DOES THIS UNIFORM MAKE ME LOOK FAT?

A LOOK AT GIRLS AGES 9-12

Ali Fife
Sierra Hobberstad
Kristine Olsen
DO PREADOLESCENT GIRLS PARTICIPATE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN ORDER TO FEEL AND LOOK GOOD...

OR DO THEY FEEL AND LOOK GOOD BECAUSE THEY ARE ACTIVE?
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Many studies have been conducted to determine the effects of exercise on females between the ages of 12 and 28 years. They have shown that consistent exercise has a positive influence on body image. (Berry et al., 2007; Morrison, 2006, & Niven et al., 2009).

- Researchers question:
  - When does body image develop?
  - Do younger girls follow the same trends?
  - Why are girls motivated to exercise?
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- "For girls who are motivated to be active primarily by body-related reasons, social physique anxiety is likely to lead to lower levels of physical activity." (Niven, 2009)

- "This study found sport participation to be a positive, protective factor in the development of adolescent girls' body image." (Morrison, 2006)
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

"Our results demonstrate that physical self-perceptions, especially physical conditioning and sport skills, are significant correlates of activity in this population." (Crocker, 2008)
**PURPOSE**

- The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether physical activity promotes a positive body image among 9-12 year old girls.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

○ Research Questions
1. Do girls who participate in a regular exercise routine/schedule display a positive perception of their body image?
2. Do young girls participate in physical activity to improve body image?
3. Do achievements in physical activity reduce pressures of obtaining an ideal body image?
4. Do girls with a positive body image participate in more physical activity?

○ Hypotheses
1. Girls who participate in regular exercise have a more positive perception of their own body image than those girls who do not participate regularly.
2. Girls participate in physical activity to improve body image.
3. Achievements in physical activity help reduce the pressure on young girls to obtain an ideal body image.
4. Girls with a positive body image participate in more physical activity.
METHODS

- **Sample Design (N=108)**
  - Participants were 9-12 years old
  - Divided into two groups
    - Active
    - Nonactive
- **Measurement Design**
  - Survey of 10 questions was created
  - Administered to 10 classes at Howard R. Driggs Elementary School.
- **Procedural Design**
  - Survey specifically tailored to 9 to 12 year old girls
  - Administered to every kid in each class in order to not single out the girls
  - Boys responses were thrown out
- **Analysis Design**
  - Used Microsoft Excel for data input and Microsoft PowerPoint to present.
A shocking 95.4% of girls exercise to be healthy. This statistic is impressive considering their age and their understanding for the purpose of exercise. Furthermore, many girls were unable to state reasons for not exercising because they felt they were already active.
RESULTS

Reasons why people (adults, friends, etc.) exercise. (N=108)

- They think it's fun, 61
- They want to be healthy, 103
- They want to be skinny, 85
- They want to feel good, 87
- Other, 7
- They have to, 5

Similar to their own views, girls feel that health is the biggest motivator for exercise among adults. Note that the statistic for exercising to be skinny has more than doubled; see discussion for further analysis.
RESULTS

When I exercise I feel:

- Happy: 66
- Motivated: 54
- Annoyed: 1
- Skinny: 6
- Tired: 11
- Upset: 0
- Energized: 68
- Talented: 24
- Excited: 80
- Healthy: 0
- Lazy: 0
- Fat: 0
- Other: 4
RESULTS

That's Me!
A Likert Scale.

- 1: That's me!
- 2: Kind of me
- 3: Doesn't matter
- 4: Not really me
- 5: Definitely not me!
RESULTS

If I was better at sports or exercised more, then I would be happier. (N=108)

Out of 108 girls, 81% felt they would be happier if they exercised more or were better at sports. The reason was ultimately not due to body image, but a desire to become and continue being healthy. In contrast, most of the girls who said 'no' felt they were already healthy and active.
RESULTS

If someone participates in sports, they are:

The girls that answered 'popular,' 'mean,' 'not cool,' and 'doesn't matter' were those who stated they exercised to be skinny. This graph substantiates that the girls surveyed believe that being active positively influences health.
DISCUSSION

- Overall, the girls recognized that exercise promotes good health.

- A majority participated in sports because they enjoyed doing them and thought they were fun. However, a substantial number thought that other people (adults, friends, etc.) exercised to be skinny. This suggests that even though body image is not a concern to these girls now, it may become a concern in the future. This contradicts other studies (Berry et al., 2007; Morrison, 2006 & Niven et al., 2009) that showed girls exercising to improve their body image.

- Only about 21% of the girls studied already hold a negative view of their bodies. Of these, most girls were of the 11 and 12 year old age group rather than the 9 and 10 year old groups.
CONCLUSIONS

- We have concluded overall, that girls between the ages of 9 and 12 years old are not worried about their body image. Because of this, they exercise in order to have fun, and not to improve their looks.

- We have also concluded that for some girls, exercising does indeed make them feel better, and most girls expressed a desire to continue living an active lifestyle.
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

- Limitations
  - Because we did not have a set number of girls surveyed for each specific age group, (nine year olds, ten year olds, etc.) our data may be skewed.

- Future Research
  - Next time, we could focus more on surveyed set numbers for each age group. (For example: 50 nine year olds, 50 ten year olds.)
  - We could focus more on whether girls feel better because they feel skinnier while they exercise or because they feel healthier.
  - We could test the girls’ physical fitness levels and BMI measurements and compare these with the girls’ opinions on their own health.
  - We could further explore correlations between positive or negative body image with positive or negative self-esteem.
REFERENCES


