

The Body Project: Anatomy, Relationships, and Representation  
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Oral Presentation

**The Identity and Objectification of Personal Trainers**

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine how personal trainers perceive their body. My research questions are the following: How does the structure or the focus of the organization affect the trainer's perception of their bodies; how does gender, age, years of employment, clientele, focus of the organization etc. affect these trainers; do these trainers internalize external cues of maintaining a certain body type, and how does that affect them?

Hypotheses

Past research has demonstrated how similar occupations with the focus on the body as an object have had certain effects on the individual, yet no study has been done on the profession of personal trainers. It is important to determine how structures and interactions within an occupation can shape and transform the identity of the employee. I have no hypothesis of yet. I am simply exploring the use of the body in identity construction.

Methods

I plan to meet one on one with personal trainers and, ask questions about their perceptions of their bodies and their interactions that take place both at work and away from work. I will post a sign up sheet and fliers in order for the personal trainers to volunteer to be interviewed. The interview will take approximately one hour, and can be scheduled at the trainer's discretion. Several questions will come from scales such as the Body Dissatisfaction scale (Garner, Olmstead, and Polviy, 1983), the Drive for Muscularity (McCreary & Sasse, 2000), and Exercise Addiction Inventory (Terry, Szabo, and Griffiths, 2003).