

The impact of Covid-19 on the lifestyle of tertiary students in a NZ polytechnic

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Introduction

Background

The Covid-19 pandemic altered people's life dramatically worldwide with major concerns of economic, political, scientific, and public health. The impact on the lifestyle behavior of the young generation was larger than anticipated.

Aim of the study

To understand better about the influence factors on the lifestyle of tertiary students in a NZ polytechnic due to Covid-19 pandemic and the correlations.

Methodology

A questionnaire was administrated online by SurveyMonkey.

Investigation

The impact of Covid-19 on

- **life overall** (from 0: not at all to 5: a lot)
- **study time and the reasons for changing**
- **stress level** (-5: decreased a lot to 0: no change to 5: increased a lot)
- **social activities**
- **sleep time**

To what extent has the Covid-19 pandemic affected your life in general?

0 (not at all) 5 (a lot)



How was your study time changed due to Covid-19? Please select all that apply.

Increased

No change

Needed extension or time off

Changed from full-time to part-time

Changed from part-time to full-time

Reduced by (how many hours a week)

What were the reasons for changing your study time? Please select all that apply.

- More time
- Increased stress (the feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to cope with mental or emotional pressure)
- Financial reasons
- Take part-time job(s) to support family
- Other (please specify)

Investigation (cont.)

The comparison aspects (prior vs during-Covid-19 lockdown)

- **living conditions** (living at home/renting/boardings)
- **eating patterns** (prepared meals/ready-made meals/take aways, # of times per week)
- **choice of food/importance of price, convenience, taste, nutrition value** (from 1: less important to 5: very important)
- **physical activity level** (from 1: very light to 5: very active)

Before the lock-down, what was the main factor that influenced your choice of food? How important is it (from 1: less important to 5: very important)?

	1 (very less important)	2 (less important)	3 (neutral)	4 (important)	5 (very important)
Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convenience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nutrition value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you think the nutrition value is very important, please explain.

During the lock-down, what was the main factor that influenced your choice of food? How important is it (from 1: less important to 5: very important)?

	1 (very less important)	2 (less important)	3 (neutral)	4 (important)	5 (very important)
Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convenience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nutrition value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you think the nutrition value is very important, please explain.

How was your physical activity level changed?

	Very light (Almost no activity at all)	Light (Walking, nonstrenuous cycling or gardening approximately once a week)	Moderate (Regular activity at least once a week e.g. walking, bicycling, or gardening, or walking)	Active (Regular activity more than once a week, e.g. intense walking or bicycling or sports)	Very active (Strenuous activities several times a week)
Before the lock-down	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During the lock-down	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Results

The extent of impact of Covid-19 on students' life in general was **3.8**.

The main reasons, for students who either needed an extension or time-off, or changed to part-time study, were

increased stress level (63%)

financial reasons (16%), and

family responsibilities (14%)

Results

For the comparison aspects (prior vs during-Covid-19 lockdown),

Living conditions (%): living at home (43 vs 55), renting (51 vs 43), boarding (6 vs 2)

Eating patterns (times per week): prepared meals (8 vs 9), ready-made meals (2 vs 2), ordered take-aways (2 vs 1)

Meaningful differences were observed with **physical activity level (3.26 vs 2.50)**; and the importance of **factor that influenced choice of food: price (3.94 vs 3.48), convenience (3.62 vs 3.41), nutrition value (3.65 vs 3.50), taste (3.86 vs 3.96).**

Conclusions

Students were anxious because of fear of infection, lacked physical exercise due to lockdown, and were having trouble in sleeping. Students' lifestyle changed.

The results of the study would **provide useful information** on the impact on daily life of tertiary students in pandemic times.

The research findings would inform health professionals of these influences for appropriate policy decision and public health practice to **promote a healthy lifestyle** during a pandemic.

Thank you!