

Covid-19 Effect on Athletes and Non-Athletes Social Support

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Abstract

For the purposes of this class, a study had to be performed, a study is that of a detailed investigation and analysis of a subject or situation. The study done was to be able to understand the impacts that covid had on both athletes and non-athletes, a study was conducted to understand how each group was affected. The main idea was that there was less stress for athletes due to them having a team dynamic and more social interactions than non-athletes creating more of a stressful environment than those who had some sort of contact with others in a world that had to be distant and contactless. For this idea of a study there had to be an idea of what the group wanted to do and seeing as covid has had the biggest shock to all people around the world, but most people within the area of the study were college students, and what their levels were was important to find out much stress they were under during this time.

Introduction

Covid-19 brought many issues for college students, which has created a difficult college experience for athletes and non-athletes. The understanding of college students' need for social support is incredibly important. College students have always had difficulties transitioning from high school to college. With Covid-19 athletes and non-athletes seem to be struggling more to build those relationships and finding important connections to maintain their mental health. There are also the typical stressors in college such as being away from home and challenging assignments. In addition to Covid-19 being a common issue within the college community, there are various levels in social support between traditional college athletic teams and students. The purpose of the research is to have a better understanding of a University and to investigate the peak of the Covid-19 impact of stress upon athletes and non-athletes.

Summary of Literature Review

The focus of previous research in this area has been athletic identity, social support, and Covid-19 effects. The main point of athletic identity is how athletics creates a specific role based on their teammates and athletic performances. The background of social support of an individual's environment has a major significance on their mental ability and their performance when stressors occur throughout the semester (Harandi, 2017). Since Covid-19 has recently been relevant in the past couple of years, many studies have not been conducted on the lasting relationships between athletes and non-athletes. These effects have currently only been observed. With the research study, data has been collected to help explain and mitigate factors which may lead to stress or lack of social support on college campuses.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Athletes have more social support than
Hypothesis 2: Athletes experience less stress than non-athletes.



Methods

Participants

Participants (N = 44) were students from a southeastern college. The ages will range from 18 to 26 (M age = 19.7, SD = 1.3, gender = 2). There was n = 31 athlete participants and n = 13 non-athlete participants. A convenience sampling method was used to recruit participants.

Perceived Support Scale (Zimet, 1998)

The multidimensional scale of perceived social support is the indicated feelings in which one may feel. The questions given on this scale show the amount of social support one has on their perceived social support. This would be on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is very strongly disagreeing and 7 very strongly agreeing.

Pandemic Related Perceived Stress Scale (Comp-Arias, 2020)

The Pandemic related perceived stress scale will be correlated to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). It shows the effects of COVID-19 on both physical impacts and emotional impact on it, of those feeling the full impact of the pandemic. The scale asks of the emotional-well-being of a person and how they are feeling physically and mentally. The scale compares if they feel none of the effects of COVID-19 or if they feel the effects greatly.

Results

The Effect of Stress on Athletes and Non-athletes.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine the effects of stress on athletes and non-athletes. It was hypothesized that athletes would experience less stress than non-athletes. The hypothesis was not supported because the participants who are athletes ($M = 29.97$, $SD = 3.79$) shared the same levels of moderately high stress as the non-athletes ($M = 31.21$, $SD = 6.9$). These statistics were non-significant, $t = -0.77$, $p = .44$, $d = -0.25$. Equal variances were assumed.

The Effect of Social Support on Athletes and Non-athletes.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine the effects of social support on athletes and non-athletes. It was hypothesized that athletes would experience more social support than non-athletes. This hypothesis was supported because athletes experienced higher levels of social support ($M = 70.3$, $SD = 7.03$) than those who were non-athletes ($M = 64.79$, $SD = 7.60$). These differences were significant, $t = 2.36$, $p = .02$, $d = .77$. Equal variances were assumed.



Discussion

This study was to compare the stress levels and social support experiences of athletes to non-athletes during Covid-19. The results suggest that athletes do not experience significantly less stress than non-athletes, but athletes do receive more social support than non-athletes. Our second hypothesis was not supported for the stress between the two groups were due to Covid-19 being a huge unknown stress everyone creating a ceiling effect with the high-end stress scores recorded. Covid-19 was an event that was stressful for everyone. Even with social support people still felt the effects and consequences of the pandemic.

In the study we found several students that took the survey didn't do traditional sports but intramurals sports that were taken out completely. The construct validity of measuring the variables was done through a survey to show the measurements of stress from athletes and non-athletes. The internal validity was threatened due to not being able to manipulate or randomly assign. Statistical validity showed that there were few groups' differences and there for low. External validity can be generalized on the population and was low because of how the sample was gathered. Gather more participants or conducting this at a larger university may show more diverse results, however these results can be applying to other universities in how Covid-19 has impacted the stress of students.

Future research that should be investigated is looking specifically at high schoolers during the outbreak of Covid-19. The research that was indicated through this experiment found that college students experienced high levels of stress and varying levels of social support. The hypothesis that would be associated with this future research is that high school athletes would have less social support than traditional students. High school athletes would not have the same resources as college athletes. This group of individuals would also incorporate seniors. This could be very traumatic due to their last season of their sport being taken away.



References

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