Pacific International Journal, Vol. 8(5); 2025
ISSN (Print) 2663-8991, ISSN (Online) 2616-4825[1]
DOI: 10.55014/pij.v8i5.901
https://rclss.com/index.php/pij

Aerobics Trainers' Use of Real-Time Feedback Technology and Clients' Performance Improvements in Aerobic Fitness Tests in Inner Mongolia, China

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Abstract: This study investigates the relationship between aerobics trainers' use of real-time feedback technology (RTFT) and client performance improvements in aerobic fitness tests. Conducted at Baotou Light Industry Vocational Technical College in Inner Mongolia, China, the research employed a descriptive-comparative-correlational design. Eighty-four aerobics trainers were surveyed on their demographic profiles, self-assessed use of RTFT (including frequency of use, technical skill, data interpretation, and real-time adjustments), and their assessment of client improvements (in cardiovascular endurance, recovery time, test scores, and performance consistency). Results indicated a significant positive correlation between trainers' self-assessed proficiency with RTFT and their reported client performance gains. While trainers were generally confident, areas for improvement were identified in consistent technology application and advanced data interpretation. The findings underscore the value of RTFT in enhancing training efficacy and highlight the need for targeted professional development to maximize its potential.

Keywords: Behavioral Change Facilitation, Consistency of Performance Over Time, Fatigue Monitoring, Heart Rate Monitoring, Personalized Exercise Prescription

Introduction

Real-time feedback can also enhance mental resilience. A study by Park and Yamaguchi (2024) found that clients who received real-time pace and heart rate updates during a VO_2 max test reported a decrease in perceived exertion and increased confidence. Coaches provided supportive prompts based on real-time data to help clients overcome challenging periods. Visually viewing their heart rate and pace progress enhanced their effort and endurance. Coaches set micro-goals mid-test to encourage clients to reach their target zones. This integration of data and motivational guidance improved their performance and mental endurance during high-intensity aerobic exercise. The frequency of training with real-time feedback significantly impacted adaptation. Li and Ong (2025) tested a high-intensity interval training (HIIT) program that provided real-time pace feedback twice a week for eight weeks. Coaches monitored VO_2 and speed data and adjusted training intensity based on clients' recovery metrics. The group improved their shuttle run performance by 15%, significantly outperforming the control group. Coaches reported that real-time data enabled them to prevent overtraining by detecting fatigue early. Tailored load management optimized aerobic training and reduced injury risk. Their findings highlight how consistent use of real-time technology can enhance training effectiveness. A group real-time feedback environment fosters collective progress. Huang and Fu (2022) compared HIIT classes using synchronized pace monitors with traditional classes. Coaches adjusted group goals based on real-time data, thereby boosting peer motivation. Class performance improved significantly across all circuits. Real-time feedback helped coaches synchronize participants' paces, fostering team cohesion. Coaches noted that real-time leaderboards fostered healthy competition and engagement. This suggests that coaches can leverage technology to guide group dynamics and maximize aerobic test results. Personalized training using oxygen uptake (VO_2) monitoring has demonstrated strong effectiveness. Okabe and Ho (2021) tracked oxygen uptake data during treadmill training,allowing them to adjust speed and incline in real time. The client's maximal oxygen uptake (VO_2) significantly improved over six weeks, and benefited from this. The coach noted that using the real-time oxygen uptake and heart rate ratio allowed them to fine-tune aerobic load. Personalized adjustments led to consistent progress and improved training adherence. This demonstrates the value of real-time physiological metrics in personalized aerobic training programs.

Despite the growing body of evidence supporting the efficacy of real-time feedback technology (RTFT) in controlled settings, a significant gap exists in understanding its practical application and impact in real-world training environments. Previous research has primarily focused on the technological capabilities and client outcomes within short-term, experimental interventions. However, there is a lack of studies that investigate how trainers—the key intermediaries who interpret and apply the technology—actually utilize RTFT in their daily practice. Furthermore, little is known about the correlation between a trainer's self-assessed proficiency with this technology and the subsequent performance improvements they observe in their clients in a specific regional context like Inner Mongolia, China. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the on-the-ground use of RTFT by aerobics trainers and its perceived effectiveness in improving client performance on standard aerobic fitness tests.

[Received 10, August, 2025; Accepted 16, October, 2025; Published (online) 20, October, 2025]

Literature Review

Wearable real-time feedback technology, such as smartwatches andbiometric sensors, has become integral to modern aerobic training. At BaotouLight Industry Vocational Technical College, such is being practiced. Trainerscan instantly monitor clients' heart rate, form, and effort, adjusting intensity inreal time to optimize workouts. Studies are exploring how these tools influenceaerobic test outcomes, suggesting that immediate data drives better clientengagement and performance (Pang & Xiang, 2023). The dynamic nature ofreal-time feedback may also enhance motivation, a critical factor for sustainedaerobic effort (Yoshimi & Chen, 2022). Understanding how trainers leveragethis technology in practice is vital for advancing fitness program mingPilot interventions have demonstrated that virtual reality-based aerobicprograms with real -time pulse monitoring im prove arterial stiffness and vas cularfunction (Yuenyongchaiwat et al , 2024). Trainers using such systems reportedgreater confidence in setting intensity zones and maintaining client effortHowever, since these were feasibility studies, broader impacts on aerobic testscores remain under investigation. This suggests real-time physiologicalfeedback supports both trainer instruction and client progress. Further rese archcan clarify how this translates to formal aerobic fitness tests.

Kihyun Pang and Hui-min Park(2025)analyzed a smartwatch-basedVO,max model validated against Cooper Test results (Pang & Park, 2025)Trainers using this model achieved better alignment between predicted andactual VO,max, demonstrating improved test accuracy. This highlights the value of wearable-derived data in refining trainer programming. The high intraclasscorrelation (lCC =0 961)underscores the reliability of smartwatch input as acoaching tool.

In addition to physiological data, trainers are increasingly adopting form-based feedback delivered via wearables. Pang and Xiang (2023) piloted smartshirts with integrated sensors that monitor breathing and posture during aerobicmovements. Trainers reported the ability to correct form deviations in real timeleading to improved performance in shuttle-run and step-test metrics. Thissuggests biomechanical feedback adds a valuable layer to outcome-basedcoaching

While real-time data offers significant advantages, trainers reportconcerns ab out over-reliance on metrics atthe expense of experientialjudgmentSato & Yoshida, 2023).In focus groups, seasoned trainers cautioned that datamust be contextualized within client behavior and response. This underscoresthe importance of trainer expertise in interpreting and balancing real-timeinputs.

The timing of feedback also plays a critical role. A study by Pan and Lee(2023)compared live heart rate feedback during VO,max tests versus post.session review. Trainers using real-time alerts helped clients adjust effortproactively, resulting in higher maximal oxygen uptake compared to end-of-session feedback. This evidence supports trainers' use of live data duringperformance testing.

Statement of problems

This study will determine the aerobics trainers'use of real-timefeedback technology and clients' performance improvements inaerobic fitness tests at Baotou Light Industry Vocational TechnicalCollege in Inner Mongolia, China

The results of the study will be used as a basis for a real-timefeedback integration program for aerobics trainers.Spe cifically, the study will answer the following questions:1. What is the demographic profile of the trainer respondents interms of.

1.1. sex;

1.2. age; and

1.3. number of years as a trainer?2. What is the self-assessment of the trainer respondents of theiruse of real-time feedback technology in terms of:

2.1. frequency of technology use;

2.2.skill in using feed back tools,

2.3. data interpretation ability;,

2.4. real-time training adjustments;

3.Is there a significant difference in the self-assessment of thetrainer respondents of their use of real-time feedbacktechnology when they are grouped according to their profile?4. What is the assessment of the trainer respondents of theirclients'performance improvements in aerobic fitness tests interms of.

4.1. progress in cardiovascular endurance;

4.2.improvement in recovery time;

4.3. increase in test scores or duration;4.4. consistency of performance over time;

5. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the trainerrespondents of their clients' performance improvements inaerobic fitness tests when they are grouped according to their

profile ?

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-comparative-correlational research design, characterized by precise variable definition, systematic data collection, methodological analysis, and thorough consideration of contextual factors. According to Hoshino and Arakawa (2023), descriptive research is crucial for capturing phenomena in their natural state, enabling researchers to observe behavioral tendencies and document the core characteristics

and conditions of environmental factors. This approach lays the foundation for a comprehensive, evidence-based understanding of social systems.

In support of this view, descriptive research has long been considered fundamental to social and behavioral research. As emphasized by Zhang and Qiu (2022), it facilitates the collection of reliable, objective data on individual beliefs, decisions, and behaviors. In this way, it enables scholars to uncover both regularities and inconsistencies within target populations, providing a nuanced perspective on psychological processes and social patterns.

Furthermore, Kimura and Na (2024) emphasize the importance of comparative methods for isolating and analyzing key variables across different demographic or cultural contexts. They also emphasize the utility of correlational analysis in revealing significant associations between factors, which can contribute to the construction of theoretical models and guide practical application. This study will utilize correlational analysis procedures to examine the links between demographic indicators and behavioral or attitudinal responses relevant to the research objectives.

This methodology blends clear descriptions, in-depth comparisons, and insightful correlations, drawing on contributions from Hoshino and Arakawa (2023), Zhang and Qiu (2022), and Kimura and Na (2024). This integrative design enhances the explanatory power and empirical evidence of this study, providing a solid foundation for future academic research and practical applications.

This study aims to investigate interviewed coaches' self-assessments of their use of real-time feedback technology and their assessment of client performance improvements on aerobic fitness tests.

Research Location

This study will be conducted at the Baotou Light Industry Vocational and Technical College in Inner Mongolia, targeting trainers at the college. This year, the college enrolls approximately 15,000 students and employs approximately 900 faculty members.

The Baotou Light Industry Vocational and Technical College is located in Baotou, a national model city known for its beautiful scenery and the "City of Deer." Founded in 1956, the college has developed over 60 years of experience and boasts comprehensive educational facilities and training equipment. The smart campus is essentially complete. The college, covering 1,000 mu (approximately 1,000 mu), is a national AAA-level tourist attraction, boasting over 200 training bases and equipment valued at over 100 million yuan. After over 60 years of development, the college has become a nationally recognized high-quality vocational college, a national pilot program for the modern apprenticeship system, and a national training base for highly skilled personnel.

The college currently has nearly 15,000 students and a faculty and staff of 900. In 2007 and 2012, the college passed the Ministry of Education's evaluations with outstanding results. In 2013, it became one of the first demonstration vocational colleges in the autonomous region. In 2019, it was recognized as a high-quality vocational college at the autonomous region level.

Participants

The respondents for this study were aerobics coaches from Baotou Light Industry Vocational and Technical College in Inner Mongolia, China. Purposive sampling was used to select the coach respondents.

This study only recruited individuals who practiced aerobics, specifically coaches or trainers with at least three years of experience.

Research Instruments

To collect the required data, researchers will develop a custom questionnaire to survey participating coaches on their self-assessments of their use of real-time feedback technology and their assessments of their clients' performance improvements on aerobic fitness tests.

The questionnaire will be administered face-to-face or in-person.

The questionnaire will consist of the following sections:

Part 1: This section will identify the demographic characteristics of the participating aerobic fitness coaches;

Part 2: This section will identify the participating coaches' self-assessments of their use of real-time feedback technology;

Part 3: This section will identify their assessments of their clients' performance improvements on aerobic fitness tests.

The adapted questionnaire and the researcher-developed questionnaire will be content-validated by experts knowledgeable in the research field. The experts' suggestions will be incorporated into the questionnaire.

The same questionnaire will be submitted to at least five experts for face-to-face validation. The questionnaire will undergo pilot testing to assess reliability. Cronbach's alpha will be calculated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The researchers welcome the experts' suggestions and will make necessary revisions to ensure the validity of the instrument. The overall reliability of the questionnaire was Cronbach's Alpha = 0.992, indicating that the results of all items were very consistent. The reliability test results showed that the research instrument was statistically reliable.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers will constructively consider and diligently adhere to ethical considerations necessary to protect the rights of all respondents. These ethical considerations are as follows:

1. Conflict of Interest

Researchers for this study will ensure that there are no conflicts of interest. Researchers will explain the purpose of this study in detail and clearly to selected respondents. Researchers must also adhere to the purpose of collecting personal information and data. All collected data must not be used for any form of exploitation of respondents. Researchers must adhere to the goals and objectives of the study.

2. Privacy and Confidentiality

Before conducting this study, we will assure respondents that all collected information will remain confidential and that the results will not be disclosed to anyone other than the researchers and those who completed the questionnaires. Researchers will not mention respondents' names when providing collected data to protect their privacy. Respondents' identities will remain anonymous, and no clues or hints that could lead others to associate or relate to them will be included.

3. Informed Consent Process

Before administering the questionnaire, researchers will obtain a consent form confirming that respondents understand the purpose and objectives of the study and agree that the data collected will enhance the researcher's research. Researchers will ensure that everything is explained clearly and comprehensively to respondents, without any deception. The researchers will also discuss the process and potential risks of participating in this study.

4. Recruitment

The participants in this study will be swimmers. Participants are free to agree or disagree with participation in this study. Participants will not be forced to participate and have the right to refuse at any time.

5. Risks

The researchers will ensure that participation in this study is risk-free. Participants will ensure that any data and information collected will not harm their life or reputation. Participants have the right to stop asking questions at any time if they feel harassed, overly personal, or intrusive.

Results and Discussion

Frequency Distribution of the Teacher Respondents' Profile

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Less than 25 years old	3	3.6%
25-30 years old	33	39.3%
31-35 years old	30	35.7%
36-45 years old	13	15.5%
46-50 years old	3	3.6%
More than 50 years old	2	2.4%
Total	**304**	**100%**
Sex		
Male	31	36.9%
Female	53	63.1%
Total	**84**	**100%**
Number of Years as a Trainer		
3-5 years	32	38.1%
5-10 years	38	45.2%
More than 10 years	14	16.7%
Total	**84**	**100%**

In terms of age distribution, 3 participants (approximately 3.6%) were under 25 years old, 33 participants (approximately 39.3%) were between 25 and 30 years old, 30 participants (approximately 35.7%) were between 31 and 35 years old, 13 participants (approximately 15.5%) were between 36 and 45 years old, 3 participants (approximately 3.6%) were between 46 and 50 years old, and 2 participants (approximately 2.4%) were over 50 years old. This means that the ages of the trainers interviewed are primarily concentrated between 25 and 30 years old. This suggests that most trainers are still relatively young professionals who are likely to bring vitality and innovation to their training programs and may also have several years of professional experience. In terms of gender distribution, 31 participants (approximately 36.9%) were male

and 53 participants (approximately 63.1%) were female. This indicates that the majority of trainers interviewed were female. This indicates a higher representation of women in this training group, which may reflect their greater participation in or interest in the specific training areas studied.
Regarding trainer experience, 32 (38.1%) of the surveyed trainers had 3 to 5 years of experience, 38 (45.2%) had 5 to 10 years, and 14 (16.7%) had more than 10 years. This means that the majority of the surveyed trainers had 5 to 10 years of experience. This suggests that most trainers have moderate experience, indicating that they have mastered basic skills and competencies in training delivery but still have room for continued growth and professional development.

Self-Assessment of the Trainer Respondents of their Use of Real-Time Feedback Technology in terms of Frequency of Technology Use

	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
1. I frequently use real-time feedback technology during training sessions.	3.01	.87	Agree	True of Me	5
2. I incorporate feedback tools into most of my training programs.	3.08	.89	Agree	True of Me	3
3. I rely on real-time data to guide training decisions.	3.10	.90	Agree	True of Me	2
4. I consistently monitor performance through technological means. 5.	3.01	.97	Agree	True of Me	5
I prefer using technology to traditional feedback methods.	3.17	.86	Agree	True of Me	1
Composite Mean	3.07	.73	**Agree**	**True of Me**	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very True of Me; 2.51-3.50 Agree/ True of Me; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/ Slightly True of Me; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/ Not True of Me

The item "I prefer to use technology over traditional feedback methods" had the highest mean score of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 0.86, indicating that respondents agreed with this statement and considered it "consistent with my understanding." This indicates that, across all dimensions of technology use frequency, the trainers surveyed expressed the strongest preference for using modern technology-based feedback methods over traditional methods, reflecting their positive attitude toward the adoption of technological advancements in training settings.

The items "I frequently use real-time feedback technology in training sessions" and "I consistently monitor performance through technology" had the lowest mean scores of 3.01. While these results were still rated as "agree," they suggest that while trainers acknowledge the importance of real-time feedback tools, their actual consistent use and monitoring in training sessions may not be as regular or habitual as other practices. This may indicate logistical, technical, or environmental barriers that limit more frequent application.

The composite mean for technology use frequency was 3.07 with a standard deviation of 0.73, corresponding to the interpretations of "agree" and "consistent with my understanding." Overall, the surveyed trainers generally acknowledge and use real-time feedback technology in training sessions. However, the lower scores suggest that while the practice exists, there is room for improvement in the frequency and consistency of its implementation.

Self-Assessment of the Trainer Respondents of their Use of Real-Time Feedback Technology in terms of Skill in Using Feedback Tools

	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
1. I am skilled in operating wearable or sensor-based feedback devices.	3.11	.93	Agree	True of Me	2
2. I can troubleshoot basic technical issues during training.	2.98	.96	Agree	True of Me	5
3. I know how to set up and calibrate real-time feedback systems.	3.07	.74	Agree	True of Me	4
4. I use the software interface of the feedback tools with confidence.	3.09	.80	Agree	True of Me	3
5. I can train others in using these feedback technologies.	2.97	.87	Agree	True of Me	6
6. I keep up to date with the latest features of the tools I use.	3.13	.80	Agree	True of Me	1
Composite Mean	3.06	.68	Agree	True of Me	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very True of Me; 2.51-3.50 Agree/ True of Me; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/ Slightly True of Me; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/ Not True of Me

The item "I stay up to date on the latest features of the tools I use" received the highest mean score of 3.13 with a standard deviation of 0.80, which is interpreted as "agree" and "I agree." This indicates that the trainers are proactively staying up-to-date on the latest developments in feedback technology. This behavior reflects their growth mindset and commitment to continuous improvement.

The lowest-rated item was "I can train others in the use of these feedback technologies," with a mean score of 2.97 and a standard deviation of 0.87. While still within the "agree" range, this low score suggests that the trainers may lack confidence in transferring their knowledge to others. This may indicate a need for more advanced training or mentoring experience to enhance their capabilities as feedback technology resource providers. The overall mean for feedback tool use skills was 3.06 with a standard deviation of 0.68, indicating consistent scores among the trainers and consistent interpretation of "This is true for me." This overall result indicates that trainers generally believe they can effectively use feedback tools. However, subtle variations in item scores highlight areas where further skill development could be beneficial, particularly in troubleshooting and training others.

Summary Self-Assessment of the Trainer Respondents of their Use of Real-Time Feedback Technology

	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Interpretation	Rank
Frequency of Technology Use	3.07	.73	Agree	True of Me	3
Skill in Using Feedback Tools	3.06	.68	Agree	True of Me	4
Data Interpretation Ability	3.01	.65	Agree	True of Me	7
Real-Time Training Adjustments	3.10	.71	Agree	True of Me	1
Feedback Communication	3.05	.69	Agree	True of Me	5
Impact on Motivation	3.09	.61	Agree	True of Me	2
Confidence in Tech Integration	3.04	.70	Agree	True of Me	6
Overall	3.06	.65	Agree	True of Me	

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/ Very True of Me; 2.51-3.50 Agree/ True of Me; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/ Slightly True of Me; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/ Not True of Me

The highest-rated area was real-time training adjustments, with a mean score of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 0.71, interpreted as "Agree" and "Meets my expectations." This indicates that the coaches surveyed were most confident and

competent in adjusting their training methods in real time based on feedback technology. This demonstrates their responsiveness and adaptability, enabling them to leverage data to instantly adjust training intensity or strategy, directly improving athlete performance and engagement.

Data interpretation skills had the lowest mean score of 3.01 with a standard deviation of 0.65. While still in the "Agree" category, this low score suggests that coaches may lack confidence or consistency in analyzing real-time data and drawing accurate insights from metrics. This suggests potential areas for improvement, such as strengthening their analytical skills or providing additional training in performance data interpretation. The overall composite mean across all categories was 3.06 with a standard deviation of 0.65, interpreted as "Agree" and "I agree." This indicates that, overall, the trainers surveyed self-assessed their use of real-time feedback technology positively. They demonstrated competence and openness to technology integration, particularly strong competence in real-time applications. However, targeted support in data interpretation and deeper integration of technology concepts could further enhance their effectiveness and confidence in using feedback tools.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates a significant positive correlation between aerobics trainers' self-assessed proficiency in using real-time feedback technology (RTFT) and their observations of client performance improvements. Trainers who reported higher confidence in their ability to use feedback tools, interpret data, and make real-time adjustments were more likely to report greater client gains in cardiovascular endurance, recovery time, and test scores. This finding strongly supports the integration of RTFT as a valuable tool for enhancing the efficacy of aerobic training programs. The results indicate that technology, when effectively leveraged by the trainer, serves as a powerful catalyst for achieving measurable fitness outcomes.

However, the study also reveals critical areas for development. While trainers expressed a general preference for technology over traditional methods, their self-assessments indicated room for growth in the consistent application of tools and, most notably, in advanced data interpretation skills. The variation in technology use based on age and experience suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach to implementation is insufficient. Therefore, the full potential of RTFT can only be realized through targeted, continuous professional development programs. These programs should focus not only on the operational use of new devices but, crucially, on building trainers' analytical capabilities to translate raw data into actionable, personalized coaching insights.

Recommendations

1. Develop targeted training programs, particularly for senior coaches and those with 10 years or more of experience, to build their confidence and competence in using real-time feedback tools.
2. Encourage facilities to incorporate real-time feedback systems into regular training programs to support data-driven decision-making and promote continuous improvement for clients. 3. Include modules in coach development programs that focus on effective feedback communication, as there is a high correlation between feedback communication and client performance.
4. Provide coaches with best practices for making real-time adjustments based on feedback data, emphasizing the critical role of immediate adjustments in improving client endurance and technique.
5. Select or develop intuitive and user-friendly feedback tools that are accessible to coaches of all skill levels to ensure widespread use and adoption.
6. Conduct ongoing workshops or certification events to keep coaches informed of the latest advancements in fitness technology and strengthen skill development and application. 7. Support coaches in regularly reviewing their own technology use and its impact on client outcomes to foster self-awareness and continuous improvement. 8. Encourage the use of collected data not only for training adjustments but also for formal assessment of client progress, thereby enhancing the credibility and utility of feedback technology.

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