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PINGGANG PINOY GUIDELINES AND HEALTH-RELATED FITNESS OF FRESHMEN STUDENTS IN PATHFIT

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between adherence to the Pinggang Pinoy Guidelines and the health-related fitness of freshmen students in the PATHFIT program at MSEUF Lucena Campus. Involving 200 students through surveys and fitness tests, the research found high awareness and commendable adherence to the guidelines, with overall fitness rated as "Very Satisfactory." A significant positive correlation was observed between adherence (not just awareness) to the guidelines and fitness levels, especially among older students, while gender and weight had no significant impact. Students excelled in flexibility, muscular endurance, and cardiovascular endurance but showed weaker performance in muscular strength. The study recommends reinforcing Pinggang Pinoy practices, promoting active participation in fitness programs, enhancing nutrition education, and encouraging hands-on activities like meal planning and strength training. It also suggests future research on the long-term impact of integrated nutrition and fitness strategies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To facilitate a more comprehensive study of the main problem at hand, the following specific questions were taken into consideration:

This study examines the relationship between the Pinggang Pinoy Guidelines and the health-related fitness of freshmen students enrolled in PATHFIT. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the freshmen students in terms of:
   1.1 Age;
   1.2 Sex; and
   2.2 Weight Status?
2. To what extent do the freshmen students adhere to the Pinggang Pinoy Guidelines in terms of:
   2.1 Awareness of the guidelines; and

   2.2 Adherence to recommended guidelines?

3. What are the results of the health-related fitness test of the freshmen students in terms of:
   3.1 Flexibility;
   3.2 Muscular strength;
   3.3 Muscular Endurance; and
   3.4 Cardiovascular endurance?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the students' profile and their health-related fitness test results?
5. Is there a significant relationship between perceived Guidelines of Pinggang Pinoy and the health-related fitness test results of the freshmen students?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this research are beneficial to the following:

Students. This study will help students understand the importance of balanced nutrition and its impact on physical fitness and overall health. It encourages them to adopt healthier eating habits and maintain active lifestyles.

Educators and PATHFIT Instructors. The study offers data-driven insights that can be used to enhance the PATHFIT curriculum by integrating nutrition education with fitness training, fostering a more comprehensive approach to health and wellness.

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Parents and Guardians. The findings will guide parents in providing better meal planning and nutritional support for their children, ensuring they meet their dietary and physical activity needs.

Future Researchers. This study serves as a reference for future research exploring the interplay between nutrition and fitness, particularly in the context of Filipino students and the effectiveness of dietary guidelines like Pinggang Pinoy.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study will employ a descriptive research design, utilizing a quantitative approach to assess the relationship between the PATHFIT fitness tests and various health-related factors, including body composition, physical performance, and lifestyle habits among freshmen students. The research will focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the PATHFIT test as a tool for assessing physical fitness and its implications for overall health.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure that the sample is representative of the larger population. Stratified random sampling divides the population into distinct subgroups (strata) and ensures that each subgroup is adequately represented in the final sample.

RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The study will involve freshmen students from MSEUF – Lucena Campus. A total of 200 students will be randomly selected for participation to ensure a diverse sample of both genders.

RESULTS

Based on the findings, the study recommends a multi-level approach to improving students' health and fitness through nutrition and physical education. For students, it is crucial to increase nutritional literacy by attending health seminars, consulting professionals, and referring to credible sources like the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) to understand and apply the Pinggang Pinoy dietary guidelines effectively. Adopting a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins—while avoiding excessive consumption of salty, sugary, and processed foods—is key to maintaining optimal health (Whitney & Rolfes, 2019). Additionally, students are advised to engage in regular physical activity, including daily participation in PATHFIT programs and at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, which aligns with the World Health Organization's (2020) recommendations for youth physical activity. They are also encouraged to regularly monitor their weight and seek professional advice when necessary to maintain a healthy body composition.

For educators and PATHFIT instructors, the integration of practical nutrition education into the curriculum is strongly advised. Lessons should not only teach concepts but also include hands-on experiences, such as healthy meal planning and preparation, to reinforce the Pinggang Pinoy framework. Regular assessments of students' dietary habits and fitness performance can help personalize instruction and track progress (McKenzie & Lounsbery, 2014). Schools should also provide access to resources like cooking workshops, nutrition counseling, and healthy cafeteria options. Furthermore, implementing gender-responsive programs that cater to the unique nutritional and physical needs of male and female students is essential for inclusivity and effectiveness (Dishman, Heath, & Lee, 2013).

Parents and guardians also play a vital role by supporting healthy eating habits at home. They are encouraged to provide balanced meals that reflect Pinggang Pinoy guidelines and promote physical activity by enabling their children's participation in sports and recreational exercise. Open communication with teachers and health professionals is also essential to create a coordinated support system for student wellness (Bryant, 2015).

For future researchers, it is recommended to explore the long-term effects of adherence to the Pinggang Pinoy guidelines on both health and fitness outcomes throughout the college years. Studies should investigate various influencing factors, such as socioeconomic status, culture, and personal preference, to better understand barriers to adherence. Moreover, enhancing research methodologies through validated tools like food diaries, 24-hour dietary recalls, and fitness trackers can improve data reliability and accuracy (Thompson & Subar, 2017). Expanding the participant pool to include more diverse populations and testing the effectiveness of targeted interventions will further strengthen the applicability and impact of future findings.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The instrument used a questionnaire checklist in gathering the data. The questionnaire for the teachers will be divided into three (3) sections: (1) Respondents' profile, (2) program variables, and (3) performance of Physical Education teachers. And for the student

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questionnaire, it will be divided into two (2) sections: (1) Respondents' profile and (2) performance of Physical Education teachers. The respondents will answer the indicators as to the code stated in the parts of the questionnaires except in the profile.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

The statistical tools for analyzing the data in this study will include descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.
Descriptive Statistics: These will be used to summarize the data, providing an overview of the participants' characteristics, fitness levels, and lifestyle habits. This will include measures such as means, standard deviations, and percentages to describe the distribution of physical fitness scores, body composition, and other variables.

SUMMARY

The study found a significant positive relationship between students' awareness of the Pinggang Pinoy guidelines and their health-related fitness, with notable correlations in flexibility, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and especially cardiovascular endurance. This suggests that students who are more informed about proper nutrition are more likely to engage in fitness-promoting behaviors, supporting findings by McKenzie and Lounsbery (2014) and the Department of Health (2015), which highlight the importance of nutritional knowledge in physical performance. However, the link between adherence to the guidelines and fitness outcomes was more nuanced: while adherence was positively related to flexibility, it was negatively associated with muscular strength and endurance, and showed no significant effect on cardiovascular endurance. This implies that merely following dietary guidelines may be insufficient without structured and well-aligned physical activity, as emphasized by Dishman et al. (2013) and Kenney et al. (2019), who advocate for integrating planned and targeted fitness routines to maximize the benefits of nutrition for physical fitness.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study's findings, several conclusions were established regarding the relationship between students' profiles, awareness, and adherence to the Pinggang Pinoy guidelines and their health-related fitness. First, it was concluded that the profile variables of the freshmen students—specifically age, sex, and weight status—had no significant relationship with their health-related fitness test results, thus sustaining the corresponding hypothesis. Second, the hypothesis suggesting no significant relationship between students' awareness of the Pinggang Pinoy guidelines and their fitness outcomes was rejected, indicating that awareness does influence fitness levels. Lastly, the hypothesis claiming no significant relationship between adherence to the Pinggang Pinoy guidelines and fitness outcomes was only partially rejected, suggesting that while some aspects of adherence are linked to fitness performance, others may not show strong or consistent associations.