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Health and Wellness in Academia: Demographics, Physical Activity, Dietary Practices, and Wellbeing among Employees of a State University

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Abstract

Employee wellbeing in academic institutions is increasingly recognized as a vital concern due to the demands of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. This study examines the relationship between physical activity, dietary practices, and wellbeing among employees of a Philippine state university, employing a quantitative approach using standardized instruments. The Global Physical Activity Questionnaire (GPAQ), the Starting the Conversation (STC) dietary assessment tool, and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS).

A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected through an electronic survey. A convenience sampling technique was utilized, targeting employees of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. The final sample consisted of 217 respondents, representing a diverse demographic group across different age categories and sexes. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and Partial Least Squares (PLS)-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to evaluate predictive relationships.

Findings reveal that physical activity significantly contributes to higher wellbeing, reinforcing existing literature on the psychological benefits of regular exercise. Additionally, better dietary practices are positively associated with wellbeing, confirming the critical role of nutrition in mental and physical health. Grounded in the World Health Organization's Conceptual Framework on the Social Determinants of Health (Solar & Irwin, 2010), the study highlights the structural and intermediary determinants influencing workplace health behaviors. The findings advocate for institutional wellness policies, age-sensitive health interventions, and expanded mental health support programs to improve employee wellbeing. By incorporating tailored health promotion strategies, academic institutions can enhance workforce productivity, satisfaction, and long-term organizational health.

Keywords: physical health; employee wellness; mental wellbeing; nutrition; workplace health