

LEVEL 5 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Module:	The Psychology of Exercise and Physical Activity		
Module code:	BMHN5003	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	50%
Lecturer:	Alison Connaughton	Internal Verifier:	Dylan Blain
Assignment Title:	Report: Establish the motives for, and the barriers that prevent regular physical activity / exercise for an individual of your choice. In particular, you should consider any impact the Covid19 pandemic has had in relation to this. Evaluate your results in light of previous research and suggest approaches to encourage exercise behaviour for that particular individual and wider population group.	Word count (or equivalent):	2127 words
Submission deadline:	13 th of January, 2023	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	Within 4 working term time weeks.
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 40%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

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Introduction/Result

An interview was conducted in order to examine what motivates or deters Mr S. from engaging in regular physical activity or exercise. Having conducted the interview and analysing the data the following conclusion were made. Mr S. continues to exercise for the many benefits derived from being physical activity including health, psychological and physical. He expressed the health benefit by stating *“To be abit more healthy by receiving all the health benefits such as a healthy CV system”*. Then he outlined the psychological benefits *“To release stress from school and work”* and *“I enjoy doing it”*. Additionally, he stated the physical benefits *“ For physique: develop muscles, to shape my body and be a bit more different”*. Currently, he doesn't play a sport but he is no stranger to physical activity as he was active during his youth but what lead him back to physical activity/exercise was the stress from trying to complete his bachelors thesis *“Many years ago as a youth I was very active but then I stopped. So when I was writing my bachelor thesis, I decide to use the gym as a way of releasing my stress and it really took off from there”*.

Mr S's biggest influence has been social media. He is driven by other people's result on social media specifically Instagram, *“Instagram I should say”*. *“The before and after pictures that I've seen with other people and how their body change”*. *“because of social media, you know technology and seeing the changes of people before and after pictures inspire me to start. Pictures you know that motivate me even more to say hey. If they can do it, I can do it as well If I need my body to be a specific shape”*. Mr S stated that he has heard of the World Health Organization physical activity guidelines however he was not familiar with it *“I've heard about it before, but I've never really looked into it”*. But after stating the guidelines he felt like he met them, which he replied with an *“I think so”*. Furthermore, Mr S has some factors that deters him from exercising including time constraints as a student and employee *“A few months ago it was school, not having enough time because of assignments and urhm If I have work since I was working part time”*. Additionally, his health plays a mediating factor *“also I would have to rest my body as well so I listen to it. I can't destroy my body”* and he has a medical condition but shows great perseverance *“So am asthmatic and this slows me down. But Growing up I was trained to exercise doing activities such as track and field even though I have asthma and how to control it while doing these activities”*. The covid-19 demotivated Mr S. in exercising and he found his fitness level deteriorating even though he tried to exercise at home *“I'm mostly at home eating and I like try to decide if to exercise at home, but it doesn't give the result I actually want, doing exercise at home it was really demotivating”*.

Results in light of previous research

Physical activity is defined as an bodily movement done by the skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure while exercise is a subset of physical activity that is repetitive, structure and planned with a goal in mind (ACSM, 2018). Physical activity has been recognizes as an important determinant of health and wellbeing. Engaging in regular physical activity perceived many benefits. These includes: physical improvements in the body, mood enhancement and mental health and wellbeing improvements through stress reduction (Pascoe & Parker, 2008; Snedden et al., 20019). Additionally, it reduces the risk of many cardiovascular diseases by improving the cardiovascular system and respiratory fitness (Wilson, et al., 2016).

Generally, people face many barriers to physical activity including Medical condition. Asthma is usually affiliated with physical inactivity and can prevent and hinder individuals from exercising (McLoughlin, et al., 2022). Asthma is a medical condition that affects a person's airway making it difficult for them to breathe (Panagiotou, et al., 2020). This slows the participants down however it was stated that *"I was trained to exercise doing activities such as track and field even though I have asthma and how to control it while doing these activities"*. Numerous research including two randomize control trial by Jaakkola et al., (2019) and Toennesen et al., (2017) and a systematic review by Q et al., (2022) saw significant improvements of asthma control and symptoms due to regular engagement with exercise. Conversely, evidence remains insufficient to assess the precise scope of exercises effectiveness to the quality of life (Heikkinen, et al., 2012). Additionally, University students experience barriers such as time constraints (Güler & Turkmen, 2008). These time constraints due to commitments such as studying and complete coursework in order to be successful therefore this can lead to a sedentary lifestyle (Chaabna, et al., 2020). World health Organization in 2020 declared the outbreak of Covid-19 a pandemic (WHO, 2020) which caused many countries to enter a state of lockdown (Onyeaka, et al., 2021). The protocol put in place may have encouraged sedentary behaviour and a reduction in physical activity levels (Balanzá-Martínez et al., 2022; O'Donoghue et al., 2016). During this period, research showed there was a reduction in physical activity level due to the lack of motivation (Paulo José Puccinelli, et al., 2021). This study can relate back to Mr S when he stated *"being home like doing exercise at home it was really demotivating"* & *"I found it difficult to stay motivated during the pandemic"*. Due to the many benefits derived from physical activity and exercise, this continues to motivate different population group such as university students. Physical activity and exercise has found to reduce the vulnerability of stress from peak periods of increased

workloads and the use of cognitive functions (Stults-Kolehmainen & Sinha, 2014). Furthermore, university students main motives for regular physical activities were mainly health related reasons (Roberts, et al., 2015) and body image (Sundgot-Borgen, et al., 2022). In addition, Social media has also become an influential platform that motivates persons to exercise and work towards creating the ideal body shape (Dureau et al., 2022; Goodyear et al., 2021).

Relating findings to current behaviour theory

Behaviour theories are a series of psychological frame work that tries to explain the reasons behind human behaviour and use the knowledge to either bring about change or maintain the change (Medlock & Wyatt, 2019). There are many behaviour change theories however only 3 will be focused on for this study. These are; the transtheoretical model, Social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory.

The transtheoretical model is the model that hypothesizes that changes takes place in stages overtime (Prochaska & Prochaska, 2019). It is consist of 5 stages of change. These stages includes precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance. Based on the interview Mr. S is currently the maintenance stage since he exercises regularly and surpasses the recommended guidelines. A study done by Liu et al., (2018) found the transtheoretical model correlates a positive relationship with physical activity for university students however to maintain a good fitness regiment one must have positive attitude and open to change. Another study concluded that males college students are more likely to be in the action or maintenance stage when compared to than females college students (Kim, et al., 2021). In addition, another study produced results showing that students who are at action and maintenance stage shows better self-efficacy (Elezi, et al., 2020). Social cognitive theory is defined as the process of learning in a social environment from the environment, individual experiences or the action of others (H.Schunka & DiBenedetto, 2020). Mr S. became motivated and started working out because of the image from others on social media *“because of social media, you know technology and seeing the changes of people before and after pictures inspire me to start. Pictures you know that motivate me even more to say hey. If they can do it”*. This theory also relates to the self-efficacy theory. Self-efficacy theory is the individual beliefs a person has in themselves about their capabilities to carry out task or achieve

goals. Self-efficacy level influences the outcome of activities (Pekmezi, et al., 2009). The level of self-efficacy usually corresponds to different levels of physical activity (Bauman, et al., 2012) and identifies the need for behaviour change or intervention as it relates to physical activity (Anderson, et al., 2010). This means that Mr S would need to maintain high level of self-efficacy in order to remain motivated continue to exercise. This is seen in the way he perceived himself and his abilities by comparing his capabilities to those fitness personnel on social media . He stated in the interview that *“Pictures you know that motivate me even more to say hey, If they can do it, I can do it as well”*. Self-efficacy has been identified as a key role for effectiveness and continuation of health behaviour maintenance (Pekmezi & Best, 2009). Furthermore, a recent study highlighted high self-efficacy encourage a 5 year continuance of physical activity amongst a group of adults who completed a 6 months walking program (McAuley, 2007).

Approaches to maintain behaviour change

Behaviour change maintenance interventions are essential to ensure individuals achieve temporary behaviour change (Kwasnicka, et al., 2016). Therefore it is imperative that strategies are set in place to avoid any relapse. The individual would need several approaches to maintain their motivation to keep exercising.

Based on the transtheoretical model Mr S is at the maintenance stage. Persons at this stage are more confident and are less likely to have a relapse. While this may be the case it is still possible for them to have a relapse.

One approach that can be used is for them is an informational approach which is also known as an educational approach. This is used to help maintain the behaviour change for regular exercising by provide further or specific information on exercising (Kahn, et al., 2002). Additionally, because Mr S already uses social media as a tool and YouTube as a means of learning how to properly do the exercises, he will be better equipped with knowledge which will motivate him more to do more and other type of exercises. Another example to this approach is for Mr S to receive feedback on their performance from others who are more experience in the area. This can enhance the self-efficacy levels in an individual and help to stay motivated (Ashford, et al., 2010). And also remind Mr S what lead them to exercise.

Another approach that can be use to ensure the continuance of this behaviour is a social support approach. Mr S. already uses social media as a means of motivation but having a social media

group where he can relate with others or the group can set goals together or give encouragement would increase his self-efficacy levels and maintain his motivation. In addition to the social media group, the social support approach also includes families. Mr S mentioned encouraging his brother to do the same. He explained “ *I try to persuade my brother to join me since he says that he can see my result. So maybe we can compete when he starts*”. Having the social support from family and friends while doing physical activity encourages a continuation in this behaviour (Larsen, et al., 2014).

Moreover, an individual adapted approach where Mr S. finds alternatives to different workouts so that he doesn't get tired of them and to have tailored workout plan by a trainer. Additionally, a change in scenery including going outdoors in a natural environment to exercise will keep him fresh and motivated. A systematic review conducted by Marini et al., (2022) found that exercising outdoors not only improves one mental health but it keeps them motivated to continue to exercise in the natural environment. Therefore, if Mr S changes his exercise environment from time to time he will receive a well-rounded benefits.

Present ideas for future research in this area

There are numerous studies that provides the effectiveness of using physical activity/exercise as a means of intervention for adults with asthma. However studies presented should be of higher quality, longer duration that includes a follow up after a number of years and of larger scales to determine the right intervention needed depending on the severity of the chronic condition. Additionally, research is lacking on approaches that ensures physical activity are maintained. There is a need for more research on approaches that keeps persons who is at the maintenance stage of the Transtheoretical model motivated and prevents them from relapsing. There are lots of research on the previous stages of the transtheoretical model but not enough on the final stage.

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Appendix

Interview transcript

Interviewer: Good afternoon. Thanks again for agreeing to participate in this interview for my research assignment. The interview contains several parts which will discuss your motives and barriers to physical activity and exercise and the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. The results from this study may be published however all the information you provide is completely confidential and your name will not be lined to your responses. When writing up this study I may select quotes from the interview to illustrate important points but your identity will remain anonymous. To ensure all responses are correct, complete and accurate this interview will be recorded.

As a participant you have rights. Therefore if you feel uncomfortable about answering any of the questions feel free to decline to answer, you can answer with a “no comment “and I would move on to the next question or ask for the interview to stop.

Prior to this interview, you would have completed and return the ethics form.

Before we start this interview do you have any question?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. Let us proceed. Do you take part in any form of physical activity or exercise?

Interviewee: Yes. I exercise

Interviewer: OK, and what is your main reason for exercising?

Interviewee: To be abit more healthy by receiving all the health benefits such as a healthy CV system. Urhm. To release stress from school and work. For better physique: develop muscles, to shape my body and be a bit more different, I should say. I enjoy doing it.

Interviewer: OK, good and how did you get into exercise?

Interviewee: Many years ago as a youth I was very active but then I stopped. So when I was writing my bachelor thesis, I decide to use the gym as a way of releasing my stress and it really took off from there.

Interviewer: OK, So what motivates you to exercise?

Interviewee: Actually. Instagram I should say. Social media generally

Interviewer: OK, what about social media- instagram that motivates you to exercise?

Interviewee: The before and after pictures that I've seen with other people and how their body change. And the way how it discipline them, I should say.

Interviewer: Okay, good. And when you say exercise, what do you do?

Interviewee: I mostly do a full body workout I should say. I work on my arms, my legs and my core like ABS and stuff. So I do, um like some twisting dumb curls. Dumbbell curls for my arm for my bicep and tricep and stuff. Ohh incline bicep curls and the stuff for my hands and then I do front squats for my legs. Um, yeah. Just to name a few exercise that that I do.

Interviewer: Okay, and are you aware that there is a World Health Organisation recommended guidelines regarding physical activity?

Interviewee: I've heard about it before, but I've never really looked into it.

Interviewer: OK, so um, I'm just gonna tell you what they are. WHO recommended 150 – 300 minutes of moderate intensity or 75-150 minutes of vigorous intensity of physical activity and 2 days or more of strength training per week.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Yeah, so do you think you meet these recommended guidelines?

Interviewee: I think so because I spent close to like 45 minutes to an hour a day doing fitness.

Interviewer: How many days per week?

Interviewee: Sometimes 5 days, six days, four days. It depends.

Interviewer: Okay, and what intensity would you say you do? Is a moderate or vigorous intensity?

Interviewee: It depend on the type of activity and what. What I plan to do on that day.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I'll say sometimes I do vigorous and other times I do it moderately.

Interviewer: What feeling do you get before, during and after exercise?

Interviewee: The feeling before. Motivated like. Hyped I should say just to prepare my body so that I can get into the vocal mood after exercising.

Interviewer: and During?

Interviewee: During exercise. I feel motivated. I feel energetic, you know. And with this I'm feeling I drive it into my exercise.

Interviewer: Okay and after?

Interviewee: After I feel content, you know I feel like OK I have done something. I have accomplished what I wanted to work on that day. If it. If it's on the leg day, you know.

Interviewer: Okay, and why have you continued exercising?

Interviewee: The results that I'm seeing. You know it makes me want to go more and more and they will all. My body is changing, you know. It motivates me, I motivate myself as well and the changes of my body also motivates me.

Interviewer: Alright. Do you have any specific goals that you want to achieve while you exercise?

Interviewee: Yes, I'm looking for the specific figure body figure. Not too big but.

Interviewer: Ohh. When you see it you will know?

Interviewee: yes with just enough muscle, yes.

Interviewer: Do you set specific goals each time you exercise?

Interviewee: Oh yes I do. I have like a plan like on my phone, each day I wrote down what I want to do.

Interviewer: Okay, and has the development in technology encourage you to exercise. If yes, how?

Interviewee: I should say social media is a big influence. I only looked at YouTube. Well, Yes, I use it, but I I looked at it to see how the exercises are being done. Just like in the correct way, without injuring myself because I don't have a personal coach uhh trainer.

Interviewer: okay. And what is your preference when exercising. Is it group or individually.

Interviewee: I prefer individual.

Interviewer: Why?

Interviewee: Because individual you're more focused and you're more concentrated. With group it's a little distracting. Individually I'm more confident.

Interviewer: Okay. And what is your preferred location to exercise? Is it gym, park or on the road?

Interviewee: Gym, because it has all the equipment there.

Interviewer: Okay, do you take part in playing any sports?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: okay. And what deters you from exercising?

Interviewee: Healthwise? So am asthmatic and this slows me down. But Growing up I was trained to exercise doing activities such as track and field even though I have asthma and how to control it while doing these activities. A few months ago it was school, not having enough time because of assignments and urhm If I have work since I was working part time. Also I would have to rest my body as well so I listen to it. I can't destroy my body.

Interviewer: Does the weather affect you exercising such as weather or seasons? Do you find that you exercise more depending on the season?

Interviewee: I think it's a balance, the Weather doesn't affect me because everything is done inside the gym.

Interviewer: OK. And in the past, what was your relationship like with exercise?

Interviewee: Five years ago, back then, I should say, I wasn't really interested in exercising like to do gym fitness and stuff

ff.

As I said before, because of social media, you know technology and seeing the changes of people before and after pictures inspire me to start. Pictures you know that motivate me even more to say hey. If they can do it, I can do it as well If I need my body to be a specific shape

Interviewer: Okay, and did the pandemic affect your ability to exercise?

Interviewee: Definitely. Because, um. One minute like.

Business and gym open for one month and then for the other month, They're close. They close for six months and it's like I don't have the equipment at home, everything is At the gym. And then at some point I feel as though my body, The work that you've put in is all gone because I'm mostly at home eating and I like try to decide if to exercise at home, but it doesn't give the result I actually want.

Interviewer: Okay. And how often did you exercise then?

Interviewee: Less. say twice. I had ended up on ordered a few equipment but being home like doing exercise at home it was really demotivating, you know?

Interviewer: Okay, when you said twice, do you mean like you literally only exercise twice during the pandemic or twice a week?

Interviewee: Like twice a week.

Interviewer: okay. So would you say you are more active before, during the pandemic or after the pandemic?

Interviewee: before and after the pandemic. I found it difficult to stay motivated during the pandemic.

Interviewer: Okay, and are your friends and family physically active?

Interviewee: They are also active, but that not that much I should say. But I try to persuade my brother to join me since he says that he can see my result. So maybe we can compete when he starts.

Interviewer: Okay, and does this affect your ability to exercise in any form?

Interviewee: No. It motivates me more and I even tried to encourage my brother to be more physical active.

Interviewer: Okay. We have reach to the end of the interview, thank you for participating. Before we end the interview I would like to check with you the following:

Did you have an opportunity to discuss everything you wanted to?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Did you feel mislead or felt liked I've influenced your answers in any way?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay then. Once again thank you.