

In the zone or out of bounds? How sports and physical activity anxiety affects life satisfaction among students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the relationship between sports and physical anxiety and life satisfaction among college students in a leading Philippine state university. Employing a quantitative research design, specifically descriptive correlation, data were collected from 2,043 respondents using simple random sampling. The research utilized the physical activity and sport anxiety scale and the life satisfaction index to measure the respective constructs, with analyses conducted using Spearman's rho correlation coefficient to assess relationships between variables. Results indicated a significant relationship between sports and physical anxiety and life satisfaction, revealing that higher levels of anxiety corresponded to lower life satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of addressing sports and physical anxiety to improve overall well-being. Implications suggest that institutions should implement mental health and wellness initiatives aimed at reducing anxiety and promoting supportive environments in physical education settings. By fostering a culture that prioritizes psychological well-being alongside physical engagement, institutions can enhance students' life satisfaction and overall quality of life.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction is generally defined as an individual's overall assessment of their quality of life based on personal goals, values, and expectations. It encompasses a subjective judgment about one's well-being, reflecting how individuals perceive the fulfillment of their needs and desires in various life domains, such as relationships, achievements, and daily activities [1]. Life satisfaction is often influenced by a combination of internal factors, such as self-esteem and resilience, and external factors, such as social relationships and environmental conditions [2]. For students today, life satisfaction plays a critical role in their academic and personal development. The unique pressures faced by students—ranging from academic expectations to social connectivity through digital platforms—create complex environments that affect their

sense of satisfaction [3]. Life satisfaction among students is thus not only an indicator of their well-being but also a crucial factor impacting their academic performance, mental health, and overall motivation, underscoring the need to understand the specific variables that contribute to or hinder satisfaction in this demographic [4].

On the other hand, sports and physical anxiety is a form of situational anxiety that emerges in contexts involving physical performance, athletic activities, or physical education, often characterized by heightened stress, fear of judgment, and concerns about physical capability [5]. This type of anxiety may stem from several sources, such as self-comparison, past experiences, perceived social expectations, or the fear of failure, which can trigger psychological responses like nervousness, self-doubt, and even avoidance behaviors [6]. For students, sports and physical anxiety can significantly impact their educational and social experiences, particularly in settings where physical activity is integrated into the curriculum. Students with high levels of sports-related anxiety may exhibit reluctance or even refusal to participate in activities, which can hinder their physical development, reduce their social interactions, and limit their opportunities for growth in teamwork and leadership skills [7]. Moreover, this anxiety can detract from their overall academic experience, as the stress associated with physical performance may carry over into other aspects of school life, affecting focus, motivation, and confidence [8].

Life satisfaction among students is increasingly affected by a combination of academic pressures, social dynamics, and mental health challenges, with sports and physical activity anxiety emerging as a notable contributing factor [9]. Research indicates that students facing high levels of anxiety related to physical activities often report lower life satisfaction, as the stress associated with these activities can create a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt. This anxiety may be compounded by the heightened scrutiny of physical performance in a group setting, where students are frequently concerned about peer judgment and fear of failure [10]. Such anxieties not only deter students from engaging in physical activities but may also negatively impact their overall self-esteem and sense of well-being, which are crucial components of life satisfaction [11]. In an era where students face amplified academic and social pressures, the psychological burden of sports-related anxiety can worsen feelings of stress and dissatisfaction, affecting both their academic performance and interpersonal relationships [12].

A growing body of research has investigated life satisfaction among students, revealing that it is influenced by various academic, social, and personal factors. Studies have consistently shown that supportive relationships, a sense of academic achievement, and effective coping skills are strong predictors of higher life satisfaction among students [13]. For example, in a study on life satisfaction and academic success, Maele and Houtte [14] found that students who experienced a supportive learning environment reported higher levels of life satisfaction, underscoring the importance of school culture and teacher-student relationships. Moreover, additional research highlights the role of mental health, with findings suggesting that students who experience lower levels of stress and anxiety tend to report greater life satisfaction [15]. Another study [16] revealed that involvement in extracurricular activities, including sports, positively correlates with students' life satisfaction, as these activities foster social connections and a sense of purpose.

Further, research on sports and physical activity anxiety has focused on a range of demographics, revealing the complex psychological and physiological impacts of this form of anxiety. Studies on professional athletes, for example, have shown that performance anxiety, often referred to as “choking under pressure”, is a common phenomenon that affects both individual and team performance levels. Study by Xinru and Ahmad [17] found that this anxiety often arises from the fear of negative evaluation, perfectionism, and high expectations, which can impede concentration and motor function, ultimately affecting performance outcomes. In a broader population, researchers have also studied sports and physical activity anxiety among amateur athletes and fitness enthusiasts, where anxiety is linked not only to performance but also to self-esteem and body image concerns [18]. For instance, a study by Özyol [19] indicated that amateur athletes experiencing social physique anxiety-worry over how others perceive their physical appearance-are more likely to avoid engaging in physical activities, thereby impacting their overall health and well-being. Additionally, physical activity anxiety has been examined in clinical populations, where individuals with anxiety disorders often exhibit heightened anxiety around physical exertion due to physiological symptoms such as increased heart rate, which they may interpret as panic symptoms [20].

Despite the extensive body of literature examining life satisfaction and sports or physical activity anxiety, a notable gap remains in understanding how these two variables intersect, particularly within student populations in the Philippine context. Much of the existing research on life satisfaction focuses on academic stressors, social relationships, or mental health [21]–[23], while studies on sports and physical anxiety have predominantly targeted professional athletes or clinical populations rather than general student groups [24], [25]. Moreover, studies that do address these factors often overlook how sports and physical anxiety specifically influence life satisfaction, a critical component of well-being among students navigating academic and social pressures. This paper addresses this gap by providing an answer on how sports and physical activity anxiety affects life satisfaction among students in a leading Philippine State University.

In the zone or out of bounds? How sports and physical activity anxiety affects life ... (Marlon A. Mancera)

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on Filipino college students, a group subject to unique academic demands and cultural influences that may shape the dynamics of physical anxiety and life satisfaction differently than in other populations. By investigating this relationship, the study offers insights into how sports and physical activity anxiety uniquely affects Filipino students' life satisfaction, providing a foundation for culturally responsive interventions that support both mental health and physical engagement in educational settings.

Furthermore, this research is significant as it addresses an underexplored yet critical aspect of student well-being by examining how sports and physical anxiety influences life satisfaction in the context of a leading Philippine State University. By focusing on the unique academic, social, and cultural experiences of Filipino college students, this study contributes valuable insights to the global understanding of student mental health and quality of life. The findings are expected to inform educators, policymakers, and mental health practitioners on how to better support students facing anxiety related to sports and physical activities, thereby fostering an environment that promotes both physical engagement and psychological well-being. This research not only fills a critical gap in the literature but also underscores the importance of a holistic approach to student development, highlighting the need for programs and policies that consider the factors impacting student life satisfaction. Through this study, the broader educational community may gain a deeper understanding of how addressing physical anxiety can enhance overall student satisfaction and success in both academic and non-academic realms.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research design

This research utilized a quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive correlation approach, to explore the relationship between sports and physical anxiety and life satisfaction among college students at a leading Philippine State University. Quantitative research is a systematic method that relies on quantifiable data to understand phenomena, drawing conclusions based on statistical analysis and numerical data. By applying structured data collection and analysis techniques, quantitative research enables objective measurements and generalizable findings, making it suitable for studies that aim to quantify relationships and test hypotheses [26].

In particular, the descriptive correlation method examines the association between variables without manipulating them, focusing on observing, describing, and quantifying relationships. Unlike experimental research, which establishes causation, descriptive correlation allows researchers to understand the degree and direction of relationships between variables as they naturally occur. This approach is commonly used in social sciences to explore how two or more variables are connected, providing insights into associations rather than causative factors [27].

This design and approach are appropriate for this study as they align with the objectives of assessing both the sports and physical anxiety and life satisfaction levels of students and exploring the relationship between these two variables. Given that this study aims to identify correlations without influencing or manipulating any variables, a descriptive correlation approach provides a framework for capturing the natural association between sports anxiety and life satisfaction. This method allows the research to draw evidence-based conclusions about the presence and strength of relationships between these variables in the targeted population, offering insights that are both reliable and relevant to the context of Philippine college students.

2.2. Research respondents and sampling

This research included a total of 2,043 respondents, who were selected through simple random sampling from a population of college students at a leading Philippine State University. This sampling technique ensured that each student had an equal chance of being chosen, thereby promoting a representative and unbiased sample of the larger student population. The respondents were asked to complete a structured questionnaire assessing their levels of sports and physical anxiety as well as their life satisfaction.

Simple random sampling is a probability sampling method that provides everyone within the population an equal chance of selection. This approach minimizes sampling bias and enhances the generalizability of the findings, which is critical when the goal is to assess broad trends and relationships within a large population [28]. The sample size of 2,043 is both sufficient and statistically strong, allowing for reliable correlation analysis and ensuring that the data gathered is representative of the university's student body. Large sample sizes, such as this one, also help improve the statistical power of the study, reducing the margin of error and supporting the precision of the correlation results between sports anxiety and life satisfaction.

2.3. Research instrument

This study utilized two primary instruments to measure sports and physical activity anxiety as well as life satisfaction among college students. The physical activity and sport anxiety scale (PASAS), developed by Norton *et al.* [29] was employed to assess students' levels of anxiety related to sports and physical activities. PASAS specifically gauges anxiety triggered by various factors in physical activity settings, such as performance, social interactions, and self-perceptions of physical ability. With a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.86, the PASAS demonstrates high internal consistency, making it a reliable tool for evaluating sports and physical anxiety across diverse populations.

Additionally, the life satisfaction index (LSI), developed by Neugarten *et al.* [30] titled "measurement of life satisfaction", was used to assess the overall life satisfaction of the respondents. The LSI is a well-established instrument that evaluates key aspects of life satisfaction, including zest for life, alignment between personal goals and achievements, mood, and self-concept. The instrument has shown a high Cronbach's alpha value ranging from 0.79 to 0.89, indicating strong internal consistency and reliability. Its application in various population groups, including students, makes it an essential tool for measuring life satisfaction in this research.

2.4. Statistical analysis

This study utilized descriptive statistics, including mean and composite mean, to summarize and describe the respondents' levels of sports and physical activity anxiety as well as life satisfaction. The mean provides an average score, representing the central tendency of each variable, while the composite mean offers an overall measure by aggregating the individual item means within each variable, providing a clearer understanding of students' general anxiety levels in physical activities and their life satisfaction. To examine the relationship between variables, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was employed. Spearman's rho is a non-parametric measure of rank correlation, which assesses the strength and direction of a monotonic relationship between two variables. This approach is particularly useful when dealing with ordinal data or when the assumptions of normality are not met, as it does not require the data to be normally distributed [31]. Spearman's rho was chosen for this study to effectively capture the degree of association between sports and physical activity anxiety and life satisfaction, addressing the primary research objective.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the levels of sports and physical activity anxiety reported by the respondents. The data highlights key aspects of anxiety experienced in sports and physical activity contexts, providing insight into the prevalence and intensity of anxiety-related factors among students. These findings serve as a foundation for understanding how physical activity anxiety may relate to overall life satisfaction in this population.

Table 1. Sports and physical activity anxiety among the respondents

Statements	Weighted mean	Verbal description
1. I feel nervous if other people watch me when I am exercising/working out	2.60	Agree
2. I usually get nervous when I play sports in front of even a few people watching	2.56	Agree
3. I am afraid that people will find fault with my performance while playing sports	2.54	Agree
4. Sometimes I think I am too concerned with what other people think about my performance while exercising/working out	2.51	Agree
5. I feel self-conscious when playing sports	2.43	Disagree
6. 1. I worry about what people will think of me while playing sports, even though it will not make any difference	2.39	Disagree
7. I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make while playing sports	2.37	Disagree
8. I pass the ball to a teammate when I get nervous	2.34	Disagree
9. I rarely worry about what kind of impression I am making on someone while exercising/working out	2.28	Disagree
10. I avoid exercising/working out where others can see me	2.26	Disagree
11. Other people's opinions of how well I play sports do not bother me	2.25	Disagree
12. I could not care less if an audience was watching me perform	2.18	Disagree
13. I feel that I will humiliate myself when I play sports	2.16	Disagree
14. I feel I will humiliate myself when I exercise/work out	2.15	Disagree
15. I avoid social gatherings if I think they will involve an athletic activity	2.10	Disagree
16. I don't want the ball to come to me when I play team sports	2.09	Disagree
Overall mean	2.33	Low sports and physical activity anxiety

4.00–3.50= Strongly agree (High sports and physical activity anxiety)

3.49–2.50= Agree (Moderate sports and physical activity anxiety)

2.49–1.50= Disagree (Low sports and physical activity anxiety)

1.49–1.00= Strongly disagree (No sports and physical activity anxiety)

Table 2 presents an overview of the life satisfaction levels reported by the respondents. The data are derived from a series of statements designed to assess various dimensions of life satisfaction, providing an understanding of how these students perceive their overall well-being. The results are summarized in terms of composite means and verbal descriptions, highlighting the average levels of satisfaction across the sample and the variations in responses to specific statements.

Table 3 displays the results of the test for a significant relationship between respondents' levels of sports and physical activity anxiety and their life satisfaction. The correlation analysis identifies the strength and direction of the association between these two variables. This table offers valuable insights into whether and how sports-related anxiety influences life satisfaction among the students.

Table 2. Life satisfaction among the respondents

Statements	Weighted mean	Verbal description
1. I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future	3.31	Agree
2. I feel old and somewhat tired	2.95	Agree
3. Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life	2.85	Agree
4. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were	2.83	Agree
5. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted	2.77	Agree
6. My life could be happier than it is now	2.76	Agree
7. I feel my age, but it does not bother me	2.76	Agree
8. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be	2.74	Agree
9. I would not change my past life even if I could	2.69	Agree
10. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better	2.68	Agree
11. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied	2.68	Agree
12. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now	2.65	Agree
13. I am just as happy as when I was younger	2.64	Agree
14. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often	2.61	Agree
15. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know	2.59	Agree
16. This is the dreariest time of my life	2.56	Agree
17. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life	2.55	Agree
18. These are the best years of my life	2.51	Agree
19. Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance	2.49	Disagree
20. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous	2.44	Disagree
Composite mean	2.70	Moderate life satisfaction
4.00–3.50=Strongly agree (High life satisfaction)		
3.49–2.50=Agree (Moderate life satisfaction)		
2.59–1.50=Disagree (Low life satisfaction)		
1.49–1.00=Strongly disagree (Very low life satisfaction)		

Table 3. Test of significant relationship between the respondents' sports and physical anxiety and life satisfaction

Paired variables	Spearman rho correlation coefficient	p-value	Interpretation $\alpha=0.05$
Sports and physical anxiety and life	-0.114**	0.000	Significant

**Statistically significant at $\alpha<0.05$

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Sports and physical activity anxiety among the respondents

Table 1 presents the levels of sports and physical activity anxiety among the respondents, revealing a composite mean score of 2.33, which is interpreted as "low sports and physical activity anxiety." This indicates that, on average, the respondents experience minimal anxiety in sports and physical activity contexts, suggesting that most students feel relatively at ease when engaging in such activities. A low level of sports and physical anxiety implies that these students may have fewer psychological barriers to participation, which could positively impact their willingness to engage in physical activities and promote a healthier lifestyle. This result also sets a foundation for understanding how their comfort with physical activities may relate to other aspects of their well-being, such as life satisfaction.

This implies that having a low sports and physical activity anxiety among students suggests favorable conditions for promoting active engagement in physical activities without the hindrance of performance-related stress or social discomfort. This low anxiety level may support better participation rates in sports and exercise, which in turn can enhance physical health, mental resilience, and social connection. Reduced anxiety in physical activity settings could foster positive attitudes toward lifelong fitness and well-being, as students are less likely to avoid these activities due to fear or self-consciousness. Consequently, low sports and physical anxiety can contribute not only to individual health benefits but also to a more active and engaged student community.

Further, overcoming sports and physical activity anxiety is crucial for students as it fosters physical, mental, and social well-being. Reducing anxiety allows them to engage more confidently in physical activities, which can improve their overall health, boost self-esteem, and build resilience [32]. When they can participate without fear or apprehension, students are more likely to enjoy the benefits of exercise, including reduced stress, enhanced concentration, and better emotional regulation [33]. Sports provide an avenue for developing teamwork, leadership, and communication skills [34]. Addressing and overcoming this anxiety empowers young individuals to lead active, balanced lifestyles and cultivates lifelong habits that positively impact their quality of life and social interactions [35].

Furthermore, the statement “I feel nervous if other people watch me when I am exercising/working out” received the highest mean value of 2.60, with a verbal description of “agree”. This indicates that, despite an overall low level of sports and physical activity anxiety, a notable number of respondents still feel self-conscious or uneasy when being observed during physical activities. This suggests that social evaluative anxiety, or the fear of being judged by others, remains a significant factor impacting students’ comfort levels in fitness settings. Such feelings may deter some students from participating fully in group exercises or public workouts, potentially limiting their engagement in beneficial physical activities and pointing to the need for more supportive, judgment-free environments in exercise spaces.

Moreover, being judged by others can significantly impact sports and physical activity participation by instilling fear of negative evaluation and leading to heightened anxiety. This fear can deter individuals from trying new activities or participating in sports, as they may worry about their performance, appearance, or skill level in front of peers [36]. Such concerns can create a cycle of avoidance, where the anxiety surrounding judgment reinforces feelings of inadequacy and discourages engagement [37]. Consequently, this can limit opportunities for social interaction, skill development, and the physical and mental health benefits that come from regular participation in sports and physical activities [38].

On the other hand, the statement “I don’t want the ball to come to me when I play team sports” received the lowest mean score of 2.09, with a verbal description of “disagree”. This suggests that most respondents do not experience significant anxiety or apprehension when it comes to actively participating in team sports. Their disagreement with this statement indicates a willingness to engage in gameplay and take on roles that require ball handling or involvement, reflecting a level of confidence in their abilities. This positive attitude towards participation in team sports can foster a sense of camaraderie and collaboration among peers, ultimately enhancing both social interaction and overall enjoyment of physical activities.

Many youths today experience less anxiety or apprehension about participating in team sports due to a more supportive and inclusive culture surrounding physical activity [39]. With increased emphasis on teamwork, cooperation, and personal growth over competition, young athletes often feel encouraged to participate regardless of their skill level [40]. The rise of social media and digital platforms allows youths to connect and share their experiences, reducing feelings of isolation and judgment (Escobar-Viera). Programs promoting mental health awareness also help normalize discussions about anxiety, equipping young people with coping strategies and fostering a sense of community [41]. Together, these factors create a more positive environment that empowers youths to engage actively in team sports without significant anxiety.

4.2. Life satisfaction of respondents

Table 1 presents the results regarding the respondents’ life satisfaction levels. The composite means of 2.70, described as “moderate life satisfaction”, indicates that respondents experience a balanced sense of contentment in their lives, though not exceptionally high. This score suggests that while many students find certain aspects of their lives satisfying, there are other areas where they feel neutral or only somewhat fulfilled. The findings reveal that the respondents likely experience a mix of positive and less satisfying experiences, reflecting a moderate outlook on their overall life satisfaction. This balanced score points to an average level of well-being, where students may feel neither strongly satisfied nor deeply dissatisfied with their current life situations.

This moderate life satisfaction suggests that students are meeting basic expectations and having some positive experiences, but there may be unmet needs affecting their motivation and mental health. It indicates that respondents might be more vulnerable to stress or dissatisfaction in difficult situations. Their sense of fulfillment may not offer enough protection against external pressures.

Despite the advancements of modernization, many youths today report only moderate life satisfaction. This paradox arises as modernization, while offering greater access to technology and educational opportunities, also introduces unique pressures [42]. The pervasive influence of social media and high academic expectations often leads to increased stress and anxiety, adversely affecting well-being [43]. The fast-paced lifestyle associated with contemporary society can lead to feelings of isolation and

dissatisfaction, making it challenging for youths to achieve a balanced and fulfilling life amidst complex social, economic, and personal expectations [44].

Among the survey items, the statement “I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future” received the highest mean score of 3.31, with a verbal description of “agree”. This suggests that respondents generally maintain an optimistic outlook and anticipate positive experiences. Their strong expectations for future enjoyment and personal achievements reflect that, despite a moderate overall satisfaction, many students hold a hopeful perspective on their futures. This optimism may serve as a motivational factor, encouraging them to pursue goals and remain engaged in activities aligned with their personal growth and aspirations.

Moreover, today’s youths tend to cultivate a positive outlook for the future, driven by diverse opportunities and a global awareness of social progress. Modern education, technology, and social media platforms empower young people to connect, learn, and mobilize around causes that resonate with them, fostering a sense of agency and hope [45]. These movements inspire many youths to focus on critical issues like climate action and social justice, reinforcing their belief in a more equitable and sustainable world. Such factors cultivate optimism, motivating young individuals to envision and work toward a future that aligns with their ideals and aspirations.

Conversely, the statement “most of the things I do are boring or monotonous” received the lowest mean score of 2.44, with a verbal description of “disagree”. This finding suggests that respondents generally do not perceive their daily activities as dull or repetitive, indicating a level of engagement and interest in their routines. While some elements of routine exist, most students feel that their activities provide enough variety and stimulation to avoid boredom. This low score implies that respondents find meaning or enjoyment in their daily tasks, which positively contributes to their overall life satisfaction.

Furthermore, finding meaning in daily activities significantly enhances life satisfaction, fostering a sense of purpose and fulfillment [46]. When individuals perceive their daily tasks as meaningful, they experience greater motivation and engagement, improving overall well-being [47]. Meaningful activities align personal values with actions, creating a positive feedback loop that promotes resilience and satisfaction, even in routine tasks [48]. This sense of purpose can act as a buffer against stress, providing a stable foundation for a satisfying and enriched life, as individuals feel that their efforts contribute to a greater purpose beyond immediate outcomes [49].

4.3. Relationship between the respondents’ sports and physical anxiety and life satisfaction

In the analysis of the relationship between respondents’ sports and physical anxiety and their life satisfaction, the Spearman rho correlation coefficient was calculated to be -0.114, with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates a statistically significant inverse relationship between the two variables at the alpha level of 0.05. The negative correlation suggests that as levels of sports and physical anxiety increase, life satisfaction tends to decrease among the respondents. This finding highlights the potential impact that anxiety related to physical activity can have on students’ overall well-being.

This implies that students who experience higher levels of anxiety when engaging in sports and physical activities may also report lower levels of life satisfaction. The significance of this relationship underscores the importance of addressing sports-related anxiety, as it could be a contributing factor to diminished life satisfaction. Such anxiety may lead to avoidance behaviors, reduced participation in physical activities, and subsequently limit the benefits of exercise on mental health and well-being, including feelings of accomplishment and social connection.

Further, the negative correlation suggests that interventions aimed at reducing sports and physical anxiety may be beneficial not only for improving students’ comfort and performance in physical activities but also for enhancing their overall life satisfaction. Creating supportive environments that foster a sense of belonging and competence in sports may mitigate anxiety and encourage participation, thereby promoting a more fulfilling and satisfying life experience for students. This highlights the need for programs that address both the psychological aspects of physical activity and the promotion of mental well-being among students, contributing to a holistic approach to health and wellness in educational settings.

Furthermore, sports and physical anxiety negatively affect life satisfaction by creating a barrier to participation in physical activities, leading to feelings of inadequacy and stress [50]. When individuals are anxious about their performance or appearance in sports, they may avoid these activities, missing out on the social interaction, physical fitness, and emotional benefits associated with exercise. This avoidance can result in lower self-esteem and a sense of isolation, reducing overall life satisfaction [51]. Additionally, the chronic stress linked to performance anxiety can affect mental health, further diminishing feelings of happiness and fulfillment [52]. Ultimately, the inability to engage in sports and physical activity can hinder personal growth and well-being, leading to decreased life satisfaction [53].

Moreover, the findings of this research, which reveal a significant inverse relationship between sports and physical anxiety and life satisfaction among students, have important implications for policy and practice within educational institutions. Given the negative correlation identified, it is essential for schools and universities to prioritize the development of programs and policies that address the psychological barriers associated with sports and physical activity. Implementing targeted mental health and wellness initiatives can provide students with coping strategies to manage anxiety related to physical activity. This could include workshops on stress management, anxiety reduction techniques, and resilience training. For instance, evidence suggests that mindfulness practices and cognitive-behavioral strategies can significantly reduce anxiety and improve mental well-being among students [54].

In addition, policies that promote inclusive and supportive environments in physical education and sports programs are crucial. This can involve training educators and coaches to recognize and address anxiety among students, as well as fostering an atmosphere of encouragement rather than competition. Research indicates that supportive social climates can enhance students' self-efficacy and motivation, which may mitigate feelings of anxiety [55]. By creating environments where students feel safe and valued, institutions can help alleviate performance-related stress, encouraging greater participation and enjoyment in physical activities.

Along with that, the findings highlight the need for schools to integrate mental health resources within their sports programs. Accessible counseling services and support groups specifically for students experiencing sports and physical anxiety can be invaluable. Studies have shown that providing mental health support in conjunction with physical activity programs can improve both psychological and physical outcomes for students [56]. Institutions should consider policy frameworks that prioritize student well-being holistically, encompassing both physical and mental health dimensions. This could involve incorporating life satisfaction metrics into program evaluations to better understand the impact of physical activity initiatives on students' overall well-being. By adopting a more integrated approach that considers both psychological and physical factors, educational institutions can develop more effective strategies to enhance students' life satisfaction and overall quality of life.

5. CONCLUSION

In The investigation into sports and physical activity anxiety among students reveals significant psychological barriers that hinder their participation in physical activities. Many students experience anxiety in public exercise settings, limiting their willingness to engage in sports. This highlights the need for educational institutions to implement mental health support systems and targeted interventions to reduce anxiety, fostering an inclusive environment that encourages physical activity and improves overall well-being. Additionally, the study shows a moderate level of life satisfaction, indicating that while students meet basic expectations, unfulfilled aspirations remain. Institutions should prioritize holistic development that promotes emotional and social well-being alongside academic achievement to nurture resilience and support students in both their academic and personal lives.

The inverse relationship between sports anxiety and life satisfaction underscores the interconnectedness of these factors, suggesting that addressing physical activity anxiety can enhance overall life satisfaction. By integrating mental health and physical education initiatives, schools can create a supportive framework that empowers students to engage in physical activities and improve life satisfaction. Future research should explore the longitudinal effects of sports anxiety on life satisfaction, expanding the scope to include diverse student populations and investigating mediating factors like self-efficacy and social support. Experimental studies on interventions to reduce anxiety and enhance life satisfaction, along with qualitative research, could offer valuable insights to better understand students' challenges and improve their overall well-being.

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C : **C**onceptualization

M : **M**ethodology

So : **S**oftware

Va : **V**alidation

Fo : **F**ormal analysis

I : **I**nvestigation

R : **R**esources

D : **D**ata Curation

O : **O**riting - **O**riginal Draft

E : **E**riting - **R**eview & **E**ditng

Vi : **V**isualization

Su : **S**upervision

P : **P**roject administration

Fu : **F**unding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Authors state no conflict of interest.

INFORMED CONSENT

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The research related to human use has been complied with all the relevant national regulations and institutional policies in accordance with the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration and has been approved by the authors' institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

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