

**INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ON SPORT
TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
STUDENT ATHLETES**

BY

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

DECEMBER, 2022

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN KINETICS AND SPORTS SCIENCE, FACULTY OF
EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (EDUCATION) DEGREE IN HUMAN
KINETICS AND SPORTS SCIENCE.**

DECEMBER, 2022

CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned certify that this project work was carried out by **AKHABHOA IWINOSA EUNICE** with matriculation number **EDU1703477** in the Department of Human Kinetics and Sports Science, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City in partial fulfillment for the award of B.Sc. (Ed) Degree in Human Kinetics.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the best parents I could ever dream to have for their relentless efforts to make sure that this project is a success and my beloved friend Boubouwei Andrew Tare Perez who has been a blessing to me and a constant source of support and comfort.

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the psychological factors that affect sports training and performance among student athletes in the University of Benin. Nine research questions were raised to guide the study. The descriptive survey research method was adopted in carrying out this study. The population of this study consists of two hundred and twenty-nine (229) student athletes. The data was collected using simple random technique and a sample size of one hundred and sixteen (116) respondents was used for the study.

The research instrument used for the study was a self-constructed questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was subjected to scrutiny and the test-retest reliability technique was used to ascertain its reliability. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that psychological factors influence sport performance which include stress, tension, anxiety and aggression. The data from the study also showed that personality, motivation, emotions, attention and concentration also affect the performance of student athletes.

In conclusion, student athletes agreed that psychological factors will affect sport training and performance. It is recommended that these psychological factors be taken into cognizance during training and competition as they determine how the student athlete will perform.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Sports can be a physically tasking activity that requires a lot of physical fitness components coming together to achieve enhanced sports performance. On the other hand, only a few people know of the psychological requirements it takes to be an athlete, as psychological preparation is vital for an athlete. There is no gainsaying on the importance of preparing physically as well as psychologically to compete in sports. Without the right mindset, it will not matter how often an athlete has been training and working out as they will not be able to perform at their best.

Both internal and external negative psychological factors can have a profound effect on how well an athlete performs. They can cause mental disruptions when practicing, breaks in focus, and even influence physicality, for example by causing shaking, muscle tightness, and increased perspiration, all of which can lead to injury if left untreated. Strategies such as goal setting, routine, and visualization can help athletes and coaches overcome these powerful psychological effects, along with talking therapies to help athletes change their mindset and improve their self-confidence.

Although psychological preparation is a component that has been often neglected by athletes and coaches alike, studies have shown that mental readiness was felt to be the most significant statistical link with Olympics ranking (Olympic Sports Journal, 2021). Athletes have frequently been quoted to state how the mental aspect is the most important part of one's performance. As Arnold Palmer, a professional golfer suggested that the game is 90 percent psychological. "The total time spent by the golfer actually swinging and striking the ball during those 72 holes is approximately seven minutes and 30 seconds, leaving 15 hours, 52 minutes and 30 seconds of "thinking time". Within the parameters of psychological aspects of athletic performance, it is interesting to note that more than 70 percent of questions raised, discussed, and debated at International conferences and seminars on sports psychology pertain to anxiety and aggression as performance to the genre of emotions. They arise under varying sets of circumstances and form a sort of continuum, but always move upward. Their far-reaching consequences for the physical and mental health of people in general and performing athletes, in particular, are an open secret. Stress results from the non-fulfillment of needs; continued stress create anxieties, and anxiety leads to tension. The residual effect of tension is felt, monitored, and evaluated both

physiologically and psychologically and is ultimately linked with psychosomatic disorders.

Elite athletes claim that 90 percent of their success comes from mental training and ability. In professional sports, there are no huge differences between athletes in terms of potential, training, or physical ability. The determining factors of success, therefore, lie in the psychological realm.

Over the years, there have been increased interest in the psychological aspect of sports. This increased interest prompted psychology and sports professionals to ask the following question: what psychological variables determine sports performance?

It is clear that mental factors affect sports performance. This is true for elite athletes as well as anyone participating in sports. People practicing any physical sport, whether they be professionals or amateurs, can benefit from developing certain psychological tools. The tools can help increase their capacity and sport performance. The Mental Health Model (MHM) of sport performance purports that an inverse relationship exists between psychopathology and sport performance. The model postulates that as an athlete's mental health either worsens or improves

performance should fall or rise accordingly, and there is now considerable support for this view. Studies have shown that between 70 and 85% of successful and unsuccessful athletes can be identified using general psychological measures of personality structure and mood state, a level superior to chance, but insufficient for the purpose of selecting athletes. Longitudinal MHM research indicates that the mood state responses of athletes exhibit a dose-response relationship with their training load, a finding that has shown potential for reducing the incidence of the staleness syndrome in athletes who undergo intensive physical training. The MHM also has implications for the general care of athletes as support services have traditionally been limited to preventing or treating physical problems. Despite its simple premise and empirical support, the MHM has often been mischaracterized in the sport psychology literature and recently some authors have questioned its validity. This study will improve on MHM research, including the more recent work involving the model's dynamic features in an effort to resolve disputes surrounding the model.

Statement of the Problem

There is no gainsaying that student-athletes have many obstacles to overcome to obtain a desirable and optimum performance in sports. Undoubtedly, psychological factors are a huge determinants of student athlete's performance. Some of the major factors that commonly affect athletes are stress, anxiety, tension and aggression. It is important to note that the presence of these factors are needed by athletes in sporting activities so eradication is not the goal, but proper management instead in order to keep them in moderation as anything outside this might have negative effects on the athlete.

Research Questions

The research is intended to address the following questions:

1. How does stress affect student-athletes' training and performance at the University of Benin?
2. How does anxiety affect training and sports performance of student athletes at the University of Benin?
3. How does tension affect training and sports performance of student athletes at the University of Benin?

4. How does aggression affect training and sports performance of student athletes at the University of Benin?
5. In what ways can the stress of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?
6. In what ways can the anxiety of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?
7. In what ways can the tension of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?
8. In what ways can the aggression of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?
9. Do the psychological factors (stress, anxiety, tension, aggression) predict training and sport performance of student athletes?

Hypothesis

Ho1: the psychological factors/variables do not significantly predict training and sport training and sports performance of student athletes.

Purpose of Study

The study is an attempt to determine,

- The psychological factors affecting student-athlete training and performance at the University of Benin
- The influence of psychological factors on the training and performance of student-athletes at the University of Benin.
- Solutions that can be proffered in managing these psychological factors among student athletes at the University of Benin

Significance of the Study

The aim of every research effort is filling a vacuum which has previously been created by generating the needed information. It is therefore hoped that findings from this research will help to implement policies that can both assist and enlighten students, teachers, coaches, teams, clubs, government, and sports administrators on the influence of psychological factors influencing training and sports performance and to concern them so as to develop adequate psychological management programmes for athletes.

Scope/Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited to student-athletes at the University of Benin. The variables of the study include: the influence of psychological factors (stress, anxiety, tension and aggression) in training and sports performance in the University of Benin student athletes; psychological variables as significant predictors of student athletes training and sport performance.

Definition of Terms

Sport: Sport (or sports) is all forms of usually competitive physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim to use, maintain or improve physical ability and skills, while providing entertainment to participants, and in some cases, spectators.

Psychological Factors: Psychological factors are the elements of one's personality that limit or enhance the ways that one thinks. One's personality can render something as simple as conversation extremely difficult or very easy. A phobia (illogical and uncontrollable fear) can limit or even control the ways that one thinks or reacts.

Student Athletes: An athlete (also sportsman or sportswoman) is a person who competes in one or more sports that involve physical strength, speed or endurance. A

student athlete is an athlete enrolled in a collegiate program and therefore participates in interscholastic or intercollegiate events

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter is concerned with the review of literature related to this study. The review of this literature is done under the following sub-heading:

- Theoretical Framework
- Overview of Sports Psychology
- Psychological factors affecting athletes
- Influence of psychological factors on sports performance and training
- Management of psychological factors
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this Yerkes (1908) inverted U theory and Hardy (1987) catastrophe theory and the Multidimensional Anxiety Theory(MAT)

Inverted-U hypothesis, this is an alternative approach to Drive Theory is the (Yerkes 1908) which predicts a relationship between arousal and performance approximates to an inverted U shape. The theory is that as arousal is increased, performance improves

but only up to a certain point. (top of the inverted U). If the athlete's arousal is increased beyond this point, then performance diminishes. The Yerkes-Dodson law is a model of the relationship between stress and task performance. It proposes that you reach your peak level of performance with an intermediate level of stress, or arousal. Too little or too much arousal results in poorer performance. This is also known as the Inverted-U model of arousal.

The theory has been around since 1908, when psychologists Robert Yerkes and John Dillingham Dodson performed experiments on mice. Even though Yerkes-Dodson is called a law, it's not a scientific law as much as a psychological concept. The Yerkes-Dodson law can be depicted as an upside-down U-shaped curve. The left side of the curve represents low arousal, or stress. The right side represents high arousal. And at the center is a medium level of arousal. The vertical line on the left side goes from poor performance (at the bottom) to peak performance (at the top). The optimal state of arousal and optimal performance come together in the middle of the curve discussing the Yerkes-Dodson law, the word "arousal" relates to stress and motivation.

Yerkes and Dodson formed their theory while performing experiments on mice. Using mild electric shocks, they were able to teach the mice to learn a task, which they called a “habit,” more quickly.

But as the shocks got stronger, the mice took longer to learn the task, maybe because they were more focused on avoiding the shock than on completing the task. Yerkes and Dodson hypothesized that as arousal increases, the ability to form a habit or perform a task well also increases. It gives you sufficient motivation. But that works only up to a certain point, known as the optimal level. As arousal surpasses that point, your performance begins to deteriorate. You’re too stressed and anxious to do your best.

So, what’s the optimal amount of arousal? That depends on the task. A simpler task requires a higher amount of arousal, while a more challenging task requires a lower level of arousal. A moderate level of stress goes a long way. It’s manageable, motivational, and performance enhancing. Your heart beats a bit faster. You feel a sense of clarity and alertness. Your brain and body are all fired up. It’s that little extra push you need when a hard deadline looms and you’re up for a promotion. It’s the rush

you get before the black belt test you've been working toward for so long. There's something you want. You've definitely got skin in the game. And a moderate surge of stress is boosting your performance. Intense stress can lead to a fight, flight, or freeze response. It's the final play of the season, winner take all, and you're up to bat. It's the make-or-break project that could get you a life changing bonus. It's the test that could keep you from graduating. In these types of situations, stress and anxiety are ramping up to an unmanageable level. Athletes' heart may beat faster, but it's unsettling, distracting, even nerve-wracking. You've lost focus and you're not reaching your full potential.

Cusp Catastrophe Theory (Hardy, 1990; Hardy & Fazey, 1987). Similar to MAT it also considers how cognitive and physiological elements of anxiety relate to performance. However, Catastrophe Theory is an advancement on MAT because it considers how these two elements interact to influence performance. Specifically, it considers how cognitive anxiety and physiological arousal (not somatic anxiety which is a perception of physiological state) interact to influence performance. To illustrate why the interaction is important the relationship between cognitive anxiety and performance is different depending on the level of physiological arousal and the

relationship between physiological arousal and performance is different depending on the level of cognitive anxiety. Simply, according to Catastrophe Theory you cannot know how cognitive anxiety relates to performance unless you know the level of physiological arousal and vice versa. This three dimensional relationship between cognitive anxiety physiological arousal and performance is shown in the image at the top of the page.

The left hand side of the three dimensional relationship with low levels of arousal shows increases in cognitive anxiety will help performance whereas the opposite occurs with high arousal (the right hand side) and there is a decline in performance. But perhaps to best explain catastrophe theory it is perhaps easiest, in the first instance to consider the back and the front face of the three-dimensional relationship and consider the relationship between physiological arousal and performance in which cognitive anxiety acts as a splitting function. When an individual is experiencing low levels of cognitive anxiety the relationship between physiological arousal and performance is in the shape of a gentle Inverted-U. When cognitive anxiety is high increases in physiological arousal will facilitate performance up to an optimum level but decreases past the optimum level will result in a severe

performance decrement (i.e. a catastrophe). To regain composure and optimum performance a large reduction in physiological arousal is necessary before the athlete can seek to regain the optimum level. It is only when cognitive anxiety is high that increases in physiological arousal above the optimum will lead to the sharp catastrophic decreases in performance.

That the relationship between physiological arousal and performance is different under conditions of high cognitive anxiety depending on whether or not physiological arousal is increasing or decreasing is termed hysteresis. The hysteresis has been demonstrated in eight crown green bowlers (Hardy, Parfitt & Pates, 1994) who completed a bowling task under conditions of low cognitive anxiety, where their individual data would not be compared to anyone's, and high cognitive anxiety where they were told their scores would be compared to elite crown green bowlers. Physiological arousal was manipulated using physical exercise and half the participants did the task with physiological arousal increasing and half with physiological arousal decreasing. While there was evidence of a substantial drop in performance under conditions of high cognitive anxiety as physiological arousal was increasing there was no evidence of a substantial decrease in physiological arousal

necessary to before the bowlers ‘flipped’ back to the upper performance surface of the model. There is other support for the central tenets of Catastrophe Theory (e.g., Edwards & Hardy, 1996; Hardy, Woodman & Carrington, 2004). Although Catastrophe Theory has been criticized as being too complex to test and therefore of dubious value to sport psychologists (Gill, 1994). That said, elements of the theory have been tested and as Hardy et al (1996) point out complexity is not a reason for rejecting a theory.

Both MAT and Catastrophe Theory describe and explain the relationship between anxiety and performance. Perhaps both are stronger on the description rather than the explanation and in it is important to consider how anxiety can influence motor performance in a bit more detail perhaps through the role negative thoughts and physical tension play in impacting performance. Approaches like the Conscious Processing Hypothesis developed by Richard Masters are perhaps stronger on explaining the mechanisms by which anxiety may affect sport performance.

Overview of Sports Psychology

Sports psychology is a recent concern of sports science. Sports psychology assists both professional and amateur athletes in addressing issues, enhancing performance, and achieving goals. It can also benefit individuals not involved in sports. It is a crucial aspect for achieving success in many sports and can aid athletes in improving performance, managing competitive pressures, recovering from injuries, maintaining a workout routine and finding enjoyment in their sport. This paper will examine the psychological factors that impact athletes' performance and involvement in sports. Psychology preparation is a fact that has been often neglected by athletes and coaches. Studies have shown that mental readiness was felt to be the most significant statistical link with the Olympics ranking. Vishwanathan Anand, a professional chess player suggested that the game is 99% psychological. "The total time spent by the chess player is almost all of their 'thinking time". Within the areas of psychological aspects of athletic performance, it is interesting to note that more than 70 percent of questions raised, discussed, and debated at International conferences and seminars on

sports psychology pertain to anxiety, motivation, arousal, personality, concentration, stress, mental imagery, confidence, goal setting, etc. They arise under varying sets of circumstances and form a sort of continuum but always move upward. Sports psychology is now a firmly recognized sports science in the curriculum of most colleges of physical education. It is recognized that psychological factors are of crucial importance in sports activities and performance. The psychology of sport is an interdisciplinary science that is based on the knowledge of many related fields, such as biomechanics, physiology, kinesiology, and psychology. It involves the study of how psychological factors affect performance and how participation in sports and exercise affect psychological and physical factors (James Caidron, 2019). In addition to the instruction and training of psychological skills to improve performance, psychology is the science of sports that seeks to understand the psychological and mental factors that affect performance in sports, physical activity, and exercise and apply them to improve performance in individuals and teams. There are many psychological factors that affect sports performance and personality such as motivation, concentration (or attention), confidence, stress, and anxiety. Athletes must be aware of the psychological.

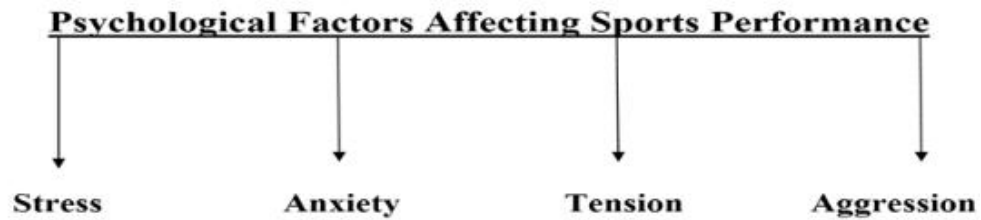


Fig.1: Psychological Factors affecting sports

Psychological Factors Affecting Athletes

The psychological factors of tension, stress, anxiety, and aggression can greatly impact an individual's sports performance and training. These factors can affect an athlete's mental and physical abilities, leading to decreased performance and increased risk of injury.

Tension refers to the psychological and physical symptoms that occur in response to stress. This can include muscle tension, headaches, and increased heart rate. In sports, tension can lead to decreased flexibility and range of motion, which can negatively impact an athlete's performance.

Stress is a natural response to challenging situations and can be either positive or negative. Positive stress, also known as eustress, can help an athlete perform at their

best. Negative stress, also known as distress, can lead to decreased performance and increased risk of injury. Stress can also lead to changes in an athlete's hormone levels, which can negatively impact their physical and mental abilities.

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild or severe. In sports, anxiety can lead to decreased focus and concentration, which can negatively impact an athlete's performance. Anxiety can also lead to changes in an athlete's hormone levels, which can negatively impact their physical and mental abilities. Aggression refers to behavior that is intended to cause harm or injury to others. In sports, aggression can lead to increased risk of injury and decreased performance. Aggression can also lead to decreased team cohesion and increased risk of conflict.

To counteract the negative effects of tension, stress, anxiety, and aggression on sports performance and training, it is important for athletes to develop effective coping strategies. These can include relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, and progressive muscle relaxation. It is also important for athletes to develop good time-management skills, so they can balance the demands of their sport with their other responsibilities.

Another key factor is the psychological support and guidance provided by sports psychologists. These professionals can help athletes develop effective coping strategies, improve their mental skills, and increase their overall well-being.

Regular sports practice has a positive influence on the physical and psychological health of athletes. Sports performance depends not only on the physical qualities of the athletes but also on psychological variables. In a competitive context, knowledge, and manipulation of psychological variables such as attention, self-confidence, stress control, anxiety, motivation, cohesion, self-control or emotional self-regulation, moods, and interpersonal skills can influence the athlete's performance. Even the practice of sports can generate feelings of fear of failure and the appearance of feelings of shame, creating in athletes a certain degree of insecurity, anxiety or stress, and avoidance behaviors, which can affect the well-being, interpersonal behavior, and sports performance of athletes. On the other hand, competitive sport is a means of socializing influences that impact the player's training, the promotion of a balanced sporting context, and the intention to continue practicing sport. Hence, the physical and psychological well-being of athletes depends on the social environments

where the sport is practiced. Outlined below are the perceived major psychological factors affecting athletes' performance and training.

Stress

Stress is defined as a physical, mental, or emotional, demand, which tends to disturb the homeostasis of the body (Web Md, 2020). It is an everyday part of life; if there were no stresses, we would probably be “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 the death of a loved one. The common denominator in all of these is change. Loss of familiarity breeds this anxiety with any change being viewed as a “threat”.

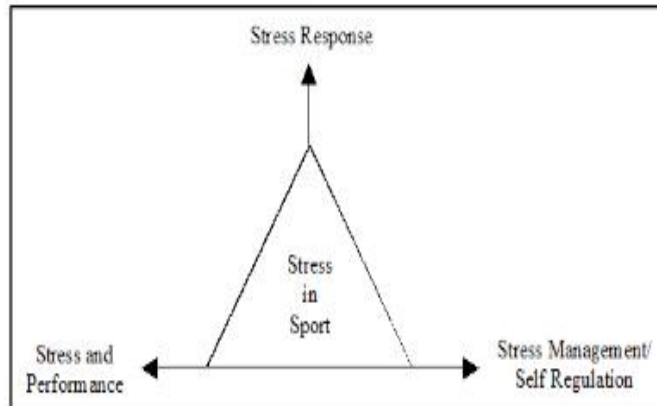


Fig.2: Stress Model, Graham Jones & Hardy

Stress and Sports Training and Performance

Sports training and 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 most 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 can also hamper one's play (Vikran & Kunash 2010).

Anxiety

Anxiety means a disturbed state of mind, emotional reactivity; arousal; nervousness; and unrealistic and unpleasant state of mind (Med Journal, 2020). Anxiety is an essential ingredient of any competitive situation and without a certain level of anxiety, there cannot be competitive performance. Neither too high, nor too low a level of anxiety is conducive to sports performance. An adequate level of anxiety produces the best results. Unless sports persons learn to cope with stressful competitive situations by managing anxiety, they would fail to achieve their goals.

Tension

As already hinted at, tension is that state of body and mind, which results from the internal and/or forces acting in opposition to each other such as 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/or behavior; in

another sense, it means tonus which is a state of partial contraction when muscles are not actively working.

An athlete's tension level in a particular competition generally consists of two parts:

- a. His basic tension level (i.e. the average tension level when awake, in other words, the activation level);
- b. The situation rises in tension due to competition (i.e. competition fever equivalent of examination fever). There seems to be a positive correlation between A and B. According to (Jeremy Botner, 2012) 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 Inverted-U model is often used to describe the influence of activation, arousal and tension on performance. The model says that an athletic performance will lose in quality if the tension level is either very low or very high, however the optimal level of activation arousal, tension and motivation is the one at which an athlete performs at his/her best or close to his/her maximum. This optimal level varies from athlete to athlete and in the same athlete from time to time depending upon the sport, how well learned it is (automatization)

and on the interpretation of bodily arousal (fight/flight). However, this ideal level is difficult to measure in an objective way expect the athlete or the coach identifying and analyzing feelings, moods and mind states.

Aggression

Both animals and human beings have biologically inherited aggression as an emotional expression. While aggression in animals has limited biological motive, aggression in man has psychological and social orientation with chief motive being possession (acquisition of wealth, property, territory, etc.), expansion (making the self, community and society grow in dimensions), and domination (showing oneself as stronger, more important, and more effective than others). To achieve these objectives, man would not mind harming man physically or psychologically. According to Baron: Aggression is any form of behavior directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment. During aggression, attack is initiated with the intent of injuring the other person. Hence aggression is deliberate and intentional. Aggression has long been a part of the sport domain. Russell suggested that outside of wartime, sports is perhaps the only setting in which acts of interpersonal aggression are not only tolerated but enthusiastically applauded

by large segments of society. Aggressive behavior can be classified according to the primary reinforcement sought via the act. Leonard and Cratty identified two forms of aggression in sport, viz. (1) hostile, reactive or retaliatory aggression, and instrumental aggression or non-emotional and task-oriented. If we will speak about the sources of sport aggression so, according to Terry & Jackson, reinforcement for acts of violence may come from (1) the athlete's immediate reference group coaches, team mates, family and friends; (2) structure of the game and implementation of rules by officials and governing bodies; and (3) attitudes of fans, media, courts, and society. Dollard decided to produce a new theory to try and explain the causes of aggression. That's where the frustration-aggression hypothesis comes from. This includes the most important factors in aggression which is described as the characteristics of the situation itself. Dollard still agreed that we have an innate aggression instinct; by for this aggressive behavior to be released, it must be the cause of frustration. This basically means that all frustration leads to aggressive behavior. Berkowitz further developed this claim and suggested that the frustration doesn't lead directly to aggression, but rather to anger (an emotion). If the frustration is unexpected or unfair this will lead to more anger which could then lead on to releasing aggression to relieve ourselves from

the frustration. If we are able to release the aggression, then we will reach catharsis. This is a stage also known as „letting go“ where all anger and frustration is released. We can conclude that aggression is a part of human behavior and is necessary for an individual to live and struggle for higher achievements. Struggle for supremacy, dominance, and excellence in sports obviously involve aggression. Aggression in one form or the other is inevitable and inescapable in sports activities. When hostility takes over aggression, the situation becomes alarming and it becomes anti-social behavior. Aggression may help in the performance of an athlete to put in harder effort for the success of the team. Athletes must be helped to reduce and control aggression in order to play calmly and perform the best. Appropriate level of aggression, as permitted under the rules governing the game, tend to improve the skill and enhance the effort, and on the other hand, high or low level of aggression will humper and retard the performance in sports.

Aggression, in its broadest sense, is behavior, or a disposition, that is forceful, hostile, or attacking. It may occur either in retaliation or without provocation (Mariam Webster's). In narrower definitions that are used in social and behavioral sciences, aggression is an intention to cause harm or an act intended to increase relative social

dominance. Predatory or defensive behavior between members of different species may not be considered aggression in the same sense. Aggression can take a variety of forms and can be physical or communicated verbally or non-verbally. Aggression differs from what is commonly called assertiveness, although the terms are often used interchangeably among laypeople, e.g. an aggressive salesperson. Aggression is defined as threats or harmful actions directed toward another individual and can include threat displays, lunging, growling, snarling snapping, and biting. In animals, aggressive behaviors are a means of communication. Dogs and cats use aggressive displays, threats, and attacks to resolve competitive disputes over resources (territory, food) or increase their reproductive potential, or escape threatening situations (Friday and Mikenyl, 2011).

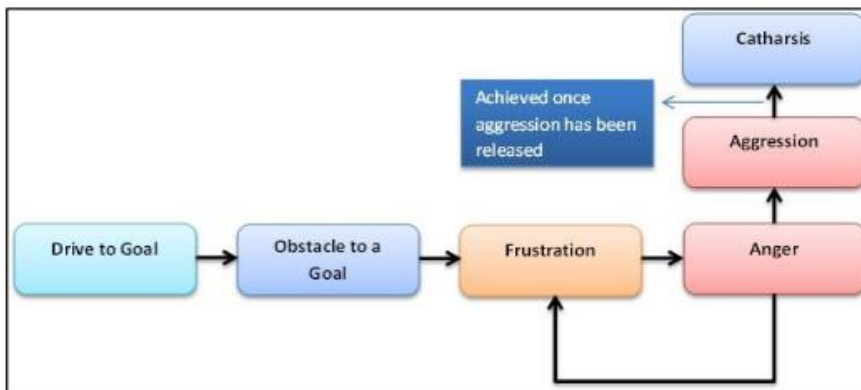


Fig.3: The Frustration-Aggression Theory

Influence of Psychological Factors on Sports Performance and Training

How does Stress Affect Performance?

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 a crucial influence on an individual's response to stress. One of the most noticeable effects 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 through mere observation, it's best to learn about the scientific relationship between stress and performance. The curve shows that as 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 the performance levels start 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, higher levels of performance. For instance, a basketball player tries to run faster, shoot a three-point shot, and succeed in it because of the pressure he has obtained from the audience, the close scores, and the tough opponents.

Negative Effects

When stress is perceived as uncontrollable or unmanageable, the person begins to experience a gradual to drastic decrease in performance levels, causing a decline in productivity and enthusiasm to respond to the stress. For instance, a very tight deadline is given to an office employee who has to take care of her four children at home and a sick mother at the hospital. This overwhelming mix of situations, if not managed carefully and totally, will result in poor performance at work, bad relationships with other members of the family, ill health, and burnout.

How Does Anxiety Affect Sports Performance?

Anxiety has both psychological and physiological implications for sports performance. For example, once aroused, it raises the general arousal level of the player to such an extent that he finds it hard to concentrate on his game due to the constant bombardment on his nervous system and his inability to diffuse tension caused by rising anxiety levels. The ability of the player to monitor and judge situations correctly is reduced. His information-processing mechanism gets overstressed resulting either in wrong or slow responses even to emergent situations. Under such a condition, the player is not focused-he wishes to do one thing but does something else. He loses control over his body and mind. The relationship between anxiety and athletic performance has been a subject of various theories that sprung up over time; for example, drive theory in 1943, and the inverted U-hypothesis or optimal arousal level in 1962. The latter was formed on the notion that there is an optimal amount of arousal that an athlete will perform at. However, if that level of arousal is passed then the level of performance will decrease. The same thing happens when the level of arousal is lower than the optimal level. Though this hypothesis has had much

support for many years, it too has fallen out of favor due to its oversimplification on a subject as complex as the brain and behavior.

How Does Tension Affect Sports Training and Performance?

Excessive tonus is called tension, which may result from excessive stimulation or from strains and stresses upon the organism. This kind of tension is not as harmful as the kind of tension which arises from a state of persistent unsatisfied wants and desires. Physiologically and psychologically as long as a person's wants are unsatisfied he remains in a state of tension. This can result in recurring injuries, a drop in athletes' fitness levels.

How Does Aggression Affect Sports Training and Performance?

Aggression like most of these psychological factors at optimal levels is favorable to the athlete and even adds joy and entertainment to the sport, but high displays of aggression can cost an athlete and his/her team so much that one of the most common punishments for aggression is disqualification which means an instant defeat or eviction which in team sports puts your team at a great disadvantage.

Management of Psychological Factors

Just like athletes' physical conditions need to be managed to ensure continued performance by athletes so also do their psychological state require proper management and monitoring (Sports Psychology Journal, 2016). Some of the ways to achieve this are outlined below for the different psychological factors.

Management of Stress

When stress comes simply as a stimulus causing distraction, modification of the stimulus itself may be sufficient to reduce stress. Stress as a perception of threat would require the athlete to learn to feel that the demands of the situation are not difficult for him/her to meet. In situations where stress becomes an illogical perception of a threat, the coach must make efforts to change the athlete's thinking and ward off illogical fears. In case of stress as an anticipated negative consequence, the performer needs to overly rehearse the behavior (routine) to the point at success is more likely to occur, and the expectation of failure corresponds to a decrease. Where stress occurs as a tension response, deep muscle relaxation technique or biofeedback acts as the best strategy. If stress comes as an important negative consequence, the athlete must be made to realize the importance of and increase (chances of) success and minimize

failure by rationalizing his thinking about the level and importance of competition. In nutshell, in dealing with stress as a process objective, external circumstances are perceived and interpreted by the athlete, thus leading to responses, the consequence of which may lead to changing the external situation and/ or modifying the athlete's perception of these external circumstances.

Management of Anxiety

According to (Sports Psychology Journal, 2020), anxiety can be managed through the following:

a. Diaphragmatic Breathing

The diaphragm is a muscle between the chest and the stomach cavity. The breathing done by contracting this muscle is known as diaphragmatic breathing. It requires simple practice to learn and then it should be repeated several times daily. The link will guide you to learn the technique.

b. Relaxation Technique

When the athlete feels the symptoms of anxiety such as increased heart rate, increased blood pressure or difficult breathing, a relaxation technique can help in controlling the anxiety. In one relaxation technique, the athlete is asked to lie down in a darkened

room and think about relaxing his body from the outside inward. As a result, the blood pressure, breathing and hearth rate normalizes. If the anxiety attack is more severe, then massaging the body can relax the individual to a great extent.

c. Visualization

Visualization is a technique, used by the athletes to control their anxiety. In this technique one visualizes himself in a situation similar to the actual event. The athlete visualizes himself winning in front of the entire crowd where the event is to take place.

Below are more ways you can use visualization to combat performance anxiety.

1. Visualizing Yourself: This is one of the exercises of visualization in which athlete visualizes themselves. The athlete is asked to visualize every physical aspect of their body with their eyes closed. While visualizing the body, the athlete tells himself that each of these body parts is fine and in good working condition.
2. Visualizing Your Game: Another exercise requires the athlete to visualize the actual sport they are to play. The athlete visualizes the events starting from the preparations before going onto the field and the first move, and finally the victory.

3. Visualizing Your Opponents: So far, you have visualized yourself and your game. In this exercise the athlete is now required to imagine how he sees his opponent playing. While visualizing his opponent's moves, he is supposed to tell himself that his moves are better than his opponent, and visualize how he should combat his opponents' moves.

Management of Tension

An athlete can manage his/her tension through the following ways

a. Focusing on What Can Be Controlled

Athletes should remind themselves that they are better trained, they have developed better techniques, but should not try to control things that are not in their control such as the audience or the opponent. An overview of the results of research on tension with elite athletes as subjects of study makes an interesting reading, even though the conclusions are at great variance across sports:

- i. Athletes (especially gymnasts, track & field athletes, basketball, and tennis players) who interpreted their tension as harmful had higher intensity of anxiety than those who reported it as being an aid.

- ii. The more experienced athletes were found to have lower level of tension. This makes some sense because as an athlete gains experience (especially while playing competitive fixtures), he or she learns tricks of the game and knows how to manage stress and tension.
- iii. The level of confidence and that of tension is said to be closely related. The higher an athlete's confidence, the less he or she will feel tense about the competition (and its outcomes) because they know they are ready to take the bull by the horn. Likewise, a tense athlete exhibits sign of self-doubt.

b. Muscle Relaxation

Tension results in stiffness of the muscles. Muscle relaxing practices are done to avoid this happening during the actual game. In this technique, the athlete tenses a particular muscle of the leg, abdomen, hands or face for 10 seconds with the eyes closed. After 10 seconds of tension, 20 seconds of relaxation should be practiced before moving to the next muscle.

Management of Aggression

There are three major viewpoints (theories) seeking to explain violent aggression in sports:

1. The biological theory, proposed by Konrad Lorenz, sees aggression as a basic, inherent human characteristic. Within this context, sport is seen as a socially acceptable way to discharge built-up aggression, a safety valve.
2. 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, or taunts by coaches or players.
3. 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.

For managing or controlling aggression a variety of coping skills, strategies and intervention techniques such as behavioral modification, positive reinforcement, mental imagery, visualization, relaxation, cognitive strategies, muscular and mental relaxation, visualization, Zen meditation, imagery skill training, goal-setting, positive

self-talk, pep-talks, hot baths, desensitization, inner mental training etc. are all effective ways for dealing with aggression.

Other psychological issues affecting sport performance

Personality

Personality in dictionary, personality means the quality or condition of being a person, but there are many early definitions for personality like “personality is the entire mental organization of a human being at any stage of his development. It embraces every phase of human character: intellect, temperament, skill, morality, and every attitude that has been built up in the course of one’s life”. The human personality is a marvelously complicated structure; delicately woven of motives, emotions, habits and thoughts, into a pattern that balances the pulls and pushes of the outside world. Several comprehensive literature reviews have been completed in an attempt to clarify the relationship between personality and sports performance. However, it is good to remember that the relationship between sports performance and personality is far from crystal clear, it seems equally true that certain general conclusion can be drawn. Athletes differ from nonathletic on many

personality traits. Personality traits are basic to sports excellence. It is necessary to identify and cultivate those personality traits which are most conducive to the performance in sports. Hence personality is an important psychological factor which, to a great extent determines the result of any athletic output.

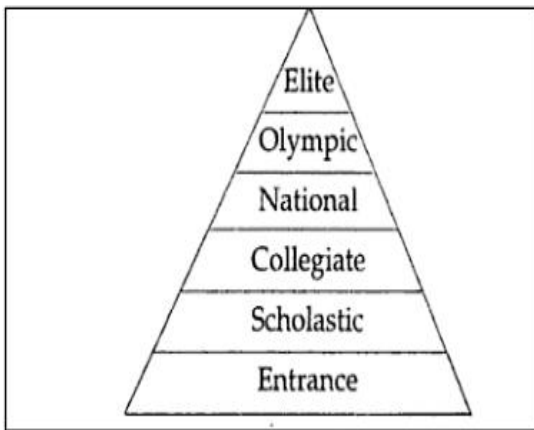


Fig.4: The Personality Performance Athletic Pyramid

Learning

Learning is a comprehensive process which covers all interactions, experiences and transformation which an individual have during his lifetime which have a permanent effect on him. It's a process that brings together cognitive, emotional, and environmental influences and experiences for acquiring, enhancing, or making

changes in one's knowledge, skills, values, and worldviews. Psychologist identified laws which guides learning; they are

- i. Law of Readiness states that an individual has to be physically and mentally ready before learning can take place. Readiness or preparedness makes one learn more quickly and effectively than otherwise. If a person is not ready to act, it will be annoying for him to act on compulsion.
- ii. Law of Exercise states that practice makes perfect. The athlete learns by doing and the more he does, the better he becomes. It is similar to the law of use and disuse where repetitions of exercises and drills helps the athlete become better at what he does. Charles A. Bucher has stated “the law of exercise, in respect to the development of skills in physical education, means that practice makes for better coordination, more rhythmical movement, less expenditure of energy, more skill, and better performance”.
- iii. Law of Effect is also called law of satisfaction states that activates that the individual experiences satisfaction or pleasure is easily and readily learn than activities that does not possess these qualities.

All the above laws, when applied to learning skills in physical education, state that the student must either be ready or must be motivated to be ready, and the act must be repeated time and again before one can become proficient. This process proceeds much more rapidly if the student experiences satisfaction and this feeling of satisfaction can be experienced only when some success has been achieved.

Intelligence

Intelligence is aggregate mental capacity or energy of an individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with one's environment. The relationship between physical activity and intelligence has often been a matter of serious debate among sports psychologists. The nature of this relationship, however often depends on how close the physical and the intellectual elements are embedded in an activity. Digiovanna said that intelligence is exercised in the analysis of skilled movement, the more complex and the more interpretative the movement, the greater amount of intelligence necessary to comprehend it. Sports activities involve complex skilled actions. Since all skilled behavior is intelligent behavior so, the relationship between sports performance and intelligence cannot be denied.

Attention and Concentration

Attention is the process of getting an object or thoughts clearly before the mind. It is focusing on one activity instead on various others. It implies withdrawal from something in order to deal effectively with others. Performance in physical activity and sport greatly depends on attention, because all psychosomatic process such as sense perception, cognitive, motor memory, intelligence, etc., is closely associated with it. A direction dimension refers to the extent to which attention is directed externally to environment stimuli or internally to cognitions and emotions. Collectively these dimensions allow the attentional requirements of different tasks to be positioned in one of four possible quadrants. Giving high quality attention to the skill during sports competition is important for effective performance.

Various cognitive strategies and intensive over learning of skills may enhance the capacity to focus attention on the task at hand, resulting in better performance. There are number of factors which distract and reduce attention and concentration, which in turn will result in poor performance.



Fig.5: Dimensions of Attentions

Motivation

In psychology, motivation refers to the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of behavior. It is the ability to initiate and persist at a task. Motivation in sports is so important because you must be willing to work hard in the face of fatigue, boredom, pain, and the desire to do other things. Motivation will impact everything that influences your sports performance: physical conditioning, technical and tactical training, mental preparation, and general lifestyle include sleep, diet, school or work, and relationships. There are two types of motivation; they are; Extrinsic motivation is geared toward external rewards and reinforces. Extrinsic motivation may come from social sources, such as not wanting to disappoint a

parent, or material rewards, such as trophies and college scholarships. Extrinsicly motivated athletes tend to focus on the competitive or performance outcome.

Intrinsic motivation is geared toward internal rewards and reinforces.

Intrinsicly motivated athletes participate in sport for internal reasons, particularly pure enjoyment and satisfaction, and intrinsicly motivated athletes

typically concentrate on skill improvement and growth. We can conclude that

motivation is a force, a drive which prompts, compels, and energizes and

individual to act or behave in a particular manner, at a particular time, for attaining the specific goal or purpose.

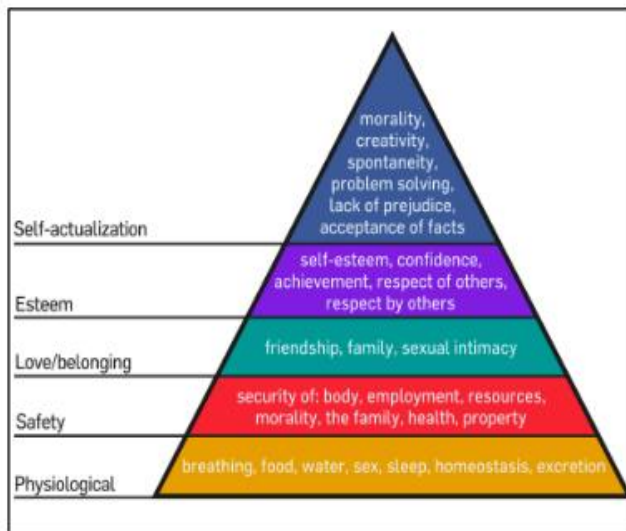


Fig.6: Maslow's Hierarchical Pyramid of Needs

Emotions

Emotions are biologically based adaptations that assist us in responding to particular external stimuli. According to Young definition, emotions are actually disturbed states or processes which originate in psychological situations and which are revealed by marked bodily changes in the glands and smooth muscles. Emotions have either positive or negative effects that can be seen when examining the role of emotions on motivational functioning, cognitive functioning, health, interpersonal functioning and performance.



Fig.7: Prime Sports Pyramid

Individual differences

Nature has not made two individuals exactly the same or even similar. People differ from one another in height, weight, color, appearance, and speed of reaction, character, personality, behavior, and the like. The innate differences among individuals are generally seen in such concrete variable as sex, age, ethnicity, body-build, physiological functions and psychological makeup. In exercise and sport, the individual differences are important principle of training which underscores the fact that optimal benefits are achieved by devising training programmes to suit the specific needs of individual athletes. ideally each exercise should have an individualized exercise programmer. This would ensure that the exercises are tailored to meet the requirements of the individual, and would minimize the risk of overtraining and overuse injuries. Individual differences in sports performance are an inevitable phenomenon, and the teacher or coach has to modify his approach according to the nature of each individual athlete.

Group Dynamics

Group dynamics is a system of behaviors and psychological processes occurring within a social group (intragroup dynamics), or between social groups

(intergroup dynamics). The study of group dynamics can be useful in understanding decision-making behavior, tracking the spread of diseases in society, creating effective therapy techniques, and following the emergence and popularity of new ideas and technologies. The first factor related to group dynamics is Stages of Group Development and this fall into four categories which are Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing. Team Cohesion is another factor that can affect the group dynamics of a team and is a big factor that if a team does not have it, it could affect their performance greatly. sports team is comprised of various individual athletes, each having different orientations and perceptions, and at times, these differences may interfere with performance of the team. Better performance will result if each member of the team merges his personal feelings and abilities into a total team effort. Success of a team depends on adjustment within i.e. how closely the team seems to be working and feeling together. Psychological togetherness among the members of the team does reflect on the outcome of the performance. Group dynamics and performance are thus mutually influential, and are further influenced by the stability of the personnel concerned with the team. It has been found that better group cohesion, generally tends to produce better performance.

Mental Imagery

Imagery may be defined as using one's senses to create or recreate an experience or visual image in the mind that at times may seem to be as real as seeing the image with our physical eyes. Mental practice is an important adjunct to the learning of almost all sport skills. The literature suggests that in addition to physically practicing a sport skill, the athlete should spend a small amount of time rehearsing execution of the skill in her mind. Mental ability and imagery help the athletes to empower their emotional state, and the way they approach the physical efforts. Such mental activity enables the athlete to improve the execution and precision of the given skill or task by thinking and imagining about it. It also helps in the smooth flow of energy as and when required.

Summary of Review of Related Literature

Mental preparation is defined as those cognitive, emotional, and behavioural strategies athletes and teams use to arrive at an ideal performance state or condition that is related to optimal psychological states and peak performance for Either competition or practice. Discussion of mental preparation is also limited to purposeful efforts that athletes and coaches use to ready themselves, although it is recognized that

many athletes may unknowingly engage in certain preparatory behaviors through force of habit or because those in their sport have always done it that way (Brewer, 2009). It is perhaps easiest to begin by saying what aggression is not. Aggression is not competitiveness, nor is it anger. Competitiveness is an attitude; anger is an emotion. While anger and competitiveness may both contribute to aggression. Aggression itself is behavior. It involves actively doing something unpleasant to someone. Aggressive behavior may come in many forms, ranging from verbal abuse-designed to cause psychological harm- to physical violence (Jarvis, 2012). A key question is how self-confidence works to influence the way that athletes perform. Self-confidence can be thought of as the “mental modifier,” because confidence seems to modify how athletes feel about, respond to, and think about everything that happens to them in sport. For example, self-confidence has been shown to positively predict athletes’ effort and persistence in sport (Brewer, 2009). Confidence consistently appears as a key skill possessed by successful athletes, and international level athletes have identified confidence as the most critical mental skill defining mental toughness. Knowing this, athletes have stated that the development and maintenance of confidence is one of their biggest needs in mental training. This is because along with its importance as a

mental skill critical to sport performance, another defining characteristic of confidence is its fragility (Brewer, 2009). Stress can be considered from two standpoints. It can be viewed from an individual's reaction to stress and it can also be viewed with respect to the source of stress. When the source of stress is referred to, the terms stressor or stress agent are generally used. Stressful agents in sport include 11 spectators and incentives, such as rewards, which may come in the form of prizes and prestigious recognition at national, county and club level. Increasing the incentive, increasing the importance of the event for the individual increases the stress (Davis, 2015).

In conclusion much of the sport research has examined self-confidence in relation to actual sport performance in terms of skill rather than in terms of the motivational behavior actually specified by the theories, such as persistence or mastery attempts, choice of activities or skills, and effort expended. These behaviors are certainly contributors to skillful performance and should be given more attention in the study of self-confidence in sport. We can conclude with the help of available literature and the studies that psychological factors are the main and important factor helping athlete to achieve the desired goal.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes and focuses on the research methods employed during the course of this study. It shall be discussed under the following sub-heading:

- 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 study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design was chosen because the study aimed at collecting data on and describing them in a systematic manner relating to the characteristics, features or facts about a given

population (Nworgu, 2015). This is because this research involves gathering information and opinions of student athletes in competitive sports.

Population of the Study

The population of this study will comprise of athletes from selected sports in the University of Benin. The population of these athletes is 148, with the breakdown shown below:

S/N	Type of Sports	Population size
1.	Athletics	68
2.	Karate	14
3.	Basketball	51
4.	Hockey	38
5.	Tennis	11
6.	Swimming	13
7.	Football	34
	Total	229

Source: Head Coaches Uniben Sports Complex (2022)

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample of this study will be made up of 50 percent of the members of the population. From each of the sports type chosen for the study. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the student athletes from each sport type represented in the study.

S/N	Type of Sports	Population size	Sample size
1.	Athletics	68	34
2.	Karate	14	7
3.	Basketball	51	26
4.	Hockey	38	19
5.	Tennis	11	6
6.	Swimming	13	7
7.	Football	34	17
	Total	229	116

Research Instrument

The research instrument that will be used for the study is a self-constructed Questionnaire titled: “Influence of Psychological Factors on Sports training and Performance Questionnaire (IPFSPQ)”. The questionnaire is comprised of two sections; A and B. Section A is designed to collect the demographic data of the respondents, while Section B consist of items generated from the research questions raised to which the respondents provide answers/ responses.

Validity of the Instrument

The research instrument was subjected to content and construct validity by the researcher’s supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Human Kinetics and Sports Science. The instrument was further modified in line with their comments and suggestions. These processes are expected to ensure both content and construct validity.

Reliability of the Instrument

The test-retest reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. In this method, the instrument was administered to twenty (20) respondents who are not part of the population. After an interval of two weeks, the

same instrument was administered to the same set of respondents under the same conditions. The result from both administrations was subjected to Cronbach alpha statistics and reliability correlation coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. This reliability coefficient value showed that the test instrument was reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The test instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants for data collection. Consequently, the respondents were instructed on how to answer the questions after which the completed questionnaires was retrieved by the researcher and research assistants on the spot to reduce loss rate and to offer the respondents the opportunity to ask questions in case they find any item difficulty.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics involving frequency counts and percentages for their bio-data, while mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions; and lastly, multiple regression statistics was used in testing the formulated hypothesis, set at a 0.05 level of significance. All these data analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for

Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The criterion level for the mean responses was below 2.50 taken as “disagree”, while mean value of 2.50 and above was considered “agree”. This came about due to the modified four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree = 4 points; Agree = 3 points; Disagree = 2 points; Strongly Disagree = 1point. Hence, the average of the allocated points mathematically becomes $= 4+3+2+1 = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Presentation of results deals with data analysis obtained from the study. It is presented in line with the research questions stated in chapter one.

Analysis of Demographic Data:

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by gender

Sex	Frequency	Percentages
Male	62	53.4
Female	54	46.6
TOTAL	116	100

The data I table 1 above shows that 53.4% of the respondents are males, while 46.6% respondents are females.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by age range

Age Range	Frequency	Percentages
17 – 20 years	25	21.6
21 – 24 years	59	50.9
25 – 28 years	30	25.9
29 years and above	2	1.7
TOTAL	116	100

The data in table 2 above shows that 21.6% of the respondents were within the age range of 17 and 20 years, 50.9% of the respondents were within the age range of 21 and 24 years, 25.9% of the respondents were within the age range of 25 and 28 years while 1% of the respondents were with 29 years and above.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents based on type of sports

S/N	Type of Sports	Number of athletes (%)
1.	Athletics	68 (29.2%)
2.	Karate	14 (5.8%)
3.	Basketball	51 (22.5%)
4.	Hockey	38 (16.7%)
5.	Tennis	11 (5%)
6.	Swimming	13 (5.8%)
7.	Football	34 (15%)
	Total	229

The data in table 3 above shows that 29.2% of the respondents participate in Athletics, 5.8 % of the respondents participate in Karate, 22.5 % of the respondents participate in Basketball, 16.7% of the respondents participate in Hockey, 5 % of the respondents participate in Tennis, 5.8% of the respondents participate in swimming, 15% of the respondents participate in football.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1:

How does stress affect student-athletes' training and performance at the University of Benin?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation on the stress affecting student-athletes' training and performance at the University of Benin?

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Stress causes an athletes to perform poorly	3.31	0.581	Agree
2	Stress causes drop in an athletes fitness	3.14	0.822	Agree
3	Stress can make an athlete get easily injured	2.83	0.805	Agree
4	Stress does not have any significant influence on athletes performance	2.01	0.982	Disagree
5	Stress can make an athlete quit sports	2.78	0.767	Agree
6	Stress when properly managed can boost an athlete's sport performance	3.20	0.832	Agree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

The data in table 4 showed that the mean values ranged from 2.01 to 3.31, while the standard deviation values range from 0.561 to 0.982. With an average mean of 2.87, it is seen that the respondents agreed to stress being the cause of athletes' poor performance, injury, drop in fitness and quitting of sports and when positively handled can improve student-athlete performance optimally, while disagreeing that stress is

insignificant to athletes' performance The low values of the standard deviation showed that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research Question 2:

How does anxiety affect training and sports performance of student athletes at the University of Benin?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation on how anxiety affect training and sports performance of student athletes at the University of Benin?

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
7	Anxiety can determine how well an athlete performs in a sporting event	2.98	0.932	Agree
8	Anxiety prevents athlete from performing optimally	3.01	0.625	Agree
9	Anxiety is a part of sports and as such should not be given attention to	3.09	0.899	Agree
10	Anxiety dulls the senses and reflexes of athletes	2.58	1.031	Agree
11	Anxiety can lead to burnout	2.91	0.764	Agree
12	Anxiety when positively handled can improve student-athlete performance optimally	3.01	0.742	Agree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

The data in table 5 showed that the mean values ranged from 2.58 to 3.09, while the standard deviation values range from 0.625 to 1.031. With an average mean of 2.91, it is seen that the respondents agreed to anxiety being important to performance, they also agreed that it can prevent optimal performance of athlete as well lead to burnout and it dulls the senses. It was also agreed that it is part of sports so should not be paid too much attention; and when positively handled can improve student-athlete performance optimally. The low values of the standard deviation showed that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research Question 3:

How does tension affect training and sports performance of student athletes at the University of Benin?

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation of responses on how tension affect training and sports performance of student athletes at the University of Benin?

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
13	Tension is a major cause of muscular injuries in athletes	2.81	0.932	Agree
14	Tension can lead to an athletes' poor performance	2.34	0.594	Disagree
15	Tension prevents athletes muscles from responding to reflex and stimulus quickly	2.98	0.942	Agree
16	Tension may not affect sports performance but enhance it if properly deployed during sport competition responding to reflex and stimulus quickly	3.20	0.514	Agree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

The data in table 6 shows that the mean values ranges from 2.81 to 3.20, while the standard deviation values range from 0.514 to 0.942. With an average mean of 2.91, it was agreed that tension is a major cause of muscular injuries among athletes, that it may not affect sports performance but enhance it if properly deployed during sport competition responding to reflex and stimulus quickly, reduces athletes reflex response,

while disagreeing it can lead to an athletes' poor performance. The low values of the standard deviation showed that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research Question 4:

How does aggression affect training and sports performance of student athletes at the University of Benin?

Table 7: Mean and standard deviation on how aggression affect training and sports performance of student athletes at the University of Benin?

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
17	Aggression can cause an athlete to lose a sporting event	3.10	0.560	Agree
18	There are no punishments for highly aggressive behaviours in sports	2.41	0.797	Disagree
19	Every sports has an accepted level of aggression that must be maintained	2.75	0.893	Agree
20	Aggression endangers the health of athletes and can cause injuries	3.10	0.560	Agree
21	Aggression where effectively channeled in terms of aggressiveness and hunger to win can cause the students to excel in sport performance	3.30	0.730	Agree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

The data in table 7 showed that the mean values ranged from 2.41 to 3.30, while the standard deviation values range from 0.560 to 0.893. With an average mean of 3.00, it is seen that the respondents agreed to aggression causing loss of sporting event, that it endangers health of players and every sport possess an accepted level of aggression. They also agreed that aggression where effectively channeled in terms of aggressiveness and hunger to win can cause the students to excel in sport performance, while disagreeing that there are no punishments for high aggression in sports. The low values of the standard deviation showed that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research Question 5:

In what ways can the stress of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?

Table 8: Mean and standard deviation on how the stress of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
22	Breathing exercises can help athletes manage stressful situations	3.06	0.506	Agree
23	Visualization and Imagery can increase athletes coping abilities for stress	3.22	0.620	Agree
24	Exposure to similar stressors the athlete will meet during sporting events will help athlete cope better	3.10	0.828	Agree
25	Repression helps athletes cope with stress	2.28	1.037	Disagree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

The data in table 8 showed that the mean values ranged from 2.28 to 3.22, while the standard deviation values range from 0506 to 1.037. With an average mean of 2.91, it is seen that the respondents agreed to breathing exercises, visualization and imagery and expression to stressors are all effective stress management methods, while they disagreed that repression is not. The low values of the standard deviation showed that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research Question 6:

In what ways can the anxiety of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?

Table 9: Mean and standard deviation on how the anxiety of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
26	Diaphragmatic breathing can help athletes control anxiety	3.09	0.583	Agree
27	Visualization is a way of controlling athletes anxiety	3.01	0.712	Agree
28	Shouting and cheering can help an athlete control anxiety	2.56	0.816	Agree
29	Practicing relaxation techniques help control athletes anxiety	3.03	0.780	Agree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

The data in table 9 shows that the mean values ranged from 2.56 to 3.01, while the standard deviation values range from 0.583 to 0.816. The four items had mean scores

above 2.50, and it was agreed that diaphragmatic breathing, practicing relaxation techniques, shouting and cheering and visualization are effective ways of managing athletes' anxiety. The low values of the standard deviation showed that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research Question 7:

In what ways can the tension of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?

Table 10: Mean and standard deviation on how the tension of student athletes at the University of Benin can be managed?

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
30	Tension is beyond the control of athletes	2.21	0.720	Disagree
31	Focusing on the factors within athlete's control help to control athletes tension	3.14	0.709	Agree
32	Stretches and warm ups can help to control athletes tension	3.05	0.644	Agree
33	Muscle relaxation is an effective way to control athlete's tension	3.12	1.006	Agree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

The data in table 10 shows that the mean values ranged from 2.21 to 3.14, while the standard deviation values range from 0.644 to 1.006. The three of the four items had

mean scores above 2.46, and it was disagreed that tension is beyond the control of athletes and agreed that focusing on the factors within athlete's control, stretches and warm ups and muscle relaxation help to control athletes tension. The low values of the standard deviation showed that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Research Question 8:

In what ways can the aggression of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?

Table 11: Mean and standard deviation on how the aggression of student athletes at the University of Benin can be managed?

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
34	Aggression is a part of sports and as such should not be controlled	2.32	0.940	Disagree
35	Counseling and therapy can help athletes cope with aggressive tendencies	3.14	0.709	Agree
36	Breathing and relaxation techniques can help check athletes aggression	3.05	0.644	Agree
37	Assigning strict punishments to highly aggressive behaviors will help athletes keep aggression under control	3.12	1.006	Agree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

The data in table 11 shows that the mean values ranged from 2.32 to 3.14, while the standard deviation values range from 0.644 to 1.006. Three out of the four items had mean scores above 2.50, and it was agreed that breathing and relaxation techniques, assigning strict punishment for aggressive behaviors in sports, counseling and therapy can help athletes manage aggression within safe and acceptable ranges, while they disagreed that aggression should not be controlled as it is a natural trait. The low values of the standard deviation showed that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: the psychological factors/variables do not significantly predict training and sport training and sports performance of student athletes.

Table 12: Mean and standard deviation of psychological factors and sports performance

	Mean	SD	N
Sport performance	1.37	0.485	116
Psychological factors	109.11	9.479	116

Table 13: Multiple Regression Statistics on prediction of psychological factors on sports performance

Model summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change

.060 ^a	.004	-.005	.48632	.004	.414	1	114	.521
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (Sports Performance)								
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	decision		
Regression	.098	1	.098	.414	.521	h ₀ is retained		
Residual	26.962	114	.237					
Total	27.060	115						

The data from table 12 showed that sports performance has a mean of 1.37/ while psychological factors has a mean of 109.11. Hence, psychological factors have a higher mean than sports performance.

From the data in table 13, with R-value of .060, there is a positive moderate relationship between the predictors (psychological factors) o the outcome (sport performance). The R Square value of .004 (0.4%) shows that the psychological factors predict 0.4% of the Variance of the outcome (sports performance).

From the data in the ANOVA table, the F value is .414. The p-value is 0.521 which is greater than 0.05, hence, the null hypothesis is accepted/retained which showed that psychological factors/variables does not significantly predict sports performance of student athletes.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of Research question 1 indicated that the respondents agreed to stress being the cause of athletes' poor performance, injury, drop in fitness and quitting of sports, while disagreeing that stress is insignificant to athletes' performance. It also showed that stress when properly managed can boost an athlete's sport performance

The findings of Research question 2 showed that anxiety can affect training and sports performance, while it was also indicated that when positively handled, can improve athletes, performance. This agrees with Sports Psychology Journal (2020) that anxiety is important to performance, it was also agreed that it can prevent optimal performance of athlete as well lead to burnout and it dulls the senses. It was also agreed that it is part of sports so should not be paid too much attention to and when positively handled can improve student-athlete performance optimally.

The findings of Research question 3, showed that tension is a major cause of muscular injuries among athletes but cannot lead to athlete's poor performance and reduces athletes reflex response in as much as it may not affect sports performance but enhance it if properly deployed during sport competition.

The findings of Research question 4 indicated that aggression causes loss of sporting event, that it endangers health of players and every sports have an accepted level of aggression, while respondents disagreed that there are no punishments for high aggression in sports and where effectively channeled in terms of aggressiveness and hunger to win can cause the students to excel in sport performance

The findings in Research question 5 showed that breathing exercises, visualization and imagery and exposure to similar stressors are all effective stress management methods, while they disagreed that repression is not. The low values of the standard deviation showed that their responses do not deviate far from one another.

The finding of Research question 6, revealed that diaphragmatic breathing, practicing relaxation techniques, shouting and cheering and visualization are effective ways of managing athlete's anxiety.

The findings of Research question 7, showed that tension is within the control of athletes and that focusing on the factors within athlete's control, stretches and warm ups as well as muscle relaxation help to control athletes tension.

The findings of Research question 8 showed that breathing and relaxation techniques, assigning strict punishment for aggressive behaviors in sports, counseling and therapy can help keep athletes aggression within safe and acceptable ranges. However, respondents disagreed that aggression should not be controlled as it is a natural trait.

The findings of Hypothesis 1 showed that psychological factors do not significantly predict sports performance of student athletes. This follows the documentation of Elmagd (2019), who stated that performance in sports is no longer dependent on the psychological wellbeing of the athlete.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of psychological factors on the sports training and performance of student athletes in the University of Benin. Nine research questions were raised out of which one was hypothesized. The researcher made use of the descriptive survey research method in carrying out this study. The population for this study consists of 229 student athletes in the University of Benin with a sample size of 116

A self-structured questionnaire was used to obtain information from the respondents. The four-point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree was adopted as options to the items.

In analyzing the data, descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages was used to analyze the demographic data, mean and standard deviation was used in the data analysis of the research questions, while multiple regression statistics was used in testing the formulated hypothesis.

The following findings were obtained from this study:

- Stress was a cause or affects student athletes' performance; and that it is significant to their performance

- Anxiety affects performance, as it can also be acknowledged that it can impede athletes from giving their best, cause burnout, and dull the senses. Also when positively handled, it can improve student athletes' performance optimally.
- Tension was a significant contributor to muscular injuries in athletes, can impair performance, and lessens reflex responsiveness. Also, tension if properly deployed will help athletes respond to reflex and stimulus quickly, thereby enhancing their performance.
- Aggressive behavior could result in the loss of a sporting event, endangers players' health, and there is an acceptable degree of hostility in every sport. Conversely, where effectively channeled in terms of aggressiveness and hunger to win can cause the student to excel in sport performance.
- Stress-reduction techniques such as breathing exercises, mental imagery, and exposure to similar stressors are all useful, but they disputed that repression is not.
- Athletes can effectively manage their anxiety by using diaphragmatic breathing, relaxing exercises, shouting, and cheering.

- Focusing on factors within athletes' control, stretches and warm ups as well muscle relaxation help to control and manage athletes' tension,
- Violent sports behavior can be strictly punished, counseling and treatment can assist keep athletes' aggression within safe and acceptable ranges, and respondents disagreed that aggression should not be managed because it is a natural trait.

Conclusion

This study provides evidence that stress is a major contributor to poor performance, injuries, decline in fitness, and sport-related quitting among athletes. The findings suggest that anxiety can impede athletes from giving their best effort, cause burnout, and dull the senses. Tension was also found to be a significant contributor to muscular injuries in athletes, and can impair performance and reduce reflex responsiveness. Additionally, the study found that aggressive behavior in sports can result in the loss of a sporting event, endanger players' health, and it was acknowledged that there is an acceptable degree of hostility in every sport. But I all

these psychological variables when effectively handled can enhance student athletes' sport performance.

Recommendations

1. Implement stress-reduction techniques such as breathing exercises, mental imagery, and expression of stressors to help manage anxiety and tension among athletes.
2. Avoid using repression as a stress-reduction technique, as it has been found to be ineffective in managing anxiety and tension.
3. Encourage the use of diaphragmatic breathing, relaxing exercises, shouting, and cheering to help athletes effectively manage their anxiety.
4. Strictly enforce punishments for violent sports behavior and provide counseling and treatment to assist in keeping athletes' aggression within safe and acceptable ranges.
5. Institution should seek the services of a sports psychologist to assist athletes talk through their problems.

6. Mental health seminars should be organized to sensitize athletes and coaching staff on these psychological factors, how they affect sports training and performance and ways to manage them.

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APPENDIX

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

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam,

This questionnaire is aimed at gathering information on the Influence of Psychological Factors on the Sports Training and Performance of Student Athletes in the University of Benin. Please your cooperation would be highly appreciated in responding to the items listed below.

All information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please fill the spaces provided below and indicate your response by ticking (✓) where applicable.

Thanks for your cooperation.

AKHABHOA IWINOSA EUNICE

Instruction: please tick (✓) appropriate boxes to the question provided

Section A: Demography

SEX: Male (), Female ().

AGE (Years): 17-20years (), 21-24years (), 25-28years (), 29years and above ().

TYPE OF SPORTS: Athletics (), Karate (), Tennis (), Hockey (), Basketball (), Swimming (), Football ().

Section B:

S/N	How does stress affect student-athletes' training and performance at the University of Benin	A	SA	D	SD
1.	Stress causes an athlete to perform poorly				
2.	Stress causes a drop in an athlete's fitness				
3.	Stress can cause an athlete to get easily injured				
4.	Stress does not have any significant influence on the athlete's performance				
5.	Stress can make an athlete quit sport				
6.	Stress when properly managed can boost an athlete's sport performance				

S/N	How does anxiety affect training and sports performance of student-athletes' at the University of Benin	A	SA	D	SD
7.	Anxiety can determine how well an athlete performs in a sporting event				
8.	Anxiety prevents athlete from performing optimally				
9.	anxiety is a part of sports and as such should not be given attention to				

10.	Anxiety dulls the senses and reflexes of athletes				
11.	Anxiety can lead to burnout				
12.	Anxiety when positively handled can improve student-athlete performance optimally				

S/N	How does tension affect training and sports performance of student-athletes at the University of Benin	A	SA	D	SD
13.	Tension is a major cause of muscular injuries in athletes				
14.	Tension can lead to an athletes' poor performance				
15.	Tension prevents athletes muscles from responding to reflex and stimulus quickly				
16.	Tension may not affect sports performance but yet enhance it if properly deployed during sport competition				

S/N	How does aggression affects training and sports performance of student-athlete at the University of Benin	A	SA	D	SD
17.	Aggression can cause an athlete to lose a sporting event				
18.	There are no punishment for highly aggressive behaviors in sports				
19.	Every sports has accepted level of aggression that must be maintained				
20.	Aggression endangers the health of athletes and can cause injuries				
21.	Aggression where effectively channeled in terms of aggressiveness and hunger to win can cause the				

	students to excel in sport performance				
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S/N	In what ways can the stress of a student athlete at the University of Benin be managed?	A	SA	D	SD
22.	Breathing exercises can help athletes manage stressful situations				
23.	Visualization and imagery can increase athlete coping abilities for stress				
24.	Exposure to similar stressors the athlete will meet during sporting events will help athlete cope better				
25.	Repression help athletes cope with stress				

S/N	In what ways can the anxiety of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?	A	SA	D	SD
26.	Diaphragmatic breathing can help athletes control anxiety				
27.	Visualization is a way of controlling athletes anxiety				
28.	Shouting and cheering can help an athlete control anxiety				
29.	Practicing relaxation techniques help control athletes anxiety				

S/N	In what ways can the tension of a student athlete at the University of Benin be managed?	A	SA	D	SD
30.	Tension is beyond the control of athletes				
31.	Focusing on the factors within athlete's control help to control athletes tension				
32.	Stretches and warm ups can help to control athletes tension				

33.	Muscle relaxation is an effective way to control athlete's tension				
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S/N	In what ways can the aggression of student athletes at the University of Benin be managed?	A	SA	D	SD
34.	Aggression is a part sports and as such should not be controlled				
35.	Counselling and therapy can help athletes cope with aggressive tendencies				
36.	Breathing and relaxation techniques can help check athletes aggression				
37.	Assigning strict punishment to highly aggressive behaviors will help athletes keep aggression under control				

S/N	Sports performance	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory
1.	I handle psychological factors related to sports performance effectively to boost my achievement		
2.	Being stressed, anxious, tensed and/or aggressive gives no room for excellent sports performance for student athletes		
3.	Psychological factors has no impact on athletes' sport performance		