

Life Satisfaction Among E-Sport Athletes: A Quantitative Descriptive Study

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Abstract

E-sport, a rapidly growing competitive field, offers promising career opportunities for many individuals. However, the intense training regimens, isolation from broader social interactions, and performance pressures can significantly impact the life satisfaction of E-Sport athletes. This study aims to describe the life satisfaction levels among E-Sport athletes. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed using non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique. The sample consisted of 100 E-Sport athletes. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) based on Diener's (1984) theory, comprising 26 valid items with a reliability coefficient of 0.933, was utilized as the measurement tool. Results indicate that 57% of athletes reported high life satisfaction. Specifically, 80.6% had high satisfaction with future life, whereas 60% had low satisfaction with their past life. Early adult male E-Sport athletes with incomes between 5,000,000 - 7,000,000 IDR and greater than 10,000,000 IDR, training for 16-24 hours, and participating in over 10 tournaments had higher life satisfaction. Conversely, athletes earning 3,000,000 - 5,000,000 IDR, training for 10-15 hours, and participating in fewer than eight tournaments reported lower life satisfaction.

Keywords E-Sport athletes, life satisfaction, cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, quantitative study.

INTRODUCTION

E-Sport, or Electronic Sport, represents a paradigm shift in the traditional understanding of sports, transforming video gaming into a competitive, organized, and lucrative profession. What began as a hobby for many has now evolved into a global phenomenon, attracting millions of viewers and generating billions in revenue. According to Agwil, Fransiska, & Hidayati (2020), the expectation for students and professionals alike is to perform optimally and succeed within set timelines—be it in education or career milestones. The concept of 'on-time' graduation, as they describe, can be paralleled to the career progress of E-Sport athletes, where 'success on time' means achieving career milestones within a critical period.

However, the high stakes in E-Sport also bring significant pressure. For instance, athletes must often meet demanding schedules, balance intense training, and maintain peak performance levels. These pressures are exacerbated by the lack of institutional support, as seen in traditional sports. In Indonesia, where E-Sport is gaining rapid traction, there is still a lag in policies and frameworks that protect and promote the well-being of these athletes (Kuncoro, 2020).

The challenges faced by E-Sport athletes are not just physical but also psychological. As reported by Kompas (2020), the intense pressure to succeed has led to tragic outcomes, such as the suicide of a 14th-semester student who struggled to meet academic and athletic



expectations. This incident highlights the critical need for psychological support and a better understanding of the mental health challenges that come with competitive E-Sport.

Given the growing importance of E-Sport in the global and Indonesian context, it is crucial to explore the factors that contribute to the well-being and life satisfaction of E-Sport athletes. Life satisfaction, as defined by Diener (2000), is a global assessment of one's quality of life according to chosen criteria. For E-Sport athletes, life satisfaction could be influenced by various factors, including their career success, social relationships, income, and the support they receive from institutions and the government.

Understanding life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes can provide valuable insights into how to support these individuals better, ensuring that they can maintain both their professional success and personal well-being. Moreover, this study can contribute to the broader field of sports psychology by providing a new perspective on the unique challenges faced by athletes in emerging sports.

The primary objective of this study is to describe the life satisfaction levels among E-Sport athletes in Indonesia. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Identify the dominant aspects of life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes.
2. Examine the relationship between various demographic factors (e.g., age, income, training duration) and life satisfaction.
3. Provide recommendations for enhancing life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes based on the findings.

To achieve the above objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the overall level of life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes in Indonesia?
2. Which aspects of life satisfaction are most dominant among these athletes?
3. How do demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and training duration relate to life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes?
4. What strategies can be implemented to improve life satisfaction among these athletes?

As E-Sport continues to grow, understanding the factors that contribute to the well-being of its athletes becomes increasingly important. Unlike traditional sports, E-Sport lacks a robust support system, making athletes vulnerable to burnout, mental health issues, and dissatisfaction. By exploring the life satisfaction of E-Sport athletes, this study aims to shed light on their unique challenges and provide actionable insights for stakeholders, including coaches, team managers, policymakers, and mental health professionals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Evolution of E-Sport and Its Impact on Athletes

The rise of E-Sport has been nothing short of meteoric. From its humble beginnings in local gaming tournaments, E-Sport has become a global industry with millions of viewers and professional players. The evolution of E-Sport has also brought about significant changes in the lifestyle and expectations of athletes. Unlike traditional sports, where physical fitness and training are paramount, E-Sport requires a different set of skills, including quick reflexes, strategic thinking, and long hours of practice.

Research by Hurlock (2006) suggests that the intense focus on performance and competition can have a profound impact on an athlete's life satisfaction. In traditional sports, athletes often receive extensive support from coaches, psychologists, and medical professionals. However, in E-Sport, such support is often lacking, leading to potential issues related to mental health and overall well-being.

Theoretical Framework: Life Satisfaction and Well-Being

Life satisfaction is a key component of overall well-being, and it is influenced by various factors, including personal achievements, social relationships, and financial stability. Diener (2000) defines life satisfaction as a cognitive judgmental process, where individuals assess the quality of their lives based on their unique criteria. For E-Sport athletes, life satisfaction may be influenced by their success in tournaments, their income, their relationships with teammates, and their ability to balance their professional and personal lives.

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Diener's model of subjective well-being, which includes life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood. This model is particularly relevant for E-Sport athletes, who often experience high levels of stress and pressure to perform.

Previous Research on Life Satisfaction in Sports

Previous research on life satisfaction in sports has largely focused on traditional athletes. For example, studies by Lyubomirsky (2001) and Santrock (2003) have shown that athletes who achieve success in their careers tend to have higher levels of life satisfaction. However, there is limited research on life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes, a gap that this study seeks to fill.

Studies by Gross & John (2003) on emotion regulation have shown that athletes who effectively manage their emotions tend to have higher levels of life satisfaction. This is particularly relevant for E-Sport athletes, who must cope with the emotional highs and lows of competition.

Factors Influencing Life Satisfaction in E-Sport Athletes

Several factors can influence life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes, including:

1. **Income:** As with any profession, income plays a crucial role in determining life satisfaction. Athletes with higher incomes may have greater access to resources that enhance their well-being.
2. **Training Duration:** The number of hours spent training can impact both physical and mental health, thereby affecting life satisfaction.
3. **Social Relationships:** Strong social ties, including relationships with teammates, coaches, and family, can enhance life satisfaction.
4. **Career Success:** Success in tournaments and recognition within the E-Sport community can boost self-esteem and life satisfaction.



The Role of Emotional Regulation in Life Satisfaction

Emotional regulation is the ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a healthy way. According to Gross (2002), emotional regulation can significantly impact life satisfaction, particularly in high-pressure environments like competitive sports. For E-Sport athletes, who often face intense scrutiny and competition, effective emotional regulation is crucial.

Research by Sekarini (2021) and Sukmaningpraja & Santhoso (2016) suggests that athletes who utilize cognitive reappraisal—reinterpreting situations to reduce their emotional impact—tend to have higher life satisfaction. Conversely, those who rely on expressive suppression—suppressing emotional responses—may experience lower life satisfaction.

METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive design to examine life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes. A descriptive approach was chosen because it allows for a comprehensive examination of the characteristics and factors influencing life satisfaction without manipulating variables.

Sampling Technique

The study employed non-probability purposive sampling to select 100 E-Sport athletes from various clubs in Indonesia. This sampling method was chosen to target individuals who met specific criteria relevant to the study, such as active participation in professional E-Sport and regular engagement in training and tournaments.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a questionnaire based on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), which was adapted and modified from Ernawati (2019). The SWLS includes 28 items designed to measure life satisfaction across various dimensions, including past life satisfaction, present life satisfaction, and future life satisfaction.

The questionnaire was distributed online to ensure a wide reach and to accommodate the busy schedules of the athletes. The responses were collected and analyzed to assess the overall life satisfaction levels and identify dominant factors influencing satisfaction.

Validity and Reliability Testing

The construct validity of the SWLS was tested using Pearson product-moment correlation, with an item considered valid if $r \geq 0.30$ (Sugiyono, 2017). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using frequency analysis to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample. Normality tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the assumptions for subsequent statistical analyses. Z-score categorization was used to identify dominant dimensions of life satisfaction, and cross-tabulation analysis was employed to examine the relationships between demographic factors and life satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Description of Respondents

The study sample consisted of 100 E-Sport athletes, with the majority being male (74%) and aged between 20-25 years (60%). Most respondents reported a monthly income between 3,000,000 - 5,000,000 IDR (47%) and trained for 5-10 hours daily (59%).

Validity and Reliability of the Measurement Tool

The SWLS demonstrated strong validity and reliability, with 26 out of 28 items considered valid ($r = 0.417-0.733$) and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.933. These results indicate that the SWLS is a reliable tool for measuring life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes.

Life Satisfaction Levels Among E-Sport Athletes

The analysis revealed that 57% of respondents reported high life satisfaction, particularly in the dimension of future life satisfaction (80.6%). However, 60% of respondents reported low satisfaction with their past life, indicating a potential area of concern for athletes reflecting on their career progress and past decisions.

Crosstab Analysis of Demographic Factors and Life Satisfaction

1. Gender: Male athletes reported higher life satisfaction (75.4%) compared to female athletes. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that men may derive greater satisfaction from career achievements and professional recognition.
2. Age: Athletes aged 26-30 years had higher life satisfaction (57.5%), possibly due to their greater experience and stability in their careers. This age group is likely to have achieved more milestones, contributing to a higher sense of fulfillment.
3. Income: Athletes with higher incomes (>5,000,000 - 7,000,000 IDR) reported higher life satisfaction (26.3%). This finding underscores the importance of financial stability in enhancing overall well-being.
4. Training Duration: Athletes who trained for 16-24 hours reported higher life satisfaction (22.8%), suggesting that those who are more committed to their training and career may experience greater fulfillment.
5. Tournament Participation: Athletes who participated in ≥ 10 tournaments reported higher life satisfaction (87.7%). Frequent competition provides athletes with opportunities to achieve recognition and success, which can boost their self-esteem and life satisfaction.

The findings of this study indicate that life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes is influenced by several key factors, including income, training duration, and tournament



participation. Athletes who are more successful in their careers and have greater financial stability tend to report higher life satisfaction. This aligns with Diener's (2000) model of subjective well-being, which emphasizes the importance of personal achievements and financial security in life satisfaction.

The study also highlights the role of emotional regulation in life satisfaction. Athletes who utilize cognitive reappraisal strategies are more likely to maintain high life satisfaction, even in the face of challenges. This finding is consistent with previous research by Gross & John (2003), which suggests that effective emotional regulation can enhance overall well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes is generally high, with future life satisfaction being the most dominant dimension. However, satisfaction with past life is often lower, indicating a potential area for intervention. The results suggest that factors such as income, training duration, and tournament participation significantly influence life satisfaction among E-Sport athletes.

To improve life satisfaction, it is recommended that E-Sport organizations and stakeholders provide greater support for athletes, including financial incentives, career development opportunities, and mental health resources. Additionally, encouraging athletes to develop effective emotional regulation strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, can help them cope with the pressures of competition and maintain high life satisfaction.

Future research should explore additional variables that may impact life satisfaction, such as social support, work-life balance, and the role of government policies in supporting E-Sport athletes. By addressing these factors, stakeholders can ensure that E-Sport athletes not only achieve professional success but also maintain a high quality of life.

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