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ABSTRACT

Examining the Interplay Between Social Support and Recreational Sports Participation Among University Students

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I. INTRODUCTION

This study explores the factors of social support and participation in recreational sports among university students at UiTM Seremban 3. The recreational sports participation among university students in Malaysia is a pressing issue that may be influenced by a few aspects, such as social barriers. The insufficient social support mechanisms may contribute to the lack of recreational sports participation, as family, peers, and institutional encouragement are critical in fostering consistent engagement in such activities [1]. Hence, the present study aims to address this issue and identify the social support that may relate to recreational sports participation within an academic environment.

II. METHODS

A quantitative research design was employed to examine social support and recreational sports participation (RSP) among 134 full-time UiTM Seremban 3 students. Data were collected via an online survey distributed through Google Forms. Social support was assessed using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) [2], while recreational sports participation was self-reported in weekly minutes [3]. Data were analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics and Spearman correlation applied due to non-normal distribution identified via Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Social Support Level Among University Students

All 134 respondents provided a score for the composite social-support index, yielding a mean of 5.0361 with $SD = 0.57630$ on what is likely a 1-to-7 scale, suggesting that, on average, participants perceive their social support to be solidly above the midpoint. Mean scores are almost identical at 5.0504 for family ($SD = 0.76690$), 5.0075 for friends ($SD = 0.53006$), and 5.0504 for significant other ($SD = 0.72921$), signifying consistently high perceived support across these relationships.

B. Duration of Recreational Sports Participation

The respondents engaged in recreational sports activity for an average of 124 minutes (about 2 hours) over the previous

week, but the large standard deviation of 62.5 minutes and a range stretching from 20 to 480 minutes points to substantial individual differences, with some respondents barely active and a few recorded less participation.

C. Relationship Between Social Support and Recreational Sports Participation

The Spearman's rho correlation analysis indicated a very weak negative correlation ($r = -0.070$), suggesting that higher levels of social support are slightly associated with lower levels of recreational sports participation. However, this relationship was not statistically significant, as evidenced by a p -value of 0.453 ($p > 0.05$). This implies that the observed correlation is not strong enough to conclude the presence of a meaningful association between the two variables in the studied population. Therefore, based on these findings, no significant relationship exists between social support and recreational sports participation among these students.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

These findings suggest that social support may not be a key factor influencing the amount of time students dedicate to participating in sports, at least within this sample. Several limitations may have influenced the outcome, such as both social support and sports participation were self-reported, which could introduce response bias. Future research might benefit from more objective measures of recreational sports activity and an exploration of additional psychosocial or environmental factors.

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