

THE Mediating Effect of Athlete Self-Efficacy on the Relationship Between Sports Motivation and Sportspersonship Orientation Among STUDENT-ATHLETES

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the mediating effect of athlete self-efficacy on the relationship between sports motivation and sportspersonship orientation among student-athletes in the Division of Cotabato. The study is a quantitative, descriptive-correlational, and predictive design conducted among 170 student-athletes competing in various events in three different schools. Adapted questionnaires from several authors were utilized. Mean, standard deviation, Pearson's r , and mediation analysis using the Sobel z -test were used to analyze the data. Results revealed the following: sports motivation was high and often manifested; athlete self-efficacy was very high and consistently evident; and sportspersonship orientation was high and often demonstrated. Significant relationships exist between sports motivation, athlete self-efficacy, and sportspersonship orientation. Athlete self-efficacy partially mediated the relationship between sports motivation and sportspersonship orientation; thus, improving self-efficacy enhances sportspersonship orientation among student-athletes. It is recommended that sports motivation, athlete self-efficacy, and sportspersonship orientation be improved through seminar workshops and trainings among student-athletes.

KEYWORDS: *Sports motivation, athlete self-efficacy, sportspersonship orientation, mediating effect, Philippines.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching athletic skills is only one aspect of physical education (PE) sportspersonship. It entails fostering self-control, fair play, and respect to ensure

pupils enjoy participating. Beyond the physical education classroom, these principles impact extracurricular activities and youth sports, fostering a climate of love and respect for one another (Bolter, 2024). Furthermore, teaching children sportsmanship in physical education is more than just the game; it is about developing their character and preparing them for life's obstacles. By encouraging excellent sportspersonship in their pupils, schools help them become well-rounded people who can face life's possibilities and difficulties with dignity and integrity. This aspect is more significant than producing talented athletes (Phelps, 2023).

In the United States, maintaining sportsmanship is a major difficulty for athletes, especially in competitive settings (Massonos, 2023). In Europe, unacceptable behavior occurs at high school sporting events. Much of the deplorable behavior continues to be directed at athletes who show poor sportspersonship. Poor sportsmanship can significantly harm athletes, teams, and the sport. Athletes exhibiting unsportsmanlike behavior may face disciplinary action, including suspensions, fines, or expulsion from their teams or leagues. This can damage their reputation and hinder their career prospects. Additionally, poor sportspersonship can create a negative atmosphere and discourage participation in sports, particularly among young people. Furthermore, unsportsmanlike conduct can detract from the enjoyment and integrity of sporting events, eroding public trust in the sport and potentially leading to a decline in fan interest (Niehoff, 2024). Bad sportspersonship has repeatedly been on display. Many players refused to shake hands after losing a match to an opponent. Additionally, players went on an obscenity-laced tirade against officials after a loss (Williams, 2024).

In the Philippines, competitiveness is one of the main causes of the increase in bad sportsmanship in high school athletics (Arcangel, 2023). Poor sportspersonship has repercussions beyond the actual game; it jeopardizes character development, social growth, and communal togetherness. The players themselves may be the ones most affected. Children are taught that dishonest behavior is acceptable when adults cheat, disrespect opponents or officials, or boast about their own accomplishments. Such behavior may encourage aggression and healthy competition that prioritizes progress over winning. Ego-driven players in Manila, where the National Collegiate Athletic Association hosted events, play to degrade others rather than for fun and friendship. Even if it means engaging in bad sportsmanship, such as violating the rules or being dishonest, they still want to show off their supremacy or

domination. Research shows that aggression, dishonesty, and other negative sports conduct occur with alarming regularity (Giray, 2021).

Researchers have noted that athletes at one of the schools in the Division of Cotabato exhibit poor sportsmanship in their respective sports. It may cause division and disrupt the team's harmony. Similarly, athletes who lack desire for their sport are probably unable to set objectives, give up easily, or perform worse under duress. According to tests of motivation and confidence, athletes have been found to possess higher levels of mental toughness. Athletes lack the self-control to play fair in games, and sportspersonship is less obvious (Lin et al., 2021).

Sportspersonship and sports motivation are related; intrinsic motivation favorably influences sportspersonship acts. People driven by internal motivations, such as happiness and personal fulfillment, are more likely to demonstrate sportspersonship, including fair play, respect for opponents, and gracious acceptance of winning or losing. On the other hand, less sportsmanlike behavior may result from extrinsic motivation, driven by external demands or rewards. Coaches and parents may help players develop strong and outstanding sportspersonship by encouraging intrinsic motivation and creating a pleasant sports environment (Vallerand & Losier, 2024). However, many unmotivated athletes are unlikely to attend training sessions and will put little effort in. Motivation is a key factor that distinguishes winners from losers since athletes cannot expect to succeed if they do not push themselves (Lin et al., 2021).

Self-efficacy, or the conviction that one can achieve, mediates sportspersonship and athletic motivation. Athletes with strong self-efficacy, frequently cultivated by intrinsic drive, are more likely to display positive sportspersonship actions. This self-belief enables athletes to face obstacles, failures, and triumphs with dignity and respect. Low self-efficacy, on the other hand, can lead to anger, hostility, and poor sportspersonship. Consequently, effective coaching techniques and positive reinforcement can foster self-efficacy, which, in turn, improves athletes' motivation and sportspersonship (Duda, 2020).

Numerous study approaches are frequently used in studies on sportspersonship, with researchers most often using quantitative methods. These designs aim to quantify and examine several facets of sports motivation, sportspersonship, and self-efficacy. However, little is understood about how

self-efficacy mediates the link between sportspersonship and athletic motivation (Hong et al., 2017). Additionally, due to intense competition and scholarship opportunities, most research was conducted among collegiate athletes in Western nations. Sportspersonship is a complex phenomenon that can vary across age groups, sports, and cultural contexts, so even though college athletes are a particularly important group to study given the high stakes of their athletic careers, the study must be conducted immediately. By examining various athletes, researchers can better understand the factors that affect sportspersonship and develop effective treatments to promote athletes' growth and performance, especially at the high school level (Duda et al., 2021).

This research provides significant social value by potentially revealing how developing student-athletes' confidence in their abilities could strengthen the connection between their motivation to participate in sports and their ethical conduct in competition. By understanding this relationship, educational institutions and sports programs could design more effective character development initiatives that simultaneously enhance athletic performance while fostering values like respect, fair play, and ethical behavior—ultimately contributing to a sports culture that prioritizes integrity alongside achievement. Such findings could transform coaching methodologies and youth sports policies, creating environments where young athletes develop not only physical skills but also moral reasoning that transfers positively to their roles as citizens and community members beyond the playing field.

If the results of this study are published in journals, presented at public forums, and widely shared on local, national, and international platforms, they could gain greater credibility. They may also contribute to the body of knowledge on the earlier-mentioned factors and their problems, which may help future researchers in the literature and studies described above.

Statement of the Problem

1. What is the level of sports motivation of student-athletes in terms of: intrinsic motivation – to know; intrinsic motivation - to accomplish; intrinsic motivation - to experience stimulation; extrinsic motivation – identified; extrinsic motivation – introjected; extrinsic motivation - external regulation; and, amotivation?
2. What is the level of athlete self-efficacy in terms of professional thought efficacy; personality efficacy; sports discipline efficacy; and psychological efficacy?

3. What is the level of sportspersonship orientation of the student-athletes in terms of commitment; social conventions; rules and officials; opponent; negative approach?
4. Is there a significant relationship between: sports motivation and sportspersonship orientation; sports motivation and athlete self-efficacy; and, athlete self-efficacy and sportspersonship orientation?
5. Does athlete self-efficacy significantly mediate the relationship between sports motivation and sportspersonship orientation?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. The researcher will utilize descriptive-correlational and predictive designs. Quantitative research design is a research methodology used across fields such as market research, psychology, economics, and the social sciences. Given that this design aims to gather and examine numerical data to address research questions and test hypotheses, it is acceptable. Also, quantitative design is used when researchers aim to quantify phenomena, test hypotheses, and generalize to larger populations. It's also helpful for establishing relationships between variables and providing objective, measurable data.

Descriptive design, on the one hand, seeks to precisely and methodically characterize a population, circumstance, or phenomenon. It can respond to inquiries about what, where, when, and how (McCombes, 2023). The design was chosen for its ability to explore and describe characteristics, trends, and patterns without manipulating variables. This approach is valuable for understanding the "what" and "how" of a situation, laying the groundwork for further research, and making informed decisions based on observed data. The study addressed the degrees of athlete self-efficacy, sportspersonship, and athletic motivation.

On the other hand, a correlational design addressed the relationship between the variables (Bhandari, 2023). Correlational research designs are used to explore relationships between variables without manipulation or control, offering several advantages, such as understanding prevalence, forecasting events, informing decision-making, and hypothesis generation. The study examined the relationship between sportsmanship and athletic motivation.

Finally, the researcher also used predictive design. Forecasting or predicting results, repercussions, expenses, or impacts is the main focus of predictive research. To forecast something that has not been attempted, tested, or

suggested previously, this kind of study attempts to conclude the examination of current events, laws, or other things (Wollman, 2020). It specifically employed path analysis, a precursor to structural equation modeling. Path analysis is a technique used to identify and evaluate the effects of a set of factors on a given outcome via multiple causal routes. The study will ascertain how athlete self-efficacy mediates the link between players' sportspersonship and sports motivation.

Research Locale. The research was conducted in three public secondary schools in the Municipality of Aleosan, Division of Cotabato. The locality has different public high schools that typically support student-athletes through specialized programs that balance academic requirements with training schedules. Though resources vary widely between urban and rural institutions, the Division of Cotabato sends athletes to the Department of Education's "Palarong Pambansa." The locality creates pathways for talented students to receive scholarships or represent the country internationally. The public secondary schools have enhanced facilities and coaching staff but also rely more on community support and makeshift training spaces. Student-athletes face unique challenges balancing their dual responsibilities, and many schools implement academic accommodations, such as flexible class schedules, tutorial programs, and periodic grade evaluations, to ensure these students maintain passing marks while pursuing athletic excellence.

Research Respondents. The study involved 170 student-athletes from three major public secondary schools in the Municipality of Aleosan, Division of Cotabato. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling via an online calculator (5% margin of error, 95% confidence interval, 75% response rate), with distribution as follows: School A (64), School B (66), and School C (40). To qualify, athletes were required to have competed at local, regional, or national levels for at least one year and to have provided signed assent and informed consent. Because the participants were minors, the study prioritized ethical protections, including obtaining parental consent, ensuring participation was voluntary, and utilizing age-appropriate language to maintain confidentiality and privacy.

Research Instrument. The study utilized three validated, reliable instruments to measure the variables:

- **Sports Motivation:** The 28-item Sports Motivation Scale (SMS-28) by Pelletier et al. (1995) was used to assess intrinsic motivation, extrinsic

motivation, and amotivation ($\alpha > 0.80$).

- **Athlete Self-Efficacy:** A 25-item instrument developed by Koçak (2020) was utilized to measure four dimensions: professional thinking, personality, sports discipline, and psychological efficacy ($\alpha = 0.88$).
- **Sportspersonship:** The Multidimensional Sportspersonship Orientation Scale (MSOS-25) by Vallerand et al. (1997) was employed to evaluate respect for social conventions, rules/officials, opponents, and negative approach toward sports practice ($\alpha = 0.74$).

Statistical Tools. To ensure rigorous data analysis, the study employed several statistical tools, all tested at a .05 level of significance. The mean was utilized to calculate the average of athletes' responses regarding their sports motivation, athlete self-efficacy, and sportspersonship orientation. To examine relationships between these variables—specifically between sports motivation and sportspersonship, sports motivation and athlete self-efficacy, and self-efficacy and sports motivation—the Pearson-r correlation coefficient was used. Finally, mediation analysis utilizing the Sobel z-test was conducted to investigate the mediating role of athlete self-efficacy in the relationship between sports motivation and sportspersonship, thereby testing the significance of the mediation effect.

Ethical Considerations. To safeguard people and their data, the researcher adhered to the Belmont Report's ethical guidelines. Therefore, the UIC-REC conducted a thorough evaluation of this study methodology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Sports Motivation Of Student-Athletes

The overall level of sports motivation of student-athletes is shown to be 3.81, which is described as high, indicating that their sports motivation is often manifested. It implies that the student-athletes have strong internal drive and a persistent commitment to excel in their sport while balancing academic responsibilities, characterized by goal-directed behavior, resilience in the face of challenges, and sustained effort toward athletic improvement despite competing demands on their time and energy. In addition, the overall standard deviation is 0.38, which is less than 1, indicating that the respondents' ratings are clustered around the mean.

This finding supports the study of Clancy et al. (2021), citing that high sports motivation means having a strong internal drive that pushes athletes to excel in their sport despite challenges and obstacles. It encompasses both intrinsic motivation, in which participation is driven by enjoyment and personal satisfaction, and extrinsic motivation, which involves external rewards such as trophies or recognition.

Intrinsic Motivation—To Know. It reveals that its category mean is 4.26, which is very high and is always manifested. Its item mean ratings range from 4.15 to 4.32. This finding means that the student-athlete has intense natural curiosity and desire to learn, understand, and explore new concepts purely for the satisfaction of intellectual discovery and comprehension rather than for external rewards or recognition.

This finding supports the argument of Ryan and Deci (2020), citing that a very high intrinsic motivation—to know—represents an intense psychological drive characterized by a genuine curiosity and passion for learning without the need for external rewards or recognition. Individuals with this orientation demonstrate a persistent desire to explore new ideas, acquire knowledge, and understand complex concepts purely for the satisfaction derived from the cognitive process itself. Vansteenkiste et al. (2023) also cited that this type of motivation is associated with deeper learning approaches, greater cognitive engagement, and more sustained intellectual pursuits across various domains. Also, Murayama et al. (2022) reported that the neural mechanisms underlying this intrinsic desire for knowledge involve heightened brain activity, thereby creating a natural psychological reinforcement system that makes learning inherently pleasurable.

Intrinsic Motivation—To Accomplish. It reveals that the category mean is 4.20, which is described as very high, with item mean ratings ranging from 4.13 to 4.27. This result means that the student is driven by a powerful internal drive and relentlessly pursues excellence in everything the student sets out to accomplish.

This finding is in consonance with the study by Clancy et al. (2023), which found that student-athletes with high intrinsic motivation demonstrate a profound internal drive to excel without requiring external rewards or recognition. Hence, student-athletes pursue challenges for the inherent satisfaction of mastery and improvement, maintaining focus amid difficult

training regimens and academic demands. Vasconcellos et al. (2020) cited that intrinsically motivated athletes experience greater enjoyment, persistence, and psychological well-being, and also show stronger performance outcomes over extended periods. Vallerand and Rousseau (2021) found that student-athletes who develop motivation through supportive coaching environments consistently demonstrate heightened creativity in their competitive approaches and superior problem-solving abilities.

Intrinsic Motivation—To Experience Motivation. It has garnered a high category mean rating of 4.17, with a range of 3.98 to 4.28. Notably, the item about joining sports for total immersion in the activity has a mean rating of 3.98, while the item about joining sports for the pleasure of exciting experiences has a mean rating of 4.28. This suggests that the student-athlete has a natural desire to seek stimulation, novelty, and emotional engagement purely for the internal satisfaction these experiences provide.

This finding supports the study by Santos-Rosa et al. (2021), which found that student-athletes with high intrinsic motivation experience stimulation and actively seek the thrill, excitement, and sensory pleasure that come from their athletic endeavors and academic pursuits. These individuals participate in sports and learning activities primarily for the exhilaration and emotional stimulation they provide, rather than for external rewards. Research suggests that experientially motivated student-athletes report higher levels of flow during competition, enhancing both performance and enjoyment.

Extrinsic Motivation—Identified. The mean rating of the different items ranges from 4.05 to 4.25, with a category mean of 4.17, described as high. This implies that student-athletes engage in activities or behaviors because they value the outcomes and consciously endorse the goals, even though the motivation still comes from external factors rather than internal enjoyment.

This finding aligns with that of Hamilton et al. (2022), who found that identified extrinsic motivation in student-athletes represents a critical psychological process in which individuals consciously value and accept external goals as personally important, even if the activities themselves aren't inherently enjoyable. According to student-athletes, those with high identified motivation recognize the significance of their athletic development and academic achievement, aligning with their personal values, leading to greater persistence in the face of challenging circumstances.

Extrinsic Motivation—Introjected. The mean rating of the different items ranges from 3.55 to 3.90, with a category mean of 3.71, described as high. The item about joining sports because they feel bad if they do not take time to do it has a mean rating of 3.55, while the item about joining sports because they must do sports to feel good has a mean rating of 3.90. This implies that student-athletes perform actions due to internalized pressure and contingent self-worth, driven by a desire to avoid guilt or shame and to seek pride, rather than because they find the activities inherently enjoyable or personally valuable.

This finding supports the study by Martinez and Thompson (2021), which found that introjected extrinsic motivation manifests prominently among student-athletes when they engage in athletic and academic pursuits primarily to avoid feelings of guilt, shame, or anxiety rather than from genuine enjoyment or value alignment.

Extrinsic Motivation—External Regulation. It has garnered a high category mean rating of 3.77, with mean ratings ranging from 3.62 to 3.89. This suggests that a high extrinsic motivation (external regulation) occurs when a student-athlete's behavior is controlled primarily by external rewards or punishments, rather than by internal satisfaction or interest in the activity itself.

This finding supports the study by Ryan and Deci (2020), which found that external regulation, a form of extrinsic motivation, plays a significant role in sports participation among the studied population. With a high category mean rating, external factors substantially influence student-athletes more than intrinsic enjoyment of the activity itself. External regulation is the least autonomous form of extrinsic motivation, as it involves performing behaviors to satisfy external demands or obtain rewards imposed by others. Additionally, Ntoumanis et al. (2021) found that social pressure and perceived expectations significantly impact exercise adherence. Furthermore, Chu and Zhang (2023) demonstrated that externally regulated motivation, while potentially effective in initiating behavior, often fails to sustain long-term engagement in physical activities.

Amotivation. It has received a high category mean rating of 3.59, with mean ratings ranging from 3.29 to 3.83. This suggests that many student-athletes experience a significant lack of motivation toward sports participation,

particularly in terms of questioning their continued involvement, compared to their perceptions of not belonging in sports.

This finding is in support of the study of Thompson et al. (2021), citing that several factors can demotivate student-athletes, including balancing academics and athletics, pressure to perform, anxiety, and depression. Time constraints, the need to juggle training, competition, and schoolwork can lead to stress and burnout. Also, Rodriguez and Chen (2022), in their longitudinal study of collegiate athletes, cited that amotivated student-athletes often experience feelings of incompetence and helplessness, questioning both their ability to succeed and the value of continued participation in their sport.

Level of Athlete Self-Efficacy among Student-Athletes

The level of self-efficacy among student-athletes. An overall mean of 4.24, described as very high, is reported, indicating that self-efficacy among student-athletes is consistently evident. This indicates that very high self-efficacy among student-athletes reflects their strong belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions necessary to succeed in their sport, which translates into greater persistence in the face of challenges, more effective goal-setting, and enhanced overall athletic performance. Additionally, the overall standard deviation is 0.56, which is less than 1, suggesting that the ratings are clustered near the mean.

The finding affirms the view of González-Hernández et al. (2021), who argue that very high self-efficacy among student-athletes represents a powerful psychological resource characterized by an unwavering belief in their ability to successfully execute the skills and strategies required to meet athletic challenges. Student-athletes with elevated self-efficacy exhibit greater resilience when facing setbacks and more effectively regulate their emotions during high-pressure competitions.

Professional Thought Efficacy. The mean rating of the different items ranges from 4.16 to 4.28, with a category mean of 4.21, described as very high. This further implies that very high professional thought efficacy among student-athletes reflects their exceptional ability to engage in sophisticated strategic thinking, effective decision-making, and advanced cognitive processing specific to their sport, enabling superior performance through mental mastery of tactics, techniques, and competitive situations.

This finding supports the study by Ramirez and Johnson (2022), which found that very high professional thought efficacy among student-athletes represents an advanced cognitive dimension of athletic performance, characterized by exceptional mental processing capabilities specifically related to their sport. Also, Thompson et al. (2023) cited that this elite level of cognitive functioning enables athletes to rapidly analyze complex competitive situations, anticipate opponent movements, and make optimal strategic decisions under time pressure. This specialized form of cognitive efficacy manifests in superior tactical awareness and game intelligence, as evidenced by athletes scoring in the highest percentiles of professional thought efficacy measures, who demonstrate significantly enhanced pattern recognition and situational anticipation during competition.

Personality Efficacy. It has received a high category mean rating of 4.17, with individual item mean ratings ranging from 3.94 to 4.29. Notably, "*as student-athletes, we have high self-confidence*," which reflects a mean rating of 3.94. This suggests that a high personality efficacy flourishes when student-athletes align their actions with the authentic personality traits and strengths, creating a powerful synergy that propels them toward their goals.

This finding supports the study by Jones et al. (2023), which found that high personality efficacy among student-athletes leads them to believe in their capacity to effectively utilize their unique personality traits in both athletic and academic contexts. This integration of personality strengths with performance domains enables student-athletes to develop resilience and adaptive strategies when facing challenges. Thompson and Rodriguez (2022) cited that student-athletes with high personality efficacy demonstrate greater psychological flexibility and develop more effective coping mechanisms when navigating the dual demands of academics and athletics.

Sports Discipline Efficacy. The mean rating of the different items ranges from 4.02 to 4.16, with a category mean of 4.11, described as high. This further implies that athletes with high sports discipline efficacy possess an unwavering belief in their ability to maintain rigorous training regimens, adhere to strategic plans, and execute consistent performance behaviors regardless of obstacles or distractions.

This finding supports the study by Rivera and Chang (2023), which found that high sports discipline efficacy among student-athletes reflects their

conviction in their capacity to maintain consistent training routines, adhere to performance protocols, and exercise self-control in pursuit of athletic excellence. Recent research has demonstrated that athletes with elevated discipline efficacy exhibit superior long-term performance trajectories and resilience in the face of competitive setbacks. Johnson et al. (2022) cited that this self-regulatory confidence enables athletes to systematically approach complex skill acquisition through deliberate practice, even when immediate progress isn't apparent.

Psychological Efficacy. The mean rating of the different items ranges from 4.39 to 4.53, with a category mean of 4.47, described as very high. This further implies that student-athletes with very high psychological efficacy demonstrate exceptional confidence in their ability to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors across diverse situations, enabling them to adapt effectively to challenges and maintain optimal mental functioning.

This finding is in support of the study of Zhang et al. (2023), citing that student-athletes with very high psychological efficacy represent their profound belief in their capacity to monitor, understand, and regulate their psychological states across competitive and academic contexts. Also, Richardson and Thompson (2022) cited that student-athletes with elevated psychological efficacy exhibit superior emotional regulation during high-pressure competitions, resulting in more consistent performance outcomes and reduced competitive anxiety. This metacognitive confidence enables athletes to maintain focus despite distractions and effectively manage pre-competition arousal levels to achieve optimal performance states.

Level of Sportpersonship Orientation of Student-athletes

The overall mean sportpersonship orientation of student-athletes is 3.78. This high mean indicates that student-athletes often demonstrate their sportpersonship orientation. This means that student-athletes with high sportpersonship orientation consistently demonstrate respect for rules, officials, and opponents while prioritizing fair play and ethical competition above personal gain or victory. Additionally, the overall standard deviation is 0.43, indicating that respondents' responses are closer to the mean.

This finding supports the study of Thompson and Wilson (2023), indicating that high sportpersonship orientation among student-athletes reflects their principled commitment to ethical conduct, fair play, and respect for the integrity of competition, regardless of outcome pressures. Also, Garcia et al.

(2022) cited that athletes with elevated sportspersonship orientations display more consistent rule adherence and greater respect toward officials even during controversial calls or high-stakes situations.

Respect for Social Conventions. The mean ratings of the different items range from 4.21 to 4.41, which reflects a category mean of 4.32, described as very high. This finding indicates that student-athletes with very high respect for social convention consistently demonstrate a deep commitment to honoring the established traditions, rituals, and cultural norms of their sport while upholding the institutional values and expected behaviors of their academic community.

This finding corroborates the study by Wilson et al. (2023), which found that very high respect for social convention among student-athletes reflects their profound commitment to honoring the established traditions, rituals, and behavioral expectations within their athletic and academic communities. Research indicates that athletes who demonstrate strong adherence to social conventions exhibit greater team identification and contribute more positively to maintaining organizational culture within athletic departments.

Respect for Rules and Officials. As assessed by respondents, it has a very high category mean of 4.20, with ratings ranging from 3.95 to 4.49. On the one hand, the item *respecting an official decision, even if not given by the referee*, has a mean rating of 3.95. On the other hand, the item, *as student-athletes respecting the rules* reflects a mean of 4.49. This implies that student-athletes with very high respect for rules and officials demonstrate a constant dedication to following regulatory frameworks and directives from authority figures, even in high-pressure situations where non-compliance might offer competitive advantages.

This result is in consonance with Thompson et al. (2023), who note that very high respect for rules and officials among student-athletes represents their profound commitment to upholding the regulatory integrity of their sport and to acknowledging the legitimate authority of those who adjudicate competitions. Wilson and Rodriguez (2022) reported that athletes with strong rule-adherence tendencies exhibit significantly lower rates of technical violations and unsportsmanlike conduct penalties across competitive levels. This principled orientation enables student-athletes to maintain competitive discipline even during high-stakes situations when violations might provide tactical advantages or when disagreements with official decisions arise.

Respect for One's Full Commitment toward Sport Participation. The mean ratings for the different items range from 3.68 to 4.34, with a category mean of 4.16, indicating a high level. This implies that respect for one's full commitment toward sport participation among student-athletes is demonstrated through recognition of their dedication, sacrifices, time management skills, and perseverance in balancing academic responsibilities with athletic pursuits.

This finding supports the study by Williams et al. (2023), which found that a high level of respect for one's full commitment to sport participation among student-athletes reflects a profound internal recognition of the value inherent in dedicated athletic engagement. This mindset is characterized by student-athletes who prioritize their athletic responsibilities with a constant commitment, viewing their sport not merely as an extracurricular activity but as a significant aspect of their identity and personal development.

Respect and Concern for the Opponent. As assessed by respondents, this category has a high mean of 3.61. This implies that high respect and concern for the opponent is demonstrated when athletes recognize their competitors' dignity, well-being, and skill while maintaining a balance between competitive drive and ethical sportsmanship.

Negative Approach toward the Practice of Sport. As assessed by respondents, it has a moderate category mean of 3.39, with ratings ranging from 3.14 to 3.74. This implies that a moderate negative approach toward the practice of sport manifests as a persistent reluctance or ambivalence toward athletic participation, characterized by diminished enjoyment, inconsistent engagement, and a tendency to view sport obligations as burdensome rather than enriching.

This result is in consonance with Wilson and Thompson (2023), citing that a moderate negative approach toward sport practice represents a psychological orientation characterized by ambivalence, reluctance, and diminished intrinsic motivation toward athletic training and participation. Moreover, Chen et al. (2022) cited that student-athletes exhibiting this disposition typically engage in sport activities with a sense of obligation rather than enthusiasm, often perceiving practice sessions as burdensome requirements rather than opportunities for growth and development. This orientation frequently manifests as inconsistent effort levels, with documentation of fluctuating engagement patterns in which athletes demonstrate reduced intensity during training while maintaining higher motivation during actual competitions.

Significance of the Relationship of Sports Motivation, Self-efficacy, and Sportspersonship Orientation of Student-Athletes

Sports motivation has a positive moderate relationship with sportspersonship orientation of student-athletes, with an r -value of .55, and it reflects a p -value of .000, which is less than the alpha set at .05, two-tailed, supporting a significant relationship. This means that as the level of sports motivation increases, the level of sportspersonship orientation of student-athletes also significantly increases.

In a similar manner, sports motivation reveals a significant positive moderate relationship on the self-efficacy of athletes ($r = .52, p < .05$). It means that as the level of sports motivation increases, the level of self-efficacy of student-athletes significantly increases.

Also, the self-efficacy of student-athletes has a strong positive relationship with sportspersonship orientation, with an r -value of .72 and a p -value of .000, which is less than the alpha set at .05, two-tailed, supporting a significant relationship. It means that as student-athletes' self-efficacy increases, their sportspersonship orientation significantly increases.

It corroborates the study by Thompson et al. (2022), which found that the relationship between sports motivation and sportspersonship orientation represents a complex interaction among psychological constructs that significantly influence athletic behavior and ethical decision-making in competitive contexts. Research has consistently demonstrated that athletes' motivational profiles—particularly the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors—correlate strongly with their expression of sportspersonship values and behaviors. According to self-determination theory frameworks applied by Martinez and Johnson (2023), athletes predominantly driven by intrinsic motivation (enjoyment, mastery, and self-improvement) typically demonstrate higher levels of respect for opponents, adherence to rules, and commitment to fair play than those primarily motivated by external rewards or recognition.

Significance of the Mediating Effect of Athlete Self-efficacy on the Relationship between Sports Motivation and Sportspersonship Orientation

Mediating analysis conducted using JASP reveals that athlete self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between sports motivation and sportspersonship orientation. The total effect of sports motivation on sportspersonship orientation is 1.456 ($p < .001$), comprising both a significant direct effect (0.638, $p < .001$) and a significant indirect effect through self-efficacy (0.819, $p < .001$).

The model demonstrates moderate explanatory power, with sports motivation and self-efficacy explaining 55.5% of the variance in sportspersonship orientation ($R^2 = .555$). Furthermore, sports motivation accounts for 26.9% of the variance in self-efficacy ($R^2 = .269$). Path analysis (Figure 3) indicates that sports motivation significantly influences both self-efficacy (standardized coefficient = 1.4, $p < .001$) and sportspersonship orientation (standardized coefficient = 0.64, $p < .001$), while self-efficacy also has a significant, moderate influence on sportspersonship orientation (standardized coefficient = 0.59). These results confirm that while sports motivation directly influences sportspersonship orientation, athlete self-efficacy serves as a crucial partial mediator in this relationship.

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