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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15366/rimcafd.2022.22.88.1.014>

ORIGINAL

DETERMINING THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SPORTS AMONG IRAQI YOUTH BY MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND INFLUENCED BY SPORTS ANXIETY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MOBILIZERS

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Received April 30, 2020

Accepted June 26, 2020

ABSTRACT

Youth is constantly passionate about games and sports and eager to win in highly competitive games; hence, there is a need to concentrate on creating strategies for the sports sector to improve its performance and success rate. During tournaments, team members face various physical and mental obstacles that might hamper players' performance and produce undesirable outcomes. This study examined the effect of essential components, such as sports anxiety and psychological mobilizers, on the sports attitude of young Iraqi athletes. The study also examined the function of psychological empowerment as a mediator between exogenous and endogenous dimensions. The simple random sampling technique was used to collect data, which was then analyzed using Smart-PLs. According to the study's findings, there is no significant relationship between psychological empowerment and attitude toward sports, refuting hypothesis H1. However, the hypothesized relationship between sports anxiety and psychological empowerment and attitude towards sports was found to be statistically significant, confirming hypotheses H2 and H3. The study also revealed a statistically significant association between psychological mobilizers, psychological empowerment,

and attitude toward sports, proving the validity of hypotheses H4 and H5. The current study also examined the role of psychological empowerment as a mediator between sports anxiety, psychological mobilizers, and attitude toward sports. According to the study's findings, the role of psychological empowerment as a mediator between independent and dependent variables is statistically significant.

KEYWORDS: Sports anxiety, psychological mobilizers, psychological empowerment, attitude towards sports

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

To maximize profits in a highly competitive business climate, organizations concentrate on developing strategies that satisfy the demands of their customers. Iraq has been observed to have contributed to technological development in various ways. The Iraqi population is very receptive to adopting various online forums, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which aid in establishing effective connections with businesses, enterprises, and corporations. As a result of the modern era's quickly changing environment, the Iraqi sports industry and the general people have gravitated toward adopting technological applications in everyday life. In recent years, the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other online platforms that play an important role in spreading word-of-mouth has increased. Furthermore, social media has played a significant role in establishing relationships and connections with media, firms, enterprises, and managers and allowing customers to access various products (Aljuboori et al., 2020).

It has been noted that many individuals use social media such as Facebook, Yahoo, YouTube, and Google to promote sports in Iraq, with the majority of social media users endorsing soccer teams in Iraq (Obaid & CK, 2022). Through the adoption of social media, Iraqi football clubs strengthened their relationships with fans. This demonstrates the positive role social media plays in establishing the link between sports communities and is considered an effective strategy for the survival of the sports industry. This activity has enhanced the interaction between sports and their supporters due to the rapid flow of information among interested parties and has played a beneficial role in developing marketing techniques to promote sports awareness. Furthermore, it has been asserted that sports gain a positive reaction from internet apps, particularly in Iraq (Obaid, 2022).

Players compete in worldwide gaming forums based on the performance of athletes, and their success is mostly determined by a self-motivated mindset that aids in tough rivalry. Lack of motivation frequently leads to poor performance and eventual failure; physical performance is crucial in determining total productivity since inadequate physical performance produces bad performance. The psychological investment of players determines their performance of players in international competitions; it has been reported that Iraqi players are worried, which hinders their performance (Owan et al., 2020). Various measures have been considered to enhance the performance of athletes in Iraq; nevertheless, a lack of discipline and game

intelligence has been identified as the root reason for low performance. So, it is of the utmost importance to undertake research on players that addresses methods for enhancing performance. Players' performance is affected by several elements, including intellect, confidence, discipline, self-efficacy, hope, and optimism. The players that possess these traits perform better in sports, but the absence of these positive elements reduces performance and causes players to experience anxiety and failure. The sophisticated and developed nations encourage their athletes and players to perform better by providing them with the necessities, psychological empowerment, and self-discipline that contribute to competitive performance. It has been said that qualities including self-control, confidence, autonomy, and psychological viewpoint lead to enhanced performance. It has also been noted that the performance of Iraqi players has not improved despite their clear lack of performance and bad sports-related outcomes (Lee et al., 2013; Tranaeus et al., 2021).

Prior study has demonstrated that the optimal performance of players is contingent upon their learning and psychological capital, which also contribute to boosting their performance. According to previous research, the sports industry's performance is vital to players' success, while weak performers contribute less to the industry's performance. Another study found that trainers could not increase players' starting and comprehension. However, trainers can help players overcome psychological challenges and problems (Lai et al., 2020; Asberi, 2016). The research has revealed that the mental approach to sports and the performance of athletes are impacted by the player's approach and perception of thinking to attain good outcomes. The highly motivated players and team captains are involved in greater performance and contribute to the industry's success. It has been reported that Iraqi athletes have a variety of obstacles and difficulties in reaching performance and quality criteria, as they have failed to fulfill the needed levels of performance in sports, and the vast majority of athletes have failed to satisfy the minimum performance standards (Pang et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2022).

Previous research has highlighted the influence of social life on the performance of athletes, given that athletes are integral members of society and cannot thrive without society's influence. The society and emotional condition of players have a large impact on game performance, and great self-control and personality are also cited as essential variables in players' performance, which also affect the industry's success (Simons & Bird, 2022). Society and social pressure also have an impact on the performance of athletes. Society affects the mentality of athletes, and the positive contribution and influence of society and the general public have boosted the performance of athletes. Conversely, the Manchester United football players thought the community impacted their performance because of the harsh societal opinion (Zhu et al., 2022; Stephen et al., 2022). The research studies have investigated the relationship between game enjoyment and performance. In contrast, the literature has focused on the emotions and attitudes of players towards the game, with self-control being cited as the most significant factor in performance due to the player's intense desire to win. Based on the research on the performance of cricket players in Asia, it has been determined that

society and community have an effect on the performance of players and that the performance of players is also impacted by their positive attitude toward the game (Bormann et al., 2016).

The prior research has contributed by examining the link between player performance and game success, arguing that the pleasure of the game plays a significant part in achieving game success. Prior research has also included perceived enjoyment as a moderator in assessing the attitude toward sports in Iraq. Self-discipline and self-control tend to regulate the behavior of players and individuals, which in turn influences the outcomes; in the case of players, the element of enjoyment and emotional control; the factors, including self-discipline and self-control, also influence the attitude toward games and sports. Great emotional control has been demonstrated to boost a player's odds of success in the game, while emotional intelligence increases productivity and performance (Efendi et al., 2019; Tayfur et al., 2022).

Prior research has made major contributions to examining the relevance of numerous elements in understanding the behavior and performance of players and the sports business. Yet, research on the unexplored domain of sports anxiety and psychological mobilizers is urgently required to explain the phenomena of attitude toward sports among the Iraqi young via the mediating function of psychological empowerment. This study intends to understand the phenomena of attitude toward sports among Iraqi players by concentrating on the predictors, such as sports anxiety and psychological mobilizers, that impact the attitude toward sports and empowerment as a mediator between exogenous and endogenous dimensions. This research contributes significantly to understanding the link between sports anxiety, psychological empowerment, and attitude toward sports and the interaction between psychological mobilizers, psychological empowerment, and attitude toward sports.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The lack of interest and inadequate facilities have a detrimental influence on the performance of sports clubs in Iraq. Several issues have arisen due to a lack of effective and acceptable leadership in sports clubs, notably football clubs. Due to the absence of leadership and inventive qualities that encourage the players via efficient decision-making and human resource management at sports clubs to overcome the obstacles that inhibit performance, the sports facilities have suffered greatly. This study aims to understand the phenomena of the effect of sports anxiety, psychological mobilizers, and psychological empowerment on the attitude of Iraqi athletes toward sports.

Psychological Empowerment and Attitude Towards Sports

The sports sector is one of the significant industries that represent the economic status of a nation and contribute to its economic standing. The sports sector has been identified as one of the fastest-growing industries due to the global development of all sports areas and the role of sports in national branding. The present expansion of the sports business has necessitated the

development of sports industry capacities, which have contributed to the rise of economic indicators in many nations (Ahmadi et al., 2020). Prior studies have examined the relationship between brand and sustainable link establishment with consumers in the sports industry, which may weaken or strengthen due to barriers such as market entry, price increases, marketing cost fluctuations, market share increase and decrease, and, most importantly, word-of-mouth. Prior research has also incorporated the role of oral communication in assessing customer loyalty in the sports industry. Prior research has focused on developing loyalty-based strategies that include credibility, attitude, congruence, trust, and verbal communication among customers for assessing brand loyalty in Iraq. The study revealed that credibility greatly affects congruence, and trust greatly impacts customers' attitudes toward sports goods. The influence of brand trust strengthens the relationship between customers and operators, which in turn initiates various improvements in the perspective of passion for a sports brand. The study also indicated that trust, homogeneity, and congruence substantially impacted buyers' attitudes regarding sports items in Iraq (Nouri Razi Al-Awadi et al., 2022).

In the same way that a player's living circumstances affect their performance, so do the emotions and feelings of the players play a crucial role in forming their attitudes. As a result of digitalization's contribution to the sports industry's enhanced performance, developed nations innovate and digitally improve the performance of athletes in various sports. Since the research on American baseball players revealed that motivation increases players' performance, the self-esteem of the players also influences their performance, as does the availability of facilities (Simons & Bird, 2022). It has been argued that psychological capital affects an individual's attitude and conduct. Therefore the preceding research also explored the effect of psychological capital on the performance of athletes. According to the study's findings, fear of losing also has a crucial impact on a player's performance (Nower et al., 2018; Ramezani et al., 2022). A player's self-control enhances their working methods and performance, but their emotional intelligence also affects their performance. Prior research also assessed the effect of psychological empowerment at the national and worldwide levels on the self-discipline required for achieving acceptable performance (Allahabadi et al., 2022). From the material mentioned above, the following hypothesis is derived:

H1: Psychological Empowerment Influence the Attitude towards Sports among the youth of Iraqi players

Sports Anxiety to Psychological Empowerment and Attitude Towards Sports

This portion of the study article discusses the association between sports anxiety, psychological empowerment, and attitude toward sports among Iraqi kids who are generally oriented toward sports. Anxiety remained the focus of research scholars because of its effect on performance, which has been demonstrated in sports psychology. Anxiety is also defined as the aversive emotional experience that may occur during any given situation in sports. The

players are expected to perform better during competition, particularly under pressure (Eysenck & Derakshan, 2007). Many negative effects of anxiety have been discovered in the sports sector. Anxiety is associated with the abandonment of sports activities, adversely related to happiness because it diminishes the degree of enjoyment, and it is disastrous for player performance and psychological results. Research has been done to determine the detrimental effects of anxiety on the performance of athletes in various sports. Anxiety has been cited as one of the most significant elements affecting the performance of soccer players and rock climbers, golfers, and table tennis players (Vine et al., 2011). Prior research examined the association between self-control and anxiety to predict athletes' performance while recognizing the various sports activities. According to the study, self-control affects a player's performance, yet, a few activities create anxiety, which decreases performance. The study revealed that different levels of self-control do not predict performance, whereas these subjects were shown to have lower anxiety levels. Higher self-control lessens the negative impact of anxiety in sports and has been demonstrated to improve athletes' performance while they are performing under pressure (Englert & Bertrams, 2012).

Anxiety also refers to the stress, concern, and apprehension in certain competitive situations that may arise in the context of a game and influence the player's behavior. This pattern may vary from individual to individual in transient phenomena. Prior research has demonstrated the effect of self-efficacy, self-care, and competitive anxiety on performance regarding sports anxiety's cognitive and physical components (Fransen et al., 2017). Prior research has focused on assessing the function of confidence as a mediator between anxiety and performance. Still, this study demonstrates that the age and gender of players or participants significantly influence their perception of anxiety and performance during sports activities (Correia & Rosado, 2019). The research has included sports confidence, competitiveness, and anxiety, as well as the perception of performance among basketball players, which varies by gender, age, profession, and affiliation. This study examined the association between confidence, anxiety, and perception of performance. The study also examined the role of confidence in sports as a mediator between anxiety and perceived performance. The study indicated that self-confidence predicts the coaches' leadership, which impacts performance. Performance is strongly connected with sports and self-confidence, and anxiety significantly affects performance. Self-confidence is substantially associated with anxiety and plays a major mediating function between anxiety and performance. According to the study, athletic confidence and competitive anxiety substantially influenced performance (Chun et al., 2023).

This study aims to assess the impact of sports fear on psychological empowerment and attitude toward sports among Iraqi athletes. Hence, the following assumptions are devised:

H2: Sports Anxiety Influences the Attitude towards Sports among the youth of Iraqi players

H3: Sports Anxiety Influence the Psychological Empowerment among the youth of Iraqi players

Psychological Mobilizers and Psychological Empowerment and Attitude Towards Sports

This research component aims to explain the connection between psychological mobilizers and psychological empowerment and the connection between psychological mobilizers and attitudes toward sports. This study aims to investigate the empirical evidence between the constructs, as the current research argues that psychological mobilizers have a tendency to influence the psychological empowerment of sports and also have a tendency to predict the behavior of individual players. The attitude of players depends on several factors, with psychological mobilizers believed to be the most significant variable influencing the attitude of players towards sports.

Prior research has focused on self-discipline, which is considered essential for performance. Sports require self-control to achieve a higher level of performance, and players whose behavior is not regulated according to the situation face negative consequences that affect their performance and productivity. According to previous research, a lack of behavioral control has a detrimental effect on performance (Elrayah, 2022). Emotional intelligence and attitude affect performance, as the level of emotional intelligence and attitude determines the level of performance; the greater the emotional control, the greater the likelihood of success due to a positive outlook and probability of success; and the lower the emotional control, the lower the likelihood of success (Tayfur et al., 2022). Previous research has demonstrated that an unfavorable attitude toward sports affects athletes' productivity and unacceptable performance (Zhang et al., 2021). The study conducted on Japanese hockey players found that good emotional control enables them to concentrate on the game rather than engaging in useless or pointless activities; the study established the relationship between emotional management and success; the self-control of the players enables them to harvest success in sports activities; the enjoyable working environment, the positive association with the coach, and working well influence the performance of a play; and the enjoyable working environment, the positive association with the coach, and working well affect the performance of the play. Personal emotions are vital in influencing players' performance, and excellent emotional control increases players' confidence, which contributes to their attitude toward the opponent and improves their odds of victory (Leitner et al., 2022; Simons & Bird, 2022).

Due to these emotions and emotional intelligence, affective intelligence influences decision-making in sports. According to research done in the education sector, the broad feeling of emotions like wrath, love, gender, nationality, religion, and race impact decision-making (Price & Caouette, 2018). The researchers have addressed emotions such as rage as a catalyst for academic and social action, which may result in various workplace-related effects as well as inequity and injustice. The psychological mobilizers, such as the interplay of emotions, can bring about complications and influence the performance and attitude of persons. The moral psychology of rage examines the phenomena of sentiments that inspire players to perform such behaviors; emotions and psychological mobilizers influence persons in various ways (Peterson, 2017; Phoenix, 2020).

This study argues that psychological mobilizers can influence psychological empowerment and attitude toward a particular decision. Since this study focuses on sports, the argument is that psychological mobilizers and psychological empowerment influence attitudes toward sports among Iraqi players. Hence, the following theories are developed:

H4: *Psychological Mobilizers Influence the Attitude towards Sports among the youth of Iraqi players*

H5: *Psychological Mobilizers Influence the Psychological Empowerment among the youth of Iraqi players*

Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment

To examine the link between external and endogenous dimensions, this study utilized the concept of psychological empowerment. Due to its influence on various behavior-related outcomes that benefit individuals and organizations, psychological empowerment has garnered a great deal of scholarly interest. It has been observed that empowerment is one of the key factors that help knowledge workers in a competitive environment for innovation and creativity (Abbas & Raja, 2015). The psychological requirement of employees or people is a sense of autonomy, which enables them to encourage good action. Organizations seek to improve psychological empowerment to reap the benefits of good management techniques that promote the tasks' long-term objectives. Many studies have emphasized the significance of psychological empowerment in achieving individuals' happiness, loyalty, and commitment (Joo & Jo, 2017). The study demonstrated a favorable relationship between psychological empowerment and work satisfaction. Organizational commitment and desire to leave are similarly impacted by empowerment and mediated by psychological capital. The positive relationship between psychological empowerment and capital has been demonstrated. The study found that effective psychological empowerment can produce a positive relationship between psychological capital and employee attitudes, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to leave the organization (Shah et al., 2019).

Prior research was conducted in the banking sector to explain the knowledge-sharing behavior of employees influenced by psychological empowerment and a high-performance work system, with organizational identification mediating between psychological empowerment and a high-performance work system and psychological empowerment mediating between a high-performance work system and knowledge-sharing behavior. The study demonstrated a beneficial relationship between a high-performance work structure, knowledge-sharing behavior, and psychological empowerment. According to the study, organizational identity moderates the association between a high-performance work system and psychological empowerment. It was shown that psychological empowerment modulates the association between high-performance work systems and knowledge-sharing behavior (Abbasi et al., 2021). Another study examined the impact of psychological empowerment and agile antecedents on the link between inventive behavior and project performance. The impact of psychological empowerment as a mediator in explaining imaginative behavior and project

performance was also evaluated. Agile methods, such as autonomy, communication, incremental development, and team diversity, were evaluated to explain psychological empowerment, which explains inventive behavior and project performance. According to the findings, team autonomy and communication lead to psychological empowerment, influencing innovative behavior. Furthermore, the statistically significant mediation function of psychological empowerment between agile techniques, innovative behavior, and project performance was obvious (Malik et al., 2021).

Previous research has demonstrated that psychological empowerment tends to mediate between independent and dependent factors. This study examines the function of psychological empowerment as a mediator between sports anxiety, psychological mobilizers, and attitude toward sports. Hence, the following theories are developed:

H6: Psychological Empowerment Mediates the Relationship between Sports Anxiety and Attitude Towards Sports among the youth of Iraqi players

H7: Psychological Empowerment Mediates the Relationship between Psychological mobilizers and Attitude Towards Sports among the youth of Iraqi players

Research Framework

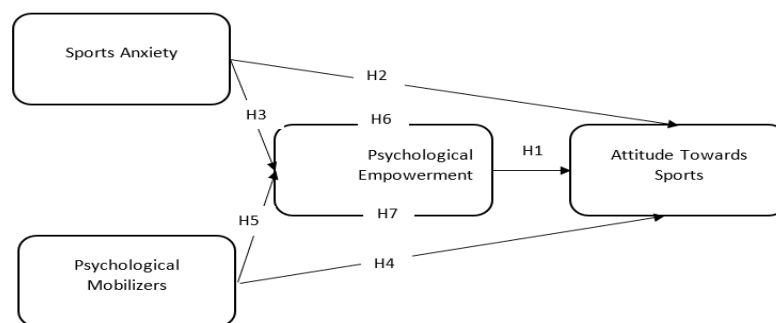


Fig 1. Research Framework

Research Methodology

This study is quantitative and cross-sectional since questionnaires were used to collect data. The quantitative character of the investigation necessitates the evaluation of the validity and dependability of constructs. This study also investigates hypotheses to determine the link between the study's constructs. Each questionnaire item was evaluated on a 5-point scale, and data were collected from young athletes in the sports sector of Iraq, mostly from Baghdad football teams. Due to their determined reliability and validity, the measuring scales for all components were borrowed from previous research investigations. The basic random sample method was used, and 600 copies were circulated to increase the response rate; in the end, 308 usable replies were collected for data analysis.

Measurement scales

The five-item scale for measuring attitude toward sports was borrowed

from the research of (Jawad, Shuit, et al., 2022). The four-item scale for measuring sports anxiety was taken from the study (Jawad, Kadhim, et al., 2022). The 12-item psychological empowerment evaluation scale was derived from the research (Abbasi et al., 2021). The five-item psychological mobilizers measuring scale was derived from the analysis of (Jawad, Shuit, et al., 2022). Each item was evaluated using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly disagree.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This part evaluates the link between the variables and the constructions. This part comprises two phases since the Smart-PLs were applied for data processing in this investigation. The first part is the measurement model assessment, which considers the reliability and validity of the variables. The Cronbach alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted are used to determine the reliability and validity of the concept. At this step, the discriminant validity is also determined. The assessment of the measurement model is conducted using the PLS algorithm of Smart-PLS, and the bootstrapping technique of Smart-PLS conducts the second phase.

Measurement Model Assessment

This research portion proves the construct's reliability and validity using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and extracted average variance. The minimum acceptable value for Cronbach alpha must be greater than 0.70; similarly, the minimum acceptable value for CR must be higher than 0.70 for the acceptability of the constructs' reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) for acceptance must stay more than 0.50. (Hair et al., 2012).

Table 1 below presents the values of Cronbach alpha, CR, and AVE

Table 1. Constructs' reliability assessment

Constructs	Cronbach alpha α	CR	AVE
AttTS	0.754	0.666	0.521
SA	0.886	0.801	0.623
PsyMob	0.872	0.723	0.543
PsyEmp	0.901	0.881	0.591

Note: AttTS (Attitude Towards Sports), SA (Sports Anxiety), PsyMob (psychological mobilizer), PsyEmp (Psychological Empowerment)

Discriminant Validity

This part investigated the discriminant validity of the study's constructs; the square root of AVE must stay greater than the constructs' correlation value. The diagonal values must be greater than all other values in the column. The discriminant validity is evaluated using the criteria established by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Table 2 demonstrates the discriminant validity.

Table 2. Discriminant validity

	AttTS	PsyMob	PsyEmp	SA
AttTS	0.721			
PsyMob	0.561	0.736		
PsyEmp	0.453	0.675	0.769	
SA	0.432	0.431	0.561	0.789

Note: AttTS (Attitude Towards Sports), SA (Sports Anxiety), PsyMob (psychological mobilizer), PsyEmp (Psychological Empowerment Measurement Model Assessment)

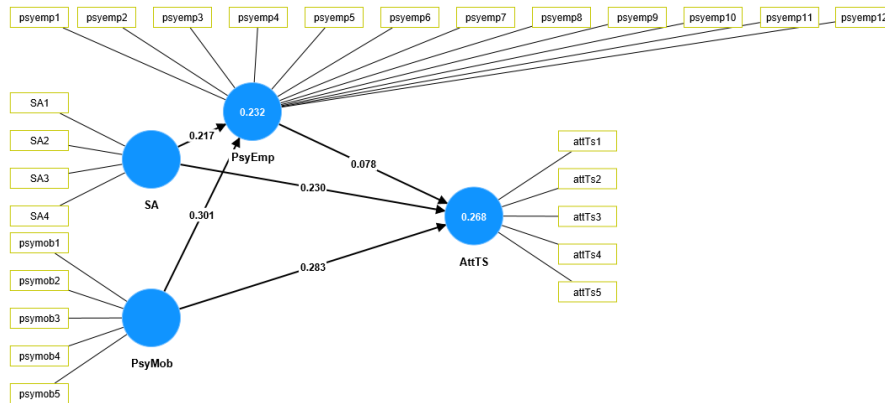


Fig 2: Measurement Model Assessment (MMA) Note: AttTS (Attitude Towards Sports), SA (Sports Anxiety), PsyMob (psychological mobilizer), PsyEmp (Psychological Empowerment)

Structural Equation Model (SEM)

This section presents the structural equation model (SEM), which investigates the framework's relationship between variables. This phase is assessed through the bootstrapping method of Smart-PLs that predict the significance or insignificance of the relationship. The relationship between variables can be evaluated on the β value, t-statistics, and p-value. The t-value must remain higher than 1.96, and the p-value must be lower than 0.05, as the error margin in social sciences is considered 5%. Relationship significance depends upon the t-value and p-value (Hair et al., 2012). There are five direct hypotheses and two indirect mediating hypotheses that have been tested in this research paper. The direct hypotheses are tested in the first phase, and the mediating hypotheses are investigated in the second phase.

Table 3. below demonstrates the results of direct hypotheses.

Hypotheses	β	t-value	p-value
PsyEmp \rightarrow AttTS	0.078	0.980	0.327
SA \rightarrow AttTS	0.230	2.421	0.015
SA \rightarrow PsyEmp	0.217	2.339	0.019
PsyMob \rightarrow AttTS	0.230	3.145	0.002
PsyMob \rightarrow PsyEmp	0.301	2.421	0.001

Note: AttTS (Attitude Towards Sports), SA (Sports Anxiety), PsyMob (psychological mobilizer), PsyEmp (Psychological Empowerment)

Hypothesis H1 was investigated, and the results of Smart-PLS demonstrate that ($\beta = 0.078$, t-value = 0.980, p-value = 0.327); this shows the insignificance of the relationship. Hypothesis H2 investigates the relationship between sports anxiety and attention towards sports, and the results show that ($\beta = 0.230$, t-value = 2.421, p-value = 0.015); this shows the significance of the relationship. Hypothesis H3 also investigated the relationship between sports anxiety and psychological empowerment as the results show that ($\beta = 0.217$, t-value = 2.339, p-value = 0.019); this shows the significance of the relationship. Hypothesis H4 investigates the relationship between psyMob and attitude towards sports, and the results show that ($\beta = 0.230$, t-value = 3.145, p-value = 0.002); this shows the significance of the relationship. Hypothesis H5 investigates the relationship between psyMob and psyEmp, and the

results show that ($\beta = 0.301$, t -value = 2.421, p -value = 0.001); this shows the significance of the relationship.

Indirect relationship assessment

Table 4. below presents the indirect mediating hypothesized relationship and its results.

Hypotheses	β	t -value	p -value
SA \rightarrow PsyEmp \rightarrow AttTS	0.117	1.981	0.019
PsyMob \rightarrow PsyEmp \rightarrow AttTS	0.121	3.143	0.001

Note: AttTS (Attitude Towards Sports), SA (Sports Anxiety), PsyMob (psychological mobilizer), PsyEmp (Psychological Empowerment)

The mediating role of psychological empowerment is investigated between independent and dependent variables, hypotheses H6 and H7 are mediating relationships and was assessed through the bootstrapping method of PLS. Table 4 above demonstrates the mediating relationship between exogenous and endogenous constructs. Hypothesis H6 investigates the mediating role of psychological empowerment between sports anxiety and attitude towards sports, the mediating role of psychological empowerment between sports anxiety and attitude towards sports, and the results show that ($\beta = 0.117$, t -value = 1.981, p -value = 0.019); this shows the significance of the relationship. Hypothesis H7 also investigates the mediating relationship that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between psychological mobilizers and attitudes towards sports among players of Iraq. The results of the mediating hypothesis show that ($\beta = 0.121$, t -value = 3.143, p -value = 0.001); this shows the significance of the relationship.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on the sports sector of Iraq to discover how sports anxiety, psychological mobilizers, and the role of psychological empowerment as a mediator influence the interest in sports. The study examined the relationships between psychological empowerment and attitude toward sports, sports anxiety and psychological empowerment, sports anxiety and attitude toward sports, psychological mobilizers and psychological empowerment, and psychological mobilizers and attitudes toward sports among Iraqi athletes. In addition, the role of psychological empowerment as a mediator between independent and dependent variables of the research framework. The study utilized simple random sampling to acquire data from Iraqi players in Baghdad via a questionnaire. The data was analyzed using Smart-PLs and it determined that sports anxiety influences psychological empowerment and attitude toward sports. Psychological mobilizers were also statistically significant with psychological empowerment and attitude towards sports. The study also found that psychological empowerment has a statistically significant mediating function between external and endogenous dimensions. The outcomes of the study imply that effective strategies must be developed and implemented to pique Iraqi adolescents' interest in sports. In addition to incorporating psychological empowerment, which tends to promote the development of an attitude toward sports among Iraqi youth, the study's findings contribute to developing strategies to ensure the sports' appeal by reducing anxiety and increasing the mobilizers that influence the attitude toward sports. Further research can be undertaken by incorporating more

sports and mental health-related characteristics, such as the perspective of emotional intelligence. Future research may include large sample size and international players to generalize the findings and establish comprehensive sports planning and tactics for a highly competitive era.

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