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ABSTRACT

Unravelling the Interplay Between Social Support and Recreational Sports Participation Among Academic Staff

Muaz Hamdi Zulkifli¹, Hasmiza Abdul Majeed^{1*}, & Mohammad Adzly Rajli¹

¹Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Negeri Sembilan Branch, Seremban Campus, Negeri Sembilan, MALAYSIA

*Corresponding author: hasmiza@uitm.edu.my

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I. INTRODUCTION

This study explores the link between social support (i.e., family, friends, and significant others) and recreational sports participation among academic staff at UiTM Seremban 3. Research on sports participation has focused on Western countries, and limited attention has been paid to the socio-cultural factors that affect sports engagement in Asian nations like Malaysia (1). Hence, the present study aims to address this gap by identifying social support levels, sports participation duration, and their interrelationship in the Malaysian academic context. Findings will contribute to and aim to inform targeted strategies to improve the wellness and foster a culture of active living among academic staff.

II. METHODS

A quantitative research design was employed to examine social support and recreational sports participation (RSP) among 57 academic staff at UiTM Seremban 3, Negeri Sembilan. Data were collected via an online survey distributed through Google Forms. The present study used the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) [2] to measure the level of social support of the respondents, and the duration of RSP was assessed using the minutes per week respondents participated in RSP [3]. These instruments were used to measure the studied variables among the target population. Data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing descriptive statistics to summarize responses and Spearman correlation to examine relationships between social support and recreational sport participation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Level of Social Support

Academic staff reported a high level of social support, with a mean score near “strongly agree” on the MSPSS scale. Family support ranked highest among sources (6.05 ± 1.18). Variations in perceived support were observed based on age, gender, and faculty, indicating that demographic factors influence the extent and source of support available to staff.

B. Duration of Recreational Sports Participation

Only 40.4% of respondents reported regular engagement in recreational sports. On average, participants spent 125.87 minutes per week in such activities. Demographic factors such as gender and household income appeared to influence participation levels, suggesting that gender aspects and

lifestyle context shape sports activity behavior among academic staff.

B. Relationship Between Social Support and Recreational Sports Participation

A significant negative relationship was identified between social support and the amount of time spent playing recreational sports during the past week ($r = -0.468, p = 0.024, < 0.05$). This indicates that individuals who reported higher levels of social support tended to engage in less recreational sports activity. The correlation is moderate in strength, suggesting a meaningful but not strong relationship. It warrants further investigation to understand why more social support is linked with less recreational sports activity, as this may challenge the common assumptions.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Social support plays a complex role in recreational sports participation among UiTM Seremban 3 academic staff. While overall support levels are high, participation remains less. The significant negative correlation may suggest differing motivational pathways. Context-sensitive strategies are needed to foster inclusive and sustained recreational sports activity within academic environments.

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