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Relationship Between Social Media Use and Anxiety Among Sports Students

Muhammad Zakwan Zukhri¹, Hasmiza Abdul Majeed^{1*}, Wahidah Tumijan¹, Rozita Abdul Latif¹,
Mohammad Adzly Rajli¹, & Azman Ahmad Tajri¹

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

*Corresponding author: hasmiza@uitm.edu.my

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I. INTRODUCTION

University students appear to have a high prevalence of anxiety, indicating an increased mental health burden in this population. In view of this growing concern, it is crucial to examine its specific effects on vulnerable groups, such as university sports students. Exploratory research has identified that social media can affect student-athletes' mental health [1]. Recognising this situation, the present study aimed to further investigate the interplay between social media use and anxiety among sports students. By identifying levels of social media use and anxiety and examining their relationship, this study provides insights into how social media use is linked with anxiety in this specific population.

II. METHODS

This study used a quantitative correlational research design. The study involved 121 respondents comprising sports students enrolled at UiTM Seremban 3 Campus. Social media use was measured using the Social Media Use Scale (SMUS) [2], while anxiety was assessed using the General Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) [3]. These instruments were used to measure the studied variables among the target population. Data were analysed using SPSS software, with descriptive statistics used to summarise responses and Pearson correlation used to examine the relationship between social media use and anxiety.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall level of social media use was analysed using descriptive statistics. The data analysis showed that the mean score for social media use was 3.87, with a standard deviation of 1.44. This finding indicates considerable variation in usage patterns among students, with some reporting minimal use and others reporting heavy and frequent use. In terms of anxiety, the mean score was 0.90, with a standard deviation of 0.66. Although the mean anxiety score was relatively low, the variability of scores indicates that some students experienced higher anxiety symptoms. This variation highlights the need to identify variables associated with elevated anxiety levels and supports the relevance of examining social media use as a possible contributing factor.

The correlation analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between social media use and anxiety, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .484$ and a significance value of $p < .01$. This finding indicates that higher social media use was associated with higher reported anxiety levels among sports students. The strength of the correlation can be interpreted as moderate, suggesting a meaningful relationship that warrants attention. The moderate correlation suggests that social media use is not the only factor associated with anxiety, but it remains an important factor. Sports students who balance academic demands with training and competition may experience increased anxiety when viewing the social or sporting success of their peers online. In addition, time spent online may reduce rest and recovery time. This situation may contribute to anxiety and emotional exhaustion. Overall, excessive social media use appears to be a risk factor for increased anxiety among sports students.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The current study provides empirical evidence that social media use is strongly linked with anxiety among sports students. The psychological implications of social media use in this group highlight the need to incorporate digital behaviour into student well-being initiatives. The findings indicate the need to promote healthy digital habits among university students, particularly those involved in sports programmes. Universities should also consider implementing digital wellness and mental health awareness programmes to enhance students' well-being.

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