

Perceived effect of depression on semi-elite basketball players' countenance in a selected higher institution in Nigeria

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Abstract. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the perceived effect of depression on semi-elite basketball players' countenance in a university in Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of basketball athletes in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The sample size comprised 300 basketball athletes selected across departments in the selected higher institution. 20 basketball athletes were selected from 15 departments using simple random sampling techniques. A self-designed research instrument titled "Depression and Emotional Stability Questionnaire" (DESQ) was used to collect data from athletes. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics of percentages, mean and standard deviation and regression at 0.05 level of significant. The result indicated that there exists a strong effect of depression on athletes' countenance ($F=55.688$; $p<0.05$). The study concluded that depression significantly affects athletes countenance, and consequently their performance in sports.

Keywords. Basketball, depression, mental health, semi-elite athletes, sport performance, university athletes.

Introduction

Sport is generally recognized as a system of activities that are based on physical athleticism. It is also known to affect various cultures, traditions and values in our society. The stories that come from the world of sport help us to gain a better understanding of our views on issues of equality, human rights, child development, standards for health and fitness, and character development, as well as many other issues. Sport receives an inordinate amount of media attention and has attracted the interest of most people in the world. Sport is capable of defining a country, region or city. Its tribal nature means that the tribe can unify behind a common purpose irrespective of race, religion or culture and the rules of sport define the particular characteristics of that sport. The concept of participation in sports for love of it has lost grounds in the modern day. Sports have become entertainment as well as big business. Therefore, winning confers on the athletes and their

nation's immense benefits, which may include but not limited to increase in status, honours and glory as well as material rewards so that a star athlete can be lifted from neophytes to the status of an ambassador at international level. In consequence most youth the world over wants to achieve this glory through sports. Attaining high standard performance in sports and physical activity is the desire of every athlete and it depends on many factors, such as training, skill acquisition, fitness level, total concentration, time transformation, emotional control and sports participation. Hence competition has become more complex, fiercer and more aggressive. Gilgunn (2011) observed that when managing various responsibilities, it is not uncommon for athletes to report physical, financial and psychological, pressures.

Emotionally stable persons tolerate minor stresses and strains of day to day living without becoming emotionally upset, anxious, nervous,

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tense, or angry. They are able to maintain composure under minor emotional stress. They are fairly constant in their basic mood, and they generally revert quickly to that state following those occasions when they have experienced considerable stress or have been exceptionally provoked. The unstable person, on the other hand, is subject to fairly wide, frequent, and often unpredictable mood shifts that may swing from pole to pole (Adeleye, 2011). Maintaining positive emotional health is an active process. Some tips for creating and living emotionally healthy life include identifying and building personal strength, realistically seeing positive in all situations either good or bad, developing the resiliency to learn and overcome challenging situations, seeing the good in oneself, creating coping skills to help with mental health issues and stress, living one's life with a sense of purpose.

The games of football can be said to be the common sports in Nigeria, and it enjoys both public and private sponsorships more than any other sports. The game also provides the avenue of travelling outside the shore of Nigeria. The evolution of basketball as a sport in Nigeria is only gaining popularity and it is most concentrated in metropolitan cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna and Abuja. Competition opportunities are not spread to the hinterlands where semi-elites' players are concentrated. They train year in and year out with limited opportunities to show case their talents and fulfil their dreams of making it big via the game of basketball. Within the university settings in Nigeria only the biannual University Games organised by the Nigeria University Games Association (NUGA). Often, this competition does not run concurrently due to lack of facilities and funding by host universities. Many universities administration always prioritise projects to embark on due to poor funding from the Federal Government. Also. This competition is terminal as it does not lead to scouting and selection to the national platform where these athletes can have the opportunity to represent the fatherland. These and many more problems can become a source of mental distress for most of these athletes and this will inevitably affect their performance.

Athletes who participate in sport at a high level for an extended period will likely experience some stressors, adversities, and failures (Mellalieu et al., 2013). Even for those rare athletes who experience minimal performance failures, other obstacles exist, such as injuries (Podlog & Eklund, 2006), strained relationships (Mellalieu et al., 2013), organizational demands (Fletcher & Hanton, 2003), abuse (Stirling & Kerr, 2008), and mental health concerns

(Papathomas & Lavallee, 2012). Competitive athletes, both (individual and teams sports) can experience a variety of significant stressors which can militate against performance. Whether it is performance failure, injury, interpersonal relationships or demands, an athlete will inevitably face some sort of hardship in their career. When someone encounters an event in their life that might qualify as some sort of "set back" they, consciously or even unconsciously, choose how to move forward. Crocker (2018) warned that though basketball is a fantastic sport, players should however not base their self-worth on their performance in the court, because if they do, they are in for a world of trouble. If a player's values are based on what he does rather than who he or she is. They will encounter heartache and depression.

Depression is a serious disorder associated with a profound decrease in quality of life (Gurland, 1992), suicide (Conwell et al., 1990), and non-suicidal excess mortality that is unexplained by physical disorder. It also places a substantial burden on family, careers and the health and social services. Depression can strike at any time, but on average, first appears during the late teens to mid-20s. Conclusively, depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease a person's ability to function at work and at home (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Depression affects much more than moods. These are a few of the most common physical symptoms of depression which include increased aches and pains, chronic fatigue, decreased interest in sex, decreased appetite, insomnia, lack of deep sleep or oversleeping.

According to Beck (1964), negative thoughts, generated by dysfunctional beliefs are typically the primary cause of depressive symptoms. A direct relationship occurs between the amount and severity of someone's negative thoughts and the severity of their depressive symptoms. In other words, the more negative thoughts you experience, the more depressed you will become. The author also asserted that there are three main dysfunctional belief themes (or "schemas") that dominate depressed people's thinking: I am defective or inadequate; All of my experiences result in defeats or failures, and the future is hopeless. Together, these three themes are described as the Negative Cognitive Triad. When these beliefs are present in someone's cognition, depression is very likely to occur.

An example of the negative cognitive triad themes will help illustrate how the process of

becoming depressed works. Imagine that you have just been laid off from your work. If you are not in the grip of the negative cognitive triad, you might think that this event, while unfortunate, has more to do with the economic position of your employer than your own work performance. It might not occur to you at all to doubt yourself, or to think that this event means that you are washed up and might as well throw yourself down a well. If your thinking process was dominated by the negative cognitive triad, however, you would very likely conclude that your layoff was due to a personal failure; that you will always lose any job you might manage to get; and that your situation is hopeless. On the basis of these judgments, you will begin to feel depressed. In contrast, if you were not influenced by negative triad beliefs, you would not question your self-worth too much, and might respond to the lay off by dusting off your resume and initiating a job search.

Beyond the negative content of dysfunctional thoughts, these beliefs can also warp and shape what someone pays attention to. Beck (1964) asserted that depressed people pay selective attention to aspects of their environments that confirm what they already know and do so even when evidence to the contrary is right in front of their noses. This failure to pay attention properly is known as faulty information processing.

Failures of information processing are very characteristic of the depressed mind. For example, depressed people will tend to demonstrate selective attention to information, which matches their negative expectations, and selective inattention to information that contradicts those expectations. Faced with a mostly positive performance review, depressed people will manage to find and focus in on the one negative comment that keeps the review from being perfect. They tend to magnify the importance and meaning placed on negative events and minimizes the importance and meaning of positive events. All of these maneuvers, which happen quite unconsciously, function to help maintain a depressed person's core negative schemas in the face of contradictory evidence and allow them to remain feeling hopeless about the future even when the evidence suggests that things will get better. This progressive cycle of decline also results in deterioration of an athlete's mental well-being. Depression then may manifest itself as altered mood states, sleep disturbances and a loss of zeal for training and competition.

Bal & Singh (2014) examined the role of emotional intelligence in performance of basketball players. The investigators selected Sixty (N=60) female intercollege level basketball players of 19 to

25 years of age to act as subjects. They were divided into three groups; (N1=20; District, N2=20; State and N3=20 National). The purposive sampling technique was used to select the subjects. The results revealed significant differences among district, state and national level female basketball players on the sub-parameters, self-awareness, and integrity. The district level female basketball players had demonstrated significantly better self-awareness as compared to their counterpart state and national level female basketball players; the national level female basketball players exhibited significantly better on integrity as compared to their counterpart district and state level female basketball players. However, no significant differences were found on the sub-parameters; empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, managing relations, self-development, value orientation, commitment and altruistic behaviour.

Goran et al. (2012) investigated personality characteristics of male professional basketball players and wheelchair basketball players. For the purposes professional basketball players (N=29) and wheelchair basketball players (N=25) had completed a cartel 16PF questionnaire which estimated personality characteristics. Differences between two groups of participants were calculated by t-test for small samples. Result demonstrated the existence if differences in the expression of certain forms of behaviour within certain dimensions of personality between these two groups. Wheelchair basketball players had higher scores at factor abstractedness ($t=1.889$; $p=0.046$), which means that they are more preoccupied by themselves and their inner mental life. Wheelchair basketball players had lower scores, emotional stability ($t=2.097$; $p=0.041$), dominance ($t=3.530$; $p=0.001$). He concluded that wheelchair basketball players are compared with professional basketball players, less emotionally stable, they have a lack of self-esteem, less ready for teamwork and collaboration than male professional basketball players.

The specific objective of this study was to ascertain the perceived effect of depressive factors on the performance outcome (countenance) of semi-elite basketball athletes in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Thus, the study tried to find out whether depression would affect the performance outcome (countenance) of semi-elite basketball athletes in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Methods

Research Design

This study will employ the descriptive research design. The study will examine the management of depression and emotional stability among athletes of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Population of the Study

The population comprised 300 basketball athletes of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, who play the game at the amateur category and represent their departments in intra basketball competition organised by private concerns and the university sports council.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The Sample size comprised 300 male basketball athletes selected from 15 departments in the selected higher institution. The departments were selected using simple random sampling technique. From the selected departments 20 male athletes were selected using simple random technique. The respondents were selected during the annual intra-varsity basketball championship while representing their departments.

Ethical Considerations

The research was cleared by the Ethics and Research Committee (ERC) of the Department of Kinesiology, Health Education and Recreation of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria with protocol number ERC /2018/02/20. Consent of the participants were sought. They were adequately briefed on the test protocols and they gave their consent via an informed consent form. The study was carried out in accordance with the Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association also known as the declaration of Helsinki.

Research Instrument

A self-designed research instrument titled "Depression and Emotional Questionnaire" (DESQ) was used to collect data from athletes. The questionnaire has three sections in all. Section A

focused on depression information of participants, section B dealt with emotional stability and section C dealt with athletes' countenance. A pilot study was conducted to test if the designed instruments is appropriate to provide answers to the set objective and hypothesis. A test- re-test with a 28 days interval was carried out with the administering of the questionnaire to 20 selected basketball athletes from another university who were not part of the final respondents used for the study. The Person Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyse the data collected and it returned a 0.77 coefficient alpha. The "Depression and Emotional Questionnaire" (DESQ) was adjoined effective to measure what it was designed to measure.

Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics of percentages, regression and Pearson correlation coefficients at 0.05 level of significant.

Results

At 64.0% most respondents strongly disagreed to having low self-esteem when with their teammates, 60.3% also strongly disagreed to not concentrating on academic after training, an accumulation of 50.7% respondents disagreed to loss of energy to perform other activities after training, a whopping 76.7% respondents agreed to feeling sad after losing a game, most of the respondents do not have difficulty making decisions during training or games. 57.4% respondents enjoy and feel better when not missing training than when they miss training, 69% respondents run from alcohol or drug for enhancement of performance, 62% respondents were still involved in other activities other than sports and coach encouragement matters to 66.6% respondents to spur them into performing even better.

The commitment of respondents been mindful of things happening to them was maintained at a level of 54%, and most of the respondents 65% feel bad about themselves when on the losing side and avoid being more pronounced towards the defeat at 85%. During emergencies 86% respondents react with calmness and efficiency and 80.7% respondents review their level of performance after every game.

Table 1

Percentile distribution of depressive factors affecting athletes' performance.

Variables	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%
I have a low self-esteem when am with my teammates	104	34.6	192	64.0
It is hard for me to concentrate on my academics after training	113	37.6	181	60.3
I have loss of energy to perform other activities after I train	145	45.4	152	50.7
I feel sad or empty each time I lose a game	230	76.7	64	21.3
I have difficulty making decisions during training and games	125	41.7	171	57.0
I feel sad, blue, and unhappy each time I don't train	172	57.4	124	41.4
If I don't take alcohol or drug, I won't perform well in competitive games	90	30.0	207	69.0
I have decreased interest or pleasure in other activities	111	37.0	186	62.0
My performance is slowed down if am not being encouraged by my coach or teammates	200	66.6	97	32.3

Table 2

Percentile distribution of factors affecting athletes' countenance.

Variables	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%
I sometimes feel that I don't care what happens to me	133	44.3	162	54.0
I feel unattractive whenever I lose a game	195	65.0	108	32.6
I hate to be the center of attention after a loss in a game	255	85.0	39	13.0
In emergencies, during game I usually react with calmness and efficiency	258	86.0	37	12.3
I worry about my performance after every game	242	80.7	53	17.7

Table 3

Mean and standard deviation for depression and athletes' countenance.

Variables	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Depression	280	22.62	4.98
Athletes Countenance	280	9.95	2.98

Table 4

Regression analysis of depression and athletes' countenance.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	1155.801	1	1155.801	55.688	0.000*
Residual	5769.824	278	20.755		
Total	6925.625	279			

a. Dependent Variable: Depression; b. Predictors: (Constant), Athletes Countenance; * p<0.05.

Table 3 and 4 ascertained the perceived effect of depression, on athletes' countenance in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The result indicated that there exist and strong effect of depression on athletes' countenance (F=55.688;

p<0.05). it also showed how significant the variables are statistically at p<0.05.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the study the hypothesis that stated that there will be no significant effect of depression on athletes' countenance was rejected. Using the regression analysis, it was revealed that depressive factors do imping on the countenance of basketball players, and invariable athletes' performance output. American Psychiatric Association (2013) noted that depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed, as it can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease a person's ability to function at work or home; Kessler et al. (2015) also says of how emotional stability enables one to develop an integrated and balanced way of perceiving the problems of life of which depression is liken to a problem. The finding of depression on athletes' countenance was also collaborated by the assertion of Beck (1964), who maintained that negative thoughts, generated by dysfunctional beliefs are typically the primary cause of depressive symptoms. A direct relationship occurs between the amount and severity of someone's negative thoughts and the severity of their depressive symptoms. In other words, the more negative thoughts you experience, the more depressed you will become. Without gain saying, this study reveals that depression positively affects the countenance of not only basketball players but also, athletes in general. Because they are all confronted with the same fear and anxiety which will affect performance negatively.

Conclusion

The study concluded that depression does adversely affect the mood (countenance) of athletes based on their perception of performance output and the impression of significant others. With the findings of this study, depression in sports maybe inevitable, however, it is important that measures such as those that aids mental stability be considered or be a habit for athletes to reduce or avoid the risk of it interfering with their level of performance and also help improve their countenance generally.

Based on the previous conclusions the following recommendations emanating from this research are as follows:

- (i) Hence, mental fitness programs should be added to the athletes screening exercise on a regular basis at least each new semester.

- (ii) Coaches and other technical crews attached to teams should be sensitive and pay attention to unusual behaviour(s) unnoticed in their players before.
- (iii) Decisive and proactive measures should be taken instantly any player is noticed as displaying signs of psychological distress in order not to have a ripple effect on the athlete's overall performance.
- (iv) Players should be encouraged to open up in time when experiencing depression, so that it could be addressed in time.
- (v) Coaches should listen to student's athletes in an open, non-threatening and sensitive manner.
- (vi) mental stability skills should be enhanced for players, as these will prove to be a way out of depression.
- (vii) Players should be encouraged to embrace positive mind-set towards rather than the negative ones which will affect performance negatively.

Author Contributions

Study Design: KA; Data Collection: KA; Statistical Analysis: KA; Manuscript Preparation: KA.

Ethical Approval

The study was approved by the Ethics and Research Committee (ERC) of the Department of Kinesiology, Health Education and Recreation of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria with protocol number ERC /2018/02/20. The study was carried out in accordance with the Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association also known as the declaration of Helsinki.

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Conflict of Interest

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