

ISSN 0974 3474



N I G E R I A N
S C H O O L
H E A L T H
J O U R N A L

VOLUME 30 • NUMBER 2 • JUNE 2018

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ISSN: 0794-3474

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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND NUTRITIONAL FACTORS AS CORRELATES OF WELLBEING OF FEMALE ATHLETES IN OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study was carried out in order to find out the psychological and nutritional factors as correlate of wellbeing among female athletes in Oyo State. The descriptive survey research design was employed due to its suitability to the study objective. The population for the study was female athletes in Oyo State while a sample of 100 respondents was purposively drawn across twelve (12) major sports represented by the athletes. A self-structured validated close ended 4-point Likert scale instrument was used for data collection. Four hypotheses were tested. The collected questionnaire were coded and analysed using inferential statistics of multiple regression to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. In conclusion, the researchers found that psychological and nutritional variables such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, late eating, snacking and skipping meal significantly correlate with wellbeing of female athletes in Oyo State Sports Council. It therefore recommended that coaches and athletes should endeavor to watch out for those psychological factors and strengthen the psychological state needed for wellbeing, nutritional needs of the athletes should be taken care of.

Key words: *Well-being, Self-esteem, Self-efficacy, Snacking, Anxiety*

Introduction

Psychologically, well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable well-being does not require individuals to feel good all the time; the experience of painful emotions (aggression, anxiety and stress) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential for long-term well-being of an individual. Psychological well-being is, however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and interfere with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life. The concept of wellbeing (in a psychological sense) involves the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose (working towards valued goals), and experiencing positive relationship.

The concept of self-efficacy, self-esteem, anxiety and stress are all psychological factors which relate to judgment people make concerning their ability to execute behaviour relevant to a specific task or situations. They refer to the confidence in one's ability to behave in such a way or to produce a desirable outcome (Bandura, 2007). Self-efficacy and self-esteem makes a difference in how people feel, think and act. Self-efficacy pertains to optimistic belief about being able to cope with a variety of stressors. People with strong self-efficacy enjoy life because they are highly engaged. When they encounter stressful situations their belief in their ability to manage situations to their benefit allows them to be self-confident (Bandura, 2007). People with low level of self-efficacy and self-esteem typically view difficult task through the lens of fear. Low self-

efficacy becomes a cycle: lack of faith in one's ability produces lack of action. Lack of action contributes to more self-doubt. They become doubtful of their own capabilities and are more easily stressed and more frequently depressed than people with high level of self-efficacy.

Shek (1997), Sastre and Ferriere (2000) showed that various factors affect adolescent's level of psychological well-being. Stress and anxiety is important to all athletes. As a subjective experience of "disease", stress and degrades quality of life. Stress and anxiety also has an associated physiology; this physiology links stress to almost all diseases known to humankind, physical and psychological. For example, the abnormal hormonal production associated with stress and anxiety is linked to diabetes, accretion of body fat, hypertension and heart disease.

Furthermore, stress physiology exerts its influence throughout one's lifespan. Prenatally, maternal stress influences the physiology and development of the foetus. This process likely continues throughout infancy. Stress and anxiety also exerts an impact later in life by predisposing to disease and accelerating the cognitive aging process. In fact, stress is associated with age of mortality. All these outcomes and many others are associated with stress and its associated physiology. Salami (2004); Wong, Wong and Chau (2001) stated that stress, lack of self-esteem and anxiety predicts wellbeing both physically psychologically.

Findings by researchers revealed that psychological variable correlates wellbeing the psychological variables are; affective, stress, self-esteem and anxiety influenced athletes' achievement, behaviours, attitudes and wellbeing (Field, 2001; Khramtsova et al. 2007; Lyubomirsky, 2001; Salami, 2004; Wong, Wong and Chau, 2001). Athletes who had high self-efficacy, high self-esteem and who were free from stress and anxiety were found to be healthy and enjoy their wellbeing were motivated to participate in relevant activities and developed positive attitudes that led to success in their career.

According to Kirk, Schutte and Hine (2008), the variables of self-esteem, self-efficacy that are factors of psychological variables are also evaluated within the study areas of positive psychology similar to wellbeing. There are many studies that examine the relationships between psychological and nutritional factors which is one of the signifiers of wellbeing. These studies noted that self-esteem is an important precursor of wellbeing and that it has a positive relationship with athletes' performances (DeNeveand Copper, 1998; Diener and Diener, 1995; Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 2006). Psychological wellbeing is another describing important aspects of human functioning ranging from positive relationships, to feelings of competence, to having meaning and purpose in life (Diener et al., 2010).

There are distinct benefits related with engaging with healthy nutritional practices and psychological well-being of individuals as they are important determinants of health and wellness. While continued unhealthy health practices and behaviours will jeopardise not only one health status in later life, but also have a long term impact, on their overall well-being (Lee and Loke, 2005). Research indicates that psychological and nutritional wellness, specifically focusing on improving the self-efficacy and promoting belief in female athlete's ability to participate in physical activity and maintaining good nutritional habits can in effect delay the onset of chronic illness which ultimately affects their health and wellness (Sidman, D'Abundo and Hritz, 2009).

The effect of poor nutrition can lead to suboptimal functioning indirectly by exacerbation of stress, sleep disturbances and fatigue. Although these states are not considered "diseases" they are daily stressors that effect psychological wellbeing. A flow-on effect exists between fatigue and suboptimal cognitive functioning, in other words, our ability to think is affected. This in turn has a negative effect on self-esteem and performance. This is a classic example of a psychological cycle (Kubara, 2000). It's tempting and even sounds logical to skip meals, one is busy, or not hungry, or trying to lose weight or your blood sugar is too high. Skipping meals, however, may actually increase one blood sugar and cause the individual to gain weight. (Harris 2000) stated that irregular eating can have you "bouncing back and forth between normal blood sugars and high blood sugars. A meager meal can give you a meager rise in blood sugar. If you take one or more blood glucose-lowering medications that can cause low blood glucose (hypoglycemia), skipping meals or eating too little can increase the risk. Spreading out foods, especially carb-containing foods, over three meals each day (and snacks if you want them) can help maintain steady blood sugar levels. (Harris, 2000). Paluska & Schwenk, (2000); Taylor (2003) findings supported a positive relationship between nutrition and individual well-being including psychological wellbeing and has even suggested that nutrition has been overlooked as an intervention for psychological health conditions

Wellbeing according to Slavin (2006) is much more than mere physical health, exercise or nutrition. It is the full integration of states of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. It also includes social, emotional, spiritual, environmental, occupational, intellectual and physical wellness. Each of these seven dimensions act and interact in a way that contributes to our own quality of life. Well-being is a relative state where one maximises his or her physical, mental, and social functioning in the context of supportive environments to life a full, satisfying, and productive life (Kubara, 2000).

According to Cella (2007), promoting well-being emphasizes a person's physical, mental, and social resources and enhances protective factors and conditions that foster health. Instead of the traditional view of prevention as only avoiding or minimising illness and risk factors, well-being also focuses on disease resistance, resilience, and self-management. From the foregoing, it is established that psychological and nutritional variables contribute immensely to the wellbeing of an individual but there is a dearth of research on the part of female athletes in Oyo State. Therefore, the main purpose of the study was to investigate psychological and nutritional factors as correlate of wellbeing of female athletes in Oyo State.

Hypotheses

- Ho1 There will be no significant joint effect of psychological variables (self-efficacy, stress/anxiety and self-esteem) on well-being of female athletes in Oyo State.
- Ho2 There will be no significant relative effect of psychological variables (self-efficacy, stress/anxiety and self-esteem) on well-being of female athletes in Oyo State.
- Ho3 There will be no significant joint effect of nutritional variables (snacking and skipping meals, and late eating and vegetable consumption) on well-being of female athletes in Oyo State.

Ho4 There will be no significant relative effect of nutritional variables (snacking and skipping meals, and late eating and vegetable consumption) on well-being of female athletes in Oyo State.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used to carry out the study. The design was suitable for the study because the researcher did not manipulate any of the variables of interest used. The population for this study was female athletes in Oyo State. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select one hundred (100) elite female athletes from Oyo State Sports Council and purposive sampling technique was used to select major sports (Athletics=15, Badminton=04, Basketball=08, Handball=10, Football=15, Hockey=14, Tennis=04, Table Tennis=06, Squash=04, Volleyball=10, Taekwondo=05 and Judo=05) represented by Oyo State female athletes, while proportionate sampling technique was used to select the required number of respondents from each sport.

The instrument used to collect data for the study was a self-developed questionnaire in a close ended form and 4-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with allotment of points in the following order: SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2 and SD = 1. The questionnaire titled Psychological and Nutritional Scale was pretested on ten (10) female athletes in Moshood Abiola Stadium Kuto, Abeokuta, Ogun State which were not part of the population of the study, with the reliability of QWB of 0.83, QPS = 0.87, QNV = 0.93. The instrument was refined based on experts' advice. The instrument was administered personally with the assistance of four (4) research assistants to ensure a high rate of return and also enable the respondents to obtain clarification on the issues that needed explanation. Data analysis was done using inferential statistics of multiple regression was used for the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Result and Discussion

Ho1: There will be no significant joint effect of independent variables Psychological variables (Self Efficacy, Stress/Anxiety and Self-esteem) on wellbeing of Female Athlete in Oyo State.

Table 1: The table shows the joint contribution of psychological variables on wellbeing of female athletes in Oyo State.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
.852	.726	.718	1.8025			
ANOVA						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	828.452	3	276.151			
Residual	311.908	63	3.249	84.955	.000	Sig.
Total	1140.360	99				

Table 1 shows the joint contribution of the three independent variables to the prediction of the dependent variable, that is, wellbeing of the female athletes was

positively predicted by the independent variables. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation ($R=.852$ and a multiple R^2 of $.726$). This means that 72.6% of the variance is accounted for by three predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the composite contributed was tested at $P<.05$. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded a F -ratio of 84.995 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ho2: There will be no significant relative effect of Psychological Variables (Self Efficacy, Stress/Anxiety and Self Esteem) on wellbeing of female Athletes in Oyo State.

Table 2: Relative contribution of the psychological variables (self efficacy, stress/anxiety and self esteem) on wellbeing of female athletes in Oyo State

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Stand. Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.615	.913		2.865	.005
Self-Efficacy	.306	.087	.226	3.526	.001
Stress/Anxiety	7.523	.110	.051	0.682	.497
Self Esteem	.695	.061	.728	11.309	.000

Table 2 above shows for each psychological variable, the unstandardised regression weight (β), the standardised error of estimate (SEB), the standardised coefficient, the t -ratio and the level at which the t -ratio is significant. As revealed in the table, self-efficacy and self-esteem are significant with self-esteem having the highest contribution of 72.8% ($\beta=.728$, $t=11.309$, $p<.05$) followed by self-efficacy with 22.6% ($\beta=.226$, $t=3.526$, $P<.05$) while stress/anxiety is not significant with no contribution of 05% ($\beta=.051$, $t=0.682$, $P>.05$).

Ho3: There will be no significant joint effect of nutritional variables (snacking and skipping meals, and late eating and vegetable consumption) on wellbeing of female athlete in Oyo State.

Table 3: The joint contribution of the nutritional variables (snacking and skipping meals, and late eating and vegetable consumption on wellbeing of female athlete in Oyo State.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.884	.782	.778	1.6004

ANOVA						
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remarks
Regression	891.916	2	445.958	174.116	.000	Sig
Residual	248.444	97	2.561			
Total	1140.360	99				

Table 3 shows the joint contribution of the two independent variables to the prediction of the dependent variable, that is, wellbeing of the female athletes was positively predicted by the independent variables. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation ($R=.884$ and a multiple R^2 of $.782$). This means that 78.2% of the in accounted for by two predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at $P<.05$. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded a F-ratio of 174.116 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

H_04 : There will be no significant relative effect of Nutritional variables (snacking and skipping meals, and late eating and vegetable consumption on well-being of female athlete in Oyo State.

Table 4: Relative contribution of nutritional variables (snacking and skipping meals, and late eating and vegetable consumption on wellbeing of female athlete in Oyo State

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient	Stand. Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	3.071	.534		5.746 .000
Snacking and skipping meals	.144	.063	.139	2.293 .024
Late eating and vegetable Consumption	.968	.074	.791	13.019 .000

Table 4 above shows for nutritional, the unstandardised regression weight (β), the standardised error of estimate (SEB), the standardised coefficient, the t-ratio and the level at which the t-ratio is significant. It is revealed in the table that snacking and skipping meals and late eating and vegetable consumption contributed significantly. Late eating and vegetable consumption has highest contribution of 79.1% ($\beta=.791$, $t=13.019$, $P<.05$) followed by snacking and skipping meals with 13.9% ($\beta=.139$, $t=2.293$, $P<.05$).

Discussion of Findings

The study determined the psychological variables (self-esteem, self-efficacy and stress/anxiety) and nutritional variables (snacking, eating late, skipping and vegetable consumption) as correlate of wellbeing of female athletes in Oyo State. It was found that jointly, psychological variables correlate wellbeing of athletes in Oyo State so also nutritional variables. The findings that revealed that psychological variables correlate with wellbeing supports the works of previous researchers who found that psychological variable; affective, stress, self-esteem and anxiety influenced athletes' achievement, behaviours, attitudes and wellbeing (Field, 2001; Khramtsova et al. 2007; Lyubomirsky, 2001; Salami, 2004; Wong, Wong and Chau, 2001). Athletes who had high self-efficacy, high self-esteem and who were free from stress and anxiety were found to be healthy and enjoy their wellbeing were motivated to participate in relevant activities and developed positive attitudes that led to success in their career.

According to Bandura (2009) self-efficacy determines whether an individual will engage in certain activities, how much effort the individual is likely to invest; and for how long he/she will persist when faced with obstacles and aversive experiences. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the more likely one will persist. The psychological factors (self-efficacy and self-esteem are the product of better life). Significant correlation was found between self-esteem, self-efficacy and abnormal eating attitudes.

According to Kirk, Schutte and Hine (2008), the variables of self-esteem, self-efficacy that are factors of psychological variables are also evaluated within the study areas of psychology similar to wellbeing. There are many studies that examine the relationships between psychological and nutritional factors which is one of the signifiers of wellbeing. These studies have indicated that self-esteem is an important precursor of wellbeing and that it has a positive relationship with athletes' performances (DeNeveand Copper, 1998; Diener and Diener, 1995; Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 2006). Psychological wellbeing is another important aspects of human functioning ranging from positive relationships, to feelings of competence, to having meaning and purpose in life (Diener et al, 2010). Whereas the concept of self-efficacy is related to the effective use of emotions by an individual, self-efficacy is a multidimensional concept and is composed of emotion regulation, understanding the emotions of oneself and others, perception of emotions and use of emotions to support thoughts dimension (Kirk, Schutteand Hine, 2008).

Result regarding stress and anxiety that was found not correlating with athlete's wellbeing in Oyo state is in contrast with the study of Salami (2004); Wong, Wong and Chau (2001) which stated that stress, lack of self-esteem and anxiety predicts wellbeing both physically and psychologically.

Result that revealed that nutritional variable of eating late, skipping meal, snacking and vegetable consumption significantly correlate wellbeing of athlete in Oyo

state agreed with the studies by Paluska & Schwenk, (2000); Taylor (2003) which findings supported a positive relationship between nutrition and individual well-being including psychological wellbeing and has even suggested that nutrition has been overlooked as an intervention for psychological health conditions

Conclusion

The study revealed that psychological variables jointly correlate wellbeing of athletes in Oyo State. Self-esteem has the highest correlation with athletes' wellbeing followed by self-efficacy while stress and anxiety have no significant correlation with wellbeing of the athletes in Oyo State. It was also revealed that nutritional variables of meal skipping, late eating, snacking and vegetable consumption significantly correlate wellbeing of athletes in Oyo State. In conclusion, psychological variables (self-esteem, self-efficacy and stress/anxiety significantly correlate wellbeing of athletes in Oyo State and nutritional variables (meal skipping, snacking, eating late and vegetable consumption) significantly correlate wellbeing of athletes in Oyo State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, which determined the psychological and nutritional factors, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Training to enhance psychological toughness should be inculcated in the training for Oyo State athletes.
2. Female athletes in Oyo State should take cognizance of nutritional attitude by consuming vegetables, taking nutritious foods, avoiding snacking all the time, not skipping meals and not eating late in the night.
3. Also athletes should be enlightened on the quality of food that is of help to their wellbeing and athletic performances.

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