

Effects of regular physical exercise on self-concept: a comparative study

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ABSTRACT

The world is no stranger to the benefits of having a fit body and a healthy mind. Feeling good, physically and mentally, go hand in hand. A person who feels healthy can most definitely have a more realistic and positive view of self. Similarly, those who do not feel very warmly towards themselves or lack an understanding of who they really are, can change that by feeling physically positive. To assess the effect of regular workout on self-concept, we conducted a study on undergraduates (age limit 20-22). For this, we took a sample size of sixty students in Amity University (Noida), 30 students who performed physical exercise and 30 who did not. The sample size was further divided into 15 male and female students in each category. We used the Self-Concept Questionnaire devised by Dr. Saraswat for our study. The data collected showed a positive correlation between Positive Self-Concept and Exercise (correlation coefficient=0.13) and a negative correlation (coefficient= -0.05) was seen with the absence of exercise.

Keywords: *Self-Concept, Physical Activity, Exercise*

Self-concept is an often used term and is self-explanatory. The notion that we hold regarding who we are as a person is the best way to put it. Although, there is debate about the whole nature vs. nurture aspect of personality; self-concept is most definitely acquired. For instance, if person X encounters situation A, he/she will react a certain way. Repeated encounters of situation A might lead to consistent behavior. This consistency helps the person himself/herself form a notion regarding their own self. Various circumstances help us find out if we can thrive under pressure or not, how brave we are, where our moral scale is tipping, etc.

In addition to ourselves, what others tell us or think of us also forms our self-concept. What people around us think of our nature also helps us form notions regarding our self. Let's suppose, a student is always asked to participate in school debates because he/she is confident in front of an audience. This feedback helps the student form the notion of him/her being good at public speaking.

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Moving on to the other variable; the effects of exercise are no secret. It is good for both the mind and body. Exercising not only helps us keep fit and disease free, it also helps us have a positive perception of ourselves. Exercising releases endorphins, serotonin and dopamine or the “feel good” neurotransmitters (Szabo,A., et al.; 2019). That is why, people who start exercising regularly are particularly adamant about not missing their daily workout. It isn't wrong to say that rigorous exercise leaves a similar kind of “high” as do recreational drugs (Jain, A., et al., 2019).

Hypothesis

- Regular physical activity will have a positive effect on Self-concept among young adults.
- Those who are not indulging in physical activity, have a negative effect on their self-concept.
- There is a significant difference between male and female subjects from the effects of exercise with respect to self-concept.

METHODOLOGY

To examine the association between rigorous physical activity/exercise and the concept of self, the Self Concept Questionnaire (SCQ), designed by Dr. R.K. Saraswat (Department of Ed. Psychology, NCERT); was administered to students of Amity University (NOIDA), dividing individuals between age 20 to 22 into two categories and further two subsets. For the correlational study of 2 variables, namely, Rigorous Physical Activity and Self-Concept; we divided the sample into 30 individuals who exercise regularly and 30 Individuals who do not. Further, the subsets comprised of male and female students; 15 in each category. The protocols for dividing individuals in each category and qualifying for the first category were stated as follows:

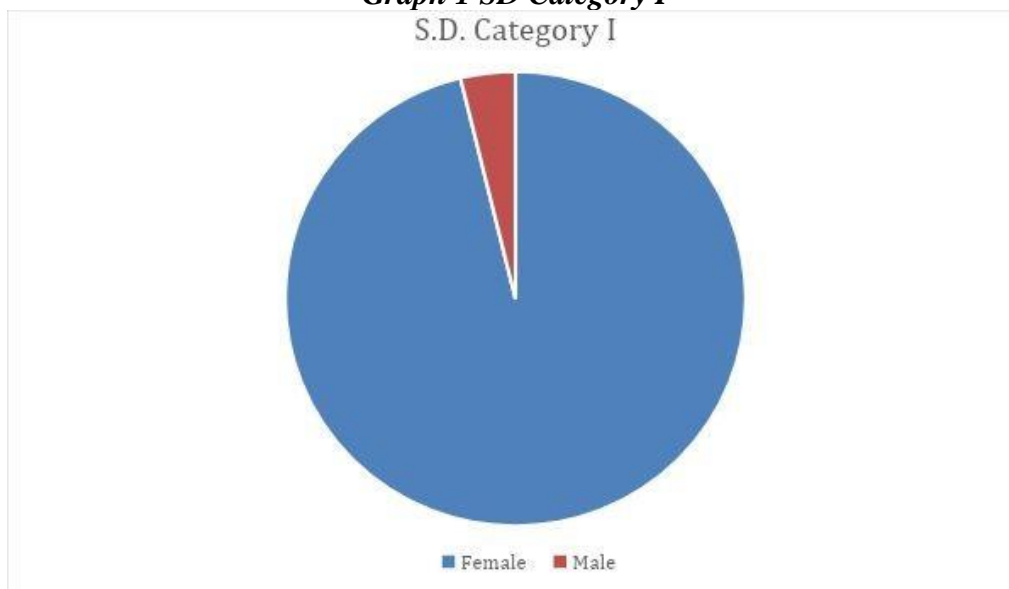
- The individual(s) who does/do not engage in any kind of physical movements, consciously and frequently; classify for the category II.
- Prerequisites to qualifying for category I:
 1. The subject should indulge in rigorous activities (jogging, cycling, yoga, etc.) explicitly for the purpose of fitness
 2. The activity should be performed (an hour least) regularly, i.e., from 4 to 7 times a week
- For both the categories, daily schedules, for instance travelling to place of work/home on foot or stairways; should not be accepted as the criteria for classification.
- The subject should make a conscious decision to exercise.
- The subject is required to reserve time for the activity pertaining to fitness, on a fixed basis.

RESULT

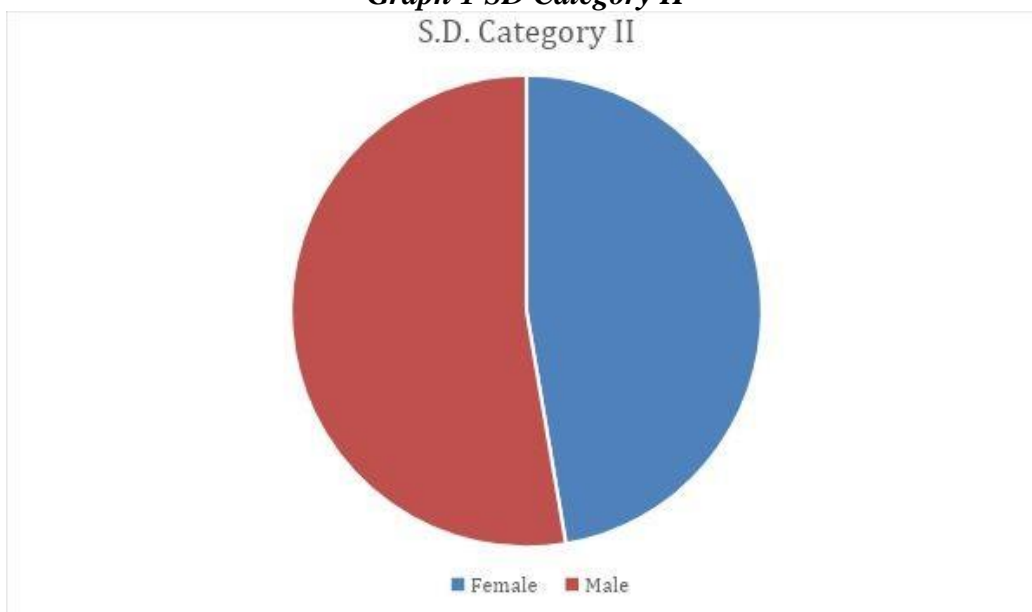
Table 1: Mean, SD and Coefficient of correlation between Category 1 and Category 2

		MEAN	Standard Deviation	COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATION
CATEGORY I	Females	190.52	0.75	
	Males	188.53	0.03	0.13
CATEGORY II	Females	101.2	0.53	
	Males	96.3	0.59	-0.05

Graph 1 SD Category I



Graph 1 SD Category II



After data collection and analysis, we found a positive correlation amongst self-concept and exercise as well as the absence of the latter variable established a negative correlation. The coefficients were 0.13 and -0.05, respectively. We established that there is a positive correlation of exercise and self –concept, negative correlation of self-concept and absence of exercise and there was a significant difference for workout effects amongst male and female students. Interestingly, we found that in the absence of exercise, there isn't any deviation for both; but exercising held a high value of standard deviation for women than men (0.75 and 0.03, respectively).

CONCLUSION

A study of relationship of Self-concept and exercise in blind people yielded the same results (Santamaria, T., et al., 2020). Bondár, R. Z., et al., (2020) studied the effect of exercise on self-concept in the intellectually disabled and established a positive relationship.

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Our study shows there is a positive correlation between exercise and Self-concept. However, there is no doubt that constant research in this arena with much larger sample size will fortify that which is already proved to some extent.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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