

FACTORS RELATING TO HEALTH BEHAVIOR OF SPORTS SCIENCE STUDENTS SUANSUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

Jarosporn Pussakham*

Faculty of Science and Technology Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Email: jarosporn.pu@ssru.ac.th

Melanie Urasanit

Faculty of Science and Technology Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Email: melanie.ur@ssru.ac.th

Jaturabhuj Busara

Faculty of Science and Technology Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Email: jaturabhuj.bu@ssru.ac.th

Abstract

Factors Relating to Health Behavior of Sports Science Students Suan sunandha Rajabhat University aims to study Health behavior of Sports Science Students Suan sunandha Rajabhat University. The researcher's sampling size is 423 people from current students. The research tool was questionnaires, which were selected simply randomly. The four instruments used in the study were the Demographics Characteristic Questionnaire, the Health care questionnaire, the health problem assessment and analysis, and the source of stress management Questionnaire. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The research results show that Sports Science Students at Suan sunandha Rajabhat University should be a model of good health to be effective in studying and doing good work because the students are in good health and are not absent due to discomfort. Can work fully Can learn and develop themselves well.

Keywords: Health Behavior, Factors, source of stress management

Introduction

Health problems, particularly non-communicable diseases (NCDs), have become a major global issue. More than 60 percent of affected individuals are unaware of their condition, and by the time they realize it, complications such as acute myocardial infarction have often occurred. The World Health Organization (WHO) has projected that by 2025, approximately 1.56 billion people worldwide will suffer from hypertension. In Thailand, according to the National Health Examination Survey conducted over the past decade, the prevalence of NCDs has been steadily increasing. The highest rise is observed in hypertension cases, followed by diabetes, as reported by the Bureau of Non-Communicable Diseases, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health (Jureporn Khongprasert, 2014). However, these diseases are largely preventable—up to 80 percent—through lifestyle modifications such as proper nutrition, sufficient physical activity, stress and anxiety management, avoidance of smoking, and promoting a supportive social and environmental context for health. This demonstrates that good health encompasses complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease. In other words, a healthy person is not only physically strong but also emotionally stable, able to manage inner conflicts, responsible, and capable of maintaining positive relationships with family and society, while adapting to live harmoniously with others.

In addition, good health requires appropriate health behaviors, health promotion, disease prevention, and risk control. Adopting correct health behaviors builds positive health

capital, helping prevent and reduce health risks that affect overall well-being. Health behavior refers to daily actions aimed at improving quality of life and enhancing overall wellness across physical, mental, and social dimensions. Most chronic diseases today, such as diabetes and hypertension, are closely related to individual health behaviors. The ultimate goal of promoting proper health behaviors is to achieve well-being at the personal, family, community, and societal levels. When individuals consistently engage in health-promoting activities, they experience long-term wellness, improved quality of life, higher work productivity, reduced absenteeism, fewer illnesses, and lower medical costs. This aligns with the National Economic and Social Development Plan, Strategy 3 of the 12th National Health Development Plan (2017–2021), which emphasizes promoting health, preventing and controlling diseases, and protecting consumers in health-related matters to ensure that Thai people are healthy in body, mind, society, and intellect.

Adolescents represent the future of the nation. They will become the country's workforce, citizens, parents, and family leaders. Therefore, the quality of today's youth reflects the quality of the nation's future human resources. Healthy adolescents are physically, mentally, and emotionally ready to become responsible adults who contribute to social and economic development. During adolescence, individuals undergo significant physical, emotional, and psychological changes, which can influence behavior and lifestyle choices. The desire for peer acceptance may lead to risky health behaviors. Hence, it is important for adults to understand and support adolescents to reduce such risks. Providing safe spaces for young people to spend their leisure time productively—such as engaging in recreational or sports activities—can help relieve emotional stress and promote well-being. Public and private open spaces can be designated as exercise or sports areas free of charge, creating accessible environments that encourage healthy lifestyles, reduce risky behaviors, and foster an interest in sports participation.

The Department of Sports Science and Health, Faculty of Science and Technology, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, recognizes that students should serve as role models for good health to ensure academic and work efficiency. Poor health among students can negatively affect their future work performance, such as frequent absences and reduced productivity. Therefore, studying health behaviors is important to provide information that can be used to modify and improve individuals' health practices. According to Sutthiwann Lertsatianchai et al. (2004), occupational type is one factor that influences health behaviors, as different job characteristics can lead to varying health patterns. Green and Kreuter (2005) also stated that health behaviors are influenced by both internal and external factors.

For this reason, studying the factors affecting health behaviors—particularly among adolescents and university students—is crucial. This age group experiences developmental changes in body, mind, emotion, and social relationships, which often result in behavior-related problems. Increasing reports of risky behaviors such as street racing, accidents, conflicts, fights, sexual misconduct, and substance abuse among youth highlight the need for health promotion that addresses these specific issues. The most effective approach is to encourage awareness of one's own health behaviors and their consequences. Educational institutions play a key role in guiding students toward positive behavioral change.

Therefore, the researcher aims to study the factors associated with health behaviors among students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The findings will provide valuable information for designing appropriate health promotion programs tailored to students' needs and may be applied to other academic disciplines. The results can also serve as a foundation for planning and developing long-term

Research Objectives

1. To study the health behaviors of students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
2. To examine the driving factors, facilitating factors, and reinforcing factors associated with students' health behaviors.

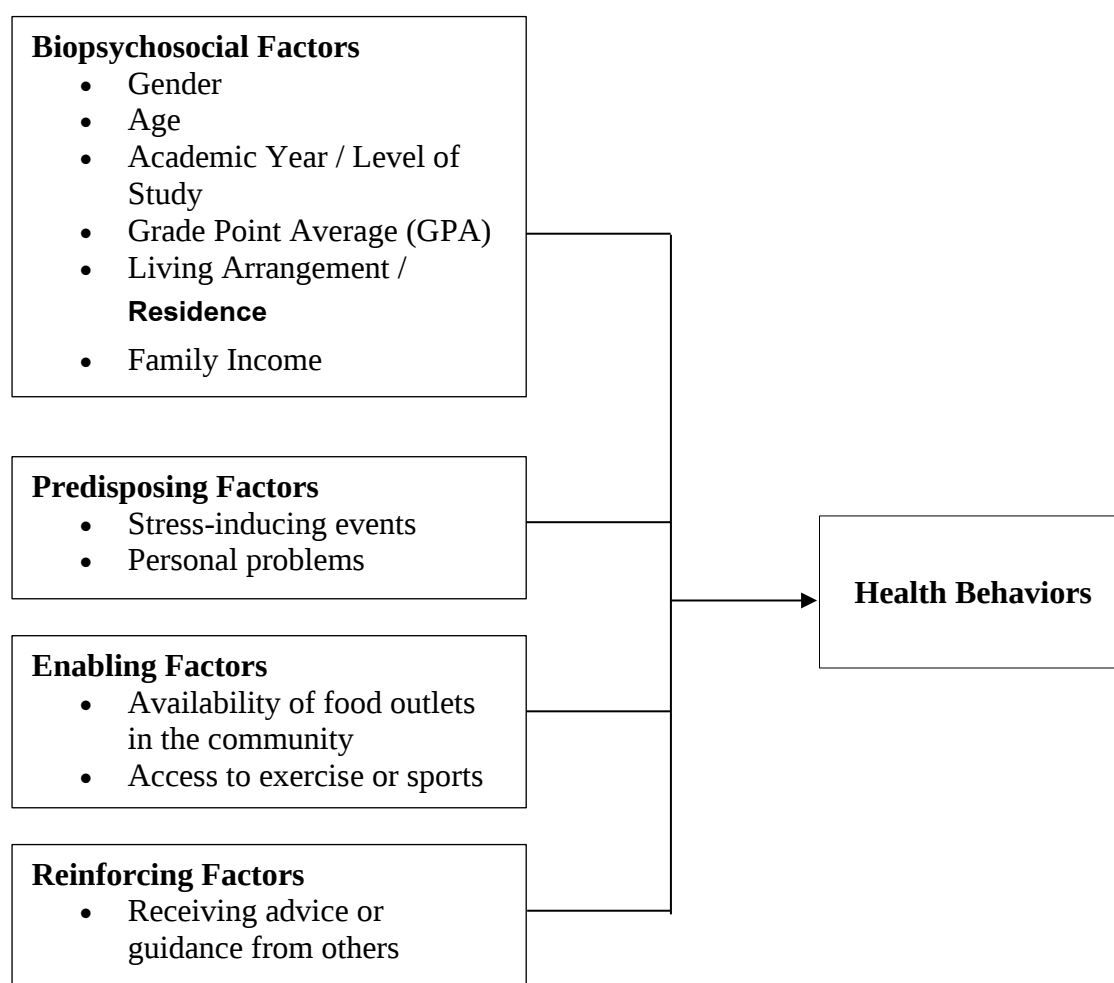


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

The population of this study consisted of students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Faculty of Science and Technology, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Sample: The sample was selected using purposive sampling according to predetermined criteria. The sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula. A total of 423 students

in the Department of Sports Science and Health met the inclusion criteria: aged 18 years or older, able to communicate, read, and write, and willing to participate in the study.

Research Instrument: Data were collected using a questionnaire divided into four parts:

1. Personal Information Questionnaire
2. Stress Assessment and Analysis Questionnaire
3. Questionnaire on Causes of Stress
4. Questionnaire on Stress Management of students in the Department of Sports

Science and Health, Faculty of Science and Technology, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Data Used in the Study: The study utilized information on personal factors (including age, gender, academic year, grade point average, etc.), students' stress levels, causes of stress, and students' stress management practices.

Content Validity

The researcher conducted a content validity assessment for all four parts of the questionnaire. Three experts were invited to evaluate the questionnaire, including one expert in health promotion and one expert in stress management. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated, yielding a value of 0.98. Subsequently, the reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which resulted in values of 0.98 and 0.96, respectively.

Data Analysis

1. Personal information and health behavior questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including distribution, frequency, and percentage.

2. The relationship between health behaviors and other factors was analyzed using the Chi-square test.

Research Results

Table 1: Stress Levels of Students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Classified by Personal Factors (n = 423)

Stress Levels	Frequency (n =423)	Percentage (%)
Low	91	21.51
Moderate	178	42.08
High	143	33.81
Severe	20	4.73

From Table 1, it was found that students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, classified by personal factors (n = 423), reported mental health conditions over the past six months. Most students experienced moderate and high stress levels, accounting for 42.08% and 33.81%, respectively.

Table 2: Consumption Behaviors of Students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Classified by Personal Factors (n = 423)

Stress Levels	Frequency (n =423)	Percentage (%)
1. Eat three complete meals per day.	200	47.3
2. Consume a variety of foods from all five food groups daily.	150	35.5
3. Eat vegetables daily.	99	23.4
4. Eat fruits daily.	203	48.0
5. Consume cooked meat.	395	93.4
6. Reduce intake of high-fat foods, such as stewed pork leg, pork belly, Chinese sausage, grilled pork neck, bacon, sausages, chicken skin, or pork skin.	100	28.4
7. Reduce consumption of fried foods, such as fried bananas or fried dough sticks.	88	20.8
8. Reduce consumption of foods or desserts high in coconut milk, butter, or margarine, such as red curry, green curry, Massaman curry, curries, sticky rice with coconut, banana in coconut milk, Bua Loy, Lod Chong, Ruby dessert, or bakery products such as bread, cakes, and donuts.	88	20.8
9. Avoid very salty foods, such as pickled or processed foods (e.g., salted meat, salted fish).	188	44.4
10. Avoid very sweet foods, including savory dishes that are excessively sweetened.	168	39.7
11. Drink at least 8 glasses of water per day.	389	92.0
12. Drink 1–2 glasses/cartons of plain or low-fat milk daily.	401	94.8
13. Avoid sweetened beverages, such as sweetened fruit smoothies, carbonated drinks, or other sugary drinks.	377	89.1
14. Add fish sauce or chili fish sauce when eating rice.	133	31.4
15. Add fish sauce or sugar when eating noodles.	133	31.4

From Table 2, it was found that the most common dietary behavior among students in the Department of Sports Science and Health was drinking 1–2 glasses/cartons of plain or low-fat milk daily, accounting for 94.8%. This was followed by consuming cooked meat (50.4%), drinking at least 8 glasses of water per day (93.4%), and avoiding sweetened beverages, such as sweetened fruit smoothies, carbonated drinks, or other sugary drinks (89.1%).

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Stress Management Practices among Students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (n = 423)

Stress Levels	Frequency (n =423)	Percentage (%)
1. Exercise	322	76.1
2. Get enough rest or sleep	316	74.7
3. Watch movies or listen to music	185	43.7
4. Engage in hobbies or leisure activities	175	41.4
5. Consult friends or people outside the family	169	39.95
6. Consult family members	150	35.5
7. Perform religious activities such as making merit, praying, or attending a temple, church, or mosque	59	14.0
8. Consult a supervisor, teacher, or lecturer	24	6.9
9. Call someone for advice	20	4.7
10. Drink alcoholic beverages such as beer or liquor	20	4.7
11. Smoke cigarettes	20	4.7
12. Consult respected persons, such as a village head, elder, or monk	10	2.4
13. Consult public health officers	8	1.9
14. Take sleeping pills or tranquilizers	8	1.9
15. Throw or destroy objects	8	1.9
16. Cry	8	1.9
17. Gamble	6	1.4
18. Argue with or physically harm others	6	1.4
19. Consult a psychiatrist	4	0.9
20. Consult a general physician	4	0.9
21. Physically harm oneself	3	0.7
22. Seek advice from a spiritual medium	1	0.2

From Table 3, it was found that the most common stress management practice among students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, was exercise, accounting for 76.1%. The second most common practice was getting enough rest or sleep, accounting for 74.7%.

Research Findings

1. Among students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (n = 423), most reported experiencing mental health conditions over the past six months. The majority experienced moderate and high stress levels, accounting for 42.08% and 33.81%, respectively.

2. Students' stress levels differed significantly ($p < 0.05$) according to family income and the sufficiency of their monthly allowance.

3. The most common dietary behaviors among students were drinking 1–2 glasses/cartons of plain or low-fat milk daily (94.8%), followed by consuming cooked meat (50.4%), drinking at least 8 glasses of water per day (93.4%), and avoiding sweetened beverages, such as sweetened fruit smoothies, carbonated drinks, or other sugary drinks (89.1%).

4. The most common stress management practices were exercise (76.1%) and getting enough rest or sleep (74.7%).

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the most common dietary behaviors among students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, were drinking 1–2 glasses/cartons of plain or low-fat milk daily (94.8%), followed by consuming cooked meat (50.4%), drinking at least 8 glasses of water per day (93.4%), and avoiding sweetened beverages, such as sweetened fruit smoothies, carbonated drinks, or other sugary drinks (89.1%). These behaviors contribute to students' overall health and well-being.

Regarding stress management, the most frequently practiced method among students was exercise (76.1%), followed by getting enough rest or sleep (74.7%). Exercise, as a stress management strategy, has been shown to benefit both physical and mental health. It helps students reduce negative thoughts and feelings that may cause stress and promotes a sense of well-being.

The results also indicated a significant positive relationship ($p < .01$) between overall health behaviors and stress management practices. Students who engaged in healthy dietary behaviors and effective stress management were more likely to maintain good health, both physically and mentally. Consequently, these students were better prepared for academic activities, work, and other responsibilities, with most reporting minimal absenteeism due to illness.

These findings suggest that promoting healthy eating habits and encouraging regular exercise as a form of stress management can significantly enhance the overall health and academic readiness of students in the Department of Sports Science and Health.

Recommendations

1. The findings of this study indicated that students in the Department of Sports Science and Health, Faculty of Science and Technology, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, exhibited moderate overall health behaviors. Therefore, faculty members and those responsible for student health should organize health promotion programs for students and the general public who are interested. These programs should support and encourage the practice of appropriate health behaviors, particularly physical exercise.

2. University staff responsible for student health promotion should not only organize exercise promotion programs but also implement regular health check-up programs to monitor students' health status at least twice a year. Moreover, the study found that some participants require additional support for mental health promotion, such as programs teaching effective stress-relief techniques.

- Ajalasutthi, S., Weerasophon, W., Chailert, B., & Maenin, W. (2024, March). A survey of consumer behavior and satisfaction with snack foods in Thailand. In *Proceedings of the National & International Conference* (Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 554–560).
- Baron, R. A., & Greenberg, J. (1990). *Behavior in organizations* (3rd ed.). Allyn and Bacon.
- Cress, V. C., & Lampman, C. (2007). Hardiness, stress, and health-promoting behaviors among college students. *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*, 12(1), 18–23.
- Jarosporn, P., & Wadee, P. (2017). Guidelines for health promotion operation of sport schools. In *Proceedings of the IRES International Conference* (Vol. 1, pp. 101–103).
- Jones, R. W. (1993). Gender-specific differences in the perceived antecedents of academic stress. *Psychological Reports*, 72(2), 739–743.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress appraisal and coping*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Namakunka, A., Suwan, N., & Fongkaew, W. (2008). Stress and factors inducing stress in nursing students during nurses practice on wards. *Nursing Journal*, 35(2), 26–36.
- Selye, H. (1956). *The stress of life*. McGraw-Hill.
- Yanwaree, N., & Sonpaveerawong, J. (2003). Student's perception on learning experience in nursing subjects of bachelor of nursing science program. *Thai Journal of Nursing Council*, 18(3), 36–46.