

The background of the entire cover is an abstract, high-energy image. It features a blurred figure of a person, likely a runner, in motion. The figure is overlaid with vibrant, streaky light trails in shades of teal, blue, and orange, creating a sense of speed and dynamic movement. The overall composition is energetic and modern.

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SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE ASSEMBLY OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING

COLLOQUIUM PROCEEDINGS

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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EXPLORING THE TENDENCY TO AVOID PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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I. INTRODUCTION

Physical inactivity significantly contributes to the onset of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity, and is a major factor in global mortality rates. University students, particularly those aged 20–29, exhibit higher rates of inactivity compared to other age groups, largely due to factors such as body dissatisfaction, health awareness, and life transitions [1]. These students often face shifts in lifestyle habits as they transition from adolescence to adulthood, which can impact their physical activity levels. Academic pressures, changes in social environments, and evolving body image concerns can contribute to a decrease in physical activity. This study examines the differences in the tendency to avoid physical activity and sports (TAPAS) across gender, age groups, and body mass index (BMI), providing valuable insights into the patterns and motivations that influence students' engagement in physical activity.

II. METHODS

This survey-based study utilized an online form distributed between October and December 2024. A total of 366 university students from three UiTM Sarawak campuses—Samarahan Campus, Samarahan Campus 2, and Mukah Campus—participated. The sample included students from diverse faculties and programs, utilizing the stratified random sampling technique. TAPAS was measured using the established instrument [2]. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze differences in the tendency to avoid physical activity and sports across gender, age groups, and BMI categories. The mean and standard deviation were also reported.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Demographic of participants

The study involved 366 undergraduate full-time students, randomly stratified from various programs at UiTM Sarawak, aged between 18 and 25 years. Of the participants, 47% were pursuing diplomas and 53% were enrolled in bachelor's degree programs. The majority of students were of normal weight (199, or 54.5%), while 59 (16.1%) were overweight, 51 (13.9%) were obese, and the remaining 57 students (15.6%) were underweight.

B. TAPAS mean score by demographics of the participants

The independent sample t-test revealed a significant difference in TAPAS scores between male and female students ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that male students tend to

avoid physical activity and sports more than female students. One possible explanation is that males may experience greater pressure related to performance and competition in sports, leading to avoidance due to fear of judgment or failure. Although various studies have reported that males are generally more physically active than females [3,4], the tendencies observed in the current sample might be influenced by peer pressure. Non-athletes, in particular, may have less involvement in physical activity and thus participate less in sports.

On the other hand, there is a significant difference in TAPAS scores between BMI categories ($p < 0.05$). Students with normal weight showed higher levels of avoidance. Post-hoc Tukey comparisons revealed that all BMI categories exhibited higher avoidance compared to obese students. This finding suggests that those who do not perceive an immediate health risk may lack motivation to engage in physical activities. Specifically, normal weight students may believe they do not need exercise to maintain their weight, leading to lower participation in sports and fitness activities. In contrast, students in the obese category showed the least tendencies to avoid physical activity, highlighting their awareness of the need to be physically active for health reasons. Interestingly, although individuals in the obese category have been reported to avoid social physical activities due to weight stigma [5], this was not observed in the current sample. Age groups showed no significant differences in TAPAS scores ($p < 0.05$), indicating that age did not emerge as an influencing factor.

TABLE I
TAPAS MEAN SCORE BY DEMOGRAPHICS (N = 366)

TAPAS Score (M ± SD)	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	3.98 ± 0.95*		3.41 ± 0.94*	
	Age groups (years)			
	18-20	21-23	24-26	> 27
	3.63 ± 0.91	3.63 ± 1.02	3.54 ± 1.08	4.14 ± 1.02
	BMI categories (kg/m²)			
UW	NW	OW	OB	
3.61 ± 0.90*	3.77 ± 0.87*	3.65 ± 1.07*	3.63 ± 0.99*	

*Significant difference at $p < 0.05$.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides important insights into the behavior of university students who avoid physical activity and sports, particularly among male students and those with normal weight. These tendencies were consistent across age groups. Universities could diversify physical activity promotion efforts to better engage male students, as physical activity participation was predominantly observed among female students. Further research is needed to explore the underlying causes of these behaviors and to identify potential interventions that could encourage more active lifestyles among university students

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