

The Effect of Fitspiration Short Video Use on Women's Body Appreciation and Exercise Motivation

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the impact of fitspiration short video use on women's body appreciation and exercise motivation in China, as well as the relationship between body appreciation and exercise motivation. Short videos have become a popular tool to inspire and motivate people to engage in exercise behaviors. However, the impact of fitspiration short videos on viewers' attitudes and behaviors is still a subject of debate. 300 female Chinese participants who use short video platforms were recruited online. 296 participants agreed to take part and responded to the survey. In addition to frequency distributions, exploratory factor analysis, one-way ANOVA, t-test, Scheffe Test, Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis have been applied in the analysis of the data. According to the results of the study, participants who reported higher fitspo short video use were more appreciated to their bodies and more inspired to exercise. Besides, women of their elder age presented higher body appreciation than the youngsters despite the influence of fitspo short video use. Finally, women's body appreciation positively affects their exercise motivation. The study concludes that fitspiration short videos do not harm women's body appreciation while positively impact their exercise motivation.

Key words: fitspiration, short video, positive body image, body appreciation, exercise motivation

Introduction

The proliferation of short videos on online platforms has revolutionized the way media content is created, shared, and consumed. Unlike traditional media servers, short videos are typically a few seconds to five minutes long and are designed to capture viewers' attention through their ease of creation, rapid shareability, richness, engagement, and fragmented distribution (Yang et al., 2019). This format offers a unique opportunity for content creators to reach a wider audience and engage viewers in new and exciting ways.

This is particularly true for online contents labeled as “fitspiration,” which combines the words “fitness” with “inspiration” and also shorten for “fitspo”. Abena claimed that fitspo imagery was intended to inspire people to engage in physical activity and seek a healthier lifestyle (as cited in Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). While the fitspo hashtag has been primarily created to promote healthy bodies in the public eye (Marie Claire, 2016), it is also increasingly shared and endorsed on popular social media platforms in China. Despite the potential benefits of fitspo, some researchers have raised concerns about its impact on body image and mental health. For example, Tiggemann & Zaccardo (2015) found that fitspo can be a beneficial counter to another internet hashtag trend called “thinspiration,” which promotes an unhealthy and

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unrealistic ideal of thinness. However, women exposed to thin-ideal media images report feeling less satisfied with their bodies, according to Hawkins et al. (2004).

Media has erred more in its projections of women's bodies and images than in its promotion of the true image of women (Sarkar, 2014), and not even to mention the more prevalent use of social media. Researches have shown that using social media lead to body dissatisfaction and an increase in exercise levels (Brudzynski & Ebben, 2010; LePage & Crowther, 2010; van de Berg et al., 2007). There is a significant body of evidence indicating that fitspo, despite its popularity and good intentions, may simply serve to make women feel worse about themselves and their bodies (Cohen et al., 2017; Prichard et al., 2020). A search of the fitspiration/fitspo hashtag on major Chinese short video-based social media platforms in September 2023 returned almost 1 million posts, featuring photos and videos of two distinct types of ideal bodies: a muscular ideal and a thin ideal. In contrast to the prevalent photo-based and appearance-focused thin ideal images on Instagram and Facebook (Cohen et al., 2017), the fitspiration/fitspo hashtag posts in China are dominated by a muscular ideal that is generally thin but defined by clearly stated muscles. Figure 1 provides an example picture of these posts in China's largest female users

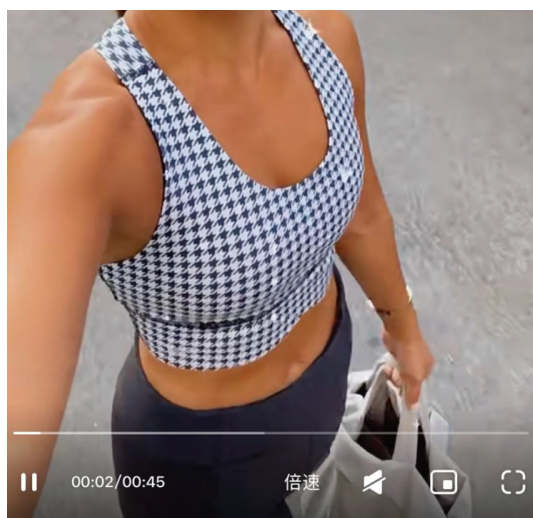


Figure 1. Example post with fitspiration/fitspo hashtags in China's largest female users focused short video social media

focused short video social media. Robinson et al. (2017) found that participants who viewed images of the muscular ideal reported being more inspired to exercise than those who viewed images of the thin ideal. In China, a country with a rapidly growing short video industry, the potential impact of fitspo content have not yet been fully explored. Popular Chinese short video-based social media platforms offer a unique opportunity to examine the effects of fitspo short videos in this context.

A vast body of literature has significantly advanced understanding of predictors and consequences of negative body image (e.g., Cash & Deagle, 1997; Cash & Fleming, 2002; Cash et al., 2004; Noles et al., 1985; Tylka & Subich, 2004); however, limited knowledge exists regarding the assessment of positive body image characteristics. The idea of body appreciation, as the most studied aspect of positive body image, relates to acknowledging one's physical appearance, functionality, and health in connection to an individual's body (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Body appreciation goes beyond mere body satisfaction, representing a manner of valuing one's body and directing cognitive processes towards safeguarding and fostering a positive body perception (Avalos et al., 2005). While body image can manifest in either positive or negative forms, it is plausible to posit that positive and negative body image are not necessarily opposing extremes but distinct constructs with unique factors, encompassing favorable attitudes, acceptance, and respect towards one's body, as well as protective cognitive styles that reject unrealistic appearance standards (Tylka, 2011). Intriguingly, individuals can demonstrate high levels of body appreciation while concurrently harboring dissatisfaction with their physical appearance, a phenomenon extensively deliberated by Tiggemann and McCourt (2013).

The majority of previous studies conducted in Western contexts have concentrated on investigating the associations between fitspo contents and negative body image-related concerns such as body dissatisfaction, body image disturbances, eating disorders, and self-esteem (e.g., Jerónimo & Carraça, 2022; Limniou et al., 2021; Nazarali & Majumdar,

2020; Prichard et al., 2018). Nevertheless, as highlighted by Avalos et al., (2005), psychology extends beyond the examination of pathology, weaknesses, and harm; it delves into positive personality attributes that contribute to and uphold overall psychological well-being. Exploring positive body image could assist psychologists in comprehending strategies to prevent body image disturbances, as they would uncover human strengths that serve as buffers against such distress. Hence, this study aims to elucidate the significance of positive body image within fitspo contents, building on preliminary findings suggesting that body appreciation may mitigate the adverse effects of media exposure and proposing that promoting positive body image could serve as an effective intervention strategy (Halliwel, 2013).

Motivation, defined as the directed energy towards a specific goal, significantly influences lifestyle decisions and the ability to sustain beneficial changes for overall well-being (Silva et al., 2008). It encompasses the psychological forces or drives that propel individuals towards particular objectives. Various theoretical frameworks applied within the realm of physical activity highlight the centrality of exercise goals as determinants of participation (Markland & Hardy, 1993; Weiss & Chaumeton, 1992). Ingledew et al. (2009) tested a three-level model of motivation within an exercise context, drawing from Deci & Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, which posits that participation motives reflect individuals' goals for engaging in exercise—what they aim to achieve or avoid. This model, assessed using the Exercise Motivation Inventory version 2 (EMI-2) (Markland & Ingledew, 1997), distinguishes among 14 specific motives such as affiliation, appearance, challenge, competition, enjoyment, health pressures, ill-health avoidance, nimbleness, positive health, revitalization, social recognition, strength/endurance, stress management, and weight management. In their model, participation motives directly predict exercise participation behavior, with motivations like stress management, health/fitness, affiliation, and challenge positively influencing participation.

Fitspo short videos have emerged as a popular tool

to inspire and motivate exercise behaviors. Recent research by Huang et al. (2022) indicates that engagement with fitness-related short videos significantly influences users' willingness to participate in offline sports, suggesting that higher user investment in watching such videos correlates with increased offline sports engagement. While previous studies (e.g., Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015; Brudzynski & Ebben, 2010) have shown fitspo's efficacy in motivating healthy habits and noted that individuals with negative body image are more likely to engage in appearance and weight-related exercise motivations (LePage & Crowther, 2010), the detailed impact of these factors on exercise motivations and behaviors remains underexplored, particularly in terms of diverse motivational profiles.

This study aims to investigate the influence of Fitspo short video consumption on women's body appreciation and exercise motivation in the context of Chinese viewership. It seeks to examine how exposure to Fitspo short videos shapes perceptions of body image, including attitudes towards physical appearance, functionality, and overall health. Furthermore, the research intends to explore whether higher levels of body appreciation correlate with increased intrinsic motivations such as fitness/health and enjoyment, potentially promoting sustained engagement in physical activity. By addressing these objectives, the study attempts to provide insights that can guide strategies for enhancing positive body image and exercise motivation among female consumers of Fitspo contents, thereby supporting their personal well-being and fitness goals.

Method

Participants and Procedures

300 female individuals of Chinese descent were primarily recruited from the Shaanxi Province in China. The selection of participants was conducted using a non-probability sampling method known as convenience sampling, which involved the utilization of online chat rooms and email communications. Prior

to completing the survey, individuals interested in participating were mandated to acquire consent forms and receive a briefing on the study's specifics. It is important to highlight that participants took part in the research voluntarily and received compensation in the form of gift cards for their contribution. To validate the questions, assess reliability, and address any phrasing issues, a pilot test involving 80 individuals was conducted prior to the official commencement of the research. To cater to the participants' convenience and the study's objectives, scales were translated into Chinese. This translation process was a collaborative effort between the author and a bilingual book editor proficient in English and Chinese but lacking prior knowledge of the topic's relevance.

Following the exclusion of questionnaires containing missing or evidently consistent responses, a total of 296 (98%) valid questionnaires were retained for analysis. The average age of the sample was 26.1 years (ranging from 16 to 57 years) with a standard deviation of 6.6. The participant's Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated based on self-reported weights and heights, resulting in an average BMI of 20.39 with a standard deviation of 2.91. Approximately 26% of participants were categorized as 'underweight' (BMI <18.5), 64.5% fell within the 'normal range' (BMI 18.5-24.9), and 9.5% were classified as 'overweight' (BMI 25-29.9) (Table 1).

Table 1. Participants demographic characteristics (n=296)

Demographic variables	n (%)
Age (M±SD)	26.1 (6.6)
10s	22 (7.4)
20s	185 (62.5)
30s	81 (27.4)
40s	4 (1.4)
50s	4 (1.4)
BMI (kg/m ²) (M±SD)	20.39 (2.91)
Underweight	77 (26)
Normal	191(64.5)
Overweight	28 (9.5)

Measures

Fitspo Short Video Use

To assess the purpose of Fitspo short videos use, the present study employed the Online Sports Contents Use Motivation Scale (OSCUMS) developed by Park (2021). OSCUMS comprises 20 components across 5 aspects of motivation for engaging with online sports content. Participants were required to indicate their level of agreement with statements on a scale ranging from 1=Not at all true (0% of the time) to 5=Extremely true (close to 100% of the time). For this study, 'online sports content' specifically referred to 'Fitspo short videos' and included 10 questions covering aspects such as social communication, information seeking, and time consumption. The measure maintained the format of OSCUMS and prompted participants to specify their reasons for viewing Fitspo short videos. The data demonstrated good reliability through Cronbach's alphas ranging from 0.730 to 0.942, and validity was confirmed by Bartlett's Test ($X^2=1782.138$, $df=45$, $p<.000$) and KMO (MSA=.826) (see Table 2).

Body Appreciation

The evaluation of body appreciation was conducted using the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) developed by Avalos et al. (2005). This 13-item unidimensional scale assessed levels of body acceptance on a 5-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from 1=Not at all true to 5=Extremely true, where higher scores indicate a greater appreciation for one's body. Participants self-reported their body appreciation score without a specified standard, reflecting solely their self-perception towards their bodies. Item nine was eliminated in the process due to a lack of internal consistency in the current study context. The measure exhibited strong reliability and construct validity in this study, as evidenced by Bartlett's Test ($X^2=2734.710$, $df=66$, $p<.000$), KMO (MSA=.930), and Cronbach's alpha (0.943) (refer to Table 3).

Table 2. *Fitspo Short Video Use factor loadings, validity, and reliability*

Items		Loading			Cronbach's α
Social Communication					
2	... in order to have something to talk about with other people.	.932	.199	.125	.942
1	... in order to have common topics with people around me.	.920	.155	.133	
3	... for it gives me a sense of connection with people around me.	.879	.246	.156	
Time Consumption					
5	... to spend my free time in a meaningful way.	.234	.860	.180	.730
4	I like to spend my time watching240	.845	.124	
7	... whenever I have time.	.309	.773		
6	... when I have free time.		.551	.345	
Information Seeking					
8	... to get information of changing body shape or losing weight.			.821	.819
9	... to get information about healthy lifestyle.		.235	.787	
10	... because I can learn the latest information about fitness trend.	.295	.250	.680	
total		4.582	1.582	1.224	
% of Variance		45.824	15.822	12.237	.689
Cumulative %		45.824	61.645	73.883	
Bartlett's Test ($X^2=1782.138$, $df=45$, $p<.000$) KMO (MSA=.826)					

Table 3. *Body appreciation factor loadings, validity, and reliability*

Items		Loading			Cronbach's α	
Body Appreciation						
6	I take a positive attitude toward my body			.865	.943	
7	I am attentive to my body's needs			.852		
10	My feelings toward my body are positive, for the most part			.839		
13	Despite its imperfections, I still like my body			.835		
4	Despite its flaws, I accept my body for what it is			.824		
2	I feel good about my body			.787		
3	On the whole, I am satisfied with my body			.787		
5	I feel that my body has at least some good qualities			.761		
1	I respect my body			.756		
12	I do not allow unrealistic images of women/men presented in the media to affect my attitudes towards my body			.739		
11	I engage in health behaviors to take care of my body			.720		
8	My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight			.685		
total				7.477		
% of Variance				62.305		
Cumulative %				62.305		
Bartlett's Test ($X^2=2734.710$, $df=66$, $p<.000$) KMO (MSA=.930)						

Exercise Motivation

The Exercise Motivations Inventory - 2 (EMI-2) (Markland & Ingledew, 1997) was adopted for the evaluation of exercise participation motivation. EMI-2

distinguishing 14 specific motives among 51 items, while the current investigation utilized 19 items across 5 specific motives: appearance, weight management, positive health, strength/endurance, and enjoyment, and restructuring them into 3 aspects, namely weight/

Table 4. Exercise motivation factor loadings, validity, and reliability

Items	Loadings			Cronbach's α
Weight/ Appearance				
3 To help control my weight	.842	.266	.230	.931
7 To improve my appearance	.827	.206	.145	
6 To have a good body	.823	.301		
2 To lose weight	.812	.218		
4 Because exercise helps me to burn calories	.802	.367	.305	
8 To look more attractive	.786	.138	.243	
5 To help me look younger	.744	.241	.248	
1 To stay slim	.564	.166		
Health/Fitness				
11 To increase my endurance	.313	.834	.270	.945
12 To build up my strength	.353	.821	.250	
9 To develop my muscles	.159	.812	.265	
10 To get stronger	.151	.809	.248	
13 To feel more healthy	.397	.745	.247	
15 To have a healthy body	.352	.712	.244	
14 Because I want to maintain good health	.371	.698	.292	
Enjoyment				
18 For enjoyment of the experience of exercising	.100	.259	.905	.927
17 Because I find exercising satisfying in and of itself	.113	.330	.860	
19 Because I feel at my best when exercising	.113	.272	.854	
16 Because I enjoy the feeling of exerting myself	.256	.458	.674	
total	10.186	2.767	1.397	.783
% of Variance	53.610	14.566	7.354	
Cumulative %	53.610	68.175	75.529	
Bartlett's Test ($X^2=6190.565$, $df=171$, $p<.000$) KMO (MSA=.911)				

appearance, health/fitness, and enjoyment. The instrument employed a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1= Not at all true to 5= Extremely true for evaluating participation motivations. Higher scores indicate heightened levels of motivation. The validity of this measure was established in this study through Bartlett's Test ($X^2=6190.565$, $df=171$, $p<.000$) and KMO (MSA=.911). The reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's alphas varying from 0.927 to 0.945 as depicted in Table 4.

Data analysis

All analyses were carried out using SPSS version 26.0, with variables being encoded to ensure preparedness for data analysis. The primary analysis entailed examining the impact of Fitspo short videos

on body appreciation and exercise participation motivation, along with the influence of different levels of body appreciation on the three exercise motivations. Initially, a reliability analysis was conducted through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha, with items being systematically removed if their deletion resulted in an increase in alpha, followed by a repetition of the analysis. Then, the factor analysis was reiterated to confirm the ultimate factor structure and loadings. Additionally, T-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Scheffe Test were employed to distinguish between different demographic groups in terms of Fitspo short video use, body appreciation, and exercise motivation. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to assess the statistical significance and relationship between each variable in the correlation analysis. Finally, sequential multiple regression

analyses were executed for each latent variable of the Fitspo short video use in relation to body appreciation and exercise motivations. In order to assess the regression's validity, the researcher computed the regression coefficient (R square) for both the predicted and observed parameters. Here, the Fitspo short video served as the predicted parameters, while body appreciation and exercise motivations served as the observed parameters.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Correlations

Table 5 indicated the means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables. Moreover, the coefficients among the latent variables are within the range of .145~.642 with coefficients below .90, and there is no problem of multicollinearity, confirming that the variables are independent of each other.

The social communication was positively associated with body appreciation and weight/appearance exercise motivation, while time consumption was not related to body appreciation but had a positive relationship with weight/appearance, health/fitness, and enjoyment exercise motivation. Additionally, information seeking was found to be positively correlated with body appreciation, weight/appearance, health/fitness, and

enjoyment of exercise motivation. Finally, body appreciation was found to be positively correlated with weight/appearance, health/fitness, and enjoyment of exercise motivation.

Compare means

Before the main analyses that tested the study hypotheses, this research also delved deeper into the participants' demographic information to see if it made any difference in their responses to the instruments.

As expected, between group differences were found in the BMI and body appreciation ($F=4.520$, $P<.05$). Participants with normal BMI ($M=2.639$, $SD=.641$) scored significantly higher on body appreciation ($p=.016$) compared to those who were overweight ($M=2.250$, $SD=.646$). Interestingly, there was no difference in exam scores between normal and underweight ($M=2.520$, $SD=.718$) or between underweight and overweight BMI participants. The t -test demonstrated that participants in their age of 20s ($M=3.830$, $SD=.937$) reported lower body appreciation ($t=-.180$, $p=.017$) than the 30s ($M=3.852$, $SD=.719$). Additionally, there were significant differences in exercise motivation between participants in their 20s and 30s ($F=5.802$, $p<.001$). Participants in their 20s had lower scores in health/fitness ($p<.001$) and enjoyment ($p=.001$) measures compared to those in their 30s. Lastly, there were significant differences between measured groups in terms of exercise motivation and

Table 5. Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations for Fitspo Short Video Use, Body Appreciation, and Exercise Motivation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Social Communication	-						
2. Time Consumption	.458**	-					
3. Information Seeking	.360**	.460**	-				
4. Body Appreciation	.134*	.095	.204**	-			
5. Weight/Appearance	.182*	.338**	.441**	.243**	-		
6. Health/Fitness	.031	.166**	.292**	.435**	.616**	-	
7. Enjoyment	.096	.145*	.214**	.462**	.395**	.642**	-
Mean	1.971	2.708	3.261	3.929	3.789	3.939	3.817
SD	1.121	1.058	1.033	.885	.959	.953	1.077

*Significant differences for $p<.05$, ** Significant differences for $p<.01$

body appreciation ($F=33.842, p<.001$). According to Scheffe test with the significant level of .05, participants with lower body appreciation had significantly lower exercise motivation compared to those with medium ($p<.001$) and high ($p<.001$) body appreciation (groups created by percentile split), while participants with medium body appreciation had significantly lower exercise motivation than those with high body appreciation ($p=.003$). More specifically, participants with medium and high body appreciation had significantly higher scores on weight/appearance-focused ($p=.002; p<.001$), health/fitness-focused ($p<.001; p<.001$), and enjoyment-focused ($p=.001; p<.001$) motivation compared to those who with lower body appreciation. However, participants scored on medium body appreciation showed a declined health/fitness ($p=.030$) and enjoyment ($p<.001$) motivation compared to the high body appreciation group.

Main Analyses

Separated multiple regression results are presented in Table 6–8, verified the independent variable’s relationship with the dependent variables is linear.

Fitspo short video use and body appreciation

To figure out the first research question of this study, the linear regression model of Fitspo short video use and body appreciation was conducted to assess which type of Fitspo short video use affects women’s body appreciation. The model was significant with $F=4.721, p=.003$, indicating at least one predictor significantly affects body appreciation. The model explained 4.6%

of the variance in body appreciation, with an adjusted R^2 of .046. The result of the model (see Table 6) showed that information seeking significantly predicted body appreciation ($t=2.865, p=.004$), indicating a positive effect on body appreciation. At the same time, body appreciation was not predicted by social communication and time consumption use of the Fitspo short video. Participants who scored higher on information seeking had increased body appreciation.

Fitspo short video use and exercise motivation

To investigate the second aim of this study, whether and to what extent social communication, information seeking, and time consumption predicted the three measures of exercise motivation is tested in three separate regression models, and all three models were statistically significant with $F=27.154, p=.000; F=10.384, p=.000; F=4.949, p=.002$. It was found that information seeking significantly predicted all three measures of exercise motivation: weight/appearance ($t=6.205, p=.000$), health/fitness ($t=4.627, p=.000$), and enjoyment ($t=2.844, p=.005$), showing that participants with higher scores of information seeking had higher weight/appearance, health/fitness, and enjoyment-related motivations. While time consumption only predicted weight/appearance ($t=2.953, p=.003$), indicating a positive effect on weight/appearance-related exercise motivation (see Table 7).

Body appreciation and exercise motivation

Three separate regression models were run to examine whether body appreciation had an impact on different exercise motivations. All three measures of

Table 6. Multiple regression analysis results of Fitspo short video use and body appreciation

Variables		<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Body Appreciation	Social Communication	.062	.052	.079	1.208
	Information Seeking	.161	.056	.188	2.865**
	Time Consumption	-.023	.058	-.028	-.400
$R^2=.046 F=4.721** p=.003$					

**Significant differences for $p<.01$

Table 7. Multiple regression analysis results of fitspo short video use and exercise motivation

	Variables	B	SE B	β	t
Weight/Appearance	Social Communication	-.030	.051	-.035	-.583
	Information Seeking	.342	.055	.368	6.205***
	Time Consumption	.167	.056	.184	2.953**
$R^2=.218$ $F=27.154$ *** $p=.000$					
Health/Fitness	Social Communication	-.096	.054	-.113	-1.768
	Information Seeking	.273	.059	.295	4.627***
	Time Consumption	.074	.060	.082	1.220
$R^2=.096$ $F=10.384$ *** $p=.000$					
Enjoyment	Social Communication	.002	.063	.002	.027
	Information Seeking	.194	.068	.186	2.844**
	Time Consumption	.059	.070	.058	.846
$R^2=.048$ $F=4.949$ ** $p=.002$					

*Significant differences for $p<.01$, **Significant differences for $p<.001$

Table 8. Multiple regression analysis result of body image and exercise motivation

	Variables	B	SE B	β	t
Weight/Appearance	Body Image	.264	.062	.243	4.302***
$R^2=.059$ $F=18.511$ *** $p=.000$					
Health/Fitness	Body Image	.469	.057	.435	8.294***
$R^2=.190$ $F=68.791$ *** $p=.000$					
Enjoyment	Body Image	.562	.063	.462	8.930***
$R^2=.213$ $F=79.744$ *** $p=.000$					

***Significant differences for $p<.001$

exercise motivations: weight/appearance ($F=18.511$, $t=4.302$, $p=.000$), health/fitness ($F=68.791$, $t=8.294$, $p=.000$), and enjoyment ($F=79.744$, $t=8.930$, $p=.000$) were significantly predicted by participants' body appreciation, indicating participants with higher scores of body appreciation had increased weight/appearance, health/fitness, and enjoyment exercise motivations. The model explained 5.9% of the variance in weight/appearance ($R^2=.059$), 19% of the variance in health/fitness ($R^2=.190$), and 21.3% of the variance in enjoyment ($R^2=.213$) (see Table 8).

Discussion

The investigation was conducted with the objective of examining the connections between Fitspo short

videos use, body appreciation, and exercise motivation in Chinese women. Findings illustrated that women who viewed Fitspo short videos exhibited a favorable body appreciation and increased motivation to engage in exercise. Moreover, women who demonstrated gratitude towards their bodies manifested all three categories of exercise motivation.

The primary aim of the present study was to assess the effects of varying types of Fitspo short video usage on women's body appreciation, particularly regarding social communication, information seeking, and time consumption among the participants. The data analyses revealed that participants' body appreciation correlated with their intentions for social communication and information seeking. Specifically, only information seeking presented a positive association with women's

body appreciation. In this scenario, participants' body self-perception was shaped not by the amount of time they spent on watching Fitspo short videos or their desire to interact and compare themselves with others, but by the information they acquired from the short video content. The present study revealed that Fitspo short videos did not appear to have a detrimental impact on women's body appreciation, contrary to the findings of a substantial body of literature that suggested a negative influence on body image (e.g., Martin Ginis et al., 2008; Talbot et al., 2017). This result adds to the finding in two important ways. First, as previously mentioned, the majority of videos labeled as 'fitspo' or 'fitspiration' on Chinese social media platforms feature muscular body figures engaged in physical activities. The findings of Benton and Karazsia (2015) supported this observation by indicating that exposure to images of a slim but well-toned body did not reduce female body satisfaction. Meanwhile, there is evidence suggesting that women's body image can be improved by being exposed to content that focuses on body functionality rather than physical appearance (Alleva et al., 2015; Mulgrew & Tiggemann, 2018). Secondly, women tend to place less emphasis on physical appearance relative to self-worth as they age. Instead, they are more inclined to value the health and functionality of their bodies, as evidenced by a research sample of Australian women aged 18-75 years (Tiggemann, 2015). It is important to mention that the participants in the present study ranged in age from 16 to 57 years, with a mean age of 26.1 years. The body appreciation score of participants in their 30s was significantly higher ($p=.017$) than that of participants in their 20s, with no group discrepancies in terms of age and BMIs ($p=.285$). This suggests that the adverse effects on body appreciation experienced by younger women after being exposed to content promoting thin ideals were less pronounced in older women, implying a potential positive correlation between age and body appreciation. Moreover, it indicates that body appreciation tends to increase with age and is sustained in older women even in the presence of thin-ideals content (Owen, 2014).

Consistent with previous research (Hausenblas &

Fallon, 2002) that identified BMI as a predictor of body image among participants, individuals with a normal BMI in the current study reported higher body appreciation scores ($p=.016$) compared to overweight individuals. Surprisingly, participants with an underweight BMI did not report a higher body appreciation score than those with normal or overweight BMIs. This finding is particularly intriguing combining with the previous research findings that individuals of Chinese descent exhibit greater body dissatisfaction and concerns about being overweight compared to Caucasians of European descent, despite actually being underweight or having a normal weight (Kennedy et al., 2004).

The second research inquiry aimed to explore the impact of Fitspo short video use on participants' exercise motivation. The findings indicate that exposure to Fitspo short videos positively influenced participants' engagement in exercise, particularly concerning information-seeking behaviors and time consumption. This outcome aligns with Berg and others' (2020) assertion that social media interventions, pervasive in contemporary daily life, can foster positive attitudes towards physical activity. Participants exhibiting a stronger inclination towards information seeking demonstrated motivations related to weight/appearance, health/fitness, and enjoyment in exercising; notably, those primarily focused on time consumption showed motivations primarily related to weight/appearance. Graff and Czarnomska (2019) similarly observed that the time spent on social media platforms could heighten women's drive to exercise, particularly young women who might be more inclined to engage in physical activity for appearance-related reasons compared to older women (Strelan et al., 2003). Furthermore, age-related analyses revealed distinctions in exercise motivations between participants in their 20s and 30s. Specifically, individuals in their 30s placed greater importance on health/fitness ($F=5.201$, $p<.001$) and enjoyment ($F=4.920$, $p<.001$) as motivational factors for exercise compared to their younger counterparts. These findings are consistent with existing literature suggesting that older women tend to have higher levels of body appreciation and health-related exercise

motivations (Tiggemann, 2015). However, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential adverse effects of Fitspo short videos, which often emphasize a thin-ideal physique. This content may inadvertently reinforce appearance-focused motivations among viewers, highlighting the prevailing influence of Fitspo contents on women's self-perceptions and behaviors related to physical activity. The findings underscore the importance of promoting healthier body image experiences and emphasizing health-related exercise motivations, particularly among younger women who may be susceptible to societal pressures and norms (Bedford & Johnson, 2006).

The third research question aimed to assess the impact of women's body appreciation on their exercise motivation, particularly in terms of weight/appearance, health/fitness, and enjoyment. As a complement to earlier research claiming that exercise interventions increase body image (Campbell & Hausenblas, 2009; Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006), the current study uncovered a correlation between positive body image and exercise motivation, with a resulting improvement in multiple exercise participation motives. In ascending order, participants exhibited a progressive increase in overall exercise motivation correlating with improved body appreciation, underscoring that women who possess favorable body perceptions demonstrate heightened likelihoods of engaging in physical activities ($F=33.842$, $p<.001$). Moreover, the investigation disclosed that individuals endorsing moderate to high body appreciation levels reported greater inclination towards exercise for reasons encompassing weight/appearance, health/fitness, and enjoyment, relative to counterparts with lower body appreciation perceptions. This signifies that women who appreciate more with their bodies are more prone to exercise, driven by multifaceted motives such as aesthetic enhancement, health maintenance, and pleasure-seeking. Notably, findings further indicated that women valuing their body highly prioritize both appearance and well-being, alongside enjoyment. Intriguingly, the study discerned that participants with moderate body appreciation exhibit lower motivation towards enhancing health and enjoyment through exercise compared to their high

body appreciation counterparts. These observations suggest a potential threshold, wherein individuals identifying with high body appreciation may derive greater exercise motivation compared to those identifying with less ideal body images. These findings carry significant implications for the development of interventions aimed at enhancing positive body image among women. Initiatives designed to promote women's engagement in physical activities should consider strategies that foster women's self-acceptance and cultivate body appreciation, especially among those with lower body perceptions. Such efforts hold promise for encouraging broader participation in sports and contributing to advancements in gender inclusivity within this domain.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the associations among Fitspo short video consumption, body appreciation, and exercise motivation among female Chinese social media users. As hypothesized, Fitspo short videos emerged as the most significant predictor of participants' body appreciation in this study. Contrary to concerns regarding potential negative effects, the influence of Fitspo short videos on body appreciation was found to be positive, suggesting that body appreciation extends beyond mere appearance conformity to encompass valuing the body for its capabilities, symbolism, and individual characteristics (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Notably, participants in this study, predominantly adult women with an average age of 26.1 years, prioritized bodily comfort and general health over appearance concerns, indicating a nuanced approach to body appreciation among this demographic.

Drawing upon social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), the findings suggested that women derive a sense of self-worth through comparisons with their social milieu, emphasizing functionality and health over aesthetic appeal, which contributed to a more positive body image than expected. Previous research had underscored the positive impact of social media on physical activity (Berg et al., 2020; Johnston & Davis,

2019), highlighting short videos as particularly effective in enhancing exercise motivation due to their ease of dissemination and accessibility for information retrieval. This assertion has been verified through current studies, indicating that the utilization of short video for obtaining details regarding physical activity serves as the predominant factor contributing to heightened motivation for exercise.

Furthermore, while increased concerns about weight and appearance were associated with greater consumption of Fitspo short videos, older women demonstrated resilience in cultivating and maintaining realistic body perceptions and values despite exposure to societal standard of the “ideal body” on social media platforms. Despite the comparatively more wholesome Fitspo content present on Chinese social networking platforms, the representation of fitness has remained stagnant, predominantly showcasing a singular body ideal characterized by being slim, toned, and attractive (Crossman, 2017). Given these insights, it is recommended that creators and consumers of Fitspo short videos remain mindful of potential negative psychological impacts and uphold positive body image attitudes and coping strategies. This approach could mitigate excessive body investment and reduce vulnerability to harmful content related to body image (Rogers et al., 2018; Webb, 2015).

Limitations and Future Research

While this study significantly contributes to our understanding of the interplay between Fitspo short video, body appreciation, and exercise motivation, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. Firstly, the study did not assess participants' specific exercise habits, which are likely to vary significantly between regular exercisers and non-exercisers, influencing their perceptions of body image. Secondly, future research could benefit from categorizing types of physical activities, such as competitive versus recreational sports, aerobic versus anaerobic exercise, to explore how different body perceptions impact engagement in specific activities. Thirdly, this investigation utilized a self-report methodology with a correlational design.

To advance our understanding, future studies are encouraged to adopt experimental designs incorporating objective measures. Such approaches could better elucidate how exposure to Fitspo short videos influences participants' exercise motivation and body image. Finally, a convenient sample of participants was primarily recruited from Central China, potentially constraining the generalization of research outcomes. Specifically, body image represents a concern intertwined with cultural variances, with individuals in Eastern societies commonly confronting heightened societal expectations regarding body image (Kennedy et al., 2004). Subsequent research endeavors could explore the disparities in body image perception among Chinese descent participants residing in both Western and Eastern cultures after exposing to identical Fitspo content.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: W.C.

Data analysis: W.C.

Writing-original draft preparation: W.C.

Writing-review and editing: J. W. Y

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