

University of Mary Washington

Eagle Scholar

Psychology Student Research Showcase

Spring 4-1-2021

Mental Well-Being of Varsity Athletes During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Courtney Haines

Valentina Leon-Ledezma

Walker Chilton

Jackson Kirschner

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.umw.edu/psychology_showcase

Recommended Citation

Haines, Courtney; Leon-Ledezma, Valentina; Chilton, Walker; and Kirschner, Jackson, "Mental Well-Being of Varsity Athletes During the COVID-19 Pandemic" (2021). *Psychology Student Research Showcase*. 6. https://scholar.umw.edu/psychology_showcase/6

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by Eagle Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Psychology Student Research Showcase by an authorized administrator of Eagle Scholar. For more information, please contact archives@umw.edu.

Mental Well-Being of Varsity Athletes during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Athletic and Social Identities

Walker Chilton, Courtney Haines, Jackson Kirschner, Valentina Leon-Ledezma



Introduction

During the pandemic, the disruption of activities and group settings would lead to a decrease in mental well-being in varsity athletes (Graupensperger, 2020). Identities like social and athletic identity can determine how a varsity athlete copes with the ongoing pandemic, as well as how social media is utilized.

Research Question

How does the relationship between social identity, coping, and mental well-being affect varsity athletes during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Background Research

- The Pandemic has had an immense power on athletes, offsetting them for a long period of time. (Taku, 2020)
- Belonging to a group is a factor that athletes take into consideration when evaluating their identification with being an athlete and mental well-being. (Bruner, 2018)
- Athletic identity determines how committed a student athlete might feel towards their sport, suggesting that students with low athletic identity have been negatively impacted by the Pandemic. (Visek, 2008)
- Turning to social media for comfort and reassurance about the Pandemic can reassure an athlete about their identity and place in society. (Schmalz, 2018)

Hypothesis

Collegiate athletes that have high levels of social identity and athletic identity, along with a large usage of social media will have greater mental well-being.

Measured Variables

- Mental Well-Being** -How athletes perceive themselves emotionally, psychologically, and socially in the past 12 months, amid the pandemic
- Athletic Identity** -Determines how strongly an athlete identifies with being an athlete and how they are impacted if are not able to compete
- Social Identity** -How strongly tied an athlete feels towards the team, along with how positive they feel about being a part of the group
- Social Media Coping** - Feelings towards using social media as a coping mechanism and why they used social media during the pandemic

Methods

- N=75
- Participants were college aged varsity athletes (18 years or older) currently on a sports team.

Gender	Race	Sport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32 Males 43 Females 1 Non-Binary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70.13% White 14.29% Black 5.19% Other 3.9% Hispanic 3.9% Asian 2.6% Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 29.3% Track and Field 20% Baseball 14.6% Softball 9.3% Soccer 26.8% Other sports teams

Procedure

1. Participants answered questions pertaining to mental well-being using The Mental Health Continuum Short Form. (Keyes, 2009)

2. Participants answered questions about their athletic identity using The Athletic Identity Measurement Scale. (Visek et al., 2008)

3. Participants answered questions pertaining to their social identity using The Social Identity Scale for Sport. (Bruner and Benson, 2018)

4. Participants answered questions concerning their social media usage using a modified Brief-COPE scale. (Schmalz et al., 2015)

Results

Table 1
Pearson's Correlation for Mental Well-Being with Athletic Identity, Social Identity, and Social Media Coping

	1.	2.	3.	4.	β	p
1. Mental Well-Being	-	-	-	-	54.34	.000
2. Athletic Identity	.13	-	-	-	.35	.19
3. Social Identity	.02	.63*	-	-	-1.05	.57
4. Social Media Coping	-.11	.09	.17	-	-2.24	.36
Mean	55.64	37.83	5.64	2.76		
SD	13.28	7.41	1.10	0.65		

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Findings

The three predictors explained 3.7% of the variance ($R^2 = .037$, $F(3, 71) = .901$, $p = .45$). The three predictor variables- athletic identity ($\beta = .354$, $p = .189$), social identity ($\beta = -1.050$, $p = .566$), and SMS ($\beta = -2.236$, $p = .357$), were **not significant** to the criterion variable of mental well-being.

Discussion

Limitations

- Limited to online survey only for data collection.
- Number of UMW athletes that took the survey.
- Survey was self-report style.
- No data collected of athletes before COVID-19.

Implications

- Social identity was correlated to athletic identity.
- Understanding of UMW varsity athlete's mental well-being.

Future Research

- How do different cultural influences effect wellbeing?
- Long term implications of COVID – 19 pandemic on mental wellbeing.
- Impact of different types of social media on social identity.
- Athletes during and after the Pandemic.

Conclusion

The original prediction that collegiate varsity athletes that have high levels of social identity, athletic identity, and social media usage would have greater well-being, was not supported by our findings within this study. There were no significant findings that supported the variable of mental well-being.

References

- Bruner, M. W., & Benson, A. J. (2018). Social Identity Questionnaire for Sport [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321882793_Evaluating_the_Psychometric_Properties_of_the_Social_Identity_Questionnaire_for_Sport_SIQS
- Graupensperger, S., Benson, A. J., Kilmer, J. R., & Evans, M. B. (2020). Social (Un)distancing: Teammate interactions, athletic identity, and mental health of student-athletes during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 67*(5), 662–670. <https://doi-org.umw.idm.oclc.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.08.001>
- Keyes, C. L. M. (2009). Atlanta: Brief description of the mental health continuum short form (MHC-SF). Available: <http://www.sociology.emory.edu/ckeyes/>. <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/MHC-SFEnglish.pdf>
- Schmalz, D. L., Colistra, C. M., & Evans, K. E. (2015). Social media sites as a means of coping with a threatened social identity. *Leisure Sciences, 37*(1), 20–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2014.935835>
- Taku, K., & Arai, H. (2020). Impact of covid-19 on athletes and coaches, and their values in japan: Repercussions of postponing the tokyo 2020 olympic and paralympic games. *Journal of Loss and Trauma. https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2020.1777762*
- Visek, A. J., Hurst, J. R., Maxwell, J. P., & Watson, J. C. (2008). A cross-cultural psychometric evaluation of the athletic identity measurement scale. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 20*(4), 473–480. doi:10.1080/10413200802415048