

Perceived Effects, Barriers, and Facilitators of Zumba Among Senior Citizens in Tacloban City

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Abstract

This study explores the perceived effects, barriers, and facilitators of Zumba participation among senior citizens in Tacloban City, Leyte. Given physical inactivity posing a major global health risk, particularly among aging populations, Zumba presents a community-based, accessible exercise program that can support both physical and psychosocial well-being. Guided by the Ecological Theory of Perception and Action and the Expectancy-Value Theory, this study investigates how environmental factors and individual motivations shape the experiences of senior citizens aged 60–65 who are actively engaged in Zumba. Fifteen participants were purposely selected from barangays 35, 109, and 109-A. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews following a standardized guide and analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis revealed five main themes: (1) Motivators of Zumba participation, (2) Functional improvements of Zumba, (3) Holistic benefits of Zumba, (4) Barriers to Zumba Participation, and (5) Facilitators of Zumba Participation. Findings indicate that consistent Zumba participation, which is increased by motivation and supported by enabling environments, is perceived to improve daily functioning, promote emotional resilience, and foster social connectedness. Despite existing barriers to Zumba participation, facilitators, which also increase likelihood of consistent zumba participation such as supportive environments and home-based modifications encourage sustained engagement. This study concludes that Zumba is perceived by most senior citizens to enhance mobility, balance, and overall quality of life in later years, while emphasizing the need for further research with broader populations and improved data collection strategies.

Keywords: Zumba, Perceived Zumba Effects Barriers, Tacloban City

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The World Health Organization declared that physical inactivity is the fourth-leading risk factor for death on the worldwide scale, coming after high blood pressure, smoking, and elevated blood glucose. Regular physical activity reduces these risks and significantly contributes to preventing cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity, and even certain cancers, improving both lifespan and quality of life. Physical activity sustains muscle mass, mobility, and functional ability in senior citizens—all so crucial for independence,

fall, and fracture prevention. Exercise, in addition, helps reduce anxiety and depression, and even supports cognitive function by promoting neuroplasticity and improving blood circulation in the brain. (Physical therapy for Health, 1970). Given these benefits, community-based exercise programs such as Zumba can potentially play a critical role in keeping the aging population engaged and involved.

Zumba is a fitness program that originated in Colombia and combines aerobic exercise with Latin dance moves. Zumba has become the most popular dance fitness program because it feels less like working out than traditional workouts (Blackler et al., 2019). It is a beneficial form of aerobic exercise, burning more calories and increasing heart rates more than walking for the same duration (Krause et al., 2022). This program not only provides structured exercise but also fosters a sense of belonging and camaraderie among participants. Social engagement is crucial for improving health outcomes in senior citizens, as it can combat feelings of isolation and depression, which are common in these populations (Seo & Chan, 2017). This indicates that group exercise programs, such as Zumba, promote not only physical fitness but also psychological well-being by fostering connections among participants.

As people age, they are susceptible to an inevitable decline in their mobility and balance. The limitations in visual acuity, diminution of proprioceptive awareness, and slowness in the center of mass responses are examples of results that compromise and combine static and movement, spatial orientation, and dynamic balance accuracy (Lockhart et al., 2010), which increases the risk of falls. Due to this functional decline, they are more prone to experience and sustain injuries. Despite the popularity of Zumba, research on its impact on senior citizens is limited (Parial et al., 2022). Most studies focus on its cardiovascular and metabolic benefits, with limited exploration of its effects on balance, mobility, and fall prevention. For instance, research has demonstrated that Zumba Gold, a modified version designed for senior citizens, meets exercise intensity guidelines for improving cardiorespiratory fitness (Dalleck et al., 2017). However, studies exploring how senior citizens perceive the effects of Zumba are understudied. This study seeks to address this research gap by exploring the perceived effects, barriers, and facilitators among senior citizens in Tacloban City.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the post-positivist paradigm, which acknowledges that reality is socially constructed and shaped by individual experiences (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). It utilizes a qualitative approach as it enables senior citizens to share their personal interpretations of how Zumba affects their physical well-being (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

To further support this study, two theoretical perspectives are utilized. First, the Ecological Theory of Perception and Action, proposed by James J. Gibson (1979), which posits that movement and perception are interdependent and influenced by the environment. In the context of Zumba, senior citizens engage with various environmental elements such as music, social interactions, and physical space. These interactions shape their awareness of body movement, balance, and mobility. Their perceived improvements are influenced by how they interpret and respond to these affordances within their surroundings.

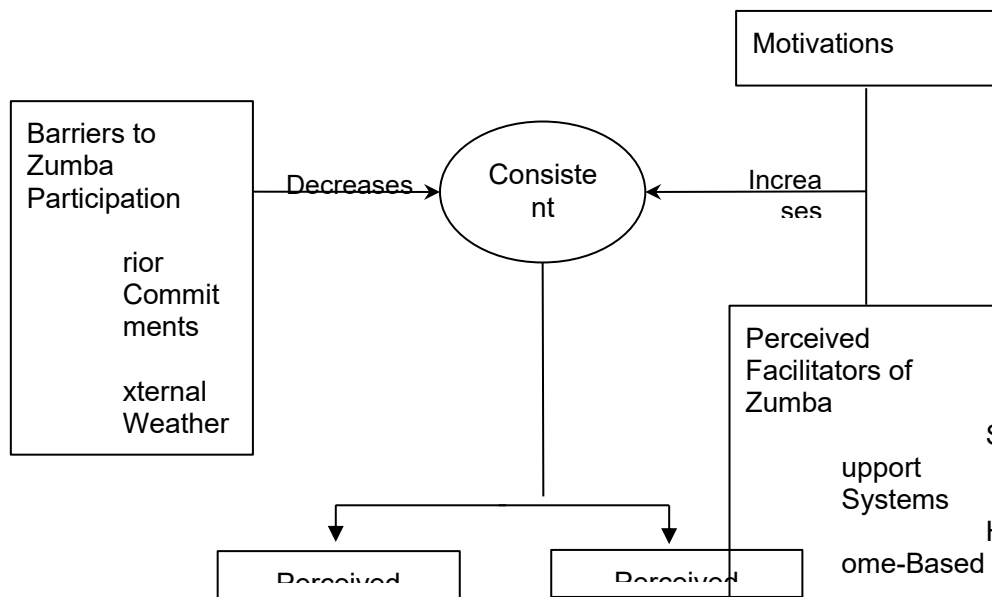
The study also draws on the Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), which explains that an individual's motivation to perform a behavior is determined by their expectation of success and how much they value the outcome. In this case, the decision of senior citizens to participate in Zumba is shaped by their confidence in being able to perform the activity, and their beliefs about its benefits. Barriers for performing activities may reduce their expectancy for success, while facilitators and personal motivations increase the perceived value of participation.

By combining these two theories, the study aims to understand how both environmental factors and individual beliefs influence consistent Zumba participation, which ultimately leads to perceived functional improvements and holistic benefits among senior citizens.

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework illustrates the dynamic interplay between individual and environmental factors that influence consistent Zumba participation among senior citizens, as guided by the two theoretical perspectives: Ecological Theory of Perception and Action and the Expectancy-Value Theory. Motivations reflect the internal values and expected benefits of participation, which is rooted in the Expectancy-Value Theory, while perceived facilitators represent the environmental factors that enhance accessibility, highlighting environmental affordances in the Ecological Theory. The outcome of consistent Zumba participation are perceived functional improvements and perceived holistic benefits. These perceived effects of Zumba may be hindered by certain barriers such as external weather conditions and prior commitments.. However, as stated earlier, with perceived facilitators and sustained motivation, the likelihood to participate in Zumba increases, along with its perceived effects.

Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Conceptual Framework



Statement of the Problem

1. Determine the demographic profile of the participants in terms of:
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Occupation
 - d. Frequency of Zumba (Per Week)
 - e. Years of Participating in Zumba
2. What are the perspectives of senior citizens toward Zumba?
3. What perceived holistic benefits do senior citizens experience from participating in Zumba?
4. What perceived barriers hinder senior citizens from participating in Zumba?
5. What perceived strategies can be implemented to facilitate the consistent participation of senior citizens in Zumba?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study benefit the participants, healthcare providers, students, and future researchers in the following ways:

1. Current Zumba participants can gain insights into how their involvement in Zumba impacts their mobility and balance.
2. Healthcare professionals, particularly those in physical therapy, can use the findings to inform their recommendations for patients seeking to improve mobility and balance.
3. Students, particularly those studying physical education, health sciences, or physical therapy, can use this study to gain a better understanding of how specific forms of exercise, like Zumba, impacts physical functions such as mobility and balance.
4. Future researchers may use this study as a reference for exploring the benefits of Zumba on physical health.

Scope and Delimitations

This study aimed to explore the perspectives of senior citizens toward Zumba and to identify its perceived effects, barriers, and facilitators. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, focusing solely on individuals who are actively engaged in Zumba. Those with specific health conditions were excluded from the study. Interviews were the primary data collection method, each conducted within a 20-30 minute timeframe to limit the duration of the data collection process.

To ensure feasibility, the study was limited to Zumba groups in barangays 35, 109, and 109-A of Tacloban City, Leyte. As a result, the findings may not represent all senior citizens in Tacloban City and it may be context-specific to these specific barangays.

Definition of Terms

Zumba Exercise. A dance-based group fitness program that combines Latin and international music with aerobic exercise routines. In this study, it refers specifically to sessions participated in by senior citizens in Tacloban City as a form of physical activity.

Perceived Effects. The subjective experiences and reported outcomes of Zumba participation as understood and felt by the senior citizens. These may include physical, emotional, psychological, or social changes.

Barriers. The challenges or obstacles that prevent or hinder senior citizens from participating in Zumba activities. These may include physical limitations, lack of time, health conditions, or environmental factors.

Facilitators. The factors that encourage or support the participation of senior citizens in Zumba. These can include social support, accessibility of venues, motivation, or availability of trained instructors.

Senior Citizens. Individuals who are within the age range of 60 to 65. Most countries have recognized 60-65 as the retirement age and described it as the start of old age. This population often experiences age-related physical decline, including reduced balance and mobility. These changes make them a relevant population for exploring the perceived effects, barriers, and facilitators of physical activities like Zumba, which aim to support functional health and well-being in later life.

Tacloban City. A highly urbanized city in the Philippines, serving as the geographical location where the study is conducted.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter expounds on literature that explores the role of physical activity in aging, the barriers to exe-

ercise, and the benefits of Zumba, including its impact on body composition, balance, mobility, and mental well-being. Additionally, it highlights Zumba's role in joint health, social engagement, and sustainability as an exercise intervention, concluding with the need for further research on its long-term effects.

The Role of Physical Activity in Health and Aging

Regular physical activity is essential for maintaining overall health and functional independence, especially among senior citizens. The World Health Organization has identified physical inactivity as one of the leading risk factors for mortality, contributing to conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity, and even certain cancers. Engaging in moderate physical activities, such as exercise and dance, can significantly improve health outcomes by sustaining muscle mass, enhancing mobility, and preventing falls and fractures (Gardner MM, et al., 2000). Furthermore, physical activity plays a crucial role in cognitive health by improving neuroplasticity and increasing blood circulation to the brain. Day et al. (2002) also state that exercise can improve balance, mobility, reaction time, and bone mineral density in senior citizens, particularly postmenopausal women and individuals aged 70 and over. Regular dancing can prolong healthy aging, maintain or even improve physical function, and thus enhance quality of life (Liu et al., 2020).

Physical Activity Levels and Barriers Among Senior Citizens

Despite the well-documented benefits of physical activity, many senior citizens remain sedentary. A study by Dela Cruz et al. (2016) investigated physical activity levels among senior citizens in a rural Philippine community. Data collected from three barangays in Pangil Municipality, Laguna province, revealed that while 75% of senior citizens were physically active, only 25% engaged in vigorous activities. Women were found to be more inactive than men, with 66% classified as insufficiently active. The study also identified several barriers to physical activity, including lack of time, social influence, low energy levels, limited willpower, and fear of injury. The 60–65 age range is widely recognized as the onset of old age and typical retirement, during which individuals often experience physical decline such as reduced balance and mobility (Naito, Ohta, & Sano, 2021). Focusing on this group allows the study to explore how Zumba can support physical function during early aging.

Zumba as an Effective Physical Activity for Senior Citizens

Zumba, a dance-based fitness program, has been widely recognized for its effectiveness in improving body composition, balance, and overall fitness. Ljubojevic et al. (2022) conducted an eight-week Zumba intervention in inactive women aged 35 to 45 and found significant improvements in body composition, including reductions in body mass and fat, as well as enhanced respiratory functions. These benefits were attributed to the dynamic and varied nature of Zumba, which promotes motor coordination and balance. Similarly, Rossmeissl et al. (2016) and Cugusi et al. (2015) found that Zumba training over eight weeks significantly reduced body fat while increasing muscle mass. The rhythmic and dance-based nature of Zumba facilitates weight shifting and coordination, which further supports its role in enhancing motor adaptability and balance (Bastug, 2018; Willis et al., 2012). According to Liu, Shen, and Tsai (2020), dance interventions were found to significantly improve overall physical function performance in healthy older adults. Their meta-analysis reinforces findings from earlier individual studies, concluding that properly organized dance programs can serve as both safe and effective physical activity options for older adults' daily routines.

Impact of Zumba on Balance and Mobility

Balance and mobility naturally decline with age due to diminished proprioceptive awareness, reduced visual acuity, and delayed postural responses. However, studies suggest that dance-based interventions

such as Zumba can counteract these effects. A cross-sectional study by Kattenstroth et al. (2011) found that senior citizens who participated in regular dance exercises exhibited greater flexibility, postural stability, balance, physical reaction time, and cognitive performance compared to non-dancers. Vendramin et al. (2016) also reported that Zumba significantly improves motor function and muscle flexibility. Additionally, a 12-week Zumba program was found to enhance postural balance, lower body strength, and walking speed in postmenopausal women. These benefits may stem from Zumba's influence on neuroplasticity, enabling the brain to adapt structurally to changes that impact motor, cognitive, and sensory functions.

Further supporting the importance of balance in older adulthood, a study by Blodgett et al. (2024) found that better balance performance at age 53 was associated with a decreased risk of recurrent falls at ages 60–64 and 68. Similarly, individuals who demonstrated good balance at age 60–64 were less likely to experience recurrent falls at age 68.

A systematic review by Lu et al. (2024) analyzed 16 studies on dance interventions lasting over four weeks. The majority of findings indicated that dance improved postural control, physical function, and overall quality of life in senior citizens. Compared to conventional therapy, physiotherapy, and aerobic exercise, dance-based interventions showed higher adherence rates, suggesting that participants found them more enjoyable and engaging.

Psychosocial and Emotional Benefits of Zumba

Beyond physical health, Zumba has been linked to psychosocial and emotional well-being. Regular participation in Zumba fosters social engagement, reducing feelings of isolation and enhancing mood. According to Britten et al. (2017), dance exercises with music and movement improvisations contribute to social integration and improve emotional well-being. Furthermore, elements of choreotherapy, which incorporate music and rhythm into movement, have been shown to alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety (Śliwka et al., 2015).

The Harvard Medical School article “Dancing and the Brain” highlights the cognitive benefits of dance, noting that engaging in rhythmic movements activates multiple brain regions responsible for memory, coordination, and creativity. Additionally, dance releases endorphins and reduces cortisol levels, leading to stress relief and improved emotional well-being. Thaut (2011) also found that rhythmic cueing in dance therapy reactivates muscle memory, which may help senior citizens regain lost movement patterns.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A qualitative design was deemed appropriate for this study, as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives on the effects of Zumba on their balance and mobility, while preserving the context and narrative of qualitative work. Descriptive studies describe phenomena rather than explain them (Ayton, 2023). Specifically, this descriptive study was conducted to broaden our comprehension on the perspectives of Tacloban City Zumba participants in their mobility and balance. This approach enabled us to investigate how seniors perceived changes in balance and mobility through Zumba

Research Environment

This research study was conducted in barangays 35, 109, and 109-A of Tacloban City, Leyte. The venues were chosen based on accessibility and their role in hosting Zumba sessions, aiming to provide an ideal setting for observing and collecting data from individuals engaged in Zumba.

Research Subjects

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that all participants met the inclusion criteria and were well-aligned with the study's focus on the perceived effects, barriers, and facilitators of Zumba among older adults. The participants selected were individuals actively engaged in Zumba programs organized by wellness organizations or barangays within the community. This approach helped minimize venue-related costs and ensured that participation did not impose any financial burden. An inclusion-exclusion criteria was established to narrow the research participants.

The participants consisted of 15 senior citizens aged 60-65 years old, residing in Tacloban City, Philippines. The sample size of 12-20 participants is considered adequate to achieve thematic saturation, especially in relatively homogeneous populations in qualitative research (Guest et al., 2005). This number allows for a rich and in-depth exploration of shared experiences, which is essential in capturing meaningful insights aligned with the study's objectives. The selected age range of 60-65 is grounded in both national and international perspectives, which commonly identify this stage as the beginning of old age and the typical retirement age (Naito, Ohta, & Sano, 2021). This makes this age range appropriate for the study since the transition to becoming a "senior citizen" is within this range.

Participants included in the study were either working or non-working individuals who regularly performed Zumba which is defined in this context as attending at least once a week and having completed a minimum of eight weeks of participation. This definition is supported by findings from Rossmessl et al. (2016) and Cugusi et al. (2015), who both observed that consistent Zumba engagement over an eight-week period is sufficient to produce measurable physical and health-related changes in the body. Thus, the eight-week threshold was used to ensure that participants had enough exposure to the activity for potential effects to emerge.

Subjects were excluded from the study if they were under medications, prescription drugs, or other drugs that may alter the participant's responses to the interview.

Research Instrument

A standardized interview guide was utilized for the semi-structured interview to ensure consistency in the data collection process. All participants were asked the same questions and the interviewers were trained to follow a script to minimize variations in the interview process. The interview guide's content was validated by licensed physical therapists. A feedback form was also utilized to ask people familiar with the topic to see if the interview questions were relevant and appropriate to ask to the participants.

The interview guide included questions about the participants' demographic profile. It also included questions about their thoughts and experiences with Zumba. These questions were divided into three categories: Perceived Effects of Zumba on Mobility, Perceived Effects of Zumba on Balance and Additional Perceived Benefits and Challenges, all with the purpose of gathering the participants' perspectives on Zumba and its outcomes. It was asked in the Waray-Waray language to ensure that the participants feel comfortable and open to share their thoughts. The purpose of the translation is to achieve methodological equivalence between the interviewer and interviewee since the standardized guide was written originally in English. This was accurately translated by a licensed professional teacher and validated again in content by the licensed physical therapists.

Data Gathering Procedure

An informed consent was first given to each participant who agreed to be interviewed. In the informed consent, the information about the research and its process were highlighted, along with the rights of the participants to refuse and withdraw from the study at any time. Once the informed consent was signed by

the participants, the consent form was collected and the interview would begin. The interview was recorded using a cellular phone. The interviewer followed the standardized interview guide, where questions about their experiences and perspectives on Zumba were gathered. All participants were asked the same questions and the interviewers followed a script to minimize variations in each interview process. The interview would last for 20-30 minutes and once all interviews with the 15 participants were done, the audio recording was transferred to laptops for transcription. The transcriptions were coded and analyzed through thematic analysis.

Thematic Analysis

This qualitative study will employ thematic analysis, following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006), to explore the perceived effects, barriers, and facilitators of Zumba among senior citizens in Tacloban City. Researchers will begin by familiarizing themselves with the data by listening attentively to the audio recordings of the interviews multiple times to gain a deep understanding of the participants’ experiences. After becoming immersed in the data, researchers will generate initial codes by identifying meaningful and relevant features in the participants’ responses, such as references to health concerns, enhanced functional mobility, support systems, or external weather conditions. These codes will then be grouped to identify recurring patterns and potential themes that address the research objectives. As the analysis progresses, researchers will review and refine both subthemes and main themes to ensure they accurately represent the data. Each theme will be clearly defined and named to reflect its core meaning and relevance to the study. The final step will involve compiling the findings into a coherent narrative, supported by direct quotes from participants, to present a comprehensive account of their lived experiences. This method will provide valuable insights into how Zumba influences the participation, motivation, well-being of senior citizens, as well as the barriers that may hinder their involvement.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in this study included obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant confidentiality, and respecting cultural and personal beliefs regarding research participation. By addressing these ethical elements, the study aimed to uphold research integrity while gaining a comprehensive understanding of how Zumba impacts mobility and balance among senior citizens in Tacloban City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Participant Demographic

Participant No.	Age	Sex	Occupation	Frequency	Years of Participating in Zumba
R1	61 y.o	F	Self-employed	2x a week	7 years
R2	62 y.o	F	Business owner	3-4x a week	3-4 years
R3	60 y.o	F	Self-employed	2x a week	14 years

R4	60 y.o	F	Business owner	Everyday	30 years
R5	61 y.o	F	Housewife	Everyday	15 years
R6	60 y.o	F	Housewife	2x a week	20 years
R7	65 y.o	F	Retired government employee	3x a week	4 years
R8	65 y.o	F	Housewife	2x a week	9 years
R9	64 y.o	F	Housewife	4x a week	2 years
R10	60 y.o	F	Teacher	2x a week	10 years
R11	63 y.o	F	Housewife	3×-4× a week	15years
R12	60 y.o	F	Accountant	3x a week	5 years
R13	62 y.o	F	Housewife	2x a week	8 years
R14	63 y.o	F	Hairdresser	4x a week	20 years
R15	65 y.o	F	Housewife	2x a week	20 years

The thematic analysis resulted in five main themes and thirteen subthemes. The themes listed below reflect the experiences of senior citizens aged 60–65 in Tacloban City who participate in Zumba exercises. They highlight the participants’ motivations for participating in zumba, perceived functional improvements, holistic well-being benefits, challenges faced during participation, and the facilitators that may influence their continued participation. The findings provide nuanced insights into how Zumba contributes to the physical, mental, and social well-being of senior citizens, underscoring its potential as a sustainable and enjoyable form of physical activity in later life. Table 2 summarizes the themes and subthemes identified in the study.

Table 2. Summary of Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Motivators of Zumba Participation	Health Concerns Physical Fitness Goals
Functional Improvements through Zumba	Enhanced Functional Mobility Improved Balance and Posture Increased Stamina and Energy

Holistic Benefits of Zumba	Integrated Health Benefits Relief and Recovery
Barriers to Zumba Participation	Prior Commitments External Weather Conditions
Facilitators of Zumba Participation	Support Systems Home-Based Alternatives

Main Theme 1: Motivators of Zumba Participation

This theme captures the various personal and health related motivations that led senior citizens in Tacloban City to begin participating in Zumba. This theme emerged from recurrent patterns in respondents’ narratives, illustrating the multifaceted nature of motivation. This theme was divided into two interrelated subthemes: Health Concerns and Physical Fitness Goals.

Health Concerns. A recurring reason for why senior citizens in Tacloban City were participating in Zumba was their desire to improve or maintain their health. Many respondents mentioned specific health issues such as diabetes, uric acid levels, or the general decline in their well-being. This prompted them to begin attending zumba sessions.

“...to lessen my sugar..blood sugar. That’s the ano, advice of my diabetologist.” (R9)

“Para an akon health. Kay diabetic baya ako.” (R6)

Some participants broadly stated that they joined Zumba for health purposes;

“Para pan good health. Good health. Pampaupay ang lawas ba.” (R1)

“Para maging maupay tak pamati” (R14)

“Kuan gihapon. For health purposes. For health benefits” (R10)

while others were motivated by witnessing the positive health effects of Zumba in others.

“...napansin namon na an zumba talaga kay napahealthy” (R8)

A few participants were also influenced after observing their peers’ declining health and expressed a desire to prevent the same trajectory. One respondent explained that they were motivated to do Zumba because they did not want to become like their friends who had already developed various health deficiencies.

“Pag nakita ako tak mga sangkay talaga nga mayda mga diperensya, naiisip ko nga diri ko gusto masugad. Namo-motivate ako ngan makadi ako ha zumba.” (R4)

Many senior citizens in Tacloban City joined Zumba primarily to address or prevent health issues such as diabetes, high uric acid, and general physical decline. This motivation reflects the established role of physical activity in managing chronic conditions and promoting functional health in senior citizens (Gardner et al., 2000; Day et al., 2002). Preventive mindset also reveals that for many participants, Zumba was not only a response to existing health issues but a proactive step towards aging well (Liu et al., 2020).

Physical Fitness Goals. In addition to health-related motivations, many participants also saw Zumba as a means to achieve or maintain their physical fitness. This included goals such as weight loss, enhanced mobility, and even meeting job-related physical demands. One participant stated the importance of Zumba in maintaining the physical fitness required for work.

“Maaram kamn na kagawad ako, required ha DILG to have a physical fitness for every brgy.” (R2)

Others plainly stated that their participation was motivated by the desire to be physically fit.

“Para ak maging physically fit” (R3)

“Basi maging physically fit” (R13)

Several participants noted changes in their body weight as a motivating factor for joining Zumba. For example, one participant mentioned that weight gain was a specific concern, and that losing weight was the primary reason for starting Zumba.

“Dumako kasi ako. As in dako. Oh nakita ka tak body build, dagko ano? Diri ak hadto nakakalingkod hin de kwatro. An akon last nga baby kay dida ako nagdako na ba. So dida ko nakuanan nga diri maupay. Diri maupay. Dida ak hito nag start.” (R4)

Another encouraged others to try Zumba, mentioning its benefits in improving the body’s overall condition.

“Oo...mag suggest ako yung mga tao na dire mag Zumba na magtry pag Zumba. Kay para sa ilang lawas maging maupay. Additional ito sa panlawas.” (R1)

Aside from health concerns, many senior participants joined Zumba to improve physical fitness, including weight loss, enhanced mobility, and job-related physical demands. This reflects findings that Zumba effectively improves body composition and aerobic capacity (Ljubojevic et al., 2022; Bullo et al., 2015). Some were motivated by noticeable weight gain, while others simply aimed to stay fit, showing Zumba’s role in promoting physical well-being among senior citizens (Cugusi et al., 2015).

In general, this theme highlights the diverse motivations that drive senior citizens (ages 60-65) in Tacloban City to engage in Zumba, encompassing both health-related concerns and physical fitness goals. Whether prompted by chronic conditions such as diabetes or the desire to maintain an active and fit body, participants viewed Zumba as a practical and accessible strategy for improving their overall well-being. These findings affirm the role of personal health goals and practical fitness needs contribute significantly to the decision to engage in regular physical activity later in life.

Main theme 2: Functional Improvements through Zumba

This theme captures the participants’ experiences of enhanced physical functioning as a result of their regular engagement in Zumba. It includes improvements in their ability to perform daily tasks more efficiently, greater endurance and reduced fatigue during activities, improved movement and flexibility, and better physical stability and body alignment. Collectively, these sub themes reflect how Zumba contributes to the functional capabilities that support independence and overall physical well-being in senior citizens.

Enhanced Functional Mobility. A significant improvement that participants perceived from Zumba is their increased capability to perform daily tasks. Many respondents reported a noticeable difference in their mobility, such as walking and climbing:

“Dako an improvement, naka saka na ako hin bukid mag saka lusad during an holy week” (R2)

“Oo dire naako mahinay, dire na mahubya pagkikiwa” (R5)

“Oo kuan malaksi an pagtrabaho.. Oo pagsaka sa hagdan, malaksi. Malaksi nga tanan. Oo, oo. Hindi kagaya sa una, na wala pa ako mag Zumba, maluya.” (R1)

In one of the interview questions, it was asked whether they had mobility-related difficulties after being a consistent Zumba participant. The common answer that was stated by most participants was none.

“Waray man mas na improved ngani nim pag lihuk” (R11)

Additionally, in the same question that asked about the participants’ mobility, participants stated that after zumba, their bodies feel lighter and it helped them become more flexible.

“Naging flexible ako, mas ma gaan na ang lawas” (R12)

“Magaan la ha lawas [it zumba]” (R13)

This supports Sharma et al. (2017) that states that exercise has been identified as a key factor in stimulating the production of synovial fluid, which lubricates joints and enhances flexibility. Furthermore, it resonates with the findings of Vendramin et al. (2016) and Kattenstroth et al. (2011) who both found that senior citizens who participated in regular dance exercises, such as zumba, exhibited greater flexibility. In general, this sub theme is supported by studies that note that regular physical activity is essential for maintaining overall health and functional independence, especially among senior citizens. It can also be likened to the 12-week Zumba program that reported that walking speed improves in postmenopausal women. This subtheme highlights the role of zumba in preventing functional decline, which in return reduces fall risk and promotes joint health. It also emphasizes the role of exercise which Day et al. (2002) explained as a way to enhance mobility and even balance.

Improved Balance and Posture. Participants consistently reported enhanced balance and posture as key outcomes of their Zumba participation. One shared that they are now able to maintain stability in daily movement:

“...diri ka na madali ma tumba ,na ka lanat ka na” (R11)

Another shared that specifically, during their zumba sessions, there is a portion that enhances their balance. “Oo, after zumba sometimes amon cool down, nakuan kami hin balance kun baga nakaka stand kami in one foot.” (R2)

Apart from being able to maintain one’s balance, having a stable body posture is vital to move essentially and prevent falls. A participant shared their personal story about how zumba improved their slouching posture.

“Before pagstart ko, nagangko kasi ako (Slouching posture) tapos mayda ko an pagkadaraga ko mild scoliosis. Tapos an pag-api ko an zumba baga hin na-improve through exercise.” “Nafeel ko an ak backbone, an akon spine. Baga hin natatadong hiya. Gintry ko la hiya nga exercise” (R10)

These responses illustrate how Zumba exercises have contributed to improved postural alignment and physical stability among participants. The ability to stand on one foot or maintain balance during daily tasks indicates enhanced core strength and coordination, which are both essential for fall prevention in senior citizens (Blodgett et al., 2024). One participant noted that Zumba’s cooldown activities often include balance-focused routines, directly supporting their ability to remain stable. Another emphasized a noticeable correction in posture, especially in relation to a previously slouched stance and mild scoliosis. This suggests that Zumba not only supports physical fitness but also promotes body awareness, posture correction, and musculoskeletal health over time (Blodgett et al., 2024). This relates to Barene & Krustrup’s (2020) study wherein it states that zumba participation among inactive adults led to significant improvements in flexibility, balance, and physical function, helping to counteract stiffness and musculoskeletal discomfort.

Increased Stamina and Energy. Many participants noted feeling more energized throughout the day, less prone to fatigue, and more capable of sustaining activities for a long period of time since they have started Zumba exercises:

“Oo tungod tak nagkiniwa kiwa naeenergize ako asya ito napaaktibo haak throughout the day.” (R3)

“Mas diri na ako madali kapuyon.” (R6)

“Ginkakapoy ako hn waray pa ako nag zumba yana dire na gin kakapoy” (R13)

“...I was able to walk 1 hour along the purok. From 5-6am or 6-7am, depende in the availability of my time.” (R9)

These responses suggest that Zumba contributes to enhanced endurance and vitality, allowing senior citizens to sustain everyday tasks with greater ease. The contrast between pre- and post-Zumba experiences reflects a perceived improvement in stamina and overall energy levels.

Overall, this theme underscores the wide-ranging physical benefits experienced by senior citizens as a result of consistent engagement with Zumba exercises and how zumba supports functional interdependence (Liu et al., 2020). These findings affirm the role of Zumba not only as an aerobic activity but also as a means of promoting ease of movement, endurance, and stability in body posture (Lu et al., 2024). Ultimately, this theme highlights Zumba's potential to delay functional decline, improve quality of life, and sustain active aging among senior citizens.

Main theme 3: Holistic Benefits of Zumba

This theme captures the interconnected benefits that senior citizens in Tacloban City gain through their experience and participation in Zumba. Beyond its role as a physical exercise, Zumba was seen also as a source of integrated health improvement (Gardner MM, et al., 2000; Day et al., 2002), enhanced confidence and social integration (Britten et al., 2017), and relief from pre-existing ailments (Sharma et al., 2017; Freiburger et al., 2020). This finding reflects how Zumba also supports holistic well-being, meaning it positively influences the physical, cognitive, emotional and even psychosocial dimensions of adults' well-being.

Integrated Health Benefits. Participants reported Zumba as something that contributed to multiple aspects of physical health simultaneously. One respondent mentioned improvements in bone health, cardiovascular function, and even cognitive function.

“Oo! Oo kay ang bones. Para sa bones man ito. Paniga...Heart. Cardio man ito, cardio. Sagol man ito, cardio, sa bones, tanan, sa mind” (R1)

““Kuan, iton. Nakabulig iton pag faster hiton mind. Kay sugad ha amon mga edad-edad na, mahinay naman naman mind iton. So pag mag Zumba, nakabulig ito pag workout sa mind. Kusog ang ang catch ba...ang catch up ba sa mind.” (R1)

This indicates a recognition that Zumba is a wide-ranging form of exercise that targets different body systems. Similarly, others highlighted specific outcomes such as better breathing, muscle strength, and reduced fatigue.

“Pag mag zumbahon ka ada imu mga friends nga mag karit, tim pag hinga imu breathing, imu mga muscles, Diri na gin ka kapoy, na taas an pasensya peru mayda iba diri na pasensya” (R11)

This aligns with literature showing that Zumba enhances not only physical outcomes like strength, balance, and respiratory function (Ljubojevic et al., 2022; Cugusi et al., 2015) but also cognitive performance and emotional well-being (Kattenstroth et al., 2011; Britten et al., 2017). These findings affirm Zumba's role in supporting holistic aging and overall wellness.

Relief and Recovery. Zumba was also perceived as instrumental in providing relief from chronic conditions and aiding in physical recovery. Participants with existing health condition discomfort such as uric acid issues or diabetes noted how Zumba helps manage pain and improve physical functioning.

“Para makuan mayda ko kasi uric acid,yana ok naman na na nag zuzumba ako” (R5)

“Dire na gin kakapoy, naupay akon diabetic” (R14)

Several participants also reported lessened body pain such as knee discomfort, and one participant even mentioned that they no longer needed maintenance medication after sustained Zumba participation.

“Oo diri nasakit tak tuhod dayon basta nabaktas” (R8)

“Oo sometimes adton once a week pa ako ag zuzumba danay maul ol akon tuhod pero katapos zumba mawara man. Na experience ko an akon tuhod bagat maluya pero yana makusog kusog na” (R2)

Another report is that the benefits of Zumba appeared to be contingent on consistency. One participant reported that skipping Zumba sessions often lead to return of foot pain suggesting the crucial role of exercise in managing pain conditions.

“kun dire ako nakaka zumba nasakit talaga akon tiyan, natigda la” (R14)

These accounts support findings that Zumba improves joint health, reduces pain, and enhances functional capacity (Sharma et al., 2017; Freiberger et al., 2020). The emphasis on consistency reflects literature highlighting the importance of sustained physical activity for long-term health maintenance in senior citizens (Day et al., 2002).

Confidence from Fitness. The physical improvements resulting from Zumba translated into greater self-confidence among participants. Some attributed their increased confidence to becoming physically fit and healthy, while others linked it to feeling better about themselves overall. This reinforces the notion that bodily changes can positively affect self-image, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, even in older age.

“Amo ito confidence. I feel physically fit. More confidence on myself.” (R9)

“Number 1, nakaimprove ha confidence ngan nagimprove talaga in terms nga nagiging physically fit. Tanan. Psychologically, physically, mentally, emotionally. Tanan” (R10)

“Of course nagiging confident ka” (R12)

Zumba in this sense, was not just about health outcomes but also enabling participants to feel more empowered and secure in their bodies. This aligns with studies showing that Zumba supports self-esteem, self-efficacy, and emotional health by fostering body satisfaction and social engagement (Britten et al., 2017), reinforcing its holistic benefits even in later life.

Emotional and Mental Benefits. Similar to how confidence stems from physical fitness, participants also reported emotional uplift and stress relief as key benefits of Zumba. Many shared that doing Zumba made them happy, less stressed, and more emotionally balanced.

“Yeah. It helps me a lot. Because as of now...I can handle ano, any ano, any situation. Not like before na I’m always depressed. Now I am happy go lucky (laughs).” (R9)

“Tanan tanan. Nagiging maupay akon mood. Nawawara stress.” (R7)

The activity was seen not only as a workout but also as a source of enjoyment, which helps them momentarily forget their problems and connect socially with others.

“Gusto ko la maging active and happy.” (R6)

“...also an excitement to meet with your friends. Nagiging alert ka dire ka gin huhubya” (R2)

This emotional and psychological impact shows that zumba is also a form of mental self-care which can contribute to the overall mental well-being. Many reported improved mood, reduced depression and a greater sense of happiness. These findings align with research showing that Zumba enhances emotional well-being by reducing stress, promoting social engagement, and stimulating endorphin release (Britten et al., 2017; Śliwka et al., 2015; Thaut, 2011), highlighting mental gains alongside the physical aspects. According to Pandit and Rajgaru (2021), participation in Zumba induces a surge of endorphins, promoting a sense of inner joy and well-being, which helps reduce stress levels and enhances overall mental health. It also supports the notion that dance releases endorphins and reduces cortisol levels, leading to stress relief and improved emotional well-being.

Main theme 4: Barriers to Zumba Participation

Despite the positive outcomes associated with Zumba as a group exercise, the study identified barriers

associated with regular participation. Two main sub themes were constructed: Commitment as barriers and External Weather Conditions. Although sometimes these challenges are subtle, they often accumulate over time and can reduce an individual's adherence to a regular fitness routine.

Prior Commitments. Adulthood comes with a growing list of responsibilities, which can limit time available for exercise. A participant shared that if there are things to attend to, it can be a hindrance to her zumba participation:

“Kun may mga ocassionnal dapat atendiran pero kun waray permi mn kami na zumba” (R2)

Another participant shared that on weekdays, it is not possible for them to do zumba since they have children but emphasized that since the group exercises are on weekends, it is not a conflict in time.

“...weekdays kay mayda ko mga anak. Pero saturday, sundays tungod na weekend, diri hiya conflict ha ak oras.” (R10)

External Weather Conditions. External weather conditions were commonly raised by participants as a significant barrier to consistent Zumba attendance. Unfavorable weather, such as strong rains, heat, or even storms, often discouraged individuals from going to class, particularly when the venue was far or required walking or commuting. Poor weather not only affects comfort and safety but can also lead to zumba sessions cancellations, disrupting routine and consistency. One participant shared how bad weather could make it difficult to attend, especially when combined with other commitments.

“oo like weather, mahubya pag kadi ha gym kun makusog it uran ngan kun may mga ocassionnal dapat atendiran pero kun waray permi mn kami na zumba, para ha akon kun dire kaya hit lawas. Pero an iba bisan mahuruhanat sige kay makukuha mn iton.” (R2)

These two sub themes provide further insights to the findings of Dela Cruz et al. (2016) wherein they identified several barriers to physical activity including lack of time. Unstable weather conditions are common in the Philippines such as rainy weather during the dry season and frequent storms and floods. The current weather conditions of the country reflect on the challenges that hinder continued zumba participation. Additionally, prior commitments are unavoidable since most in this age group, ages 60-65, have family and children. Yamasaki et al. (2021) found that participation rates in Zumba were high among senior citizens, particularly those who had completed child-rearing responsibilities and had more time for leisure activities. As such, those who have not yet completed those child-rearing responsibilities, similar to the participant mentioned above, may have difficulty in engaging in zumba regularly. Nevertheless, these barriers can be alleviated through the help of facilitators.

Main theme 5: Facilitators of Zumba Participation

This theme explores the enabling factors that may help support and sustain senior citizens' engagement and participation in Zumba activities. While personal motivation is key to participation, the data also revealed that external support systems and simple accessible alternatives play a huge role in maintaining regular attendance in Zumba. These facilitators help address the practical barriers such as accessibility and need for guided instructions.

Support Systems. Participants emphasized the need for external support to aid their continued zumba participation. One participant suggested the role of barangays in making zumba groups accessible for them to lessen cost and encourage more members to join.

“Sana... sana it amon barangay officials, part of their IRA magsupport hit amon association. Kay syempre kami mga retirees na...I have to minimize other kuan so that I can pay the sobra...100 per day...last 50, because kung guti la kami, na 100 kami...naluluoy kami ha mga kuan. Syempre na travel pa hira, dire

man hira taga didi ha Tacloban V&G....Amo mag financial support it barangay, para di na kami mag binayad (Laughs)....” (R9)

Home-Based Alternatives. However, without financial capability and external support from others, it would be difficult to maintain within a zumba group and continue it on a regular basis. As such, a common alternative done by the participants is practicing zumba at home through the use of technology.

“Ha balay mayda, nag i-stretching ako. Makita nala ak hito ha TV. Ha balay nala ako naglulugaring.” (R4)

“Nagsasayaw sayaw nala ha balay like through video (youtube) or ha tv.” (R7)

“Di ngani ak nakaka-zumba in one week baga mabug-at ha lawas. Pero nagzuzumba ako once na-feel ko na mabug-at akon lawas. Nag-youtube ako once kun gusto ko bisan diri weekends.” (R10)

This theme highlights how external support and accessible alternatives help sustain zumba participation among senior citizens. Participants expressed the need for financial and institutional support, such as assistance from barangays, to reduce costs and encourage attendance. In the absence of such support, many turned to home-based Zumba using YouTube or TV. These facilitators play a key role in helping senior citizens stay active despite barriers. This reflects the need for support systems and home-based alternatives to maintain the activeness and passion of these adults towards zumba to promote healthy behaviours. It has been emphasized by many studies such as Bullo et al. (2015) that Zumba fitness is an effective exercise modality that enhances aerobic capacity and improves body composition. Furthermore, moderate-to-vigorous intensity Zumba training is said to improve cardiovascular fitness, neuromuscular function, body composition (Donath et al., 2014), which is known to decline in ages 60-65.

In synthesis, the five themes revealed a dynamic interplay between motivation, experience, and sustained participation in Zumba among senior citizens in Tacloban City. Health concerns and physical fitness goals served as initial motivators, while observable improvements in mobility, stamina, balance, and overall wellness reinforced continued engagement. Zumba was not only perceived as a physical exercise but also as a holistic health practice, contributing to emotional upliftment and body confidence. However, participants shared that they faced time constraints and environmental barriers that occasionally disrupted attendance. Crucially, although these barriers may hinder continued participation, they can all be lessened by facilitators: community support and access to home-based alternatives. These two facilitators, the highlight of the last theme, wraps the importance of accessibility and sustained encouragement in ensuring that motivation and the benefits will continue all through and maintain within the age group who is at potential decline. In essence, these interconnected themes emphasize that Zumba, when made accessible and supported by the right conditions, plays a vital role in promoting functional independence and quality of life in older adulthood.

SUMMARY

This study revealed five key themes that illustrate the experiences of senior citizens ages 60-65 in Tacloban City who participate in Zumba. First, the Motivators of Zumba Participation highlighted the reasons of senior citizens for participating in Zumba exercises, which were mainly related to health concerns and having physical fitness goals. Second, Functional Improvements through Zumba focused on the physical benefits observed by participants, including improved stamina, mobility, balance, and ability to perform daily tasks. Third, the Holistic Benefits of Zumba emphasized the wider impact of Zumba on participants, mainly on cognition, emotion, and psychological well-being (e.g. increase confidence and relief from health issues). Fourth, the Barriers to Zumba participation explored the hindrances of Zumba participation which were centered on having prior commitments and the external weather conditions. Lastly, the final

theme called Facilitators of Zumba Participation discussed how support systems and accessible alternatives, such as utilizing youtube videos to do home-based works, may help participants maintain their engagement in zumba exercises despite the known barriers.

CONCLUSION

The perspectives of senior citizens towards Zumba centered mainly on the idea that Zumba improves their life. They emphasized that Zumba can help address health concerns and even help them achieve physical fitness goals. Furthermore, they shared that it helps improve daily functioning and provides holistic health benefits, both physical and psychosocial benefits that can improve a person's overall quality of life. Notable answers include walking faster, easing pain from current ailments, and providing happiness and confidence to oneself.

This can be understood through Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), which suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in an activity when they expect to succeed in it and if they value the potential outcomes. In this case, many senior citizens not only believe they could keep up with the activity (expectancy), they also believed and placed high value on the health, emotional, and social benefits of Zumba. Additionally, applying the Ecological Theory of Perception and Action (Gibson, 1979), which states that movement and perception are interdependent and influenced by the environment, senior citizens interact with their surroundings, including music, dance, and a group setting. These environmental interactions can influence their emotional state, such as improved mood, which is one of the reported benefits of Zumba. In turn, this positive effect may shape how they perceive the effectiveness of Zumba in improving their balance and mobility.

However, these perceived positive effects of Zumba can be hindered by barriers such as external weather conditions and prior commitments. As such, there is a need for strategies such as support systems and home-based alternatives to facilitate long-term participation in zumba. These perceived facilitators ensure that Zumba is effective and its benefits will be achieved by senior citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's results, the researchers recommend the following for future studies:

Although the study achieved positive results, the study was conducted in a short period, therefore, future studies should extend the study period.

More participants are recommended with diverse backgrounds. Other researchers can dive into other mediating variables such as gender or socioeconomic status.

Add more Barangays to increase generalizability of results and lessen bias.

Classify Zumba as a specific type of exercise. Although Zumba is widely practiced, further research is needed in order to clearly define the category of exercise Zumba falls under and its specific health benefits that it offers.

Improve on data collection process since there were lapses in interviews (e.g. inability to expound on answer and establish rapport). Additional data collection methods may be added such as getting a wider history on the participants and/or providing other types of self-reports.

By implementing these recommendations, future researchers and the community can strengthen the impact and reach of Zumba programs for senior citizens. This will support not only the enhancement of balance and mobility but also the wider objective of promoting physical independence and improving the overall quality of life for seniors in Tacloban City.

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