

Barriers to Active Lifestyle and the Coping Strategies of the PE Students in the New Normal

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Abstract

The spread of the coronavirus all over the world has an impact on our daily routine, including the limitation of every individual's ability to go out of their respective homes. The active involvement of students in physical activity and the desire to stay active during a pandemic has been jeopardized due to the increase of COVID-19 cases in the country, and this has brought restrictions to limit students' opportunities for physical activity. The objective of this study was to evaluate the barriers and coping strategies to an active lifestyle among tertiary physical education students during the pandemic. The descriptive-quantitative design was used in this study, with a researcher-made questionnaire administered to tertiary physical education students to collect data that is relevant for interpretation. Based on the findings, the non-availability of fitness equipment, facilities, and resources were the top barriers for students to be involved in physical activity in the new normal. Meanwhile, the results showed that when it comes to the coping strategies for an active lifestyle, students engage themselves in doing different household chores to stay active and healthy. Furthermore, in order to keep up an active lifestyle, the identified barriers need to be taken into account by the physical educators and added to the university's physical education program. This can be done by designing a physical activity that works well in the new normal setting and helps each student get healthier and live a healthier life.

Keywords: active lifestyle, barriers, coping strategies, new normal, physical education students

I. INTRODUCTION

An active lifestyle is essential for an individual to stay healthy and achieve holistic development. However, the pandemic has brought challenges to everyone and has obstructed lives due to the current virus. When the pandemic strikes and a lockdown is implemented, it directly impacts all aspects of daily life, especially the means of self-sufficiency. The virus also has an impact on daily life because it prevents people from leaving their homes. Moreover, outdoor physical activities have been disrupted; cases of sedentary lifestyle have increased, having a significant impact on the entire population's overall health.

The present situation is an inevitable dilemma that must make an extra effort, so students should find ways to stay motivated and avoid

becoming dragged down in their studies in order to achieve their goals, as well as engage in regular physical activities to maintain an active lifestyle. According to Biddle & Ekkekakis (2012) physically active lifestyle has been linked to improved mental health. The study of Maugeri et al. (2020), denotes regular exercise boosts one's self-esteem and sense of well-being. Individuals who exercise regularly have fewer depressive and anxiety symptoms, going to lend confidence to the idea that physical activity can help prevent the development of mental disorders.

Therefore, student's involvement in physical activity can contribute to well-being and preventing from any diseases. The study of Jacob (2021) stated that self-care is more important than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic to help develop and maintain a healthy immune system. He also added that the

immune system plays a complex and elegant role in promoting wellness by assisting the body in identifying and effectively responding to viral infections and other diseases. Thus, these statements emphasize that every individual must value themselves for their health promotion and involvement in physical activity for an active lifestyle.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the barriers that each student faces, as well as the coping strategies to stay active in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. This research is extremely valuable to students, and teachers. Participation in various physical activities will improve students' fitness levels, leading to increased productivity and a healthier lifestyle. As a result of this research, teachers will be able to incorporate strategies into the teaching-learning process, improving the quality of instruction. As a result, these contribute to the development of a "fundemic" program on teaching styles for physical education courses that will cater to the needs of students while also addressing the challenges that physical educators face in conducting classes in the new normal.

II. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive-quantitative research method was used, with a researcher-created questionnaire that was validated by the City Nutritionist, the University Nurse Head, and the Research and Development Head. The survey questionnaire was divided into two sections, with some questions requiring multiple responses. The first section addresses the perceived barriers to an active lifestyle as perceived by respondents, and the second section addresses coping strategies based on the barriers encountered for both personal and community reasons.

An online survey was used to conduct the reliability test at Saint Theresa College in Tandag City and Saint Vincent de Paul Diocesan College in Mangagoy, Surigao del Sur. Using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, the research instrument has a coefficient of 0.79, which was considered acceptable. There was no item that was rejected or revised. The

online survey was administered to respondents who are officially enrolled NEMSU-Tandag Campus students taking physical education courses. The respondents are chosen at random by the researchers, and each student has an equal chance of responding to this study. In the academic year 2021–2022, there are 3,950 students enrolled in physical education courses. With 14.38 percent of the total population, 568 samples were chosen.

III. RESULT & DISCUSSION

Question 1. What are the barriers to an active lifestyle for physical education students in the new normal?

The weighted mean was used in calculating the barriers to an active lifestyle of the physical education students in the new normal, as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Barriers To Active Lifestyle In The New Normal

BARRIERS TO ACTIVE LIFESTYLE	Weighted Mean
I am afraid to go to the gym because of the COVID-19 pandemic.	3.19
I am not sure which fitness centers are safe and secured.	3.48
I am afraid to go outside for physical activities due to my vaccination status.	2.69
I am not motivated to do physical activities at home.	3.10
I feel lazy when I am at home.	3.37
I don't have access to any fitness equipment or resources.	3.64
I don't have companions to exercise with outside.	3.43
I find it difficult and/or struggling to wear face mask while exercising in public	3.72
I don't have time to exercise.	3.06
I cannot do physical activity due to online classes.	3.33
I have so many household chores to do than engage in any physical activities.	3.47

I feel self-conscious about how I look when exercising.	3.29
I have lack of sleep.	3.58
Sports activities that require close contact with each other are restricted due to the pandemic.	3.62
I spend most of the time playing online games and surfing on the Internet.	3.03
I eat and watch movies more than do workouts.	3.32
I am emotionally disturbed that demotivates me to be physically active.	3.30
I am demotivated to exercise due to the frustration I have experienced before on the failure of fitness goal attainment.	3.14
I am not aware that engaging to physical activities or being physically active is important, most especially in this time of pandemic.	2.71
I am fearful of being injured.	3.13
OVERALL MEAN	3.28

Table 1 depicts the barriers to physical activity or to an active lifestyle among physical education students in the new normal. As revealed in the table, the top most rank among the identified indicators on the barriers to an active lifestyle from the response of the five hundred sixty-eight (568) respondents falls on *"I don't have access to any fitness equipment or resources,"* with a 3.64 weighted mean and described as "agree." It is frequently followed by the statement "Sports that require close contact with one another are prohibited due to pandemic," which has a weighted mean of 3.62. With a weighted mean of 2.69 and 2.71, respectively, the least barriers to an active lifestyle among tertiary PE students revealed that "I am afraid to go outside for physical activities due to my vaccination status and I am not aware that engaging in physical activities or being physically active is important, especially

in this time of pandemic." This implies that students were not able to utilize any resources for fitness activities due to social isolation brought by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Physical education activities are done through different platforms and social media applications just to give justice to education amidst the global health crisis. Students are encouraged to perform different physical activities by doing live or pre-recorded videos in order to showcase their performance relative to PE courses.

According to Farah (2021), personal barriers such as "laziness and fatigue", "lack of motivation", and "lack of time" were the most prevalent barriers. Interestingly, the aforementioned barriers were identified previously in clinical populations before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some results were somewhat surprising, given that individuals are probably under social isolation as they lack time, become lazy, and experience fatigue—said factors were not expected to be the most frequent personal barriers. On the other hand, both lack of time and laziness and/or fatigue could be associated with domestic activities and working at home, which needs to be further investigated. Studies have shown that both lack of time and being tired are common problems for people.

The statement of Farah's study in 2021 negates the result of the present study since the lack of appropriate facilities and equipment and space to access these resources for fitness and sports engagement were the most revealed barriers to physical activity and were associated with affecting physical activity levels due to the COVID-19. Therefore, it is possible to assume that many individuals experiencing social isolation do not consider their home as an environment conducive to physical activity. As closures of public fitness gyms, school/university gymnasiums, sports complexes, parks, trails, and beaches make it more difficult for individuals to be active, it is important that health professionals, especially PE educators, provide information to the population about the different possibilities of home exercise and sports programs.

Question 2. What are the coping strategies toward the barriers of an active lifestyle in the new normal?

Table 2 To answer question no.1 the weighted mean was used to calculate the barriers to an active lifestyle of physical education students in the new normal.

Table 2. *Coping Strategies To Active Lifestyle In The New Normal*

COPING STRATEGIES TO ACTIVE LIFESTYLE	Weighted Mean
I set schedule intended for exercise and wake up early in the morning.	3.51
I join virtual workouts to keep myself fit while staying at home.	3.16
I use the fitness guide smartphone application to help me stay on track with my fitness goals.	3.43
I take a walk or jog in a quiet and peaceful place.	3.73
I visit some local shopping malls and walk for half an hour or more.	3.21
I do common household chores or other indoor activities	4.01
I do workouts (or exercise) with physically active people.	3.38
I eat healthy and nutritious food to boost my energy levels.	3.79
I ride a bicycle on my own to stay fit and healthy	3.08
I need to get more sleep and do any physical activities alone.	3.96
OVERALL MEAN	3.53

Table 2 presents the coping strategies for the active lifestyle of students in the new normal. The result reveals that among the coping strategies, students agreed to oftentimes do common household chores or indoor activities with a weighted mean of **4.01**. This implies that students perform different household chores regularly or as many times as they like in their home in order to stay fit and healthy. This kind of coping strategy is the best way to stay active since students are in their individual houses performing various kinds of household chores or some indoor activities for their safety.

Adapting to the new normal caused by the pandemic has resulted in the adaptation of strategies to aid students in the transition of having an active lifestyle in the new normal. This conforms to the article by Emling (2017), who stated that several of the world's largest physical activity studies discovered that doing housework is almost as beneficial as running or working out when it comes to lowering your risk of heart disease and extending your life. Consequently, the conduct of regular activity at home and combining it with household chores will significantly help every student, including their families, sustain a healthy and lifelong active lifestyle. According to the World Health Organization, regular physical activity can help us make perfect sense of our days and keep in touch with family and friends. During a pandemic, doing chores at home and doing indoor activities like playing games makes everyone in the family healthier and more productive in the new normal setting.

Meanwhile, riding a bicycle was the least among the coping strategies for an active lifestyle in the new normal, with a weighted mean of 3.08 and a verbal interpretation of neutral-sometimes. The implication of this result is that not all students have a bicycle to use in their involvement in physical activity due to financial limitations. Unlike students with a passion for biking and the financial capacity to acquire one, Knowing that cycling has a lot of benefits for our bodies, like enhancing the cardio-vascular fitness of every individual, Also, since there is limited space for an outdoor physical activity due to health protocol, which hampered students' ability to perform the activity outside, the total implication of the result showed that students are more comfortable doing physical activities at home, including performing household chores, which also improves their fitness level. In the study of Ejiri et al. (2021), approximately 80% of the participants were engaged in either walking or exercise, household chores, or strength training at home to maintain their health, and these exercises proved to be associated with older adults' psychological well-being, with different

impacts observed depending on the activity type.

IV. CONCLUSION

The prevailing study sheds light on the barriers and coping strategies to an active lifestyle among physical education students in the new normal setting. Based on the findings, the non-availability of fitness equipment, facilities, and resources were the top barriers for students to be involved in physical activity in the new normal. Meanwhile, the results showed that when it comes to the coping strategies for an active lifestyle, students engage themselves in doing different household chores to stay active and healthy. Furthermore, in order to keep up an active lifestyle, the identified barriers need to be taken into account by the physical educators and added to the university's physical education program. This can be accomplished by creating a physical activity that continues to work well in the new normal setting and assists each student in becoming better and living a healthier life.

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