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**Experiences regarding leisure participation among southern India
university students following the onset of the COVID-19
pandemic: A qualitative study**

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Experiences regarding leisure participation among southern India university students following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study

Abstract

Purpose: Leisure activities are among the university students' occupations which bring about several benefits. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, a vast range of students' leisure activities has been influenced. This study aimed at exploring the students' leisure experience during the pandemic to understand if there were any differences in leisure participation and students' associated feelings and perceptions.

Method: 12 students, aged 19 – 24 years, attending universities in Southern India participated in this qualitative study. The study utilized a semi-structured online interview with an interview guide constructed to capture the understanding of their activities before the pandemic and how they experienced them afterward.

Results: Three themes emerged from the analysis including the students' general understanding of leisure activities and influencing factors, their leisure participation and associated feelings, and the COVID-19 impacts on their leisure.

Conclusion: The study found that university students' leisure participation had changed in the way they perceived the activities and how they engaged in them after the pandemic. Although it was not any new findings, it reinforced the literature on leisure from students' perspectives and also address the role of the occupational therapist in promoting healthy and appropriate leisure routines among university students.

Keywords: leisure activities, leisure experience, university students, COVID-19 pandemic, occupational therapy