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The Interplay Between Self-Efficacy and Anxiety Among Student-Athletes

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I. INTRODUCTION

The growing pressure faced by student-athletes to excel both academically and in sports has brought mental health concerns, particularly anxiety, into sharper focus. One key psychological factor that influences how athletes respond to anxiety is self-efficacy. Previous studies have reported a significant link between self-efficacy and anxiety [1][2]. Therefore, a better understanding of the correlates of self-efficacy and anxiety among student-athletes is needed. Recognising this situation, the present study aimed to further investigate the interplay between self-efficacy and anxiety among student-athletes. By exploring this relationship, this study aims to inform targeted interventions to support students' healthy behaviour within a unique academic and sporting environment.

II. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design using a survey approach. The population consisted of 130 student-athletes from Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of demographic information, the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) [3], and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) [4]. Descriptive statistics, including mean, frequency, and percentage, were used to determine levels of self-efficacy and anxiety. Spearman's rho correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicated that most UTHM student-athletes reported moderate to high-levels of self-efficacy. A total of 53.1% of respondents fell into the moderate self-efficacy category. The mean score for moderate self-efficacy was 3.34, with a standard deviation of 0.35. In addition, 45.4% of respondents showed a high-level of self-efficacy, with a mean score of 3.80 and a standard deviation of 0.11. These findings suggest that most student-athletes felt reasonably confident in their ability to manage challenges, perform well, and cope with difficult situations. In terms of anxiety, the results showed that most respondents experienced minimal anxiety, with 62.3% of student-athletes classified under this

category. The mean score for minimal anxiety was 2.58, with a standard deviation of 0.95, indicating low anxiety symptoms among most respondents.

Correlation analysis revealed a very weak positive relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety ($r = .034$), which was not statistically significant ($p = 0.697$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The absence of a significant relationship suggests that anxiety among student-athletes may be influenced by other factors, such as academic workload, injury, social support, and coping strategies, rather than self-efficacy alone.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The present study concludes that although UTHM student-athletes generally exhibit positive psychological profiles with moderate to high self-efficacy and low anxiety, there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety among UTHM student-athletes. The findings provide useful baseline data for university administrators, coaches, and counsellors in monitoring student-athletes' mental health. Future studies should investigate a broader range of psychological and environmental influences and examine the effectiveness of interventions, such as mental skills training and stress management programmes, to better enhance the well-being of student-athletes.

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