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Barriers to active lifestyle among tertiary physical education students before the pandemic

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Abstract---An active lifestyle is a way of life that incorporates regular exercise and healthy nutrition to improve overall well-being. Any activity that gets you up, down, sideways, and moving is considered part of an active lifestyle. This study evaluated the barriers to an active lifestyle before the pandemic among tertiary physical education students at Surigao del Sur State University (SDSSU)—Tandag Campus. The goal of this study was to discover the barriers that each student has, as well as the reasons why students are not physically active for a variety of reasons. The method used in this study was a descriptive-quantitative design with the use of a researcher-made questionnaire administered to the tertiary physical education students to collate the data relevant for interpretation. Based on the findings, the non-availability of fitness equipment, facilities, and resources were the top barriers for students before the pandemic. Students' self-motivation, encouragement, and self-support are the student coping strategies before the pandemic. Lifestyle habits have been dramatically altered given these unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is possible that barriers to physical activity have changed because of the global pandemic and the shift in educational settings to a new normal in which educators and students have learned to adapt to this change.

Keywords---barriers, active lifestyle, tertiary physical education students, and descriptive-quantitative.

Introduction

The Surigao del Sur State University (SDSSU) Tertiary Physical Education students believed that maintaining good physical and mental health was one of the most crucial aspects of life. Active physical activity could maintain and enhance one's physical, mental, and overall quality of life. Lack of time is the most frequent obstacle to a regular physical activity program, and most of us are aware of this. People most often claim a lack of time, fatigue, company, resources, or abilities as reasons why they don't engage in regular physical activity. Making physical activity a regular part of your life may be made easier by recognizing your obstacles and learning how to overcome them.

Moreover, Hazzaa (2018) identified that possible barriers to being physically active (PA) must be determined and eliminated to promote active living and reduce inactivity among the population. Several environmental barriers related to urbanization are believed to be attributed to such a global inactivity epidemic, including fear of violence and outdoor crime, high-density traffic, low air quality, and a lack of suitable exercise places, sports facilities, sidewalks, and parks. In developed countries, advancing age and lack of time appear to be among the most common barriers to PA. Family income may also influence physical inactivity, as lower-income people are less likely to meet PA guidelines when compared to higher-income people. In addition, a recent study found that adults who thought there were environmental or personal barriers to participating in physical activity were less likely to do it than those who thought there were no barriers at all. Based on the discussion of the study by Kanavaki et al. (2017), positive exercise experiences and beliefs, knowledge, enjoying exercise, a "keep going" attitude, adjusting and prioritizing physical activity, and having professional and social support were important physical activity facilitators. He also added that motivation, attitude, and behavior regulation aren't just caused by external factors and social support. They all play a role.

The goal of this study was to discover the barriers that each student has, as well as the reasons why students are not physically active for a variety of reasons.

Methodology

The research method employed was a descriptive-quantitative with the use of researcher-made questionnaire duly validated by the City Nutritionist, the University Nurse Head and the Research and Development Head. The survey questionnaire composed of three parts where some of the questions may be answered in multiple responses. The first part seeks answers on the profile of the respondents. The second part deals with the barriers to active lifestyle needed as perceived by the respondents. and the third part pertains to the coping strategies based on the barriers encountered for both personal and in the community. The correlations among these variables are also determined. The reliability test was conducted at Saint Theresa College in Tandag City and Saint Vincent de Paul

Diocesan College in Mangagoy, Surigao del Sur via an online survey. Using Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, the research instrument has a coefficient of 0.79 level of reliability, which is deemed acceptable. There is no item subject to rejection and revision. The online survey was administered to the respondents, who are the officially enrolled students of SDSSU-Tandag Campus with physical education courses. The respondents are randomly selected by the researchers where every student has an equal chance to respond in this study. There are 3,560 students enrolled in physical education courses in AY 2019-2020. Out of the total population, 568 samples are chosen with 15.96%.

Result and Discussion

Table 1
Barriers To Active Lifestyle Before The Pandemic

BARRIERS TO ACTIVE LIFESTYLE	Weighted Mean
I do not have enough time to do physical activities for my fitness.	3.05
I am not motivated to indulge in various exercises training.	2.98
I cannot perform fitness activities because I am always tired and clumsy.	2.73
I have no companion to achieve physical fitness goals and I hate to be alone.	3.00
I found it irrelevant and not my priority this time.	2.69
I have no skills to perform those physical activities which are difficult for me.	2.65
There were no fitness resources, equipment, and materials when I work-out.	3.16
I am unhealthy to be healthy; I found it difficult because of my health status.	2.61
Exercise training apparatus, materials, equipment, and facilities are not convenient every time I needed.	2.90
I am ashamed when somebody saw me doing physical activities.	2.96
I am not encouraged and supported to do active lifestyle.	2.59
I have fear of injury.	2.77

It is expensive; I can't even afford to buy healthy foods.	2.64
I will be bullied because of my disability.	1.99
I am stuck to social media, mobile games, and other technological-related activities.	2.86
OVERALL MEAN	2.77

Table 1 presents the results on barriers to an active lifestyle before the pandemic. It shows that the greatest barrier to the active lifestyle of physical education students in higher or tertiary education before the pandemic was the absence or non-availability of fitness resources, equipment, and materials intended for workout purposes, with a 3.16 weighted mean. It implies that tertiary physical education students will be motivated to exercise once the necessary equipment and facilities are available at the university. Although there was a fitness gymnasium available in the city, unfortunately, students have financial constraints that hamper their interest in engaging in fitness activities. In the study by Dixit et al. (2021), a lack of resources was perceived to be one of the barriers to physical inactivity among medical students, aside from a lack of willpower, which was perceived to be the most significant determinant for physical inactivity. However, Ferreira Silva et al. (2022) identified *lack of time* as the most cited barrier to physical activity in university students, which is associated with spending more time on mobile devices and having less time for other activities, including physical activity. Kulavic et al. (2013) & Ross & Meller (2016) also added lack of time, energy, willpower or motivation, and financial resources as some of the barriers to being physically active. In the study by Wright et al. (2018), they cited a *lack of commitment* as a primary barrier to physical activity. It further implies that the barriers to an active lifestyle vary according to individual differences and lifestyle.

On the other hand, respondents disagreed that bullying exists among them. It revealed that bullying was not a barrier to an active lifestyle and was not evident among the tertiary physical education students who have the common goal of fitness and wellness. This result was associated with the anti-bullying act of the country that prohibits everyone from bullying. Republic Act No. 10627, also known as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, emphasizes and addresses bullying in all educational institutions and other settings (GOVPH, 2013). Further, respondents also disagreed that they are not supported and motivated to lead an active lifestyle because even the physical education instructors at the university are physically active in their lifestyle despite their loaded schedules. This shows the students the benefits of physical activity. In PE class, students learn about the positive effects of doing fitness activities. This encourages them to do more activities that help them live a more active life on a regular basis.

Physical activity is one of the best things people can do to improve their health conditions. Any activity that gets you up, down, sideways, and moving is considered part of an active lifestyle. The identification of its barriers was crucial when it came to developing interventions to promote physical activity. Among

adults, lack of time, social influence, and lack of motivation are frequently reported barriers to regular participation in physical education courses.

Table 2
Coping Strategies To Active Lifestyle Before The Pandemic

COPING STRATEGIES TO ACTIVE LIFESTYLE	Weighted Mean
I set schedule intended for exercise and wake up early in the morning.	3.12
I joined organizations that focus on physical training like dance troupe and sports clubs.	2.64
I take food supplements and vitamins that boost energy level.	2.89
I do workout activities that don't require equipment, materials, and apparatus.	3.37
I purposely walk short-distance engagements even when I can't do strenuous activities.	3.38
I motivate, encourage, and support my own self.	3.74
I invite someone to join me doing fitness activities.	3.12
Only those simple or moderate levels of physical activities that do not require complications are usually what I performed.	3.43
I eat not too much expensive foods as long as it is healthy nourishments.	3.53
I exercise alone according to my convenient time without relying to others.	3.48
OVERALL MEAN	3.27

Table 2 presents the results on the coping strategies of physical education students towards the barriers to an active lifestyle before the pandemic. It shows that the most effective coping strategy before the pandemic was to motivate, encourage, and support themselves in engaging in an active lifestyle with a weighted mean of 3.74. Regardless of the absence of resources, facilities, and equipment, tertiary physical education students are motivated to engage in physical activity for an active life. The World Health Organization (2019) highlighted that self-motivation promotes the importance of physical activity for health and well-being. On the other hand, in the study of Austin et al. (2022), it contradicts that *lack of motivation* and time are the most frequently reported barriers. Intervention focusing on motivational support could be an acceptable and effective means of achieving and sustaining positive behavioral change. Motivation that was more self-regulated and intrinsically motivated would help inspire individuals to engage in physical activity more frequently (Ball et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Rolving et al. (2019) agreed that having the support of family and friends in regular participation in physical activities motivates an individual to engage in an active lifestyle.

On the other hand, the lowest response, with a weighted mean of 2.64, is on joining an organization that focuses on physical training like dance troupes and sports clubs. This implies that PE students have many choices and prescribed activities by the university, like cultural and variety shows, intramurals, and athletic meets. Students are physically active, but joining clubs and organizations

is not their primary priority since, before the pandemic, movements were not restricted and there were a variety of physical activities.

Conclusion

The present study sheds light on the barriers and coping strategies to an active lifestyle among tertiary physical education students at Surigao del Sur State University (SDSSU) before the pandemic. As a result, PE students had a strategy for dealing with their daily lives and physical activity even when they are at home. The topmost barriers to an active lifestyle before the pandemic, as perceived by the SDSSU Tertiary Physical Education students, are the absence or non-availability of fitness equipment, facilities, and resources. They coped with this barrier to an active lifestyle before the pandemic by motivating, encouraging, and supporting themselves.

This study was highly beneficial to the students, community, and teachers. Students will improve their fitness levels through involvement in various physical activities, leading to productivity and a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, teachers would be able to incorporate strategies into the teaching-learning process and improve the quality of instruction through this study.

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