeableness scale ($M=40.65$, $SD=5.35$) and the lowest on the emotional stability scale ($M=29.07$, $SD=6.71$). It seems that the score on the imagination scale ($M=39.16$, $SD=6.78$) was too close to the score on the agreeableness scale on average. Also, based on the standard deviation values, it is evident that the most consistent scores were shown by participants on the imagination dimension of the personality inventory ($SD=5.30$),

whereas the widest spread of scores was detected in the conscientiousness scores ($SD=7.62$). The next table shows the descriptive statistics for the dependent variable of the study, which is body image, based on the type of exercise (pole dancing, other type of exercise and no exercise) (Table 2).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for body image by type of exercise ($N=75$).

Variable	N	Exercise type	n	Mean	Std. deviation
Exercise	Yes	Pole dancing	25	37.16	7.38
			Other	25	39.4
	No		25	34.92	5.93
		Total		37.16	6.78

In general, it seems that participants who perform other form of exercise score closely regarding their body image with those who do pole dancing as exercise. However, those who do some kind of workout other than pole dancing seem to have the highest mean body image score ($M=39.40$, $SD=6.43$).

The worst body image score is achieved by participants who do not exercise at all ($M=34.92$, $SD=5.93$). The following table illustrates the descriptive statistics of body image scores by gender and exercise (Table 3).

Table 3: Mean body image scores (SD) by gender ($n_m=22$, $n_f=53$) and exercise ($n_{no}=25$, $n_{yes}=50$).

Gender	Exercise	No exercise
Females	37.89 (7.14)	35.18 (5.32)
Males	39.38 (6.48)	34.44 (7.23)

From the above table, it is shown that the most positive body image score is achieved by male participants who exercise ($M=39.38$, $SD=6.48$), followed by females who exercise too ($M=37.89$, $SD=7.14$). However, the table shows that all categories of participants have scored similarly on the body image scale on average [5].

Inferential Statistics

In order to test the first hypothesis and check for relationships between the DV (body image scores) and the continuous IVs (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and imagination) Pearson's and Spearman's correlations were performed. Imagination was positively and moderately related to body image scores and the correlation was statistically significant, $r(73)=0.26$, $p=0.03$, indicating that participants with higher scores on the imagination dimension of the personality scale are more likely to show a more positive body image.

No significant correlations between the other four personality dimensions and body image scores were detected. A Spearman's correlation showed that extraversion and body image scores were positively but poorly related, hence the correlation did not reach significance, $r_s(75)=0.18$, $p=0.13$.

Further, Pearson's correlations showed that agreeableness and conscientiousness were positively but again poorly related to body image scores, hence in both cases the correlations did not reach significance, $r(73)=0.14$, $p=0.24$ and $r(73)=0.13$, $p=0.25$ respectively.

Body image was negatively related to body image but again no statistically significant correlation was found, $r(73)=-0.09$, $p=0.43$ [6]. In the figure below the nature of the significant correlation between body image and imagination dimension of personality is shown (Figure 1).

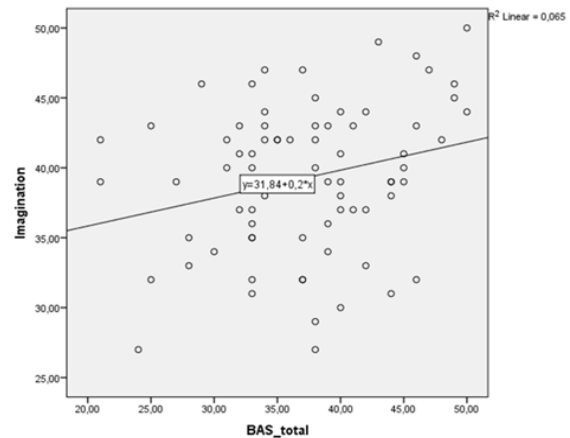


Figure 1: Scatterplot showing the relationship between body image and imagination.

In order to test the second hypothesis and check whether personality dimensions and exercise are predictors of body image scores, a standard multiple regression analysis was run, with only imagination out of the five personality dimensions (since it was the only personality dimension that significantly correlated with body image scores) and exercise as predictor variables. The levels of the categorical variable "exercise (workout)" were coded as 0=no exercise and 1=exercise (participants do some kind of workout) so that the variable could be used as a dummy variable in the regression analysis [7]. The multiple regression showed that there was a significant overall model effect, with both predictors explaining 10.9% of the total variance in body image scores, $R^2=0.11$, $F(2, 72)=4.41$, $p=0.02$. However, only imagination was found to be a significant predictor of body image scores: $B=0.30$, $t(72)=2.09$, $p=0.04$, while exercise was not detected as a significant predictor of body image scores, $B=3.01$, $t(72)=1.88$, $p=0.06$. The following table shows in detail the results of the regression analysis (Table 4).

Table 4: Standard multiple regression with imagination and exercise as the criterion variables and body image as the predictor variable.

Predictors	B	SE B	β
Imagination score	0.3	0.14	0.23*
Exercise	3.01	1.6	0.21

Note: $R^2=0.11$, adjusted $R^2=0.08$, * $p<0.05$

As seen from table 4 only the continuous variable "imagination" and not the categorical variable "exercise" was a significant predictor of body image scores. In order to test the third hypothesis and check whether type of exercise affects body image scores, a one-way between groups ANOVA was performed on the data.

The ANOVA showed that there is no significant difference in body image scores between the participants who exercise on pole dancing, those who do other forms of exercise and those who do not exercise at all, $F(2, 72)=2.87$, $MSE=43.74$, $p=0.06$,

$\eta_p^2=0.07$. However, this result is marginally insignificant compared to a 5% level of significance [8].

Finally, in order to test the final hypothesis and explore whether gender and exercise affect body image scores, a factorial 2×2 between subject's ANOVA was performed. The results showed that only exercise had a significant main effect on body image scores, $F(1, 71)=4.69$, $MSE=44.89$, $p=0.03$, $\eta_p^2=0.06$, with those participants who do exercise showing better body image scores than those who do not exercise. Gender did not show a main effect on body image, $F(1, 71)=0.05$, $MSE=44.89$, $p=0.83$, $\eta_p^2=0.00$. There was no interaction detected between gender and exercise on body image either, $F(1, 71)=0.40$, $MSE=44.89$, $p=0.53$, $\eta_p^2=0.01$.

In conclusion, the main results of the statistical analysis show that first of all, only imagination correlates with body image scores. Secondly, the regression analysis showed that imagination is a significant positive predictor of body image indicating that the higher the score on imagination the more enhanced and positive the body image of the participants. Finally, the exercise type was marginally insignificant, whereas those participants who exercise were found to show better body image compared to those who did not exercise at all [9].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section briefly reviews the results of the present study and addressed how these results are related to previous literature. Research implications are also discussed as well as limitations of the present study and potential future studies are also suggested.

In this study, the issue of how the personality dimensions and the type of exercise can be used to predict body image was addressed. A review of previous studies that are available for this topic conclude that from the five personality dimensions only three of them are linked with physical health and can be used to predict body image and physical activity patterns, with only two of them being highly correlated with body image.

Moreover, the three personality dimensions were neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness, with previous literature indicating strong associations between neuroticism and poor emotional well-being, neuroticism was also associated with negative body appearance evaluation and lower body appreciation and participants that had higher scores in neuroticism had poorer self-esteem. However, neuroticism could be used as a predictor for body image dissatisfaction and neuroticism was positively associated with extrinsic and internal motivation.

Previous studies have found that extraversion has a strong association with positive appearance evaluation and positive body appreciation and participants who scored high in extraversion were found to exercise more than the ones who had low extraversion scores. The results of this study support the previous findings with participants who scored higher in imagination were shown to have a more positive image and no other significant correlations were found between body image and the other four personality dimensions.

In addition, extraversion was found to be positively but poorly related to body image and agreeableness and conscientiousness were also found to be positively but poorly related to body image [10].

Previous literature states that exercise acts as a mediator for self-care and the type of exercise will result to different body images with limited research on the subject of how different sports affect body image and how pole dancing can change one's body image perception and appreciation. In our knowledge this is the first study that tries to examine the relationship between personality types and pole dancing. The findings of the study suggest that participants who pole dance does not show to have a better body image than participants who exercise but they do have a more positive body image than participants who do not exercise. Participants who performed other type of exercise than pole dancing had highest mean body image than both of the other groups. Participants who exercise, either pole dancing or other form of exercise, were shown to have a better body image than participants who do not exercise. Participants who did not perform any physical activity (non-exercisers) had lowest body image scores than participants who perform pole dancing or other type of exercise at least three times a week, however no significant difference was found between participants who performed pole dancing and participants who performed other type of exercise in body image. These results are in good agreement with other studies which have shown that exercise affect body image appreciation.

In addition, we tried to examine if gender is a factor in how individuals perceive and appreciate body image and if gender and exercise can be used to predict body image. The findings of our study suggest that male exercisers have better body image than all other groups, female participants who performed pole dancing were shown to have better body image than female participants who performed other type of exercise, but they scored lower in body image in relation to male participants who performed pole dancing or other type of exercise [11]. The results of the study are not consistent with previous studies who have stated that gender is a salient factor in body image and women will be more invested and attentive to their physical needs and women will have greater awareness of perception of their body than men. In addition, further interpetation of our data to examine if gender and exercise can be used to predict body image, showed that only exercise had a significant effect on body image, between participants who exercise, either pole dancing or other form of exercise and gender had insignificant effect on body image [12].

Moreover, the research had several limitations. The main limitation in the result is due to its small sample size, which was 75 participants in total. The sample size could have been expanded by including participants from various physical activities and/or sports. An earlier start in data collection would have increase the time needed to survey more participants. Ideally, the number of participant would have been more evenly distributed across gender and type of exercise, as in the pole dancing category females were more than males, which is evident that men in Greece still are not that interested and thus, a small sample was collected.

A larger sample with more diversity would have benefited our results.

Another limitation could be the translation of the body appreciation scale-2, a small pilot study with the translated questionnaire would be better before its use in the “real” study. Furthermore, the study would have been more beneficial if other measurements for other aspects of body image were addressed such as body fat percentage measurement and BMI measurement. As any study, this could not have been an exception regarding limitations. The results of our study cannot be conclusive as a greater depth of information may have been obtained by conducting focus groups comprised of participants more representative of the population. The translated version of the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) requested from participants to fill their demographic situation and marital status, as well level of education, however due to the fact that many participants failed to complete these values and in analyses would have presented as missing values, it was chosen for the variables of marital status, demographic position, level of education and number of children, not to be included in the analysis performed but those variables could not be taken off completely from the questionnaire since the original translators had included them.

Some possible implications of the findings of this study could be used by different areas of psychology, like positive psychology, cognitive psychology, sports psychology and in eating disorder treatments as well other professions such as sports coaches, life coaches and counselors. The results can be used to better determine which sport matches the best with the individual’s personality as well which sport and/or physical activity could benefit the most the individual. It is clear that further research needs to be carried out to examine if gender can be used to predict the type of exercise the individual chose to do, to examine specific sports with each of the five personality dimensions as well a better investigation in the new topic of pole dancing as a recreational and physical activity and how it can affect one’s personality, body image appreciation and evaluation in contrast to other forms of dance and exercise, ideally the next research will be with focus groups which will be followed for a period of time and after a longer period of time to see if body image appreciation has changed over the years and what factors have affected that change [13].

CONCLUSION

Exercise and personality have been examined over the last years, however it is not examined if it can be used to predict body image. This study tried to examine this topic. Summing up the results it can be concluded that personality can be used to predict body image and gender does hold an important role in how the individual perceive their body and the type of exercise individuals chose to perform and the type of exercise can be used to predict body image, however our results suggest that gender does not affect body image appreciation, but this was due to the ratio between men and women was not even.

Additionally, this study supports the notion that individuals who exercise will have a more positive image than individuals who do not exercise and exercisers will be more extraverted and conscious than non-exercisers.

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