

## **THAI FEMALES AT THE GYM: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF THAI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper looks closely at the perceptions and attitudes of gym members at a local fitness centers in relation to looks and performance. Some women wear clothes that enhance their performance while others want to gain attention, both desires have been shown to engage and motivate others. Businesses in the fitness field can see that WHO is in the gym is important in terms of membership and sales. Essentially having “appealing” women in the gym does motivate others to come into the gym and motivates them to exercise.

### **Keywords:**

- 1) **Confidence:** A feeling that provides self-assurance that can yield positive behavior.
- 2) **Appealing:** A positive attribute in relation to body type and presentation.
- 3) **Motivation:** The driving force or reason to do something, in this case, exercise.

### **1. Introduction**

Many people would like to have a good body type, especially women who strive to be confident, beautiful and fit. Nowadays women show more interest about fitness, and many go to workout. The problem that we want to explore is “how clothing and makeup influence the experience of a female at fitness clubs” when women go to the gym, how men and women perceive them according to makeup and attire. This study focuses on motivation, nonverbal communication, and perceptions of people in the fitness arena. Many women in Thailand interested about exercise so, they go to the gym. In this study we would like to know how clothing and makeup influence the experience of a female at fitness clubs. This study will be useful for everyone who are exercising in fitness and also it relates to nonverbal communication that you can apply to use in daily life. Fitness is always a popular activity that requires a great deal of social interaction and for many women, confidence. This confidence can come out in different ways, and one such way is seen in what women wear and how they present themselves at the gym.

#### **Scope of the Study**

This study looked closely at the perceptions of women at the gym, in accordance with their attire and makeup choices. Interview questions shed light on how men feel about “appealing” women in the gym, how women feel about themselves, and how they feel about their same sex counterparts when they dress a certain way. Gyms are a unique environment, and the way people look certainly affects that atmosphere. This study followed an interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm was designed to help guide some qualitative research in that there are subjective notions and perceptions that need to be interpreted.

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## 2. Literature Review

### Makeup

Most females would like to have a good image. Makeup is a first thought that comes to our mind when we talk about beauty and this is very true because it can make you more beautiful, it can change your look also, it can be a first impression and this is the way for people come to you. Definitely, females have to put on makeup even they go to do something, activities or fitness clubs because it is self-confidence. According to Koriche, (2008) makeup acts and stimulates three of our senses: touch (which encompasses all sensations from the body surface), smell (fragrance), and sight (the process of becoming and looking beautiful) that is the positive stimulation of these senses by makeup can induce sensory as well as psychological pleasure. Koriche (2008) posited “The positive stimulation of these senses by makeup can induce sensory as well as psychological pleasure (p. 127). Furthermore this scholar suggested that some positive influences of cosmetics on the well-being and self esteem that result in positive emotional states have been reported. For example, emotions with a positive valence (e.g., induced by a pleasant odor or colorful cosmetics) induce a decrease in heart rate, whereas negative valence stimuli induce opposite effects (p. 127). Afbale (2002) beauty is often perceived as one of the most pleasant aspects of life. Its influence also is almost inevitable (p. 1). Koriche, (2008) the made-up face is considered as more valuable than the natural face and tends to supports the self-image, thus restricting variability in the makeup structure (p. 135). Therefore, makeup application can be considered as a daily routine to decrease negative effects and/or increase positive effects related to self-image and one's relation to the social environment (p. 136).

### Clothing

Clothing has become a very important piece of identity for many people, particularly in a gym. According to Crane (2000) Clothing, as one of the most visible forms of consumption, performs a major role in the social construction of identity (p. 1). Tiggerman and Andrew (2012) conducted a study was successful in furthering investigation into the role of clothing in women's body experience. Women make clothing choices every single day of their lives, and thus clothing choice represents an important appearance-management behaviour, but one which has been relatively neglected in the research literature. The obtained correlations with aspects of body image suggest that the choice of clothing is neither incidental nor “frivolous, trivial, and inconsequential” Nevertheless, as a set, the findings suggest that self-objectification is indeed relevant to the new domain of women's selection of clothing (p. 411). Hendrickson added in a study about attire that a “Man look at women and this is the visual organizing principle in oil painting, magazine advertising, and motion pictures”(1996, p. 4). Abbey (1987) clothing effect would be particularly strong for male raters because clothing seemed like a cue that males would attend to closely (p. 110). Kristina (2008) suggested that women prefer clothing that is more revealing and appealing near the onset of ovulation, particularly in mating-relevant contexts.

Regardless of the underlying motivations involved, changes in women's clothing choices are notable, as they provide readily observable cues of ovulation that even complete strangers can observe (p. 1459). Newhall (2013) Also, the level of social activity tends to be different than in either a domestic/private space and a work or public space. There is less intimate than in the home but greater intimacy, I argue than in the workplace where often a certain level of decorum and level of familiarity is acceptable (p. 51). However, clothing is very important in everyday life and influence to communication.

### **Body type**

For many females, a good shape is very important and influence for many people that they require to have good shape for healthy, good looking and more confident.

There is a preoccupation in the media with images of beautiful bodies, the stars, celebrities and models who exemplify the good life (p. 198). Lindsey (2014) Weight-loss and body shaping messages account for almost one-fifth of all the editorial content in women's fitness and health magazines, where the emphasis of this content is placed on appearance rather than on health, and exercise rather than healthy diet (p. 4). Lindsey (2014) bodies not being represented in the pages of magazines that purport to display health and fitness in women (p. 14).

According to Newhall (2013) Definitions of physical fitness and their manifestations in human form and human function continue to change, but the dominant version of fit is always on display (p. 3). Newhall (2013) There is a connection between the types of bodies built through fitness practices and the spaces in which this is accomplished that is more salient for women than for men because of the narrow construction of the ideal female body (p. 2-3). Newhall (2013) explored these dynamics in the context of the space in which they are occurring. Newhall also discussed the recent fitness industry trend, "total body," which has resulted in classes that incorporate strength training into aerobic workouts and also stated that "Every space, regardless of where it is placed on the public/private spectrum, is not nearly as homogenous as it may be perceived initially" (p. 48). Also, body type influence for communication. For example, you are beautiful, many guys want to know you and talk to you and this is true because body type is one of attractive and beautiful.

### **Communication**

Body language is a type of nonverbal communications in which physical behavior or image communicates a message that we use for communicate by we didn't talk, we use our body movement as in the fitness clubs trainers use many body language to teach about how to exercise. According to Agneta (2000) Because of the kinds of ambiguities discussed at the outset of this chapter, and because gender is obviously not under experimental control, it is extremely difficult to know what explains the gender difference in smiling (or any their nonverbal behavior), and in particular, whether the difference is related to emotion (p. 100). Agneta (2000) In summary, our model suggests a rich variety of possible influences on women's smiling. Perhaps the most important contribution of this model is the feedback arrows that suggest there are many routes through which women's positive affect may be related to their smiling (p. 104). All of these aforementioned factors can influence a variety of perceptions, and this study attempted to dig deep into how these perceptions affect the gym.

## **3. Methods**

We used purposeful random snowball sampling and get 12 interviewees. Each participant are at least 20 years old, and all genders are included. The venues are located at and around Naresuan university because we were interested in the attitudes and perceptions of my peers. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews that were open-ended so that participants could provide depth and clarity in the responses.

Interviews were the only necessary instrument, and all participants have pseudonyms to protect identities. Snowball sampling eliminated any fear of bias, and this study was approved by the NU IRB committee. Each interview lasted between 12-16 minutes, and all participants were voluntary and over the age of 20.

## 4. Results

The data was analyzed and reported in order of research question. Each research question has a specific purpose and the eight structured interview questions answered the questions. From interview I got the answer of my research question in 2 different group that is male and female. Some follow-up questions emerged in response to a response and those data were included.

### **Research Question 1.**

*What is the perception of females at the gym who wear revealing clothing?*

For male perception, 90% of males admitted to looking at, and being motivated in some way at the gym when “sexy” or appealing girls were there. As for female perception, 80% of women do not wear revealing clothing while 20% like to wear revealing clothes but, they have a same opinion that think about if they wear revealing clothing. They will feel comfortable to wear revealing clothing and they think it easy to move or workout, also they can see their body movement and muscle to motivate them. Basically, if they have the confidence to wear something revealing or appealing, they want to do so because it motivates them and they are proud of their shape.

### **Research Question 2.**

*What nonverbal message is being sent by women at the gym who wear makeup and clothing not necessary for a workout?*

Only 10% of men do not like it when women wear revealing clothing at the gym because it is a distraction. 80% of females that don't wear revealing cloth they think the message that sent by women at the gym who wear makeup and clothing not necessary for a workout. Only 10% that like to wear revealing clothing Woman 1 said “I like to wear appealing clothing because I can see my body when I workout.”

About makeup, all the man think women should not wearing makeup to the gym because when you workout it will remove by their sweat as Man 1 said “ It's weird that wearing makeup to exercise and then sweating.”

All of women that I interviewed 100% have same opinion, it's a personal rights and it's about social, they want to look good when they meet friends at a gym so, make them more confidence. Also, it's normal for women and it's an almost behavior of women as Woman 1 said “I want to look good when I see the other people, it's my personal thing and I don't think it going to affect the others.”

### **Research Question 3.**

*How does appearance and demeanor affect the environment of the gym?*

Most of the participants explained in some way or another that their gym experience is in fact influenced in some way by “appealing” women at the gym. Females indicated that they may be inspired or motivated when they see a woman who looks fit and confident. Additionally men indicated they when a woman is working out with a fit body and revealing style that they often workout harder, and certainly do like when these females are at the gym. The gym itself, as a business, generates more revenue as a result of these women coming the gym, because more people will follow.

## 5. Discussion

The results of this study also clearly showed that motivation and confidence are two major factors in people, not just appealing girls going to the gym. However, appealing girls at the gym were a catalyst for motivation for others, and, the appealing girls only dress a appealing way because they have confidence. Future work could also investigate these two factors in juxtaposition with fitness and health facilities. Perceptions are always subjective in nature, and this study may open the door to future work in this area.

## 6. Conclusions

### Limitations

In our research we think the weakness is we interviewed only 12 people. I could have interviewed more than 12 people or had a focus group where participants could have had a discussion with each other regarding this topic.

### Conclusion

The goal of this study was to know how clothing and makeup influence the experience of a female at fitness clubs. Attitudes and perception almost certainly affect the workout and time spent at the gym. We expected to learn how people at the gym are affected by women who are wearing revealing clothing or suggestive makeup at the gym.

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