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and believed obesity was controllable. In a study surveying fitness center employees (management and administrative staff  $n = 15$ , personal trainers  $n = 16$ , fitness instructors  $n = 19$ , and exercise/sport physiologists  $n = 20$ ), Dimmock et al. (2009) reported a moderately strong implicit bias, but no explicit bias, towards individuals in larger body sizes. More recently, Fontana et al. (2018) found that personal trainers ( $n = 52$ ) report strong implicit biases against individuals who are obese.

Recently, Zaroubi et al. (2021) published a review article on the predictors of weight bias in fitness professionals and exercise science students (Zaroubi et al., 2021). Most of the studies in this review sampled undergraduate students in the exercise science field, with only four of the 18 sample fitness professionals. Of those four studies, only three included weight bias as a dependent variable (Dimmock et al., 2009; Fontana et al., 2018; Robertson & Vohora, 2008). A thematic analysis was conducted, and six themes emerged. First, exercise science students and fitness professionals strongly believe that weight is controllable and associate individuals with larger bodies with negative attributes such as laziness. Second, the relationship between gender and weight bias is still unknown as data is conflicting. Third, being enrolled in an exercise science or similar educational program is likely a predictor of weight bias. Fourth, personal and psychosocial factors (e.g., the tendency to internalize an athletic body as the ideal body shape) likely influence weight bias. Fifth, knowledge of the uncontrollable aspects of obesity (e.g., genetics) is likely to lower weight bias. Lastly, there is conflicting evidence regarding the influence of one's personal history with someone in a larger body. Chambliss et al. (2004) report that a lack of family history of having a larger body leads to higher explicit weight bias in fitness professionals and regular exercisers (Chambliss et al., 2004). In contrast, DeBarr and Pettit reported no statistical differences in weight bias held by health educators classified as overweight compared to normal weight.

Little research has examined explicit weight biases of fitness professionals, and no research has focused on whether their social identities and/or role in the industry (e.g., group fitness instructor versus personal trainer) influence their weight bias. This research is particularly important due to the influential nature of this field. Clients often look to fitness professionals for advice and education on changing their health behaviors. If fitness professionals hold strong weight biases, they may contribute to a harmful cycle whereby their clients become less likely to participate and/or adhere to their health behavior changes. Fitness professionals need to have more knowledge of weight biases. Thus, the study aimed to examine the influence of age, gender, body dissatisfaction, race, role in industry, BMI, income, and education on weight bias in fitness professionals.

## Results

There was a statistically significant interaction between gender and BMI on total AFAT scores,  $F(2,272) = 3.139$ ,  $p = .045$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .023$ . Therefore, an analysis of simple main effects for gender and BMI was performed with statistical significance receiving a Bonferroni adjustment. Women in the healthy ( $2.02 .51$ ) and overweight ( $1.97 .49$ ) BMI categories had significantly greater total AFAT scores ( $p = .003$  and  $p = .023$ , respectively) compared to women in the obese BMI category ( $1.63 .48$ ). There was also a statically significant interaction between education and BMI on total AFAT scores,  $F(9,266) = 2.201$ ,  $p = .022$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .069$ . An analysis of simple main effects for education and BMI was performed with statistical significance receiving a Bonferroni adjustment. For participants who had completed some college, those who were classified in the healthy BMI category had significantly greater total AFAT scores ( $2.05 .50$ ) compared to those in the overweight BMI category ( $1.72 .46$ ),  $p = .045$ . For participants who completed a master's degree, those in the healthy BMI category ( $2.08 .56$ ) and overweight BMI category ( $2.05 .43$ ) had significantly greater total AFAT scores ( $p = .003$  and  $.016$ , respectively) compared to those in the obese BMI category ( $1.48 .46$ ). No other interaction effects were found. Therefore, one-way ANOVAs and MANOVAs were conducted to assess the direct effect of the IVs on AFAT total and AFAT subscales, respectively. The mean total AFAT scores for each IV are listed in Table 7.

## Age

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