

## **EMPLOYED WOMEN WHO GO IN FOR SPORTS - SATISFACTION WITH ONESELF, ONE'S FAMILY, ONE'S JOB, ONE'S SOCIAL LIFE AND GENERAL LIFE SATISFACTION**

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### **Abstract**

Health care professionals consider awareness of benefits of physical activities and exercise to be of the utmost importance in health promotion. Lack of physical activity amongst employees is one of the predisposing factors contributing to obesity and a risk factor for numerous illnesses and non-advancement in job. The main objective of this research is to explore the connection between physical activities in employed women and satisfaction with oneself, one's family, one's job, one's social life and general life satisfaction. A survey was conducted amongst 300 employed women, 160 of whom do not go in for sports while 140 of them do. The findings show that the women who go in for sports are considerably more satisfied with themselves and their family compared to those who do not go in for sports. Significant differences are also related to job satisfaction and social life as well as general life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** physical activity, satisfaction with oneself, life satisfaction, employed women

### **Introduction**

The importance of exercise, the issue widespread through all levels of business organizations and amongst a large number of employees, requires a multi-aspect approach. Researches have shown that the main driving force for physical activity is basic motivation as it determines the willingness to begin physical activity, which is a key factor for successful exercise (Rhodes & Blanchard, 2007).

The agreement of a person to perform the exercise prescribed by a physical therapist is very important for the success of exercise. Unfortunately, many people have the problem with that and, as a result, efficiency and motivation during exercise become diminished. Many people

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only agree to perform basic exercise and additional intervention is necessary to boost their motivation, which implies that 10-30% people will be in a dilemma over whether to agree to exercise or not.

The challenge the instructor faces is to conduct scanning and an interview with people who have started taking exercise so as to identify the key motives and reasons for taking exercise as well as benefits to be expected from the physical activity (Rhodes & Fiala, 2009).

Health care professionals consider awareness of benefits of physical activities and exercise to be of the utmost importance in health promotion along with the readiness of the instructor for active involvement and collaboration with the client (Brewer, 1999). Lack of physical activity amongst employees is one of the predisposing factors contributing to obesity and a risk factor for numerous illnesses and non-advancement in job (Goldman, Jarrard, Kim, Loomis, & Atkins, 2000).

A research conducted in Thailand, amongst nurses, obtained significant statistical data regarding physical activity at work, its benefits, obstacles to implementation and motivation for exercise. The study was based on Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977a; Bandura, 1977b) and Health Promotion Model (Pender, 1996). The study provided statistically significant data on the connection between exercise and personality characteristics, on benefits and obstacles during physical activity, on self-productivity, but also on social support for people who exercised. Additional work involvement did not affect physical involvement, but additional motivation, in addition to a person's basic motives, is a significant factor. Motivation was also affected by self-confidence and the results expected from exercise (Kaewthummanukul, Brown, Weaver, & Thomas, 2006). Self-productivity, as important part of self-confidence, played a pivotal role in a change of behaviour (Bandura, 1977a).

Other studies revealed that participation in physical activity had positive effect on self-productivity enhancement (Piazza, Conrad, & Wilbur, 2001; Nies & Kershaw, 2002). Physical activity is influenced by: benefits from physical activity, obstacles overcome during exercise, motivation, social support and the work environment. In this case motivation comprises intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation means the feeling of satisfaction during and upon exercise, while extrinsic motivation means all the results and rewards resulting from exercise (Kaewthummanukul et al., 2006).

Psychologists attempted to introduce physical activity amongst employees as a kind of general support for self-productivity and self-confidence enhancement at work. However, they had to face numerous barriers which diminished and had negative effect on motivation (Rhodes & Fiala, 2009).

The most obvious and most frequent obstacle to physical activity was the time required for exercise. People who decided to change their life style and introduce exercise should be further motivated by keeping them informed of the exercise programme, a detailed plan of how, when and where they can perform a series of exercises (Norman & Conner, 2006; Rhodes, Blanchard, Matheson, & Coble, 2006).

In order to increase the effectiveness of physical activity promotion, Hillsdon, Foster, Naidoo and Crombie (2004), suggest introduction of client monitoring, verbal and written instructions, while some other authors (Schneiders, Zusman, & Singer, 1998) emphasize verbal support and progress opportunity.

The most frequent motive for exercise is physical appearance, that is, aesthetic and affective improvements during exercise. Use of music, television, video beam and the interaction among those who exercise proved very effective for elimination of negative sensations during exercise (Bonk, France, & Taylor, 2001). Should clients manage to integrate their exercise into their schedule, the result will certainly be positive (Rhodes & Fiala, 2009).

A large-scale study of acceptance of a physical activity at work promotion programme, conducted amongst all the employees in a Clinical Centre in Philadelphia, revealed that the workplace was ideal environment for physical activity promotion. The data showed that those employees who did not perform any physical activity in their leisure time were more interested and motivated to exercise at work (Phipps, Madison, Pomerantz, & Klein., 2010).

There were benefits of this physical activity at workplace programme to both the organization and employees. The benefits to the organization were increased work efficiency, improved work quality and increased job satisfaction, in addition to the opportunity to reduce illnesses and damage to employees, the consequences of which were negative for both the organization and employees (Dishman, 2007; Pronk et al., 2004).

Barriers such as personal dissatisfaction, the time required for exercise or the place where the activity should take place were some of the barriers to physical activity in the workplace identified in this study as well as in some other studies focused on the issue (Kruger, Yore, Bauer, & Kohl, 2007; Walcott-McQuigg, Zerwic, Dan, & Kelley, 2001).

It was also proved that people who exercise are more polite, have more self-confidence, that they are more sociable, have stronger self-control, manage stress better and become better at work (Martin, Sinden, & Fleming, 2000). Positive effect of exercise get transferred to everyday activities, so cycling to work is becoming more frequent as well as taking the stairs instead of the lift, etc. (Martin Ginis, Latimer, & Jung, 2003).

The main objective of this research is to explore the connection between physical activities in employed women and satisfaction with oneself, one's family, one's job, one's social life and general life satisfaction.

## Methods

*Sample.* A survey was conducted amongst 300 employed women, 160 of whom do not go in for sports while 140 of them do. 153 women were employed in private sector while 147 of them were employed in state sector (Table 1.)

Table 1  
*Sample – characteristics*

Criterion	Physical activity		Total
	YES	NO	
Private sector	61	92	153
State sector	79	68	147
Age: 25-35	100	58	158
Age: 35-45	33	58	91
Age: 45-55	7	44	51

*Instruments and procedure.* The survey was conducted through an anonymous questionnaire, designed for the purposes of this research. The questionnaire comprised five-point Likert items where 1 meant: not satisfied at all, and 5 meant: fully satisfied. The respondents were asked if they were satisfied with themselves, their family, their job, their social life and life generally. The descriptive items comprised the following questions: Do you play sports at least twice a week? Do you work in private or state sector? How old are you?

The data obtained was processed by *Statistica 9.1 for Windows*. The statistical analysis used were descriptive and correlative methods and t-test.

## Results

Differences between women who go in for sports and women who do not go in for sports regarding satisfaction with oneself, one's family, one's job, one's social life and general life satisfaction are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Differences between women who go in for sports and women who do not go in for sports regarding satisfaction with oneself, one's family, one's job, one's social life and general life satisfaction*

Satisfaction with	M1	M2	SD1	SD2	t-test	p-value
Oneself	4.11	3.34	1.08	1.40	3.58	0.00
Family	4.67	3.44	0.80	1.51	4.91	0.00
Job	4.01	3.21	0.67	1.49	3.60	0.00
Social life	4.33	3.22	1.20	1.50	4.88	0.00
Life	4.11	2.90	1.30	1.60	4.90	0.00

M1-women who go in for sports

M2-women who do not go in for sports

The findings show that women who go in for sports are considerably more satisfied with themselves and their family than those women who do not go in for sports. Significant differences appear with relation to job, social life and general life satisfaction. Comparison against each of the five criteria reveals that the satisfaction is much higher in women who perform physical activity. All the findings are relevant at the  $p < 0.01$  level.

Table 3

*Correlation of satisfaction perception against the 5 criteria*

Satisfaction with	Oneself	Family	Job	Social life	Life
<b>Oneself</b>	1.00				
<b>Family</b>	0.46	1.00			
<b>Job</b>	0.50	0.36	1.00		
<b>Social life</b>	0.52	0.49	0.35	1.00	
<b>Life</b>	0.51	0.60	0.40	0.32	1.00

Expectedly, correlations of subjective satisfaction assessment against the five criteria are very high and statistically relevant. All correlations are positive. Regarding general life satisfaction, the highest correlation is with family satisfaction, and the lowest is with social life satisfaction although it is also high and relevant.

## Discussion

According to the research described here and the data obtained, it is concluded that physical activity significantly affects increase in satisfaction with oneself, one's family, one's job, one's social life and general life satisfaction in employed women.

This research confirms the findings of the research by Kaewthummanukul et al. (2006) stating that investment into physical activity programmes for employees increases their motivation for further engagement, that is, physical activity involvement. Women look more attractive, they feel more self-confident, more satisfied with themselves in many respects, which also affects their family. Women's productivity at workplace is increased, they are more motivated to work and additional workload does not have any negative effect on the quality of their work or work involvement, employees' interaction improve and so does the quality of their social life.

In the study by Phipps et al. (2010) the workplace is recognized as one of ideal places for physical activity promotion amongst employed women, the fact that could be emphasized as a recommendation to employers. Considering the finding that playing sports is closely connected to higher job satisfaction, it could be assumed that recreational physical activity would contribute to a significant rise of job motivation and job satisfaction, which could directly reflect in company profit rise.

Such business policy may be perceived as significant social support. Social support perception, that is, the organization's support, whether it is in private or state sector, stimulates work quality and job satisfaction (Rhodes & Fiala, 2009), as is confirmed by the findings of our research. The atmosphere at work is enhanced, which is reflected in personal satisfaction and in social contacts, which then enhances the atmosphere at home. As a result, these women are more satisfied with how their family functions. Physical activity considerably contributes to better health, especially in women whose job requires long periods of sitting or standing, in which cases exercise plays role in prevention of some illnesses affecting women at their productive life stage (Dishman, 2007).

Various recreational programmes such as fitness, aerobics, aquarobics, Pilates and similar types of exercise for women at work contribute to the increased quality of their interpersonal relationships. They go beyond the framework of professional relationships at the workplace which requires certain detachment and they build a closer and more sincere relationship. Their social circle of friends and acquaintances expands, their social life acquires a new dimension and it becomes more successful. This atmosphere and mood is taken home and it affects family life, while positive changes of their behaviour are transferred to other family members, which establishes balance between mental and physical health, and general life satisfaction.

In order to enable majority of women to pursue such lifestyle, it is necessary to promote physical activity in the media, press and public promotional events in organizations. Women should be encouraged to adopt this kind of lifestyle and introduce changes through various types of recreation in organizations, but also through sporting gatherings or events. Thus socializing and health care can meaningfully be brought together.

Women who wish or perceive that they need to take up a physical activity should be supported since sports will bring them satisfaction, increase their self-confidence and satisfaction with themselves, improve their physical appearance and health, which will then contribute to quality family and social relationships. In addition to support, they should be given encouragement and provided with the right conditions in term of time and finance, as changing individual behaviour plays a key role in raising other women's awareness.

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