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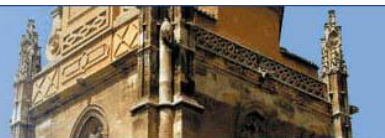
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¹Assistant Professor III, Department of Physical Education, Institute of Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation, University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan, 9407, Philippines



Gen Z's Fitness Concepts and Ways to be Fit: Insights to Strengthen Students' Learning Experiences in Tertiary Physical Education

Ruben L. Tagare, Jr.

Assistant Professor III, Department of Physical Education, Institute of Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation, University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan, 9407, Philippines

Email: tagareruben@usm.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Being dubbed as digital natives born and raised in the highly industrial era, generation z students differ from previous generations. A recent study revealed an increasing number of dropped-out students in physical education classes in one of the leading State Universities in the Philippines. Several reasons have been revealed, and one of those is the current tertiary physical education curriculum content. Hence, this study aimed to determine the fitness concepts and ways to stay fit of generation Z students and utilize in enhancing the curriculum content and improve the students' learning experiences in tertiary physical education. Using the descriptive phenomenology research design, 95 research participants took part in focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and unobtrusive participant observations. The findings of this inquiry indicated three (3) reasons why generation Z students still perceive physical education as an essential course in schools (gadget addiction; early childhood diseases; and stress release) and six (6) ways to stay healthy (exercise and physical activities; balanced diet; enough sleep/rest; self-discipline; and use of technology to promote fitness). The findings and conclusions served as critical components in strengthening the tertiary physical education curriculum to tailor the learning experiences to generation Z students' concepts, ways, and preferences.

Keywords: Generation Z Students; Fitness Concepts; Tertiary Physical Education; Course Strengthening; Qualitative Research; and Ways to be Fit

INTRODUCTION

Our modern world is shaped by tremendous technological changes that modify how we think about society and education. A new generation (generation Z) has come and can speak the "technology language." It's common for them to be called "digital natives" because they were born into a world connected to the internet (Tagare Jr, 2022). These students in higher education rely on PC-recorded lectures instead of taking notes, are more likely to ask questions online, and see lectures as "come and entertain me." They do not like waiting for a response and prefer instant information and communication (Daukseviciute, 2016; Rothman, 2016a). This significantly affects the teaching-learning environment in current educational structures because they are more tech-savvy than typical generation X teachers. This makes it more difficult for teachers to teach, guide, and supervise these students (Cilliers, 2017).

Gen Z have brains that are not the same as those in previous generations, not because of genetics but because of how our brains adapt to the outside world. Their brains have been wired for sophisticated, complex visual imagery, so the part of the brain that controls visual ability has grown significantly. This has made visual learning more effective for this group of people. This group does not like listening to lectures or having conversations. Instead, they like interactive games, collaborative projects, advanced organizers, and challenges (Rothman, 2016b).

Hence, they have been getting much attention because of their unique traits and habits. They were raised when technology was very advanced, making them different from previous generations. In the academe, mentors need to know these students very well to help provide the proper instruction they need. Their generation is called "digital natives" because they were raised in a technologically advanced environment, were exposed to a wide range of situations, and could connect with people from all over the world through the internet. Because these group of students are more clever, adaptable, and open to different cultures, many companies are worried about future challenges and issues that they will face. They want to get what they want instantly, are impatient, spoiled for choice, and don't want to fail. These characteristics make them egocentric people who think they will be business owners and CEOs when they finish college (Singh, 2014).

Concerning their health, the World Health Organization reported that over 1.5 million adolescents and young adults died worldwide in 2019, or approximately 5000 per day. Chronic diseases, self-inflicted injuries, cardiac

arrest, and strokes are their leading causes of death. In addition, access to the internet via smart devices has led to excessive use, which significantly contributes to the worldwide increase in the number of diseases reported among gen Z. All this is a result of cutting off physical activities in favor of playing video games, surfing the internet, or binge-watching for extended periods. This generation is experiencing a significant increase in the number of patients with insomnia, depression, obesity, and poor eyesight (Harambat et al., 2012).

There is an increasing number of dropped-out students in physical education classes at one of the leading State Universities in the Philippines. A preliminary study was conducted in 2020 to elicit the factors affecting this problem and revealed five main issues. Physical fitness tests and time limits in physical education made it hard for students to do well; they also had to do a lot of homework that took up their free time, which made them stressed and anxious; and problems in setting up the curriculum for the new tertiary physical education program, especially on its content. As a result of this research, it is recommended that the current curriculum be investigated and contextualized to fit generation Z students' local concepts better and tailor their learning experiences with their interests and preferred activities (R. L. Tagare & Villaluz, 2021).

The tertiary physical education program presently offered in the said school is a course expected to provide an introduction and orientation in the field of physical education. The course syllabus that the school uses focuses on teaching and learning activities that focus on discussion, demonstration, and performance-based and dwell solely on improving physical fitness. Further, the learning objectives focus more on cognitive development rather than psychomotor. With this, the current syllabus is distant from the desire and interests of their generation.

Various research works have been conducted to examine their behaviors (Töröcsik et al., 2014); the implications of their characteristics to the workplace (Francis & Hoefel, 2018); their social competence (Turner, 2015); comparison of them with previous generations (Dimock, 2019); how they behave in schools (Philippas & Avdoulas, 2020); and threats to their health (Le & Arcodia, 2021). In the educational setting and teaching-learning, few scholars have attempted to investigate them; however, studies relative to physical education and fitness are barely sufficient (Seemiller & Grace, 2016).

Because of this gap and the identified problems, this study was conducted to investigate the generation Z students' fitness concepts specifically to determine how they perceive the importance of physical education amidst technological advancement and their local notions on ways to be fit to identify their fitness preferences as tools to be used in designing activities for their tertiary physical education so that students could have better learning experiences in their tertiary physical education. Research shows that learning environments can be improved by using local principles as a foundation for adapting a curriculum to meet the needs of students from different generations.

More specifically, this research was conducted to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. How do they view the significance of physical education in schools considering today's technological advancements?
2. What fitness ways and preferences do they want to be incorporated into their tertiary physical education curriculum?

Through this research, the generation Z students could express themselves by letting their thoughts and ideas be known. This research also helped curriculum analysts and developers to understand their behavioral interests in tertiary physical education to tailor the learning content to their interests and preferences. The development and discussion of important themes have helped improve the content of the physical education program. This study served as a guide for school administrators, curriculum experts, teachers, and scholars who want to improve instruction by looking at students' patterns of behaviors, perspectives, and local notions.

METHOD

Research Design and Procedures

This study used a qualitative research design, specifically the descriptive phenomenology method. Multiple data collection techniques were used to get a realistic picture of how generation Z students act, think, and communicate to meet the study's goals by analyzing their tertiary physical education experiences. Descriptive phenomenology analyzes a scenario written in the third person based on field researchers' data (Creswell, 2002). Focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, unobtrusive participant observations, and journal writing were all used in this study to get the needed data.

Before starting this investigation, the head of the school and the people who took part had to give their permission. After the school heads and participants agreed to participate in the study, the researcher secured an informed consent contract and gave them a series of orientations to ensure they knew about the study.

Interviews were done casually and semi-structured. Participants were asked open-ended guide questions to get their thoughts, and it went through ethics and technical reviews to ensure that no insulting content could harm the participants' emotional well-being. These approaches may seem like casual chats, but they have an explicit and implicit goal: to find out how they build and categorize their thoughts to understand them better.

The researcher also implied unobtrusive participants' observation to observe how the gen Z behave and act quietly. This helped the researcher comprehend the sincerity and authenticity of the participants' responses. Journal writing was also done by the researcher to self-reflect and register essential observations from the research participants. The responses of participants were recorded with audio recorders and video cameras. Lastly, this study ensured that participants and their information were treated with the utmost respect, anonymity, and confidentiality. For the safety of the participants, no names, institutions, or affiliations were mentioned.

Research Participants and Instruments

The purposive sampling method was used to choose the total sample participants for this study. A total of 95 generation Z students (born between 1995 – 2010) took part in the completion of this research. The research participants have agreed to participate in this study by signing the informed consent contract. The said contract contained the essential information that they needed to know.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data were analyzed and interpreted through the framework introduced by Corbin and Strauss (1990), which includes word analysis, coding, and thematic organization of concepts. Using open coding, the researcher separated the data into discrete parts and labeled them with "codes." Open coding was also done to group the words and concepts that the research participants used the most. Following open coding, axial coding was used to reveal codes, categories, and subcategories grounded in participants' voices within the collected data. In other words, axial coding is a qualitative research technique for constructing relationships between data, determining how concepts are related, and eliminating meaningless words and phrases. Following the coding, essential themes have been formed. Lastly, in the validation process, the researcher returned to the Research Participants to clarify confusing terms and validate their transcribed responses.

RESULTS

Table 1. Participants' Notions on why Physical Education is still Important in Schools amidst Technological Advancement

Essential Themes	Frequency of Responses	Core Ideas
Physical Education VS Excessive Usage of Gadgets	General	- People have developed an addiction to utilizing their gadgets
	General	- We have no other option except to manage devices
	General	- Youth are so engrossed with gadgets that they have forgotten about physical activity
	Variant	- Depleted of energy due to their preoccupation with gadgets
Prevalent of Childhood Diseases	General	- Young people contracting illnesses are increasing
	General	- Young people are experiencing unusually high blood pressure
	Typical	- Children are suffering from diseases at a young age
Physical Education as Venue to Vent and Release their Stresses	General	- It serves as a means of relieving tension associated with academics
	Typical	- We must alleviate our accumulated stress
	Typical	- Physical education activities to avoid feeling sleepy during academic classes

Legend

General -response mentioned by 50% or more of the participants

Typical- response mentioned by at least 25% but less than 50%

Variant- response mentioned by less than 25% of the participants

Table 2. Participants' Responses on their Ways to Fit amidst Technological Advancement and their Preferred Activities to Promote Fitness

Essential Themes	Frequency of Responses	Core ideas
Continuous Engagement in Exercise and Physical Activities	General Typical Variant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercise and participate in activities in the community - Doing physical activities like walking from the school campus - Sweat it out through engagement in various activities
Ensuring a Balance Diet	General General General General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be healthy, it should be a balanced diet - It should be balanced as possible - Proper diet and proper eating - PE does not only focus on the body but also on health
Getting Enough Sleep/Rest Daily	General Variant Variant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have enough time to sleep then daily exercise - A balanced diet, proper training, and enough sleep - If you have a good rest, you'll have a good mood the following day
Having a Self-discipline in Fitness	General General General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-discipline and be disciplined on what you hear, what you do, and what your intake in your body - It will all start with the attitude of a person and their self-discipline - Knowledge is useless without the will
Use the Technology as a Medium to Promote Fitness	Typical Variant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of all now have access to the internet so that they can surf it for Zumba - It is now up to them on how they will apply technology
Allocating Time for Self-Meditation	General Variant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through meditation, we can have a self-relax - Through meditation, we can show self-discipline

Legend

General -response mentioned by 50% or more of the participants

Typical- response mentioned by at least 25% but less than 50%

Variant- response mentioned by less than 25% of the participants

DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed to determine what generation Z students think about fitness by investigating how they perceive the importance of physical education in schools and how they stay healthy so that their experience in tertiary physical education could be enhanced. The following text shows how the goals of this study were met.

Generation Z's Fitness Concepts

To find out what generation Z students think about fitness, the researcher asked them about the value of physical education in schools and their lives, especially since their world is already very technologically advanced, and they can get almost anything at the touch of a finger. Their fitness concepts show that, despite having almost everything, they think that physical education should be more important in schools for the following reasons:

1. Physical Education VS Excessive Usage of Gadgets

"Excessive usage of gadgets" means that generation Z students are excessively compulsive in using electronic gadgets to unwind and escape stress, particularly monitoring their social media accounts. Without a doubt, the participants are still aware of the potential implications of such addiction, notably its health risks. Physical education classes are still relevant in today's world due to device addiction, as demonstrated in their responses below:

"...people have developed an addiction to utilizing their gadgets from the time they get up, before they eat, and before they sleep. When we are at home, we have no other option except to manage devices, which is why we need PE so much because this is the only time we feel physically fit." (G12-6)

"...today's youth are so engrossed with gadgets that they have forgotten about physical activity. When they approach PE class, they are depleted of energy due to their preoccupation with gadgets. They become easily fatigued and appear to have a change in their physique, which causes them to complain about something that is typically not difficult to do..." (G12-65)

Scholars in 2010 investigated the harmful effects of too much exposure to gadgets. People who use smartphone apps like Facebook have their brains "rewired" because they get too much dopamine from their bodies when interacting with things that make them happy, like using Facebook repeatedly (Lam & Peng, 2010). Boredom makes people interact with something that makes them feel good, like the Facebook app. This interaction leads to many rewards in the form of likes, messages, and images, which causes the body to release more dopamine (Chou & Ting, 2003). Dopamine receptors in the brain become less sensitive after many cycles like this one. This means the body does not feel as good when it gets the same natural reward. This spirals the person down a path of more desire for the same reward to get the same level of pleasure as before. There is anxiety and a lack of desire if the cravings are unmet. Gadget addiction is like alcohol or drug addiction because it causes the same bad things to happen (Felt & Robb, 2016).

Further, internet and gadget addiction have harmed youths' cognitive and emotional development. People who spend a lot of time on the computer get more virtual connections and get more rewards from social media (shares, likes) and less face time. People who don't interact with others face-to-face are less likely to empathize with other people. Children's self-esteem and confidence are hurt because social media shows people perfect lives and toned bodies. Another bad thing that could happen is that people won't focus and be more distracted during interactions. People at risk of becoming addicted to the internet are more than twice as likely to show signs of depression as their peers who are not addicted (Muduli, 2014).

2. Prevalent of Childhood Diseases

According to the research participants, early childhood and lifestyle-related disorders are prevalent in their generation. Hypertension and diabetes because of obesity and a lack of physical activity were among the most dominant chronic diseases among the research participants, as confirmed by data from the university hospital. This scenario confirms the World Health Organization's (2017) findings that the Philippines is not exempted from the growing number of obese children worldwide. Statistics indicate that 13% of children in the Philippines are now overweight or obese. In connection, generation Z students recognize this worrisome dilemma, which is why they are adamant about the importance of physical education in modern times. Physical education's importance in reducing early childhood illness is demonstrated in the following response from this participant:

...the number of young people contracting illnesses is increasing. Young people are experiencing unusually high blood pressure, so physical activity is critical for overall health. Typically, when they return home from class, they do nothing." (G12-P50)

In 2019, about 1.5 million young people between the ages of 10 and 24 died - almost 5000 a day. Early infancy diseases, accidents, violence, self-harm, and maternal conditions are the leading causes of death in teenagers and young adults, as well as long-term illnesses and injuries (Harambat et al., 2012).

Though they can be prevented and treated, common infectious illnesses still kill many children, even though they can be prevented and treated. Pneumonia, diarrhea, and malaria killed more than 29% of all children under five in 2018. There are many infectious diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa, so children in the world's poorest countries must bear so much of the burden. These changes are not set in stone. UNICEF wants to protect and stop children from dying of sickness worldwide. At the community level, they help countries improve their primary health care systems and fight diseases like malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea and HIV, and tuberculosis (Prevention, 2015).

3. Physical Education as Venue to Vent and Release their Stresses

For the research participants, "releasing stress" entails abstaining from any duties they must complete for a period. They simply want to enjoy and have fun to divert their attention away from anything that causes them to overthink, such as academic requirements, responsibilities, relationships, and family problems. As a result, generation Z students stated that physical education helps them cope with stress. As such, generation Z students view physical education as a means of dealing with stress, as evidenced by the following excerpts from their responses:

"...PE is the sole opportunity for us to have fun. It becomes a time for us to bond and participate in various activities. Additionally, it provides us with the opportunity to create memories and serves as a means of relieving tension associated with academics...." (G12 – P24)

"...If it is strictly intellectual, it is exhausting, and we must relieve our accumulated stress. We need something that will energize us for the next subject. As a result, we require physical or PE activities to avoid feeling sleepy during academic classes." (P35 – G12)

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (2008), physical activities have also been shown to improve mental fitness by reducing anxiety and depression and improving self-esteem and cognitive function (Maurer et al., 2008). Exercise has also been shown to help with low self-esteem and not wanting to be around people (Callaghan, 2004). These participants' views are in line with this assertion.

Exercise is essential for patients with a lot of stress and anxiety because these patients are already more likely to be overweight. Taking antipsychotics, especially atypical antipsychotics, increases the risk of weight gain. People who do physical conditioning programs could keep their weight under control and said their fitness levels, exercise tolerance, blood pressure, and energy all went up (Guszkowska, 2004). For example, a brisk walk for 30 minutes three times a week is enough to get these health benefits. Another thing to remember is that these 30 minutes don't have to be consecutive. Three 10-minute walks are thought to be just as beneficial as one 30-minute walk (Peluso & Andrade, 2005).

Generation Z Students' Ways to be Fit

After establishing their fitness notions and evaluating the importance of physical education to their generation in today's world, it is critical to ask about their strategies to stay fit, as they can serve as strong points for strengthening their experiences in tertiary physical education. Establishing their fitness methods can be included in their physical education lessons to boost their interest and foster a firm conviction for continued participation in physical activities. Their responses are illustrative of their positions:

1. Continuous Engagement in Exercise and Physical Activities

Exercising and participating in physical activities are two rising replies to how someone can obtain physical fitness. For the research participants, "Continuous Engagement to Exercise and Physical Activities" refers to participation in a variety of activities such as walking, running, playing sports, attending the gym, or even performing home chores, as represented in the following statements:

"...just exercise and participate in activities in the community like Zumba or fun run..." (G12-P24)

"By doing physical activities like walking from the school campus to home since we don't do many physical activities in the classroom --- sitting and doing nothing most of the day--- and also to sweat it out." (G12-P72)

This position taken by the participants is consistent with the finding of Ito (2019) (Ito, 2019), who explained that exercise is critical for promoting health and well-being because it not only alleviates stress, anxiety, and depression but also serves as an excellent agent for weight control, muscular strength, and disease prevention by strengthening the immune system.

The idea that physical activity and exercise can make people feel better about their health and well-being isn't new. Nearly two millennia ago, the Roman poet Juvenal talked about the importance of *men sana in corpore sano* or a healthy mind in a healthy body. The ancient Greeks and Romans knew exercise was essential to

keeping a healthy body (Donnelly & Lambourne, 2011). Even though this is what people have always thought, there hasn't been a reliable way to measure the effect of physical exercise or fitness on many health outcomes, such as mortality risk. As a result, it's not surprising that it's hard to figure out how much physical activity differences between countries affect how long people live (Bhattacharyya et al., 2010; R. J. L. Tagare & Villaluz, 2021).

In addition, Active people who keep their weight in check live about seven years longer than those who are not active and obese. Even more important, those extra years are often healthier years. Active living can help prevent or delay the onset of chronic illnesses and common disorders as people age. On the other hand, active adults keep their quality of life and independence for a long time as they age (Haugen et al., 2013).

2. Ensuring a Balance Diet

Exercise and a balanced diet are inextricably linked. This viewpoint by research participants demonstrates the importance of being aware of what one consumes. Additionally, they underlined the need to consume healthy intakes and balance go, glow, and grow foods in one's diet. To enable an individual to maintain a healthy weight, 30% physical activity/exercise and 70% diet must be included. Additionally, eating a balanced diet results in more significant well-being because it aids disease prevention, improves mood and energy, and promotes restful sleep. As evidenced by the findings, generation Z students knew that maintaining fitness requires a balanced diet. Their responses below demonstrate this:

"To be healthy, it should be a balance diet. For example, excessive vegetables are not good too because you lack protein. So, it should be balanced as possible..." (G12 – P33)

"...proper diet and proper eating because PE does not only focus on the body, but also with health." (G12 – P57)

A healthy diet and getting enough exercise daily are essential for physical and mental health and well-being. These strategies are not only to help avoid or keep from gaining weight, but they also help to get a good night's sleep and have a better mood. Body movements improve the function and results of the brain (Loprinzi et al., 2013). Consuming a balanced diet and being physically active are two of the most important things to stay healthy at any age. A balanced diet is eating the right number of calories and nutrients to keep the weight in check. Physical activity is any kind of exercise that burns calories (Zelber-Sagi et al., 2011).

People who eat a lot of healthy food and exercise can lower their risk of developing chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, some cancers, and their disability, weight gain, and weight loss. More exercise can also help look better and have more fun with family and friends. It can also help keep independence and become more fit (Asigbee et al., 2018).

3. Getting Enough Sleep/Rest Daily

Research participants frequently identify getting enough rest and sleep as wellness values for achieving fitness. Indeed, having enough sleep and rest is critical as it aid in brain regeneration, increases emotional well-being, strengthens the immune system and physical health, and improves daytime performance and safety. Additionally, generation Z students understand sleep deprivation increases the risk of obesity, hypertension, diabetes, kidney illness, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. They also understand "rest" as a time to unwind by taking a nap to evade school tasks and pressure temporarily. The Generation Z Students' need for enough sleep was evident in their comments below:

"... for us to be healthy, it is important to eat properly and have enough time to sleep then daily exercise..." (G12-P47)

"For me, balanced diet, proper exercise, and enough sleep. If you have a good sleep, you'll have a good mood the next morning." (G12-P65)

It is critical for people of all ages to get sufficient sleep. Sleep is necessary to properly function all the body's functions, particularly the immune system. Teenagers' physical health, emotional and mental development and academic achievement depend on adequate sleep. Sleep is critical for brain development and function during adolescence, increasing attention span, memory, and cognitive capacities. Sufficient sleep also contributes to the physiological growth spurt during adolescence (Worley, 2018).

On the other side, sleep deprivation results in tiredness, a lack of focus, and a decline in academic performance. Inadequate sleep in adolescents has been associated with an increased risk of depression, behavioral disorders,

diabetes, and hypertension. Additionally, it has been demonstrated to negatively affect athletic performance (Ramar et al., 2021).

4. *Having a Self-discipline in Fitness*

Generation Z students believed in the importance of self-discipline in achieving fitness. According to the research participants, self-discipline is one of the most critical and valuable abilities a person must possess. It gives individuals the inner power necessary to make sound judgments and impose self-control. The research participants' affirmation of "*self-discipline*" refers to exercising self-control over one's diet, specifically with street meals, junk foods, and processed foods. Indeed, individuals demonstrated wisdom and insight regarding which foods benefit their health. As a result of generation Z students' comments, self-discipline is viewed as a critical component in achieving fitness.

"...proper self-discipline and be disciplined on what you do and what do your intake in your body..." (G12-P75)

"...It will all start with the attitude of a person and his/her self-discipline, will, and determination to be physically fit. Because knowledge is useless without will..." (G12-P41)

Self-discipline is all about making good decisions about what should and should not. Everything, from what to eat to how much exercise to do, is based on a person's sense of order and self-discipline. Training gives people a sense of control over their bodies, leading to a greater understanding of other parts of their lives, which is an excellent way to fight stress. Regular exercisers have more self-esteem and a sense of self-control (Mroczkowska, 2018).

Self-discipline is not self-punishment, as many people think. Instead, it means controlling one's behavior, reactions, and way of life (Manokha, 2018). Self-discipline helps people stay focused on their goals. It lets people oversee their actions and responses in any situation. A muscle grows stronger the more it is used, and so with self-discipline. Inadequate self-discipline could lead to low self-esteem (Kinnunen et al., 2012).

5. *Use the Technology as a Medium to Promote Fitness*

Undoubtedly, generation Z students cannot live without technology because they were born into a globalized culture. The world is constantly developing to improve these systems to make life easier and more sedentary. "*Use the Technology as Medium to Promote Fitness*" refers to utilizing modern technology to encourage fitness. Generation Z students asserted that the value and relevance of something were always dependent on its user. Generation Z students acknowledge the role of high-tech tools such as the internet, mobile applications, social media, and video games as motivating tools for exercise and promoting physical activity. As with technology, it can be harmful to humans if not used appropriately. The participants in this study view technology as a tool for achieving fitness in the digital era, not as a threat. The following are their responses:

"...Technology is a factor that helps [in fitness]; besides, most of all now have access to the internet so they can surf it for Zumba dances, other aerobic exercise and how to eat healthily. It is now up to them on how they will apply it...." (G12-P82)

"...you can now learn through YouTube, and there are mobile applications available in social media where you can learn the ways for a proper diet and exercise — for me, those two are the basics for being healthy." (G12-P17)

Recent research has shown that technology can change people's behavior by giving them essential information, educational materials, fitness trackers, fitness apps, intelligent fitness clothes, and regularly monitoring and providing feedback (Axon et al., 2018). Digital tools such as social media, smartphones, apps, and activity trackers can help people overcome barriers to regular physical activity by assisting with planning, boosting access to fitness programs and exercises, reminding them of daily goals, and giving social and peer support (Middelweerd et al., 2014).

6. *Allocating Time for Self-Meditation*

Allocating Time for Meditation is the last notion that generation Z students consider significant in reaching fitness. Research participants usually claimed meditation as their way to obtain health nowadays primarily

because of the tension and strain they feel in academics. For generation Z students, "meditation" refers to activities such as yoga and other mind-calming exercises that might aid in mind relaxation to be relieved from stress and pressure.

This stance affirms research in neuroscience that has verified that meditation provides several benefits to the youths, including reducing stress, anxiety, and depression, improving sleep, increasing attention and concentration, changing the brain in ways that protect against mental illnesses, improving emotional control, and improves grades and academic performance (Shonin et al., 2013). Thus, their interest in meditational activities is evident in their responses below:

"...I prefer meditation because through meditation we can have a self-relax and through meditation, we can show self-discipline." (G12-P65)

"...there should be a meditation every morning here in school so we could somehow, although briefly, can relax and free our minds from worries..." (G12-P54)

Meditating people improves their mental health by improving their focus and concentration, increasing self-awareness and self-esteem, lowering their stress and anxiety, and cultivating kindness, among other things. Meditation can also improve physical health by making one more tolerant of pain and helping fight against substance abuse (Barnert et al., 2014). Another study also found that practicing mindfulness techniques like meditation improves academic focus and concentration, allowing kids to focus better on assignments and do better on tests. Besides that, meditation can help people improve their self-esteem and memory, lower their blood pressure and heart rate, and keep their immune systems balanced (Wisner, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this research concludes that generation Z students continue to value physical education as a vital topic in schools and a significant component of the curriculum nowadays amidst technological advancement due to their excessive habits in using technological devices and the prevalence of early childhood diseases. It can be concluded that these students want to take a more significant part in every process, as evident by their eagerness to recommend essential components to their physical education courses.

Further, this study concludes that generation Z students' ways and fitness activity preferences are distant from the current tertiary physical education the school offers. Generation Z students suggested innovative ways to help them appreciate and have better learning experiences in tertiary physical education. This study also concluded that physical education provides a safe venue for students to relieve academic stress and anxiety through participation in activities. Furthermore, this study concludes that self-discipline is critical in obtaining and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The ability to exercise self-control and have a higher sense of self-worth can be gained through self-discipline, which is essential to attaining fitness.

Lastly, this research has answered all research questions that are beneficial to enhancing the curriculum content of tertiary physical education and strengthening the generation Z students' learning experiences. Hence, considering the outcomes and conclusions of this investigation, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. This study suggests adding more physical activities and nutrition-related topics to the lessons to make tertiary physical education more engaging. This will help students fully understand the importance of good nutrition and exercise in weight management.
2. To ensure generation Z students don't get too much academic work, schools and other academic fields might want to regulate the tasks given to generation Z students. This will help them lower their stress and anxiety levels and get the rest and sleep they need to keep their health and well-being in check.
3. Content developers may consider incorporating technology into their physical education courses at the tertiary level so that students can track their progress with new technologies and get them excited since these students are digital natives.
4. Meditation and other mind-calming exercises are recommended to help lessen the amount of stress they feel at school.

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