

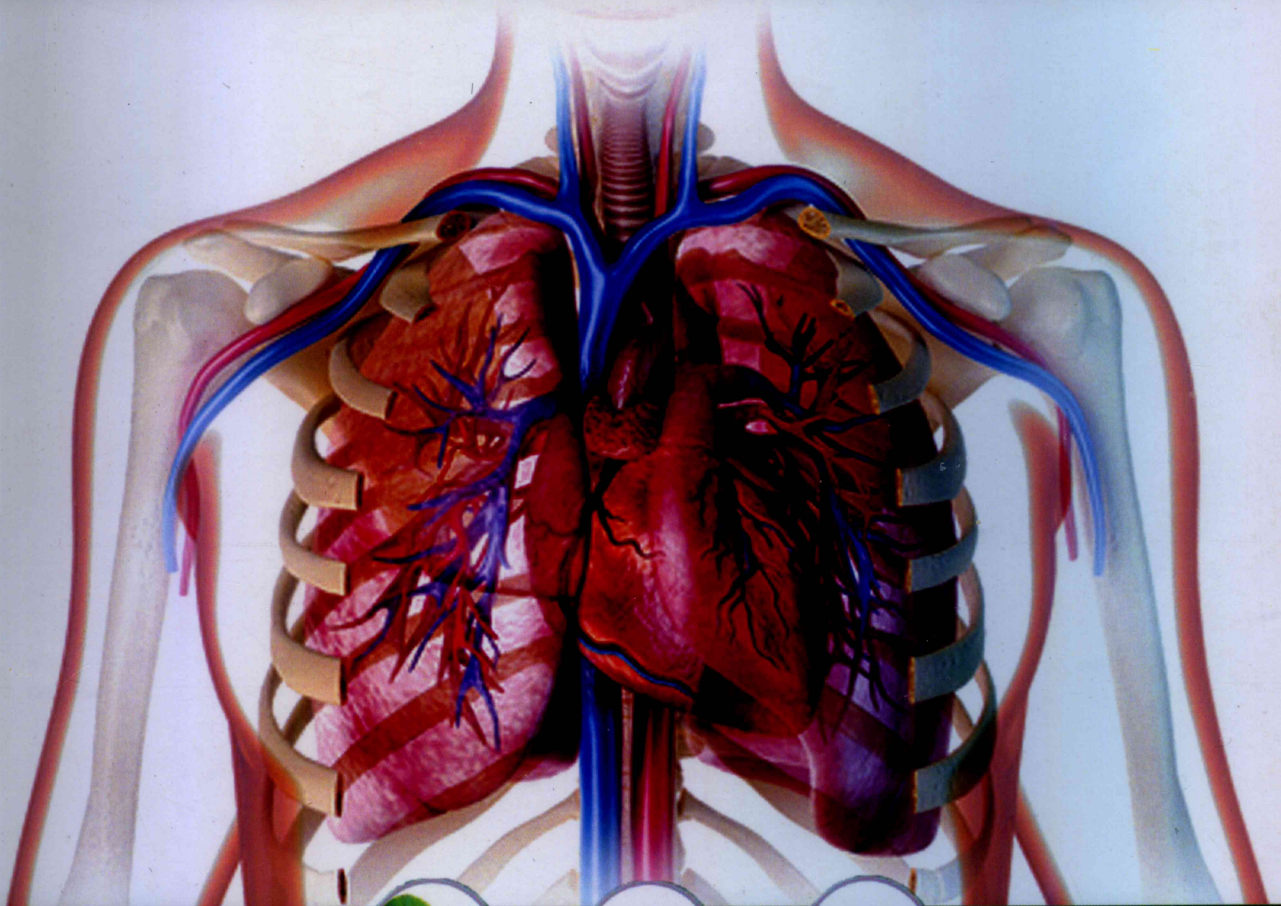


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BENEFITS OF EXERCISE FOR IMPROVING HEALTH STATUS OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S AMONG UNDERGRADUATES, UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study assessed the benefits of exercise for improving health status of an individuals among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to examine if exercise improves physical and mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. A descriptive research design of the survey type was used for the study. The population for the study comprised all undergraduates of University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. A sample of three hundred and eighty (380) respondents was selected using multi-stage sampling procedure. A researcher developed questionnaire validated by three experts and tested for reliability using a split half method was used as instrument for the study. Data was analysed using frequency and percentage for demographic data while an inferential statistic of chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the formulated null hypotheses. Findings revealed that exercise improves physical and mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Findings also revealed that exercise significantly influence physical health status (calculated χ^2 value 60.29 > table χ^2 value 16.92) and mental health status (calculated χ^2 value 88.76 > table χ^2 value 16.92) of an individual. It was therefore concluded that exercise improves both physical and mental health status of an individual. The researcher recommended amongst others that students should maintain regular exercise as routine activity which can help to improve healthy muscular strength and flexibility.

Keywords: Benefits, Exercise, Health-status, An-individuals, Undergraduates

Introduction

Disciplines such as nutrition, psychology and exercise science are increasingly coming together in order to understand wellness in a holistic way. The study of wellness has developed across disciplines to describe a holistic approach for understanding human development and for improving quality of life. Exercise does not only mean to go to gym or some club for daily activity; it means to do some physical activity no matter how and where.

Health According to World Health Organisation (WHO) in Ravi (2017) work refers to a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Different experts have also defined health in different ways: An expert in anatomy define health to when the body is confirm to normal anatomical structures; a physiologist viewed health as normal body functions; a biochemist refers to it when the body has normal biochemical levels / values; a pathologist, health means normal cellular make up; a geneticist viewed that health means correct existence of genetic potential and to a psychiatrist, health means well adjusted and a balanced personality.

Any physical activity could be considered exercise, but doing exercise mean activities that individual does purposely for fitness or training, rather than something that's part of daily routine, thus, exercise is a subcategory of physical activity which is structured, repetitive and purposeful which is used to improve health, maintain fitness and as a means of physical rehabilitation (Westerterp, 2013).

The WHO reported that physical inactivity is the fourth risk factor for mortality in the world and about 3.2 million people die each year from physical inactivity related illnesses but the people who make exercise as essential part of their routine are more happy and efficient than others (Mohammed, 2016; WHO, 2020). As a result, there are increasing number of wellness programs being created on university campuses in the recognition of the importance of the holistic development and well-being of college students.

Exercise is also considered as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure (Westerterp, 2013). In this context, it is widely recognized that regular physical activity and exercise reduces the risk of pre-mature death, improves muscular strength and flexibility, enhance the functioning of the immune system, lowers the risk factors of various chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis to keep the body healthy (Ravi, 2017). As a consequence, exercise is often related with maintenance or improvement of physical fitness (Bherer, Erickson & Liu-Ambrose, 2013).

There are various kinds of exercise such as calisthenics, flexibility (Stretching), isokinetic, isotonic and muscle-fitness (Ravi, 2017). Calisthenics means muscle-fitness exercise that overloads muscles by forcing the muscles to work at a higher level than usual. Flexibility (stretching) means exercise designed to stretch muscles and tendons to increase joint flexibility or range of motion. Isokinetic refers to as muscle-fitness exercise in which the amount of force equals the amount of resistance, so that no movement occurs. Isotonic is defined as a fitness exercise in which the amount of force exerted is constant throughout the range of motion and muscle-fitness is considered as exercise designed to build muscle strength and endurance by overloading the muscles.

The outlook on the participating in an exercise activities or programmes has generated uncertainty, some even gave the notion that engaging in exercise has no health benefits other than to catch fun while some students assumed that it hinders academic ability. Considering well-documented benefits of exercise, some students ignored exercise programme or course and tag it to people who are less busy with activities occupation. With a low level of exercise activities among students been a national health issues and physical and cognitive functioning has become increasingly concerned (Bakinde, Dominic & Adebayo, 2020) while exercise is associated with decreased obesity risks, enhanced cardio-vascular fitness, better wellness and academic success (WHO, 2020) as well as to correct the misconception of participating in exercise particularly among University of Ilorin students. The purpose of the study was to assess the benefits of exercise for improving physical and mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study answered the following research questions:

- Will exercise improve physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria?
- Will exercise improve mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

This study tested the following hypotheses formulated:

- Exercise will not significantly improve physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
- Exercise will not significantly improve mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Methods and Material

This study employed a descriptive design of survey type. The researcher adopted the method because it has the advantage of covering a wide scope and a great deal of information can be obtained from large population. Therefore, the choice of the descriptive research design of the survey type makes it possible for the researcher to make representative sample among the population of the study. The target population comprised all undergraduates of University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria with population of 44,515. A sample of three hundred and eighty (380) was used for the study. This comprised students who were selected across the 15 faculties in University of Ilorin. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample for the study. This included simple random, proportionate and convenience sampling techniques. A researcher developed questionnaire was used as instrument for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Department of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Education, University of Ilorin. Cronbach alpha reliability was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The result was 0.78. The researcher with the help of four instructed research assistants administered the questionnaire. The 380 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents for two weeks. Copies of the questionnaire were retrieved immediately to avoid any loss and influence of any extraneous variable. Data collected were coded and analysed using a descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages while an inferential statistics of chi-square (χ^2) was used to analyse the hypotheses for the study at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the Respondents

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Name of Faculty		
	Agriculture	84	22.2
	Basic Medical Science	18	4.7
	Education	165	43.4
	Engineering and Technology	56	14.7
	Life Science	57	15
	Total	380	100
2.	Gender		
	Male	221	58.2
	Female	159	41.8
	Total	380	100
3.	Age Range		
	15-19yrs	91	24
	20-24yrs	189	49.7
	25yrs and above	100	26.3
	Total	380	100
4.	Ethnicity		
	Yoruba	350	92.1
	Hausa	7	1.8
	Igbo	23	6.1
	Total	380	100

The frequency distribution of the respondents participating in the analysis is revealed in table one. It was revealed that Education (43.4 percent) has the highest number of the respondents. It was also revealed that 221 respondents were male (58.2 percent), while 159 respondents were female (41.8 percent). This indicates that most of the participants were male. The age range also indicated that respondents between the ages of 20 – 24 years participate mostly in the study. The ethnicity of the respondents showed that 350 respondents Yoruba (92.1 percent) have the most of the participants.

Research Question One: Will exercise improve physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria?

Table 2: Percentile analysis on the influence of exercise on physical health status improvement of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	PR	D	SD	NR
1.	Participation in exercise can help to prevent obesity	66 (17.4%)	268 (70.5%)	334	22 (5.8%)	24 (6.3%)	46
2.	Exercise strengthen immune system and prevent risk of illness and infections	116 (30.5%)	220 (57.9%)	336	24 (6.3%)	20 (5.3%)	44
3.	Exercise such as gymnastic training leads to better body flexibility	155 (40.8%)	189 (49.7%)	344	16 (4.2%)	20 (5.3%)	36
4.	Involvement in exercise training enhance muscular strength	144 (37.9%)	192 (50.5%)	336	20 (5.3%)	24 (6.3%)	44
Total				337.5 (88.8%)			42.5 (11.2%)

Note: PR= Positive response, NR= Negative response

Table two shows the result to Research Question One. The mean percentage of positive responses 337.5 (88.8%), which is greater than the mean percentage of negative responses 42.5 (11.2%). This implies that exercise improves physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: Will exercise improve physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria?

Table 3: Percentile analysis on the influence of exercise on mental health status improvement of an individual among undergraduate, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	PR	D	SD	NR
1.	Exercise enhance lasting and satisfying personal relationships	108 (28.4%)	192 (50.5%)	300	60 (15.8%)	20 (5.3%)	80
2.	Exercise helps to restore overwhelmed emotions such as fear and anger	188 (49.5%)	100 (26.3%)	288	68 (17.9%)	24 (6.3%)	92
3.	Participating in exercise helps to feel comfortable with other people	100 (26.3%)	184 (48.4%)	284	72 (18.9%)	24 (6.3%)	96
4.	Involvement in exercise enhance students intellectual capacity	172 (45.3%)	132 (34.7%)	304	52 (13.7%)	24 (6.3%)	76
Total				294 (77.4%)			86 (22.6%)

Table three shows the result to Research Question Two. The mean percentage of positive responses 294 (77.4%), which is greater than the mean percentage of negative responses 86 (22.6%). This

implies that exercise improves mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence between exercise and physical health status improvement of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Table 4: Chi-square summary on exercise and improve physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	df	Cal. χ^2 Val.	Tab. χ^2 Val.	Decision
1.	Participation in exercise can help to prevent obesity	66 (17.4%)	268 (70.5%)	22 (5.8%)	24 (6.3%)				
2.	Exercise strengthen immune system and prevent risk of illness and infections	116 (30.5%)	220 (57.9%)	24 (6.3%)	20 (5.3%)				
3.	Exercise such as gymnastic training leads to better body flexibility	155 (40.8%)	189 (49.7%)	16 (4.2%)	20 (5.3%)	9	60.29	16.92	H ₀ is Rejected
4.	Involvement in exercise training enhance muscular strength	144 (37.9%)	192 (50.5%)	20 (5.3%)	24 (6.3%)				
Total		481	869	82	88				

$\alpha=0.05$

Table four shows the result of hypothesis one which states that exercise will not significantly improve physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The table reveals that the calculated chi-square value of 60.29 is greater than the table value of 16.92 with the degree of freedom 9 at 0.05 alpha level. Hypothesis one was therefore rejected. This implies that exercise improve physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: Exercise will not significantly improve mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Table 5: Chi-square summary on exercise and improve mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	df	Cal. χ^2 Val.	Tab. χ^2 Val.	Decision
1.	Exercise enhance lasting and satisfying personal relationships	108 (28.4%)	192 (50.5%)	60 (15.8%)	20 (5.3%)				
2.	Exercise helps to restore overwhelmed emotions such as fear and anger	188 (49.5%)	100 (26.3%)	68 (17.9%)	24 (6.3%)	9	88.76	16.92	H ₀ is Rejected
3.	Participating in exercise helps to feel comfortable with other people	100 (26.3%)	184 (48.4%)	72 (18.9%)	24 (6.3%)				
4.	Involvement in exercise enhance students intellectual capacity	172 (45.3%)	132 (34.7%)	52 (13.7%)	24 (6.3%)				
Total		568	608	252	92				

Table five shows the result of hypothesis two which states that exercise will not significantly improve mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The table reveals that the calculated chi-square value of 88.76 is greater than the table value of 16.92 with the degree of freedom 9 at 0.05 alpha level. Hypothesis two was therefore rejected. This implies that exercise improve mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result from the analysis of hypothesis one showed that exercise improves physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The finding agrees with the view of Downward and Rascute, (2015) who found that participating in exercises improves health, increases cardiovascular performance, improves muscular strength, flexibility and bone health, reduces hip and spinal cord fractures and enhance colon functioning. The researcher is of the opinion that engaging in an exercise improves physical health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

The result from the analysis of hypothesis two showed that exercise improves mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The finding corroborates with the finding of Ali, (2018) who found that maintaining regular exercise every day can bring about healthy body and strength, improving mental wellbeing of the general public, improves mood and self-perceptions, relieve stress and anxiety and enhance cognitive ability. The researcher is of the opinion that participating in an exercise improves mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that exercise improves physical and mental health status of an individual among undergraduates, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the researcher recommended that students should maintain regular exercise as routine activity which can help to improve healthy muscular strength and flexibility; school management should encourage students to participate in exercise and utilize the available sport facilities which will help to improve students' intellectual capabilities.

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