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Experiences of Sedentary Middle Age Group Housewives Participating in Step Aerobics Course

Abstract

Doing physical activity or having an opportunity to exercise can be difficult for young and middle aged sedentary housewives, especially if there is a financial limitation, both in terms of home economics and the time. Providing a chance for benefiting the opportunities of physical activity environments, the mentioned target population can be supported for the lifelong learning and physical activity. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to investigate the process of a municipality-supported step aerobics course to sedentary housewives. This study is a qualitative study in nature in that the case study has been selected as a methodology of this study, as a specific environment has been intended to defined from a holistic view. A total of 8 participants have been selected with a homogenous sampling approach among the sedentary housewives that going to Municipality Culture and Arts Center Gym for at least 7 months in Tokat, Turkey. Two semi-structured focus group interviews have been conducted to define a group that shows similar characteristics. After the transcription period, the results have been obtained with a thematic content analysis. Four themes have been emerged as Self Confidence (1), Socialization (2), Self awareness (3), and Wellness (4) of sedentary housewives. Moving from the homes -where the sedentary housewives mostly spend their time at- to the gym, the socialization expectations have been met. Having new friends has helped them to gain good emotional wellbeing and many positive effects. Besides those good changes, the characteristics and content knowledge of the coach with the sports environment expectations are the other mentionable findings. Socially supported lifelong learning and physical activity opportunities from the official institutions are indispensable for the individuals with special needs. This study can be an example for the women who spend their whole time at homes to make them socializing, meeting their expectations to change their interests and perceptions about their environments and people around them. Within this context, it can be foreseen that submitting of similar courses to sedentary housewives by providing qualified coaches and appropriate sports environments can attribute individuals to be directed to physical activities.

Keyword: step aerobics, sedentary, experience, case study.

INTRODUCTION

Sedentary lifestyle, increasing nowadays, has brought along some significant health problems and exceedingly has made feel the effect on the housewives that have this lifestyle the most. Physical activities cure the physiological, psychological, metabolic variables and are preventive against chronic diseases and help to sustain muscle-tendon-joint good emotional wellbeing. Notwithstanding, the effects of physical activity on health can only be in the positive way with accurate and regular exercise program, accurate daily program, adequate nutrition, individual fitness of exercise intensity and continuity period.

Regular exercise, while physically improving the body, has an important role in increasing the state of readiness psychologically against cases to be performed and creating faster solutions to problems which individuals may face with in their life. Sports branches which can easily performed and entertaining such as step aerobics, rapidly take place among people's choices who want to get rid of monotony of the daily life recently and are added to activity programs.

Step aerobics is an exercise dance which individuals can easily perform as physical fitness, its regular movements are accompanied by rhythm, entertain the person while exercising, increase muscle-tendon strength, accelerate fat burning and provide mental relaxation. Today the reason of its perception as a women sports is that it is preferred by mostly working women and housewives in our regions. The reason of this preference is that women are more appropriate to rhythm, they do not prefer high intensity exercises and they want to relieve the stress of daily life in a fun way.

There is also a decrease of houseworks which are based on physical strength of housewives or working women in communal living. Because these movements in houseworks are repetitive and uniform, energy expenditure decreases accordingly and it is difficult to maintain the body composition (Wing 1995; Arslan & Ceviz 2007: 212). The most effective method in maintaining the body composition is the adequate nutrition and performing activities by doing exercises. Activities increase the muscle volume, decrease fat content and cause the decrease of net body weight. It is also known that regular exercise has effects on loss of appetite. It increases calorie consumption and accelerates the basal metabolism. Also it increases the insulin sensitivity, HDL/LDL cholesterol ratio (Wadden 2003; Er 2015: 13).

The object of this study is to research the effect of step aerobics course on sedentary housewives.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study has been planned and conducted according to case study which is one of the qualitative research types. Yin (1984) explains the case study as a research method which is used in occasions studying a current event within its own reality, in which the boundaries between the phenomenon and its content are unspecified in certain lines, and in which more than a data source presents (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005; Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). With this study, an answer to the question of "What are the effects?" has been searched with the interpretive approach.

The sample of the study are 8 voluntary sedentary housewives who are the course attendars of Municipality of Tokat Hanımeli Culture and Arts Center with the average of age is 44. Medical approval has been obtained related that women participating in the study do

not have any harm in exercising. Women have been asked to continue their regular nutrition not to take any other special diet through the course period. Later in the course, with the aim to determine the effect of step aerobics exercises on sedentary women, they have been asked to answer 8 questions relevant to aim of the study via interview and sound recording has been done. To get more comprehensive informations, 3 women have been picked amongst them and been interviewed considering their demographic informations and lifestyles and sound recorded again. Participants in records have been encoded as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and the samples of the transcript of interviews have been collected under the 3 main headings.

During the step aerobics course period, participants have been exercised between 45 min and 1 hour, in %45-55 intensity, minimum 3 months long and 3 days in a week. Within this period, informations about step aerobics have been given before the exercises and questions have been answered, 5-10 min warm-up before the exercise, 5-10 min stretching after the exercise and regional work-out have been done and in the end 5 min of sleep with meditation music has been permitted.

Table 1. Exercise Program Applied on the Participants

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Later
Exercise Period	45 min-1hour	45min-1 hour	45 min-1 hour	45 min-1 hour
Exercise Intensity	%40	%45-50	%50	%50-55
Frequency of the Course, Week/Day	3	3	3	3

Table 2. Questions to Determine the Effect of Step Aerobics Course on the Sedantary Women

1. What are your thoughts about the course before you attend the step aerobics course?
2. What are your expectations from step aerobics course, could you reach your expectations at the end of the course?
3. What are your opinions about efficiency of the instructor? Do the instructor profile in your mind before the course and the reality match up with each other?
4. What have you learned in the step aerobics course period?
5. What has this course attributed to you in terms of cognitive, physical and social aspects?
6. How has the course affected your health?
7. What are the changes in your life with the step aerobics course?
8. What do you recommend if you think the step aerobics courses to be better?

FINDINGS

As can be seen in Table 3, 3 main themes have been found according to the content analysis of study on housewives. These themes are 1- individual effects of the step aerobics course, 2- characteristics of the step aerobics instructor and 3- expectations about gym environment.

The first main theme revealing in the study findings is that effects of step aerobics course to individual. The content of this theme is completed with positively increasing and expected features in individuals. They are respectively; self confidence in individuals with the step aerobics course and increase in motivation, socialising, increase of self awareness and significant alteration in features of wellness. It is seen that with the course middle aged housewives start to love themselves and the society, their health problems decrease and feel more energetic and they gain psychological good emotional wellbeing.

Table 3. Effects of Step Aerobics Course on Sedentary Middle-Aged Women

Increasing self confidence and motivation (24)		
I. Effects of step aerobics course to individuals	Socialising (36)	Expectation of socialising Feeling of belonging Change in interest and perception Extrinsic motivation Leadership and self actualization
	Self awareness (40)	Cardiovascular endurance Increase in awareness relating sports and correct implementation of exercises Importance of sports and proper nutrition
	Wellness (17)	
II. Characteristics of Step Aerobics Coach	Personality characteristics of the coach (11)	Good looking Nice attitude Entertaining and energetic coach
	Content knowledge of the coach (15)	Well-informed in the field Kickstart Interested and sympathetic coach
III. Expectation of Sports Environment	Clean and enough mirrors for everybody (8)	
	Everchanging and renewed music (6)	
	High ceiled, spacious (6)	
	Gyms in which the lightnings motivate (5)	

In the conclusion of the study analysis an increase in self confidence of all participants has been observed. Self confidence means that individuals get a good point of view and being at peace with herself and the people around. [B] has responded as " I didn't like my body before and was ashamed of dressing tight dress, after I have started sports (step aerobics) my body has got shaped and now I am confident." Motivation is the desire to success the determined object. [E] has expressed herself as " I used to get up lately beforehand but now I am doing my jobs at night and come to course after my children and husband leave the house. Now I see this as my priority, the more I lost weight the more I am motivated but beforehand I was feeling embarrassed." After my observations, I have come to conclusion that there is an increase of self confidence in all participants during the course period and they try to convince their friends to attend the course. The reason of my conclusion is that new participants have stated that they attend the course with advice of their friends.

Thanks to step aerobics course, expectations of the middle aged housewives participants of the study have been fulfilled, there is something different in their daily life and they have a new environment by having some of their home time for the course. For example to that, participant [E] has reported that " I would never go outside and want to leave the bed because I had nothing to do but now with the course I try to wake up early and come to see my friends, totally I feel more energetic for my life." I also have observed that women are more energetic generally and they can communicate more easily day after day.

Women who reach the feeling of belonging have started to move more free in exercises and discovered that they are not different from others. Participant [B] has said that " I used to think they would make fun of me before I came to the gym but when I came here I thought that they were all same as me, there was not any difference between me and them." When I have compared the first times and the later, I have observed that shy eyes changed their place with confidence.

Change in interest and perception has been shown as especially sportswear and music choice in all women. Participant [C] has said that “ I take a look for sportswear stores now, I was not interested in them before and now I consider the suitability of the shoe sole.” In the conclusion of my observations, sweat suits and daily clothes have given their place to sports tights and sports vests in all women.

Extrinsic motivation mostly represents the women’s love of their physical appearances more. Drop in fat mass with exercises, strengthening of the muscles, skin revitalization and becoming appealing of the body shape have increased the extrinsic motivation in women. Participant [B] has said that “ Thanks to exercises I start to like my body more, I want to look at the mirror all the time and I fit in my clothes.” According to my own observations, women have started to look more at the mirror and their expectations about appearance have increased.

Leadership and self actualization are personality developments occurred as a result of learning and successful implementations. Participant [C] has stated that “ I trust in myself thanks to exercise, moreover I help my friends and I consider taking courses to be an instructor.” My observation is that even it is not at the same level in all participants, sense of achievement reveals the leadership features.

Self awareness is to understand, listen, direct and represent our feelings. As an example to this, [C] “ After I have figured out how to do exercises properly, I have learnt how to use my body, then I have realised that there is a change in the parts I want to develop for a long time and now I am so happy. In addition to that I have discovered my leadership feeling and I am surprised about that.”

Wellness expresses to complete our daily activities in the most vigorously and energetic way. [E] has stated and become an example for the effect of step aerobics dance on wellness “ I used to have such a difficulty at getting up that I had pain all over my body. Now I wake up early and do not have arthralgias, I can reach the shelves which I could not reach before, I welcome my kids positively when they come home in the evening.”

Cardiovascular endurance is the increase in heart volume and the veins to expand through exercise to maintain blood flow in the most comfortable way. Participant [F] has said that “ I have diabetes and heart disease, thanks to low paced exercises my drug level has decreased.” Based on my observations and interviews at course period, I have come to the conclusion that various diseases in all women participated in course have been decreased or removed.

Participant [B] and [C] have made the same comment about the increase awareness to sports and the proper implementation of the exercises; “Sports has changed our point of view to life, looking good and feeling wellness are the consequences of that, also proper exercises have accelerated the process of having a dream body.” I have ensured that all the participants that I coached have seen an improvement by correcting incorrectly known movements and consequently I have seen the expected result that physical reformation in all of them, understanding the importance of proper sports and sustaining of sports.

The most important condition of the importance of sports and proper nutrition, having the desired body and being healthy is to eat properly. Individuals should adjust their meals according to their daily caloric needs, consume healthy fats, and stay away from the cook – chill food and artificial sugar, besides they should be able to correctly adjust their feeding time during the day. Related to importance of sports participant [A] has stated

"Thanks to sports I wake up vigorously in the morning.", participant [D] " Because I lost weight, I can do my own jobs without help from anyone." It has been observed that individuals started to exercise more eagerly two weeks after work-out, they started to think that they were doing it properly and lost weight with proper nutrition.

The second main theme of the study is the characteristics of the step aerobics coach. Step aerobics a physical and mental exercise dance is a branch that must have knowledge of training as well as physical competence during step aerobics practice. Individuals should get out of the courses which they go to fun exercise with the less deformation as possible as they can and it should not affect their health negatively. Though the possibility is low, the trainers should take up-to-date trainings and develop themselves in terms of information and practice.

Personal characteristics of the coach, as well as his/her knowledge, is a factor which makes the lessons energetic and full and it is an important way of participants' ensuring to get a positive point of view at first glance. These characteristics are a good looking, nice attitude, funny and energetic coach; sedentary individuals have more expectations from the coach comparing to professional players regardless of the branch because they have not exercised such a sport before and they want the coach to affect them first. Step aerobics is branch in which mostly women participate and a coach with a good looking, having good communication skills and the most important completing the sessions with the participant. In other words, what is want is not that the coach shows the moves and waits but he/she exercises and entertains with the participants. Participant [G] "Days ,in which the coach is energetic, are very entertaining.", participant [E] " The clothes of the coach was appealing and now I wear similar clothes."

The content knowledge of the coach is a process starting with that the coach understands visually the need for exercise have met and notice the solutions of health problems. Otherwise, the attitude towards the coach would change and the coach may fail to fulfill the expectations. A good coach is expected to have full knowledge of the field. Updating herself/himself all the time in order to transmit the correct informations to individuals, getting training, motivating the participants by proper training, being concerned increase the having full knowledge of the field. Participant [B] "When the coach shows me moves I understand it better and I want to do it all the time.", participant [E] " Because the coach deals with everybody equally, nobody feels more valuable or worthless." As a coach I respond my participants' questions in the most correctly way by keeping my trainings updated and this increases the trust of the coach. At the same time, I try a different way of motivation for everybody because of the individual differences and this makes participations to be more successful.

The third main theme of the study is the expectation of the gym. One of the most important factors affecting individuals is the ambiance of the gym. Gyms with a nice exterior and interior encourage people to exercise. Participants have answered the question relating how the step aerobics gyms should be as they should be wide, spacious, high ceiled, surrounded by the mirrors which participants can see themselves from different percepectives, in which the music changes in every lesson and lightning is enough and especially hygenic areas motivate them to exercise.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the study is to reveal physical, mental and social effects of the step aerobics dance/exercise on middle aged sedentary housewives. As a matter of fact, when we compare the developed and underdeveloped cities in our country and particularly in developed countries, it is seen that the mass of sedentary housewives' participation level of sports is low. Determining how the sedentary women participated in step aerobics group dance have changed in physical, mental and emotional ways in such environment contributes to field concerning why women should give importance to sports activities in general and positive effects of personal gains to their life privately.

There is a meaningful difference when the period before and the ongoing time of the step aerobics course of participants has been observed. In other words with the participation of sedentary women to exercise dance, their psychological goodwill has improved, they also have started to love their bodies after weight loss thanks to exercise, they have been motivated and confident and their extrinsic motivation has increased. Richman and Shaffer (2000) state that participation in sports activities increases and positively affects body perception and satisfaction (Baştuğ, Akandere & Yıldız, 2011; 26). Lots of studies have been conducted on self confidence and psychological goodwill and the findings of these studies support my own study.

Küçük and Koç (2003) have come to the conclusion that the easiest way to psychological and socially activate people is exercise because thanks to sports people can meet and interact with other people from different thoughts and different cultures in so many environments. Within this context, the step aerobics exercise in my study on sedentary women parallels with meeting the expectation of socialisation.

In the consequence of examination of the studies conducted on exercise and the health, it has been concluded that proper exercise minimises physical and metabolic health problems. Demir and Filiz (2004) in their study on effects of sports exercises on human organism, define the exercise as preventative the risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes, overweight, cholesterol and physical inactivity. It protects clear mind and psychological balance, improves the energy level. It prevents the stress, heart diseases and cancer; supports bone and muscle health. It lowers the blood pressure and helps the removal of toxins formed in body. These studies are the same as those reported by voluntary participant women in my study.

When researched the studies on sports environments, it reveals that one of the most preeminent factors to motivate the person is sports environment. People should be aware of the hygiene and comfort of the sports environment. If there is not a good ventilation in the gyms, water vapor volatilises to cause discomfort for the athletes and the water vapor which is exhaled, reaches the level of disturbing the mass. This situation affects the performance in a negative way (Saçaklı, 1989; p.165; Duran, 2013; p:36). The insufficiency and impropriety of the lightning, regardless of the choice of lightning type, causes one of the reasons of decrease performance in almost all areas, prescribed industrial diseases and productivity; increase the industrial accidents (Şerefoğlu, 1989; p.131; Duran, 2013; p:38). The ideal lightning at gyms is the use of the daylight. Regardless of the capacity of the gyms, artificial lightning systems should provide direct well seeing. The daylight and the lamplight should be considering together regarding architecturally. The colour of the lights which are used in lightning of the gyms, should not damage the visual perception and colour separations of the athletes

(Duran, 2013; p.39). Some problems such as diseases occur in the unventilated and insanitary gyms. The overcoming the problem relies upon the designing of gyms advertently (Erkan, 1989; p.95; Duran, 2013; p:35). Informations acquired in the studies share similarity with the expectations of the participants of study.

The expectation of a coach well informed in the field in subthemes of the study is the most important headline that the participants give importance on the coach expectations. Individuals may be affected negatively as well as affected positively and this can be an excuse for sedentary life addiction which is already a problem at the moment. Individuals have right to benefit from the knowledge of the coach and trust them during exercises, and coaches should be able to transmit the knowledge to them and earn trust. According to the study of Bıyıklı (2007), it is concluded that individuals, exercising in control of expert trainers at gyms, feel safe. This study parallels with my own study.

CONCLUSION

Step aerobics is an exercise dance that individuals with physical fitness capacity can easily do, its regular moves are applied with rhythm, entertains the person while exercising, increases muscle-tendon strength, accelerates fat burning and provides psychological relaxation. Getting rid of the effects of sedentary life is an easy way of keeping away from stress caused by hard life, if any, disciplining while entertaining the body.

In consequence of field observation of the study, like other cardio exercises, step aerobics exercise dance also has positive effects on middle aged sedentary housewives. Physical effects are strength of muscle-bone and tendon in individuals, having the correct posture, body values becoming admirable. Mental effects are increasing self-confidence and motivation, gaining the sense of belonging to groups, leadership and proving self to people and providing extrinsic motivation. Social effects are meeting the expectation of socialising of housewives, change in interest and perception developing with socialising, increase in the awareness towards environment and the people, entertain and getting activity.

SUGGESTIONS

Regular exercising in terms of the health is a need for every age and investments should be made in sports considering that a certain part of the society does not have the budget for this and this should be open for public. Women participated in the study could reach the gym in which they could not go because of both financial and spouse pressure, thanks to facilities of the municipality that they would use free of charge where they are located, and they could make a difference in their lives.

One the most common problems in exercise dances is the coach and behaviour. The coach expectation of sedentary women that have never conducted such an activity and do not participating in this type study is a person well informed in the field, good looking and cheerful, kick-start, interested and entertaining with group during exercises and energetic. Within this context, the coaches should be controlled regularly, work legally (certificated) and be evaluated by feedbacks.

Indoor or outdoor sports halls, step boards and music are necessary for the group to be comfortable at the same time for step aerobics exercise dance. Suggestions for the exercise area in the study; the gyms should be clean and covered with enough mirrors for everybody, the music should be different in each lesson and various music styles should be used in the

course, the halls should be wide, spacious and the lightning should motivate the individuals to prepare for dance.

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