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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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THE ROLE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN FOSTERING MENTAL TOUGHNESS DURING AN OUTDOOR RECREATION ACADEMIC CAMP

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I. INTRODUCTION

Mental health issues like stress, anxiety, and depression negatively impact relationships, thinking, and overall well-being, especially among college students managing academics, finances, and new environments [1]. Anxiety and depression, in particular, disrupt daily life and cause emotional struggles [2]. Mental toughness helps mitigate these effects by building resilience and improving coping skills. This connection emphasizes the importance of early support and practical strategies to enhance well-being in challenging situations [3].

II. METHODS

This study utilized the DASS-21 scale (Moya et al., 2022) with a total of 21 items and the Mental Toughness 4C's framework (Haqiyah et al., 2023) with a total of 27 items to measure mental health and toughness. A total of 104 participants from the Final Outdoor Camp were analyzed after removing one outlier. Descriptive statistics (Mean \pm SD) and inferential analysis (Spearman & Paired Sample T-Test), were applied to evaluate the collected data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Level of Mental Health

The participants' mental health levels were high (3.30 ± 0.53). The scores indicated consistency among participants, with limited variability. These findings suggest that students maintained robust mental health during the Final Outdoor Camp, this study aligning with baseline expectations and emphasizing the importance of mental health in high-pressure academic settings.

B. Main Factor Mental Toughness

Communication had the highest influence on mental toughness (2.42 ± 0.55 , $\alpha = 0.70$). Confidence, control, and challenge followed in significance. The reliability scores support the consistency of these findings. Communication's prominence underscores its crucial role in fostering mental toughness during the camp, highlighting its importance in team-based environments.

C. Level of Mental Toughness

Participants exhibited moderate levels of mental toughness (3.30 ± 0.45). Variations among participants were minimal, suggesting uniform mental toughness across the cohort. These findings align with expectations, reflecting the effectiveness of the Final Outdoor Camp environment in cultivating moderate but stable levels of mental toughness among the students.

D. Pre and Post Mental Toughness Following Final Outdoor Camp

Pre- and post-camp mental toughness scores showed minimal change (Pre: 2.29 ± 0.44 ; Post: 2.32 ± 0.40). The difference was not statistically significant. So, we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that the mental health level during the Final Outdoor Camp program was not effective in mental toughness among respondents ($t(103) = 0.48$, $p = 0.63$).

E. Association of Mental Health and Mental Toughness

A moderate, positive correlation ($r = 0.495$, $n = 104$, $p < 0.001$) was observed between mental health and mental toughness levels. This indicates that better mental health is associated with stronger mental toughness. These findings align with existing research, emphasizing the interconnectedness of mental health and toughness in challenging academic activities.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals a significant link between mental health and mental toughness in Final Outdoor Camp participation, with communication as the key factor. Minimal changes in toughness pre- and post-camp highlight the need to foster mental health and toughness for academic success under pressure.

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