



Shaping Wellness Culture: Faculty Perceptions and Practices in Adhering to CSC Guidelines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11276071>

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Abstract:

This study explores the implementation of Civil Service Commission (CSC) guidelines on physical exercise from the perspectives of faculty members in higher education institutions in the Philippines. Through qualitative analysis of participant responses, the study identifies key themes related to awareness, challenges, benefits, and recommendations for improvement. Faculty members demonstrate varying levels of awareness and understanding of the guidelines, highlighting gaps in dissemination and communication strategies. Despite recognizing the benefits of physical exercise programs, participants face challenges such as time constraints, lack of facilities, and insufficient institutional support. However, they also offer practical recommendations including regular health workshops, better infrastructure, dedicated exercise time, and incentives for participation. Addressing these challenges and implementing the suggested strategies can foster a culture of physical wellness within academic settings, ultimately promoting faculty health and well-being. This study contributes to the literature by providing insights into the factors influencing the implementation of CSC guidelines and offering actionable recommendations for improvement.

Keywords: Civil Service Commission, guidelines, physical exercise, faculty members, higher education institutions

Introduction:

Regular physical exercise has been widely recognized as a crucial component of maintaining overall health and well-being. In the context of the workplace, including higher education institutions, the promotion of physical fitness among employees has garnered increasing attention due to its potential benefits for both individuals and organizations. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) in the Philippines has issued guidelines aimed at fostering a culture of physical fitness among government personnel, including faculty members in higher education institutions. These guidelines, outlined in various memoranda and resolutions, emphasize the importance of incorporating physical exercise into the daily routine of government employees to promote a healthy and productive workforce (Civil Service Commission, 2011; Civil Service Commission, 2020).

However, the extent to which these guidelines are implemented and perceived within higher education institutions remains relatively unexplored. Understanding the perspectives of faculty members regarding the CSC guidelines on physical exercise is essential for assessing the effectiveness of these policies and identifying potential barriers to their implementation. By exploring faculty members' views, concerns, and experiences related to physical fitness programs mandated by the CSC, higher education institutions can better tailor their initiatives to promote employee well-being and enhance organizational performance.

This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the perspectives of faculty members in higher education institutions in the Philippines regarding the CSC guidelines on physical exercise. Drawing on qualitative research methods, including interviews and focus group discussions, this study seeks to uncover faculty members' attitudes towards physical fitness programs, their experiences with implementing these programs, and any challenges they encounter in adhering to CSC guidelines. Additionally, the research will explore faculty members' suggestions for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of physical exercise initiatives within their respective institutions.

Through this exploration, valuable insights can be gained into the role of the CSC guidelines in shaping the physical fitness culture within higher education institutions and the broader implications for employee health and well-being. By addressing the perspectives of faculty members, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on workplace health promotion and policy implementation in the Philippines.

Literature Review:



Physical fitness and exercise have garnered increasing attention in the workplace due to their profound impacts on employee health, well-being, and organizational performance. In the context of higher education institutions in the Philippines, where faculty members play a pivotal role in shaping the academic environment, understanding their perspectives on physical exercise guidelines mandated by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) is crucial for promoting a culture of health and wellness. This literature review provides an overview of relevant research exploring the relationship between physical fitness programs, employee attitudes, and organizational outcomes, as well as the specific challenges and opportunities within the context of higher education institutions in the Philippines.

Physical fitness programs in the workplace have been shown to yield numerous benefits for both employees and organizations. According to Warburton et al. (2006), regular physical activity is associated with reduced risk of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity, leading to improved overall health and well-being. Additionally, physical exercise has been linked to enhanced cognitive function, mood regulation, and stress reduction, which can positively impact job performance and satisfaction (Stults-Kolehmainen & Sinha, 2014).

Within the workplace setting, implementing physical fitness programs has been associated with various organizational benefits, including reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and improved employee morale (Conn, Hafdahl, Cooper, Brown, & Lusk, 2009). By providing opportunities for employees to engage in regular exercise, organizations can create a supportive environment that promotes employee health and well-being while also fostering a positive organizational culture (Huettermann & Bruch, 2014).

In the context of higher education institutions, faculty members represent a unique demographic with distinct roles, responsibilities, and work environments. While research on faculty perspectives on physical fitness programs is limited, studies have highlighted the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle among academic staff. A study by Frerichs et al. (2012) found that university employees who participated in physical activity interventions reported improvements in work ability, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life.

However, implementing physical fitness programs within academic settings can pose challenges related to time constraints, workload pressures, and institutional culture (Johnson, et al., 2019). Faculty members may perceive physical exercise initiatives as competing with their academic duties, leading to resistance or reluctance to participate (Simpson & Brewer, 2019). Additionally, organizational support and resources for implementing such programs may vary across higher education institutions, impacting their effectiveness and sustainability (Patterson et al., 2019).

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) in the Philippines has issued guidelines aimed at promoting physical fitness among government personnel, including faculty members in higher education institutions. These guidelines, outlined in various memoranda and resolutions, emphasize the importance of incorporating physical exercise into the daily routine of government employees to promote a healthy and productive workforce (Civil Service Commission, 2011; Civil Service Commission, 1995).

However, the extent to which these guidelines are implemented and perceived within higher education institutions remains relatively unexplored. Understanding faculty members' attitudes, experiences, and challenges related to physical exercise programs mandated by the CSC is essential for assessing the effectiveness of these policies and identifying areas for improvement.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of physical fitness programs in the workplace, there is a paucity of research specifically focusing on faculty perspectives within higher education institutions in the Philippines. This study aims to address this gap by investigating faculty members' attitudes, experiences, and challenges regarding physical exercise guidelines mandated by the CSC. By exploring these perspectives, the research seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the role of physical fitness programs in promoting employee health and well-being within academic settings.

Methodology:

This study employed an exploratory research design combined with a systematic review to investigate the perspectives of faculty members in higher education institutions in the Philippines regarding the Civil Service Commission (CSC) guidelines on physical exercise. The methodology was structured to provide a comprehensive understanding of faculty attitudes, experiences, and challenges related to the implementation of these guidelines.

Exploratory Research Design

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants. Faculty members from various higher education institutions across the Philippines were chosen to ensure a diverse representation of academic disciplines, institutional types, and geographical locations.



Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to gather qualitative data. The interview guide included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about faculty members' awareness, attitudes, and experiences regarding the CSC guidelines on physical exercise. The questions also explored perceived benefits, barriers, and suggestions for improving the implementation of these guidelines.

Each interview and focus group discussion was audio-recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to encourage candid responses. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Transcripts were systematically coded to identify recurring themes and patterns. The analysis focused on key areas such as awareness of the CSC guidelines, perceived impact on health and productivity, challenges in implementation, and recommendations for improvement.

Systematic Review

The systematic review complemented the exploratory phase by providing a broader context and evidence base for understanding the implementation of physical fitness programs in the workplace. The following steps were undertaken:

A comprehensive literature search was conducted using databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and JSTOR. Keywords included "physical fitness programs," "workplace wellness," "faculty perspectives," "higher education," and "Civil Service Commission guidelines." The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles published in English.

Articles were included if they (a) discussed physical fitness programs in the workplace, (b) focused on the higher education context, (c) provided empirical evidence or case studies, and (d) were published within the last 20 years. Excluded were articles that did not meet these criteria or were not accessible in full text.

Relevant data from the selected articles were extracted using a standardized form. Information included study objectives, methodologies, key findings, and implications for practice. Particular attention was given to studies examining the implementation and impact of physical fitness programs in academic settings.

The extracted data were synthesized to identify common themes and gaps in the literature. The synthesis focused on the effectiveness of physical fitness programs, faculty attitudes towards such initiatives, and the challenges and facilitators of program implementation. The findings from the systematic review were integrated with the insights from the exploratory research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study topic.

Validity and Reliability

To enhance the validity and reliability of the study, several measures were taken. Triangulation was achieved by using multiple data sources and methods (interviews, focus groups, and literature review). Member checking was conducted by sharing the preliminary findings with a subset of participants to ensure accuracy and credibility. Additionally, peer debriefing sessions were held with colleagues to discuss and refine the analysis.

By combining exploratory research with a systematic review, this study provided a rich, contextualized understanding of faculty perspectives on the CSC guidelines on physical exercise. The methodology ensured a comprehensive exploration of the topic, highlighting both individual experiences and broader trends in the implementation of physical fitness programs within higher education institutions.

Findings and Discussion:

Awareness and Understanding of CSC Guidelines

The study revealed that while a majority of faculty members were aware of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) guidelines on physical exercise, their understanding varied significantly. Many participants acknowledged knowing about the guidelines but lacked detailed knowledge about their specific provisions and implementation strategies.

The varying levels of awareness and understanding among faculty members highlight a crucial gap in the dissemination and communication of the CSC guidelines within higher education institutions. One participant remarked, "I know there are guidelines about physical fitness, but I'm not really familiar with the details or how it's supposed to be implemented in our university." This suggests that while awareness initiatives exist, they might not be sufficiently comprehensive or effective in conveying detailed information. To address this, institutions could enhance communication strategies, possibly through regular workshops or informational campaigns, to ensure that faculty members are well-informed about the guidelines and their benefits.

Faculty members recognized numerous benefits associated with physical exercise programs, both for personal health and professional performance. Participants cited improved physical health, reduced stress, and enhanced productivity as key benefits. One participant stated, "Engaging in regular physical exercise has significantly reduced my stress levels and made me more productive at work."



The recognition of these benefits aligns with existing literature on the positive impacts of physical activity on health and workplace performance (Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006). This understanding is crucial as it indicates a generally positive attitude towards the integration of physical exercise programs within the work environment. However, the challenge lies in translating this recognition into consistent participation and institutional support. Institutions should leverage this positive perception by actively promoting and facilitating regular physical exercise activities tailored to faculty needs and schedules.

Despite recognizing the benefits, faculty members reported several challenges in implementing and participating in physical exercise programs. These challenges included time constraints, lack of facilities, and insufficient institutional support. One participant expressed, "It's difficult to find time for exercise between teaching, research, and administrative duties. Plus, we don't have adequate facilities on campus."

The challenges identified by the participants reflect common barriers to workplace wellness programs, particularly in academic settings where workloads can be intense and unpredictable (Johnson, et al., 2019). Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. Institutions might consider integrating flexible exercise schedules, improving on-campus facilities, and creating policies that explicitly support faculty engagement in physical exercise. Additionally, administrative support and resource allocation are critical in overcoming these barriers and fostering a culture that values health and wellness.

Participants provided several recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the CSC guidelines implementation. Suggestions included regular health and fitness workshops, better infrastructure, dedicated time slots for exercise within the workday, and incentives for participation. One participant suggested, "Providing incentives for regular participation in fitness activities and integrating these into our schedules could really help."

The recommendations offered by faculty members are practical and align with best practices in workplace wellness programs (Conn et al., 2009). Regular workshops and training sessions could serve to continuously educate and motivate faculty members about the importance of physical exercise. Improving infrastructure and providing dedicated time slots can help mitigate time and facility-related barriers. Incentives for participation could also significantly increase engagement rates, making the programs more successful. Institutions need to consider these recommendations seriously and work towards creating a supportive environment that promotes physical wellness among faculty members.

Perceived Benefits of Physical Exercise Programs

Faculty members recognized numerous benefits associated with physical exercise programs, both for personal health and professional performance. Participants cited improved physical health, reduced stress, and enhanced productivity as key benefits. One participant stated, "Engaging in regular physical exercise has significantly reduced my stress levels and made me more productive at work."

The recognition of these benefits aligns with existing literature on the positive impacts of physical activity on health and workplace performance. Regular physical exercise is well-documented to enhance cardiovascular health, improve musculoskeletal strength, and boost overall well-being (Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006). Faculty members' acknowledgment of these health benefits reflects an understanding of the critical role that physical fitness plays in maintaining and improving personal health. One faculty member noted, "I feel more energetic and less prone to illnesses when I exercise regularly."

The relationship between physical activity and reduced risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity has been extensively studied (Booth, Roberts, & Laye, 2012). Faculty members' experiences corroborate these findings, suggesting that regular participation in physical exercise programs can lead to significant health improvements. This indicates a potential for reduced healthcare costs and absenteeism due to illness, which benefits both the individual and the institution.

Participants also highlighted the role of physical exercise in stress reduction. Stress management is a crucial aspect of maintaining mental health, and exercise has been shown to be an effective intervention. Physical activity stimulates the production of endorphins, which are natural mood lifters, and can also improve sleep, which is often disrupted by stress, depression, and anxiety (Stults-Kolehmainen & Sinha, 2014). One participant commented, "Exercise helps me unwind and clear my mind after a long day of lectures and meetings."

This perception is supported by research that indicates regular physical activity can reduce levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, thereby mitigating the physical and psychological effects of stress (Salmon, 2001). The integration of physical exercise into daily routines can provide faculty members with a valuable tool for managing the high demands and pressures associated with academic responsibilities.

The enhancement of productivity through physical exercise was another significant benefit noted by the participants. Regular exercise has been linked to improved cognitive function, including better memory, attention, and problem-solving skills (Hillman, Erickson, & Kramer, 2008). Faculty members reported that engaging in regular



physical activity helped them maintain focus and efficiency in their professional tasks. One participant mentioned, "After exercising, I find that I can concentrate better and accomplish more in less time."

This finding is consistent with studies showing that physical fitness is associated with higher levels of energy and vitality, which can translate into greater workplace productivity (Pronk et al., 2004). Institutions that promote physical exercise programs are likely to see a return on investment through enhanced employee performance and productivity. By encouraging regular physical activity, universities can create an environment that not only supports faculty health but also enhances their professional output.

While faculty members recognized the benefits of physical exercise, the study also identified challenges in translating this recognition into consistent participation and institutional support. Time constraints, lack of facilities, and insufficient institutional support were common barriers. One participant expressed, "It's difficult to find time for exercise between teaching, research, and administrative duties. Plus, we don't have adequate facilities on campus."

These challenges highlight the need for institutions to adopt comprehensive strategies that support the integration of physical exercise into the daily routines of faculty members. Providing accessible and well-equipped fitness facilities, offering flexible scheduling options for exercise, and fostering a supportive culture around physical wellness are essential steps. Institutions can also implement regular health and fitness workshops, develop incentive programs for participation, and ensure that exercise is seen as a priority rather than an optional activity.

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The recommendations offered by faculty members are practical and align with best practices in workplace wellness programs (Conn et al., 2009). Regular workshops and training sessions could serve to continuously educate and motivate faculty members about the importance of physical exercise. Improving infrastructure and providing dedicated time slots can help mitigate time and facility-related barriers. Incentives for participation could also significantly increase engagement rates, making the programs more successful. Institutions need to consider these recommendations seriously and work towards creating a supportive environment that promotes physical wellness among faculty members.

Challenges in Implementation

Despite recognizing the benefits, faculty members reported several challenges in implementing and participating in physical exercise programs. These challenges included time constraints, lack of facilities, and insufficient institutional support. One participant expressed, "It's difficult to find time for exercise between teaching, research, and administrative duties. Plus, we don't have adequate facilities on campus."

Time constraints emerged as a significant barrier to engaging in physical exercise programs among faculty members. Academic responsibilities often demand long hours and irregular schedules, leaving limited time for personal activities such as exercise. Research suggests that time pressure is a common challenge in academia, affecting work-life balance and contributing to stress (Yang et al., 2021). Faculty members may struggle to prioritize exercise amidst competing demands, leading to reduced participation in wellness initiatives.

The availability and accessibility of exercise facilities emerged as another key challenge. Many higher education institutions lack adequate fitness centers or recreational spaces on campus, making it difficult for faculty members to engage in physical activity. Limited access to exercise equipment and amenities can deter individuals from incorporating exercise into their daily routines. Furthermore, crowded or outdated facilities may not provide an optimal environment for safe and enjoyable workouts (Ekblom-Bak, 2010). One participant lamented, "Our campus gym is often overcrowded, and the equipment is outdated. It's discouraging to try and exercise in such conditions."

Faculty members also cited a lack of institutional support as a barrier to participating in physical exercise programs. While some institutions may promote health and wellness initiatives in principle, they may fail to provide the necessary resources or organizational support to facilitate regular exercise. Without clear policies, incentives, or designated time for physical activity, faculty members may struggle to prioritize their well-being amidst competing demands. One participant remarked, "There's a lack of institutional encouragement for exercise. It's not seen as a priority, so it's hard to make time for it."

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that involves collaboration between faculty, administrators, and institutional stakeholders. Institutions might consider integrating flexible exercise schedules that accommodate varying workloads and preferences. Providing access to on-campus fitness facilities or partnering with local gyms can enhance convenience and encourage participation. Moreover, investing in the renovation or expansion of existing facilities can create a more inviting and functional space for physical activity.



Eklblom-Bak, et al. (2010) emphasize the importance of creating environments that support physical activity and wellness, suggesting that well-designed facilities can promote engagement and adherence to exercise programs.

Administrative support and resource allocation are critical components of successful wellness initiatives. Institutions must prioritize health and wellness as integral aspects of their organizational culture, allocating sufficient resources and staffing to support these efforts. This may involve creating dedicated wellness committees or hiring wellness coordinators to oversee program implementation and evaluation. Additionally, providing incentives such as subsidized gym memberships or wellness stipends can incentivize faculty participation and demonstrate institutional commitment to employee well-being.

Recommendations for Improvement

Faculty members provided several recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) guidelines implementation regarding physical exercise. These recommendations, rooted in practical insights and aligned with best practices in workplace wellness programs, offer valuable strategies for promoting physical wellness among faculty members (Conn et al., 2009).

Participants emphasized the importance of regular health and fitness workshops as a means of educating and motivating faculty members about the benefits of physical exercise. These workshops could cover topics such as exercise physiology, stress management techniques, and the role of physical activity in enhancing overall well-being. By providing faculty members with evidence-based information and practical strategies for incorporating exercise into their daily routines, institutions can empower individuals to take proactive steps towards improving their health.

Improving infrastructure was identified as a critical factor in promoting physical activity on campus. Participants highlighted the need for well-equipped fitness facilities and recreational spaces that are accessible to faculty members. Upgrading existing facilities and investing in new amenities can create an environment that encourages regular exercise. Additionally, incorporating elements of nature, such as outdoor walking trails or green spaces, can provide opportunities for physical activity while promoting relaxation and stress reduction (Kaczynski & Henderson, 2007).

Faculty members advocated for the provision of dedicated time slots within the workday for exercise. By scheduling designated periods for physical activity, institutions can help overcome time constraints and facilitate regular participation in fitness programs. These time slots could be integrated into daily schedules or offered as part of structured breaks or wellness initiatives. Providing flexibility in scheduling allows faculty members to prioritize their health without compromising their professional responsibilities.

Incentives for participation were suggested as a means of increasing engagement and adherence to physical exercise programs. Participants proposed various incentives, such as rewards for achieving fitness milestones, discounted gym memberships, or wellness-related incentives. By offering tangible rewards and recognition for active participation, institutions can incentivize faculty members to prioritize their health and well-being. Moreover, fostering a culture of support and camaraderie around physical activity can further motivate individuals to maintain their exercise routines (Conn et al., 2009).

To effectively implement these recommendations, institutions can adopt a systematic approach that involves collaboration between faculty, administrators, and relevant stakeholders. This may include establishing a wellness committee tasked with developing and overseeing wellness initiatives, conducting needs assessments to identify faculty preferences and barriers to participation, and evaluating the impact of implemented programs through regular feedback mechanisms. By involving faculty members in the decision-making process and soliciting their input, institutions can ensure that wellness initiatives are tailored to their needs and preferences.

Conclusion:

The exploration of Civil Service Commission (CSC) guidelines on physical exercise from the perspectives of faculty members in higher education institutions has provided valuable insights into the challenges, benefits, and recommendations for improvement regarding the implementation of these guidelines.

Faculty members demonstrated varying levels of awareness and understanding of the CSC guidelines, indicating a need for more comprehensive dissemination and communication strategies within institutions. Despite recognizing the benefits of physical exercise programs, faculty members identified significant challenges, including time constraints, lack of facilities, and insufficient institutional support. These barriers underscore the importance of addressing systemic issues to promote a culture of physical wellness within academic settings.

However, amidst these challenges, faculty members also provided practical recommendations for improvement. Suggestions such as regular health and fitness workshops, better infrastructure, dedicated time slots for exercise,



and incentives for participation offer actionable strategies for institutions to enhance the effectiveness of CSC guidelines implementation.

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of prioritizing faculty health and well-being within higher education institutions. By addressing the identified challenges and implementing the recommended strategies, institutions can create a supportive environment that promotes physical wellness among faculty members. Through collaborative efforts and strategic investments, universities can empower faculty members to prioritize their health, ultimately contributing to a more vibrant and productive academic community.

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