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EXTENDED ABSTRACT



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Relationship Between Peer's Social Support and Physical Activity Participation Among Youth

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I. INTRODUCTION

Physical inactivity among youth can lead to major health issues such as obesity and mental illness. 80% of adolescents fail to meet physical activity guidelines, making this a critical health issue both globally and nationally [1]. Previous studies mainly focused on high school students, without examining how peer's social support influences physical activity among youth in higher or different educational backgrounds [2]. As young people grow, they begin to rely more on their peers than their parents [3]. Understanding this transition is important for developing effective interventions.

II. METHODS

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional correlational design. A total of 406 Malaysian youth aged 18 to 24 years participated in the study using snowball sampling. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire comprising the Malay Version of the Social Support Scale for Exercise (peer-related items) and the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) Malay Version – Short Form. Descriptive statistics were used to determine levels of peer's social support and physical activity participation. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using Jamovi software to examine the relationship between the variables.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. To Assess the Level of Peer's Social Support Among Youth

The mean score for peer social support was 41.40 ($SD = 13.20$), indicating that the overall level of peer social support among youth was moderate. This suggests that although peer support is present, its level varies across social contexts and developmental stages [4].

B. To Assess the Level of Physical Activity Participation Among Youth

The mean total physical activity participation was 3005.00 MET-minutes per week ($SD = 2154.00$), indicating a moderate level of participation according to the IPAQ classification. This suggests engagement primarily in daily routines and recreational activities rather than sustained vigorous exercise. Such patterns are consistent with previous findings indicating that peer support may indirectly influence adolescents'

physical activity by enhancing self-efficacy and enjoyment [5].

C. To Examine the Relationship Between Peer's Social Support and Physical Activity Participation Among Youth

The Pearson correlation indicated a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between peers' social support and physical activity participation ($r = 0.790$, $p < .001$), suggesting that adolescents with higher perceived peer support engaged in greater levels of physical activity. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that peer support is positively associated with physical activity participation among adolescents. [6].

TABLE I
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEERS SOCIAL SUPPORT AND
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION AMONG YOUTH

Total Physical Activity	
Total Peer Social Support	0.790***

Note. *** $p < .001$. $N = 406$

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, youth experienced moderate levels of peer social support, which may not be fully used to enhance health-related behaviours. Physical activity participation among youth was also moderate, indicating room for increased engagement. Importantly, a strong positive relationship was found between peer social support and physical activity participation, suggesting that peer support is an important social factor associated with higher levels of physical activity participation.

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