

Quality Of Life through Physical Activities

Jagpreet Kaur

Assistant Professor Teaching of Hindi Surjit Memorial College of Education, Malwal, Ferozepur India

Abstract

Serbanoiu and Tudor stated that physical education is an education through movement. "Physical education is seen as a way of improvement the condition of a nation becoming more able to express, to explore and develop in a balanced relationship with the environment in which he lives. Physical education is addressed simultaneously to body, psychic because the person moves, thinks, feels, expresses etc. (Şerbănoiu and Tudor, 2007). Zamfir and Vlăsceanu consider that quality of life can be analysed interms of the ways in which we can realize its improvement: better objective living conditions, perfecting life styles. (Zamfir and Vlăsceanu, 1998). Physical activity professionals and participants recognize enhanced quality of life as a benefit of and motivator for physical activity. However, Quality of life measures are often problematic and rarely consider the participant's perspective. This paper focuses on recent findings from a larger project on the role of quality of life in physical activity and health promotion. More specifically, we focus on the views of participants and potential participants to better understand the relationship of physical activity and quality of life. In earlier stages of the project we began with a conceptual model of quality of life and developed a survey.

KEYWORDS: quality of life, physical education and sports, aerobics classes, health, self image.

1. Paper rationale

This paper rationale is to inform people about the benefits of spending time outdoors by practicing physical exercise and encourage them to have a quality life.

This research aims to study the quality of life in an original manner by establishing the correlation between physical exercise and strategies used in educational counselling.

The specialist in physical education and leisure activities can influence the quality of life of the participants at this type of exercise through: information on the risks posed by sedentary life, active listening on the difficulties faced by people who practice physical exercise, presenting the risks of unhealthy behaviours (tobacco use, consumption of fast-food, sleep deprivation), encourage the participants to practice physical exercise etc.

Şerbănoiu and Tudor emphasize the importance of physical education and sports and mentioning at the same time the consequences of the lack of physical activity. Thus, physical activity is a "direct stimulus of them orphofunctional development, its absence could lead to adaptations of involutive type such as appearance of deficitary postures, anxiety or depressive states and the increase of stress levels with major implications on individual health.

2. Paper theoretical foundation and related literature

Quality of life is a multidimensional and multidisciplinary concept which has a variety of meanings. Quality of life is considered by specialists as being "the necessary condition for happiness" (McCall, 1975), "a subjective satisfaction"

(Terhune, 1973), "an adaptive potential" (Colby, 1987) and "importance given to life" (Jolles and Stalpers, 1978 cit.in Delle Fave, 2013).

Physical education and sports contributes to quality of life influencing emotional state, peer relationships, material wealth (employees are more relaxed, have a good physical and mental tone are more productive), independence and social integration.

According to the law of physical education and sports, published in 1999, "physical education means all forms of physical activity aimed, through organized participation or self-expressing or improving physical fitness and spiritual comfort, to establish social relationships civilized and lead to obtaining results in competition at all levels. The practice of physical education and sports is a right of the person, without discrimination as guaranteed by the state, and the administrative, educational and sports institutions have an obligation to support physical education, sports for all and sports performance, and to ensure conditions of their practice." (Law of Physical education and sports, art1(2)).

Lupu identifies the dimensions of quality of life: emotional or mental well-being, interpersonal relationships, material wealth, personal affirmation, physical well-being, independence, social integration, ensuring fundamental human rights. (Lupu, 2006)

On the other hand, Veenhoven distinguishes four qualities of life referring to life chances and life results. He includes in life chances: liveability of environment as an outer quality and life-ability as an inner quality, the inner capacities of the persons to exploit the chances offered by environment. Regarding to life results, he differentiates utility of life as an outer quality and appreciation of life as an inner quality. Veenhoven clarifies that not everyone who is useful is happy and vice versa. (Veenhoven, 2000)

Through physical exercise participants not only improve their physical condition but also, stress levels, self-esteem, personal life management, productivity at work and therefore the quality of life. Kretchmar lists the many benefits of practicing physical exercises as follows (Kretchmar 1994, cit.in Şerbănoiu and Tudor, 1997):

- physical education contributes to the transmission of knowledge (information) about the human body, exercise, hygiene, biomechanics movement, sports branches regulations etc.;
- fitness (fitness and motor skills) is an important vector that influences physical education. As a prerequisite to health, developing muscle strength, endurance, mobility, coordination, etc., it contributes to improving the quality of life;
- driving skills acquired in large number increase the possibilities of motion testing new driving sensations, enrich the universe of knowledge, which promotes the expression of personality;
- physical education involves a significant emotional content, meaning that generates satisfaction and joy, releases stress and creates a sense of individual freedom.

According to Heart American Association, moderate exercise practiced for at least 30 minutes per day has proven many benefits for our health:

- improves blood circulation, which reduces the risk of heart disease;
- keeps weight under control;
- helps in the battle to quit smoking;
- improves blood cholesterol levels;
- prevents and manages high blood pressure;

- prevents bone loss;
- boosts energy level;
- helps manage stress;
- releases tension;
- promotes enthusiasm and optimism;
- counters anxiety and depression;
- helps people to fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly;
- improves self-image;
- increases muscle strength, increasing the ability to do other physical activities;
- provides a way to share an activity with family and friends;
- reduces coronary heart disease in women by 30-40 percent;
- reduces risk of stroke by 20% in moderately active people and by 27% in highly active ones;
- establishes good heart-healthy habits for children and counters the factors (obesity, high blood pressure, poor cholesterol levels, poor lifestyle habits, etc.) that lead to heart attack and stroke later in life;
- helps people delay or prevent chronic illnesses and diseases associated with aging and maintains quality of life and independence longer for seniors. (American Heart Association, 2014)

3. Methodology

This research is conducted based on a questionnaire targeting quality issues carrying aerobic classes, assessing collaboration with instructors for leisure activities, the quality of physical activity programs and the extent to which expectations were achieved.

As research methods we used: literature review, questionnaire-based survey, observation, percentage and graphical representation, the method of processing and interpretation of statistical and mathematical data. Processing data was made using statistical analysis software Microsoft Office Excel.

This is a pilot study conducted on a total of 30 subjects participating in aerobics classes. Participants are female aged between 18 and 36 years.

With regard to subscriptions at aerobics classes, the majority of subjects (83.32%) come to aerobics classes over half a year: 10% have made subscriptions since 1-3 months old, 6.66% go to aerobics for 3-6 months, 46.66% participate at aerobics for 6-9 months, 16.66% go for 9-12 months and 20% of participants go to aerobics classes for more than a year.

4. Results

American Heart Association (2014) recommends that walking is the simplest way to start and continue a healthy life. Walking claims no costs, is easy, safe, provides heart health benefits. Regarding our research, we observe that 21 subjects of 30 declare to know about the importance of being active every day, and the benefits of walking briskly at least 30 minutes per day, but they don't have enough time for doing this activity. Most of participants on this study (21 subjects of 30) declare to be unsatisfied about the spare time that they have after a hard day work. So, we are entitled to say that although walking has a lot of benefits, it claims after all one cost: time. So, we can say that an effective time management can help subjects to perform physical activities outdoor too and be more satisfied with their lives.

Most of participants in the study, (23 of 30) state that during aerobic classes get heavily recommendations from their instructor on how to properly execute the

physical exercises (76.66% of subjects) and receive recommendations on ways to relax (40% of subjects).

Instead, practitioners consider they receive from specialists in physical education and leisure activities as small extent of recommendations about healthy nutrition (73.33% of participants), encouragements (12 of 30 participants, meaning 40% of subjects) and attention (2 of 30 subjects, meaning 6.66% of respondents).

Analyzing the benefits of participating in aerobics programs, found that:

- 25 of 30 participants (83.33%) declare to be less stressed in daily life since coming to aerobics classes;
- 19 of 30 subjects (63.33%) feel more cheerful, more enthusiastic;
- 14 of 30 respondents (46.66%) have noticed they lost weight;
- 13 of 30 (43.33%) have a better opinion of themselves;
- 5 of 30 participants (16.66%) gave up eating fast food products;
- Almost all participants at the study, 28 of 30, meaning 93.33% of the subjects were pleased to find out they sleep better;
- 21 of 30 respondents (70%) have made new friends that have met at the sports centre;

Of the 30 participants in the study, 8 (26.66%) say are smokers. None of the participants quit smoking, but they say that since they come to the gym consume less tobacco;

The main reasons why they come to the gym are: to keep weight under control 13 of them (43.33%), to release tension (8 subjects - 26.66%), to socialize (5 - 16.66%) and to improve health (4 participants meaning 13.33%).

Surprisingly a large percentage of respondents (76.66%) stated that any person working in the fitness centre has asked the reasons why clients have purchased subscriptions to aerobics classes and what their objectives are by participating in these activities.

5. Discussions

We observe a high interest from specialists in physical education and leisure activities to help participants to properly perform physical exercises and also an interest from specialists to help participants relax and body recover after doing physical exercise.

Notable is also the fact that most of participants were not asked about the reasons why they purchased the subscriptions. People need to feel understood, to have attention. When they come to fitness centres and purchase subscriptions is obviously they want to change something in their life, even if they come to gain more confidence in themselves, to release tension, to lose weight or just to socialize they need to know that the ones from the fitness centre care about them. Establishing and identifying targets can help both practitioners and instructors achieve the goals that they have.

Regarding the attention that exercise and leisure activities practitioners receive from the instructor, most participants in this study (16 subjects - 53.33%) declare to be satisfied. Noteworthy is the percentage of those who would like to receive more attention and support in achieving the objectives set out in aerobics classes (8 participants - 26.66%).

All participants from this study noticed the benefits of practicing physical exercise. Most of them were pleased to find out their life has changed both physically and mentally: they lost weight, they have a better opinion of themselves, they sleep better, they have new friends whom they met at gym, they feel more cheerful, more

enthusiastic, more confident in themselves. Some of participants also gave up eating fast food products.

6. Conclusions

Customers go to the gym to practice physical exercises. For this they need a specialist who is either instructor of physical activity, fitness instructor or personal trainer. Practicing exercise, participants improve their quality of life. Specialists in physical activities appeal to a variety of training methods: verbal, intuitive and practical methods. In addition to the training methods they can use the methods and knowledge of customers, in terms of motor, somatic, functional, psychological. Also, they can use the methods and means of assessment.

Participants who are informed of the risks involved in behaviours such as tobacco use, consumption of fast food on health will be more motivated to practice leisure time physical activities.

We believe that is important to identify the targets of the participants because can help instructors to achieve better results with them and can facilitate communication and motivation of participants.

Physical activity helps maintain physical and mental health. Benefits of physical education are not restricted to those who practice them. They have an impact on society, lower costs for health, better social integration, lower levels of stress (knowing that practicing physical activity stimulates the release of endorphins, also known as happy hormones, so people who practice physical education and sports are happier, are more sociable, friendlier) and higher productivity at work.

We recommend that specialists in physical education and leisure motor activities operating in fitness centres to focus more on tips about healthy nutrition and on the motivational side of participants so that practitioners of physical exercise feel encouraged in their quest to improve their physical condition, mental condition, self image and therefore to help them improve the quality of life.

It is clear that physical activity has so many benefits, so it is fundamental to promote physical education and sports, this giving source of enthusiasm, optimism and health.

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