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Relationship Between Social Support and Athlete's Readiness to Return to Play Sports



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Abstract | Although sports involvement has been extensively proven to have physical and psychological advantages, players often encounter substantial challenges that can impact their readiness for competition, including stress, injuries, and academic pressures. Having the social support of friends, coaches, teammates, and family might enhance individuals' readiness to compete once more. The goal of this study was to determine the relationship between social support and athlete's readiness to return to sports within the Faculty of Sports and Recreation athletes from UiTM Seremban 3. Questionnaire methods were utilized to collect data, with a total of 349 participants completing the Athlete's Received Support Questionnaire (ARSQ) and Psychological Readiness to Return to Sport. The results show a significant relationship between all dimensions of social support and readiness to play ($p < 0.001$). Emotional support has a significant positive moderate relationship ($r = 0.417, p < 0.001$). Esteem support has a significant positive moderate relationship ($r = 0.419, p < 0.001$). Informational support is a positive moderate relationship ($r = 0.373, p < 0.001$), and Tangible support is a significant positive moderate relationship ($r = 0.366, p < 0.001$). In conclusion, the data indicates that esteem support and readiness to play sports were connected. The Emotional, Esteem, Informational, and Tangible support significantly contributes to athletes' readiness, thereby enhancing their performance and overall sports experience, potentially improving performance and well-being overall.

Keywords: *Emotional support, informational support, esteem support, tangible support, readiness to return to play sports.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

College players who play both an athletic and academic role are likely to face a great deal of psychological stress for a variety of reasons [1]. In addition to the pressure to do well academically, collegiate players also had to deal with the demands of an athletic career [2]. Previous research findings suggest that this group of athletes may feel significant psychological discomfort because of the stress of maintaining such a rigorous and regimented routine [3]. Along with the stress associated with injuries, the stress associated with failure also contributes to depressive symptoms among college athletes [4]. The purpose of this study was to learn more about how college athletes saw the advantages of getting help to effectively recover from injuries and reintegrate into society after an injury that ended their career. Studies indicate that the general purpose of social support for injured athletes is to encourage them to return to play sports. In a study conducted by [11], almost half the athletes who sustained injuries exhibited mild to severe depression symptoms. The study also included the post-injury symptoms among college athletes, which showed most of the athletes with long-term injuries developed low self-esteem, and showed feelings of grief, resentment, and solitude [11]. The objective of this study is to determine the relationship between social support and athlete's readiness to return to play sports.

II. METHODS

This research uses correlational design to determine the relationship between social support and athletes' readiness to play among UiTM Seremban 3 Faculty of Sports and Recreation athletes. Total athletes are 1213. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan table, the sample that must be collected would be 291 people. To ensure the data collection process runs smoothly, the 20 percent dropout subject will be added to avoid subjects who cannot answer the questionnaire and have to cancel at the last moment, which will be $N = 350$.

It utilizes a structured questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was designed to measure two primary constructs: the level and type of social support (ARSQ: Athlete's Received Support Questionnaire) students perceive they receive, which the author is [14]. This questionnaire had 22 questions that were categorized into four dimensions (emotional, esteem, informational, and tangible). The reliability of this questionnaire is above ($\alpha = 0.956$) [12], as is their extent of readiness to play [13]. This questionnaire has 6 questions and is categorized into 3 levels of confidence. After the data collection process, the statistical analysis was performed using Jamovi, in which data is inserted into the software for analysis. The descriptive and inferential analysis data were performed to measure the strength of the correlation and p -value. The Pearson correlation was used.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show a significant relationship between all dimensions of social support and readiness to play ($p < 0.001$). Emotional support has a significant positive moderate relationship with readiness to play in sports ($r = 0.417, p < 0.001$). While Esteem support has a significant positive moderate relationship with readiness to play in sports ($r = 0.419, p < 0.001$). Informational support has a positive moderate

relationship with readiness to play in sports ($r = 0.373, p < 0.001$), and tangible support has a significant positive moderate relationship with readiness to play in sports ($r = 0.366, p < 0.001$).

Different types of social support can have varying impacts. This study supports the previous observations from [9], which reported that different types of social support, such as emotional, informational, and instrumental support, can have varying impacts on individuals' psychological well-being and stress levels. The relationship can be influenced by who is providing the support. Support can come from anyone among athletes. It is encouraging to compare this result with that found by [10], who found that support for athletes can come from many sources, including coaches, teammates, family, and friends, each playing an important role in the athlete's performance and well-being.

The emotional support has a positive moderate relationship with readiness to play ($r = 0.417, p < 0.001$). Emotional support helps reduce stress and anxiety, which are common among injured athletes. Lower stress levels can facilitate better focus on rehabilitation and adherence to recovery protocols, leading to improved readiness to return to play. Emotional support can significantly reduce stress and anxiety in injured athletes, aiding in their focus on rehabilitation and adherence to recovery protocols, which enhances their readiness to return to play [5].

The esteem support has a strong positive moderate relationship with readiness to play ($r = 0.419, p < 0.001$). These results are consistent with those reported that esteem support is positively correlated with psychological well-being [6]. Esteem support plays an important role in confidence building. Esteem support often includes affirmations of an athlete's skills and abilities. Positive feedback and recognition from coaches, teammates, and significant others can boost the athlete's confidence in their ability to recover and perform at their previous level.

Informational support has a positive but weak relationship with readiness to play ($r = 0.373, p < 0.001$). Informational support is more about improving skills. These confirm the association between athletes who are well-informed about their treatment options, recovery timelines, and potential outcomes being better equipped to make informed decisions about their care and rehabilitation, which can lead to improved adherence to prescribed protocols [7].

The tangible support has a positive, weak relationship with readiness to play ($r = 0.366, p < 0.001$). Tangible support means providing practical assistance and resources that help individuals manage their challenges. These results seem to be consistent with other research that found financial support for medical expenses or educational costs can significantly reduce stress among athletes, enabling them to focus more effectively on their rehabilitation without the added burden of financial concerns [8].

TABLE 1
CORRELATION BETWEEN VARIABLES

		Mean Emotional Support	Mean Esteem Support	Mean Informational Support	Mean Tangible Support
Total	Pearson's r	0.417	0.419	0.373	0.366
Readiness	P-value	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the data indicates that esteem, support, and readiness to play sports are connected. The emotional, esteem, informational, and tangible support significantly contributes to athletes' readiness, thereby enhancing their performance and overall sports experience, potentially improving performance and well-being overall.

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