

2009

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College Students' Attitude Towards the Utilization of the Sport Recreation Center (SRC)

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Abstract

The primary aim of this paper is to examine the reasons for using or not using the student recreational center (SRC) among a frequent users and non-users. The second purpose is to use the research findings in order to make some recommendations for attracting stronger patronage amongst student users. Two groups of college students that were identified by user and non-user were invited to attend a separate focus group discussion. A user group consisted of six students (5 male, 1 female) with a mean age of 20.33 (Sd=.82), and the non-user group consisted of eight students (6 male, 2 female) with a mean age of 20.38 (Sd=1.30). The discussion was lead by one of the authors and was tape recorded with permissions from the respondents. The recorded tape was transcribed verbatim and analyzed by using the content analysis method by the three authors. Separate analyses were conducted for both groups. Results show that three themes emerged as important for the User group using the facility: the wellness reason; good facilities; and reasons associated with socialization. On the other hand, four themes emerged for the non-user group not using the facility: inconvenience; personal inadequacy; poor accessibility; and lack of interest. On how to attract more students, the User group suggested that students themselves must be knowledgeable in exercise; SRC should create more competition; and the SRC should keep up with the maintenance. While the non-user group suggested that more email information sent to them; the SRC should train their staff (e.g. for weight room staff), and the SRC should build a bigger space (especially weight room); and more competition should be offered. Furthermore, it is interesting to find that both the user and non-user have different opinions on how to promote more students usage. However, there appears to be a relatively good relationship between the two. This relationship has is in the conclusion and further recommendations are also suggested.

Keywords: Students recreational center, attitude, barriers and benefits, physical activity, college students.

1.0. Introduction

It has been estimated that 60 percent of United States colleges and universities have optimized the benefit of a student recreation center (SRC), which on average have a 75 percent student take-up.¹ What is more, the figures have kept on increasing because the demand for recreation center usage has continued to explode, which heightens student expectations to on what to expect about campus life. The SRC has been very competitive among the top universities, and may also act as one of the key factors to recruit new students and to ensure students stay academically challenged. It is also been reported that 30 percent of the regular users of sport recreation center have indicated that the recreational facilities provided by certain universities was their priority in decision making about enrolling as students.² To ensure student satisfaction while learning, many universities have upgraded their SRC with a renovated Olympic sized pool, a leisure pool, a hot tub, indoor jogging track, weight lifting room, cardiovascular fitness center, universal gym, racquetball and squash court, boxing ring, indoor rock climbing, with shower room facilities and free equipments. Further more many recreation centers have also provided access to individualize fitness and nutrition counseling and classes for dance, fencing, yoga, and cardio fitness.³

2.0. Previous Research

The central attractions of such million dollar investment in facilities is to create a livelier and meaningful campus life to students, faculty, and staff as well as the alumni, all of which enhance the university's competitiveness position in the academic arena.⁴ Additionally, such investment helps the university to re-establish a relationship with the alumni for recruitment purposes and means better job hunting for future graduates.⁵ The SRC is also a source to improve recruitment and help to overcome the retention problems among young college students. As well as becoming a recruiting tool, it also helps to facilitate a healthy lifestyle among students with varieties of available recreational programs provided by SRC. According to Belch, Gabel and Maas⁶, a quality SRC can serve as an excellent college freshman creating environment that may secure a subculture within a larger community and a sense of belonging which supports a healthy campus life environment.

Developing a healthy campus life is important because student life is more complex than previously imagined and the notion that if you enrolled, you will get a better job at the end no longer hold goods. It is now realized that to be a successful student may mean experiencing stress or other problems such as general problems with college life⁷; adjusting to roommate and interpersonal conflict⁸; peer pressure⁹; eating disorders¹⁰; binge drinking¹¹; and adjusting with academic work¹². To some extent, it is a time where students live in a separate liminal world, independently away from their parents. They are exposed to behave in certain ways that might not be conducive with the intellectual college challenge of what college life is supposed to be. The consensus is that if students live the undesirable life they would not survive as a student. Therefore, the SRC is a route to ensure that the students undergo the enjoyment with recreational activities in their leisure time and in the long run adopt healthy behaviors for adulthood. According to Sallis, et al.,¹³ there are five characteristics of individuals that are more likely to adopt a vigorous exercise lifestyle: those who have self-confidence to succeed in exercise program; knowledgeable on healthy lifestyles; knowledgeable of the importance of regular exercise; have a good perception about the value of regular exercise; and their initial physical condition. Overall, the SRC is a place that can bring into existence constructive active life styles among college students⁶.

It is obvious that inactivity behavior is a major health concern in the United States, where it was reported that although 70 percent of 12 years old children have been reported to engage in vigorous physical activity regularly, the percentages has declined to only 35 percent by the time they reach the age of 21.¹⁴ As a result, more people are sedentary when they are older. Moreover, the vigorous physical activity among adolescence also decline from high school to college.^{15, 16} In order to

overcome this problem, it was suggested that sports personnel should encourage more adults, especially college students, to exercise as many attitudes are established during late adolescence.¹⁷ In addition, it is also reported that the college years are the time when young adults make the decisions about their lifestyles and behavior. Therefore, it is important that the positive attitudes about physical activity are made during those years.¹⁸ These attitudes once established can still be changed¹⁹, but it takes time to re-established them again. Therefore, the SRC may play a key role in facilitating these attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, those who are inactive are more likely to suffer from other physical problems associated with chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases²⁰, depression, mood disturbance, and mental health problems^{21,22}. Regrettably to say, the risk of being overweight during late adolescent is also strongly associated with obesity during adulthood than being overweight during childhood²³. It is likely that the worsening of this condition occurs because the individuals are unable to prioritize time to participate in physical activity²⁴.

3.0. Statement of Problems

The high rate of inactivity among college age students is a primary concern because the impact of that college behavior is likely to influence students' behavior when they leave the college¹⁸. For these reasons, assessing the perceived benefits and barriers among the users and non-users of SRC is crucial because the university administrator may have spent millions of dollars to build the facility for recreational activities. Previously, a study by Zizzi, Ayers, Watson, and Keeler²⁵ on 655 college students (537 users; 118 non-user) at a large mid-Atlantic university found that almost 50 percent of non-users never visited the SRC, and 78 percent did not participate in any physical extracurricular activities. In addition, the non-users also mentioned that time commitments and inconvenience were two major reasons why they did not use the SRC. This finding shows that longitudinal studies should be conducted to understand why students avoid using the SRC. It was with this concern about the SRC college students, that this study is conducted.

4.0. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this paper, then, is to examine the reasons why users keep using the SRC and why non-users keep avoiding it. The second purpose is to get the recommendations from the user and non-user on how to attract more students to use the SRC.

5.0. Methodology

5.1. Participants

The sample of (N= 14) undergraduate students consisted of six users (5 male; 1 female) and eight non-users (6 male; 2 female) of student recreational center from a mid-Atlantic university, with mean ages of 20.33 (Sd=.82) and 20.38 (Sd=1.30) respectively. The respondents were identified from three general education classes in the School of Physical Education and those who participated in the focus-group interviewed had been granted a five bonus points in their quizzes. Although, originally 15 users and 12 non-users agreed to participate, only eight non-users showed up during the afternoon session, and only six users appeared for the evening session. The small sample of focus groups will help them to share their opinion in detail⁴⁶. All of the users and non-users were predominantly Caucasians, except two respondents in the non-users group were African-American. All of the users were at the maintenance stage where they exercise regularly for more than six months, three times per week and for at least 20 minutes. On the other hand, the six of the non-users were at the maintenance stage and the other two were at the preparation stage (i.e., they exercise some times, but not regularly).

5.2. The Interview Schedule

This study was conducted using the focus group method where a group of respondents being asked questions openly in a room and which they are expected to answer and discuss it openly with other respondents. The framework of this focus group interview research was an open ended interview schedule that was followed by content analysis, which was devised, designed and based on the physical activity and exercise psychology literature, the methodological procedure of the qualitative interview^{26,27} and information adopted from the pilot study.

A different semi-structured format was used in the interview schedule for the user and non-user focus group. One of the authors who is trained in the qualitative interview techniques conducted the questions and answers session for each focus group which was conducted separately. When a question was asked, anyone in the group could provide their opinions and the same issue could be argued by others. The facilitator controlled the discussion and probed and asked for clarity if the answer was not clear. The respondents also were given flexibility to express their point of view to agree or disagree with the issue that being discussed by others.

For the user group particularly, the interview guidelines consisted of three parts. The first part involved to getting a feeling on how they felt about their university overall. The second part focused on what they thought of physical activity and the reasons of using the recreation center, whilst the final part asked about their recommendations on how to invite others to SRC. Some example questions from the interview guidelines were the following: 1) what about being physically active do you like? 2) What do you like specifically about the SRC that motivated you to go,? and 3) What is your suggestion and recommendations for inviting others to join the SRC?

The methodological approach with the non-user group was to use a used similar interview guideline but with minor modifications. The guidelines consisted of three parts. The first part focused on how they felt about being students at the university. The second part focused on their leisure activity and the reason why they didn't use the SRC, and finally, they were asked about what it would take to invite others and themselves to start going to the SRC. Some examples of the questions from the interview guidelines are: 1)What are your free time activities during weekdays and weekend?, and what do you like about these,? 2) I was told that you are not using the SRC. What are the reasons this? Are there any barriers that prohibited you?, and 3) What is your suggestion and recommendation to promote SRC to others who refuse to use it? For each question follow up, elaboration and clarification probes were used to ensure the respondents explained what they meant. They were free to interrupt at any time to make comments and justifications of the issues that were being discussed.

5.3. Interview Procedure

The study had the approval of the Institutional Review Board of the university. All answers and questions sessions were conducted by one of the author who acted as a facilitator. A pilot study for both user and non-user interview schedule was conducted earlier to identify the problems and clarity of the questionnaire. From a pilot study, a few changes were made for both groups in the interview schedule. Before the session began, the facilitator read out the purpose of the study to the respondents and told them that they have a right not to answer any questions or terminate anytime during the interview session if they feel threatened or uncomfortable. They were also reminded that their responses were confidential and no individual names would be listed on the final reports. They were told that the interview would be tape recorded and those who agreed to participate read and signed an informed consent cover letter. They were told that the tapes would be destroyed at the end of the study. The interviews were held in an attractive meeting room that held to 15 people. During the sessions the door was closed to avoid any outside distractions. The interview was transcribed verbatim by the researchers.

5.4. Data analysis and Coding Process

In this study a content analysis was conducted from the interview transcript. It is a procedure of coding a large amount of raw data from the interviews into blocks that represent a common theme. There are two types of content analysis, an inductive (new theme emerged from transcript quotations) and deductive (based on the existing theory and research).²⁷ This study employed an inductive analysis. Additionally, the term content analysis has been typically employed previously in qualitative research in sport and exercise psychology.^{28, 29} During the process, one of the authors read and familiarized the²⁸ single-spaced transcribed interviews for the user group and 25 pages of single-spaced of the non-user group. After familiarizing the transcribed material, the author identified the raw data with similar meaning into groups. These groups were known as the lower order theme and represented a lower basic unit. However, due to the limited obtained data, the lower order theme was skipped. But it was renamed as the higher order theme.²⁸ Finally, from the higher order theme, a dimension was created which was the highest meaningful group; and no further grouping was conducted.³⁰ After the analysis was conducted by one of the authors, the three authors got together and discussed the findings. As a result of the meeting the changes were made until a consensus regarding the dimensions was reached.

6.0. Results and Discussion

The results of the study will be discussed into three separate parts: 1) The reason for using the SRC by the user group, 2) The reason for not using the SRC by the non-user group, and 3) The suggestions made by the user and non-users on how to encourage others to use the SRC. The results show that the reason for using SRC by the user focus group yielded three dimensions (i.e., wellness, good facility, and to socialize) with 11 higher order themes, and 39 raw data. On the other hand, the reason for not using the SRC by the non-user generated four dimensions (i.e., inconvenience, personal inadequacy, not accessible, and lack of interest) with 11 higher order themes and 30 raw data. Finally, in order to encourage others to use SRC, the user suggested that the students themselves must be knowledgeable in exercise, the SRC should create more competition, and it should keep-up with the maintenance of the facilities. In comparison, the non-user suggested that the SRC should email students more information, better train their staff (e.g. for weight room staff), create more space (especially for weight room), and create more competition.

6.1. Reasons for using SRC by user group

The content analysis identified three major dimensions for the reasons why users use the SRC facility which in their view should be arranged in a favorable manner; a) for wellness reason, b) good facilities, and c) in order to socialize.

a) *For wellness reason.* These dimensions reflect how the respondents take care of their well being as a student to sustain the academic pressure by being physically active. It seems likely these college students used the SRC for ‘hanging out’ and to conduct recreational activities for health purposes. It would seem that they are making decisions for their immediate and future health.¹⁸ This dimension consisted of three higher order themes that will be discussed next; to be healthy, to be less stressed, and to keep in shape.

To be healthy is defined as people who are free of disease and are able to maintain their everyday work without physical problems.³¹ This means that they are involved in exercise regularly five times per week, at least 30 minutes per session and in order to increase their physical well being. For these groups, being healthy helps to allow them to stay alert and active during the day. This was expressed in the following way by one of the respondents;

Actually if I exercise I will stay awake during the day, especially after lunch where others seem pretty weak but I am still alert. And I kind of like feeling lazy if don't do

exercise. I also will feel better during the night too...and I might not feel right if I miss the schedule.

This kind of pattern might also encouraged them to do homework and study in an intense mood. Marcus and Forsyth³² found that those who are physically active will reduce the risk of heart diseases, high blood pressure, and diabetes, reduce risk of colon cancer, have less chance of catching cold and flu, have better weight management, increased energy, better sleep and enhanced self esteem. All of these factors will support the students to excel in their academic performances.

To be less stressed is another higher order theme in this dimension. This means that by participating in the recreational activities reduces their individual depression and mood disturbance.³³ As a matter of course, being college students they probably feel more depressed and stressed because of the challenge of academic work, peer pressure and socialization problems. At this period too, they also have to make decision around their lifestyle and therefore, it is an imperative to have a healthy physical and mental health.¹⁸ It is obvious that peer pressure, academic pressure, financial constraint, and time management are among the stressors that college students have to face and adapt to. Instead of being sedentary, this group of student has used the SRC as ‘work-out’ place to make them feel less tense or anxious. One of the students stated that:

I really do my work out after I have fulfilled my study schedule or after having a test because that really stresses you out...you feel like you need to get away from all that burdens your mind.

This is because the mind and body connection is indisputable, and therefore, the meaningful experience of recreational activity intertwined with physical and mental satisfactory outcomes.³⁴ In other words, the SRC has a key function in easing students mind from further mental distress.

Finally, *to keep in shape* is the third higher order theme in this dimension. This means that students want to be physically fit. Being in a good shape will lead the individual to improve their sense of well-being and self-perception.³⁵ Particularly at their age, it is important that to keep in shape because it improves their campus socialization and feeling good about themselves. All of these feelings are linked to mental health benefits³⁶, and moderate physical activity is also associated with the higher grade point average.¹⁸

b) *Good facility.* Good facilities as the second highest dimension identified by the user group. The study by Zizzi et al²⁵ found that 40% of non exercisers became an exerciser after a SRC was newly built at one of the largest mid-Atlantic university. Perhaps, good facilities provided by the SRC are the reason that this group of students using the facility. The results identified three higher order themes from this dimension: variety of facilities, good quality and cleanliness.

Variety of facilities suggests that the SRC has offers a distinction of facility such as weight room, cardiovascular fitness area, jogging track, swimming pool, indoor courts and personal exercise classes. The millions of dollar investment by the administrator to build the SRC is a good investment because it has attracted students to participate in key recreational programs, as well as increasing the new student’s enrolment.² When asked what they would miss most if SRC closed for a month? One of the respondent replied that, “I miss the atmosphere because I get there every single night and it just nice to be there. You have everything that you need to exercise over there.”

The other two higher order themes are *good quality* and *clean*. Because of the nice environment and cleanliness the students liked to use this facility a lot. In a similar vein, one of the respondent said that, “the SRC is nicely set up...and I just like it a lot.” They also said that the SRC is better than the “private gym down town.” The atmosphere attracts them to keep on using the SRC facilities. The cleanness of the SRC is another reason that makes them keep coming to the facility. They also suggested that the regulations and procedures employed in the SRC such as “no chalk rule in the weight room” kept the place clean and enjoyable place to use.

c) *To socialize* is the final dimension of why students using the SRC. The key reason here is of using the SRC is to socialize with other students. A study by Belch, Gabel, and Maas^{6 (p266)} also found that the SRC “may provide freshman with an initial place where they inherently feel a sense of belonging

as they seek additional or alternative ways of affiliating within a larger community.” The two higher order themes in this dimension are *to meet other people* and *to have fun*.

Using the SRC as a place of *Meeting other people* is important because it is a way to fight loneliness and social isolation in the campus community. Thus, by using the SRC students are able to meet their regular friends who have the same interest to endure physical activity.²⁴ As a respondent put it, “I have started using the SRC since last year all by myself, and now same people with same interest are there every night and now we kind of work out together every night.” This friendship interaction is a positive kind of leisure activity. The final dimension of higher order theme is *to have fun*. The enjoyable experiences gained from the SRC makes them desire to possess more. As Kimiecik 37 suggests people continue to exercise because of fun, happiness and satisfaction they get out of it. Thus, this means that the SRC has been successful in providing fun to its users.

6.2. Reasons for not using the SRC by the non-user

Results show that four key dimensions emerged from the transcript that are inconvenience, personal inadequacy, distance, and lack of interest. Although it has been reported by Willis and Campbell²⁴ the major reason people don't exercise is due to time factors, however, the same findings did not emerge from the transcripts. Perhaps, this is because most of the individual in this focus group are regular exercisers. That is they have been exercising somewhere else. All four dimensions are discussed as below:

a) *Inconvenience* is the dimension for not using the SRC facilities because students might have felt uncomfortable with the atmosphere in the SRC. The feeling of inconvenience was also found to be a main barrier to the non user by Zizzi et al.,²⁵. They might feel comfortable to exercise alone or in other favorable places. There are two higher order themes in this dimension: Overcrowding and inability to focus..

Overcrowding means that the space provided is not proportionate with the number of people using it. Thus, it makes the non-user uncomfortable to exercise in the SRC. Although, some of the respondents agreed that the pool section, the jogging track and the multi purpose court were spacious however, most of the respondents were disappointed with the weight lifting and cardiovascular room. They found it is over crowded for exercising and lifting. As two of the respondents argued:

I can feel it when I first started and if you are really motivated to exercise you should go there. You definitely like to be there because it seems to have everything you want. But like as time goes on, you can feel so over crowded over there especially in the weight room...

I think it's over crowded now, more than it used to be before and I have to wait for a machine in the weight room... some individuals just keep on using it for long time.

Overcrowding is also quite frustrating because you have to wait to use the equipment. It becomes more intimidating when you are starting to compare yourself with others while waiting. Like one of the girl said, “you feel inadequate compared to some...some would turn out to weights around some 400 pound on a bench press and I was really intimidated by it.’ This would appear to suggest that, the non-users are novice and lack of which might create inconvenience and inability to participate in the crowd. Therefore, it is suggested that a ‘capacity study’ of the weight and cardiovascular room should be conducted in the near future in order to explain this issue in more detail.

Inability to focus is another higher order theme that emerged from the non user focus group. This situation happens when friends come and start to create a conversation while you are working out. Some of these non-users felt that the unwanted communication was very distracting and made them lose focus, which makes them feel uncomfortable. One of the quotations stated:

Friends that are using the recreation center also can be the reason for me not going...each time I am going to work out, they want to have a conversation or keep you occupied which restrains what I am doing...

The findings also suggest that that social interaction is very disturbing to some of the non-users. This is not a new phenomenon because this isolating activity is increasing in the society because more and more people find it difficult to spent free time with neighbors or other people in the community.³⁸
³⁹ In addition, they also identified that the high speed electronic communications including internet often glued people to the computer screen which often left leaving them socially isolated from others. There is no immediate answer to this issue. To understand the problems more, further studies should examine the relationship of computers and individual isolations among students.

b) *Personal inadequacy* dimension is the second most frequent reason identified by the non-user. Personal inadequacy means the lack of sufficient skill, and lack of physical or emotional ability to be in the crowd. In this regard it is the idea that their body weight might be another reason why they do not adapt to exercise.⁴⁰ Two higher order themes have been recognized in this regard: lack of confidence and feeling out of shape.

Lack of confidence is the feeling that the individual has no confidence in their own ability to achieve what they wanted. Without the self-efficacy to succeed, one would felt a little bit left out and unable to show their true ability especially in an open environment such as a weight room. McAuley and Blissmer⁴¹ have documented that self-efficacy is the most important determinant of exercise behavior. This seems particularly true when a respondent stated that;

I think people who do use the facility are very confident in the atmosphere. Probably they have been doing it for a long time and like if you go to the second floor of the girl gym you can tell that those girls are in the gym 24-7 and that something that always done....

Thus, this shows that a lack of confidence to weight lift is the reason for them not using the SRC. They still felt that their ability is not appropriate enough to be in the weight room at the SRC.

Feeling out of shape is the condition where students are usually overweight. The results also found that non-users are reluctant to exercise in public because they are out of shape. According to Sallis et al.,¹³ one of the characteristic individuals who are likely to adopt vigorous exercise lifestyle are those who initial condition is overweight or obese. Further more, Zabinski, Norman, Sallis, Calfas, and Patrick⁴² also found that the high sedentary adolescents were those who have the highest record of Body Mass Index (BMI) and body fat. Some of the respondents felt uncomfortable because of their larger body mass. One respondent mentioned:

Like a 200 pound guy got on me...that's what intimidated me. When I came out there because I am kind of quite out of shape but the guys who walk around there like to put so much weight and they like looking at themselves in the mirror and they like getting their tripod to take a shot...

It would appear that non-users feel a little bit embarrassed because the people who acquainted in the gym have those who are confidence and have been working out for long time. It is because of that they might not consider the SRC a good place to exercise.

c) *Non-Accessibility* is a third dimension for non-users not using the SRC. Non-accessibility means that the SRC is not easy to access and is situated far away from their home. A respondent stated that, "I live off-campus and it makes the thing more difficult." This dimension consisted of two higher order themes which are *unsuitable location* and *transportation problem*.

Unsuitable location is understand that the SRC is not convenient to exercise because of the distance and the location. In this study, the students who lived off-campus felt that the university administrator has prioritize the on-campus students the use of the SRC. They found that the location is not accessible to them. The result was similar to Raynor, Coleman and Epstein's⁴³ study, where accessibility and nearness of the exercise equipment was the determinant of exercise behavior. Moreover, Zabinski's et.al,⁴² also found that low sedentary adolescents cluster was found to have highest self-efficacy to exercise, due to the availability of physical activity equipments. One of the responds said that, "To me is all about the location, I wish it was stationed nearer to my house." It goes without saying that the location of the millions dollar SRC might not suitable to be changed to

other places because it is so expensive to do so. It seems to be more less issue of better booking system for off-campus students. This suggestion is in a similar vein, as what was expressed by the non-user during the interviews. They also expressed that the weight and cardiovascular rooms were over crowded. Perhaps, setting up a new smaller SRC weight and cardiovascular room in downtown area might persuade the non-user to use the SRC again. This might also improve new student enrolment.²

Transportation problems were also identified as reasons that the non-user might not use the SRC. They complained that they don't have a car to travel and using the public transport is often wasting their time. Previously, Zizzi et al.,²⁵ found that time was a prime constraint on use of the SRC. However, in this study the non user group has incorporated the time factor together with the transportation problems as the reason for not using the SRC. As one of them indicated:

Transportation is probably the biggest thing ...like when you are freshman you live at the towers and nearer to SRC where you can just walk. But in sophomore year you stayed off-campus and you have to travel by PRT [public rail transportation]. People like me staying off-campus, where you have to walk to prt and wait to prt to arrive. Sometimes you have to wait longer because of peak time. When you want to come back, you have to beat the time and the last prt was 10 o'clock and at that time people are still around. So prt is I said inhibitor for me to go to the recreation center.

Thus, this means that the SRC are accessible to on-campus students where they can walk to the SRC. But for the sophomore who has to stay off-campus and doesn't have car to travel might feel it was not worth it to spend time waiting for public transportation. Perhaps, due to the cold weather of the mid-Atlantic region especially during fall and winter might also be a key reason for them to give up waiting the public rail transport. Should a schedule shuttle bus and 'women bus' service be provided to the most populated off-campus student area be provided in the future? The research on the accessibility to public transport to the SRC should be conducted further in the future.

c) *Lack of interest* is the final dimension for not using the SRC which is defined that those who are not using the facilities have no interest or have other plans or interest to do something else. This dimension has one higher order theme that is lack of motivation.

Lack of motivation is defined as a person has no desire to go or do physical activity in the SRC. The drive to do something is important because it will ensure adherence. Results show that students felt that there are many other ways of exercising which can be done outside the SRC. One of the guys states that, "If I want to work out I will go running or do some fun activities instead of driving to the recreation center and sit on those machine and wait." Similar sceneries were also identified by another non-users; As one put it:

There is so much you can do on your own, and there is no point going and waiting and just watching everybody else workout...and if you are using the treadmill you most probably wait a good 10-15 minutes. Hey you can have been doing half of your run if you just do it outside.

Actually there will always a lot of excuses if students don't have motivation to do something or to go to the SRC. If the users can keep on using the SRC and wait for the equipment, why are the non-user unable to do that? Perhaps, they are unmotivated enough to connect themselves to the environment and to the university surroundings itself.⁶ It was also noted that 'enjoyment of sedentary behaviors was highest' among the sedentary clusters adolescents.⁴² Therefore, it also takes commitment to ensure someone join the SRC regularly.

6.3. What are the Suggestions made by the user and non-user to Promote others to Come Regularly to SRC?

The results show that the user group has three major suggestions to promote the others come regularly to SRC which are: students themselves should be knowledgeable in exercise; the SRC should create more competition; and should keep up with the maintenance. On the other hand, the non-user has four

suggestions which are: more email about SRC should be sent to them; the SRC should trained their staff (e.g. for weight room staff); the SRC should build bigger space (especially weight room) and there should be more competition.

The suggestions made by both groups were inconsistent. The results show that the user group is thinking more on what makes the atmosphere more challenging and enjoyable place to adhere. While, the non-user group focuses more towards how to solve their own problems so that they can regain their interest in recreation. Despite these arguments, both of the groups agree that the SRC staff, particularly those who are at the weight room, should be trained in handling the equipment, especially weight machine. This is the reason why the user group asked the student to be knowledgeable in exercise because they found that most of the new comers felt intimidated inside the gym, simply because they don't know what to do. If they are knowledgeable, they can easily be familiarized with the place and will be motivated to adhere to exercise. More over, they also found that the staff in the gym was not helpful enough particularly in demonstrating how to use the machine. This is perhaps because of their poor knowledge of the equipment. One of the respondent stated, "I have seen kids going to the staff and asking them...however he go out and asked someone else." The problem with this is that it might be wrong information and if it happens, I might be dangerous to the new comers, especially dealing with weight equipment. One of the respondents suggested the followings:

Let the students have a basic training before they go in there... so that they know what to do in the free weight and so that they don't hurt themselves or anybody else. They should be trained and certified by the person in that area. So that when some new guys come and asking, they know how to help.

Nevertheless, the monthly training should be given to the SRC staff particularly in using and demonstrating the apparatus for beginners as well as intermediate students. Training the staff is one thing, but the staff should also be trained on how to maintain the equipment such as putting on grease. Apart from that, the SRC administrative staff should keep updating the weight machine equipment. They should also be more alert on when to change the old and buy the new equipment.

It is also interesting to find out that both user and non-user groups agree that more intramural competitions should be added to increase the numbers of students interested using the SRC. It might be that the users are more interested in the intramurals because it can make them more competitive as well as to kept them challenging. One of the users mentioned about how to get more people to use SRC, "I think something like a competition might get people to go. There are so many competitions you could do. Like my brother in Virginia Tech, they have a strong competition...they have power lift competition stuff like that..." On the other hand, since most of the non-users in this study are exerciser, but not using the SRC facility, they might also appreciate more competitions. Despite the findings, gender considerations should be accorded importance because according to Scully, Reilly, and Clarke⁴⁴ women are still most likely to engage in non-competitive activities.

The *need to be informed*, specifically by e-mail and *making the weight room bigger* were the other two suggestions made by the non-users. They felt that by making use of the university e-mailing facility to inform SRC regular activities, it would help others appreciate the SRC. One of them complaining that, "I used to get email or stuff, but now I don't know why they stop sending to me..." Many of them wanted to be informed on the programs offered. They know that most of the information's are posted inside the SRC, but it only useful if they are going there regularly. From this suggestion, it is recommended that the SRC management should start thinking of ways as to how to send information on the programs offered through students' e-mail and faculty bulletin boards.

The non-user group also suggested that the weight room should be made bigger and spacious. They felt that the space provided by the SRC for weight room was too small to cater for the increasing numbers of regular lifters. In addition, they also recommended that the SRC has separate room for novice and advance lifters. One of them suggested that:

You just have advanced students in the designated section as far as weight section...So you have advanced people who will come every day and do their routine. On the other side there are beginners who will do their stuff without being intimidated by others...

7.0. Summary and Conclusion

The result of this study is in the similar vein with other previous studies on the SRC.^{6, 25,47} All of the studies agree that the SRC has played a key role in promoting active lifestyles among college students. Students feel that the SRC has provided good facilities for recreational activities and a place to socialize with others who have the same interest. The millions of dollar investment in the SRC should be sustained because of the benefits obtained by the students, staff and alumni, all of which aim to be physically active. In terms of management, it is a compromising factor because with the healthy students and staff the university will be more productive. Moreover, the SRC can also be considered as a tool to attract more new student to enroll with the university.² Overall, all of the respondents recognize the significance of the SRC in this large mid-Atlantic university because it provides good facilities and services. A non-user herself has complimented the SRC, “I think it is a great facility, I mean I have seen other university facilities...this is really one of the top level that I have seen.” On the other hand, the major complained made by the non-user is that weight lifting room is over crowded. One of them suggested, “As a size, you can build whatever you want to build...probably just making the weight area as the most priority to be extended.” Thus, this means that the SRC is great, but it will be better if the weight room is expanded. Other than that, the university should consider building a smaller SRC that consisted of weight lifting and cardiovascular room in the downtown area which is populated by the off-campus students. To whatever extent, some routine follow-up research should be conducted regularly to ensure that both the users and SRC administrators are kept abreast of current trends.

On consequences, the non-users have voice out that inconvenience, personal inadequacy, not accessibility, and lack of interest as their major reasons for not using the SRC. Thus, this shows that the individuals themselves are ‘the reason’ for them not participating in the SRC. This is probably true because the feeling of inconvenience, personal inadequacy and lack of interest are all about the individual negative feelings and ability. These dissatisfactions feeling and poor ability could be improved if they want to. They seem unable to adapt with the environment and dislike working out and meeting other people, which according to Hepburn³⁸ and Putnam³⁹ are an increasing phenomenon of social isolation. Perhaps, the isolationist effect caused by internet (Putnam, 1996)⁴⁵, might be a reason of avoiding others in the gym. More research should be considered on this issue in order to understand more about the SRC non-users behavior.

Personal inadequacy such as not knowing what to do and being out of shape has shows that the non-users are not preparing themselves to be physically active persons. They should learn how to overcome this inadequacy in order to be active in campus life. Of course, lack of interest is another personal factor that can only be adjusted specifically by the individual themselves. If they are willing to change, these problems of unwillingness to join the SRC would not happen. That is why when a question was asked about how to motivate others to use the SRC, the users suggested that ‘the students themselves should be knowledgeable.’ This is because without proper knowledge of how to use the exercise apparatus, it will inevitably intimidate them, which somehow or rather decrease their interest to continue using the SRC. Therefore, both the user and non-user suggestions are inter-related.

On the other hand, further studies should be conducted on understanding non-user characteristic some more. This is because as Zizzi et al., (2004)²⁵ found, a prime reason for non-users not using the SRC was time commitments (53.4%). However, the content analysis of this study shows that time was only incorporated with other factors such as transportation problems. Perhaps, the sample of students in previous studies are too large and most of them are not exercising regularly, if compared to the students in this study.

The result also showed that the non-users also need to know what is going on in the SRC. They would like the management to think of the ways of passing the information to them. As the results indicate, using the on campus e-mail system might be another ways of getting the message across. It is important that all students be informed of the program offered because it might attract the ‘contemplator’ to change and make a move to join others in the SRC, or more ‘prepared’ students to change to ‘action.’

The result of this study is not without some limitations. The use of bonus marks to attract the respondents in the survey might limit the generalization of this study. This is because those who don’t need the bonus mark might have different perceptions of why they are using or not using the SRC. Moreover, the unbalance number of ethnic minority groups in this study also might give different perceptions on the SRC. All of the respondents in both groups are predominantly white and Caucasian, except two in the non-user group which are African-American. However, because this study adopted a qualitative approach it should not have to be generalized to all population²⁷, it only focus specifically on this sample of population. Although, the focus group sample are small the implication of it helps them to share about the topic in great details⁴⁶.

Further research involving longitudinal design based on a larger sample should be considered in order to understand the behavior change among the non-users to users or user to non-users respectively. Understanding progressive behavior change over longer period of time will help the SRC to identify and monitor proper recreational programs in the future. Perhaps, examining one gender respondents will also help to understand the basic necessities for both men and women to use the SRC. This is because Zizzi et al.,²⁵ found that the non-users are primarily female and almost half of the respondents female students had never visit SRC. Scully, et al.,⁴⁴ also reported that females prefer recreational activities, while men more competitive activities. This scenario might also be true for all Caucasians, all African-Americans, and all Asian-Americans and other ethnicities. As for that, it will also be interesting to examine the in-depth interview on this selected ethnic population as an additional study to all-American ethnic. Finally, it is also suggested that an inter-cultural study should be conducted in order to understand the characteristics of users and non-users of the SRC. The results, on the other hand, will further justification for the administration to continue on financing and upgrading the SRC for students and staffs^{47,48}.

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