



P-ISSN: 2394-1685  
E-ISSN: 2394-1693  
Impact Factor (RJIIF): 5.38  
IJPESH 2024; 11(4): 277-280  
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[www.kheljournal.com](http://www.kheljournal.com)  
Received: 05-05-2024  
Accepted: 11-06-2024

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## Teachers physical activity, mental health and quality of life: Basis for health and exercise program

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.22271/kheljournal.2024.v11.i4e.3433>

### Abstract

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the present levels of collegiate teachers' physical activity, mental health, and quality of life as well as their coping mechanisms for handling these aspects of their challenges in a few state colleges and universities in the Philippines using a sequential explanatory strategy. Data showed that many teachers were having problems with their physical and mental health. Most participants, particularly women and adults, did not meet the recommended physical activity levels because they spent too much time sitting, and most of their modes of transportation did not require them to walk. Coping mechanisms such as prayer, coffee breaks, and naps, as well as regular exercise regimens, particularly resistance training and biking, help teachers to improve their physical and mental fitness. The highlighted tactics that educators employ ought to be taken into consideration for policy interventions aimed at promoting mental and physical well-being in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Physical activity, mental health, quality of life

### Introduction

Numerous research studies have been carried out to investigate the mental and physical health of teachers in the job. University professors exhibit similar levels of PA and a link between PA and wellbeing as the broader community. It is necessary to implement carefully thought-out initiatives to improve university staff members' well-being and PA Cooper, K., & Barton, G. C. (2016) [3]. Seventy-five percent of university employees' workdays were spent seated, with the exception of those in facilities management. Fountaine, C. J., Piacentini, M., & Liguori, G. A. (2014) [4] state that university personnel seem to be ideal candidates for workplace interventions to reduce physical inactivity in conjunction with low levels of leisure time PA. One of the main risk factors for coronary artery disease is physical inactivity. It also raises the risk of obesity, high blood pressure, stroke, poor HDL cholesterol, and diabetes mellitus (AHA, 2005). Cardiovascular disease, thromboembolic stroke, hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, osteoporosis, obesity, colon cancer, breast cancer, anxiety, and depression are among the disease outcomes linked to physical inactivity in prospective observational studies. Consequently, in the majority of the world's nations, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) linked to physical inactivity are the biggest public health issue. Improving physical activity behaviors across all populations requires immediate implementation of effective public health initiatives. According to WHO (2002), there are four different contexts in which people engage in physical activity on a daily basis: (1) at work (particularly if the job requires manual labor); (2) while traveling (walking or cycling to work); (3) while performing household chores; and (4) during leisure time (sports and recreational activities). Any or all of these areas of everyday physical activity can be the focus of improving physical activity. In order to distinguish between individuals who stayed active throughout the transition and those who did not, other recommendations were also revealed. For example, Discriminant Function Analysis (DFA) identified specific behavioral and control correlates about PA enjoyment, limited time, inconsistent schedule, work demands, and job pressures. To prevent physical inactivity, PA interventions given before career transitions may be necessary. Rhodes, R. E., and Kirk, M. A.

(2012) [6]. According to the study by Raustorp, J., & Health, 13, 72-77. to by commuting by bicycle, 19.2% of the population can meet the health recommendations.

Prescriptions for physical activity are based on the many types of physical activity. Furthermore, in university teaching, burnout syndrome is very common. Ayina, C. A., Tanga, M. Y. L., Ngalagou, P. M., Assomo-Ndemba, P. B., Manga, L. O., Ebolo, H. O., & Mandengue, S. H. (2019) [8]. Participating in sports and other physical hobbies and pastimes helps prevent burnout syndrome. As a result, the researcher made the decision to investigate how people's struggles to be active at work relate to their physical activity, mental health, and quality of life. Additionally, the goal is to create and implement a well-thought-out wellness program for teaching staff in order to reduce stress and motivate them to do better at their jobs.

## Methods and Materials

### Design and Participants

This study determined the physical activity of university staff members utilizing a mixed method, a sequential explanatory approach using survey technology. It is a sort of research that characterizes and interprets events based on its features, including behaviors, beliefs, processes, and trends, according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011). The study employed stratified sampling to choose respondents in order to

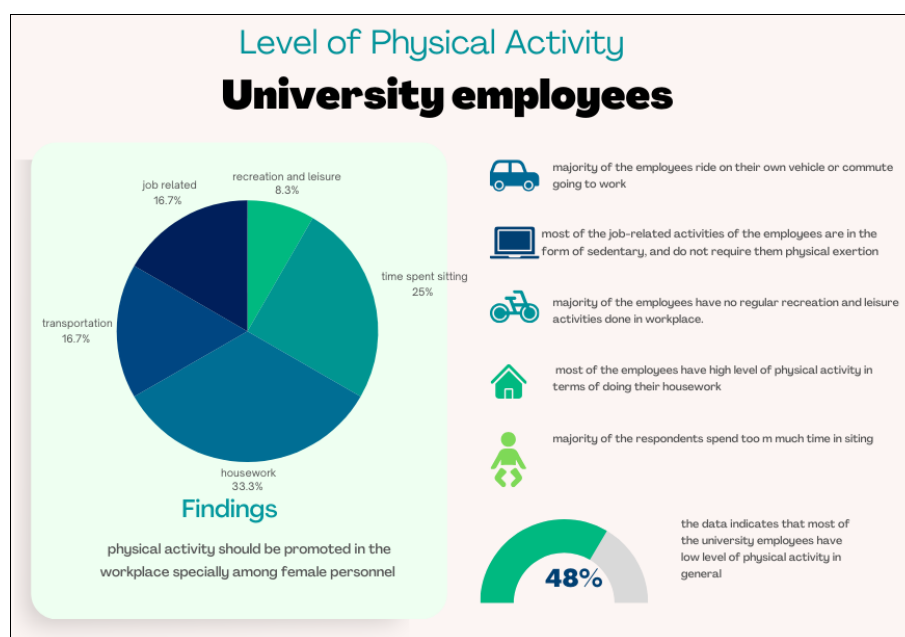
Koglin, T. (2019) [10] the potential for active commuting by bicycle and its possible effects on public health. Journal of Transport &

guarantee the representativeness of the data. For the study, a sizable and distributed population is involved. Because there are many teaching and non-teaching staff members in Central Luzon's public universities, the researcher found it straightforward to collect data using a Google Form.

### Research Instrument and Procedure

The instrument was a modified version of Booth (2000)'s International Physical Activity Questionnaire, which was first created in October 2002. The investigator utilized documentary analysis via books, journals, online browsing, and a thorough review of both domestic and international studies and literatures to inform the development of the survey and questionnaire. The researcher created the questionnaire after reviewing and analyzing questionnaire samples from related studies.

The main tool utilized to gather data for this study was a self-administered questionnaire. The initial section of the survey comprised questions about the respondent's age, sex, and employment status. An open-ended question in Part II asked the respondents about their coping mechanisms for handling stress at work and about their best tips for overcoming the obstacles associated with being a teacher. the respondents' experiences with physical activity.



**Fig 1:** Level of physical activity, University employees

Based on the respondents' answer to the open-ended questionnaire in Part III of the questionnaire: What are the problems you encountered in doing physical activity the following are the summarized responses based on the thematic analysis conducted by the researcher: Physical Activity (PA) promotion programs are limited in the workplace Lack of more individually-based programs which are tailored materials to individual needs more fitness instructors are needed specially in the role of resistance training Sports and exercise nutrition experts are lacking which found to be essential Lack of gym equipment and bicycles in the workplace to be used which is essential Finally, there were lack of in-depth evaluation strategies and complete descriptions of intervention programs in order to

identify the most effective strategies.

## Discussion

With Considering the responses provided by the participants to the open-ended section of Part III of the survey: What are the challenges you faced when engaging in physical activity? The following are the condensed answers derived from the researcher's theme analysis:

Limited workplace initiatives to promote physical activity (PA) and a dearth of more individualized programs with materials catered to individual needs More fitness instructors are required, particularly for weight training. Sports and exercise nutrition specialists are overlooked, despite their importance. Workplaces lack the necessary gym equipment

and bicycles.

Ultimately, the absence of comprehensive evaluation techniques and comprehensive program descriptions for intervention programs made it difficult to determine which strategies were the most successful.

### Conversation

Regarding the Respondent Profile, it indicates that there are more teaching staff members than non-teaching staff members and more female respondents than male respondents. The respondents have been working for one to five years, hold a master's degree, and are primarily between the ages of 46 and 59. Concerning the Physical Activity of SUC Staff: Exercise That's Relevant to Your Work Overall, mean ratings indicate that respondents strongly feel they engage in physical activity related to their jobs, with the lowest mean being agreement with moderate physical activity, which includes playing, riding a bike, or lifting small goods. Furthermore, SUC non-teaching staff members engage in more physically taxing activities than do teaching staff members. SUC staff members physically participated in transportation-related activities while they were traveling. The majority of SUC employees drove to work, and they had to walk a minimum of ten minutes between locations. More walking is preferred by teaching staff members than by non-teaching staff members. As with the majority of workers' opposition to using bicycles for commuting, respondents were unwavering in their agreement that housework, household upkeep, and family care are all activities. Although they are strongly against performing tasks that need a lot of physical effort, they are in favor of doing them periodically. They conduct out sensible housekeeping tasks and fully agree. Exercise for enjoyment, sport, and leisure: Despite the program's constraints and their hectic work schedules, which are the largest obstacles to working out, SUC staff members—both teaching and non-teaching—participate in physical activity mostly for leisure. It's encouraging to see how people are actively engaging in leisure, sports,

## Part 2 Coping Strategies

### Prayer

Some individuals mentioned that placing their belief in God served as one of their coping mechanisms for mental health issues like depression and anxiety. Participant 1: I just have faith that God will take care of everything in my life when I'm feeling very down. My mental health gets better when I just submit everything to Him while I'm feeling hopeless. Yes, I just handed it to him when I was hopeless and despondent, and in either case, the weight either instantly vanished or got lighter over time. I start each day with prayer, and I find that it helps me deal with the day ahead of me. Yes, when I have a major issue, I just pray and give it to God, and it greatly improves my situation. Yes, I still remember when I'm in the darkest time of my teaching career its prayer that makes me strong again and have a good life. Participant two also confirms the, yes, I almost give up my life I just leave it to God when I'm so down I cried that time and pray and I recovered from that dark days of my life. Yes, when my problems come to my life specially in my work, I just pray make some meditations and surrender it to God and it works for me

Thus, our research demonstrates that spirituality, particularly in the context of professions, can be incorporated into the framework of workplace health promotion programs to enhance worker performance and organizational efficacy.

Prayer and other spiritual practices can also help employees become more self-sufficient. More spirituality-related person resources may mitigate the negative effects of job demands on job strain, including burnout, and affect motivation by encouraging work engagement when job demands are high, as demonstrated in the Job-demand resources model according to Chirico, F., Sharma, M., Zaffina, S., & Magnavita, N. (2020) <sup>[2]</sup>.

### Coffee Break

**Participant 2:** "Yes, I do depend on coffee, particularly in the morning for a snack with rice treats for breakfast, as well as for an afternoon snack at approximately three o'clock in the afternoon. Coffee helps me stay motivated when my cortisol level is low." This time, I add nuts and chocolate delights to my coffee. Participant from a Third-Party Coffee provides me energy, keeps my mind busy, and makes my job as a teacher easier, so it's my go-to drink when I'm feeling low. Coffee gives me the energy to get back up and face my academic challenges when I'm feeling low. I feel weaker when I don't drink coffee because it appears like there is something missing from my routine and nutrition. My morning coffee, along with some bread and eggs, gives me the energy I need to go through the day. I enjoy sipping robusta-bean coffee as a midday snack since it gives me energy and motivation to achieve more. Yes, a morning snack of robusta or liberica beans along with delicious coconut treats helps one cope with a heavy job during the day. Yes, when I take my arabica coffee first thing in the morning with bread, it helps me think more clearly and makes me react much faster. It's supported by informants two yes when I drink coffee it makes me my mind very active and helps me to focus on my work. Participant two also says "I can't start my day when I don't drink coffee, it is affirmed by participant three that coffee is vital in their functioning in the workplace, yes, I love to have my coffee also in around 9am to 10 am its very good source of my energy, it boosts my mind and I think it makes me to accomplish many paperwork in my desk."

### Time spent sleeping

Both participants 2 and 3 attested that napping is an extremely efficient means of replenishing their energy, as it infuses them with fresh vitality each time, particularly in the post-lunch slump. Another participant mentioned that taking a nap provides them with extra energy to work, particularly in the afternoon session. Participant 3 corroborated the statements made by the other informants, saying, "Yeah, I feel better when I incorporate a quick nap into my routine, especially when I'm working in the afternoon."

According to Muang, K. S. (2020) <sup>[7]</sup>. The coffee consumption has impact on job productivity as a self-perception on coffee drinkers, mental effects, and the urge to drink coffee. It also forms a habit among the coffee lovers making them feel more concentrated, energetic and more confident at work.

### Physical education and other associated activities

Yes, I work out with cardio three times a week, and it's incredibly beneficial to my physical and emotional health. I spent fifteen to thirty minutes strolling. Yes, doing some exercise—especially riding a bike—makes me feel better and happier when I'm having a bad day at work. Yes, exercising—especially for a brief period of time when lifting weights—makes me feel better and reduces my stress from work. I like to include weight training in my fitness regimen. Additionally, Participant 2 stated, "I go to the gym every



Tuesday and Thursday, and it makes me feel better about my physical and mental well-being. Compared to merely cardio workouts, I feel stronger after performing resistance training. Especially in the morning, I feel amazing after riding. It helps me feel happier and more confident while also calming me down. Yes, riding a bike benefit both my physical and emotional health. It helps me a lot at work by enabling me to transport my items to my destination. Additionally, participant 3 stated, "Yes, riding encourages me to stay active most of the time as I utilize it as a form of transportation. Participant 2: "Yeah, riding a bike in the morning helps me go places and is very beneficial to my physical and emotional well-being at work.



Fig 2: Workplace Health Model

In order to improve the quality of life at work, policies that support coffee breaks, naps, regular exercise programs with sufficient equipment and fitness professionals, and spiritual well-being should be promoted and taken into consideration. The physical and emotional health of teachers has a direct bearing on the teaching effect. The importance of instructors' physical and mental health are essential for the effectiveness of their functioning. Gao, X., & Yin, Y. (2020) [5].

## Conclusion

According to the survey, university teachers' levels of physical activity did not meet the benchmarks' daily criteria. It is necessary to make improvements to the cardio and strength training facilities, as well as the availability of the gym equipment in the workplace and the bike and pedestrian lanes. Adult and female employees should receive more attention when it comes to physical activity promotion. Additionally, the study shows that teachers used strategies to improve their well-being despite limitations and barriers to external factors affecting their physical and mental health. These strategies included the promotion of spiritual health, coffee breaks, nap times, and exercise programs in the workplace. Given the study's findings, these strategies should be taken into consideration as they were found to be very beneficial in helping respondents deal with the challenges of the teaching profession. Promotion of coffee break, napping, regular exercise program with adequate equipment and fitness

experts and spiritual health in the workplace should be encouraged and consider for policy intervention for the promotion of quality of life in the workplace

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