Fitness a Stronger Exercise Motivator among United States Female Collegiate Exercise Physiology Students compared to Czech Republic

Peterson JA[1], Darling TV [1], Bagley EJ[1], Stelzer J[2], Griffin MR[2], Klimesova, I[3]

[1]Exercise and Sport Science; Oklahoma City University; Oklahoma City, OK; [2]Valdosta State University; Valdosta, GA; [3]Palacký University; Olomouc, CR

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Advisor / Mentor: Darling TV (tvdarling@okcu.edu)

ABSTRACT

Motivation is significant in influencing behavior change and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Physical appearance, weight control, and fitness enhancement are primary motivators for exercise participation and adherence. Exercise knowledge and cultural influences are less established. The purpose of this study was to compare exercise motivators among collegiate female exercise physiology students from the United States (US) and the Czech Republic (CR). US (N=28; age=21.1±2.2) and CR (N=25; age=20.2±1.5) freshman exercise physiology students from Valdosta State University (Valdosta, GA) and Palacký University (Olomouc, CR) volunteered for the study. A secondary analysis was conducted on female participants using body mass index (BMI) and responses from the Motives for Physical Activities Measure-Revised (MPAM-R). MPAM-R results indicated fitness was a stronger motivator than appearance for US. Significant differences were found between fitness and appearance for US (t=-2.195; p=.037). Fitness was greater in US than CR (t=-2.872; p=.008). Appearance differences were not significant. BMI was significant for both fitness (t=15.486; p=.000) and appearance (t=15.867; p=.000) among US and BMI was significant for both fitness (t=29.461; p=.000) and appearance (t=31.578; p=.000) among CR. US female exercise physiology students report fitness as a stronger exercise motivator than appearance, and fitness as a stronger motivator among US compared to CR. Further research is needed to evaluate exercise knowledge and culture as motivating factors for exercise participation and adherence.