

**PSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF  
STUDENTS' ATHLETES IN SPORTS IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN KINETICS  
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SCIENCE.**

**SEPTEMBER, 2023.**

## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned verify that this work has carried out by **AWOKE CHIBUEZE AWOKE** with matric. Number **EDU1904419** of the department of human kinetics and sports science, faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo state in partial fulfillment of the requirements of B. Sc(Ed. ) degree in Human kinetics and, sports science.



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28/09/23

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to Almighty God, always being a Father, my very present help in terms of need and my sufficiency

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am immensely grateful to God Almighty, who made it possible for me to initiate and accomplish this research work.

I articulate my sincere gratitude with special thanks to my supervisor Prof Elvis. I Agbonlahor who happens to be an icon, mentor, motivator, friend, and a corrector for his fatherly roles he played throughout the course of this research work. His input at the planning and execution stages, gave direction to the work, his academic, moral and leadership qualities were propelling forces and so were he constructive criticisms

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## ABSTRACT

This work is aimed at investigating the psychological variables affecting the performance of student athletes in sport in the university of Benin. Eight research questions were raised for the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of study consisted of 633 student athletes of the University of Benin. The data was collected using simple random sampling technique and a sample size of 127 student athletes from University of Benin. The research instrument used for the study was a self-structured questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was subjected to scrutiny and the test-retest reliability 0.87 indicating that the instrument was reliable. The data was analyzed using frequency and standard deviation for the analysis of the research questions. The results revealed that psychology plays a crucial role in student athletes sporting performance and coping strategies such as positive self-talk confidence, mental vigor and relaxation are known to boost performances.

In conclusion student athletes are attempting to get better in sports performance but the lack of full knowledge on sport psychology and the failure to practice the known coping strategies leads to a decline in their sports performance, they should also train together and work along with their coaches by having a close relationship with them and share experiences with them, all these improve their mindset and help to improve their performances. Recommendations are made that student athletes should expose themselves to expected stimuli during training in order to enhance their performance and be able to peak in competitions and keeping close to their coaches which help the coach to know when the student athletes are psychologically imbalanced.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the Study**

The study of psychological factors affecting athletic performance is a relatively new field, but it has gained increasing attention in recent years. This is because it has been recognized that mental skills play an important role in the success of athletes, particularly student athletes.

Early research in sports psychology focused mainly on the physical and technical aspects of sports. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, researchers began to explore the psychological factors that affect athletic performance. This led to the development of theories such as self-efficacy, motivation, anxiety, and goal setting.

More recently, there has been an increasing interest in understanding the role of psychological variances in the performance of student athletes. Studies have shown that factors such as self-confidence, resilience, and emotional intelligence can affect the performance of student athletes. For example, a study by Wilson and colleagues (2017) found that athletes who had higher levels of self-confidence and emotional intelligence had better performance outcomes.

Despite the growing body of research on the topic, there is still much to be understood about the psychological factors that affect student athletes in particular. It is important to study these factors in order to develop effective training programs that address the mental skills necessary for success in sports. This study aims to contribute to this area of research by exploring the relationship between psychological variances and the performance of student athletes in sports.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "sports" is defined as activities involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment. It can also refer to a person who engages in sports or an activity involving physical exertion and skill. In addition, the term "sports" can be used as an adjective to describe things related to sports, such as sports equipment or sports broadcasting.

One definition of psychology was provided by William James, a prominent psychologist and philosopher in the late 19th and early 20th century. In his influential textbook "The Principles of Psychology" (1890), he defined psychology as "the science of mental life, both of its phenomena and of their conditions" (p. 4). James viewed psychology as the study of consciousness, including perception, attention, memory, reasoning, and emotion, and he believed that it was essential to understand the relationship between mental

processes and their underlying biological and environmental factors. This definition has been influential in shaping the field of psychology and continues to be cited and discussed today.

Psychology is an academic and applied discipline involving the scientific study of mental processes and behavior. Psychology seeks to explain the mental processes and behavior of individuals. Psychology also refers to the application of such knowledge to various spheres of human activity, including relating to individuals' daily lives and the treatment of mental illness.

The background and context of the study on "Psychological Variance Affecting Performance of Student Athletes in Sports" is centered around the importance of understanding the psychological factors that influence the performance of student athletes in sports.

Participation in sports is not only a way for students to maintain good health and develop social skills, but it also provides an opportunity for personal growth and development. However, the success of an athlete in a sporting event is not solely determined by their physical capabilities. Psychological factors such as motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, stress, and mental toughness can significantly affect athletic performance.

Moreover, the performance of student athletes in sports is essential to educational institutions, as it can enhance the reputation of the school and attract potential students. Therefore, understanding the psychological factors that influence student athletes' performance can help institutions develop effective training programs that improve their performance in sports.

Overall, the background and context of the study highlight the need to explore the psychological factors that influence the performance of student athletes in sports and the significance of the study in developing better strategies to enhance their athletic performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the recognition of the importance of psychological factors in athletic performance, the impact of psychological variances on the performance of student athletes in sports has been largely ignored. While physical training and nutrition are often emphasized, mental skills training is not always given the same attention. As a result, student athletes may not be receiving the support they need to perform at their best. This study aims to address this gap in knowledge by exploring the relationship between psychological variances and the performance of student athletes in sports.

There is a lack of research and understanding regarding the specific psychological factors that affect different sports and different levels of competition, making it challenging to develop tailored psychological training programs for athletes.

Many athletes struggle with mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, which can negatively impact their sports performance, yet there is a lack of resources and support available for addressing these issues in the sports context.

The pressure to win and perform at a high level in sports can lead to unhealthy psychological states, such as perfectionism and burnout, which can have long-term negative consequences for an athlete's mental and physical health.

There is a need for more comprehensive and evidence-based approaches to evaluating and enhancing psychological skills in athletes, which may require interdisciplinary collaboration between sports psychologists, coaches, and other healthcare professionals.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the psychological factors that affect the performance of student athletes in sports?
2. Does motivation influence the performance of athletes in sports?.
3. What are the expected stressor that affect the performance of athletes in sporting activities?

4. To what extent does aggression determine the performance of student athletes?.
5. Does tension influence students athletes performance in sports?.
6. Does anxiety influence athletes performance in sports?
7. Does self-efficiency have influence on student athletes sports performance?.
8. What are the coping strategies to be employed to manage this psychological variables affecting sports performance?.

### **Hypotheses**

There is no significant relationship between psychological factors and the performance of student athletes in sports.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between psychological variances and the performance of student athletes in sports. Specifically, the study aims to:

- To investigate the psychological variables affecting athletes sports performance .
- To identity how motivation influence the performance of athletes
- To explore the affected stressor that affects the performances of athletes.
- To dig out the role of tension on effectiveness of athletes.

- To assess the extent of aggression on the performance of athletes.
- To know the effects of self-efficiency on the performance of athletes.
- To know the coping strategies to be employed to manage these psychological variances

Overall, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on sports psychology and to provide practical insights for those working with student athletes. By better understanding the psychological factors that affect athletic performance, coaches and trainers can develop more effective training programs that help student athletes achieve their full potential in sports and beyond.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is multi-faceted. Understanding the psychological variances affecting the performance of student athletes in sports has practical implications for coaches, trainers, and educators who work with student athletes. The following are some of the potential benefits of this study:

Improve athletic performance: By identifying the psychological factors that affect athletic performance, coaches and trainers can develop more effective training programs that

address the mental skills necessary for success in sports. This, in turn, can lead to improved athletic performance among student athletes.

Enhance psychological well-being: Focusing on the mental well-being of student athletes can have a positive impact on their overall psychological health. Implementing recommendations to improve the psychological well-being of student athletes can lead to increased self-confidence, motivation, and resilience.

Inform policy decisions: The results of this study can inform policy decisions related to sports programs in schools and universities. For example, schools may choose to invest in mental health resources for student athletes based on the findings of this study.

Contribute to the field of sports psychology: This study adds to the growing body of research on sports psychology, particularly in the area of psychological variances affecting student athletes. It can contribute to the development of new theories and models for understanding the psychological factors that affect athletic performance.

Create awareness to athletes on psychological factors which can influence their performance.

In summary, this study has the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of sports psychology and can have practical implications for improving the performance and well-being of student athletes.

## **Scopes and Limitations of the Study**

The scope of this study focuses on the relationship between psychological variances and the performance of student athletes in sports. It aims to explore the different psychological factors that may affect athletic performance, how these variances may differ across different types of sports, and the potential impact of psychological skills training on student athlete performance. The study also aims to develop recommendations for coaches, trainers, and educators to improve the psychological well-being and performance of student athletes.

However, this study has some limitations. First, the study will only focus on a specific population of student athletes in a particular geographic location, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study will rely on self-reported measures of psychological variables, which may be subject to response biases. Third, the study will only examine the short-term impact of psychological skills training, and it may not capture the long-term effects of such training on athletic performance.

Finally, the study may be affected by extraneous variables such as the athletes' physical health, their access to training facilities, and their level of support from coaches and trainers, among others. These variables may have an impact on athletic performance, and

it may be difficult to control for all of them in the study. Despite these limitations, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the relationship between psychological variances and the performance of student athletes in sports.

### **Definitions of Terms**

**Psychology:** this is the scientific study of human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context.

**Psychological variances:** Individual differences or variations in psychological traits, characteristics, or states that may impact an individual's behavior, emotions, or cognitive processes. Examples of psychological variances that may affect athletic performance include self-esteem, anxiety, motivation, self-efficacy, resilience, and coping skills.

**Student athlete:** A student who participates in sports as a member of a school, college, or university team. Student athletes typically balance academic demands with the demands of sports training and competitions.

**Performance:** The extent to which an athlete achieves their goals or objectives in a given sport, event, or competition. Performance may be measured by various indicators, such as speed, accuracy, endurance, agility, or overall success in a given game or season.

Sports psychology: The study of how psychological factors, such as motivation, cognition, emotions, and behaviors, impact athletic performance and how participation in sports impacts psychological functioning. Sports psychology aims to help athletes optimize their performance, enhance their mental skills, and cope with the psychological demands of sports.

Self-efficacy: An individual's belief in their own ability to perform a specific task or achieve a specific goal. Self-efficacy is often linked to athletic performance, as athletes who have high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to believe they can achieve their goals and persist in the face of challenges or setbacks.

Anxiety: A state of heightened arousal and apprehension that may result from the anticipation of a stressful event or situation, such as a sports competition. Anxiety may impact athletic performance by interfering with focus, attention, and motor coordination.

Motivation: The drive or willingness to engage in a specific activity or behavior, such as sports participation. Motivation may be influenced by various internal and external factors, such as personal goals, social norms, rewards, and feedback.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter was organized under the following various headings related to the subject under discussion, the sub headings are as follows.

- Conceptual framework
- Stress and sports performance
- pressure and sports performance
- anxiety and sports performance
- Aggression and sports performance
- Tension and it's relation to sports performance.
- Motivation and sports performance
- Coping strategies to be employed to manage psychological variances.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

Psychology factors are the mental factors that help or prevent sports people from being in the right "frame of mind" to perform well. Sports psychology in the sport's service that

seeks to understand psychological and mental factors that affect performance in sports, physical activity and exercise and the team performance.

In 1996, the European federation of sports psychology (FEPSAC)) produced such a broad definition which slightly complicated needs. Sports psychology is the study of the psychological basis, process and efforts of sports. This of course begs the questions, what is sports and what is psychology?.

Although many athletes would insist that sports necessarily include an element of competition. The term sport is used both in the FEPSAC definition of sports psychology and throughout including activities to the purpose of competition, recreation education and health.

Sports psychology is a broad term, many American sports psychologist draw a sharp distinction between academic sport psychology which focuses on all the factors affecting participation and performance in sport and applied sports psychology which focuses purely on applying psychology to athletic performance (cox 2001).

There are four major performance skills for all elite sport men and women, there being technical, physical, tactical and mental the latter skill in one that performing consistently to their athletes. Sport psychology has played a, significant role in the understanding, training and ultimately for one of mental skills for peak performance.

In sports, one must be eager to perform and to improve performance, the individual's determination to do this is called motivation. The intensity of it is called arousal. If training leads to boredom, one loses motivation. An individual who is wound up' suffers from anxiety, feels tensed which could lead to poor performance in sports.

Feedback is information about the outcome of a performance and it can greatly affect future performance.

A cursory look at personality in relation to athlete sportsmen choice of sports and performance.

Extroverts are socially outgoing. They need high arousal level to perform. Coaches and team mates need to keep them' excited' about performing. They prefer team games with open skills and lots of unpredictability. Open skills are used in the sports where you cannot predict what will happen next, for example, in an invasion game such as hockey.

Introvert on the other hand are usually shy. They perform better at lower arousal levels. Coaches and team mates need to allow them to stay calm and focused. Too much stimulation will cause them to be over-aroused and they will not perform well. They prefer sports with fine movement, closed skills and regular routines closed skills and used in sports Where you can control the environment, for example putting in golf.

Some people like sports in which they can show direct aggression like boxing and rugby, where players make contact with each other. Others prefer sports which involve indirect aggression like tennis and volleyball, Where players hit a ball to beat their opponents.

Within applied sport psychology, it has become of extreme importance to understand the psychological factors that accompany a successful athletic performance. In order to understand what psychological process might be contributing to quality of performance, it is important to look at the specific psychological constructs with theoretical relevance to optimal performance. (Jackson, Thomas, Marsh & Smethurst, 2001) majority of social cognitive perspectives, which places an emphasis on an individual's thought processes to explain the reasons for their behavior (Heirwood, Cumming & Fletcher 2001) in themselves, psychological skills are (Edwards & Steyn 2008)

Although it has been accepted that there is a link between mindfulness, psychological skills and performance anxiety, little research has been done in determining the link between these three. It is of extreme importance for athletes to have the skills needed for regulating arousal, processing information, and managing emotion. These skills are targeted in training programs and can make the difference between a successful and unsuccessful athlete (Jackson, Thomas, marsh & Smethurst 2001) the skills that trained in

psychological skills training include : psychological arousal, cognitive arousal, mental imagery, attention, concentration and so on (Edwards & Steyn 2008).

This term is often used interchangeable with the term mental skills but is a much broader concept. A large amount of research has been carried out on psychological skills such as psychological arousal, cognitive arousal and mental imagery, attention, concentration, self-confidence, goal setting and motivation (Edwards and Steyn 2008). It is interesting to note that it was found that the psychological skills usage in elite Olympic equestrian athletes was higher than that found in sports such as women's tennis, competitive rock climbing, Olympic weightlifting and with the exception of vigor and mood states, elite runners, triathletes and football (Meyers, Bourgeois, Leunes and Murray 1999)

According to Lesyk (1998) there are nine mental skills that all successful athletes have, these nine skills are specific and contribute to success in sports. They can all be learnt and can improve with training and practice. The nine mental skills are choose and maintain a positive attitude, maintain a high level of self motivation, set high realistic goals, deal effectively with people, use positive self-talk, use positive mental imagery, manage anxiety effectively, manage their emotions effectively, maintain concentration.

## **Stress and Sports Performance**

Stress is defined as physical, mental or emotional, which tends to disturb the homeostasis of the body. It affect our everyday part of life; if there were no stresses, we would probably "dire of Boredom". Stress is inevitable in life and sport, and all performing actors, artists and athletes perform their tasks with varying stress levels. Used rather loosely, the term may relate to any kind of pressure, be it due to one's job, school work, marriage, illness or death of loved one. The common denomination in all of these is change. Loss of familiarity breeds this anxiety with any change being viewed as a "threat".

Sports performance is not simply a product of physiology (for example stress and fitness) and biomechanical (for example technique factors) but psychological factors also play a crucial role in determining performance. However, every athlete has a certain stress level that is needed to optimize his or her game. That bar depends on factors such as past experiences, coping responses and genetics. Stress during sports, as in anything else in life, may be acute, episodic or chronic. For the part in sports, it is episodic, whether during a competitive match between friends, or a championship game. While acute stress may actually act as a challenge, if not harnessed it can evolve to not only an episodic stressor that can affect one in the long term, but also hamper one's play.

Stress comes in many forms, not all of which are directly related to competition performance. Many of the stressors an elite faces do not come from the competition but rather from the organization of the team he or she plays for (Mellalieu, Neil, Hanton, & Fletcher, 2009). This could be due to the possibility that athletes are acquainted with stressors that come within competition and because those stressors remain fairly constant. Organizational stressors however, can vary and remain inconsistent to both type and timing (Hanton, Wagstaff, & Fletcher, 2012). Mellalieu (2009) concluded that multiple organizational stressors affected athletes. One of the major stressors involved the playing environment and the organization of that environment. The athlete's role within the organization of the team and the cohesiveness among players were also revealed to be stressors. In addition, the level of involvement from team management was found to add to an athlete's perceived stress.

Even though organizational stressors may not continually worsen, they are regularly present and affect the athlete (Hanton et al., 2012).

Mellalieu (2009) also investigated the competition stressors faced by athletes. These included stressors such as being adequately physically prepared, internally and external expectations, and athlete's image, and current opponents. Sustaining an injury was also a stressor to athletes as they have expressed concern over incurring a new injury.

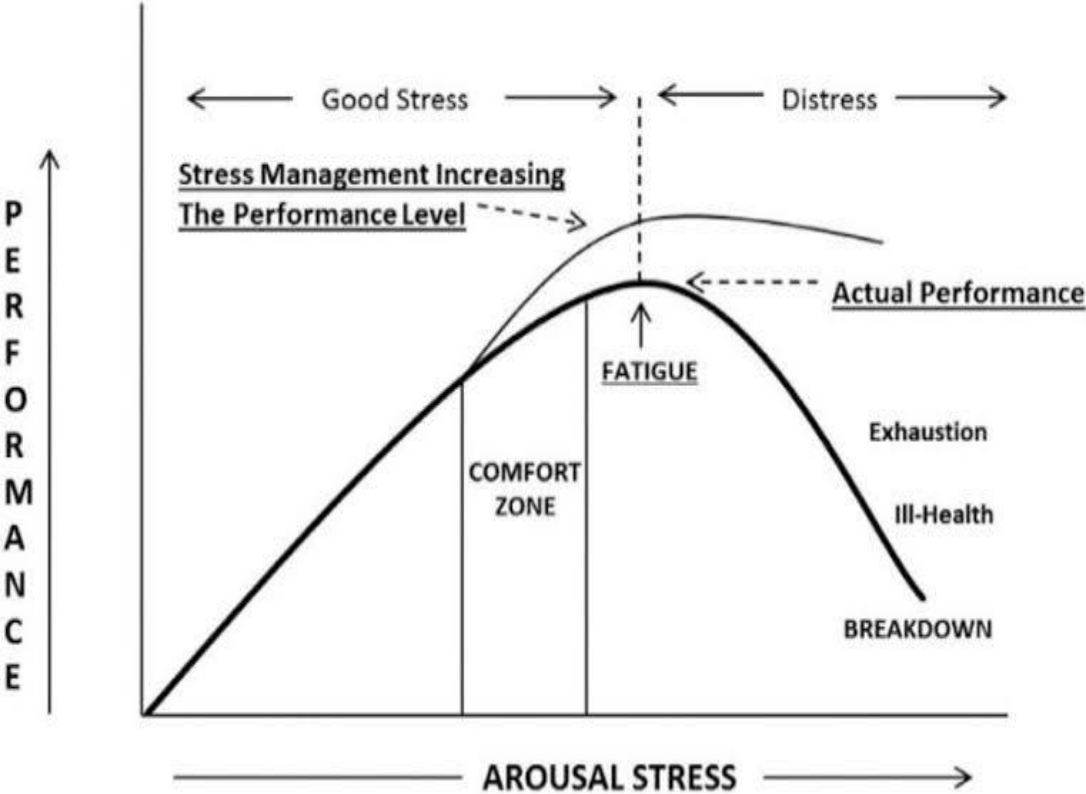
Worsening an existing one, or feeling unstable at the site of an injury (Walker &Nordin-Bates, 2010).

The pertinent question that arises as concern stress influencing sports performance is how does stress affect performance? This could be answered thus, the relationship between stress and performance has been portrayed by the stress response curve created by Nixon P. in 1979. In addition, pressure, an important stressor, has also crucial influence on an individual's response to stress. One of the most noticeable effect of stress in one's life is the changes in his performance. While we can easily recognize the consequences of normal or excessive amounts of stress thorough mere observation, it is best to learn about the specific relationship between stress and performance.

### **The Stress Response Curve**

To better understand the effects of stress to performance, Nixon, P (1979) created the following in theoretical terms.

**THE STRESS RESPONSE CURVE**



*Adapted from Nixon P, practitioner, 1979*

The curve shows that the level of stress increases, the performance level also increases, to the point of eustress, or healthy tension. Near the point of fatigue, an identified area called the comfort Zone indicates the range of stress levels that we can absolutely manage and facilitates good performance levels. As stress begins to be perceived as overwhelming or excessive, the person reaches a fatigue point wherein performance level starts to decline. The ultimate end of overwhelming stress called burnout can be exhaustion, ill health or breakdown.

### **Positive Effects**

As shown by the graph, performance levels increase when stress management is effective. Stressors such as pressure and demands can facilitate better stress response and thus, high level of performance. For instance, a basketball player tries to run faster, shoot a three-point shot and succeeds in it because of the pressure he has obtained from the audience, the close and the tough opponents.

### **Negative effects**

Physical Impairment: High levels of stress can lead to physical symptoms such as muscle tension, increased heart rate, and shallow breathing. These physiological responses can

negatively impact an athlete's coordination, speed, agility, and overall physical performance.

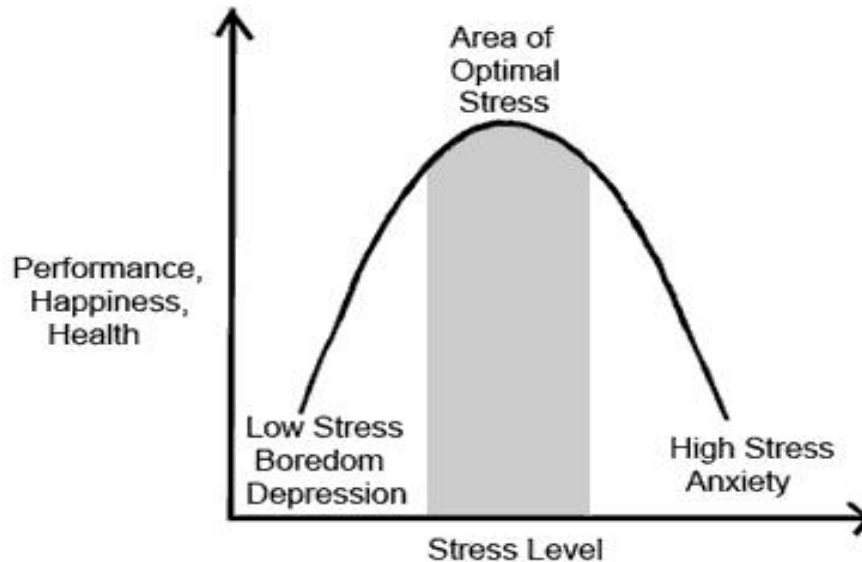
**Decreased Focus and Concentration:** Stress can impair an athlete's ability to concentrate and maintain focus on the task at hand. This can result in reduced reaction times, poor decision-making, and a decreased ability to anticipate and respond to changing game situations.

**Impaired Motor Skills:** Stress can interfere with an athlete's fine motor skills, which are essential for precise movements required in many sports. It can lead to decreased accuracy, coordination, and control, affecting techniques like shooting, passing, or throwing.

**Increased Risk of Injury:** When an athlete is stressed, they may be more prone to making mistakes, taking unnecessary risks, or neglecting safety precautions. This can increase the likelihood of injuries during sports activities.

Pressure and sports performance

Pressure one of the significant life stressor, affect performance as shown by the "inverted-U graph below which was created by Robert Yerkes and John Dodson in 1908



***The inverted-U relationship between pressure and performance.***

A cursory at left side of the graph, you will notice that low pressure or low levels of stress results to person's stress response as "boredom" or unchallenging. Even if the task is of great important, in the absence of an appropriate level of pressure, attention and concentration to perform the task are significantly low. On the other extreme levels of pressure doesn't mean high level performance level rather, it's the same as the result from

low pressure- low performance levels due to "unhappiness" or negative feelings due to overwhelming stress. However, there's region called the "area best performance ". In this region, Moderate pressure resulting to optimum stress or stress that is totally manageable leads to the highest level of performance. During major competition such as the Olympic Games, world cup or even championship games and NUGA, WAUG which are interscholastic games, the pressure on the players to perform well is exclusively high. Part of this pressure can come from widely held ideas about the expectations of players. As observed by otten (2009), one way to decrease the chances of athlete choking under pressure is to introduce pressure scenarios in order to increase confidence. Coaches need to know that players can handle the pressure and still perform at optimal levels.

### **Anxiety in Relation to Sports Performance**

Anxiety is a negative emotional state characterized by nervousness, worry, and apprehension and associated with activation or arousal of the body. Thus, anxiety has a though component (e.g worry and apprehension) called cognitive anxiety. It also has somatic anxiety component which is the degree of physical activation perceived (Weinberg, 1999). In relation to sports performance. Anxiety can be a major problem for many sports persons, particularly for those engaged in individual sports and for those in

'exposed or isolated positions in team sports such as goal keepers in handball football and hockey for example (Weinberg 1999).

In several respect a high level of anxiety is disadvantageous for optimum performance in competitive sport. Anxious people, generally do less well in the important events than they do in the less important ones and in practice situation (Davis 1989). Anxiety among an athlete is a feeling of perceived imbalance in his or her abilities and the demands placed upon them. (craft, Magyar, Becker, & Feltz, 2005). In sports where interaction with the opponent before competition are greater.

Research on anxiety and sports performance has been a topic of interest in the field of sports psychology for many years. Anxiety can have both positive and negative effects on athletic performance, and understanding its impact is crucial for athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists. Here are some key findings and themes from research on anxiety and sports performance:

**Inverted-U Hypothesis:** One prominent theory is the Inverted-U Hypothesis, which suggests that there is an optimal level of anxiety for peak sports performance. According to this theory, too little or too much anxiety can impair performance, while moderate levels of anxiety can enhance it. This optimal level varies depending on the individual and the specific sport.

State Anxiety vs. Trait Anxiety: State anxiety refers to temporary anxiety experienced in a particular situation, such as before a competition, while trait anxiety refers to a stable characteristic of an individual's personality. Both state and trait anxiety can influence sports performance, but research suggests that state anxiety has a more immediate impact.

Choking under Pressure: High levels of anxiety can lead to a phenomenon known as "choking under pressure," where athletes fail to perform at their best during critical moments. Research has shown that increased self-consciousness, distraction, and intentional narrowing are some of the factors that contribute to choking.

Cognitive Anxiety and Somatic Anxiety: Anxiety can be divided into cognitive anxiety (worry and negative thoughts) and somatic anxiety (physical symptoms such as increased heart rate and muscle tension). Studies have found that cognitive anxiety tends to have a stronger impact on performance than somatic anxiety.

Coping Strategies: Athletes can employ various coping strategies to manage anxiety and enhance performance. These strategies include goal-setting, imagery and visualization, relaxation techniques, positive self-talk, and pre-performance routines. The effectiveness of these strategies can vary among individuals and sports.

Individual Differences: The relationship between anxiety and sports performance is highly individualized. Some athletes may thrive under high-pressure situations, while

others may struggle. Factors such as experience, skill level, and personality traits can influence how athletes respond to anxiety.

**Intervention Programs:** Sports psychologists often work with athletes to develop intervention programs aimed at reducing anxiety and optimizing performance. These programs may include cognitive-behavioral techniques, stress management training, and performance profiling.

It's important to note that research on anxiety and sports performance is ongoing, and new studies continue to explore these relationships in different sports and populations. Athletes and sports professionals can benefit from staying updated on the latest research findings and working with qualified sports psychologists to address anxiety-related challenges

### **Aggression and Sports Performance**

Aggression is not competitiveness, nor is anger. Competitiveness is an attitude, anger is an emotion. While anger and competitiveness may both contribute to aggression. Aggression itself is a behavior.

Aggression by definition involves actively doing something unpleasant to someone. Aggression behavior may come in many forms, ranging verbal abused designed to cause

psychological harm to physical violence (Jarvis, 1999). It is generally agreed that all aggression involves the intent to cause harm in some form. Behavior which incidentally hurt someone is not aggression. Putting these factors together, a simple working definition of aggression would look something like this behavior of any kind that is carried out with the intension of harming another person (Jarvis, 1999).

Aggression and its relation or effect on sports performance. There are three major viewpoints (theories) seeking to explain violent aggression in sports.

The biological theory, proposed by konrad Lorenz, sees aggression as a basic, inherent human characteristic. Within this context, sports are seen as a socially acceptable way to discharge built-up aggression, a safety valve.

The psychological theory states that aggression is caused by frustration. It is situational. Frustration results when one's efforts to reach a particular goal are blocked. In sports, frustration can be caused by questionable calls by officials, failure to make a particular play, injuries that interfere with optimum performance, heckling from spectators, a taunts by coaches or players

The social learning theory has received the most empirical verification and maintains that aggression behavior is learned through modeling and reinforced by rewards and punishments. Young athletes take sports heroes as role models and imitate their behavior.

Parents, coaches and teammates are also models who may demonstrate support for an aggressive style of play.

Russell (1993) has pointed out, sports is perhaps the only peacetime setting in which we not only tolerate but actively encourage and enjoy aggressive behavior. In the notoriously violent ice hockey, violence clearly sells, attendance at matches being positively correlated with frequency of violent acts ( Jones 1993). On the other hand, there is a normal panic regarding football hooliganism, and in recent years there have been a string of high-profile court cases in which athletes have pursued cases against others who deliberately injured them.

It is widely believed that the use of aggression wins games. As often said by basketball coach Leo Durocher famously that "Nice guys finish last". Aggression was one of the 10 personality traits believed to be associated with athletic success. Of course we should bear in mind the distinction between hostile aggression, instrumental aggression and assertiveness. It may be that the conventional wisdom supporting the value of aggression may favor the supporting assertive behavior rather than aggression.

Young (1999) has noted the increase that this is a direct result of increased professionalization and the young financial incentives to win. McCarthy & Kelly (1978) found a positive relationship between time taken for penalties (a measure of a team's

aggression) and number of goals scored. however, wankel ( 1973) compared the penalty times of winning and losing ice hockey teams and found no difference. Since ice hockey is such an aggressive sport. If no clear results emerge here, it is unlikely that aggression would be associated with success in other sports. Of course, the situation and the reason for the aggression would make a difference to whether it was helpful (Gill. 2000). While the willingness to perform a professional foul would probably benefits a team. The anger associated with hostile aggression would probably be unproductive, harming concentration and decision making. Of course much depends on the sports some, in Particular combat sports, are inherently aggressive, and points are awarded in some martial arts contest for aggression. The sort of psyching up used for at least some combat sports can be intensely aggressive. Clearly, when we perform a rugby tackle or a karate kick, we do so in the knowledge that we are afflicting certain discomfort on the other athlete, and that there is some risk of causing injury. The raises the difficult question, are behavior which involve hurting another person within the rules of the sport truly aggressive? Baron (1977) addressed this issue in his influential distinction between hostile and instrumental aggression.

Hostile aggression takes place when the primary intention of the behavior is to harm the other player. This type of aggression is accompanied by anger, and the underlying wish is to see the victim suffer.

Instrumental aggression takes place when the behavior is clearly likely to cause harm, but its intention is to achieve a different aim, such as to score a point or prevent the opposition from scoring a goal.

Husman & Silva (1984) have made further distinction between aggression and assertiveness. Assertiveness involves the type of behavior that might appear aggressive, but which does not result in harming an opponent. In many sports, for example, we might choose at certain times to charge directly towards an opponent, perhaps, with an accompanying cry, but without any intention of making contact. The classic example of this is rushing the net in tennis. (1994) pointed out that physical contact can be assertive rather than aggressive, provided the intention is to gain dominance over opponents rather than injure them. Thus footballers can shoulder-charge one another while tackling, but, provided the intention is to obtain the ball rather than injure, this is assertive rather than aggressive behavior.

## **Arousal and Sports Performance**

Arousal can be defined as the emotional, mental or physiological activation required to produce a response. Arousal in sports can be defined as the degree of activation both physiological and psychological that an individual experiences when faced with a sporting situation or task. It can be viewed as a continuum ranging from drowsiness to psyched up, hyperactive state.

In the field of sports psychology, many models have been created to explore arousal levels as they relate to athletic performance. This model include the following

Drive theory: according to drive which was proposed by Hull (1943), if an athlete is appropriately skilled it will help them to perform well if their drive to complete is aroused. That is they are 'psyched up'.

Inverted-U hypothesis: the Inverted-U Hypothesis by Yerkes and Dodson (1908) predicts that the relationship between arousal and performance approximate an inverted U shape, the theory states that as arousal is increased, performance improves but only to a certain point. If the athlete's arousal is increased beyond this point then performance diminishes. A moderate degree of arousal is seen as being optimal to performance.

Catastrophe theory: this was proposed by Fazey and Hardy (1988) catastrophe theory is a variant of the inverted U theory hypothesis, which predicts that an increase in arousal

beyond an optimal point leads to a symmetrical, orderly decline in performance. The inverted U model suggests that a slight increase in arousal will lead to a slight deficit in performance. Catastrophe theory proposes that when an athlete goes beyond the optimal point, a large and dramatic decline in performance ensues, a 'catastrophe' from which it is very difficult for an athlete to recover. They rejected the assumption of the inverted U hypothesis.

Too little arousal can be disruptive as extremely high levels of arousal when taking an exam, it pays to be moderately aroused but not trembling with nervousness. Although performance is usually best when arousal is moderate, the level of arousal for optimal performance varies in different tasks, with easy or well learned tasks, peak performance comes with relatively high arousal. With more difficult or unrehearsed tasks, usually achieve their peak performance, when highly aroused by competition (Myers, 1993) the level of arousal can be measured in relation to performance.

The first theory which was Clark Hull's (1943) the drive theory assumes a direct relationship between arousal and sports performance. This meant that the possibility of the desired response occurring increased with higher arousal levels. The drive theory is not viable for all sports and can be applied only to simple motor tasks, not complex ones. The Inverted-U theory which suggested by Yerkes and Dodson (1908) implies that for optimal

performance to occur, the individual must attain a moderate level of arousal, optimal does not mean maximal, too little or too much arousal leads to decline in performance. This theory takes into account the complexity of the task, and is used in many situations; however, it fails to explain why, how and when arousal affects performance.

### **Tension and Sports Performance**

Tension is the state of body and mind which results from internal and or factors acting in opposition to each other such as in emotional reactions like anger or fear in one sense, tension may refer to the residual effect of mental or emotional strain reflected in a person's appearance and behavior, in another sense, it means tonus that is a state of partial contraction when muscle are not actively working. Excessive to us is called "tension" which may result from excessive stimulation or from strains and stress upon the organism. This kind of tension is not as harmful as that of tension which arises from a state of persistent unsatisfied want and desires physiologically and psychologically as a person's want are unsatisfied he remains in a state of tension.

Tension, both physical and psychological, plays a significant role in sports performance. The ability to manage and control tension is crucial for athletes in order to optimize their performance and achieve their goals. In this response, I will discuss the impact of tension

on sports performance and provide relevant references and citations to support the information.

**Physical Tension:**

Physical tension refers to the tightness and stiffness in muscles that can affect an athlete's performance. It can reduce flexibility, coordination, and overall movement efficiency. Research has shown that excessive physical tension can hinder athletic performance and increase the risk of injuries.

**Psychological Tension:**

Psychological tension, such as anxiety and stress, can have a significant impact on sports performance. Athletes who experience high levels of psychological tension often have difficulties focusing, making decisions, and executing skills effectively. Anxiety can lead to reduced concentration, increased muscle tension, and impaired decision-making processes.

### **Choking under Pressure:**

Choking under pressure is a phenomenon that occurs when athletes perform below their usual level in high-pressure situations. It is often associated with increased tension and anxiety. Research suggests that heightened pressure can lead to disruptions in intentional focus, working memory, and automaticity, which can negatively impact sports performance.

### **Optimal Tension Levels:**

While excessive tension can be detrimental, an optimal level of tension is necessary for optimal sports performance. This optimal level varies from athlete to athlete and depends on the specific sport and task at hand. The Yerkes-Dodson law proposes an inverted U-shaped relationship between arousal (tension) and performance, indicating that moderate levels of tension can enhance performance, while too little or too much tension can impair it.

These references provide a starting point for understanding the impact of tension on sports performance. However, it is worth noting that the field of sports psychology is extensive, and there are numerous studies and research articles available that delve

deeper into this topic. Consulting additional academic resources can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

### **Motivation and Sports Performance**

Motivation plays a crucial role in sports performance, as it can significantly influence an athlete's dedication, effort, and overall achievement. In this response, I will provide an overview of motivation in relation to sports performance, supported by relevant citations and references.

#### **Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation:**

Motivation can be classified into two main types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for the inherent satisfaction and enjoyment it provides, while extrinsic motivation involves participating in an activity to attain external rewards or avoid punishment. Both types of motivation can impact sports performance.

A study by Vallerand et al. (2008) examined the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on athletes' persistence and performance. The results showed that athletes

who were more intrinsically motivated demonstrated higher persistence and performance levels compared to those who were primarily extrinsically motivated.

### **Self-Determination Theory (SDT):**

Self-Determination Theory provides a framework for understanding the role of motivation in sports performance. SDT proposes that three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—drive intrinsic motivation and optimal performance. When these needs are satisfied, athletes are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their sport.

A study by Standage, Duda, and Ntoumanis (2003) investigated the relationship between self-determined motivation and sports performance. The findings revealed a positive association between self-determined motivation and performance outcomes. Athletes who were more self-determined in their motivation reported higher levels of satisfaction, effort, and performance.

### **Goal Setting Theory:**

Goal setting is a widely recognized motivational strategy in sports. Goal setting theory suggests that setting specific, challenging, and attainable goals can enhance athletes'

motivation and performance. Goals provide athletes with a sense of direction, focus their efforts, and increase their persistence.

A meta-analysis by Locke and Latham (2006) examined the relationship between goal setting and sports performance. The results demonstrated a significant positive effect of goal setting on performance across various domains, including sports. Specific and challenging goals were found to be most effective in improving performance.

### **Achievement Motivation:**

Achievement motivation refers to an individual's desire to achieve success and avoid failure. In sports, athletes with high achievement motivation tend to set challenging goals, persist in the face of obstacles, and demonstrate a strong work ethic, all of which contribute to improved performance.

A study by Roberts, Treasure, and Kavussanu (2007) investigated the relationship between achievement motivation and sports performance in young athletes. The findings indicated that athletes with higher levels of achievement motivation exhibited better performance outcomes and greater effort expenditure in training and competition.

These studies provide a glimpse into the relationship between motivation and sports performance. However, it is important to note that motivation is a complex and

multifaceted construct that can be influenced by various individual and situational factors. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of motivation's impact on sports performance requires considering additional research and perspectives.

### **Coping Strategies of Psychological Variables Influencing Sports Performance**

For managing or controlling psychological variables a variety of coping skills, strategies and intervention technique such as behavioral modifications, positive reinforcement, cognitive strategies, muscle and mental relaxation, visualization, imagery skill training, goal setting, positive self-talk pep talk, hot baths, desensitization, bio feedback, goal setting has been suggested in the literature

### **Summary of Related Literature Review**

In this literature review the influence of psychological variables on sports performance was elaborated. These psychological variables were defined by different scholars which was cited the literature. Stress and its influence on sports performance was revealed, the stress response curve by Nixon (1979) was illustrated for better understanding, pressure and its influence to sports performance has been explained comprehensively using the "inverted u" graph. Anxiety has been explained as a negative emotional state

characterized by nervousness, worry and apprehension and associated with activation or arousal of the body. It also pointed out relationship of aggression and sports performance which shows the different types of aggression in sports such as hostile aggression, instrumental aggression and assertiveness.

Tension has been describe to be that state of body and mind, which results from the internal or forces acting in opposition to each other, tension and its relationship on sports performance has been described in this chapter, it is seen that an athlete's tension level in a particular competition generally consist of his basic tension level and the situation rise in tension due to competition. The relationship of arousal to sport performance was reviewed and some models such as drive theory (Hull 1943), the inverted U hypothesis (Yerkes & Dodson 1908), and catastrophe theory (Fazey & Hardey, 1988) were used to describe it. Motivation and sports performance were also examined explaining the intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, negative motivation and positive motivation were also explained. Self-efficiency and its influence on sports performance were revealed and its source also were elaborated. The coping strategies of psychological factors influencing sports performance were stated.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter deals with the methods and steps used by the researcher to carry out this study. The methods and procedures adopted in carrying out this study are described and discussed under the following headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the study
- Sample and sampling techniques
- Research instrument
- Validity of the instrument
- Reliability of the instrument
- Method of data collection
- Method of data analysis

#### **Research Design**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This research design focuses on the collection, organization, analysis and interpretation of data of a given

population. It involves seeking people's opinion about a particular phenomenon under study.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study consisted of all the undergraduates' student athletes in the University of Benin (UNIBEN) who trains at the various sporting facilities within The University of Benin, Ugbowo Main Campus, according to the data from Uniben sports centre, the population of the eligible student athletes in the university of Benin estimated to be 633.the distribution of the student athletes population across all faculties in university of Benin is shown in the table below:

<b>FACULTIES</b>	<b>POPULATION OF STUDENT ATHLETES</b>
Agriculture	50
Arts	48
Basic medical sciences	32
Dentistry	20

Education	96
Engineering	70
Environmental sciences	22
Law	38
Life sciences	48
Management sciences	47
Medicine	28
Pharmacy	29
Physical sciences	50
Social sciences	49
Veterinary medicine	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>633</b>

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample size for the study of one hundred and twenty seven (127) undergraduate students athletes in the University of Benin. In order to guarantee a representative sample,

the simple random sampling techniques was used in selecting sample for the study. 20% from each faculty made up of the sample of the study.

<b>FACULTIES</b>	<b>POPULATION OF THE STUDENT ATHLETES</b>	<b>SAMPLE SIZE</b>
Agriculture	50	10
Arts	48	10
Basic medical sciences	32	6
Dentistry	20	4
Education	96	19
Engineering	70	14
Environmental sciences	22	4
Law	38	8
life sciences	48	10
Management sciences	47	9
Medicine	28	6
Pharmacy	29	6
Physical sciences	50	10
Social sciences	49	10
Veterinary medicine	6	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>127</b>

## **Research Instrument**

The test instrument used for this study was self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of two parts, sections A and B. Section A was designed to get information about the demographic data of the respondents. While section B was comprised 31 items relating to the variables of the study. Structured responses to the questionnaire options were a four point modified likert scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

## **Validity of Instrument**

The test instrument for this study was validated by the project supervisor and two lecturers in the department of human kinetics and sports science who are research experts in the field. This was to ensure both content and construct validity of the instrument. Also, necessarily corrections were made in line with their suggestions to avoid any form of ambiguity.

## **Reliability of the Instrument**

The instrument was pilot tested among twenty (20) respondents who was not part of the sample of the study. The test retest method employed. This involves administering the

instrument twice to the respondents with the intervals of two weeks. The score obtained from both administration would be subjected to analysis using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) A reliability coefficient of 0.087 was obtained showing that the test instrument was reliable.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

The researcher administered the questionnaire to student athletes in University of Benin which was completed by them and the researcher retrieved the completed questionnaire forms immediately.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

Data collected from the respondents through the questionnaire forms was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage for their bio data while mean and standard deviation was used for analysis of the research questions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### Data Analysis

This chapter dealt with data analysis, results and discussion of findings.

The analysis of data are tabulated and shown in table below.

Analysis of demographic data

**Table 1: percentage distribution of respondent by age.**

Age.	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-20.	42	33.1
21-25.	70	55.1
26-30.	12	9.5
31 and above.	3	2.3

The data in table 1 showed that 42(33.1%) of the respondents are within the age of 15-20 years, 70(55.1%) were within the age range of 21-25 years, 12(9.5%) of respondents falls into the age range of 26-30 years while 3(2.3%) of respondents are 31 years and above. It can be seen that majority of the respondents are within the age of 21-25 years.

**Table 2. Percentage distribution of respondents by sex**

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<b>Sex.</b>		<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Male.	90.	70.9	
Female.	37	29.1	

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The data from table 2 showed that 90(70.9%) of respondents are male while 37(29.1%) are females, this showed that the majority of the respondents are males.

**Table 3: percentage distribution of respondents by level**

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<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
100	13.	7.87
200.	24.	18.90
300.	27.	21.26
400.	51.	40.16
500.	6.	4.72
600.	9	7.09

---

The data from table 3 showed that 10(7.87%) of the respondents are from 100L, 24(18.90%) are from 200L, 27(21.26%) are from 300L, 51(40.16%) are from 400L, 6(4.72%) are from 500L while 9(7.09) are from 600L. This showed that majority of the respondents are from 400L.

**Table 4: percentage distribution of respondents by faculty**

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<b>Faculty</b>		<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Agriculture .	10	7.87	
Arts.	10	7.87	
Basic Medical sciences.	6	4.72	
Dentistry	4	3.15	
Education .	19	14.16	
Environmental sciences .	4	3.15	
Law.	8	6.30	
Life sciences.	10	7.87	
Management sciences .	9	7.09	
Medicine Pharmacy .	6	4.72	
Physical sciences .	6.	4.72	
Social sciences	10	8.87	
Engineering.	10	8.87	

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The data from table 4 showed that 10(7.87%) are respondents from faculty of Agriculture, 14(11.02%) are from faculty of Engineering, 19(14.96) are from faculty of Education, while 1(0.79%) are from faculty of veterinary medicine. This show that majority of the respondents are from faculty of Education.

## ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research question 1: what are the psychological variables influencing athletes performance in sports.

**Table 5: mean and standard deviation of responses on psychological variables influencing athletes performance in sports.**

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<b>S/N.</b>	<b>Item Statement</b>	<b>Mean.</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1.	Do you get enough satisfaction and pleasure from engaging in sports	3.28.	0.76	Agreed
2.	Physical activities help to control depression.	3.29.	0.71.	Agreed
3.	Involvement in physical activities improves my interpersonal relationships.	3.40.	0.83.	Agreed
4.	Involvement in physical activities encourage team spirit.	3.42.	0.67	Agreed

---

The data in Table 5 show the mean values ranges from 3.28 to 3.42, while the standard deviation values ranges from 0.79 to 0.67. The mean values which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50 show that the respondents agreed to all the four items as regards the psychological variables influencing athletes sports performance. The low values of the standard deviation show that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research question 2: Does motivation influence the performance of the student athletes

Table 6: mean and standard deviation of responses on influence of motivation on performance of student athletes in sports.

<b>S/N.</b>	<b>Item Statement</b>	<b>Mean.</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
5.	I get rewarded after participating in participating in sport actively.	3.32.	0.72	Agreed
6.	I participate in physical activities because I enjoy it.	3.28	0.71	Agreed
7.	Coaches approval motivates my participating In sports	3.30.	0.72.	Agreed
8.	Physical activities enhances study of skills among student athletes.	3.4.	0.64.	Agreed

The data in Table 6 show the mean values ranges from 3.32 to 3.45, while the standard deviation values ranges from 0.72 to 0.64. The mean values which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50 show that the respondents agreed to all the four items as regards the psychological variables influencing athletes sports performance. The low values of the standard deviation show that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research question 3: what are the expected stressor that affect the performance of athletes in sporting activities?

Table 7: mean and standard deviation of responses on expected stressor affecting athletes performance.

<b>S/N.</b>	<b>Item Statement</b>	<b>Mean.</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
9.	I have difficulty in concentration when Participating in sports.	3.42	0.72	Agreed
10.	Aggression, anxiety and tension affect Athletes sports performance .	3.38.	0.72.	Agreed
11.	Participating in physical activities can expose an athlete to injury.	3.45.	0.64	Agreed

The data in Table 7 show the mean values ranges from 3.42 to 3.45, while the standard deviation values ranges from 0.72 to 0.64. The mean values which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50 show that the respondents agreed to all the three items as regards the psychological variables influencing athletes sports performance. The low values of the standard deviation show that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research question 4: To what extent Does aggression determine the performance of student athletes.

Table 8: Mean and standard deviation of responses on extent to which aggression determine students athlete performance .

<b>S/N.</b>	<b>Item Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
12.	Physical activities help to control aggression	3.40.	0.63	Agreed
13.	Aggressive behavior affect athletes sports Performance positively.	3.52.	0.63	Agreed
14.	Aggressive attitude hinders ones performance.	3.48	0.64	Agreed
15.	Athletes who are able to control their aggressive tendencies have high sports performance.	3.46	0.64	Agreed

The data in Table 8 show the mean values ranges from 3.40 to 3.46, while the standard deviation values ranges from 0.63 to 0.64. The mean values which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50 show that the respondents agreed to all the four items as regards the psychological variables influencing athletes sports performance. The low values of the standard deviation show that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research question 5: Does tension influence students athletes performance in sports?.

**Table 9: Mean and standard deviation of responses on influence of tension on students performance.**

<b>S/N.</b>	<b>Item Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
16.	Participating in physical activities change and Improve my mood.	3.46.	0.64	Agreed
17.	Physical activities help distract the mind from Its trouble	3.47	0.64.	Agreed
18.	The presence of fellow competitors induce tension in the athletes.	3.41.	0.64.	Agreed
19.	Tension comes as a result of understanding by the athletes.	3.45	0.67.	Agreed
20.	Tension promote better sports performance.	3.40	0.74	Agreed

The data in Table 9 show the mean values ranges from 3.46 to 3.40, while the standard deviation values ranges from 0.64 to 0.74. The mean values which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50 show that the respondents agreed to all the five items as regards the psychological variables influencing athletes sports performance. The low values of the standard deviation show that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research question 6: Does Anxiety influence students sports performance?

**Table 10: Mean and standard deviation of responses on influence of anxiety on students athletes performance**

<b>S/N.</b>	<b>Item Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
21.	Physical activities help to control anxiety and Fear.	3.38.	0.63	Agreed
22.	Being anxious tends to affect student athletes Performance.	3.45.	0.64.	Agreed

The data in Table 10 show the mean values ranges from 3.38 to 3.45, while the standard deviation values ranges from 0.63 to 0.64. The mean values which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50 show that the respondents agreed to all the two items as regards the psychological variables influencing athletes sports performance. The low values of the standard deviation show that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

**Research question 7: Does self-efficiency have influence on student athletes sports performance?**

**Table 11: Mean and standard deviation of responses on influence of self efficiency on student athletes sports performance.**

<b>S/N.</b>	<b>Item Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
23.	Involvement in physical activities help to promote positive thinking.	3.41	0.67	Agreed
24.	Observing other athletes task improves my performance.	3.43	0.64	Agreed
25.	The belief system of an athlete is responsible for high performance.	3.38	0.67	Agreed
26.	Previous performance is used to boost my present performance.	3.46	0.64	Agreed
27.	Involvement in physical activities improves my sense of belonging identity.	3.40	0.72.	Agreed

The data in Table 11 show the mean values ranges from 3.41 to 3.40, while the standard deviation values ranges from 0.64 to 0.72. The mean values which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50 show that the respondents agreed to all the five items as regards

the psychological variables influencing athletes sports performance. The low values of the standard deviation show that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

**Research question 8: What are the coping strategies to be employed to manage this psychological variables affecting sports performance?.**

**Table 12: Mean and standard deviation of responses on coping strategies to be employed to manage this psychological variables affecting sports performance.**

S/N.	Item Statement	Mean.	Standard Deviation	Decision
28.	Positive self talk can be used to cope with these psychological variables.	3.40	0.79	Agreed
29.	Confidence is used to boost sports performance.	3.32	0.69	Agreed
30.	Mental vigor helps to boost sports performance.	3.36	0.70	Agreed
31.	Being relaxed can help to cope with these psychological variables.	3.32	0.72	Agreed

The data in Table 12 show the mean values ranges from 3.40 to 3.32, while the standard deviation values ranges from 0.79 to 0.72. The mean values which are all above the criterion mean of 2.50 show that the respondents agreed to all the four items as regards the psychological variables influencing athletes sports performance. The low values of the standard deviation show that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between psychological factors and the performance of student athletes in sports.

Table 13: Pearson correlation statistics on relationship between psychological factors and sports performance of student athletes.

<b>Item Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Number (N)</b>
Psychological factor.	26.89.	4.31	127
Sports performance	78.49	4.23	127

		<b>Psychological factor</b>	<b>Sports performance</b>
psychological factor	Pearson correlation	1	.813
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	127	127
Sports performance	Pearson correlation	.813	1

Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	127	127

From data in table 13, the mean of psychological factors was 26.89, while the mean of sports performance was 78.49. Thus sports performance had a higher mean than psychological factor.

Also with an r-value of 0.813, it shows that there is a strong relationship between psychological factors and sports performance. With a p-value of 0.000 which is r-less than 0.05 level of significance, means that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between psychological factors and sports performance of student athletes is rejected, thus, there is a significant relationship between psychological factors and sports performance of student athletes.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The findings from table 5 in research question I showed that feeling depressed and getting enough satisfaction and pleasure, interpersonal relationship and encouragement of team spirit are psychological factors affecting student athletes sport performance. This is in line with the documentation of sacks and sacks(1981) then they conducted a study

on 600 college students participating in various physical activities (aerobic activities) such as tennis, wrestling, jogging, it was reported that all the subjects said they felt less depressed.

Result obtained from research question two revealed that the student athletes are highly motivated intrinsically and also extrinsically and positively motivated through the reward they get and through coaches approval which corroborates with Hsc Online (2015) that the use of positive motivation results in higher levels of improvement in performance and tends to last than any gains made from the use of negative motivation.

With regard to research question three the expected stressors affecting the performance of student athletes in sporting activities, the respondents Agree that they have difficulty in concentration when participating in sports and aggression, anxiety and tension affect students athletes sport performance and they agreed that injury act as a great stressor to the athlete during competitions which is in line with walker and Nirdin Bates (2010) that sustaining an injury as also a stressor to athlete as they have expressed a great concern over incurring a new injury, worsening an existing one or feeling unstable at the site of an injury.

In regards to table 8 in research question four which shows the extent to which aggression determine student athletes performance, it revealed that aggression can hinder

the student athletes' performance and it can be controlled by them. the respondents all agreed that student athletes who are able to control their aggressive behaviour tend to have high sports performances, they also agreed that physical activities helps to control aggression, which is in line with Russell (1993) that sports is perhaps the only peace time setting in which one does not only tolerate but actively encourage and enjoy aggressive behaviour.

The findings from table 9 in research question 5 which showed the influence of tension on student athletes sports performance revealed that student athletes in the University of Benin go through tension even when they are aware that tension does not promote better sports, with the assertion of Bali (2015) who stated that a high level of basic tension will easily cause an athlete to choke under the perceived impact of impending competition or during a critical part of the competition.

The findings from table 10 in research question 6 which answers the influence of anxiety on student athletes sports performance showed that anxiety affect their performance, this corroborates with Mottram (2005) who stated that moderate level of anxiety about an approaching competition can actually improve skills and abilities, too much may compromise performance.

The findings also revealed in table 11 in research question seven (7) that self efficacy has a great influence on student athletes performance. It showed that observing other athletes, belief system, previous performance, sense of belonging and positive thinking can result in higher or lower result in their performance. This is in line with Bandura (1989) who stated that one believes that they can organize and execute courses of action enabling the attainment of successful performance is not based on the skills one has, but that individuals believe that they can achieve with skill.

The research findings from table 12 in research question eight(8) revealed the coping strategies used in managing psychological variables related in sports performances which the respondents agreed to positive self-talk, confidence, mental vigor and being relaxed to help boost their performances.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter provides the summary, findings, conclusion as well as recommendations

This study was conducted in order to find out the psychological variables affecting the performance of student athletes in sports using University of Benin as a case study. Eight research questions were raised for the study. Summary Related literature was reassessed to gather information on great scholars view on the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this stud. The population of the study was made up of 633 student athletes in the University of Benin. A total of 127 student athletes made up the sample for the study using the simple random sampling technique to get the sample size. a descriptive statistics using frequency and percentage was used in the data analysis of the respondents bio- data, while mean and standard deviation was used in the data analysis of raised research questions.

## **Findings**

- Student athletes in university of Benin are aware that psychology play a crucial role in their sports performance.
- it was also find out that student athletes are positively motivined by the couches using approval and they are extrinsically motivated also through the use of rewards which make them participate more fully in sports.
- Student athletes are aware of the stressors which may occur during sports performances and they are ready to cope with the stresses which may occur during competitions.
- university of Benin are aware of the influence of aggressive tendencies and how possibly they can control it in order to have high sports performances and the extent to which physical activities help to control aggression.
- Student athletes go through tension when performing in sports which leads to a drastic decrease in their performance outcome.
- The influence of self-efficiency is used by most student athletes to increase their performance outcome; most of these student athletes believe in themselves that they

can overcome any obstacle, this serve as a strong psychological factor to boost their performance. it sources which are previous performance and observing other athlete performance are used to enhance the student athletes to perform at their peak.

- The coping strategies used in managing psychological variables related in sports performance which is employed by student athletes in university of Benin are positive self talk, confidence, mental vigor and relaxation.

## **Conclusion**

Psychology plays a crucial role in the performance of athletes either during training or competition. Though student athletes are attempting to get better in sports performance, but the lack of full knowledge on sports psychology and the failure of them to practice the coping strategies which can be employed in performances leads to a decline in their sports performance, the student athletes are working together to achieve a common goal, therefore they can train together and work along with their coaches by having a close relationship and share experiences with them, all these improve the student athletes

mindset and help them to improve their performance. Coping strategies such as positive self-talk, confidence, mental vigour, and relaxation should be practiced for competition use.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the submission above, the following recommendations were put forth:

- The student athletes should be able to master the psychological variables which can help them to overcome tension, anxiety, aggression and expected stressors which can interfere with their performance on the field of play.
- Student athletes should expose themselves to expected stimulus during training in order to enhance their performance and be able to peak in competitions.
- The coaches should be able to create a good relationship with the student athletes, in order for them to know when the student athletes are psychologically imbalanced.
- Coaches should always remind the student athletes of the different coping strategies to be used in order to boost their performances.

- Since the student athletes are intrinsically motivated, they should endeavor to study more on components that make up a successful athletic performance.
- The student athletes should indulge more in psychological training in order to strengthen their mental factors.
- Student athletes should seek the help of a sports psychologist before, during and after sports competitions.

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**APPENDIX:**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN KINETICS AND SPORTS SCIENCE**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**  
**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**  
**BENIN CITY**

Dear Respondent,

I am a final year student of the above name institution and i am carrying out a research on the topic "psychological variables affecting the performance of student athletes in sports in the University of Benin, Benin City.

Please kindly assist me by indicating your opinion where necessary.

This study is strictly for academic purpose and you are thereby assured that all information supplied will be treated in strictly confidential manner.

Thank you.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

AGE: 15-20 years ( ), 21-25 ( ), 26-30 ( ), 31 above ( ).

SEX: Male ( ) Female ( )

LEVEL: 100 ( ) 200 ( ), 300 ( ), 400 ( ), 500 ( ), 600 ( )

FACULTY: Agriculture ( ), Arts ( ), Basic medical sciences ( ), Dentistry ( ), Education ( ) Engineering ( ), Environmental sciences ( ), Law ( ), Life sciences ( ), Management sciences ( ), Medicine ( ), Physical sciences ( ) Pharmacy ( ), social sciences ( ), veterinary medicine( ).

**SECTION B.**

Instruction tick ( ) any response that correspond with your opinion in the appropriate boxes below,

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
	<b>What are the psychological variables influencing athletes performance in sports?.</b>				
1.	Do you get enough satisfaction and pleasure from engaging in sports.				
2.	Physical activities helps to control depression.				
3.	Involvement in physical activities improves my interpersonal relationships.				
4.	Involvement in physical activities encourages team spirit.				
	<b>Does motivation influence the performance of student athletes in sports</b>				
5.	I get rewarded after participating in sports actively.				
6.	I participate in physical activities because i enjoy it.				
7.	Coaches approval motivates my participation in sports.				
8.	physical activities enhances study of skills among student athletes				

	<b>What are the expected stressor that affect the performance of athletes in sporting activities?.</b>				
9.	I have difficulty in concentration when participating in sports.				
10.	Aggression, anxiety and tension does not affect athletes sports performance				
11.	Participation in physical activities can expose an athlete to injury.				
<b>To what extent does aggression determine the performance of student athletes?.</b>					
12.	physical activities help to control aggression				
13.	Aggressive behavior affect athletes sports performance positively.				
14.	Aggressive attitude tends to hinder ones performance.				
15.	Athletes who are able to control their aggressive tendencies have high sports performance.				
<b>Does tension influence students athletes performance in sports?.</b>					
16.	Participation in physical activities change and improve my mood				
17.	physical activities help distract the mind from its trouble.				
18.	The presence of fellow competitors induce tension in the athletes.				
19.	Tension comes as a result of understanding by the athletes.				
20.	Tension promote better sports performance.				
<b>Research question 6: Does anxiety influence student athletes sports performance?.</b>					
21.	Physical activities help to control anxiety and fear.				
22.	Being anxious tends to affect student athletes sports performance.				

**Does self-efficiency have influence on student athletes sports performance?.**

23.	Involvement in physical activities help to promote positive thinking.				
24.	Observing other athletes task improves my performance.				
25.	The belief system of an athlete is responsible for high performance.				
26.	Previous performance is used to boost my present performance.				
27	Involvement in physical activities improves my sense of belonging identity				

**What are the coping strategies to be employed to manage this psychological variables affecting sports performance?**

28.	Positive self-talk can be used to cope with these psychological variables.				
29.	Confidence is used to boost sports performance.				
30.	Mental vigor helps to boost sports performance.				
31.	Being relaxed can help to cope with these psychological variables.				

## APPENDIX 2:

GET

FILE='C:\Users\user\Documents\Adeyemi Precious analysis.sav'.

DATASET NAME DataSet1 WINDOW=FRONT.

FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Gender

/ORDER=ANALYSIS.

### Frequencies

[DataSet1] C:\Users\user\Documents\Adeyemi Precious analysis.sav

### Statistics

Gender

N	Valid	127
	Missing	0

**Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	90	70.9	70.9	70.9
	Female	37	29.1	29.1	100.0
	Total	127	100.0	100.0	

DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Item1 Item2 Item3 Item4 Item5 Item6 Item7 Item8  
 Item9 Item10 Item11 Item12 Item13 Item14 Item15 Item16 Item17 Item18 Item19  
 Item20 Item21 Item22 Item23 Item24 Item25 Item26 Item27 Item28 Item29 Item30  
 Item31

/STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV MIN MAX.

## Descriptives

### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item1	127	1.00	4.00	3.2835	.79580
Item2	127	1.00	4.00	3.3937	.71445
Item3	127	1.00	4.00	3.4016	.82865
Item4	127	1.00	4.00	3.4173	.67190
Item5	127	1.00	4.00	3.3150	.72046
Item6	127	1.00	4.00	3.2756	.70909
Item7	127	1.00	4.00	3.2992	.71620
Item8	127	2.00	4.00	3.4646	.63988
Item9	127	1.00	4.00	3.4173	.71759
Item10	127	1.00	4.00	3.3780	.72297
Item11	127	2.00	4.00	3.4488	.63881
Item12	127	2.00	4.00	3.3937	.63192
Item13	127	2.00	4.00	3.5197	.64057
Item14	127	2.00	4.00	3.4803	.64057
Item15	127	2.00	4.00	3.4567	.63939
Item16	127	2.00	4.00	3.4724	.64027
Item17	127	1.00	4.00	3.4094	.67087
Item18	127	2.00	4.00	3.4488	.63881
Item19	127	1.00	4.00	3.4016	.73743
Item20	127	2.00	4.00	3.3780	.62905

Item21	127	2.00	4.00	3.4882	.64076
Item22	127	1.00	4.00	3.4094	.67087
Item23	127	2.00	4.00	3.4252	.63645
Item24	127	1.00	4.00	3.3780	.66582
Item25	127	2.00	4.00	3.4567	.63939
Item26	127	1.00	4.00	3.4016	.71558
Item27	127	1.00	4.00	3.3701	.71050
Item28	127	1.00	4.00	3.4016	.76904
Item29	127	1.00	4.00	3.3150	.68662
Item30	127	1.00	4.00	3.3543	.69611
Item31	127	1.00	4.00	3.3228	.72245
Valid N (listwise)	127				

COMPUTE psychologicalfactor=Item1 + Item2 + Item3 + Item4 + Item28 +  
Item29+Item30 + Item31 .

EXECUTE.

COMPUTE sportsperformance=Item5 + Item6 + Item7 + Item8 + Item9 +  
Item10+Item11 + Item12 + Item13 + Item14 + Item15 + Item16 + Item17 + Item18 +  
Item19 + Item20 + Item21 + Item22 + Item23 + Item24 + Item25 + Item26 + Item27 .

EXECUTE.

## CORRELATIONS

/VARIABLES=psychologicalfactorsportsperformance

/PRINT=TWOTAIL NOSIG

/STATISTICS DESCRIPTIVES

/MISSING=PAIRWISE.

### Correlations

### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Psychologicalfactor	26.8898	4.31172	127
Sportsperformance	78.4882	10.22591	127

## Correlations

		psychologicalfactor	sportsperformance
psychologicalfactor	Pearson Correlation	1	.813**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	127	127
sportsperformance	Pearson Correlation	.813**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	127	127

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).