The Relationship Between Psychological Climate and Social Physique Anxiety and Self-Presentational Efficacy

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Introduction
- Group exercise classes have been identified as settings where body-related concerns might be present (Martin & Fox, 2001)
  - Social physique anxiety (SPA): perceptions of negative evaluation of one’s physique (Hart et al., 1989)
  - Self-presentational efficacy (SPE): confidence to present oneself to others (Leary & Atherton, 1986).
- In exercise settings, SPA and SPE have shown to be associated with aspects of the group, such as group support (Martin & Fox, 2001) and social interactions (Carron & Prapavessis, 1997).
- As SPA and SPE may be related to feelings of safety and comfort in the group setting, one might speculate that psychological climate (PC; Brown & Leigh, 1996; Spink et al., 2013) would be related to the experience of body-related concerns.
  - Psychological climate is described below

Purpose
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between PC and both SPA and SPE.

Psychological Climate

Psychological Safety
- Supportive Management: The expectations and flexibility of the leader perceived by an individual
  - "My leader gives me the authority to participate as I see fit." (4-items)
- Role Clarity: Individuals perceive clarity in their roles regarding expectations and the consistent predictability of task norms
  - "I feel very useful in my role in the class." (3-items)
- Self-Expression: Freedom that individuals feel they have in expressing themselves in the group
  - "I feel free to be completely myself around the class." (2-items)

Psychological Meaningfulness
- Contribution: Perception that one’s contribution to the task is meaningful
  - "My contribution is very valuable to the class." (3-items)
- Challenge: Whether individuals feel that their required task within the group is challenging
  - "It takes all my resources for me to succeed in this class." (2-items)

Results

SPA
- Challenge*: \( \beta=0.07, p<.01 \)
- Contribution*: \( \beta=0.02, p=.70 \)
- Role Clarity: \( \beta=0.16, p=.001 \)
- Supportive Management: \( \beta=0.09, p=.17 \)

\( F(5,389)=13.66, p<.001; R^2 = .149 \)

SPE
- Challenge*: \( \beta=0.07, p=.03 \)
- Contribution*: \( \beta=0.23, p<.001 \)
- Role Clarity: \( \beta=0.14, p<.001 \)
- Self-Expression: \( \beta=0.39, p<.001 \)
- Supportive Management: \( \beta=0.01, p=.91 \)

\( F(5,388)=12.77, p<.001; R^2 = .141 \)

Discussion
- Both psychological safety and meaningfulness emerged as predictors of SPA and SPE
  - Previous research relating PC to effort only had psychological safety (expressive role and role clarity) emerge (Hamamoto et al., 2015)
  - Challenge was associated with higher SPA and lower SPE
    - Perhaps perceiving challenge may have affected individuals’ perceptions about presenting themselves in a positive manner (i.e., as fit) and/or lead to increased worry about negative evaluations (Leary, 1992)
  - Contribution was positively related to SPE
    - The frequency of the class (2x per week for 16 weeks) may make it more meaningful for participants and their contributions more salient (Gammage et al., 2004)
  - Self-expression was negatively related to SPA
    - Individuals who do not feel comfortable sharing their feelings may also have concerns about negative evaluation from others (Spink, 1992)
  - Role clarity was negatively related to SPE
    - It might be speculated when individuals know their roles and expectations for those roles are clear, they may feel more self-presentational pressures (Leary, 1992; McKnight et al, 1991)

Strengths
- Large sample (n=394) that was ethnically diverse
- Samples were collected from a variety of group activity courses: Resistance Training, Aerobic Fitness, Physical Conditioning, and Cardio Kickboxing

Limitations
- Limited ability to generalize due to the recruitment of only registered students in university activity classes
  - Classes for university credit may be different than drop in classes or classes offered through fitness centers
- Hierarchical nature of the data (participants nested within classes) not considered
- Cross sectional study limits ability for causal statements