ABSTRACT

Examined whether people who post about physical activity on social media differed in their self-presentational efficacy (confidence to present themselves in a positive fashion) when compared to those who do not post.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants consisted of a convenience sample of 113 undergraduate kinesiology students at California State University, Fullerton.

- Age: Ranged from 19-39 (M = 22.14, SD = 3.04)
- Gender: 62 males (54.9%) and 44 females (38.9%)
- Ethnic breakdown: 36 Hispanic (31.9%), 30 Asian (26.5%), 27 Caucasian/White (23.9%), 6 Pacific Islander (5.3%), 1 African American (0.9%), 1 Native American (0.9%), 1 Middle Eastern (0.9%), and 3 who identified as Other (2.7%)

METHODS

Procedure:
- In Fall 2016, students completed a cross-sectional questionnaire in their introduction to statistics class

Measures:
- Self-Presentation was measured using self-presentational efficacy scale (15 items; Gammage, Hall, & Gins, 2004). This scale asked about perceptions with regards to specific outcomes such as 'being in good shape' and 'looking fit and toned'
  - SPE: Confidence that other people will think...your body looks fit and toned
  - 0 (not at all) to 100% (completely confident) - Cronbach alpha = 0.94
  - SPOE: By exercising regularly, other people will think that my body is fit and toned
  - 1 (agree) to 5 (not agree) - Cronbach alpha = 0.93
  - SPOV: I place a lot of value on having a body that looks physically fit.
  - 1 (agree) to 5 (not agree) - Cronbach alpha = 0.92

RESULTS

No significant differences were found between those who post about PA and those who do not based on SPOE (t(62.99)=0.375, p=0.709, d=0.83) or SPOV (t(103)=1.490, p=0.139, d=1.83).  

DISCUSSION

• Participants who posted about PA on SM had higher levels of SPE than those who did not post about their PA on SM
• Those who share might be more confident to present themselves well or those who are confident may be more likely to share
• As this was a cross-sectional survey directionality cannot be established
• Reasons for posting on SM have been to gain recognition (Pinkerton et al., 2017) so it might be speculated that more confident people may expect gaining recognition through their interactions on SM

Limitations:
• Due to using a convenience sample, there is a small sample size and all the participants in the study were kinesiology students. Therefore, it does not serve as a representative sample and has low external validity

Future Directions:
• Continue to explore the underlying factors behind why people choose to post about PA on SM to better understand the publics’ motivation to post and how it relates to their motivation to participate in PA
• Examine how one portrays oneself on SM surrounding PA relates to participation in physical activity