

THE PERCEPTION OF BENEFITS, BARRIERS, AND CUES TO ACTION FOR
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:
A CASE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AT A HISTORICALLY
BLACK COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
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MAY 2021

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to those who have supported me during my life, especially the last 4 years while I was on this doctoral journey. To my husband John: there were many times that I wanted to quit but you would not let me. You constantly reminded me that you do not eat a whole elephant, you take a bite at a time. Focusing on one task at a time made this daunting mission more manageable. I could not have done this without you putting up with me throughout this doctoral journey. John, I am glad we did this together.

To my daughter, Jillian: you are the reason I push myself like I do. Thank you for understanding that this phase of my life would not last forever. I appreciate your love and patience during this process. I want you to know that you can do anything you set your mind to do and work hard. The sky is the limit.

My parents, Al and Evelyn Cooper, have supported me from the day I was born. I am forever grateful for their encouragement and love all these years. They did not have the opportunities to pursue higher education like I did but have always supported me in my efforts to better myself. It took me becoming a parent to truly appreciate all they sacrificed for my siblings and me.

My best friend, Carol Galbraith, has gone above and beyond who a friend should be. You have listened to me vent, encouraged me to say no to all that is not helping me, and took care of Jillian, so I could focus on my schoolwork. Your kindness has not gone unnoticed.

To the rest of my family and friends who have supported me during these past few years, thank you. Several have encouraged me and helped with Jillian. I am truly grateful for all of you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my advisor, Dr. Casandra Harper-Morris, for your patience with me as I struggled to write at times. Thank you for your advice and feedback. When I felt like this dissertation was impossible, you encouraged me to give it just 15 minutes a day. Of course, most days those 15 minutes lasted longer and before I knew it, I was finished. I cannot thank you enough. I aspire to be more like you as an advisor and professor. To the rest of my committee: Dr. Bradley Curs, Dr. Pilar Mendoza, and Dr. Michael Williams; your feedback has helped me develop as not only a student but a person as well. I am grateful that I was able to work with you all in writing my dissertation.

Thank you to Kathleen Langley and Earnest Washington for your assistance in helping me recruit participants for my study and for helping me learn more about students' physical activity habits at Lincoln University. I look forward to working with you both to improve the physical activity habits of students at Lincoln University.

Thank you to my fellow Cohort 11 members. Although we came from all over Missouri, I feel that we will always have a bond. You all made those long days of school in the summer more enjoyable. Working with our Jeff City Cohort was a blessing because we became close and encouraged one another when things got hard. I am thankful for the relationships I now have because of our cohort.

Thank you to Dr. Kevin Rome for encouraging me to go back to school to pursue my doctorate. Also, thank you to my students for listening to me talk about school. I hope that you see how hard I have worked to accomplish a difficult task and know that you also can accomplish difficult tasks. Thank you to my coworker/interim dean, Dr. Chad Kish, for your support and advice during the past 4 years.

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ABSTRACT

Physical activity offers many benefits, yet the majority of college students do not meet the recommended weekly amounts. This study investigated African American students' perceptions of barriers, benefits, and cues to action at Lincoln University. There was a gap in the literature because no qualitative studies regarding African American students' physical activity had been conducted. This qualitative study discovered that most students do not feel physical activity is supported on campus. In addition to reporting barriers, benefits, and cues to action, participants also offered recommendations for increasing physical activity. Recommendations for future research include conducting another case study using all races of students who attend this institution of higher learning. A quantitative study could provide a broader perspective of physical activity and usage of the campus recreation center. Conducting this same study at multiple institutions would also be a good idea to add to the research. If the cues to action were put into place, another study could be done to see if physical activity rates increase.

SECTION ONE-INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE

Engagement in physical activity is acknowledged as a critical factor that contributes to positive benefits, physically and psychologically (Powell & Blair, 2019). Although people recognize the benefits of being active, many still do not work out as they should (Skrebutinaite & Karauskiene, 2019). Regular physical activity is positively associated with better health, yet evidence suggests that the frequency of physical activity among students attending institutions of higher learning is not improving (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2019). Most people assume that college students are healthy but a study of students at the University of Kansas showed that many students have low physical activity levels and carry extra weight (Huang et al., 2003). Results from this study also showed that the majority of those students fall below the physical activity guidelines. During the transition from the teenage to the young adult years, the potential to gain weight increases due to decreases in physical activity (Kjonniken et al., 2008). In 2010, the United States Department of Health and Human Services reported that 33.8% of respondents were inactive during their last 2 years of high school, while 55.9% were considered physically inactive during their first 2 months of attending a university. Particularly for college students, physical activity can help prevent weight gain, provide a way to manage ill effects of stress, and protect against chronic diseases in the future.

Physical education classes can help improve the quality of life for young adults by educating them on how to take care of their bodies. These classes should be required for all college students because they need to have health literacy when they graduate (Sparling, 2003). Institutions of higher learning can serve as an avenue to increase physical activity among young adults, yet the majority of institutions have cut required health and physical education classes for students. Fifty years ago, 97% of colleges and universities required students to take a physical

education class to earn a degree. In 2010, that proportion has dropped to 40% of institutions (Cardinal et al., 2012). One study found that the majority (55.8%) of institutions of higher learning offer some type of personal health course; however, only 10% of these require that all students take a health course as part of graduation requirements (Henry et al., 2017). Many institutions maintain recreation centers for students to use, but all students do not take advantage of this resource. Most students would like to utilize student recreation centers more frequently but experience barriers to exercise (Stankowski et al., 2017).

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the many benefits of exercising, only 43.9% of college students achieve the recommended amount each week (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2019). Regular physical activity includes participating in moderate and vigorous-intensity physical and muscle-strengthening activities. Studies have shown that meeting the recommended amounts of exercise helps with weight maintenance or loss. Lack of being physically active is one of the contributing factors to increasing obesity rates on college campuses (World Health Organization, 2019).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016), a little over one third (36.5%) of adults in the United States have obesity and even more are considered overweight. Individuals who have a body mass index of 25-29.9% are considered overweight while those with 30% or higher are classified as obese. Excess weight increases one's chances of having serious health conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, certain cancers, and type 2 diabetes (Powell & Blair, 2019). While research shows that being physically active lessens the risks of certain diseases, rates of physical activity have decreased significantly throughout the years (Williams et al., 2018). In addition to the physical benefits of exercising, studies have shown that regular physical activity is good for stress management and mental health (Barney et

al., 2014; Sharp & Barney, 2016). Students attending college experience greater independence and are expected to balance school with other activities, such as work, sports, or family. Physical activity is a healthy outlet for students when they feel overwhelmed with the demands of school.

Research in elementary, middle, and high school settings has indicated that physical activity is positively associated with academic success (Iri et al., 2016; Raine et al., 2018). A study conducted at the college level seems to show that students who practice healthy behaviors may perform better academically but more evidence is needed to determine the relationship between physical activity and grade point averages (Wald et al., 2014). Young et al. (2015) found that participation in recreational sports programs has a positive association with higher grade point averages, retention, and satisfaction for college students.

Problem of Practice

In a time where budgets and resources are dwindling, most college campuses have cut physical activity programs and classes (Cardinal et al., 2012). In 2015, Lincoln University eliminated all physical activity classes and removed the requirement of that credit for graduation. The personal and community health class was also removed as a general education requirement that year. A brand-new recreation center opened for students' use in the spring of 2017. Additionally, campus groups offer fitness events throughout the semester. Currently, very little data exists on students' usage of the student recreation center or participation in events that promote physical activity. The current system tracks students' visits by swipes of identification cards, however, there are no unique identifiers for each student. Therefore, no records are available with exactly how many students visit the Linc, nor is usage by class, gender, or race available. According to the director of the Linc, it appears that only a very small percentage of students are taking advantage of having access to a state-of-the-art fitness facility on campus.

When I asked him how many students utilize the Linc monthly, he replied, “not enough”. He said he hopes to get a new system in the next few months that will give him demographic information on students when they swipe their identification cards. It is possible for students to attend LU and not have any exposure to health or fitness education. The focus of this research, therefore, is to understand what students perceive to be the barriers and benefits to working out at the Linc and what cues to action could take place that could increase physical activity levels.

Existing Gap in the Literature

Little research has been done about physical activity at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). No studies have been found that focus on African American students’ perceived benefits and barriers for physical activity in predominantly white institutions nor historically Black colleges and universities. One study conducted at an HBCU in Maryland revealed that 68% of respondents were physically inactive. Those rates were even higher for female students and those who are considered overweight or obese (Sa et al., 2015). One study found that 75% of African American women who took part in the study were physically active, but the majority of their physical activity occurred in places other than the campus recreation center (Carter-Francique, 2011). Another study at a rural HBCU found that less than half of survey respondents were physically active (Kemper & Welsh, 2010). My study provides more understanding of where and why students workout. The findings of this research add to what is already known about the general benefits and barriers of all college students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the physical activity patterns of African American students at Lincoln University. I wanted to discover more about whether students take advantage of events and programs that are offered to promote physical activity, including

utilizing the campus recreation center. My study also revealed more about students' beliefs regarding the benefits and barriers to being active. Discovering students' perceptions of benefits and barriers can aid university administration by using the information to plan programs that would entice students to be more physically active (Ball et al., 2018; Dhurup & Garnett, 2011; Silliman et al., 2004).

The research was conducted at Lincoln University, which is an HBCU located in Jefferson City, Missouri (Lincoln University, n.d.). All data for this case study were gathered on campus. I personally went to the Linc and observed students who entered the facility. This helped me see who generally uses the Linc on an average day. I also collected interview data about why some students chose to work out while others did not. In addition to interviewing students, I also interviewed the campus director of the Linc.

In the last few years, researchers have studied the relationship between fitness and academic outcomes in elementary through high school students (Calik et al., 2018; Raine et al., 2018). Research in the past has examined the relationship between physical activity, fitness, and cognitive abilities for youth, teenagers, adults, and elderly adults but it is unknown if findings from these studies are the same for college students (Calestine et al. 2017). Other research examining the exercise patterns of students while taking physical activity classes in college found that students who take these types of classes engage in regular physical activity outside of class (Sullivan et al., 2008). Adopting healthy habits in early adulthood has the potential to lead to an enhanced way of life as individuals mature. Institutions of higher learning have the ability to play a major role in educating students holistically, which should include providing opportunities to learn about health through physical activity. Examining motivations, benefits,

and barriers to exercise can help program planners design interventions to improve exercise participation on campus.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What motivates African American students at a historically Black college and university to work out regularly?
2. What do non-physically active African American students at a historically Black college and university describe as their barriers to working out?
3. What recommendations do active and non-active African American students have regarding ways to increase students' physical activity?

Conceptual Framework

The research questions for this case study were formed based on the Health Belief Model (HBM). Godfrey Hochbaum, Irwin Rosenstock, along with colleagues at the United States Public Health Service developed this model in the 1950s to understand the lack of participation in public health programs (as cited in Steckler et al., 2010). It was one of the first theories used to explain health behavior and continues to be used in studies that examine the behavior of people (King et al., 2014). Since then, it has become one of the most commonly used theoretical frameworks in health behavior research and interventions. This model focuses on the attitudes and beliefs of individuals regarding health behaviors. The HBM includes concepts that predict why people will or will not take action to change behaviors: perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cues to action, and self-efficacy. To investigate why some people make healthy choices while others do not, this model uses information about their beliefs and expectancies. The components of this model can be applied to this study to learn

more about students' perceptions about physical activity on campus.

Perceived susceptibility refers to whether or not a person thinks they are at risk for something bad happening if he/she does not change a behavior. Students may think that since they are young, certain health conditions will not happen to them (Das & Evans, 2014). Others may say they choose to work out to avoid illnesses. Perceived severity is how bad an individual thinks an illness will be, if it happens. One may believe he/she may get an illness but may not perceive the illness as being severe. Most of the time if an individual believes that he or she is at risk of a serious health condition, he or she will be more likely to take action.

Perceived benefits are the positive things one believes will happen as a result of the behavior change. A person who sees a lot of benefits in modifying behavior is more likely to change. One study found that students' top perceived benefits of physical activity are better health, improved looks, and maintenance of a healthy weight (King et al., 2014). I am interested in discovering if students at an HBCU see the same benefits of exercising regularly.

Perceived barriers are reasons that may cause an individual not to take action. Constraints that prevent people from participating in certain behaviors can include cost, time, lack of knowledge (Ebben & Brudzynski, 2008). Learning more about specific barriers for students at Lincoln University is the first step to overcoming those barriers to increase physical activity.

Cues to action are what may cause people to change their current behavior. These cues can be reasons one feels inclined to perform a behavior or external factors and/or events that can make one want to take action. For students who are already active, it is important to find out what made them adopt a physically active lifestyle. For those who are not active, the mission would be to discover what strategies administrators can use to encourage them to exercise more.

Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief that he or she can be successful in developing

new habits and whether or not he/she has the ability to perform the specific behavior, in this case exercising for 150 minutes each week. Students may know that physical activity benefits them but still may not believe they are capable of being physically active. In addition to the six constructs, researchers acknowledge that other factors may influence a person's views; age, education, family history, religion, and marital status are examples of demographics that may influence perceptions.

The HBM has been modified and adapted for several studies in the areas of health promotion and education (King et al., 2014). It is best suited for a qualitative case study on the campus of Lincoln University to learn more about the perceptions and views of students regarding physical activity. While health professionals are doing more to promote physical activity, additional research is still needed to continue exploring the issues of physical inactivity.

Research Design

The setting for this case study was Lincoln University, which is an HBCU located in Jefferson City, Missouri (Lincoln University, n.d.). The racial demographics of the student body are 44% White, 43% Black or African American, 7% ethnicity unknown, 2% Hispanic/Latino, 2% non-resident alien, and 2% other (College Factual, n.d.). Traditionally, one may think of historically Black colleges and universities as being predominantly African American. Lincoln University is unique in this regard because the amount of African American and White students is almost equal. At one point, there were more White students than African American.

I collected data from places on campus where students participate in physical activity, including but not limited to the Linc recreation center, campus sports fields, and rooms commonly used for fitness events. I work on campus, so, it was convenient for data collection. After permission was granted through the Institutional Review Board, I used purposeful

sampling of students. To recruit participants for the study, flyers were displayed across campus to recruit students for participation in the study, concentrating on high traffic areas such as the student recreation center, classroom buildings, the cafeteria, and the student union. An announcement was posted on Canvas, which is the program students use for their classes, and an email was sent to all students who currently attend LU. I also requested that faculty announce my study in their classes to encourage students to participate. When recruiting participants for my study, I hoped to get an equal number of physically active and inactive students as well as an equal number of males and females. However, more females than males volunteered to participate: 10 females, 5 males. Although I wanted to have 2 students of each classification, all of the participants were juniors and seniors. Eight participants were physically active, meaning they got at least 150 minutes of exercise weekly in the past month. Seven participants were physically inactive, meaning they get less than 150 minutes of exercise per week in the past month. Students were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and were given informed consent before being interviewed.

Data Collection Tools

Interviews with students were my primary source of data. According to Creswell (2014), interviews are the main form of data in qualitative research. Interviews allow individuals to share insight with researchers on their lived experiences (Seidman, 2013). The final sample included 15 participants: 8 physically active students and 7 physically inactive students. Each interview was estimated to take approximately 30 minutes to one hour online via Zoom. Interviews lasted between 25 and 45 minutes.

I used a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A) to conduct all interviews. The interview questions were predetermined based on past research and the theoretical

framework, but follow up questions were asked that were unique to each participant in response to what they are sharing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). If more information was needed to understand responses, I followed up the original question for clarification. Although a guide of interview questions was used to steer the conversations, students had the opportunity to share any other pertinent information after all of the listed questions were asked. With the participants' permission, the interview was audio recorded while it took place on Zoom. The Otter.ai app was used for transcription, detailed notes were taken during the interview and a reflection was written after each interview ended. I also reviewed all transcriptions to check for accuracy and edit as needed. In addition to interviewing students, the director of campus recreation and wellness was given an opportunity to share his views about physical activity on campus. By having this conversation, I learned more about the reasons he believes some students work out, while others do not. I also learned more about what the Linc does to promote physical activity to students.

I also utilized direct observations as data sources. I had planned to incorporate demographic usage records from the Linc, but there were none available with their current system. No records are kept during fitness classes and there is currently no system to keep records of individual students' visits. Originally, I had planned to observe students while they participated in various physical activities, such as utilizing the recreation center, attending fitness events, and participating in intramural sports. The only activity I did not observe was intramural sports. Because of COVID-19, none took place during my study. As a complete observer, I did not participate in the activities but took field notes as an outsider (Creswell, 2016). Following Creswell's (2016) model for an observational protocol, notes included type of activity, day/time, participant demographics, number of participants, and information on what was observed during the activity as well as reflections on what was being observed. To keep research organized and

centrally located, I kept a journal while conducting the study. The journal included information on each interview such as date, time, participant demographics, and notes on the session. I also kept field notes on observations as well as preliminary data analysis in this journal.

Data Analysis

After all interviews were conducted, the data was organized for analysis. Once the data was organized, I carefully reviewed each source of data to get a general idea of what was collected. Every interview transcript was thoroughly read to get a sense of each individual's responses, writing any thoughts that come to mind while reading. After this general review took place, I began open coding, a process that begins the categorization of data by noting any parts of the data that may be relevant to the study. Kuckartz (2014) recommends sorting by categories, sub-categories, and specific dimensions. Based on the literature, benefits of physical activity was an expected category to emerge from the data. A sub-category of benefits of physical activity was good looks, for example. A dimension of good looks was toned muscles. After open coding was performed, I applied selective coding to categorize the information into themes.

Limitations, Assumptions, and Design Controls

One limitation was categorizing students into regularly working out or not because this is not a permanent state. The regularity of students' working out is subject to change. Another limitation may relate to which participants from various categories volunteered to participate. There were more female than male participants. All of the students were juniors or seniors, no freshmen or sophomores volunteered for the study. If freshmen or sophomores participated, the results may have been different. I assume that students were honest in their responses and that they would have answers to the questions I ask them. All of the males who participated were active, so I had no input from inactive males. It is also important to note that my study was

conducted during the global pandemic of COVID-19. This may have limited my study because students are still trying to figure out how to navigate life in these very different times and may have influenced who was able to participate and how they felt about or described their physical activity patterns. Another limitation was not having specific demographic data on who uses the campus recreation center.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, **physical activity** is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires using energy (World Health Organization, 2019). Often physical activity and **exercise** are used interchangeably. The term exercise refers to physical activity that is planned and structured with the goal to improve physical fitness. **BMI** stands for body mass index which is a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of his/her height in meters. **Physical education classes** are classes taught by a certified instructor that instruct students on physical activities. **Recreation centers** refer to facilities built for students to use for physical activity.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because the research on physical activity of students attending historically Black colleges and universities is scarce. Conversations with students will provide information to help inform future decisions on what must be done to increase the physical activity levels of African American students. Not only might this case study affect change on the campus of Lincoln University, the results may be transferable to other HBCU campuses as well as primarily white institutions.

Summary

This study will help promote health and wellness for Lincoln University students, which may result in a variety of positive outcomes. Academics, social well-being, physical, and mental health can all be positively impacted by physical activity. Conversations with students revealed their perceived barriers, benefits, and cues to action for physical activity. Having this knowledge will assist administration in planning programs and developing policies to help students become more physically active.

SECTION TWO-PRACTITIONER SETTING FOR THE STUDY

In spite of the many benefits of exercising, more than 80% of adults in the United States do not participate in regular physical activity (ODPHP, 2019). The Centers for Disease Control recommend that adults participate in 150 minutes of moderate physical activity. About 50% of female college students and about 44% of male college students fail to meet the recommended guidelines. Minor changes that may seem harmless to a college student can lead to major changes in their lives. For example, reduced exercise has the potential to cause weight gain, thus, increasing body mass (Hoffman et al., 2006). Colleges and universities can help students by offering opportunities for them to learn more about healthful living, yet the majority of these institutions no longer mandate health or physical education classes as part of the graduation requirements for all students (Cardinal, 2012; Henry et al., 2017). In 2014, Lincoln University decided to no longer require all students to take health and physical education classes. Now only those students who major in wellness and physical education are required to take these courses. Institutions that are not offering these courses need to think about ways in which health-related topics can be addressed to reach all students (Hoffman et al., 2006).

College students now have more opportunities than ever to engage in physical activity. Most institutions of higher learning provide students access to recreational services and facilities (Danbert et al., 2014). In 2017, Lincoln University opened a campus recreation center on its' campus in Jefferson City, Missouri. The Linc is a state-of-the-art facility with 4 multi-sport courts, a fully equipped weight room, a 3-lane indoor track, and 2 fitness rooms for group exercise classes. Although students' fees pay their membership, the director has told me that a lot of students do not utilize it. Studying students' motivations to exercise regularly and their reasons for not working out regularly can help administrators encourage students to be more

physically active. Researching why some students exercise while others do not may help administrators increase physical activity levels on campus.

History of Organization

Lincoln University is a 4-year historically Black college and university located in Jefferson City, Missouri. Lincoln University and Jefferson City Parks and Recreation engaged in a unique collaborative project where each entity came to the planning table in need of a recreation center, but only part of the resources. Lincoln University, founded in 1866 as Lincoln Institute at the end of the Civil War, is a historically Black public land-grant university located in Jefferson City, Missouri. The campus boasts just over 2,500 undergraduate students and offers 50 undergraduate degrees along with Master's degrees in education, business, and the social sciences (Lincoln University, n.d.). Jefferson City is the capital of Missouri and currently the 15th most populous city in the state at 42,895 (Wikipedia, n.d.). The ethnic composition of the university is 44% White, 43% Black or African American, 7% ethnicity unknown, 2% Hispanic/Latino, 2% non-resident alien, and 2% other (College Factual, n.d.). In comparison, Jefferson City is 78% White, 17% Black, and 5% other (Wikipedia, n.d.).

Both Lincoln University and Jefferson City identified a need for a new recreation center but each had only part of the resources to turn it into a reality. Jefferson City's Parks and Recreation Department (now known as Jefferson City Parks) was renting space to run their community sports programming and had begun exploring the possibility of constructing a facility allowing them to host their own events. The Parks Commission, who oversees Jefferson City Parks, made funding available but identifying a location for the facility was proving to be challenging. The university needed an up-to-date wellness facility for their students, faculty, and staff, and they had a centrally-located piece of property on the edge of campus for the building.

Initially the university had plans of constructing an on-campus facility that would house a one-court gymnasium and a smaller fitness center.

Administrators from the university heard that Jefferson City was exploring potential partnerships with other entities and asked to be included in those conversations. The end result was a joint project between both entities to construct an 80,000-square foot, state-of-the-art wellness center that would be called The Linc. This space is used primarily for Lincoln University students, as well as the city's youth and adult sports programs. In addition to access for those groups, monthly memberships are available to the faculty and staff of the university and to community citizens. "The Linc is just so fitting...it links our community to expanded parks programming...our city and local businesses to new revenue...and it showcases our positive relationship with Lincoln University" (Todd Spalding, director of parks, The Linc Grand Opening, March 23, 2017).

As the project came to fruition, the specific resources each group of stakeholders brought to the table was defined. Lincoln University had the property, a ready-made campus population to utilize the facility, and a wellness fee of \$75 per semester that students were paying to support the project financially. Jefferson City had additional financial resources, as well as staff members, to help run the facility. Jefferson City Parks full-time staff members operate the front desk of the facility during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.), with part-time parks staff manning the front desk before and after normal business hours. Lincoln University shares in the cost of the part-time front desk staff. Lincoln also assumes sole responsibility for staffing the fitness center in the building, as well as cleaning and maintaining that space. Both Jefferson City Parks and Lincoln University share responsibilities of maintenance and normal operating expenses (lights, water, sewer, etc.). Lincoln University has three administrators, a director and

two assistant directors who work directly with the Jefferson City Parks staff in The Linc. They serve as the primary stakeholders for the university in upholding the mission of The Linc and ensuring the needs of the campus are met within this collaborative project.

Organizational Analysis

When looking at any situation in an organization, several viewpoints must be taken into consideration. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), four frames exist to help us look at things from various perspectives. The structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames serve numerous roles to clarify confusion, produce options, and provide strategies to make a difference in groups. Learning to apply all four frames helps one appreciate and become more knowledgeable about organizations (Bardach & Patashnik, 2016). Viewing issues from different perspectives provides clarity about what is happening in organizations and can possibly shed light on why things are occurring. To examine the issue of recreation center usage on college campuses, using all four frames produces a better understanding of the operation of the Linc and whether or not daily practices may have an effect on students' utilization of the facility.

The structural frame includes the specific roles and responsibilities of individuals and groups within an organization. At the Linc, policies and goals are set forth by the administration of LU and Jefferson City Parks. A memorandum of understanding was established between the two parties before the building was completed. This document specifies the roles and responsibilities for each group. Lincoln University shares in the cost of the part-time front desk staff. Lincoln also assumes sole responsibility for staffing the fitness center in the building, as well as cleaning and maintaining that space. Both Jefferson City Parks and Lincoln University share responsibilities of maintenance and normal operating expenses such as lights, water, sewer, etc. The directors and coordinators from both sides serve as the primary stakeholders for the

university in upholding the mission of the Linc and ensuring that needs of the campus are met within this collaborative project. Both entities have several support staff who are instrumental in operating the Linc. From an outsider's view, it appears that responsibilities are evenly distributed and that both sides have an equal say in the operation of the Linc. The shared setup has the potential of challenges since the two entities may have different opinions on how the facility should be run, they may also differ on their goals, and the processes that must occur if changes need to be made.

While the structural frame focuses on the arrangement of an organization, the human resources frame focuses on the people involved with the organization. Part of the human resource approach focuses on getting to know people. Before my study, I did not know how students felt about the staff of the campus recreation center. I learned from the conversations with students that participants had positive interactions with them. Organizations exist to serve human needs. "People and organizations need each other" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 117). The students' wellness fees support the operation of the facility. Membership fees from community members also help run the Linc. The facility must satisfy students as well as community members. Institutions of higher learning exist to satisfy the needs of students. Bolman and Deal (2013) state that human needs are met by the existence of organizations. Some students attend colleges and universities for personal growth (Schultz & Higbee, 2007). For some, that personal growth may include learning how to live healthfully. Research has shown that students who are healthier perform better academically, while students who are unhealthy tend to perform poorly in school (Henry et al., 2020).

Bolman and Deal (2013) discuss how some groups are richly blessed with the resources they need but lack talent, skill, and motivation. At Lincoln University, students have access to a

state-of-the-art recreational facility but some of them seem to lack the motivation to utilize it. As an instructor on campus, many students have told me that they do not regularly visit the Linc. Another key component of the human resource frame is strategic planning which involves thinking of activities that will promote participation. When scheduling and thinking about the future, the wants and needs of participants should be considered.

Being open to viewpoints of those who visit the Linc can help directors improve participation. Allowing potential and current Linc users the option to give feedback helps promote growth and improvement. The directors of the Linc promote activities by posting flyers (see Appendix C) on campus, sending emails, posting on social media, and using word of mouth. When planning activities and programs, feedback from participants is imperative. When people feel that communication is open between the organization and them, they feel valued and more likely to stay committed to goals. Although the people who run an organization may work hard to serve students, other factors may hinder staff from serving people as fully as they would like. One of these factors is power or lack thereof.

Viewing an organization from a political lens requires one to analyze who has the power. Organizations consist of individuals and various groups that are vying for control. In this case, the Linc consists of students who attend Lincoln University and community members from Jefferson City. It is unclear how power is divided between the two groups. Anytime there are different groups of people involved, diversity will exist within their values, beliefs, interests and how they perceive situations. Differences among people and limited resources can cause conflict, which may result in a struggle for power. For example, sometimes sports tournaments occupy all the courts in the Linc for an entire weekend. Students have told me they get frustrated when they

take the long walk from residence halls to play basketball, only to get there and see that no courts are available for them to play.

Accommodating students and the community may be challenging because neither group may ever feel they have adequate access. Group and individual needs are important but the fight for scarce resources can result in friction. Students may not go to the Linc if they feel they cannot use what they came in to use, while community members may not visit the Linc if they feel students have more access. Conflict is not always a problem, but it must be managed productively. Inadequate resources can cause frustrations when trying to negotiate what is best for all parties involved. The two groups must collaborate to work towards their own interests (Bolman & Deal, 2010).

The symbolic frame examines the culture, purpose, vision, and values of an organization. The interviews with students helped me learn more about the culture of the Linc and also what it symbolizes to students. They described it as a place to socialize, a place to work out, and a place for growth. In March of 2017 at the opening ceremony for the Linc, LU President Kevin Rome and Jefferson City Parks Director Todd Spalding revealed the name of the new recreation center together. This represented the cooperation of the university and community to see this project to completion. During the ceremony, representatives from both groups spoke about the Linc, including the president of the Parks Commission, a city councilman, students, LU's police chief, and an assistant athletic director from LU.

The Department of Recreation & Wellness provides inclusive recreation experiences designed to positively impact the intellectual and personal development of Lincoln University students, faculty, and staff. We provide our students a safe work environment with adequate training and student/professional development opportunities. Our

department fosters friendships, educational, recreational, competition and fun through multiple recreation and wellness programs. (Lincoln University, n.d.)

The vision for the Linc includes language for the provision of “dynamic and diverse recreational experiences which positively engage students through learning and leadership opportunities” (Lincoln University, n.d.). During interviews, I asked participants about their experiences at the Linc. The purpose of these questions was to see if the mission statement is being fulfilled. Regardless of what an organization says formally in documents, visions, or mission statements; the values that matter are those that an organization actually displays in day to day operation. From the outside, it appears that Lincoln University and Jefferson City Parks are working harmoniously to create a positive experience for students.

To get a clear picture of what is going on in any organization, it is important to view it using all four frames. Using the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames helps one understand why things occur. Bolman and Deal (2010) state that you are more effective when clear goals are set, and a plan is put into place to reach those goals. Although Lincoln University has a recreation center on campus, no goals have been set for students’ utilization of this facility. With no clear goals established, the individuals within the organization may not know what they are working to achieve.

Leadership Analysis

Leadership can be defined in many ways. Considerable research has been conducted on this topic over the course of the last century. Northouse (2016) defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 6). Normally one thinks of a leader as one person leading an organization but sometimes groups do better with a collaborative method (Bolman & Deal, 2013). At the Linc, leadership is shared

among the directors, assistant directors, student workers, and interns. Although they serve various roles within the organization, leadership can be seen in their different positions.

Northouse (2016) describes several theories of leadership in great detail. I believe my study most connects with servant and human resource leadership styles seen at the Linc. I chose these two styles because I believe people in the health and wellness industry are in it to serve others.

Greenleaf (1977) was the first author to write about the servant leadership style. Since this model was first introduced, several scholars have built on the concept, including Spears (2010), who noted 10 characteristics of servant leaders from Greenleaf's writings: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community are all characteristics of servant leadership. The directors, student workers, and interns display all or some of these traits. Servant leaders are concerned with the needs of their followers. In this case, the followers are the students. The directors are always looking for ways in which they can better serve students. Often times, you can find a director chatting with a student if you walk through the facility. This shows that they value relationships and realize the importance of listening to students. While observing a staff meeting, I noticed that the Jefferson City Parks director, Tom, gave supervisees opportunities to discuss what's going on in their respective areas. He established direction by setting strategies on how to recover money spent on unplanned things. During this interaction, I noticed several characteristics of a servant leader: listening, empathy, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

According to Bolman and Deal (2013), human resource leadership is characterized by sincerity, compassion, and support. In several conversations with the director of JC Parks, it is evident that he exhibits strong human resource leadership. He has said that he establishes

direction for his department by hiring the right people and does not get too involved in what they do which shows that he empowers his employees. Those who work for him set goals and they agree on what they will do which shows that he encourages them to participate and do their own parts without him telling them everything to do. To him, buy-in is important. He believes that people in this profession are passionate about their work, thus very committed. He gives his workers power to solve problems within their realm of expertise. He will step in as needed but stressed the importance of allowing those under him to make decisions. He motivates his staff by doing the right thing and being an example of what he expects from them. Rewarding and acknowledging success is a characteristic of a good leader. People feel their work is valued when it is acknowledged. Rooke and Torbert (2011) shared that leaders create visions and inspire initiatives to help those visions come true.

While shadowing him, I observed his contagious passion. He gets excited when he talks about his future plans for the department, and it makes those around him feel the same excitement. His coworkers appear inspired to work hard towards the goals the department has. They are committed to the goals he has because he has “hired the right people.” He does an excellent job of empowering subordinates by allowing them to manage their areas and giving them the freedom to have input. By funding an opportunity for his supervisees to attend a national conference, it demonstrates his commitment to those who work for him. His leadership is evident in his daily tasks and it is clear that the people he leads are fulfilled in what they do. They want to work for him because he shows them that he values what they do for the department. During observations and conversations, it is clear that JC Parks Director, Todd, has all of those qualities.

Kotter (2011) stated that leadership requires individuals to motivate and inspire others. The director and assistant directors are present during hours of operations and they even participate alongside students in various activities. The fitness specialist sponsors several challenges throughout the school year in which students and staff are involved. You can even find staff members, including the director, participating in various classes and events alongside the students. Bolman & Deal (2013) states that motivating people requires being in tune with the needs of people and responding to those needs. Servant leaders know the goals of those who follow them and they help them reach their full potential. In order to help followers succeed, these leaders need to be good at listening and communicating. These two areas are also a part of the servant leadership model. By listening, leaders show their followers that they care about their points of view and perspectives. Showing empathy is important when gaining the trust of others because it shows that you are concerned with the lived experiences of those around you.

Other characteristics that are part of the servant leadership model related to the leaders at the Linc are healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, and commitment to the growth of people. When most people hear the word healing, they probably think of someone in the medical field helping someone feel better or recover from an injury. In this case, healing actually refers to leaders caring about their followers' well-being (Northouse, 2016). Leaders care for those around them. Awareness is knowing oneself and understanding the impact they have on other people. I believe that leaders at the Linc are persuasive in a positive way, because they communicate clearly in a way that others want to change on their own without coercion. Predicting what may happen in the future based on what has happened in the past is also important. Lastly, another key characteristic of good leaders is the commitment the development of their followers. By investing their time and energy in working for the Linc, one

would hope that the leaders are trying to create value for not only the community but also for society as a whole.

Implications for Research in the Practitioner Setting

This research provides more information on students' utilization of the Linc, which in turn may lead to an increase in the number of students who exercise. My hope is that these findings may be useful for the institution's recreation center in the development of programs or marketing initiatives to encourage students to use the Linc more than they do now. By interviewing students, I learned about the personal and institutional factors that influence the activity levels of students. This study also contributes to our understanding of college students' physical activity within the context of an HBCU campus, which is an underrepresented population within higher education research.

Summary

When looking at any problem, it is important to consider the whole picture of what is happening. The Linc is a unique facility because of the collaboration between a city and a university in that city. The structural and political lenses can help us better understand the dynamics between the two entities. One must also look at the leadership of those in charge to see how that may affect students' usage of the Linc.

SECTION THREE-SCHOLARLY REVIEW FOR THE STUDY

Participation in physical activity is imperative to the health of Americans, thus contributing to the well-being of our country. Physical activity defined by the World Health Organization (2019) is any movement of the body produced by skeletal muscles that requires using energy. Physical activity includes exercise that is planned and structured with the intent of improving physical fitness. Individuals gain many physical and psychological benefits from being active regularly (Powell & Blair, 2019). Despite strong evidence for the many benefits of regular physical activity participation, rates continually decrease throughout life spans. There is particularly a steep decline in young adulthood, from 20-25 years of age (Centers for Disease Control, 2018). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2017) report that about one in five adults meet the minimum guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities, which is 150 minutes of moderate movement or 75 minutes of vigorous movement weekly. This low participation rate in adult physical activity is cause for concern because insufficient physical activity is one of the top risk factors for disease and death in the world (World Health Organization, 2019).

Physical activity decreases as people's age increases for a variety of reasons, such as jobs and more sedentary leisure activities (World Health Organization, 2019). It has also been noted that physical activity rates decrease between high school and college (Bray & Born, 2004). In 2018, the American College Health Association published the latest national college health assessment data, revealing that 43.9% of college students reported meeting the minimum recommended amount of physical activity each week (American College Health Association, 2018).

Since 1970, the rates of being overweight in the United States have considerably gotten worse (Centers for Disease Control, 2017); 68% of adults are now overweight or obese. A body mass index (BMI) of 25%-29.9% constitutes being overweight, while a person with a BMI of 30% or more is considered obese. Adults between the ages of 18-29 years old experience the most weight gain, with statistics even higher for students who attend institutions of higher learning (LaCaille et al., 2011).

Young adults living with excess weight may experience physical, psychological, and social concerns more than those who are at ideal weights (King et al., 2014). Obesity can cause serious medical conditions and increases the risk of diabetes, certain types of cancers, musculoskeletal illnesses, and cardiovascular diseases (Powell & Blair, 2019). Most people know the physical consequences, but the psychological issues can also be problematic. Overweight and obese people are more likely to suffer from increased social consequences such as discrimination, prejudice, and emotional hardships (King et al., 2014).

People of all racial and ethnic backgrounds are affected by overweight and obesity, but the disparities are even higher for minority groups (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2018). Excess weight affects people of all races but people of color, specifically African Americans seem to be affected more than others (Sa et al., 2016). The majority of college students are at risk for poor health habits, but African American college students tend to be heavier and gain more weight during college than other racial and ethnic groups (Nelson et al., 2007). Despite the increased overweight and obesity rates among African American college students, few research studies have been conducted to learn more about this specific population while attending institutions of higher learning (Keating et al., 2006).

One study focused on Black women's relationships with physical activity, obesity, and recreation facilities at a primarily white institution (Carter-Francique, 2011). Some participants expressed sociocultural concerns such as race and gender hindering them from visiting the recreation center. Some also indicated that they are physically active in spaces where they are more comfortable, such as sports teams and campus organizations. This study concluded that perhaps Black women's lack of participation proves a lack of appropriate programs for this population (Carter-Francique, 2011). In another study, female students reported they were concerned about their weight, but they still engaged in less vigorous physical activity than male students (Hayes et al., 2009).

With knowledge of the causes and consequences of carrying too much weight, health professionals seek preventive strategies to combat obesity (Trowbridge & Schmid, 2013). One strategy is participating in regular physical activity. Learning more about physical activity patterns among college students should be the first step when one is thinking about how to increase physical activity levels. Administrators in higher education are failing to promote physical activity to their students (Keating et al., 2006).

In 2010, the United States Department of Health and Human Services launched *Healthy People 2020* to improve the health of the nation and address health disparities (Office of Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, 2019). Addressing the health of adolescents, including college-aged students is a key area of Healthy People 2020. Goals of this initiative include promoting healthy behaviors throughout life and building environments—socially and physically—that encourage good health for all people (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2019). The American College Health Association (2018) developed Healthy Campus 2020 as a “sister document” to the Healthy People initiative.

The objectives of Healthy Campus 2020 align with the objectives of Healthy People 2020 but address health issues that are specific to institutions of higher learning. The two specific physical activity goals focus on increasing the number of students who meet guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities. Another goal of Healthy Campus 2020 is “to create social and physical environments that promote good health for all in order to support efforts to increase academic success, productivity, student retention and lifelong learning (Office of Disease and Health Promotion, 2019). Environments have the power to influence our health behaviors. Since college campuses are one of the most significant environments in which many young people spend the beginning of their adulthood, these settings are ideal locations to promote the health benefits of being active. The early years of a young adult’s life are important in developing long term health related behaviors. Researchers point out that a limitation of Healthy People 2020 is the lack of directions that have been given in how campuses should try to reach those goals (Keating et al., 2005). Not only have no directions been given, there are currently no measurements in place to determine if these objectives are being met on college campuses.

Health Promotion on Campus

Promoting physical activity on campus should be one of the top priorities because it will benefit the university as well as the students. Previous research shows that regular physical activity may be valuable to students’ academic performance and success (Calik et al., 2018; Iri et al., 2016). Much room exists for the betterment of physical activity habits of the college-aged population. Universities are prime settings to encourage healthy lifestyles because students are in transitional periods that offer favorable conditions for health promotion (Nolan et al., 2011).

Students attending institutions of higher learning are at an ideal time in their lives where their behavior is conducive to transformation (Silliman et al., 2004).

Behaviors started during college may continue into adulthood, therefore increased research needs to be conducted to decide how to improve physical activity of college students.

During the college years, several habits can potentially influence long-term health behaviors. Physical activity is an example of a habit that can have effects beyond a student's time spent in college (Caletine et al., 2017). Fitness and health classes have been the traditional way to reach college students to teach them more about developing healthy habits. According to Cardinal et al. (2012), most institutions of higher learning no longer require health and physical activity classes. If institutions of higher learning choose not to offer these types of classes, they should consider alternative ways for students to receive information on how to live healthy lives.

To date, no evidence has been found regarding health promotion on campuses of HBCUs. One study suggested that students attending HBCUs have a lot of health knowledge, but they do not practice what they know to be good for them. Not only should institutions of higher learning consider mandating curriculum about healthy behaviors, courses should focus on prevention of diseases prevalent in the African American community, such as heart disease and diabetes. This study also suggested that delivering this material via the internet may be a successful way to reach more students (Livingston et al., 2012).

Intervention programs designed for minority college students have the potential to establish healthy habits at a time when lifelong behaviors are being shaped in their lives and may also prevent or decrease negative health outcomes later in their lives (Sparling, 2003). Focusing more attention on this population may help administrators find ways to improve the health of these high-risk groups (Ajibade, 2011). HBCUs can play a part in reducing health disparities

among African Americans by providing programs that encourage lifelong healthy behaviors, such as regular physical activity (Kemper & Welsh, 2010). Less than half of the study respondents at a rural historically Black college met the recommended levels of physical activity, which confirms the need for better health promotion on campuses of HBCUs (Kemper & Welsh, 2010).

In a study of minority community college students, it was found that about 2/3 of them lacked sufficient physical activity. Results from this study show the dire need for improving physical activity levels of minority students (Sullivan et al., 2008) Adopting healthy habits in early adulthood can lead to an enhanced way of life as individuals mature. Institutions of higher learning can play a major role in educating students holistically, which should include providing opportunities to learn about health through physical activity. Unfortunately, at a time where budgets and resources are dwindling, most college campuses have cut physical activity programs and classes (Cardinal et al., 2012).

Elimination of Physical Education Classes

College physical education classes can provide an important tool in improving the health of Americans (Sparling, 2003). Unfortunately, institutions of higher learning are cutting these classes. In the early 1930s, 97% of private and public institutions of higher learning required some form of physical education, including activity- and conceptual-based classes; in 2010, only 39.55% required this credit (Cardinal et al., 2012). One study found that only 10% of institutions of higher learning require personal health classes for graduation credit (Henry et al., 2017).

Considering America's increased attention on health and the significance of physical activity in maintaining health and wellness, this is disheartening. Traditionally, physical education classes were required as a credit for graduation for all college students, regardless of

their intended major. The purpose of these classes was to develop well balanced people who could “maximize their potential, function at a high level, and be productive members of society” (Sparling, 2003, p. 583). These classes also have the ability to teach healthy living skills while creating behaviors that can benefit young adults throughout the rest of their lives (Sparling, 2003). A requirement of at least one lifetime fitness class can increase levels of physical activity (Sullivan et al., 2008).

If it is not possible to offer these types of classes, administrators should seek alternative methods to address healthy living topics (Sellers et al., 2014). Some institutions of higher learning use wellness centers to offer informational sessions to teach students the health benefits of regular physical activity (Dhurup & Garnett, 2011). Another avenue for reaching students is a campus recreational center.

Use of Recreation Centers

One study indicated that there may be a positive relationship between the number of times students utilize campus recreation centers and positive academic outcomes, including the likelihood of having higher grade point averages than those who do not utilize these centers (Roddy et al., 2017). The use of campus recreation services and student retention are linked (Danbert et al., 2014; Kampf et al., 2018). Usage of recreation centers on campus can also be beneficial for academic success (Roddy et al., 2017). Students need recreation centers because these facilities provide an important service to students and may enhance student experiences through program implementation and initiatives to support academic success and retention (Roddy et al., 2017). These centers have the potential to play a key role in helping fulfill the academic missions of institutions of higher learning. Even those students who do visit their recreation center may not be making the most of what is offered due to various constraints, such

as lack of time to fully utilize resources and lack of knowledge in using equipment (Stankowski et al., 2017).

Student recreation centers have can potentially promote the well-being of college students (Xie et al., 2018). Institutions of higher learning should educate incoming students on the value of campus recreation centers when they first arrive to campus, such as orientation or summer programs (Forrester et al., 2018). Generally, institutions of higher learning are investing in resources to increase physical activity on campus. The high percentage of students who are physically inactive indicate that these resources are not being fully utilized (Suminski et al., 2002). Campus recreational facilities are the main environment for physical activity to occur for most college students (Shaikh et al., 2018). Studies show that recreation centers may serve more purposes than just a place to exercise (Danbert et al., 2014). They can also serve as places for socialization and other wellness benefits (Kampf et al., 2018). Learning more about the current status of physical activity on campus may assist campus recreation facilities to focus programming and marketing techniques towards specific populations.

Since recreational facilities are the main environment in which many college students participate in physical activity, students must feel comfortable in these facilities to utilize programs and services. Research indicates that a strong relationship exists between the built environment and physical activity (Ajibade, 2011). One study suggested campus administrators should look into the benefits of a recreation center when considering ways to increase recruitment, retention, GPA, and other areas (Kampf et al., 2018). Making the facilities attractive to all students is imperative to increase students' usage of the recreation centers, thus increasing physical activity on college campuses (Shaikh et al., 2018). Student recreation centers need to offer recreational activities that are appealing to all students (Forrester et al., 2018).

Campus recreation administrators should consider statistics and health disparities for all students in order to create appropriate programs and incorporate diversity within the programming. In addition to providing a safe space for students to work out, practitioners should also consider offering instruction on health topics such as nutrition, meal preparation and types of different physical activity, to name a few (Carter-Francique, 2011). A random sample of over 900 undergraduate students at a large, public university in the southeast region of the United States answered survey questions to find out more about characteristics of students who use the recreation center and those who do not. Results showed predicting factors of whether or not one will use the recreation center include sex, class standing, living situation, fraternity/sorority affiliation, and the desire to alter one's weight (Miller et al., 2008). Men were more likely use it, freshmen and sophomores had higher usage rates than juniors and seniors, living on campus and belong to Greek organizations also increased one's probability of using the campus recreation centers. Having this knowledge should encourage administrators to reach out to groups less likely to use the recreation center to learn more about what can be done to increase usage by those who currently do not use it.

When students feel like they belong while studying at institutions, they are more likely to become involved in activities on campus. The respondents in one study said that the student recreation center helped them bond and feel a sense of community which developed relationships with other students (Miller, 2011). Since retention of students is an important goal for colleges and universities, administrators should notice how important recreational programs are to the success of an institution.

Factors Influencing Levels of College Students' Physical Activity

Many factors can influence levels of physical activity, including physical, social, psychological, and cognitive (Farren et al., 2017). Understanding these factors is crucial in developing interventions to entice examining the motivations, benefits, and barriers to exercise can help program planners design interventions to entice students' voluntary participation in physically active behaviors on campus (Gontarev et al, 2016). As physical activity declines on college campuses, talking to students to learn more about factors that influence whether or not they exercise is critical to try to increase physical activity.

Motivations

Understanding the motivations to exercise for college students should be the first step to improving physical activity in this demographic (Ball et al, 2018). Previous research found that students' motivating factors for physical activity includes the satisfaction of being in good shape, relaxation, increased self-esteem, better mood and energy (LaCaille et al., 2011). Using the social cognitive theory, it seems that motivation for participation in physical activity comes from the satisfaction one feels while being physically active. That satisfaction may be obtained from successes that come from working out, development of increased confidence, and the encouragement that comes from others. These findings suggest that programs should aim to increase exercise self-efficacy and social support networks (Farren et al., 2017).

Fitness programs developed according to age, sex, and race may increase motivation levels of that group. Appealing to groups' interests may improve the likelihood of them wanting to be physically active. One must also be mindful of current trends and consider if they appeal to the targeted group (Egli et al., 2011). Offering a more diverse variety of programs is a strategy colleges and universities can use to appeal to different groups (Williams et al., 2018). They were

also asked how the university could help more students become physically active. The responses were categorized into four themes: offering physical activity classes for credit, increasing awareness, better scheduling/timing of programs, and more group or club activities. These findings show the importance of talking to students to see what appeals to them, as enjoyment of activities increases exercise adherence (Lewis et al., 2016).

The Exercise Motivation Inventory (EMI) was designed to evaluate exercise motivation that influences participation, choice of activities and motives for exercising. This EMI tool could be used at institutions of higher learning to determine what motivates students to be physically active. Although motivation is based on individuals, a study showed that motivation of college students and their choices in being active are “directly influenced by communication between themselves, their important relationships, and societal pressures” (Fletcher, 2016, p. 504). Learning more about students’ motivations to exercise is important to begin increasing physical activity in the population of college students (Egli et al., 2011). Understanding students’ motives as well as promoting the positive aspects of being active may increase physical activity on campus. A one-dimensional approach for encouraging physical activity may be useful, but research shows it may not be best. Utilizing a multidimensional approach allows students to have more opportunities that may be appealing to them (Egli et al., 2011).

Benefits

Neuroscientists have found that exercise can improve brain function which can help improve academic achievement (Cottman & Engesser-Cesar, 2002). In the last few years, researchers have studied the relationship between fitness and academic outcomes in elementary through high school students and there seems to be a positive relationship between the two (Calik et al., 2018; Raine et al., 2018). Studies show a positive correlation for youth, but the

relationship may vary for college students. One study hypothesized that academics positively affects physical health but the results did not prove there was a relationship between grade point averages and fitness levels. The findings indicated that students who studied more had less time for physical activity (Calestine et al., 2017). Another study found that students who utilized the campus recreation center regularly throughout the semester were more likely to have higher grade point averages than those who did not visit regularly (Roddy et al., 2017). Although it cannot be said if physical activity and recreation center usage definitely have a positive effect on academics, it appears promising.

Health professionals have extensively studied and communicated findings on the benefits of physical activity (Nolan et al., 2011). Being active regularly decreases one's risks of certain illnesses and offers many other physical, psychological, and physiological benefits (Beville et al., 2014). Students feel increased psychological outlook, improved health, enhanced performance, and enhancement of life are some of the top benefits of participating in physical activity. Those who plan programs for students should concentrate their efforts on communicating the positive health benefits of being physically active and the significance of exercise in maintaining a healthy weight. The physical benefits of exercise are often most promoted but mental benefits also need to be communicated.

Attending an institution of higher learning can bring stress that is challenging to navigate and physical activity can be a benefit in addressing these stressors. In addition to studying, students must balance other activities such as work, extracurricular activities, and even parenting. These situations can be stressful, but research shows that physical activity can help decrease stress in a person's life (Barney et al., 2014; Sharp & Barney, 2016). Participation in physical activity classes helps students deal with hassles and other issues that cause stress in their

lives. Students said these classes help them deal with their stressors and improve their confidence in managing the stress of life (Barney et al., 2014). College physical activity classes can deliver a simple, accessible method for students to deal with their stress. Physical activity can potentially decrease stress and also may serve as a coping mechanism to deal with stress. Students who participated in leisure time physical activity each week stated that they experienced lower levels of stress. Research has also shown that being physically active creates competence to complete their school responsibilities, decreases daily stress, enhances social relationships, and networking (Barney et al., 2014).

Targeting perceived benefits may prove to be an effective technique to increase the physical activity of college students. Research shows students acknowledge that regular exercise has mental and physical benefits, but they still may not be physically active due to barriers in their lives (LaCaille et al., 2011). There are many reasons that impede people from beginning and continuing an active lifestyle, including no time for working out, family demands, lack of motivation, no access to a fitness center, and lack of knowledge (Ebben & Brudzynski, 2008; Nolan et al., 2011).

Barriers

In one study, the top three barriers were the same for males, females, traditional and non-traditional students. No willpower, lack of time, and no energy were reported as the main constraints that kept them from working out (Ball et al., 2018). Health professionals should use information about barriers to create programs to address constraints, which may help students in starting or maintaining a regular exercise routine. Lack of motivation and lack of time appeared to be the top two reasons students do not work out; therefore, the challenge becomes creating opportunities that will fit within their schedules and also appeal to their interests (Brown et al.,

2006). When administrators decide to address barriers to increase usage, they need to talk to not only those who are physically active but also those who not regularly physically active (Stankowski et al., 2017).

Summary

As obesity has increased in the United States of America, physical activity has decreased. This should be alarming because the consequences of obesity are serious and can potentially be life-threatening. Institutions of higher learning have a responsibility to educate students on the importance of physical activity as an integral part of a healthy lifestyle. Since most colleges and universities have reduced or eliminated health and physical education classes, it is critical to find other ways to teach students about their health.

Promoting the positive aspects of physical activity and learning more about what motivates LU students to be physically active will enable administrators to plan programs and interventions beneficial for the student population. Using the information discovered about motivations, benefits and barriers can also be useful when planning fitness activities and events on campus. Universities are stakeholders in the health of the students in which they serve. In addition to the benefits of physical activity, it also provides opportunities for social interaction and integration which increases the likelihood that students will feel a sense of connectedness and belonging on campus. Feeling they are connected may lead to higher levels of retention and graduation. Research can lead to better programs to increase physical activity on campus. Very few studies have been done on the campuses of historically Black colleges and universities, so more information is needed for this population of students.

SECTION FOUR: CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

Results of this study can benefit administrators of student recreation centers on campuses across the United States. It can also be beneficial for others in positions at institutions of higher learning who have a vested interest in the health of students as well as others who work at institutions of higher learning who may have an interest in physical activity levels of students. At Lincoln, the results can directly benefit directors and program planners at the Linc. Since money is being invested to maintain the facility, campus administrators should be interested in the findings. One particular organization that I plan to share this research with is NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation. NIRSA, formerly known as the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association, is an organization that recognizes that recreational opportunities in colleges and universities have an important role to promoting wellness in communities (NIRSA, n.d.).

I would like to present at the national convention for NIRSA that is normally held in February of each year. This will give me an opportunity to share my research with over 2,000 recreational professionals from various institutions of higher learning. The organization seeks proposals that include diverse cultures and institutions. My study fits that requirement perfectly. My goal is to present findings from the study using a white paper at the convention in 2022. This format will best reach participants because it can be read quickly. The paper will highlight the findings of students' motivations, barriers, and any recommendations they have to improve physical activity levels of students.

THE PERCEPTION OF BENEFITS, BARRIERS, AND CUES TO ACTION FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: A CASE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AT A HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

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WHAT WE KNOW....

- Physical activity tends to decrease as people get older (World Health Organization, 2019).
- Students attending institutions of higher learning are at an ideal time in their lives where their behavior is conducive to transformation (Silliman et al., 2004).
- Recreation facilities on campus provide an important service to students and may enhance student experiences through program implementation and initiatives to support academic success and retention (Roddy et al., 2017).

THE PROBLEM IS....

Despite the many benefits of physical activity, the majority of students still do not work out regularly. Some campuses invest in recreation centers, yet, students still do not take advantage of this resource.



THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

- Learn more about students' physical activity behaviors; including perceived barriers, benefits, and cues to action.



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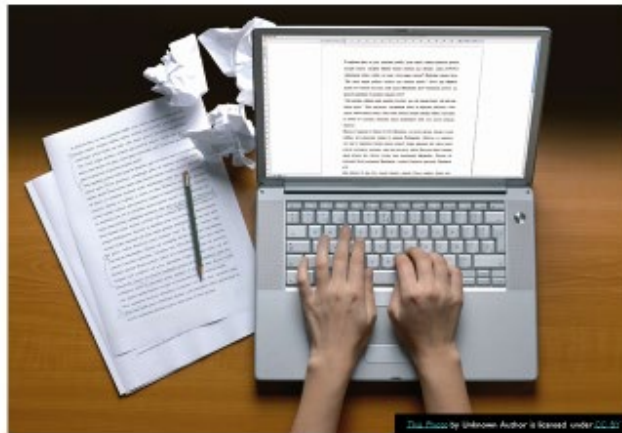
METHODOLOGY



- Case study with 15 participants
 - 10 females
 - 5 males
 - 8 physically active
 - 7 physically inactive

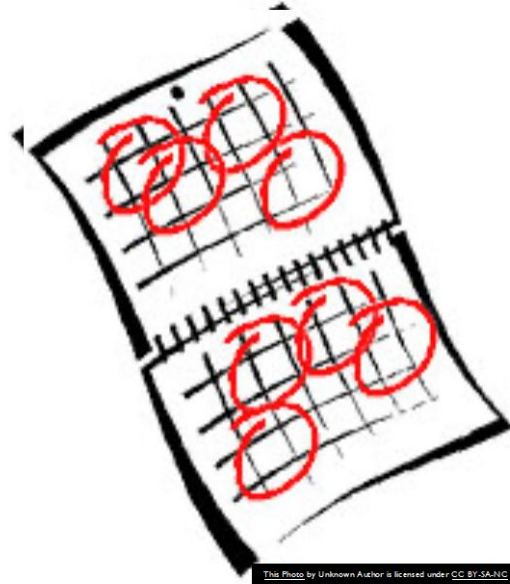
RESULTS

- LU does not support physical activity.
- Most are in favor of a health/pe class.
- 3 themes emerged
 - Barriers
 - Benefits
 - Cues to Action



THEME #1: BARRIERS

- Personal Reasons
 - Transportation
 - Lack of willpower and energy
- Schedule
 - Too busy
 - Work & school
 - Classes offered



THEME #1: BARRIERS

- Lack of knowledge
 - Don't know how to use equipment
 - Unaware of free classes
- Covid-19



THEME #2 BENEFITS



- Mental
 - Increased academic focus
 - Self-confidence
- Physical
 - Appearance
 - Better health
- Social
 - Time with friends
 - Meeting new people

THEME #3: CUES TO ACTION

- New offerings
 - Intramurals
 - Activities on campus
- Promotion
 - More publicity
 - Other ways besides email
- Nothing new
 - Continue challenges
 - Keep up the positive environment



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IMPLICATIONS

- Findings from this study indicate that students may be more physically active if they feel they belong in a space. Administrators should work to make sure all students feel comfortable in workout areas and fitness classes.
- Marketing and program staff should use multiple ways, besides email, to promote offerings.

IMPLICATIONS

- University administrators should consider bringing back health &/ or physical education classes. This study may lead to increased levels of physical activity by providing recommendations to administrators at the Linc and the university. They should promote the benefits and address the barriers to increase physical activity.

IMPLICATIONS

- Contributes to current body of research by adding a study about historically Black colleges and universities. Findings were consistent with previous studies about barriers and benefits college students experience involving physical activity but offers something new in the recommendations to increase physical activity.

SECTION FIVE-CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP

The benefits of physical activity have been widely publicized, yet many adults still do not meet the minimum suggested guidelines. While research shows that being physically active lessens the risks of certain diseases, rates of physical activity have decreased significantly (Williams et al., 2018). Lack of being physically active is one of the contributing factors to increasing obesity rates on college campuses (World Health Organization, 2019). In addition to the physical benefits of exercising, studies have shown that regular physical activity is good for stress management and mental health (Barney et al., 2014; Sharp & Barney, 2016). Young et al. (2015) found that participation in recreational sports programs has a positive association with higher grade point averages, retention, and satisfaction for college students. Despite the many benefits of being physically active, only 43.9% of college students achieve the recommended amount each week (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2019).

Literature Review

The Health of African American Students

The majority of college students are at risk for poor health habits, but African American college students tend to be heavier and gain more weight during college than other racial and ethnic groups (Nelson et al., 2007). Despite the increased overweight and obesity rates among African American college students, few research studies have been conducted to learn more about this specific population while attending institutions of higher learning (Keating et al., 2006). Students attending institutions of higher learning are at an ideal time in their lives where their behavior is conducive to transformation (Silliman et al., 2004).

Intervention programs designed for minority college students have the potential to establish healthy habits at a critical time when lifelong behaviors are being shaped that may

prevent or decrease negative health outcomes later in their lives (Sparling, 2003). Focusing more attention on this population may help administrators find ways to improve the health of these high-risk groups (Ajibade, 2011). HBCUs can play a part in reducing health disparities among African Americans by providing programs that encourage lifelong healthy behaviors, such as regular physical activity (Kemper & Welsh, 2010).

Use of Recreation Centers

Campus recreational facilities are the main environment for physical activity to occur for most college students (Shaikh et al., 2018). Institutions of higher learning should educate incoming students on the value of campus recreation centers when they first arrive to campus (Forrester et al., 2018). Many invest resources to increase physical activity on campus, but the high percentage of students who are physically inactive indicate that these resources are not being fully utilized (Suminski et al., 2002).

Studies show that recreation centers may serve more purposes than just a place to exercise (Danbert et al., 2014). They can also serve as places for socialization and other wellness benefits (Kampf et al., 2018; Xie et al., 2018)). Students need recreation centers because these facilities provide an important service to students and may enhance student experiences through program implementation and initiatives to support academic success and retention (Roddy et al., 2017).

Since recreational facilities are the main environment in which many college students participate in physical activity, students must feel comfortable in these facilities to utilize programs and services. Making the facilities attractive to all students is imperative to increase students' usage of the recreation centers, thus increasing physical activity on college campuses (Shaikh et al., 2018; Forrester et al., 2018).

Benefits

Health professionals have extensively studied and communicated findings on the benefits of physical activity (Nolan et al., 2011). Being active regularly decreases one's risks of certain illnesses and offers many other physical, psychological, and physiological benefits (Beville et al., 2014). Research has also shown that being physically active creates competence to complete their school responsibilities, decreases daily stress, enhances social relationships, and networking (Barney et al., 2014). Another study found that students who utilized the campus recreation center regularly throughout the semester were more likely to have higher grade point averages than those who did not visit regularly (Roddy et al., 2017).

Targeting perceived benefits may prove to be an effective technique to increase the physical activity of college students. Research shows students acknowledge that regular exercise has mental and physical benefits, but they still may not be physically active due to barriers in their lives (LaCaille et al., 2011). There are many reasons that impede people from beginning and continuing an active lifestyle, including no time for working out, family demands, lack of motivation, no access to a fitness center, and lack of knowledge (Ebben & Brudzynski, 2008; Nolan et al., 2011).

Barriers

Health professionals need to use information about barriers to create programs to address constraints, which may help students in starting or maintaining a regular exercise routine. Lack of motivation and lack of time appeared to be the top two reasons students do not work out; therefore, the challenge becomes creating opportunities that will fit within their schedules and also appeal to their interests (Brown et al., 2006). When administrators decide to address barriers

to increase usage, they need to talk to not only those who are physically active but also those who not regularly physically active (Stankowski et al., 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the opportunities Lincoln University offers to African American students who are not part of sports teams to be physically active on campus. I wanted to discover more about whether or not students take advantage of events and programs that are offered to promote physical activity, including utilizing the campus recreation center. The case study method was used to identify perceived barriers, benefits, and cues to action to physical activity relevant to this population. According to Yin (2018), six sources of evidence can be used in a case study. For this particular study, interviews were the primary source. Direct and participant observations were also used. Originally, I had planned to utilize archival records but once I started the study, I found out no such records currently exist.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What motivates African American students at a historically Black college and university to work out regularly?
2. What do non-physically active African American students at a historically Black college and university describe as their barriers to working out?
3. What recommendations do active and non-active African American students have regarding ways to increase students' physical activity?

Research Method

As a qualitative research method, the case study approach allows an investigator to explore a “real-life, contemporary bounded system through detailed, in-depth data collection

involving multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2013). This method was utilized to better understand physical activity patterns of African American students.

Participants

The method of purposeful sampling was used to collect the data for this study. After I received approval from the University of Missouri’s Institutional Review Board, full-time college students between the ages of 18-22 were recruited from a small historically Black college and university in the Midwest. Students were recruited by a mass email to all students, flyers posted in highly frequented places on campus, a request to professors to announce the study in their classes, and an announcement was placed on Canvas. Interested students were instructed to call or email the researcher. After the initial contact, students were sent an email to answer basic demographic information to screen for eligibility. Questions included are you a student at Lincoln University? What race do you identify as? How much physical activity do you get per week? In addition to answering those questions, students were asked to include 2-3 days/times they were available for a Zoom interview. Interview data was collected from 15 participants; 7 physically inactive females, 3 physically active females, and 5 physically active males. The physical active participants reported at least 150 minutes of physical activity weekly on a regular basis.

Procedures

I created semi-structured interview questions to learn more about students’ physical activity habits. The questions were designed to start a conversation regarding how much students exercise, their perceived benefits, barriers, and cues to action regarding physical activity. Interviews were conducted via Zoom at a time conducive to students’ schedules. Before each interview, the participants were required to give informed consent. They also granted me

permission to record and transcribe their interviews. Each one was told their responses are confidential and kept on a laptop protected with a password. While each interview was being conducted on Zoom, it was recorded to the cloud. The Otter.ai software also recorded and transcribed the conversations. I also took notes during interviews. When the conversations ended, I listened to the transcript and corrected errors. I began the interview by asking the participants to tell a little about themselves, then proceeded to ask the semi-structured questions. During some of the interviews, other questions were asked as follow-up to information students shared. As the interviews were going on, I took notes on the conversations and ideas that came to mind as they talked. Each interview lasted anywhere from 20-40 minutes. After all questions were answered, participants were allowed to ask questions or add anything else that felt would be useful for this study. They were then thanked for their time and given a \$5 incentive via cash app.

Coding of Data and Data Analysis

Once I completed the interviews, I organized them by physically active and physically inactive participants. I then read through the interviews to see how students' responses answered my research questions. I typed responses to the motivation questions, benefits, barriers, and recommendations to improve physical activity at Lincoln. I then grouped similar responses together to figure out themes.

Results

Research Question 1. What motivates you to work out? This purpose of this question was to find out reasons participants work out. Answers to these questions addressed the perceived benefits component of the health belief model. The common answers from this question involved themes of mental, physical and social benefits.

Theme 1: Mental benefits. Physically active students cited several psychological benefits from working out. Increased academic focus was cited several times. Kenny said “working out helps my academics because it clears my head and I’m focused when it’s time to study.” Marc responded, “commitment to fitness helps me stay committed to academics.” Other mental benefits included self-confidence, a tool to deal with mental illnesses and a way to “clear your mind when you’re going through stuff (Kim).” Two participants discussed how working out helped them get through depression. Kendra said “during the pandemic was terrible for me. Exercise was my best friend and helped me get out of my funk.” Marc said his therapist recommended he start exercising as therapy during high school. He said working out helped him get through a hard time and he “doesn’t want to go back to a suicidal state.”

Theme 2: Physical benefits. Physical appearance was the top response in this category. Several students said looking good motivated them to work out regularly. Jimmy said, “I’m working on my summer body.” Brian answered, “I know this sounds wrong but no one likes being fat.” Two participants told stories of how certain diseases run in their families and they are physically active to try to avoid those issues. Brian said, “My grandmother passed from diabetes when she was 55. I never really go to know her and that motivates me to be healthy.” Kendra stated, “High blood pressure runs in my family. I work out because I don’t want to have it.” Marc responded, “When I exercise, I eat healthier. I don’t want to undo all my hard work in the gym by eating bad foods.” Other responses included better sleep and avoiding health problems.

Theme 3: Social benefits. This theme included answers involving time with friends. John said, “My friends motivate each other to work out.” Kendra responded, “I work out with friends, so this is a good way for us to spend time together.” Brian answered, “I’ve met a lot of people by playing sports at the Linc.”

Research Question 2: What do students at Lincoln University describe as barriers to working out? This question sought to figure out perceived barriers of students who do not regularly work out. The top barriers reported in this study were personal reasons, schedule, and lack of knowledge. Consistent with another study, some of the personal reasons included no willpower, lack of time, and no energy as being the main constraints that kept them from working out (Ball et al., 2018). The schedule barrier came from those who said work and class schedule left no time for working out. Others said the class schedules did not work for them. Lack of knowledge involved not knowing how to use the equipment in the weight room and not knowing about classes offered. Marsha said, “It’s not that I don’t have time. I just need to make time.”

Theme 1: Personal Reasons. Physically inactive students stated many reasons why they do not work out regularly. Transportation was the most popular response to this question. The Linc is approximately ½ mile from the main campus. Students said it is too far to walk. Some students were honest in saying they are just lazy, unmotivated, and procrastinators. Among personal reasons, transportation was the barrier stated the most. This is important to note because the majority of students at Lincoln University are first generation from low to middle income families. They may not have the means to afford a vehicle. The director of the Linc is aware that this is an issue and said he is considering a shuttle for transportation, however, he is doubtful that a shuttle will increase usage of the Linc. “I think some students just use no transportation as an excuse.”

Theme 2: Schedule. Busy schedules were a common answer to this question. “Between 2 jobs and being a full-time student, I just don’t have time to work out.” “I need to put myself on a schedule to work out.” One student began by saying she did not have time to work out but then

admitted she could make time if she wanted to. “I know I could make time by going early or after work but I am tired and unmotivated.” 3 participants said they do not attend classes at the Linc because the schedule does not work for them. One participant was unaware that the classes offered are free to all students. Another student said that the classes offered do not fit in her with her schedule.”

Theme 3: Lack of knowledge. Three female participants said not knowing how to use equipment in the weight room keeps them from working out. Alli stated, “I don’t know how to use the weights and machines. I don’t want to embarrass myself.” Bea said “It helps to have someone to show me how to lift but I can’t always do that.” Alli said, “I don’t go to classes because I didn’t know they were free.”

Theme 4: Pandemic. Bea responded, “Corona virus kinda changed my workout habits because in the back of my mind, I’m worried about others having it and I may get it. People don’t wear masks. I know I take precautions but others may not. I don’t want to be exposed.” Tiffany said she only went to the Linc sporadically but now she “doesn’t go at all because of Covid.”

Research Question 3: What recommendations do students have on how Lincoln University can better support students’ physical activity?

Theme 1: New offerings. Several students had suggestions on new offerings that may entice more students to work out. Sports tournaments and intramurals were the top answers in this theme. Students reported enjoyment of those activities prior to Covid. Because of the pandemic, the Linc has not been able to offer those. The director has said he is hopeful that they can resume soon. Another response was offering activities on campus and not just at the Linc. Kenny said, “Since students complain about walking to the Linc, having activities on campus

closer to where we have classes may get more people involved.” Jimmy felt it would be a good idea to “showcase progress of students who work out regularly. If students can see before and after pictures of students, they may be more motivated to work out themselves.” Marsha suggested, “provide transportation from campus to the Linc.”

Theme 2: Promotion. Almost every participant recommended more publicity. Emails are the primary avenue of informing students about programs and events going on at the Linc, however, students admit they do not always read their emails. In addition to continuing emails, students had other suggestions to ensure every student sees the information. Marsha suggested, “post flyers everywhere.” Lisa said, “Professors can make announcements in classes.” Social media was the most quoted way students said they find out about what is going on. Alli responded, “educate students on benefits around campus, such as the cafeteria and student union.” Lisa said, “Post on Canvas (platform students use for classwork).” Shauna answered, “showcase the events more.”

Theme 3: Nothing new. Some participants’ responses involved doing some of the same things or nothing new. Several said the Linc should continue offering challenges. Shauna said, “Keep up the great environment.” Sara said, “They can’t do anything else. Until students want to change, they won’t. They have to be motivated.”

Discussion

This study was unique because very few studies have been conducted regarding African American students attending historically Black colleges and universities. An important contribution of my research is using the Health Belief Model for this population. Previous research found that students’ motivating factors for physical activity includes the satisfaction of being in good shape, relaxation, increased self-esteem, better mood and energy (LaCaille et al.,

2011). Consistent with previous research, participants in this study stated some of these same benefits they gain from working out.

Campus recreation administrators need to use information about barriers to create programs to address constraints, which may help students in starting or maintaining a regular exercise routine. Lack of motivation and lack of time appeared to be some of the top reasons students do not work out; therefore, the challenge becomes creating opportunities that will fit within their schedules and also appeal to their interests (Brown et al., 2006). When administrators decide to address barriers to increase usage, they need to talk to not only those who are physically active but also those who not regularly physically active (Stankowski et al., 2017). Contrary to past research, transportation was the top barrier in this study. This is important to note because the majority of students at Lincoln University are first generation from low to middle income families. They may not have the means to afford a vehicle. The director of the Linc is aware that this is an issue and said he is considering a shuttle for transportation.

Promoting physical activity on campus should be one of the top priorities for administrators because it will benefit the university as well as the students. Publicizing events and programs that campus recreation offers is a must to increase students' physical activity levels and develop healthy habits with the potential of lasting a lifetime. Administrators in higher education are failing to promote physical activity to their students (Keating et al., 2006). Much room exists for the betterment of physical activity habits of the college-aged population.

Findings from this study were consistent with a previous study on Black women's relationships with physical activity and recreation facilities (Carter-Francique, 2011). Participants in that study indicated that they are physically active in spaces where they are more comfortable. Results of these studies may indicate that Black women's lack of participation may

indicate a lack of appropriate programs for this population (Carter-Francique, 2011). Since recreational facilities are the main environment in which many college students participate in physical activity, students must feel comfortable in these facilities to utilize programs and services.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this study was categorizing students into regularly working out or not because this is not a permanent state. The regularity of students' working out is subject to change. Another limitation may relate to which participants from various categories volunteered to participate. There were more female than male participants. All of the students were juniors or seniors, no freshmen or sophomores volunteered for the study. If freshmen or sophomores participated, the results may have been different. I assume that students were honest in their responses and that they would have answers to the questions I ask them. All of the males who participated were active, so I had no input from inactive males. It is also important to note that my study was conducted during the global pandemic of COVID-19. This may have limited my study because students are still trying to figure out how to navigate life in these very different times and may have influenced who was able to participate and how they felt about or described their physical activity patterns.

In the future, several studies could complement these findings. Another case study could be conducted using all races of students who attend this institution of higher learning. A quantitative study could provide a broader perspective of physical activity and usage of the campus recreation center. Conducting this same study at multiple institutions would also be a good idea to add to the research. If the cues to action were put into place, another study could be done to see if physical activity rates increase.

Conclusion

Universities are stakeholders in the health of the students in which they serve. Research can lead to better programs to increase physical activity on campus. The current study investigated the benefits, barriers, and recommendations students have for physical activity. The findings of the study contribute to the existing body of literature on the barriers and benefits of participation in the college student population. This study can be a helpful resource for campus recreation service administrators who wish to increase students' physical activity and use of their facilities. Using this information discovered about benefits, barriers, and recommendations can also be useful when planning fitness activities and events on campus. Promoting the positive aspects of physical activity and learning more about what motivates students to be physically active will enable administrators to plan programs and interventions beneficial for the student population. Increasing facility usage can help enrich these college students' lives in many ways.

In addition to the physical benefits, it also provides opportunities for social interaction and integration which increases the likelihood that students will feel a sense of connectedness and belonging on campus. Feeling they are connected may lead to higher levels of retention and graduation. Those who plan programs for students should concentrate their efforts on communicating the positive health benefits of being physically active and the significance of exercise in maintaining a healthy weight.

SECTION SIX-SCHOLARLY PRACTITIONER REFLECTION

As I reflect on my doctoral journey these last 4 years, not only have I grown tremendously as a person but also as an educational leader and scholar. When I started this journey in 2017, I did not consider myself to be a leader at all. At the time, I thought of leaders as people in positions of power. After just a couple of weeks in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (ELPA) program, I realized how wrong I was and that I actually have been a leader my whole life. Throughout my school years, I was involved in many clubs, organizations, and sports, serving as team captain for basketball, track and tennis. Eventually I became one of very few Native Americans from my community to attend and graduate college, I am the first in my family to obtain a Bachelor's or Master's degree from a 4-year university. I will also be the first to earn a Doctorate degree.

I completed my Master's degree in 2005 while working full-time and had no intentions of ever pursuing another degree. Twelve years later, Dr. Kevin Rome, president of Lincoln University at the time, encouraged me to apply for the University of Missouri's Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Doctoral program. As a 39 year old full time working mother, I did not think I could go back to school. Dr. Rome spoke very highly of the cohort model and 3 other people from the university who were already in the program encouraged me to apply. I figured I had nothing to lose by applying. In April, I found out I was accepted. I was nervous and excited to begin.

Classes began during the summer of 2017. 3 week of schoolwork all day was a lot but I was grateful to be part of a group. It was nice having others to talk to and ask questions about material I did not understand. Although we had an intense project to complete, we worked together and submitted a successful project. I learned a lot that summer and I appreciated how

diverse the curriculum was. The focus of the summer's content was culture, politics, and power. Until then, I had never considered the influence of those 3 factors in organizations. As a culminating project, the Wicked Problem was a great way for us to apply all we learned that summer. We all had strengths and weaknesses and this project allowed us to all display leadership at various times. Cooperating with a group to accomplish such a huge task increased my confidence.

In addition to culture, politics, and power; social justice was another topic we discussed. Being a Native American woman, I considered myself aware of issues minorities face. These discussions really opened my eyes to so much that I had never considered and showed me that we still have a lot of work to do in this area. I have always had friends from all different walks of life but this showed me the importance of making sure you have a diverse group of people around you as a leader.

The ELPA program introduced me to several theories of leadership. According to Northouse (2016), leadership is a “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 6). To evaluate my leadership style, I used the StrengthsFinder Assessment (Clifton, 2004), questionnaires from various theories (Northouse, 2016), and data gathered from student surveys. Gallup's StrengthsFinder pinpointed my top 5 strengths as harmony, relator, consistency, restorative, and positivity. Although I see qualities from most of the leadership styles in myself, the servant leadership model and the authentic leadership style resonated most strongly with me as an individual.

Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf was the first author to write about the servant leadership style. Since this model was first introduced, several scholars have built on the concept, including Spears

(2002) who noted 10 characteristics of servant leaders from Greenleaf's writings. Four of these characteristics have been a major part of my personality as an educator: listening, empathy, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Spears, 2002).

Effective educators must listen intently to their students. Good communication is key in showing them that you care about their well-being. My office door is always open for students to come in and talk about anything. I want them to feel comfortable to confide in me and ask questions when they need advice or information. I do not always have the answers but I can always be a good listener. Although my background is different from many of my students, I work hard to understand where they come from. It is my job to help empower them to work hard, so that they can be successful regardless of their backgrounds. Despite our differences, my experience as a first generation college student allows me to help them. I remember how grateful I was when advisors and instructors helped me. Showing empathy to my students shows them that I truly care. I am concerned for the well-being of my students and I want them to be well. As an instructional leader, building a sense of community, in and out of the classroom, is important to me. Roland (2008) described communities as relationships resulting from a sense of belonging among a diverse group within society. I always want students to feel welcome around me and free to be who they are. I never want students to feel that the only time they can interact with me is during their class periods they have with me.

As an instructor at a historically Black college and university, I am committed to the growth of my students. Part of my job is making sure they stay on track to achieve that goal of graduation. Seeing them walk across the stage at graduation makes me proud that I played a part in that accomplishment. Rooke and Torbert (2011) shared that leaders create visions and inspire initiatives to help those visions come to be. Kotter (2011) stated that leadership requires

individuals to motivate and inspire others. When I first decided to major in education, my motivation was helping others. I chose physical education because I specifically wanted to teach young people the importance of living healthy lifestyles. Growing up, I did not have healthy physical educators, so I wanted to be a positive role model for young people. As an instructor, I lead by example in what I try to instill in my students. If I tell them they need to exercise, I must model the behavior for them. I was nominated as teacher of the year at 3 different schools during my elementary physical education career. I feel proud that my colleagues and administrators chose me to represent our profession.

Authentic Leadership

When you are genuine and trustworthy, people will trust you (Northouse, 2016). Authentic leadership has been defined in multiple ways. I relate to the internalized moral perspective (Northouse, 2016) because it refers to sticking to my values and not allowing others to influence decision making. One of my top five strengths is being a relator, so, relational transparency is important to me. Showing genuine concern while opening up to others is how trusting relationships start. (Northouse, 2016). Sharing my experiences and encouraging my students to open up and share about themselves is important to me in teaching and advising. Living out my purpose shows my students that I truly want to help people. I feel blessed in having the ability to share my true self with students.

Being a leader in the field of education, we must consider what is best for the students we serve (Shapiro, 2016). Working with students at LU, this is of particular importance. “Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead (Schein, 2005). LU is an open enrollment institution and sometimes students come to us with many odds

against their success: first generation college students, troubled neighborhoods, broken family life, poverty, etc.

According to Heifetz and Laurie (2011), leadership must take place on a daily basis. We must live our lives according to our beliefs. I believe that my purpose in life is sharing my passion for healthy living to help others live healthily. Educational leaders should be good examples for their students. Health and fitness are important to me, therefore I spend a lot of time in self-reflection. I contemplate where I am, where I want to be, and what I must do to get there; personally and professionally. As an educator, it is my responsibility to meet my students where they are and figure out what I must do to get them to where they need to be.

Being a leader requires me to act ethically with my students' best interests in mind. Striving to be an effective leader requires me to conduct myself professionally, cultivate relationships, and make sound decisions based on data. As an educational leader, I am committed to continuing to be an advocate for the students that I serve at Lincoln University. Ethical leaders are effective in leading others because they allow their character and values to guide them in decision making. Their honesty allows them to learn to constantly work on being the best versions of themselves (Mihelic et al., 2010).

Because of this program, I now consider myself a lifelong learner. Being a student and a teacher at the same time has challenged me to reflect on who I am as a learner. Being a part of this doctoral program has challenged me in ways I never imagined it would. In my previous years of schooling, I focused mainly on getting assignments done. I never put a lot of thought into whether or not I was actually learning anything. As a doctoral student, I did not just go through the motions of completing assignments to check off a box. I actually spent time how

those assignments were contributing to deepening my understanding and how I could apply that to my career.

According to Gill (2010), the acquisition of new beliefs, skills, attitudes, and knowledge changes an individual's perception of the world around them. Individual learning helps one to better understand information which improves job performance, thus contributing to the performance of the organization. As a lifelong learner, one should always seek opportunities for development.

Understanding how I learn best has enabled me to help my students realize their best learning styles. By learning about themselves, they can interact effectively with others. Self-reflection in education is a critical component in experiencing success in college and throughout life. (Gill, 2010). Students learn better when they know how they learn best and why they learn best in those situations. Gill (2010) discusses the necessity of assessment of self, as well as in organizations.

Throughout my schooling, I can remember teachers who knew their content but were not effective in teaching it to others. As an effective instructor, meaningful learning experiences are imperative to engage learners. Merriam and Bierema (2014), state that students will be less engaged in learning processes if they don't understand why the content is meaningful. Often times educators become so wrapped up in giving students information that they forget to explain the importance of what they are teaching and why it is relevant. For as long as I can remember, I have had an easier time learning when I can see how I can apply the new concepts to my life. I believe this is the case with most people.

Part of being a lifelong learner includes seeking areas of improvement; ranging from how I can improve as instructor to personal growth in various areas of my life. As long as one lives,

he/she should always focus on improvement. Being complacent with where you are in life while striving to reach your potential can be challenging and frustrating at times. Leaders must demonstrate honesty, not just with others but themselves as well. No one is perfect, but we must learn from our mistakes and constantly work to be the best version of ourselves (Mihelic, Lipicnik, & Tekavcic, 2010).

“Critical thinking-the ability to assess your assumptions, beliefs, and actions- is imperative to survival; failure to engage in it makes you a target of those who may wish to harm or manipulate you” (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Effective critical thinking is important to making good decisions throughout life. It is not enough just to think critically, change agents must also take critical action. This experience has made me think more critically about everything. Learning the importance of data and how to use it in making decisions was another valuable piece of this program. You can not just say something is a problem, you must be able to show data on why it is a problem. The same applies to solutions, data must support why that may or may not be a good solution.

This reflection has increased my self-awareness of who am as a learner, leader, and change agent. I also appreciate knowing what my strengths are and will continue to look for ways for this knowledge to help me as an instructor. The cohort model has been beneficial to my learning. Working as part of a group brought different perspectives and was helpful to hear other voices when trying to understand hard concepts.

This whole experience has helped me develop a voice and have the courage to speak up. Previously, I was a reserved person who did not always feel comfortable talking in a group. Overall, I am truly grateful for this doctoral experience. It has made me a better person as well as

a stronger leader and scholar. Going forth, I will continue to think critically and constantly pursue opportunities for learning.

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Appendix A

Student Interview Protocol

Share with me a little about yourself. (year in school, major, intended career)

How has your level of physical activity been throughout your life? (Were you active in sports when you were a kid? Throughout middle school? High school? Now?)

Describe the amount of physical activity you get weekly. (option: Describe the amount of physical activity you got this past week. Is that typical for you or different than usual? Try to get some estimate of time per workout and then estimate of workouts per week. And estimate of lows and highs—minimums and maximums.

150 minutes is the recommended amount of physical activity adults should get weekly.

(30 min/day, 5 days/week. Would you say you meet that recommended amount?

For active students: What motivates you to be physically active (probes: academics, social, physical, mental—theoretical framework—ask about those dimensions—if not here then somewhere)? What types of activities do you participate in? Where?

For inactive students: Can you say more about your motivations around physical activity—do you want to be more active than you currently are? Do you experience barriers to activity? Are you satisfied with the current level of activity you have? Is there anything that would motivate you to become more active? Are there any activities that you have engaged in for physical activity in the past that you have enjoyed? If you did want to be more physically active now, what options are available to you?

Have you ever been to the Linc? What can you tell me about the Linc (probes: the staff, the facilities, the location, the feel of it, anything)? How do you know of events happening at the Linc?

(Probes: How often do you visit the Linc? When you go to the Linc, what do you do? If you currently work out at the Linc, what are your reasons for working out there? If you currently do not work out at the Linc, what are your reasons for not working out there?)

What, if anything, can the Linc do to encourage more students to be physically active?

Is there anything the Linc does particularly well and should continue doing to promote/support students' physical activity?

Do you think students' physical activity is supported on campus? How so or why not?

When is the last time you took a physical education class?

Was it an elective or a requirement?

If Lincoln offered a physical education class for credit, would you take it?

Appendix B

Director Interview Protocol

Please state your name and title.

What does your job entail?

How long have you worked in this position?

How does the Linc keep track of data on usage?

If so, how is that done?

Are you able to track students' visits? (Example: John Doe visited the Linc 3 times this week.)

What percentage of students use the Linc?

What do you think are the benefits of students using the Linc?

What barriers do students encounter in using the Linc?

What does the Linc do to encourage students to be physically active?

What does Lincoln University do to encourage students to be physically active?

What seems to motivate students to be physically active?

What is going well at the Linc?

What do you feel can go better at the Linc?

Appendix C

Flyer

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

Campus researcher is seeking participants for a study on physical activity at Lincoln University.

The study is part of the researcher's dissertation for a doctoral degree. Participants will remain anonymous . Must have the following qualifications:

- African American student who is not an athlete
- Have access to Zoom for a 30 minute interview
- The ability to answer questions regarding current physical activity
 - Interested in talking to people who currently work out and those who do not

\$5 will be given to each participant at the conclusion of interviews with a chance to win a \$20 gift card to restaurant or store of your choice when study ends.

VITA

Crystal Moseley was born and raised in Warrenton, North Carolina. During her senior year of high school, she earned the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Award to East Carolina University. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sport Science in 2000. In 2005, she earned her Master of Arts in Education from East Carolina University.

She was a physical educator in North Carolina public schools for 13 years before moving to Missouri in 2014. She served one year as an academic advisor at Lincoln University before transitioning to an instructor in the School of Education. She has been an instructor and advisor in the department of wellness since 2015.

Moseley currently resides in Jefferson City, Missouri, with her husband, John, and daughter, Jillian.