

**THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BEHAVIOURAL REGULATIONS IN THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED BODY SIZE DISCREPANCIES AND
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG ADULT WOMEN**

David Markland
Bangor University, UK

Abstract: Research has shown a negative relationship between perceived body size discrepancies and exercise participation among women. This might be explained from a self-determination theory perspective by perceived discrepancies between actual and ideal body size causing individuals to feel less autonomous in the regulation of their exercise behaviour. The aim of this study was to test the mediating role of exercise behavioural regulations in the relationship between body size discrepancies and physical activity participation. Participants were 102 women who completed measures of body size discrepancies, behavioural regulations and physical activity. Analyses showed that a reduction in more autonomous regulations mediated a negative relationship between discrepancies and physical activity. Less autonomous regulations did not play a mediating role. Thus it appears that body size discrepancies exert a negative influence on physical activity by decreasing feelings that exercise is a valued and enjoyable activity rather than by leading people to feel more externally or internally controlled in their behaviour.

Key words: Body image, Exercise, Self-determination.

Address: David Markland, School of Sport, Health & Exercise Sciences, Bangor University, George Building, Holyhead Road, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2PZ, UK. Fax: +44-1248-371053. E-mail: d.a.markland@bangor.ac.uk

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