



Gen Z's Involvement in Sports Activities Is a Positive Trend

Muksan Dali¹, Fadlun ch. Anwar¹, Gusti Randi Pakaya¹, Lina Putri Susanti¹, Meri Haryani⁵

¹Fakultas Olahraga dan Keolahragaan, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the involvement of students in sports activities at the Sports Coaching Education Study Program at Gorontalo State University and the factors that influence it. Generation Z in sports activities, the factors that influence it, and how sports become part of their lifestyle amidst academic, social, and technology pressures. The method used was a quantitative survey with a purposive sampling technique, involving 150 active students. The results showed that the majority of students participate in flexible sports such as running and gym training, influenced by social media and easy access to sports facilities. However, the main challenges faced are limited time due to academic workloads and a sedentary lifestyle. In conclusion, a technology-based approach and community support are needed to increase the consistency of sports participation among students. Requiring technology-based approaches and community support to increase the consistency of their participation in sports.

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Penulis Korespondensi:

Safri Irawan,

Fakultas Olahraga dan Keolahragaan, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

Email: safriirawan@ung.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z's involvement in sports activities has shown a positive trend in recent years. As an age group born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, Generation Z grew up in an era of rapidly developing digital technology, which influences almost all aspects of their lives, including their lifestyle and exercise habits. The desire to maintain physical and mental health, as well as to enhance self-image, makes exercise an integral part of their lives. However, along with the increase in participation in sports, challenges arise that hinder its consistency. This study aims to explore more deeply the involvement of Generation Z in sports activities, the factors that influence it, and how sports become part of their lifestyle amidst academic, social, and technology pressures.

Globally, exercise is no longer viewed solely as a physical activity to maintain physical fitness, but also as a means to improve mental health and strengthen psychological well-being. Previous studies have shown that exercise has a significant impact on reducing stress, improving mood, and increasing self-confidence, especially among the younger generation. For example, research by Tyas & Jannah (2024) highlights how the influence of social media can increase interest in sports among Generation Z by utilizing digital platforms as a means of promotion and interaction between sports communities. Furthermore, engaging in physical activity can provide significant mental health benefits for Generation Z, such as reducing the anxiety and depression that many of them experience.

However, despite numerous studies demonstrating the benefits of exercise for Generation Z, challenges remain. One of the biggest challenges is maintaining consistent exercise, given the high academic pressures and the dominance of technology in daily life. Many Generation Z members are trapped in a sedentary lifestyle that

poses health risks, such as obesity and poor posture, due to excessive gadget use. Furthermore, limited access to adequate exercise facilities and limited time due to academic commitments are also significant barriers that reduce their motivation to exercise regularly.

This study aims to address this issue by further investigating how Generation Z adapts to sports activities in this digital era. This article will highlight the important roles of technology, social media, and sports communities in increasing their participation. Furthermore, this study will discuss the various types of sports chosen by Generation Z, most of which are easily accessible and flexible, such as running, yoga, and gym training. Furthermore, this study will identify factors that can increase their engagement in sports, as well as intervention strategies needed to maintain and even expand their participation.

The novelty of this study lies in its deeper understanding of Generation Z's sports participation patterns, particularly in Indonesia, which have not been widely explored in the scientific literature. Using quantitative methods through a survey of Generation Z college students, this study seeks to delve deeper into their exercise habits, preferences, and the barriers they face in actively engaging in physical activity. The findings of this study are expected to provide important contributions in designing more effective policies and intervention programs to increase Generation Z's involvement in sports and support a more productive and sustainable healthy lifestyle.

Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide useful recommendations for educational institutions, the government, and the community in designing sports programs that are more innovative and in accordance with the needs of Generation Z. Thus, sports are not only a tool to achieve physical fitness, but also an important means in shaping the character and mental well-being of the younger generation.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design with a descriptive approach. This method was chosen to provide a clear picture of the participation of students in the Sports Coaching Education Study Program at Gorontalo State University in sports activities and the factors that influence it. This study was conducted on students enrolled in the program, graduating class of 2025.

The population in this study was all students in the Sports Coaching Education Study Program at Gorontalo State University, consisting of various classes. The research sample was selected using a total sampling technique, with the criteria being students who actively attend lectures in the study program and are regularly involved in sports activities. The total respondents involved in this study were 150 students, consisting of 90 male students and 15 female students.

Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The questionnaires were designed to identify the frequency, type of exercise, and duration of physical activity undertaken by students. The instruments were tested for validity and reliability before distribution. The questionnaires were distributed online using the Google Forms platform to facilitate respondents' completion and return of data.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to describe the characteristics of respondents, the distribution of types of exercise they engage in, and the factors influencing their participation in physical activity. The data obtained were also compared with guidelines established by the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding recommended levels of physical activity for maintaining physical and mental health.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to explore Generation Z's involvement in sports activities and the various factors that influence it. Based on the results of a survey of 105 students in the Sports Coaching Education Department of Gorontalo State University, it was found that the majority of Gen Z students participate in physical activities regularly, although their level of involvement in sports can be categorized as moderate. The activities most often chosen by them are flexible sports, such as running, gym training, and yoga. This finding indicates that Generation Z is more likely to choose types of sports that do not require special facilities and can be done independently, which is in accordance with the findings of (Devi, 2023) who showed a preference for flexible sports among Gen Z.

Factors Influencing Sports Involvement

One of the main factors driving Gen Z's involvement in exercise is the influence of social media. Most respondents reported being motivated to exercise after viewing fitness content shared by influencers on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. (Bencsik et al., 2019) showed that social media influences exercise habits in younger generations, and this influence is more pronounced among Gen Z, who are actively connected to

various digital platforms. Social media serves not only as a place to share experiences but also as a primary source of motivation for Gen Z to start and maintain exercise habits.

Furthermore, easy access to sports facilities also plays a significant role in Gen Z's decision to participate in sports. Most respondents chose sports that don't require access to expensive facilities or are far from their homes. This is consistent with research by (Al'Farisi, 2025) , which states that Gen Z prefers practical and accessible sports, such as running and home training, over those that require specialized equipment or expensive facilities.

However, while many Gen Zers are involved in sports, there are significant challenges regarding consistent participation. One of the biggest barriers is time constraints caused by high academic demands. Most students report that being busy with coursework often prevents them from exercising. This finding is supported by (Dąbrowski et al., 2025) , which shows that academic pressure is a major factor reducing sports participation rates among young people. Time spent studying and preparing for exams leads to limited time for exercise.

Sedentary Lifestyle and Technology

In addition to academic pressure, excessive gadget use is a major obstacle for many Gen Z. Respondents in this study revealed that the tendency to spend hours in front of digital screens, whether for entertainment or social media, makes them less likely to be physically active. This is in line with research by (Gothilander et al., 2025) . (Bencsik et al., 2019) , which shows that dependence on digital devices leads to a sedentary lifestyle , which increases the risk of various health problems, such as obesity and postural disorders.

To overcome this obstacle, several fitness apps have begun to emerge as a solution for Gen Z. The use of apps like Strava and Fitbit, which can track exercise progress, is one way to overcome a sedentary lifestyle . Research by (Wang, Wang, and Deng 2024) (Piepiora et al., 2024) showed that fitness apps can help Gen Z monitor their physical activity and provide incentives to continue exercising, even if time is limited. This also demonstrates that technology can be used to support a healthy lifestyle, although it often acts as a barrier.

The Role of the Sports Community in Maintaining Consistency

The role of the sports community has also proven crucial in maintaining consistent exercise among Gen Z. Many respondents felt more motivated to exercise when they did it with friends or in a group. This supports the findings of (Syahvira, 2025). (Zawadk et al., 2024) , which showed that involvement in a sports community can increase enthusiasm for exercise and reduce feelings of anxiety or isolation. Furthermore, findings from (Ye 2025) (Adam et al., 2025) showed that social phenomena such as “ flexing ” (showing off physical achievements on social media) have become part of Gen Z's lifestyle, encouraging them to be more active in exercising so they can show their progress to their friends or followers.

Online communities, especially those based on sports, play a crucial role in motivating Gen Z. Platforms like YouTube and Instagram allow Gen Z to share their experiences and achievements in sports, often serving as a source of motivation for them to stay active. This finding is supported by research by (Jiao et al., 2023) , which shows that digital platforms provide Gen Z with easy access to health and fitness information, which in turn increases their desire to exercise.

Recommendations for Increasing Gen Z Sports Engagement

Based on these findings, it is recommended that exercise programs engaging Gen Z should be technology-based and easily accessible. These programs can utilize fitness apps, social media, and online communities to increase motivation and exercise consistency. For example, fitness apps integrated with social media platforms can give Gen Z the opportunity to share their progress and participate in fitness challenges with their friends (Biber et al., 2013). (Azimi Nojاده, Abdavi, and Yurtsizoğlu 2025).

Furthermore, educational institutions and governments need to provide more affordable and accessible sports facilities for all students, so that Gen Z can easily participate in physical activities that support a healthy lifestyle. Findings from (Julianti, Mulyana, and Widyaningsih 2024) suggest that policies supporting Gen Z's physical engagement should include improved access to sports facilities, both on campus and in the community.

CONCLUSION

Based on research findings, Generation Z's involvement in sports activities shows a positive trend, driven by the influence of social media, easy access to sports facilities, and motivation to maintain physical and mental health, although challenges such as limited time and a sedentary lifestyle remain major barriers, requiring technology-based approaches and community support to increase the consistency of their participation in sports.

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