



Exploring the Availability and Perception of Fitness Programs for Teachers in Higher Education Institutions

Crisanto V. Cipriano

Western Mindanao State University, Zamboanga City, Philippines

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4649-7601>

Osias Kit T. Kilag

PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc., Mercado St., Poblacion, Toledo City, Philippines

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0845-3373>

Rina F. Solatorio

PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc., Toledo City, Cebu, Philippines

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1556-4058>

Jenbe E. Calunsag

PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc., Toledo City, Cebu, Philippines

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1556-4058>

Joana Marie F. Tintim

PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc., Toledo City, Cebu, Philippines

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0351-8492>

Jason Isaac III A. Rabi

Department of Education, Schools Division of Toledo City, Philippines

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0912-2058>

Abstract:

This study examines the availability and perception of fitness programs for teachers in higher education institutions. Through an integrative review of existing literature, key themes emerge regarding interest, barriers, benefits, and the role of organizational support. Teachers demonstrate a strong interest in diverse fitness activities but face barriers such as time constraints, scheduling conflicts, and perceived costs. Participation in fitness programs is associated with numerous benefits, including improved physical health, enhanced mental well-being, and increased job satisfaction. Organizational support, including leadership buy-in, resource allocation, and supportive policies, plays a crucial role in promoting participation and fostering a culture of health and wellness. By addressing barriers and leveraging organizational support, higher education institutions can create environments that prioritize teacher well-being, ultimately contributing to a more positive and sustainable work environment within academia.

Keywords: fitness programs, teachers, higher education institutions, well-being, organizational support

Introduction:

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of promoting health and wellness among educators, particularly in higher education institutions (Cipriano, et al. 2024). With the increasing demands and stressors associated with teaching in academia, maintaining physical fitness and overall well-being is essential for educators to perform their duties effectively and sustainably. While numerous studies have explored wellness programs in various workplace settings, limited attention has been given to the availability and perception of fitness programs specifically tailored for teachers in higher education institutions (Cipriano, et al. 2024).

This research aims to address this gap by examining the availability and perception of fitness programs for teachers in higher education institutions. By investigating the accessibility, utilization, and attitudes towards such programs, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the support systems and resources provided for educators' well-being in academia (Redublado, et al., 2024). Understanding the landscape of fitness programs for teachers in higher education can inform policymakers, administrators, and educators themselves about the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle and fostering a supportive work environment (Santos, et al., 2024).

To achieve this aim, the research will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive data on the availability and perception of fitness programs among teachers in higher education institutions (Uy, et al., 2024). By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, this study intends to offer a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing the accessibility and effectiveness of fitness programs tailored for educators in academia (Kashan, et al., 2023).

This research is significant as it contributes to the broader discourse on teacher well-being and highlights the importance of addressing the unique needs of educators in higher education settings. By shedding light on the availability and perception of fitness programs, this study seeks to advocate for the implementation of supportive



initiatives that promote the holistic well-being of teachers, ultimately enhancing their job satisfaction, performance, and overall quality of life.

Literature Review:

The promotion of health and wellness among educators, particularly in higher education institutions, has garnered increasing attention in recent years. This literature review aims to explore existing research on the availability and perception of fitness programs for teachers in higher education institutions. By synthesizing findings from previous studies, this review provides a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape, identifies gaps in the literature, and lays the groundwork for the present study.

Teacher Wellness Programs in Higher Education: A Systematic Review

Pieper, et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review to examine the impact of workplace wellness programs in higher education institutions. Their analysis encompassed a wide range of wellness initiatives, including fitness programs, mental health support, and stress management workshops. While the review identified several benefits associated with wellness programs, such as improved job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism, the authors noted a lack of specific research focusing on fitness programs tailored for teachers in higher education.

Building on the need for more focused research, Brown and Elliott (2015) conducted a qualitative study to explore teacher wellness programs specifically in post-secondary institutions. Through in-depth interviews with educators, administrators, and wellness coordinators, the researchers gained insights into the design, implementation, and perceived effectiveness of fitness programs. Their findings highlighted the importance of providing diverse and accessible fitness options to accommodate the varying needs and preferences of teachers.

Michael, et al. (2019) adopted a mixed-methods approach to investigate the needs and preferences of teachers regarding wellness programs. Their study involved surveys and focus group discussions with faculty members from multiple disciplines. The findings revealed a strong interest in fitness-related activities, with participants expressing a desire for on-campus gym facilities, group exercise classes, and wellness incentives. Additionally, the researchers identified barriers to participation, such as lack of time and awareness, which underscored the importance of proactive promotion and scheduling.

Promoting Teacher Well-being Through Fitness Programs

Turner and Garvis (2023) conducted an exploratory study to assess the impact of fitness programs on teacher well-being in higher education. Their research involved implementing a six-month fitness intervention consisting of group workouts, nutritional counseling, and wellness workshops. Through pre- and post-program surveys, the researchers observed significant improvements in participants' physical health, mood, and overall job satisfaction. These findings underscored the potential of structured fitness programs to enhance teacher well-being and productivity.

In a qualitative study by Wilson, et al. (2018), faculty and staff members shared their perceptions and experiences regarding wellness initiatives in higher education. While the study encompassed various aspects of wellness, including mental health support and work-life balance, fitness programs emerged as a central theme. Participants emphasized the importance of integrating physical activity into their daily routines and expressed a desire for employer-sponsored fitness incentives, such as gym memberships and wellness stipends.

The literature reviewed provides valuable insights into the availability and perception of fitness programs for teachers in higher education institutions. While existing research highlights the potential benefits of such programs in promoting teacher well-being and job satisfaction, several gaps and opportunities for further investigation are evident. By addressing these gaps, the present study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on educator wellness and advocate for the development of tailored fitness initiatives in higher education settings.

Methodology:

For this study, an integrative review methodology was employed to synthesize and analyze existing research on the availability and perception of fitness programs for teachers in higher education institutions. The integrative review process involved several steps, including identifying relevant literature, appraising the quality of studies, extracting data, and synthesizing findings. A comprehensive search of academic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and PsycINFO was conducted to identify relevant studies published between 2016 and 2023. Keywords including "fitness programs," "teacher well-being," "higher education," and "perception" were used to narrow down the search results.

Studies were included if they focused on fitness programs specifically tailored for teachers in higher education institutions and explored aspects such as availability, utilization, and perception. Only peer-reviewed articles written in English were considered for inclusion. Studies that primarily focused on K-12 education, wellness programs in other workplace settings, or non-peer-reviewed sources were excluded from the review. The selected



studies were critically appraised to assess their methodological rigor and relevance to the research topic. Data extraction was then conducted to capture key information, including study aims, methodologies, participant demographics, and main findings. A thematic analysis approach was used to identify common themes and patterns across the literature.

A total of 15 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the integrative review. These studies encompassed a diverse range of methodologies, including qualitative interviews, surveys, and intervention studies. Many studies reported a strong interest among teachers in participating in fitness programs, with a desire for diverse activities such as group exercise classes, gym facilities, and wellness workshops.

Barriers to participation in fitness programs included lack of time, scheduling conflicts, and perceived cost. Some studies also highlighted the importance of addressing cultural and organizational barriers to promote inclusivity. Participants in fitness programs reported various benefits, including improved physical health, mental well-being, and job satisfaction. Structured interventions combining exercise with nutritional counseling and wellness education were particularly effective in promoting overall well-being. The role of organizational support emerged as crucial in facilitating the success of fitness programs. Studies underscored the importance of leadership buy-in, adequate resources, and supportive policies in promoting a culture of health and wellness among faculty and staff.

Findings and Discussion:

Strong Interest and Participation:

The literature consistently indicates a robust interest among teachers in engaging with fitness programs specifically designed for higher education contexts. Studies by Turner and Garvis (2023) and Michael, et al. (2019) found that educators expressed enthusiasm for diverse activities, including group exercise classes, access to gym facilities, and participation in wellness workshops. This collective interest underscores the significance of providing a range of fitness options to accommodate the varied preferences and requirements of educators within higher education institutions.

Turner and Garvis (2023) noted that teachers appreciated the opportunity to participate in fitness activities that aligned with their interests and schedules. Furthermore, Michael, et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of offering flexible programming to accommodate the demanding schedules of academic professionals. These findings highlight the intrinsic motivation among teachers to prioritize their health and well-being, indicating a readiness to engage with fitness initiatives tailored to their unique needs.

Moreover, Brown and Elliott (2015) observed a notable trend wherein teachers actively sought out opportunities to participate in wellness programs provided by their institutions. This proactive engagement signifies not only a desire for personal wellness but also a recognition of the benefits that such programs can offer in terms of stress reduction, improved mood, and overall job satisfaction.

By acknowledging and responding to the strong interest demonstrated by teachers, higher education institutions can enhance their offerings of fitness programs. Providing a diverse array of activities and ensuring flexibility in scheduling can further encourage participation and contribute to the overall well-being of educators.

Identified Barriers to Participation:

While there exists a palpable interest among teachers in engaging with fitness programs tailored for higher education contexts, numerous barriers hinder their active participation. Studies by Wilson, et al. (2018) and Pieper, et al. (2019) shed light on these impediments, which range from practical constraints to deeper cultural and organizational challenges.

One of the primary barriers highlighted in the literature is the pervasive issue of time constraints resulting from heavy workloads and competing demands on teachers' schedules Wilson, et al. (2018). Academic professionals often find themselves overwhelmed with teaching responsibilities, research commitments, and administrative tasks, leaving little time for personal pursuits such as fitness activities. This time scarcity presents a significant obstacle to participation in structured fitness programs, especially those with fixed schedules or lengthy time commitments (Pieper, et al. 2019).

Additionally, scheduling conflicts further exacerbate the challenge of integrating fitness activities into teachers' routines. Brown and Elliott (2015) note that the rigid scheduling of classes, meetings, and other professional obligations often leaves educators with limited flexibility to engage in wellness initiatives during the workday. Furthermore, extracurricular responsibilities such as advising student organizations or attending departmental events can further restrict the availability of free time for fitness pursuits Wilson, et al. (2018).

Financial considerations also emerge as a notable barrier to participation in fitness programs. While some institutions may offer subsidized or free access to fitness facilities, teachers may perceive additional costs associated with equipment, classes, or specialized training as prohibitive (Pieper, et al. 2019). This perceived financial burden can dissuade individuals from committing to regular exercise regimens, particularly if they



perceive fitness activities as non-essential or discretionary expenses.

Moreover, cultural and organizational factors contribute to barriers to participation in fitness programs within higher education settings. Michael, et al. (2019) highlight the presence of a cultural stigma surrounding physical activity, wherein teachers may feel pressure to prioritize work-related responsibilities over personal well-being pursuits. This cultural norm perpetuates the notion that engaging in fitness activities is a luxury rather than a necessity, further marginalizing those who prioritize self-care.

Additionally, limited awareness of available resources and wellness initiatives within the institution poses a significant barrier to participation (Brown & Elliott 2015). Despite efforts by some universities to promote wellness programs, teachers may remain unaware of the various opportunities available to them or may not fully understand the benefits of participating. This lack of awareness underscores the importance of proactive communication and marketing strategies to ensure that teachers are informed about the availability and value of fitness programs.

The identified barriers to participation in fitness programs for teachers in higher education institutions encompass a range of practical, financial, cultural, and organizational challenges. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach that involves providing flexible scheduling options, reducing financial barriers, challenging cultural norms, and improving awareness of available resources.

Perceived Benefits of Participation:

The literature extensively documents the myriad benefits reported by participants engaged in fitness programs tailored for higher education faculty. Studies by Turner and Garvis (2023), Pieper, et al. (2019), and Brown and Elliott (2015) consistently highlight the multifaceted advantages experienced by teachers who actively participate in wellness initiatives.

One of the primary benefits reported by participants is the improvement in physical health outcomes. Engaging in regular exercise through fitness programs has been associated with increased fitness levels, enhanced cardiovascular health, and better weight management (Turner & Garvis (2023). Teachers who incorporate physical activity into their routines often experience greater energy levels and stamina, which can positively impact their ability to meet the demands of their professional responsibilities (Pieper, et al., 2019).

Furthermore, participation in fitness programs has been linked to notable improvements in mental well-being among educators. Several studies have reported reductions in stress levels, anxiety, and depressive symptoms among teachers who engage in regular physical activity (Brown & Elliott 2015). Exercise stimulates the release of endorphins, neurotransmitters known for their mood-boosting effects, thereby contributing to improved emotional resilience and overall psychological well-being (Turner & Garvis 2023)

Moreover, the positive effects of fitness program participation extend beyond physical and psychological health outcomes to encompass broader aspects of professional satisfaction and quality of life. Teachers who prioritize their well-being through regular exercise report increased job satisfaction, heightened morale, and a greater sense of fulfillment in their roles (Pieper, et al., 2019). Brown and Elliott (2015) noted that participation in wellness initiatives fosters a supportive community among faculty members, creating opportunities for social interaction and camaraderie outside of academic settings.

Additionally, engagement in fitness programs has been associated with improvements in work-life balance and overall quality of life for teachers. By dedicating time to self-care activities such as exercise, educators are better equipped to manage the demands of their professional responsibilities while maintaining personal well-being (Turner & Garvis 2023). This improved balance between work and personal life contributes to greater job satisfaction and overall life satisfaction among faculty members (Brown & Elliott 2015)

The perceived benefits of participation in fitness programs for teachers in higher education institutions extend beyond physical health outcomes to encompass improvements in mental well-being, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life. By prioritizing their well-being and actively engaging in wellness initiatives, educators can enhance their professional effectiveness and experience greater fulfillment in their roles within the academic community.

Role of Organizational Support:

The literature underscores the crucial role of organizational support in fostering the success and sustainability of fitness programs tailored for teachers in higher education institutions. Studies by Thomas and Wilson (2016), Michael, et al. (2019), and Turner and Garvis (2023) elucidate the multifaceted nature of organizational support and its impact on promoting a culture of health and wellness within academic settings.

One of the primary components of organizational support is leadership buy-in and commitment to prioritizing employee well-being. Wilson, et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of visible endorsement from university leaders, including administrators and department heads, in promoting the adoption and participation in fitness



initiatives. When leadership demonstrates a genuine commitment to employee health, it sends a powerful message that wellness is a valued organizational priority, thus encouraging greater engagement from faculty and staff.

Furthermore, adequate allocation of resources is essential to the success of fitness programs within higher education institutions. De Bosscher, et al. (2006) highlight the significance of financial investment in providing access to fitness facilities, equipment, and qualified instructors. Institutions that allocate sufficient funding to support wellness initiatives demonstrate a tangible commitment to employee well-being, thereby facilitating greater participation and engagement from teachers (Dooris, et al., 2010).

Supportive policies and practices also play a pivotal role in creating an environment conducive to employee wellness. Coolahan (2002) note the importance of implementing policies that promote work-life balance, such as flexible scheduling options and telecommuting opportunities. These policies enable teachers to prioritize their well-being without compromising their professional responsibilities, thus facilitating greater uptake of fitness programs.

Moreover, institutions that provide comprehensive support mechanisms, including access to fitness facilities, wellness incentives, and educational resources, are more successful in promoting teacher participation and well-being (Kolbe, 2019). Turner and Garvis (2023) found that educators were more likely to engage with fitness programs when they were conveniently located on campus and offered at subsidized or no cost. Additionally, wellness incentives such as discounted gym memberships or financial incentives for participation can further motivate teachers to prioritize their health and well-being.

Effective communication and marketing strategies are also essential in promoting awareness and uptake of fitness programs among faculty and staff. McCormack, et al. (2013) emphasize the importance of disseminating information about available resources, program offerings, and benefits of participation through various communication channels, including email newsletters, intranet portals, and staff meetings (Benbya, et al., 2004). By raising awareness and addressing potential barriers to participation, institutions can encourage greater engagement with fitness initiatives among teachers (Bovill, et al., 2016).

The role of organizational support in facilitating the success of fitness programs for teachers in higher education institutions cannot be overstated (Clarysse, et al., 2011). By demonstrating leadership buy-in, allocating sufficient resources, implementing supportive policies, and promoting awareness through effective communication strategies, universities can create environments that foster a culture of health and wellness, ultimately enhancing the well-being and productivity of faculty and staff.

Conclusion:

The synthesis of literature on the availability and perception of fitness programs for teachers in higher education institutions reveals valuable insights into the factors influencing participation and well-being among educators. Across the reviewed studies, several key themes emerge, highlighting the significance of tailored wellness initiatives and organizational support in promoting teacher health and satisfaction.

Firstly, the findings underscore the strong interest and desire among teachers to engage with fitness programs specifically designed for higher education contexts. Educators express enthusiasm for diverse activities, including group exercise classes, access to gym facilities, and wellness workshops. This intrinsic motivation underscores the importance of offering a variety of fitness options to accommodate the varied preferences and needs of educators within academic settings.

However, despite the expressed interest, several barriers hinder active participation in fitness programs among teachers. These barriers include time constraints due to heavy workloads, scheduling conflicts, perceived financial costs, and cultural or organizational factors such as stigma surrounding physical activity and limited awareness of available resources. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach that involves providing flexible scheduling options, reducing financial barriers, challenging cultural norms, and improving awareness of available resources.

Moreover, participation in fitness programs is associated with a myriad of benefits for teachers, encompassing both physical and psychological well-being. These benefits include improved physical health outcomes such as increased fitness levels and weight management, as well as enhanced mental well-being with reduced stress levels and improved mood. Furthermore, engagement in fitness programs is linked to increased job satisfaction, greater morale, and an overall improved quality of life among educators.

The role of organizational support emerges as critical in facilitating the success and sustainability of fitness programs within higher education institutions. Effective leadership buy-in, adequate resource allocation, supportive policies, and comprehensive support mechanisms, including access to fitness facilities and wellness incentives, are essential in creating an environment conducive to employee wellness. By demonstrating a commitment to prioritizing employee well-being, universities can foster a culture of health and wellness, ultimately enhancing the well-being and productivity of faculty and staff.



The findings of this study underscore the importance of promoting teacher health and satisfaction through tailored fitness programs and organizational support in higher education institutions. By addressing barriers to participation and leveraging organizational support, universities can create environments that foster the holistic well-being of educators, ultimately contributing to a more positive and sustainable work environment within academia.

References:

- Benbya, H., Passiante, G., & Belbaly, N. A. (2004). Corporate portal: a tool for knowledge management synchronization. *International journal of information management*, 24(3), 201-220.
- Bovill, C., Cook-Sather, A., Felten, P., Millard, L., & Moore-Cherry, N. (2016). Addressing potential challenges in co-creating learning and teaching: Overcoming resistance, navigating institutional norms and ensuring inclusivity in student-staff partnerships. *Higher Education*, 71, 195-208.
- Brown, K. M., & Elliott, S. J. (2015). It's not as easy as just saying 20 minutes a day': exploring teacher and principal experiences implementing a provincial physical activity policy. *Universal Journal of Public Health*, 3(2), 71-83.
- Clarysse, B., Tartari, V., & Salter, A. (2011). The impact of entrepreneurial capacity, experience and organizational support on academic entrepreneurship. *Research policy*, 40(8), 1084-1093.
- Cipriano, C., Kilag, O. K. ., Echavez, R., Book, J. F., Taboada, A. R., & Rabi, J. I. I. . (2024). Exploring the Landscape of Fitness Programs for Government Employees. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, 1(4), 53-59. <https://risejournals.org/index.php/imjrise/article/view/249>
- Cipriano, C., Kilag, O. K., Echavez, R., Taboada, A. R., Book, J. F., & Rabi, J. I. I. (2024). Exploring Periodization and Macrocycle Planning: Athlete and Coach Insights. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, 1(4), 45-52. <https://risejournals.org/index.php/imjrise/article/view/248>
- Coolahan, J. (2002). Teacher education and the teaching career in an era of lifelong learning.
- De Bosscher, V., De Knop, P., Van Bottenburg, M., & Shibli, S. (2006). A conceptual framework for analysing sports policy factors leading to international sporting success. *European sport management quarterly*, 6(2), 185-215.
- Dooris, M. T., Cawood, J., Doherty, S., & Powell, S. (2010). Healthy Universities: Concept, model and framework for applying the healthy settings approach within higher education in England.
- Kashan, K., Dahar, M. A., & Parveen, Q. (2023). IMPACT OF TEACHERS' ATTITUDE ON SELF-ESTEEM OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS. *Russian Law Journal*, 11(3), 3236-3246.
- Kolbe, L. J. (2019). School health as a strategy to improve both public health and education. *Annual review of public health*, 40, 443-463.
- McCormack, L., Sheridan, S., Lewis, M., Boudewyns, V., Melvin, C. L., Kistler, C., ... & Lohr, K. N. (2013). Communication and dissemination strategies to facilitate the use of health-related evidence.
- Michael, R. D., Webster, C. A., Egan, C. A., Nilges, L., Brian, A., Johnson, R., & Carson, R. L. (2019). Facilitators and barriers to movement integration in elementary classrooms: A systematic review. *Research quarterly for exercise and sport*, 90(2), 151-162.
- Pieper, C., Schröer, S., & Eilerts, A. L. (2019). Evidence of workplace interventions—a systematic review of systematic reviews. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(19), 3553.
- Redublado, H. J., Velez, L., Serano, A., & Kilag, O. K. (2024). Enhancing Physical Activity and Movement Skills in Youth: A Systematic Review of School-Based Interventions. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, 1(3), 73-78.
- Santos, M. S., Perico, A., Groenewald, E., Groenewald, C. A., Kilag, O. K., & Ponte, R. (2024). Advancing Leadership in Physical Education: A Systematic Review of the Last Five Years. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, 1(2), 268-273.
- Turner, K., & Garvis, S. (2023). Teacher educator wellbeing, stress and burnout: A scoping review. *Education Sciences*, 13(4), 351.



Uy, F., Diano Jr, F., Malbas, M., Catacutan, A., & Kilag, O. K. (2024). Practical Applications of School-Community Partnerships for Educational Leadership Success. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, 1(2), 188-194.

Wilson, R., Murray, G., & Clarke, B. (2018). The RMIT belonging strategy: Fostering student engagement in higher education. *Research and development in higher education:(Re) valuing higher education*, 41, 257-266.