

YOUTH'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS PHYSICAL FITNESS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO UDUPI DISTRICT

Dr. Umesh Maiya

Associate Professor, Department of Commerce and Management, Dr. G. Shankar Government Women's First Grade College & P.G. Study Centre, Ajjarkadu, Udupi 576101. Email:

umeshmaiya@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present study has been made with a view to explore the youth's perception towards physical fitness, to find out the effect of various aspects of the fitness that are attractive and lead to satisfying or dissatisfying the youths. Physical fitness is a broad term which literally means a hale and healthy physique. The purpose of physical fitness is to create a consciousness and enthusiasm among people and to stimulate these interests for physical welfare which will help them to have a better and more healthful living. Increased physical fitness not only improves health but improves our performance at work. Hence, researcher tried to study the aspects of physical fitness among the youths of Udupi district.

KEYWORDS: Exercise, Diet, Environment, Health, Teenagers perception and adult perception.

INTRODUCTION

In this competitive world, success of any person can depend on his or her hard work, dedication and vision. Physical fitness is one of the important factors in every individual to achieve these milestones. Today youths are focused highly on external factors than their internal aspects. So, it is one of the impacts to stay fit.

Fitness is one of the most important aspects in the field of Physical Health. "Health" is a backbone of every individual to stay focused towards their goal. The need and importance of fitness was developed from the Greek & Roman period, the Dark Age, Renaissance, revival of Olympic World War etc.

Kipling Said "Nations have passed away and left not races and history gives the naked cause of it one single, simple reason in all cases They fell because their people were not fit."

- The word fitness is the ability of the body to meet the demands of the environment.
- Fitness not only years to life but life to one's years.
- Physical fitness is an important part of total fitness.

Basic fitness can be classified in four main components: Strength, speed, stamina and flexibility.

Physical fitness has been associated with psychological benefits in youths by improving their control over symptoms of anxiety and depression.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main research objective is to study the youth's perception towards healthy diet and physical fitness with special reference to Udupi district.

RESEARCH METHEDODOLOGY

Sampling:

The simple random sampling technique was used by the researcher to draw the sample from Udupi district, Karnataka. Single sample is drawn for the study i.e., "youths", sample size is 250. But the respondents were 300 in numbers. Researcher had rejected 50 among them. (due to mismatch for our criteria)

Tools used for study:

This study is descriptive and analytical in nature. It is based on primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected from journals, newspapers, and internet. Primary data was collected by the researcher through questionnaire provided to the youths. Questionnaire consists of 15 questions. For scaling purpose, five-point Likert scale was used for all the que Random sampling method was used stions. For analysis and interpretation, researcher used simple statistical tool like percentage and some of the relevant and interesting data are presented in the tabular form and diagram. (bar chart, pie chart) Chi-square test is used for testing purpose.

HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between exercise and diet.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between exercise and diet.

Hypothesis 2:

H₀: There is no close association between gender and surrounding factor.

H₁: There is a close association between gender and surrounding factor.

Hypothesis 3:

H₀: Youths does not give equal importance to exercise and diet depends on their age.

H₁: Youths give equal importance to exercise and diet depends on their age.

SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

The study is confined to youth's perception towards physical fitness in Udupi district. The physical fitness consists of healthy diet, regular exercise, stamina, flexibility etc.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The findings of this study cannot be generalized with the other parts of the state or countries. Only few factors of the physical fitness are considered. Physical fitness is a vast concept, due to which all the aspects could be covered.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

“Health” is a backbone of every individual to stay focused towards their goal. Due to high influence of external factors on youths, they failed to concentrate on their physical fitness. As this topic is under researched in Udupi district, researcher tried to know the youth’s perception towards physical fitness.

CONCEPTUVAL FRAMEWORK:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defined **physical fitness** as, “the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue, and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and respond to emergencies.”

U.S Department of Health and Human Services (1996) defined **physical fitness** as, “a set of attributes that people have or achieve that relates to the ability to perform physical activity.”

Dr. Luigi Fontana, defines “Diet and exercise are key factors in preventing chronic diseases and delaying aging.”

John F Kennedy, defines “Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity.”

The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAPHER), defined Physical fitness as, “Fitness is that state, which characterizes the degree to which a person is able to function. Fitness is an individual matter. It implies the ability to each person to live most efficiently with his potential. Ability to function depends upon physical, mental, emotional, social & spiritual components of fitness, all of which are related to each other and are naturally interdependent.”

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The study describes that the personal characteristics of the respondent youths that is, age of the youths, gender of the youths in respective city mostly belongs to the age group of 15-29. Female respondents concentrate about Physical Fitness in the city are more than that of male respondents. The objective was to find out the various factor affecting the Physical Fitness of the youths like, exercise, diet, stamina etc.... It is concluded that some of the factor causing dissatisfaction regarding Physical Health, some are neither causing dissatisfaction nor contributing much towards health satisfaction. Factors like exercise, diet, age & gender are contributing towards health satisfaction as dissatisfaction caused by these factors is almost negligible. On the other hand, there are some factors which causes dissatisfaction to the youths includes, stress & tension, psychological factors & health problems etc. This is definitely not a good sign since a large number of youths may be suffering from health & psychological disorders which not only affect Physical Fitness but also reduce their satisfaction towards health.

Factors affecting physical fitness:

- **Regular exercise:** Irregular exercise affects our physical fitness and wellness. To improve our physical fitness, we should perform exercise regularly.
- **Environment:** Polluted environment affects our health. Safe, clean and hygienical environment helps to maintain the stable body condition.
- **Health problems:** Diseases and injury greatly affect the physical fitness and wellness. So, we should follow the obstructive and remedial measure which does not affect the physical fitness.
- **Age & gender:** When we grow slowly it affects the physical fitness. Gender differences improve the physical fitness and wellness.
- **Diet:** We must practice balanced diet to stay fit.
- **Intoxicants:** We should avoid the use of drugs, alcohol, and other intoxicants to stay healthy.
- **Stress & tension:** When we take any type of stress, tension and worries it results in reducing the physical fitness and wellness.
- **Rest & relaxation:** The stress level will increase, when we do not concentrate on these factors. Exercising, relaxing and getting enough rest will help us to do better and enjoy life more.
- **Posture:** Poor posture can cause both physical and mental stress. So good posture can balance both physical fitness and wellness.
- **Psychological factors:** Negative connotation affect physical fitness. So, we have to think and act positive to overcome from these psychological factors.

Table 1: Gender distribution of Respondents

Gender	No. of youths	Percentage
Male	105	42%
Female	145	58%
Total	250	100%

Source: Field survey Data

Inference: The data indicate that Females are more fitness conscious in the district than that of Males, in that 58% are Females and rest of them are Males.

Table 2: Age of the youths

Age	No. of youths	Percentage
15-19	56	22.4%
20-24	135	54%
25-29	59	23.6%
Total	250	100%

Source: Field survey Data

Inference: The above table indicates that majority percentage (54%) of respondents is in 20-24 years age group. The lowest percentage of respondents (22.4%) is in 15-19 years age group.

Table 3: Perception towards exercise for minimum of 1 hour per day.

Hour	No. of youths	Percentage
Strongly disagree	10	4%
Disagree	16	6.4%
Neutral	68	27.2%
Agree	114	45.6%
Strongly agree	42	16.8%
Total	250	100%

Source: Field survey Data

Inference: From the Table 3, it is clear that 16.8% of respondents felt that a person should exercise for minimum of 1 hour per day to remain physically fit.

Table 4: Contribution of exercise in gaining the stamina

Stamina	No. of youths	Percentage
Strongly disagree	8	3.2%
Disagree	20	8%
Neutral	48	19.2%
Agree	64	25.6%
Strongly agree	110	44%
Total	250	100%

Source: Field survey Data

Inference: From the above data, 44% of youths were strongly agreed that exercise helps to gain more stamina. Were as, 25.6% are agreed, 19.2% were stayed neutral, 8% of them were disagreed and the rest 3.2% were strongly disagreed the statement.

Table 5: Contribution of exercise in reducing the stress level

Stress level	No. of youths	Percentage
Strongly disagree	34	13.6%
Disagree	25	10%
Neutral	39	15.6%
Agree	72	28.8%
Strongly agree	80	32%
Total	250	100%

Source: Field survey Data

Inference: Table 5 represents that maximum proportion of the respondents (32%) strongly agreed that stress level can be reduced through exercise. Only few of them (10%) disagreed the above statement.

Table 6: Impact of exercise in bodies flexibility

Flexibility	No. of youths	Percentage
Strongly disagree	9	3.6%
Disagree	9	3.6%
Neutral	37	14.8%
Agree	94	37.6%
Strongly agree	101	40.4%
Total	250	100%

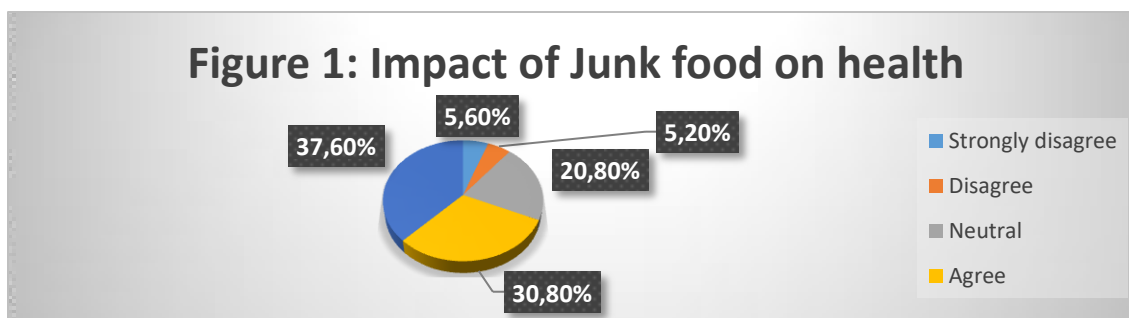
Source: Field survey Data

Inference:The above table clearly depicts that a large portion of respondents (40.4%) strongly agreed that regular exercise results in bodies flexibility.

Table 7: Impact of Junk food on health

Junk food	No. of youths	Percentage
Strongly disagree	14	5.6%
Disagree	13	5.2%
Neutral	52	20.8%
Agree	77	30.8%
Strongly agree	94	37.6%
Total	250	100%

Source: Field survey Data



Source: Field survey Data

Inference: Table 7 & Figure 1 reveals that majority of the respondents (37.6%) strongly agreed that junk food has as adverse effect on health. Were as, 30.8% are agreed, 20.8% were stayed neutral, 5.2% of them were disagreed and the rest 5.6% were strongly disagreed the statement.

Table 8: Influence of weather condition on consuming junk food

Weather condition	No. of youths	Percentage
Strongly disagree	22	8.8%
Disagree	44	17.6%
Neutral	66	26.4%
Agree	56	22.4%
Strongly agree	62	24.8%
Total	250	100%

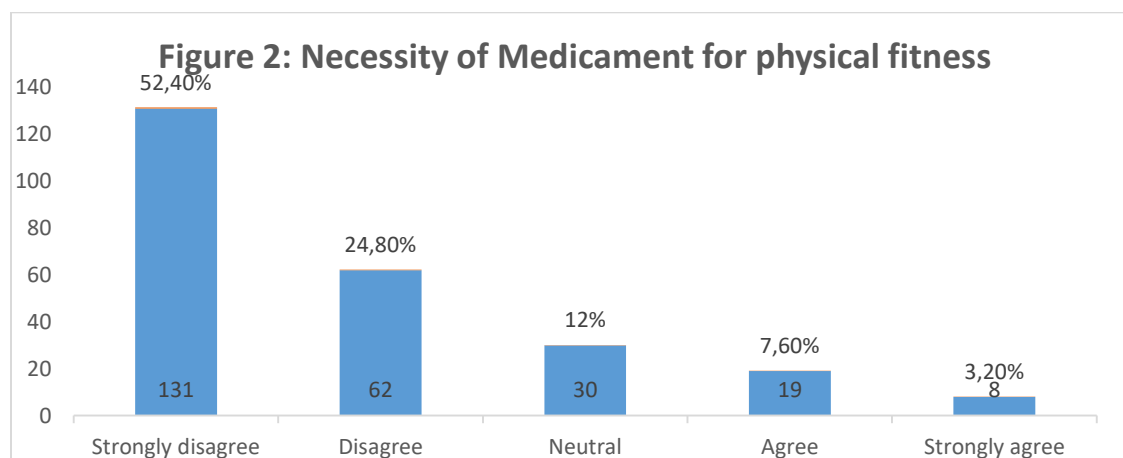
Source: Field survey Data

Inference: The above table indicates that majority percentage (26.4%) of the youths stayed neutral regarding the influence of weather condition on consuming junk food.

Table 9: Necessity of Medicament for physical fitness

Medicament	No. of youths	Percentage
Strongly disagree	131	52.4%
Disagree	62	24.8%
Neutral	30	12%
Agree	19	7.6%
Strongly agree	8	3.2%
Total	250	100%

Source: Field survey Data



Source: Field survey Data

Inference: In the survey conducted by us a specific question was posted to the respondents regarding the necessity of medicament for physical fitness. Most of them strongly disagreed (52.4%) which is a positive move towards physical fitness.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS:**Hypothesis 1:****H₀:** There is no significant relationship between exercise and diet.**H₁:** There is a significant relationship between exercise and diet.**Table 10: Importance of exercise and diet in physical fitness**

Exercise \ Diet	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Strongly disagree	8	7	6	6	7	34
Disagree	6	7	6	11	10	40
Neutral	8	6	6	15	10	45
Agree	6	7	7	17	39	75
Strongly agree	7	6	7	6	29	55
Total	35	33	32	55	95	250

Source: Field survey Data

Table 11: Chi-Square Analysis

Chi-Square Value	Table Value	Significance
30.834	15.338	Highly Significant

Source: Field survey Data

As the calculated value is more than that of the table value, the alternate hypothesis has been accepted and the null hypothesis has been rejected.

Hypothesis 2:**H₀:** There is no close association between gender and surrounding factor.**H₁:** There is a close association between gender and surrounding factor.**Table 12: Association between gender and surrounding factor**

Surrounding Gender	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Male	22	10	24	24	26	106
Female	24	25	29	40	26	144
Total	46	35	53	64	52	250

Source: Field survey Data

Table 13: Chi-Square Analysis

Chi-Square Value	Table Value	Significance
5.399	9.488	Not Highly Significant

Source: Field survey Data

As the calculated value is less than that of the table value, the null hypothesis has been accepted and the alternate hypothesis has been rejected.

Hypothesis 3:

H₀: Youths does not give equal importance to exercise and diet depends on their age.

H₁: Youths give equal importance to exercise and diet depends on their age.

Table 14: Level of importance towards exercise and diet according to age factor

E & D Age	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
15-19	12	12	11	14	12	61
20-24	11	10	15	41	56	133
25-29	12	11	12	10	11	56
Total	35	33	38	65	79	250

Source: Field survey Data

Table 15: Chi-Square Analysis

Chi-Square Value	Table Value	Significance
28.882	18.307	Highly Significant

Source: Field survey Data

As the calculated value is more than that of the table value, the alternate hypothesis has been accepted and the null hypothesis has been rejected.

CONCLUSION:

Healthy living is a combination of many things, including good nutrition, regular exercise and a positive attitude. Taking care of your body and feeling pride in your accomplishments can improve both your physical and mental health. There are many things you can do to improve your quality of life. Improving your diet and exercising regularly are two of the easiest steps. By this, you can make a change and an improvement in your life. From the above analysis, it is clear that, physical fitness is one of the important factors to maintain the stable health. Since more than half of the youths adopted activities with respect to physical fitness in their daily routine. Hence, symptoms of anxiety and depression are under control. "Exercise is a celebration of what your body can do. Not a punishment for what you ate".

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