

## **COMPARING SELF-DETERMINATION AND BODY IMAGE BETWEEN EXCESSIVE AND HEALTHY EXERCISERS**

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**Abstract:** The influence of self-determination and body image on exercise behavior was examined using a multi-method approach. A series of validated scales was administered to 218 male and female exercisers to compare the exercise motivation and perceived body image of four groups exhibiting low to high levels of both exercise behavior and commitment. Exercisers identified as having the most “excessive” exercise behaviors (N = 4) were also interviewed. Analyses of quantitative data revealed that “excessive” exercisers displayed higher levels of introjected regulation and of self-determined forms of motivation than “healthy” exercisers. Qualitative findings revealed health/fitness and appearance-related motives, and guilt as a motivating factor for “excessive” exercisers. Quantitative results are discussed according to self-determination theory and past research. Interview findings suggest body image does influence excessive exercise behavior.

**Key words:** Exercise, Motivation, Multi-method, Self-determination theory.

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