Human & Social Sciences Journal

Volume 11, Issue 02, December 2025, P.P. 170-179.

Physical activity at university: between tourism and healthy living

االنشاط البدني في الوسط الجامعي: بين السياحة ونمط الحياة الصحي

L'activité physique au milieu universitaire : entre tourisme et l'hygiène de vie

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Date of submission 20/09/2025- Date of acceptation 25/11/2025- Date of edition : 31/12/2025

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل أثر النشاط البدني في الهواء الطلق على نمط الحياة الصحي للطالبات الجامعيات وتعزيز السياحة الجامعية. أُجريت دراسة وصفية مقطعية لمدة ثلاثة أشهر بمدينة قسنطينة، شملت 19 طالبة يمارسن الرياضة الخارجية ثلاث مرات أسبوعيًا. استُخدم استبيان FFEPGV لتقييم نمط الحياة.أظهرت النتائج أن 84% من الطالبات يمارسن الرياضة لأكثر من 45 دقيقة يوميًا، و90% بمعدل لا يقل عن ثلاث مرات أسبوعيًا. كما تبين أن 63% يتبعن نظامًا غذائيًا غير متوازن مع تناول متكرر للوجبات الخفيفة، و74% يشربن أكثر من 1.5 لتر من الماء يوميًا، دون تسجيل استهلاك للتبغ أو الكحول. وسجلت غالبية المشاركات نومًا جيدًا، وصحة نفسية مستقرة دون اللجوء إلى الأدوية.

توصي الدراسة بتشجيع النشاط البدني في الهواء الطلق لتحسين جودة الحياة والصحة النفسية، وتعزيز السياحة الرياضية الجامعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياحة الرياضية؛ نمط الحياة؛ النشاط البدني؛ الطالبات الجامعيات

Abstract :

This study aims to analyse the impact of outdoor physical activity on the healthy lifestyle of female university students and to promote campus tourism. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted over three months in the city of Constantine, involving 19 female students who practiced outdoor sports three times per week. The FFEPGV questionnaire was used to assess lifestyle.

The results showed that 84% of the participants exercised for more than 45 minutes daily, and 90% engaged in physical activity at least three times per week. However, 63% followed an unbalanced diet with frequent snacking, while 74% drank more than 1.5 litres of water daily. No tobacco or alcohol consumption was recorded. Most participants reported good sleep quality and stable mental health without the use of medication.

The study recommends promoting outdoor physical activity to improve quality of life and mental well-being, while also encouraging the development of university sports tourism

Keywords : Sports Tourism; healthy lifestyle; physical activity; university students

Résumé :

Cette étude vise à analyser l'impact de l'activité physique en plein air sur l'hygiène vie sain des étudiantes universitaires et à promouvoir le tourisme universitaire. Menée sur trois mois à Constantine, elle a concerné 19 étudiantes pratiquant des activités extérieures trois fois par semaine. Le questionnaire FFEPGV a servi à évaluer leur hygiène de vie. Les résultats montrent que 84 % s'exercent plus de 45 minutes par jour et 90 % au moins trois fois par semaine. Toutefois, 63 % suivent un régime déséquilibré avec des collations fréquentes, tandis que 74 % consomment plus de 1,5 litre d'eau par jour. Aucune consommation de tabac ou d'alcool n'a été observée. La majorité bénéficie d'un bon sommeil et d'une stabilité mentale sans recours aux médicaments.

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L'étude recommande de favoriser l'activité physique en plein air pour améliorer la qualité de vie et le bien-être , tout en soutenant le développement du tourisme sportif universitaire
Mots clés : Tourisme Sportif; L'hygiène de vie; Activité Physique; Les étudiantes Universitaire

Introduction :

Healthy behaviours (a healthy diet, regular physical activity, recuperative sleep, limited screen time, etc.) constitute a healthy lifestyle. These healthy habits are recognised as protective factors for both physical and mental health **(FAECUM, 2016)**They also help to prevent risky behaviour (excessive consumption, dangerous practices) and addictions.

Adults over the age of 18 should limit their sedentary time, and replace it with physical activity of any intensity (including light),This is what the WHO recommends for better health **(WHO, 2020)**, But more than that, physical activity practised outdoors would be an excellent way of promoting a healthy and active lifestyle among young people and especially university students, who live in an environment full of academic pressures and daily challenges and an intense life between studies and exams, facing challenges linked to time management and social pressures. In this context, engaging in outdoor physical activities presents itself as a suitable strategy for overcoming stress and psychological pressures, while improving energy levels and concentration.

Reaching university represents a decisive phase in the journey of young adults، it symbolizes greater autonomy and the emergence of new obligations to assume. This moment is often linked to significant transformations in daily lifestyle there is thus a risk of developing bad habits for health such as unbalanced eating, physical inactivity or high levels of stress **(AACH, 2020)** . Yet the health and well-being of students are key factors in their academic success and personal fulfilment **(WHO, 2020)**.

In this respect, sport-based outdoor tourism (SBOT) is a promising approach to encouraging a more active lifestyle among university students by promoting a variety of physical activities practised in the great outdoors, such as hiking, cycling and climbing **(Roe, 2013)**Participating in these activities has many health benefits, both physical and mental. These include improved cardiovascular and muscular health, as well as reducing stress and anxiety **(Pretty, 2005)**.

A number of studies have highlighted the benefits of time spent exercising on the health of populations in general. This includes prevention of chronic disease and improved sleep as well as boosting the immune system **(Roe, 2013)**. Nevertheless there is a lack of studies specifically targeting the influence of exercise on the lifestyles of female university students who have particular health needs **(Evans, 2011)**،and especially at a national level.

Female students face particular challenges such as academic pressure, family responsibilities, financial difficulties, which can negatively influence their lifestyle habits **(Brow, 2006)** it is therefore essential to explore how TSPA can contribute to improving the lifestyle of these young women and help them adopt healthier behaviours.

Our study takes place in this context, it deals with the problem of taking care of university girls through the practice of an adapted physical activity (TSPA), (outdoor fitness), and highlight its effects on their lifestyle hygiene, their motivation and their participation in promoting tourism in the university environment.

1- Methodology.

This is a descriptive study. It was carried out over 3 months in Constantine, and the subjects completed a standardized physical activity questionnaire (FFEPGV).

1-2. Subjects.

19 university girls aged between 18-25 years, free of any cardiovascular or other pathology, consented to take part in the present study.

The subjects were reassured that the data would be collected with respect for confidentiality and anonymity.

Experimental protocol :

This is a cross-sectional study, on subjects who participated for 3 months. The subjects included individually completed the validated questionnaire by the FFEPGV *(Fédération Française d'Éducation Physique et de Gymnastique Volontaire).*

The questionnaire is designed to assess lifestyle habits and has the following characteristics:

Purpose: to assess and become aware of lifestyle habits

Target group: adults

Duration: 7 minutes

Location: in a quiet place with a table or shelf.

Materials: pens or pencils, questionnaires for each person.

Instructions: fill in the questionnaire. Choose the answer that seems most relevant to your daily life and circle it for each question.

Precaution:

- Make sure that reading is not a barrier for all the participants.
- Make sure you create an "atmosphere" where everyone has their place and feels at ease.
- Be vigilant about the confidentiality of answers to questions that might make people feel uncomfortable.
- Check that the person has answered all the questions.

2- Results and discussion .

The results of the study are expressed in mean, standard deviation and percentage.

- **Results for physical activity**

The following table shows the results of the physical activity and sport practised by the female students.

Table -1-: **Results of questions 01 and 02**

Q01: How active are you on an average day ?			Percentage	Q02: How many sports sessions do you do per week ?		Percentage
0 min	0		0%	0	0	0%
20 min	2		10,5%	1 session	1	5,3%
30 minutes	1		5,3%	2 sessions	1	5,3%
45 minutes	16		84,2 %	3 sessions	17	89,4%
Average		3,74		3,89		

Table (1) shows the distribution of responses to questions 01 and 02.

- **Results of food intake**

The following table shows the qualitative and quantitative results of the students' food intake.

Table –2 -:**Results of questions 03, 04,05**

Q 03: Do you eat 3 to 4 meals a day?		Percentage %	Q 04: Are your meals balanced?		Percentage %	Q05: Do you nibble?		Percentage %
Never	0	0 %	Never	1	5 %	Never	7	37%
Sometimes	2	11 %	Sometimes	9	48%	Sometimes	5	26%
Often	5	26 %	Often	5	26 %	Often	5	26%
Daily	12	63 %	Daily	4	21%	Daily	2	11%
Average	3,52		2,63			2,89		

Table (2) shows the distribution of responses to questions 03, 04 and 05.

- Note that the subjects declared that they never smoked or drank alcohol (Q7 and Q8) and that they consumed between 1 and 1.5 litres of water per day (Q6).

➢ **Results for the sleep parameter .**

The following table shows the students' night-time sleep results

Table **–3 -:Results of question 09**

How many hours do you sleep per night?		
- From 5 h	1	5%
5 to 6 h 30	0	0%
6.30 a.m. to 7.30 a.m.	9	47,5%
+ more than 7.30 am	9	47,5%
Average	3.37	

Table (03) shows the distribution of responses to question 09.

➢ **Results on social relations and taking medication**

Tables 4 and 5 below show the results for food intake and social relationships of female university students, respectively.

Table **–4 -:Results of Q10 and Q11**

Q 10: **Do you take medication?**		Percentage %	**Q 11: Do you have back pain?**		Percentage %
On a daily basis	2	11%	Every day	1	5%
Often	0	0%	Often	2	11%
Sometimes	8	42%	Sometimes	7	37%
Never	9	47%	Never	9	47%
Average	3.26		3,26		

Table (04) shows the distribution of responses to questions 10 and 11.

Table –5 -:**Results of Q12 and Q13**

Q12 :**Do you encounter stressful or conflictual situations?**		Percentage %	**Q13:Do you feel fulfilled in your relationships?**		Percentage %
On a daily basis	0	0%	Every day	5	26%
Often	4	21%	Often	11	58%
Sometimes	11	58%	Sometimes	3	16%
Never	4	21%	Never	0	0%
Average	3.00		3,10		

Table (05) shows the distribution of responses to questions 12 and 13.

- **Summary table**

The following table shows the overall results of **the** FFEPGV questionnaire.

Table –6 -:**Summary table**

Physical activity	**Diet + water**	**Sleep and health**	**Psychosocial**
Question 1 **Question 2**	**Question 3** **Question 4** **Question 5**	**Question 8** **Question 9**	**Question 12** **Question 13**
○ 84.2% practise more than 45 minutes a day ○ 89.4% more than 3 times a **week**	○ More than 70% take more than 3 to 4 meals a day ○ Balanced food rations remain contentious ○ The percentage of nibbling remains contentious ○ 100% of subjects drink between 1L and 1.5L of water / day	○ 95% sleep between 6.30am and 7.30am ○ 90% occasionally take medication ○ 84% of subjects experience back pain sometimes or never	○ 69% of subjects rarely or never experience stressful situations ○ The majority (84%) often, if not always, feel fulfilled in their relationships.
	Note that the subjects stated that they never smoked or drank alcohol (Q7 and Q8).		

It can be seen from the table, through the different axes developed and the 13 questions asked in the questionnaire, that the subjects practising physical activity in the open air have a high level of practice, but different and sometimes unbalanced eating habits; these imbalances are essentially linked to the frequency of meals and nibbling, On a psychological level, most of the subjects felt fulfilled following a proposed programme of physical activity, and most of them felt fulfilled after following the proposed programme of physical activity. What's more, most of them experienced few stressful situations, thanks to the mental benefits of sport and physical activity in the open air. It has also enabled them to discover sites and places that would otherwise be unknown to them.

Table –7 -: **The following table shows the results of the FFEPGV questionnaire**

On a daily basis	0	0%	Every day	5	26%
Often	4	21%	Often	11	58%
Sometimes	11	58%	Sometimes	3	16%
Never	4	21%	Never	0	0%
Average	3.00		3,10		

Table –8 -: **level of heathy lifestyle**

	Average	**Standard deviation**	**Level**
Healthy lifestyle	44.42	4.26	Good

The results show a score of 44.42, which is a good score by questionnaire standards (44.42 > 18) and a standard deviation of 4.26.



Figure (01) illustrates the positive value of the score according to the questionnaire standards

Discussion:

The results of the lifestyle questionnaire indicate a good quality of life in our study population. This level could be linked to the training followed for 3 months with an outdoor exercise programme. The specialist literature has in fact reported the positive effect of regular, adapted physical activity on mental health and lifestyle in different populations.

In terms of the relationship between physical activity and tourism, the students involved developed a more regular and lasting habit of physical activity. Frequent exposure to natural environments and the discovery of new sporting disciplines encourage a more playful and less restrictive approach.

Several studies **(creps-pdl.sports.gouv.fr, 2024)** have shown that outdoor sports tourism appears to be an effective vector for improving sporting habits, by encouraging individuals to adopt a regular and diversified practice of physical activity.

In terms of the social dimension, which often involves group activities, sports tourism plays a key role in reinforcing sporting habits. The group dynamic and social support enable greater adherence and perseverance in the practice of physical activities. **(duncan, 2018)** For the second aspect, the results show a breakdown between several profiles: some people have an unbalanced diet, others eat slightly better, some snack between meals, while water consumption appears to be broadly in line with the questionnaire standards (1L - 1.5L/d). However, water consumption is influenced by factors such as the season, temperature and humidity. So it's difficult to say that people who take part in physical activity systematically eat well. This could be explained by their environment, particularly the fact that they live in university halls of residence, which limits their opportunities to cook and prepare their own meals.

Sleep, for its part, is a fundamental pillar of health and well-being, particularly for university students. Poor quality sleep is often associated with academic stress, irregular working hours and an active social life. Outdoor physical activity is a natural and effective solution for improving sleep quality in this population. We found that the majority of female students got enough sleep after exercising outdoors.

In fact, our results are consistent with several studies **(Rahman and al, 2018)**, **(Kelly and al, 2017)**, which have shown that outdoor physical activity is a valuable ally for improving sleep quality in university students. By combining outdoor exercise with good sleep hygiene and a healthy diet, it is possible to promote restful sleep and take full advantage of its benefits on health, well-being and academic success.

Our results also reveal a positive impact of outdoor physical activity on mental health, social relationships and disease reduction in female university students. Exposure to nature, physical exercise and social interaction would have contributed to these benefits.

Our results are in line with those of **(McKay, 2008)** who showed that physical exercise was comparable to antidepressants in reducing depressive symptoms.

(Calmeiro, 2009), for their part, confirmed that physical activity is a recognised protective factor for mental health. Its effects are significant enough to be considered a psycho-therapeutic process in its own right **(Anne-Claire, 2021)**.

Conclusion:

The aim of our study was to highlight the influence of three months of outdoor physical activity on the well-being and quality of life of female university students and to demonstrate its role in promoting tourism through sport.

The results of the study showed that the university students who took part in our programme had a good level of healthy living, reflected in good sleep, less use of medication and good eating habits, although these were sometimes contentious.

However, combining an outdoor training programme with a diet programme could improve these results even further. We strongly recommend improving the quality of energy intake and following a healthy diet. The habits of not snacking between meals and eating 5 fruits and vegetables are recommended by specialist literature and, above all, by the WHO **(WHO, Adolescent health, 2021)**.

Physical activity also has a positive effect on psychological well-being and quality of life. Indeed, active people live longer, as shown by the results of recent studies that reveal the impact of a healthy diet and mental health on people's life expectancy, which will have a definite socio-economic impact by reducing the cost of care, which increases with age **(creps-pdl.sports.gouv.fr, 2024)**.

The results of this study confirm the winning combination of outdoor physical activity and tourism on well-being in the university environment.

Physical activity in the open air offers university students an exceptional opportunity to improve their health. Physical activity in the great outdoors, whether hiking, cycling, climbing or other activities, helps to improve general fitness, strengthen the cardiovascular system and maintain a healthy weight and adequate body composition، Exposure to natural light promotes the production of vitamin D, which is essential for healthy bones and a properly functioning immune system. In addition, outdoor physical activity reduces stress, anxiety and depression, promoting optimal mental and emotional balance. Contact with nature soothes the mind, allowing people to refocus on themselves and disconnect from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. By taking advantage of the benefits of outdoor sports tourism, university students can improve their overall quality of life, feeling more energetic, happier and more fulfilled.

The study underlines the importance of promoting outdoor physical activity in the university environment, and calls on those responsible to provide appropriate facilities to satisfy students' motivation to take part in sport and enjoy the natural environment that our country has to offer.

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