

Exercise Motivation and Self-Esteem: A Study on Teachers*

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to examine the relationship between exercise motivation and self-esteem among teachers and to determine whether these variables differ according to demographic characteristics such as gender, branch, and regular exercise participation.

Method: The study was conducted with the voluntary participation of 488 teachers working in different branches. Data were collected using the Exercise Motivation Attitude Scale and the Self-Esteem Scale. The obtained data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods, including descriptive statistics, group comparisons, and correlation analyses.

Results: The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between exercise motivation and self-esteem. While no significant gender difference was observed in overall exercise motivation, female teachers scored significantly higher in the negative attitude and thought sub-dimension. Teachers who exercised regularly had lower scores in the negative attitude and thought subdimension, whereas they had higher scores in the positive perspective and health and physical appearance and health subdimensions, as well as in overall exercise motivation. While no statistically significant difference was found in self-esteem levels according to gender, a significant difference was found according to teaching subject area.

Conclusion: The results indicate that higher levels of exercise motivation are associated with higher levels of self-esteem among teachers. Supporting teachers' participation in regular physical activity may contribute positively to their psychological well-being, self-perception, and overall quality of life. Therefore, developing programs and practices that encourage physical activity among teachers is recommended.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Exercise Motivation, Physical Activity, Teachers, Psychological Well-Being.

ÖZET

Öğretmenlerde Egzersiz Motivasyonu İle Benlik Saygısı Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

Amaç: Bu araştırmanın amacı, öğretmenlerde egzersiz motivasyonu ile benlik saygısı arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek ve bu değişkenlerin cinsiyet, branş ve düzenli egzersiz yapma durumu gibi demografik özelliklere göre farklılaşp farklılaşmadığını belirlemektir.

Yöntem: Araştırma, farklı branşlarda görev yapan toplam 488 öğretmenin gönüllü katılımıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veri toplama sürecinde Egzersiz Motivasyon Tutum Ölçeği ve Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler uygun istatistiksel analiz yöntemleri ile değerlendirilmiş, değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler ve gruplar arası farklılıklar incelenmiştir.

Bulgular: Araştırma bulguları, egzersiz motivasyonu ile benlik saygısı arasında pozitif yönlü ve anlamlı bir ilişki bulunduğunu göstermiştir. Cinsiyet değişkenine göre genel egzersiz motivasyonu puanlarında anlamlı farklılık bulunmazken, kadın öğretmenlerin olumsuz tutum ve düşünce alt boyutunda daha yüksek puan aldığı belirlenmiştir. Düzenli egzersiz yapan öğretmenlerin olumsuz tutum ve düşünce alt boyutu puanlarının daha düşük; pozitif bakış ve sağlık, fiziksel görünüm ve sağlık alt boyutları ile toplam egzersiz motivasyonu puanlarının

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ise daha yüksek olduđu belirlenmiştir. Benlik saygısı düzeylerinde cinsiyete göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmazken, öğretmenlik branşına göre anlamlı bir farklılık tespit edilmiştir.

Sonuç: Araştırma sonuçları, öğretmenlerde egzersiz motivasyonunun artırılmasının benlik saygısı ve genel psikolojik iyi oluş üzerinde olumlu etkiler yaratabileceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu doğrultuda öğretmenlerin fiziksel aktivitelere katılımını destekleyen uygulamaların yaygınlaştırılması hem bireysel hem de mesleki yaşam kalitesine katkı sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Benlik Saygısı, Egzersiz Motivasyonu, Fiziksel Aktivite, Öğretmenler, Psikolojik İyi Oluş.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary societies, maintaining and improving individuals' physical, psychological, and social well-being has become a central concern within both health sciences and sports sciences. As lifestyles increasingly shift toward sedentary patterns, physical activity has gained greater significance as an essential component of a healthy life. Beyond its contribution to physical fitness, exercise is widely recognized as a practice that supports emotional balance, enhances psychological resilience, and contributes positively to overall quality of life. Previous research has demonstrated that regular participation in physical activity is associated with lower levels of stress, improved mood, and greater life satisfaction (Güleşce & İlhan, 2024; McAuley & Blissmer, 2000). At the same time, technological developments and changing working conditions have reduced daily movement opportunities, making participation in exercise more dependent on individual preferences and motivational processes (Ceviz, 2024; Yurtseven, 2023). Within this framework, exercise motivation has emerged as a key concept for understanding why some individuals maintain regular physical activity while others struggle to do so. Motivation reflects the internal drives and external influences that initiate, direct, and sustain behavior, making it a critical determinant of exercise participation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Erdoğan & Bahadır, 2019). Consequently, the examination of exercise motivation has become an increasingly prominent topic in sports science research.

Closely linked to exercise motivation is the concept of self-esteem, which represents an individual's evaluation of their own worth and personal value. Self-esteem is regarded as one of the fundamental indicators of psychological adjustment and healthy personality development (Rosenberg, 1965; Baumeister, 1998). Individuals with positive self-esteem tend to demonstrate greater confidence in social interactions, stronger coping abilities, and higher levels of life satisfaction. The development of self-esteem is influenced by a variety of factors, including social relationships, personal experiences, cultural expectations, and self-

perception processes (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). In addition, social comparison mechanisms play a substantial role in shaping how individuals evaluate themselves within different social contexts (Festinger, 1954). Exercise has been identified as one of the factors that may contribute positively to self-esteem by improving body image perceptions, strengthening feelings of competence, and enhancing self-efficacy beliefs (Aşçı, 2004; Bandura, 1997). Therefore, investigating the interaction between exercise motivation and self-esteem offers valuable insights into both psychological functioning and individual development.

A considerable body of research has explored the association between exercise participation and self-esteem, with many studies reporting a positive relationship between these variables. Findings generally indicate that individuals who engage regularly in physical activity tend to report more favorable self-perceptions and higher levels of self-esteem compared with less active individuals (Erkmen, 2017; Konar & Şanal, 2020). Participation in sports and exercise is often associated with increased confidence, improved body satisfaction, and enhanced psychological well-being (Çağlayan & Uçan, 2012; Gencer & İlhan, 2012). Nevertheless, the literature also suggests that this relationship may not always be direct. Some studies have emphasized that the impact of exercise on self-esteem can vary according to contextual and personal factors, and in some cases may be relatively limited (Katra, 2021; Köse et al., 2016). Variables such as the reasons for engaging in exercise, the quality of motivational processes, and the social environment surrounding participation are considered influential in shaping this relationship (Karabulut & Müftüler, 2023; Cevhan & Polat, 2024). Furthermore, contemporary perspectives describe exercise motivation as a multidimensional construct encompassing physical, psychological, and social components rather than a single motivational factor (Caz, 2024; Yoncalık & Yoncalık, 2024). This multidimensional nature highlights the need for more comprehensive investigations into how exercise motivation and self-esteem interact.

Among various occupational groups, teachers occupy a particularly important position due to their influence on the cognitive, social, and emotional development of future generations. As individuals who serve as role models within educational settings, teachers' physical and psychological well-being extends beyond personal health and carries broader social implications. Research has suggested that teachers' perceptions of self-worth and professional competence are closely related to job satisfaction, occupational performance, and the quality of interactions established with students (Çetinkaya Uslusoy et al., 2016; Varol et al., 2021). However, demanding workloads, administrative responsibilities, and occupational

stress may reduce opportunities for regular participation in physical activity (Akkoyun & Özer, 2021). For this reason, strengthening exercise motivation among teachers may contribute not only to healthier lifestyles but also to improved psychological well-being and professional effectiveness. Evaluating the relationship between exercise motivation and self-esteem within the teaching profession may therefore provide meaningful evidence for both educational and sports science disciplines.

Based on these considerations, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between teachers' exercise motivation and self-esteem levels. In addition, the study seeks to determine whether these variables differ according to selected demographic characteristics, including gender, teaching branch, and regular exercise participation. By examining these relationships, it is expected that the findings will contribute to a better understanding of the factors associated with teachers' engagement in physical activity and psychological well-being. Furthermore, the results may provide practical implications for developing interventions and strategies designed to encourage active lifestyles among teachers while also contributing to the existing body of knowledge within sports sciences.

In the study, hypotheses were tested regarding the existence of a significant relationship between exercise motivation and self-esteem and whether these variables differ according to demographic variables such as gender, branch, and regular exercise status.

- H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between exercise motivation and self-esteem.
- H2: Gender leads to significant differences in teachers' exercise motivation levels.
- H3: Gender leads to significant differences in teachers' self-esteem levels.
- H4: Teachers' exercise motivation levels differ significantly according to their teaching branch.
- H5: Teachers' self-esteem levels differ significantly according to their teaching branch.
- H6: Teachers who exercise regularly have higher levels of self-esteem compared to those who do not exercise.
- H7: Teachers who exercise regularly have higher exercise motivation compared to those who do not exercise.

METHODS

Research Design

This research was designed within the scope of a quantitative methodology to explore the association between teachers' exercise motivation and self-esteem levels. A descriptive and correlational survey design was adopted, as this approach allows for the examination of existing conditions and the identification of potential relationships among variables without manipulating the research environment. In addition to investigating the interaction between exercise motivation and self-esteem, the study also sought to determine whether these variables differed according to selected demographic characteristics. Data were gathered through standardized measurement instruments administered to participants under the same conditions. Following the data collection phase, statistical procedures were employed to evaluate the research questions and test the relationships among the variables under investigation.

Participants

The target population of the study consisted of teachers employed in educational institutions located in the province of Ağrı. Due to accessibility and participant availability, convenience sampling was employed. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the study included 488 teachers. The sample comprised teachers from various teaching branches and included participants with different gender and regular exercise participation characteristics. This diversity enabled the study variables to be examined across different demographic groups and strengthened the comparative dimension of the research.

Table 1: Demographic Findings

Variable	Category	n	%
Branch	Primary school teacher	54	11.1
	Physical education teacher	62	12.7
	Social studies teacher	63	12.9
	Visual arts teacher	42	8.6
	Mathematics teacher	39	8.0
	Science teacher	30	6.1
	Preschool teacher	44	9.0
	Literature and Turkish teacher	26	5.3
	Religious culture teacher	46	9.4
	Vocational subject teacher	82	16.8
Gender	Male	271	55.5
	Female	217	44.5
Exercise Status	Yes	228	46.7
	No	260	53.3

The demographic profile of the participants demonstrates a heterogeneous sample structure. Examination of branch distributions indicates that vocational subject teachers constitute the largest group within the sample, followed by social studies, physical education, and primary school teachers. The representation of teachers from different teaching branches contributes to the diversity of professional perspectives included in the study. Gender distribution reveals a slightly higher proportion of male teachers than female teachers, although both groups are substantially represented. Findings related to exercise participation indicate that teachers who reported engaging in regular exercise and those who did not are represented in relatively similar proportions. Overall, these characteristics suggest that the sample provides a suitable basis for examining exercise motivation and self-esteem across different demographic groups.

Data Collection Methods and Tools

Data were collected using two established measurement instruments. Self-esteem was assessed using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, originally developed by Rosenberg (1965) and adapted into Turkish by Çuhadaroğlu (1986). The scale employs a four-point Likert-type response format. In the original study, its Cronbach's alpha coefficient was reported as $\alpha = .85$.

Exercise motivation was assessed using the Exercise Motivation Attitude Scale developed by Caz (2024). The scale consists of 20 items and three subdimensions—Negative Attitude and Thought, Positive Perspective and Health, and Physical Appearance and Health—and employs a seven-point Likert-type response format. In the scale development study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from $\alpha = .792$ to $\alpha = .933$.

For the present sample, Cronbach's alpha was calculated as $\alpha = .842$ for the Exercise Motivation Attitude Scale and $\alpha = .298$ for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Accordingly, the Exercise Motivation Attitude Scale demonstrated good internal consistency, whereas the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale demonstrated low internal consistency in the current sample.

Ethical Approval

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical approval was obtained from the Iğdır University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on July 23, 2025 (Meeting No. 2025/33; Document No. E-37077861-000-181440). Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants' data were ensured throughout the research process.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis of the data was carried out using the SPSS 27.0 software package. Prior to conducting inferential analyses, the distributional characteristics of the dataset were evaluated in order to determine the most appropriate analytical procedures. Correlation analysis was performed to identify the direction and strength of the relationship between exercise motivation and self-esteem. For comparisons involving two independent groups, the independent samples t-test was employed. Differences among three or more groups were examined through one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). In situations where the assumptions required for parametric testing were not adequately satisfied, suitable non-parametric alternatives were utilized. Through these procedures, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the relationships and group differences associated with the variables under investigation.

RESULTS

The Relationship Between Exercise Motivation and Self-Esteem

The correlation analysis conducted to determine the association between exercise motivation and self-esteem revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Although the relationship was significant, the magnitude of the correlation remained relatively low. This finding suggests that teachers with higher levels of exercise motivation tend to report slightly higher self-esteem scores. However, the limited strength of the relationship indicates that self-esteem cannot be explained solely by motivation toward exercise. Considering the multidimensional nature of self-esteem, it is reasonable to assume that social, psychological, environmental, and occupational factors may also contribute to its development. Therefore, exercise motivation should be considered one of several variables associated with self-esteem rather than its primary determinant.

Table 2: Correlations Between Exercise Motivation and Self-Esteem (Pearson)

Variable	EMAS_total	RSES_total
EMAS_total	1	0.123**
RSES_total	0.123**	1

*Note. N = 488, * $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

The Effect of Gender on Exercise Motivation

The effect of gender on exercise motivation levels was examined using an independent samples t-test. The difference between female and male teachers was evaluated.

Table 3: Comparison of Exercise Motivation Sub-Dimensions and Total Scores by Gender (Independent Samples t-test)

Scale / Sub-Dimension	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Negative attitude and thought (EMAS)	Male	271	1.4307	0.57656	-2.094	486	0.037
	Female	217	1.5464	0.64222			
Positive perspective (EMAS)	Male	271	6.1613	1.05940	-0.462	486	0.644
	Female	217	6.2021	0.84419			
Physical appearance and health (EMAS)	Male	271	6.1033	1.06564	1.009	486	0.314
	Female	217	6.0084	0.98943			
Total exercise motivation (EMAS)	Male	271	4.4882	0.60796	-0.532	486	0.595
	Female	217	4.5145	0.45050			

The level of significance in the analyses was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

The comparison of exercise motivation scores according to gender revealed that a statistically significant difference emerged only within the negative attitude and thought dimension. Female teachers obtained higher scores in this dimension, suggesting a greater tendency toward negative perceptions or concerns regarding exercise participation. No significant differences were identified in the positive perspective, physical appearance and health, or overall exercise motivation dimensions. These findings indicate that gender does not substantially influence general exercise motivation levels among teachers. Instead, gender-related differences appear to be limited to specific cognitive or attitudinal aspects associated with exercise behavior.

The Effect of Gender on Self-Esteem

Whether gender creates differences in self-esteem levels was analyzed using an independent samples t-test.

Table 4: Comparison of Self-Esteem Scores by Gender (Independent Samples t-test)

Variable	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t	df	P
RSES_total	Male	271	2.2908	0.28171	0.078	486	0.938
	Female	217	2.2889	0.22926			

The level of significance in the analyses was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

The comparison of self-esteem levels between male and female teachers did not reveal a statistically significant difference. Both groups demonstrated highly similar self-esteem scores, indicating that gender was not associated with substantial variation in self-evaluations among the participants. This finding suggests that teachers' perceptions of self-worth are

relatively independent of gender differences. Consequently, gender does not appear to function as a determining factor in self-esteem within the present sample.

The Effect of Branch on Exercise Motivation

The effect of branch on exercise motivation was analyzed using one-way ANOVA.

Table 5: ANOVA Results of Exercise Motivation (EMAS) by Branch

Variable	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Negative attitude and thought	Between groups	6.850	9	0.761	2.10	0.030
	Within groups	173.607	478	0.363		
	Total	180.457	487			
Positive perspective	Between groups	20.420	9	2.269	2.45	0.010
	Within groups	436.743	478	0.914		
	Total	457.163	487			
Physical appearance and health	Between groups	15.320	9	1.702	1.70	0.085
	Within groups	503.828	478	1.054		
	Total	519.148	487			
EMAS total	Between groups	8.950	9	0.994	3.10	0.002
	Within groups	134.767	478	0.282		
	Total	143.717	487			

The level of significance in the analyses was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

The findings indicate that teachers' branches significantly influence certain dimensions of exercise motivation. Statistically significant differences were identified in the negative attitude and thought dimension, the positive perspective dimension, and overall exercise motivation scores. In contrast, no significant differences were observed in motivations related to physical appearance and health. These results suggest that professional specialization may shape teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward exercise. Differences in working conditions, professional demands, and educational backgrounds may contribute to variations in exercise-related motivation across branches.

The Effect of Branch on Self-Esteem

The effect of branch on self-esteem was analyzed using one-way ANOVA.

Table 6: ANOVA Results of Self-Esteem Scores by Branch

Variable	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
RSES_total	Between groups	2.950	9	0.328	3.15	0.001
	Within groups	29.831	478	0.062		
	Total	32.781	487			

The level of significance in the analyses was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

The analysis revealed a significant relationship between teaching branch and self-esteem. This finding suggests that professional roles and occupational contexts may influence

how teachers evaluate themselves. Variations in professional expectations, social recognition, and job-related experiences may contribute to differences in self-esteem levels among branches. Accordingly, branch-specific characteristics appear to play a role in shaping self-perception.

Self-Esteem Levels of Teachers Who Exercise Regularly and Those Who Do Not

The self-esteem levels of teachers who engage in regular exercise and those who do not were compared.

Table 7 : Comparison of Self-Esteem (RSES_total) Scores by Regular Exercise Status

Variable	Group	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p
RSES_total	Yes (exercise)	228	2.2987	0.25594	0.695	486	0.487
	No (no exercise)	260	2.2823	0.26273			

The level of significance in the analyses was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

The comparison between teachers who regularly engage in exercise and those who do not revealed no statistically significant difference in self-esteem. Although individuals who exercised regularly demonstrated slightly higher mean scores, the difference was not sufficient to reach statistical significance. This finding indicates that participation in regular exercise alone may not directly influence self-esteem. Rather, self-esteem is likely shaped by a broader range of psychological and social experiences beyond physical activity participation.

Exercise Motivation Levels of Teachers Who Exercise Regularly and Those Who Do Not

The difference in exercise motivation levels between teachers who exercise and those who do not was analyzed.

Table 8: Comparison of Exercise Motivation (EMAS) Scores by Regular Exercise Status

Variable	Group	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Negative attitude and thought (EMAS)	Yes	228	1.3904	0.54869	-3.148	486	0.002
	No	260	1.5626	0.64727			
Positive perspective (EMAS)	Yes	228	6.2882	0.97344	2.333	486	0.020
	No	260	6.0841	0.95659			
Physical appearance-health (EMAS)	Yes	228	6.3114	0.85844	5.144	486	<0.001
	No	260	5.8417	1.12030			
EMAS total	Yes	228	4.5809	0.51677	3.113	486	0.002
	No	260	4.4288	0.55677			

The level of significance in the analyses was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

The analysis demonstrated that regular exercise participation is significantly associated with exercise motivation. Teachers who reported engaging in regular exercise exhibited lower levels of negative attitudes toward exercise and higher scores in positive perspective, physical

appearance-health motivation, and overall exercise motivation. These findings indicate that individuals who actively participate in exercise tend to develop more favorable attitudes toward physical activity and stronger motivational orientations. The results also suggest that sustained participation in exercise may reinforce positive motivational processes and contribute to greater commitment to an active lifestyle.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study indicate that exercise motivation and self-esteem are positively associated among teachers. Although the strength of the relationship was relatively modest, the existence of a statistically significant association suggests that motivation toward physical activity may contribute to more favorable self-evaluations. Previous studies have similarly reported that participation in exercise and positive attitudes toward physical activity are linked to improved psychological functioning and stronger perceptions of personal competence (Aşçı, 2004; Erkmen, 2017). Regular engagement in physical activity may enhance individuals' perceptions of their physical capabilities and body image, which can subsequently influence self-worth perceptions (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016; Haspolat & Kağan, 2017). Nevertheless, the limited magnitude of the relationship observed in this study demonstrates that self-esteem is influenced by a much broader set of variables. Factors such as interpersonal relationships, social comparison processes, professional experiences, and environmental conditions are also recognized as important contributors to self-esteem development (Festinger, 1954; Baumeister, 1998). Therefore, the present findings support contemporary perspectives that conceptualize self-esteem as a multidimensional psychological construct.

The analyses related to gender demonstrated that overall exercise motivation levels were largely similar among male and female teachers. However, a significant difference was identified in the negative attitude and thought dimension, with female participants reporting higher scores. This finding may reflect the influence of social and cultural factors that shape women's experiences regarding physical activity. Previous studies have suggested that concerns related to physical appearance, body image, and social evaluation may create additional barriers to exercise participation among women (Altıntaş et al., 2007; Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). Despite these differences, the absence of gender-based variation in overall motivation indicates that exercise has become an equally valued activity for both men and women within contemporary society. Similarly, no significant gender difference was found in self-esteem levels. This result aligns with studies reporting that self-esteem is influenced more

strongly by personal and contextual factors than by gender alone (İlhan & Gümüşdağ, 2021; Yazıcıoğlu & Ulağı, 2021).

The results demonstrated significant differences in both exercise motivation and self-esteem according to teaching branch. These findings suggest that professional context may be associated with teachers' attitudes toward exercise and their self-evaluations. Previous studies have indicated that exercise motivation and self-esteem may vary according to professional experiences, occupational roles, and working conditions (Başığıt Gönendi et al., 2024; Çetinkaya Uslusoy et al., 2016; Gencer & İlhan, 2012; Varol et al., 2021). However, post-hoc comparisons are required to determine the specific teaching branches between which these differences occur.

Another important finding concerns regular exercise participation. Teachers who reported engaging in regular exercise demonstrated significantly higher exercise motivation levels than those who did not. This result supports the notion that behavioral engagement and motivation reinforce one another through a reciprocal process. Individuals who participate in exercise regularly may experience positive outcomes that strengthen their willingness to continue engaging in physical activity (Güleşce & İlhan, 2024; Karabulut & Müftüler, 2023). Despite this difference, self-esteem levels did not vary significantly according to exercise participation status. This finding suggests that self-esteem develops through long-term psychological and social experiences and cannot be substantially altered by exercise participation alone (Rosenberg, 1965; Rogers, 1951). Exercise may contribute indirectly to self-esteem, yet it does not appear to function as an independent determining factor.

When the hypotheses developed for the study are evaluated collectively, the findings provide partial support for the proposed theoretical framework. The existence of a significant positive association between exercise motivation and self-esteem led to the acceptance of the first hypothesis. The gender variable produced significant differences only in one motivation subdimension; therefore, the related hypothesis was partially supported.

Regarding self-esteem-related hypotheses, no significant differences were identified according to gender resulting in the rejection of the respective hypotheses. Branch differences were associated with significant variations in both exercise motivation and self-esteem and therefore supported the corresponding hypothesis. Regular exercise participation did not create significant differences in self-esteem, leading to the rejection of that hypothesis. However, teachers who exercised regularly displayed significantly higher exercise motivation levels, supporting the final hypothesis.

The findings demonstrate that exercise motivation is positively associated with self-esteem among teachers, although the strength of this relationship is limited. The results further indicate that self-esteem may be associated with a combination of psychological, social, and professional factors rather than exercise-related variables alone. Consequently, exercise motivation should be considered one of several factors associated with positive self-perception.

Suggestions

Since a positive relationship was found between exercise motivation and self-esteem, school-based exercise programs aimed at increasing teachers' participation in physical activity should be expanded.

Given that teachers who engage in regular exercise have higher levels of exercise motivation, sustainable, accessible, and flexible physical activity programs should be planned for teachers.

Since the branch variable was found to influence both exercise motivation and self-esteem, individualized physical activity and psychosocial support programs tailored to the needs of teachers from different branches should be developed.

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