

Perceived Burnout as a Function of Gender and Sport Type among Youth-Athletes in Taraba State

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Abstract- Athletes face many challenges throughout their quest for perfection. The road to excellence, they may face numerous hours of training, injuries, and rehabilitation, stress, anxiety and interaction with coaches. The conceptualization of burnout involves the interaction of a number of different components such as behavioral, cognitive, physical, effective and emotional signs and symptoms.

The study was carried out using descriptive survey research design. 200 athletes were purposively selected in Taraba State Athletic Competition. A moderated Eades Athletic Burnout Inventory (MEABI) was administered to the respondents, 5- points Likert Scale ; Always (A), Almost Always (AA), Frequently (F), Sometimes (S), and Not At All (NA). The instrument has the reliability index of 0.88. Data was analysis using t-test at 0.05 level of significance to determine the association of gender and sports type on burnout among athletes. Perceived burnout as a function of gender and that of sport type among Taraba athletes were tested. The burnout level of female athletes is higher than that of male athlete in Taraba State and that gender has significant effect on the burnout of athletes in Taraba State. On sport types, burnout level among the athletes of team and individual sport are not significant. Therefore burnout in sports is not the function of sports types

It was therefore recommended that the coaches, the trainer and sport psychologist should be able to train the athletes whether male and the team and the individual on the psychological techniques to reduce the occurrence of burnout and enhance better performance in their sporting activities

I. INTRODUCTION

Increase in performance over time appear to come about partially based on increased need or desire by athletes to dedicate themselves to their sport and athletic accomplishment. Athletes practice countless hours to improve their skill and talent (Cremades & Wiggins, 2008). Dedication and devotion of long period of time for training to enhance good performance come on high expectation of not only athletes, but parent and coaches. Jones, Swain and Cale (1991) and Wiggins and Brustad (1996) emphasised that high expectation may increase the amount of stress an athlete experiences, and it has been shown to be related to higher levels of state anxiety which might ultimately lead to burnout.

With this type of emphasis placed on sport in our society, it is not unusual that the term burnout and anxiety have become almost synonymous with sport in many cultures across the world (Wiggins, Cremades, Lai, Lee & Erdmann, 2006). Burnout affects a wide variety of individuals participating in sport, including athletes and coaches. With regard to athlete burnout, there does not seem to be difference between recreational and elites athletes. According to Dale and Weinberg (1990) the primary cause of burnout seems to be long hours of practice requiring physical and mental energy as well as pressure to perform for game day. According to Rotella, Hanson, and Coop (1991), there are many athletes who excel under pressure, however, there are a significant number who turn away from their sport because of intensive training, high-pressure competition, extra adult pressure and induced stress.

Burnout is a condition of psychological, emotional and sometime physical withdrawal from sport participation as well as direct result from chronic stress (Rotella, Hanson & Coop, 1991). Each year many young athletes turn their heads from sport participation because of their frustrating experiences in sport. Sport Psychology research points out that it is the sum total of experiences over time, the judgement of one's performance, the pressure to perform, the stress in performing, the boredom, lack of joy, and the goals that others place on the athletes that ultimately lead the athletes to burnout and early retirement from sport (John, 2007)

Stress plays an important precursory role in burnout. Stress in reference to burnout is defined as a perceived imbalance between perceived demands and perceived response capabilities (Martens, 1977, & Martens, Burton, Vealey, Bump & Smith, 1991). Each person has tolerance level for stress. If the stress becomes considerably greater than the tolerance, a person will suffer emotional stress its negative consequences (Humphrey, 2003).

According to Vealey, Armstrong, Comar and Greenleaf (1998), burnout is defined as a psychological, emotional, and physical withdrawal from activities. It may be that an individual withdrawal from an activity from a length of time because there is no other perceived way to escape the situation and related stress (Raedeke, Granzyk & Warren, 2000, Raedeke & Smith, 2001). Stresses identified as being related to burnout are fear of failure, frustration, high expectations, anxiety, and pressure to perform (Dale & Weinberg, 1990). Characteristics associated

with burnout includes a physical and emotional exhaustion, negative effect, a lack of perceived accomplishment a loss of concern or interest in an activity, and depersonalisation (Smith, 1986 & Weinberg & Gould, 2003).

According to Rotella, (1991), Sport Psychology professionals generally agreed by sport psychologist that at the core of burnout is a general combination of the following symptoms; lack of energy, exhaustion, sleeplessness, some degree of depression, tension, irritability, anger, headaches or other physical ailments, decreased performance, a tendency to internalise all failure, disillusionment with sports, and loss of confidence. British Broadcasting Corporation Sport Academic (2005) opined that thou the symptoms of burnout can be confusing, but coaches and parents should watch for the following; constantly feeling tired, easily frustrated, not wanting to go to practice or training, increase irritability, headaches or minor body aches and worrying about failure and adult expectation <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/ten>

Burnout among athletes is equivocal in term of gender differences. According to Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Kelley, Eklund, and Ritter-Taylor (1999), Lee and Cremades (2004) and Pastore and Judd (1993), female athletes and coaches experience burnout more than male athletes and coaches. The reason behind this according to the authors is that female reported greater levels of emotional, physical and devaluation than males. In contrast to that is Lai and Wiggins (2003) who found that male soccer experienced burnout than female players.

When further examining reasons for burnout in sports, several differences based on demographics according to Gould and Carson (2004) are found, males reported the effect of win-loss record on their decision more than females. Martens and Seedfeldt (1979) stressed those female rated social aspects of sports (relationships with teammates, peer comparison) as more of an influence on their decision than males. Females have reported negative experiences in sport (physical and emotional trauma) that have led to some discontinuing sport participation (Gilbert, 2001).

A large numbers of female athletes experience a considerate amount of stress than male in their respective sport. It is when those high levels of stress and anxiety are maintained at the extended amount of time, the athlete may become burned out and loses the desire to continue participating in that sport (Pietraszuk, 2006). Caccese and Mayerberg (1984) indicated that female coaches and athletes are easily emotional exhausted and have lower personal accomplishment.

Caccese and Mayerberg (1984) stressed further that females were more burned out than males due to years of experience, less time to learn to cope with stress, too idealistic and have too high expectations. Vealey, Armstrong and Comar (1998) stressed that female athletes seek social support as a coping mechanism for performance-related stress in sport more than male athletes and that if the social support is withdraw, the female athletes are exposed to burnout.

According to Kalimo and Hakanen (1998) in Adekola (2010), women are better equipped for human relations and for sharing their negative emotion, while men tend to suppress their emotional impulses in order to live up to their roles, thereby

making women more inclined to adopt cynical attitude as means for coping with stress. It has also been explained that exhaustion does affect women than men because more often than not, women do carry double workload (job, housework, childcare). (Adekola, 2010).

Because depersonalisation is associated with burnout, factors such as encouragement, cooperation, and support from team members may influence the individual's resilience against burnout. These factors as mentioned above are constantly emphasised in team sports that require a task involving the whole team. Thus, the authors have categorized sports such as baseball, basketball, football, handball and volleyball are under team sports and sports such as tennis, table tennis, badminton, golf and track and field events are under individual sports (Cremades & Wiggin, 2008).

Skill development and performance was predicted by higher perceived social support in team sport than individual sport (Alfermann, Lee & Wuerth, 2005). According to the authors, past research has shown that greater satisfaction with social support is related to lower burnout levels (Price & Weiss, 2000; Raedeke & Smith, 2004) In a study by Kelley and Gill (1993), results revealed a relationship with greater levels of social support and lower levels of stress appraisal and burnout among coaches and players. Thus, athletes participating on team sports may be more likely to perform at optimal levels and less likely to burnout, as opposed to athletes who participate in individual sports. It is against this background that this study is designed to assess gender and sport types as a function of burnout among youth-athletes in Taraba State.

II. HYPOTHESES

- 1) There is no significant difference in burnout level between male and female athletes in Taraba State.
- 2) There is no significant difference in burnout level between athletes of team sports and individual sports.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey research design. 200 athletes who participated in Taraba State Athletic Competition are involved in the study.. Moderated Eades Athletic Burnout Inventory (MEABI) was administered to the respondents. 5-points Likert Scale; Always (A), Almost Always (AA), Frequently (F), Sometimes (S) and Not At All (NA). The questionnaire was in two parts; demographic information and statement of facts. 4 items made up the demographic information while 20 statements were on the burnout. The instrument has the reliability index of 0.88. Data was analysed using t-test at 0.05 level of significance to determine the association of gender and sports type and burnout among athletes

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in burnout level between male and female athletes in Taraba State.

Table 1: Perceived burnout as a function of gender among Taraba State athletes

Group	Mean	N	SD	Df	t-val	Sig (2-tailed)
Female	3.0778	50	.53867			
Male	1.9504	50	.61655	98	9.737	.000

t,df=.427 (P<0.05)

It is shown in the table 1 above that the t-test score of female athletes is 3.0778 ±.53867 while that of the male is 1.9504 ±.61655. It is also indicated that the t value 9.737 is higher than t. critical value of .427 and P <0.05. This indicates statistical significant difference in burnout level between male and female athletes in Taraba State. The data shows clearly that the burnout level of the female athletes is higher than that of male athletes. It can be deduced from the data that gender has

significant effect on the burnout of athletes in Taraba State. Therefore, burnout among Taraba State Athletes is the function of gender.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in burnout level between athletes of team sports and athletes of individual sports.

Table 2: Perceived burnout as a function of Sport types among Taraba State athletes

Group	Mean	N	SD	Df	t-val	Sig (2-tailed)
Team Sports	2.3600	51	.72330			
Individual Sports	2.6745	49	.86591	98	-1.974	0.51

t,df =1.297 (p>0.05)

The table above shows the t-test score of perceived burnout as a function of sport type (team and individual sport). It is shown that the mean score and standard deviation of team sport athletes burnout and individual sport athlete burnout is 2.3600 ±.72330 and 2.6745 ±.86592 respectively. The critical value of 1.297 is higher than t-value of -1.974 while P>0.05. The result according to the table indicates that the different in burnout level among the athletes of team and individual sport are not statistical significant. Therefore burnout in sports is not the function of sports types (team and individual sports)

and have too high expectations. According to Vealey, Armstrong and Comar (1998), female athletes seek social support as a coping mechanism for performance-related stress in sport more than male athletes and that if the social support is withdraw, the female athletes are exposed to burnout. Demographics factors such as gender according to Ryan and Gould (2004) are found to affect level of athlete’s burnout. In their study males reported the effect of win-loss record on their decision more than females; therefore men are less burned out. This finding of this study is in contrast to that is Lai and Wiggins (2003) who found that male soccer experienced burnout than female players.

IV. DISCUSSION

The study is to determine whether burnout among players is perceived as a function of gender and sport type. The findings of this study revealed a significant effect of gender on burnout among athletes. However, the result as shown in table 1 indicates that female athletes were burned out than male athletes. Considering the gender shift that is taking place in sport that has historically been dominated by men, sex difference is a factor to be considered in the study of athletic burnout. The burnout level was relatively low in men than in female. This findings collaborates the findings of Pasture and Judd (1993) Kelley, Eklund, and Ritter-Taylor (1999), Lee and Creamades (2004) that stressed that female athletes and coaches experience burnout more than male athletes and coaches. The reason behind this according to them is that female reported greater levels of emotional, physical and devaluation than males. Cremades and Wiggin (2008) study also revealed that female athletes displayed higher levels of burnout as opposed to male athletes.

With regard to burnout as function of sports types (individual and team sports), it is revealed in this study that burnout in sports is not the function of sports types (team and individual sports).The finding concur with the study of Vealey et, al (1992) who reported a lack of relationship between sport type and burnout. They pointed out trait anxiety as a stronger predictor of burnout. Contract to this finding is the finding of Kelley and Gill (1993), Price and Weiss (2000); Raedeke and Smith (2004) which revealed that athletes in individual sports would show higher levels of burnout as opposed to athletes on team sports. To them, social support factors as encouragement and cooperation from team members may influence the individual’s resilience against burnout. Thus social support is emphasised more in team sports than individual sports which may help to explain the finding of this study that athletes participating in team sports experience lower burnout levels. According to Alfermann, Lee and Wuerth, (2005), past research has shown that greater satisfaction with social support which is easily attainable in team sport is related to lower burnout levels. Kelley and Gill (1993); Price and Weiss (2000), Raedeke and Smith (2004) study revealed that females in team sports reported lower reduced sense of accomplishment levels than females in individual sports. Past research according to the authors has

shown that greater satisfaction with social support may be related to less burnout level.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The burnout level of female athletes is higher than that of male athlete in Taraba State and that gender has significant effect on the burnout of athletes in Taraba State. On sport types, burnout level among the athletes of team and individual sport are not significant. Therefore burnout in sports is not the function of sports types.

It was therefore recommended that the coaches, the trainer and sport psychologist should be able to train the athletes whether male and the team and the individual on the psychological techniques to reduce the occurrence of burnout and enhance better performance in their sporting activities. It was also therefore suggested that trainer, coaches and sport psychologist should encourage their athletes with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and greater satisfaction with social support for less burnout levels.

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