



ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYEE WOMEN TOWARD PHYSICAL FITNESS AT UNIVERSITY OF KUFA

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Abstract

Background: Women's health refers to physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural and social well-being, which indicates that there is further to health than the absence of disease or disability. Therefore, women require physical activity to enhancing mental health, self-image, social skills, cognitive functioning and to improve symptoms associated with mild or moderate depression or anxiety.

Methods: The descriptive, cross-sectional study design was performed from the 5th December 2018 to 20th March 2019. The main objective of this study is to identify Attitudes of Employee Women toward physical fitness and to find out the relationship between women's attitudes and their socioeconomic status. A non-probability sampling technique, purposive sample. That include (140) employee women was selected from faculties at University of Kufa.

Results: the total of (140) employee women showed positive attitudes toward physical fitness, no correlation between attitudes of women toward physical fitness and their age and BMI. With respect to relation of participants' socio-demographic data with their attitudes the results demonstrate the majority of women (96) were married, (119) of them were complete Institute or College. Furthermore, (105) of participants have not any chronic diseases. According to their response about orientations regarding Running or walking sport, (105) of them have oriented

toward it, (72) have no oriented toward Fitness drills/aerobics sport. Furthermore, (110) of them not oriented about other sports. That employee response to their participation in physical activity, majority (56) of them never participate in any physical activity per week.

Conclusions: The conclusion of the current study showed participants generally expressed positive attitudes toward physical fitness. Majority of them never participate in any physical activity per week. According to association that showed just marital status has significant association with attitude of employee women.

Keywords: Attitudes, Physical Fitness.

1-Introduction: Women's health refers to physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural and social well-being which indicates that there is further to health than the absence of disease or disability. Therefore, demand of physical activity for enhancing mental health, improve symptoms associated with mild or moderate depression or anxiety and improve self-image, social skills, and cognitive functioning for women (1)(Gichuki, 2015). Scientific research has shown various health benefits associated with a regular physical activity and exercise to all body systems and enhancing lifestyle which impact on health of individuals, as well as related to mental health and job performance (2) (D'Alonzo, and Saimbert,2013). It has an important effects on body composition, energy balance and energy expenditure. Low physical activity level among adult can develop diseases such as: stroke, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes type II, colon cancer and breast cancer. Moreover, other health results such as injuries, mental health and falls, risk of obesity can be preventive(1) (Gichuki,2015). The education about benefits of physical activity and exercise play a role for initiate and continue it regularly that raising number of purchased population moreover, gym memberships are increase in the last 10 years to become in 2011 around 43 million, Although, according WHO the important fourth risk factor of death around world are physical inactivity, 31% of population inactive physically(3) (Drannan,2016). Physical activity and physical fitness in modern public health holds that thinking it may influence health during childhood and adolescence, as well as throughout life. The potential relationships between

physical activity in childhood and adolescence and adult activity assumes health during adulthood (4) (Malina, 2001). Adult women has accomplish significant health advantage during age 18-64 years, when they must engage physical activity at least either (75) minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic or (150) minutes of moderate physical activity in a week or performed together of both with aerobic activity in (10) minutes episodes spread throughout the week (1) (Gichuki, 2015). Asian American adults report low level of lifestyle physical activity than of the total U.S. population according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Also, recent studies showed low participation rate of midlife Asian American women in physical activity. Many diseases reported that higher prevalence rates than those of White midlife women (5) (IM, et al., 2014). The main reason for studying women in current research, is rare sharing women in physical activity than men in our country. Thus, the same reasons for low physical activity level of Asian American midlife women is the most physical activity promotion programs are rarely culturally appropriate. Several cross-cultural studies of midlife women's physical activity indicated clear ethnic differences in attitudes toward and actual participation in physical activity(5) (IM, et al., 2014). Sport traditionally has been a domain of male achievement, and gender differences in sport participation have been the subject of research since the 1970s. However, despite the passage of several decades of heightened awareness of gender inequalities, girls take part in fewer sports than do boys. Explanations for the gender gap in participation are based on the strong link between sports behavior and masculinity(6) (Arabci, 2009). Physical capacity and work ability decline with age (30-60) years because of biological and environmental factors. Moreover, lifestyle factors may affect the decline of physical capacity in women is slightly lower than in men especially during the transitional ages of menopause because this period may affect quality of life and also the ability to cope with increasing work demands. Better physical capacity may increase work ability and help people to cope with physical strain. Among women an increase in physical exercise is known to have beneficial effects on overall health also alleviate menopause-related symptoms, and result in improved work ability(7) (Rutanen, et al., 2014).

2-Methodology

Study Design: the descriptive, cross-sectional study design was performed from the 5th November 2018 to 15th March 2019. The main objective of this study is to identify Attitudes of Employee Women toward physical fitness and to find out the relationship between women's attitudes and their socioeconomic status.

Setting of the study:

The study was conducted in faculties at University of Kufa.

Sample of the study:

A non-probability sampling technique, purposive sample. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on specific characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best assist researcher to answer the questions of research. That include (140) employee women was selected from faculties at University of Kufa according to following criteria:

- 1- Select an employee women in Faculties at University of Kufa.
- 2- They agree to participate in study.
- 3- Women with diploma, bachelor's degree and postgraduate studies.

Instrument of the Study: By reviewing related literatures and studies the questionnaire was prepared depending on (8) (PAPPOUS, et al.,2006) it was included three main parts (part I designed to collect sociodemographic data of participants, it includes their age, BMI, marital status, level of education and chronic diseases. Part II\ first which included women's orientations regarding the specific sport, the second sub-divided was participation in physical activities (per week) it rated (1- Never to 4- Always). To assess women's attitudes toward physical fitness the part III was contain (14) items consisted of four subscales that included (4 items to reflect tension release, 4 items to health promotion, 3 vigorous exercise and 3 items supposed to social benefits). Answers of participations were ranked into to 5 point Likert scale, which rated from (1- strongly

disagree to 5- strongly agree). All but one item were positively phrased; in the case of the one item that was negatively phrased, the SPSS software used in the statistical analyses converted the negatively worded questions to positive scores.

The validity of study:

Validity, The ability of collect the necessary data through questionnaire.

Pilot study:

Current pilot study was objective to obtain evidence about reliability of questionnaire, recognized ability of applied instrument and estimate the required time to collect data. By taking sample of fourteen respondents from various faculties within one week.

Reliability:

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test was used to definite the reliability of the study questionnaire. The value of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test which was (0.81) for attitude scale. The result showed the acceptable reliability to begin data collection.

Data Collection:

Participation and agreement in this study was voluntary obtained from each participant after clarified the subject of study and its objectives besides , the instructions on the way of how filled questionnaire with kept confidentiality of participants secret. Collection data were throughout period from 25th December 2018 to 20th January 2019. Total sample was collected and usable for statistical analysis were (140) questionnaire.

Statistical analysis:

Data of the (140) participant's women were entered and analyzed by means of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Percentages, means, frequencies and standard deviation were the obtained descriptive statistics. The attitude questionnaire used the 5 points Likert's scale

model, however, the scoring system is not much different than the 3 points scales but the higher scores given to the more positive attitude and the lower score given to the least negative attitude, with a score ranged 1 – 5. then the responses of participants assessed according to these scores and given a suitable score, however, uncertain or undecided response was considered the midpoint of this scoring system and given a score of 3 which is equal to the mean of scores (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), (15/5). As in this scale two responses below 3 (negative attitude) and two responses above (positive attitude), therefore, the cutoff point of 3 was used to differentiate between the positive and negative attitude of participants, and the according to mean score for each item or domain or the overall attitude score, participants categorized:

Positive Attitude: mean score ≥ 3

Negative Attitude: mean score < 3

All variables scores were tested for normal distribution and statistically analyzed using the standard statistical tests for parametric variables and managed as scale variables. while the categories of the scores were managed as nominal or ordinal variables, accordingly.

3. Results

That demonstrates the findings of analyzing data through statistical package for social science (SPSS), the study was achieved (140) employee women with age ranging (22-55) years.

Table 3.1. Attitudes of Employee Women toward physical fitness (n=140)

Items		Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Physical activity releases the tension of the individual participant.	4.24	0.69
2.	Exercise helps to work off emotional tensions and anxieties.	4.21	0.69
3.	Physical activity in some form is an excellent remedy for the tense, irritable, and anxious person.	4.17	0.63
4.	Developing one's physical skills leads to mental relaxation and relief from tension.	4.11	0.69
5.	Physical exercise is important in helping a person gain and maintain all around health.	4.43	0.61

6.	Physical exercise is beneficial to the human body.	4.70	0.50
7.	Physical exercise, undertaken with common sense and good judgment, is essential to good health.	4.16	0.77
8.	Regular physical activity makes one feel better.	4.36	0.68
9.	Regular vigorous exercise is necessary for good health.	4.44	0.66
10.	Vigorous exercise is necessary to maintain one's general health.	4.38	0.68
11.	Vigorous exercise is not necessary to maintain one's general health.	3.16	1.50
12.	Exercising with other people in the same age range is socially beneficial.	3.89	0.79
13.	Associating with others in some physical activity is fun.	4.26	0.80
14.	Participation in physical recreation is a satisfying and enriching use of leisure time.	4.14	0.76
Overall		4.1906	0.40

Table (3.1) shows women's responses regarding different questions on attitudes toward physical fitness for each question. That revealed majority of them have positive attitudes.

Table 3.2 Frequency distribution of items and overall attitude toward physical exercise of participant women (N=140)

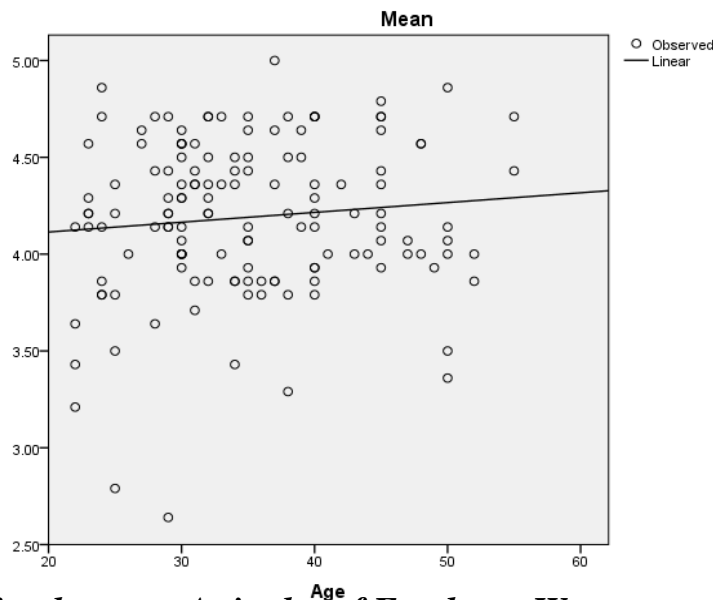
Attitude toward	Positive		Negative		Mean score	Evaluation
	No.	%	No.	%		
Tension release	138	98.5	2	1.43	4.18	Positive
Health promotion	138	98.5	2	1.43	4.41	Positive
Vigorous exercise	137	97.8	3	2.14	4.00	Positive
Social benefits	136	97.1	4	2.86	4.10	Positive

This table summarize the number and percentage of attitude toward physical exercise, that showed the majority (98.5%) of responses were positive toward tension release and health promotion, also that revealed (97.8%) positive attitude about vigorous exercise. Moreover, majority (97.1%) of response was positive about social benefits of physical exercise.

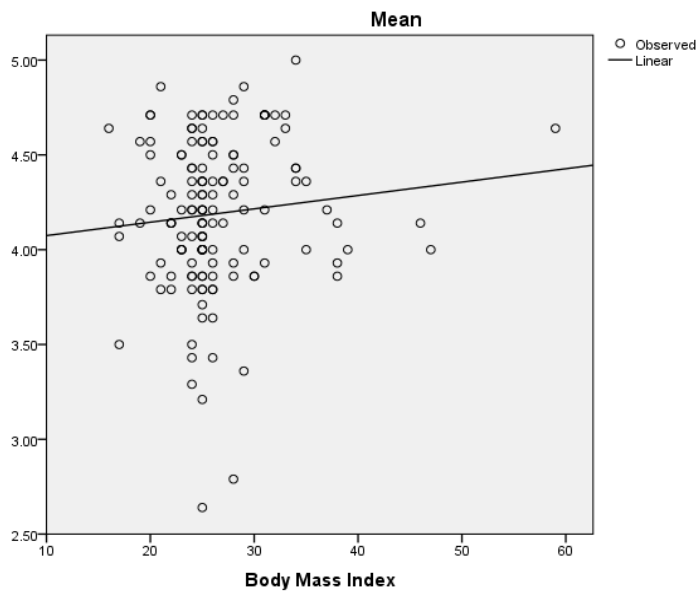
Table 3.3. Correlation between Attitudes of Employee Women toward physical fitness and their age and BMI (n=140)

	Pearson Correlation	P-value
Age	0.103	0.226
BMI	0.100	0.241

this table (3.3) shows no correlation between attitudes of employee women toward physical fitness and their age and BMI.



Figure(1): Correlation between Attitudes of Employee Women toward physical fitness and their age.



Figure(2): Correlation between Attitudes of Employee Women toward physical fitness and their BMI.

Table 3.4. Socio-demographic characteristics of employee women (n=140)

items	Sub-items	No.	MS	SD	P-value
Marital status	Married	96	4.26	0.38	0.002
	Unmarried	44	4.03	0.41	
Level of Education	Institute\College	119	4.16	0.40	0.06
	Post graduate	20	4.34	0.36	
Chronic disease	Yes	35	4.20	0.43	0.85
	NO	105	4.18	0.39	
orientations regarding the specific sport					
Running/walking	Yes	105	4.22	0.36	0.136
	NO	35	4.08	0.50	
Fitness drills/aerobics	Yes	68	4.17	0.40	0.661
	NO	72	4.20	0.40	
Other sports	Yes	30	4.22	0.43	0.658
	NO	110	4.18	0.39	

The current table demonstrates the majority of women (96) were married, (119) of them were complete Institute or College. Furthermore, (105) of participants have not any chronic diseases. According to their response about orientations regarding Running or walking sport, (105) of them have oriented toward it, (72) have no oriented toward Fitness drills/aerobics sport. Furthermore, (110) of them not oriented about other sports. When P-value <0.05 that show significant association, while P-value >0.05 that show non-significant association. Therefore, just marital status show significant association with their attitude.

Table 3.5. Participation in Physical Activities (per week)

Activities	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Always	8	4.41	0.69	0.195
Sometimes	36	4.09	0.33	
Rarely	40	4.18	0.41	
Never	56	4.22	0.37	
Total	140	4.19	0.40	

This table (3.5) portrays that employee response to their participation in physical activity, majority (56) of them never participate in any physical activity per week.

4. Discussion:

Attitude is an important concept affecting human behaviors. It is an emotional and intellectual state of readiness having directive and influential power on humans' behaviors towards all relevant states and objects occurring as a result of life and experiences. In general, attitudes affect the senses, thoughts, and behaviors of individuals. According this research, indicated that the attitudes of employee women towards physical fitness are generally positive and high. Table 3.1. and table 3.2. showed responses regarding different questions on attitudes toward physical fitness for each question. That demonstrate majority of women have knowledge, positive attitudes and desire toward physical activity and its importance for good health and weight loss, but many barrier reasons prevent them to practice activity such as culture, gender and work time. However, this was consistent in part, with the study of Patricia, that found participation people had positive attitude towards physical exercise. This finding agreement with current study (9) (Patricia, and Rui, 2014). Regarding correlation between attitudes of employee women toward physical fitness

and their age and BMI. Table 3.3. shows no correlation, that explain the physical activity is necessary for all age group. Moreover, it very important among adult and old age especially for women. With respect to socio-demographic characteristics of employee women, table 3.4. demonstrates the majority of women were married, they complete Institute or College. According to their response about orientations regarding Running or walking sport, the majority of them have oriented toward it, (72) have no oriented toward Fitness drills/aerobics sport. Furthermore, (110) of them not oriented about other sports. Additionally, marital status shows significant association with their attitude. Participation in Physical Activities (per week) table 3.5 portrays that employee response to their participation in physical activity, majority of them (never) participate in any physical activity per week. This result clarify limitation toward participate to physical activity. This result of present study is in agreement with other study done among women from former Yugoslavia had decreased their level of physical activity after the move to Sweden. They had found it difficulties to find appropriate and realistic physical activities. Still, they desired to be more physically active. Further hindrances to physical activity and a healthy lifestyle were the harsh winter climate and lack of accessibility to indoor facilities (10) (Sandström, *et al* ,2015). On the other hand, The women mentioned in study carried out by IM,2014 that their parents treated them differently than their male siblings. They felt that girls were not encouraged to participate in physical activity (5) (IM, *et al*, 2014). In contrary of current results, study done by Patricia that found (always) response exceed (never) toward participant in physical activity (9)(Patricia, and Rui, 2014).

5. Conclusion:

The conclusion of the current study showed participants generally expressed positive attitudes toward physical fitness. According to association that showed just marital status has significant association with attitude of employee women.

6. Recommendation:

- 1- maintain the attitude of the employee women toward physical fitness by improve the knowledge related to fitness.
- 2-Encourage employee women to participate in physical fitness program
- 3- Develop workshop about importance of physical activity and its benefits for women.

7. References:

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