MUSIC AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF AMATEUR VARSITY ATHLETES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examines the role of music in enhancing the mental well-being and performance of amateur varsity athletes in Nigeria. It specifically assessed their perceptions of how music influence various aspects of their sports performance; including mental health, concentration, motivation, and stress reduction. Sample comprised of 60 athletes purposely selected from two universities (Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and Oduduwa University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria). A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed that majority of athletes believed that music positively impacts their mental well-being (61.7%), and enhances their ability to focus (86.7%). Additionally, 91.7% of respondents affirmed that music helps them maintain a positive attitude and reduces stress prior to performance in sports activities. Majority of the respondents (93.3%) indicated that music energizes them during sports. These results underscore the potential of music as a valuable psychological tool in athletic settings, capable of improving performance and mental resilience. However, the study also notes that a small minority of athletes did not find music beneficial, highlighting the need for personalized approaches in integrating music into sports training. The study concludes that while music is widely recognized for its positive effects, individual differences should be considered when employing music as a motivational and performance-enhancing strategy in sports.
Keywords: ***Athletes, well-being, university, music, and performance.***

Introduction

Understanding the elements that affect mental health has gained attention in recent years, especially for collegiate athletes who frequently deal with additional stresses and difficulties. University athletes must continue to perform at high levels physically while managing the pressures of academics, social expectations, and the psychological strain of participating in competitive sports. This combination of factors can lead to increased levels of anxiety, stress, and even burnout, making mental well-being a critical area of concern.

Due to its well-known therapeutic benefits, music has been extensively researched for its ability to affect emotional states, lower stress levels, and enhance mental health in general in a variety of settings. Its precise effects on college athletes, a population that is both physically and intellectually demanding, are still unknown. While some research has looked at how music affects physical performance, more research is needed to fully understand the psychological impacts, particularly as they relate to mental health.

This study aims to investigate the connection between music and mental health in collegiate athletes by examining the ways in which various musical genres, tempos, and personal preferences can affect mood, stress levels, and mental health in general. By exploring this association, the research hopes to offer information that could guide therapies and strategies for mental health that are specifically designed to meet the requirements of collegiate athletes. This could result in the provision of a convenient and non-invasive tool to improve the mental health of these athletes.

Literature review

The relationship between music and mental well-being has been a subject of academic inquiry across various populations, yet its specific impact on university athletes remains relatively underexplored. This literature review examines existing studies on music's influence on mental health, particularly focusing on athletes, to contextualize and underscore the significance of further research in this area.

Music and Mental Well-Being

Music has long been recognized for its therapeutic potential. It is commonly used as a tool for mood regulation, stress reduction, and emotional expression. Research indicates that music can significantly influence an individual's psychological state by triggering emotional responses, altering mood, and even reducing anxiety levels (Pelletier, 2004). For instance, a study by Thoma et al. (2013) demonstrated that listening to music can reduce cortisol levels, which are closely associated with stress, thereby enhancing overall mental well-being.

Music and Athletic Performance

In the context of sports, music is often used to improve physical performance and endurance. Research has shown that music with a fast tempo can increase an athlete's motivation and endurance, while slower, more melodic music can aid in relaxation and recovery (Karageorghis & Priest, 2012). The psychological effects of music during physical activity are well-documented, with studies indicating that music can enhance focus, reduce perceived exertion, and improve performance outcomes (Terry et al., 2020). However, the majority of this research focuses on the physical aspects rather than the psychological benefits related to mental well-being.

University Athletes and Mental Health Challenges

University athletes face unique challenges that can impact their mental health. The dual demands of academic responsibilities and athletic commitments often result in high levels of stress, anxiety, and even burnout (Humphrey et al., 2000). These pressures make university athletes a vulnerable group in terms of mental health, necessitating effective strategies to support their well-being. Despite the well-documented stressors, there is a gap in the literature concerning the use of music as a tool for mental health support among this population.

Music as a Tool for Enhancing Mental Well-Being in Athletes

While there is ample evidence to suggest that music can enhance athletic performance, fewer studies have focused on its potential to improve mental well-being among athletes. A study by Bishop et al. (2007) highlighted that music interventions could serve as a non-invasive method to reduce anxiety and improve mood among athletes. This finding is supported by Karageorghis and Terry (2009), who noted that the psychological benefits of music, such as mood enhancement and stress reduction, could be particularly beneficial for athletes experiencing high levels of stress.

The existing literature suggests that music has significant potential as a tool for improving mental well-being, particularly in high-stress populations like university athletes. However, most research has focused either on the general population or on the physical performance of athletes, leaving a gap in understanding how music specifically impacts the mental health of university athletes. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the relationship between music and mental well-being among university athletes, providing insights that could inform more effective mental health strategies and interventions for this unique group.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather data from 60 university athletes drawn from Obafemi Awolowo University and Oduduwa University, both in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. Participants were selected using purposive sampling technique, ensuring the inclusion of athletes across various sports disciplines. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages

Results and Discussion

Section A

Table 1

Name of Institution	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
O.A.U	30	50%	50%	50%
O.U.I	30	50%	50%	100%
Total	60	100%		

The table provides the distribution of respondents by their institutional affiliation for the study on "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being Among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria." Institutional Distribution: The respondents are evenly split between two institutions: Obafemi Awolowo University (O.A.U) and the Oduduwa University Ile-Ife (O.U.I). Each institution has 30 respondents, making up 50% of the total sample. Both the Percent and Valid Percent are the same for each institution, indicating no missing data. Each institution contributes equally to the sample, with 50% of respondents from O.A.U and 50% from O.U.I. The cumulative percent for O.A.U is 50%, which increases to 100% when O.U.I is included. This indicates that the entire sample is accounted for with these two institutions. The table indicates an equal representation of university athletes from O.A.U and O.U.I, providing a balanced sample for the study. This balance ensures that the findings related to the impact of music on mental well-being will not be skewed by overrepresentation from one institution. The equal distribution also facilitates a comparative analysis between the two institutions, if needed.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Female	**30**	**50.0**	**50.0**	**50.0**
Valid	**Male**	**30**	**50.0**	**50.0**	**100.0**
	Total	**60**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The table presents the distribution of respondents by sex for a study on "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria."

Sex Distribution

The respondents are evenly split between females and males, with each group comprising 30 individuals, representing 50% of the total sample. Percent and Valid Percent: Both the Percent and Valid Percent values are identical, reflecting the fact that there are no missing data. Each sex represents exactly half of the total respondents, with 50% each. Cumulative Percent: The cumulative percent shows the running total of respondents as you move from females to males. For females, the cumulative percent is 50%, and when males are added, it reaches 100%. This indicates that the entire sample has been accounted for. The table indicates an equal representation of male and female university athletes in the study, ensuring that any analysis or findings will be balanced in terms of gender distribution. This balanced representation is beneficial for exploring gender differences in the impact of music on mental well-being.

Table 3 Age Distribution

	Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15-25	41	68.3	68.3	68.3
	26-35	19	31.7	31.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

The table provides the age distribution of respondents in the study on "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria." The majority of respondents (41 out of 60) fall within the 15-25 age range, making up 68.3% of the sample. The remaining 19 respondents are in the 26-35 age range, constituting 31.7% of the sample. The Percent and Valid Percent are identical since there is no missing data. This shows that each percentage corresponds directly to the proportion of the total sample for each age group. For the 15-25 age group, the cumulative percent is 68.3%, meaning this group accounts for over two-thirds of the respondents. When the 26-35 age group is included, the cumulative percent reaches 100%, indicating that all respondents are accounted for within these two age groups. The table shows that young individuals between the ages of 15 and 25 make up the bulk of university athletes in the study, with a smaller percentage falling into the 26–35 age range. Based on their age distribution, it appears that the majority of the athletes are still in their early university years, which may be representative of the demographics of college students generally. The information makes it possible to comprehend the potential effects of music on mental health in each of these age groups, with an emphasis on the younger population.

Table 4: Music has a positive impact on my mental well-being

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agreed	37	61.7	61.7	61.7
	Disagreed	4	6.7	6.7	68.3
	Indifference	4	6.7	6.7	75.0
	Strongly Agreed	15	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

This report evaluates the tool employed for data collection in the study "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria". The study aimed to analyse the influence of music on the performance and mental health of university athletes. The majority of participants (61.7%) agreed that music has a positive impact on their mental well-being. This indicates a substantial portion of the sample perceives a positive correlation between music and mental well-being. A relatively small percentage (6.7%) disagreed, suggesting that there is a minority who do not believe in the positive effect of music on their mental well-being. Another 6.7% expressed indifference, implying that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement about the effect of music on mental well-being. This group might be neutral or unsure about the impact of music. A significant proportion (25.0%) strongly agreed, signifying a notable positive perception of the influence of music on mental well-being among this subset of participants. The cumulative percent allows us to see the progression of agreement/disagreement. For example, by the end of the data, 61.7% had agreed, and this percentage gradually increased to 100% as we moved through the categories.

The table indicates that the majority of university athletes in the study have a positive perception of the impact of music on their mental well-being, with a smaller portion expressing disagreement or indifference. These findings can be valuable for designing future studies or interventions related to the use of music for mental well-being in this population.

Table 5: Music helps you to focus on your performance.

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	**No**	**8**	**13.3**	**13.3**	**13.3**
	Yes	**52**	**86.7**	**86.7**	**100.0**
	Total	**60**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Regarding whether or not music helps them concentrate on their performance, university athletes' answers are displayed in the table from the study "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria." 52 out of 60 respondents, or 86.7%, said that music aids in their ability to concentrate on their performance. Eight respondents, or 13.3%, said that music did not aid in their ability to concentrate on their performance. This is a lower percentage. Since there are no missing responses, the percent and valid percent are the same. This indicates that 86.7% of the sample as a whole felt that music helps people focus, while 13.3% disagree. The total percentage of responders who gave a "No" response is 13.3%. According to the statistics, a significant proportion of the university athletes who were chosen for the study feel that music enhances their capacity to

concentrate on their performance. This study is significant because it lends credence to the theory that music can help athletes perform better and maintain focus (Rivera-Torres, 2023). The fact that so few respondents did not think music was beneficial in this way suggests that music in sporting settings may be advantageous for most individuals.

Table 6: Music helps you to maintain a positive attitude during sports activities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No	5	8.3	8.3	8.3
Valid	Yes	55	91.7	91.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

The table presents the responses of university athletes on whether music helps them maintain a positive attitude during sports activities, as part of the study on "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria." An overwhelming majority of respondents, 55 out of 60 (or 91.7%), indicated that music helps them maintain a positive attitude during sports activities. A small minority, 5 respondents (or 8.3%), reported that music does not help them maintain a positive attitude. The Percent and Valid Percent are identical, reflecting the fact that there are no missing responses. Thus, 91.7% of the athletes find music helpful for maintaining a positive attitude, while 8.3% do not. The cumulative percent for respondents who answered "No" is 8.3%. The data reveals that the vast majority of university athletes believe that music plays a crucial role in helping them maintain a positive attitude during sports activities. This strong consensus suggests that music could be a valuable psychological tool for fostering positivity and motivation in athletic settings (Gråstén, Arto, et al 2015). The small percentage of athletes who do not find music helpful in this regard indicates that while the benefit is widespread, it may not be universal for all athletes.

Table 7: Music helps to reduce stress before sports activities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No	5	8.3	8.3	8.3
Valid	Yes	55	91.7	91.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Regarding if music helps athletes decompress before competition, university athletes' answers are displayed in the table from the study "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria." The vast majority of respondents 55 out of 60, or 91.7% said that listening to music before doing sports relieves their tension. Before participating in sports, 5 respondents, or 8.3%, said that music did not help them decompress. This indicates that while 8.3% of respondents do not think music decreases stress before sports, 91.7% of respondents do. According to the findings of this study, most collegiate athletes believed that listening to music before a sporting event helps them feel less stressed. This demonstrates how useful music may be as a stress-reduction technique in sporting settings, especially prior to competitions or physically demanding activities (Thoma et al., 2013). The small percentage of athletes who do not find music to be useful in reducing stress indicates that, although music is quite successful for most people, it might not be for everyone.

Table 8: Listening to music during sports activities help to improve your performance**.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	13	21.7	21.7	21.7
	Yes	47	78.3	78.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

As part of the research project "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria," university athletes were asked to rate the extent to which they felt that listening to music while physical activity improved their performance. The results are shown in the table. 47 out of 60 respondents, or 78.3%, strongly agree that listening to music while participating in sports enhances performance. Thirteen respondents, or 21.7% of the sample, said that music had no effect on their ability to perform better when playing sports. This shows that, compared to 21.7% of athletes, 78.3% of them believe music improves their performance. The total percentage of respondents that said "No" is 21.7%.

According to the findings, a sizable majority of collegiate athletes believe that playing music while participating in sports will help them perform better. This research lends credence to the idea that music has the potential to be an effective motivational aid and performance booster in sports environments (Karageorghis & Terry, 1997). Notwithstanding, the viewpoint held by 21.7% of the participants implies that the efficacy of music in enhancing performance can differ across individuals, potentially contingent on personal inclinations, sports genres, or the specific type of music employed.

Table 9: Music helps you to become more motivated during sports activities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	5	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Yes	55	91.7	91.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

The table presents the responses of university athletes regarding whether music helps them become more motivated during sports activities, as part of the study on "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria."

The vast majority of respondents 55 out of 60, or 91.7% said that listening to music increases their motivation when playing sports. Five respondents, or 8.3%, said that listening to music did not increase their motivation. There are no missing responses, as evidenced by the same percentage for the valid and percent. This shows that while 8.3% of the athletes do not believe that music helps them stay motivated, 91.7% of them believe that it does. The total percentage of respondents that said "No" is 8.3%.

According to the findings, a sizable majority of collegiate athletes think that music plays a big role in keeping them motivated when they're playing sports. The significance of music as a motivational tool that can improve athletic performance and engagement is highlighted by this research. The tiny proportion of athletes who do not

believe that music can help them stay motivated implies that, even if the advantages are generally acknowledged, people's tastes and reactions to music can differ. All things considered, the findings demonstrate how music can be a useful tool for increasing motivation in sporting situations (Karageorghis & Terry, 1997).

Table 10: Music energizes during sports activities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	4	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Yes	56	93.3	93.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

The table presents the responses of university athletes on whether music energizes them during sports activities, as part of the study on "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria."

A clear majority of respondents, 56 out of 60 (or 93.3%), reported that music energizes them during sports activities. A very small minority, 4 respondents (or 6.7%), indicated that music does not have an energizing effect. Since there are no missing data points and all replies were completed, the percent and valid percent values are equal. This demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of athletes (93.3%) believe that listening to music while exercising gives them energy. The findings show that a sizable majority of collegiate athletes think that music is essential to their ability to stay energized while participating in sports. This result is in line with the body of research that demonstrates how motivating music can be for athletes. For example, studies by Karageorghis and Terry (1997) indicate that energetic music can improve physical performance and perceived exertion, increasing desire and energy during sporting activities. Additionally, according to Thoma et al. (2013), listening to music can cause pleasant emotional reactions, which may boost motivation and engagement when engaging in physical activity. The very small percentage of athletes (6.7%) who do not find music energizing suggests that while music is largely beneficial for most, individual differences, such as personal preference and the type of music played, can influence its effectiveness.

Additional findings reveal divergent opinions on listening to music before, during, or after training and competition. The basketball coach (from one of the institutions) emphasizes that listening to music should be a personal choice for individual athletes' before coming to the court or training session. He asserts that playing or listening to music during training acts as a distraction, hindering athletes' from comprehending instructions and adversely affecting performance outcomes. Conversely, basketball players contend that listening to music during training enhances concentration, instils confidence, and positively impacts performance. They assert that heavy metal music, in particular, aids in rhythmical movements, influencing motivation, especially during fast breaks, accompanied by the cheering from the crowd.

Summary

The study "Exploring the Impact of Music on Mental Well-Being among Selected University Athletes in Southwest Nigeria" offers insightful information about how university athletes view the impact of music on their performance and mental health. The vast majority of participants (61.7%) reported that music has a beneficial

effect on their mental health, with 25% strongly endorsing this statement. This shows that musicians are well aware of the benefits of music as a coping mechanism for mental health. Furthermore, 86.7% of participants stated that music helps them concentrate while performing; supporting the notion that music can be a useful tool for improving focus in competitive environments.

Overall, the findings underscore the potential benefits of integrating music into athletic training and competition to foster better mental health and improved performance.

In addition to concentration and mental well-being, the results highlight music's role in maintaining a positive attitude and reducing stress among athletes. With 91.7% of respondents stating that music helps them maintain a positive attitude and similarly high percentages affirming its effectiveness in stress reduction, it is evident that music is perceived as a crucial psychological tool in sports environments. The consensus among athletes that music energizes them (93.3%) further supports the notion that music can boost motivation and engagement during sports activities. However, the study also reveals that a small minority of athletes (ranging from 6.7% to 21.7%) do not find music beneficial in these aspects, indicating that personal preferences and individual differences should be considered when integrating music into athletic practices.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the substantial role music plays in enhancing the mental well-being and performance of university athletes. The overwhelming majority of respondents believe that music positively influences their mental health, concentration, motivation, and overall performance. This underscores the potential for music to serve as a valuable resource for athletes, especially in high-pressure situations such as competitions and training sessions. By recognizing the psychological benefits of music, coaches and sports organizations can implement strategies to incorporate music effectively into training regimens.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the varying perspectives of athletes regarding music's effectiveness. While most participants affirmed the benefits of music, the small percentage of individuals who disagreed suggests that there may be unique factors influencing each athlete's experience. Future research could explore these individual differences more deeply, helping to tailor music interventions that accommodate diverse preferences and enhance the overall athletic experience.

Recommendations

Incorporate Music into Training Regimens: Coaches should consider integrating music into training sessions to enhance focus, motivation, and mental well-being. Creating playlists that cater to athletes' preferences can maximize the effectiveness of this strategy.

Tailored Music Programs: Develop personalized music programs based on individual athlete preferences and performance goals. This approach could include pre-competition playlists to boost motivation and reduce anxiety.

Education and Awareness: Conduct workshops or seminars to educate athletes on the psychological benefits of music, encouraging them to explore different genres and styles that may enhance their performance.

Further Research: Encourage future research to investigate the individual differences in athletes' responses to music, exploring factors such as genre preference and the context in which music is played (before, during, or after activities) to develop more effective interventions.

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