

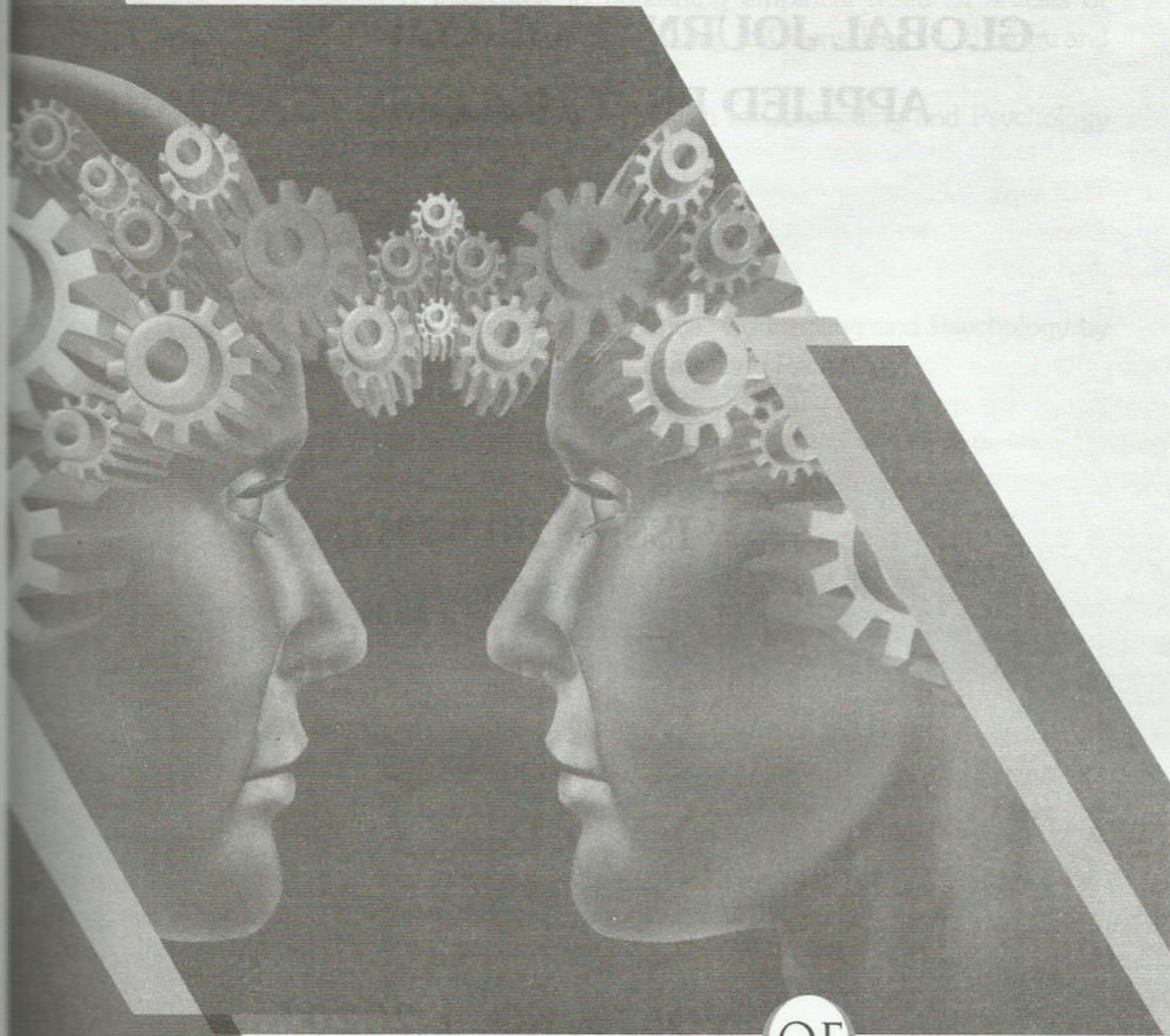
GLOBAL JOURNAL



OF

**COUNSELLING
AND
APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY
[GJOCAP]**

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ABOUT GJOCAP

Global Journal of Counselling and Applied Psychology [GJOCAP] is a peer-reviewed international journal that publishes bi-annually. It is interested in publishing empirical research articles or position papers. Publication covers a wide range of issues relating to Counselling Psychology and Social Work.

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Introduction

Over the years, counselling has been a key factor in the development of sports performance. The concept of sports counselling has evolved over time, from a focus on physical training to a more holistic approach that considers the psychological and social aspects of an athlete's performance. In the early days of sports counselling, the focus was on physical training and technique. However, as the understanding of the human mind grew, it became clear that psychological factors also played a significant role in an athlete's performance. This led to the development of sports psychology, a field that studies the relationship between the mind and sports performance. Sports psychology has since become an integral part of sports training, with many athletes and teams seeking the help of sports psychologists to improve their performance. The role of sports psychologists has also expanded to include working with athletes on issues such as stress management, motivation, and team dynamics. In addition, sports psychologists are now often involved in the rehabilitation of injured athletes, helping them to overcome psychological barriers to recovery. The importance of sports psychology in modern sports cannot be overstated. It has become a key component of any athlete's training regimen, and its role in improving performance is well-documented. As the field of sports psychology continues to grow, it is likely that its impact on sports performance will only increase.

With the expansion of sports psychology, the role of sports psychologists has also expanded. They are now often involved in the rehabilitation of injured athletes, helping them to overcome psychological barriers to recovery. In addition, sports psychologists are now often involved in the development of young athletes, helping them to develop the psychological skills needed for success in sports. The role of sports psychologists has also expanded to include working with athletes on issues such as stress management, motivation, and team dynamics. In addition, sports psychologists are now often involved in the rehabilitation of injured athletes, helping them to overcome psychological barriers to recovery. The importance of sports psychology in modern sports cannot be overstated. It has become a key component of any athlete's training regimen, and its role in improving performance is well-documented. As the field of sports psychology continues to grow, it is likely that its impact on sports performance will only increase.

Scholars have argued that the role of sports psychologists has expanded significantly over the years. They have pointed out that sports psychologists are now often involved in the rehabilitation of injured athletes, helping them to overcome psychological barriers to recovery. In addition, sports psychologists are now often involved in the development of young athletes, helping them to develop the psychological skills needed for success in sports. The role of sports psychologists has also expanded to include working with athletes on issues such as stress management, motivation, and team dynamics. In addition, sports psychologists are now often involved in the rehabilitation of injured athletes, helping them to overcome psychological barriers to recovery. The importance of sports psychology in modern sports cannot be overstated. It has become a key component of any athlete's training regimen, and its role in improving performance is well-documented. As the field of sports psychology continues to grow, it is likely that its impact on sports performance will only increase.

ATHLETES AND COACHES ATTITUDE TOWARDS SEEKING SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES IN KWARA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated athletes and coaches attitude towards seeking sports psychology services in Kwara State Sports Council. The variables investigated are; confidence in sport psychology consulting, stigma tolerance, personal openness, and cultural preference. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised athletes and coaches in Kwara State Sports Council. The sample was 150 respondents (Athletes=125) and (Coaches=25). Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. The research instrument was standardized questionnaire developed by Robert (2000) tagged Athletes and Coaches Attitude towards Seeking Sport Psychology Service Questionnaire (ACATSPSSQ). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the study. The findings revealed significant influence of confidence in sports psychology consulting, stigma tolerance, personal openness on attitude towards seeking sports psychology services among the respondents. The study recommends that sport psychology practitioners should demonstrate their professional prowess by structuring their consulting services to address the potential barriers and increase their effectiveness with their clients.

Introduction

One of the major contributory factors to excellence in sports performance is psychology. The sports psychologists endeavour to assist in stabilizing the emotion of the athletes so that in spite of all the problems associated with the competition they are still able to cope and perform well through psyching processes. In addition to instruction and training of psychological skills for performance improvement, applied sport psychology may include work with athletes, coaches and parents regarding injury, rehabilitation, communication, team building, and career transitions (Hamberger & Iso-Ahola, 2006). The idea behind holistic sport psychology is to promote personal improvement and performance enhancement simultaneously; supporting athletes in all three dimensions of their lives - as people, students, and athletes (Andersen, Miles, Robinson & Mahoney (2004); Friesen & Orlick, (2010).

With the expansion of opportunities for athletes in the world of sports, many athletes have expanded their search for ways to enhance their performance. This means not only working to maximize physical skills, but also striving to master mental skills so that optimal performances can result, and many athletes would agree that optimal sports performance involves just as much, if not more, of a mental component than a physical one. Hence, the job of sport psychologists may be important to athletes, as it is these professionals who are specifically trained to work with athletes in developing the mental skills necessary for improved performances.

Scholars have argued that athletes' perspectives of sport psychology may improve if they are provided with adequate information, particularly because the vast majority of athletes have reported that they do not have adequate knowledge of sport psychology (Sullivan & Hodge, 1991,

Adeyeye & Adeyemo 2013). A commonly accepted method thought to improve athletes' perspectives of sport psychology consultation consists of sport psychology personnel engaging individual athletes in rapport enhancing interviews. In doing so, psycho-educational information is often informally and formally provided with the intent of establishing trust, credibility, and commitment to the respective intervention approach.

While research with elite-level athletes who have previously worked with sport psychologists has revealed that athletes at this level highly value such services (Gould, 2004), However, more recently Wrisberg and Simpson (2010); Wrisberg, Simpson, Loberg, Withycombe, and Reed (2009) stated that athletes who had previous positive experiences of sport psychology have a greater appreciation, remain receptive and report little stigma towards seeking sport psychology services in the future. Furthermore, coaches' relationships with athletes go beyond teaching and instructing, because of the coach-athlete relationship, coaches' attitudes and opinions may influence whether or not an athlete seeks help or continues work with a sport psychology consultant (Martin, Akers, Jackson, Wrisberg, Nelson & Leslie et.al., 2001). Given the significant role of coaches within the athletic environment and the continued growth of applied sport psychology, it is important to gain an understanding of the potential variables influencing coaches' use of sport psychology services.

One crucial factor that determines whether or not athletes or coaches are willing to use sport psychology services is their attitude. Results from previous studies suggest that individual attitude (athletes and/or coaches) are influenced by; confidence in sport psychology, stigma tolerance, personal openness, and cultural preference (Zakrajsek, Martin, & Zizi, (2011); Zakrajsek & Zizzi, (2007; 2008).

Furthermore, confidence in sport psychology indicates athletes' state of beliefs about the usefulness of sport psychology and mental training to their performance (Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; Zakrajsek et al., 2011). Thus, it could be asserted that the higher the belief, the more the likelihood they will seek and engage sport psychology services.

Expectations before consultations may influence clients' attitudes and intended use of sport psychology services, if athletes and coaches enter the consultation with different expectations of the process than the consultant, conflict and termination can occur (Martin et al., 2001). For example, athletes may expect the consulting process to be directive and quick at solving problems. It is against this background that this research investigated athletes' and coaches' attitude towards seeking sport psychology services in Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

Coaches holds central and influential role within the athletic environment, in which their attitude towards sport psychology services may influence athletes' decisions. In situations where coaches are skeptical and perceive sport psychology consultation as being meant for only problem athletes this may likely to affect the athletes' prospect.

Some individual factors perceived to influence attitude towards seeking sport psychology services are tied to absence of previous experiences working with a sport psychology consultant, the expectation of consultation is equivocal as well as individual socio-demographic characteristics such as (age, gender, type of sport). Thus, this study investigated Kwara state athletes and coaches' attitude towards seeking the services of sport psychology and utilization of sport psychology services in a bid to improve performance.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of confidence in sport psychology on

attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State?

2. There is no significant influence of stigma tolerance on attitude towards seeking sport psychology service among athletes and coaches in Kwara State?
3. There is no significant influence of personal openness on attitude towards seeking sport psychology service among athletes and coaches in Kwara State?

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive design of survey type. This design allows the researcher to give a vivid explanation about athletes and coaches' attitude towards seeking sport psychology services based on the information gathered. The sample for this study was 150 respondents comprising 125 Athletes (Male = 93, and Female = 32) and 25 Coaches (Male = 16, and Female = 7) in Kwara State Sports Council.

The research instrument is standardized questionnaire, Athletes and Coaches' Attitude towards Seeking Sport Psychology Service Questionnaire (ACATSPSSQ) developed by Robert (2000). The instrument is rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). The questionnaire was made up of two sections of A, and B. section A covers the Demographic data of the respondents which include; Gender, Age, Type of sport and Status. Section B comprised items on confidence in sport psychology consultation, stigma tolerance, personal openness, and cultural preferences.

The validity of the instrument was ascertained by consulting two (2) lecturers who are experts in the Department of Human Kinetics Education and one (1) other from the Department of Psychology, University of Ilorin. This was to ensure the adaptability of the instrument to local environment. Their inputs assisted in enhancing the quality of data gathered for the study. Test-retest method was used to

determine the reliability of the instrument. Cronbach alpha statistic was used to analyze the data; a coefficient value of 0.81 was obtained.

The questionnaire was administered on the respondents during sports training. The researcher read the instruction for completing the questionnaire and obtained informed consents before administering the instrument. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20.0. Descriptive statistics of percentage, mean and standard deviation and Chi square statistic was used to analyze the data.

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1: Age distribution of the respondents using mean and standard deviation

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age in years	150	24.17	8.387

Table one reveals the age distribution of the respondents for the study. 150 respondents participated in the study, the mean age was 24.17 and the standard deviation was 8.387. 94 respondents (62.7%) were male while 56 respondents (37.3%) were female. 28 respondents (18.7%) were from soccer, 26 (17.3%) from squash, 16 (10.7%) from basketball, 14 (9.3%) were from tennis, 25 (16.7%) from weight lifting, 24 (16.0%) from athletics while 17 (11.3%) were from boxing. The status of the respondents revealed that 125 respondents (83.3%) were athletes and 25 respondents (16.7%) were coaches.

Results

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant influence of confidence in sport psychology on attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State?

Table 2: Chi-square analysis on confidence in sport psychology practitioner and seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State

S/ N	Item	SA	MA	A	N	D	MD	SD	Raw Total	Df	Cal χ^2 value	P
1.	If a teammate asked my advice about how to become mentally tougher, I would recommend that he/she see a sport psychology consultant.	102	20	23	4	1	0	0	150	24	133.663*	.000
2.	A sport psychology consultant does not have the knowledge and skills to help me perform better.	36	26	40	9	8	12	19	150			
3.	A sport psychology consultant could help me fine-tune my sport performance.	33	9	11	15	24	22	36	150			
4.	I would follow the suggestions a sport psychology consultant gave to me.	48	43	49	6	2	1	1	150			
5.	If I were having problems during competition, such as difficulty with focusing or handling pressure, a sport psychology consultant would be more helpful than a coach or anyone else.	64	41	24	14	5	0	2	150			
Column Total		283 (37.7%)	139 (18.5%)	147 (19.6%)	48 (6.4%)	40 (5.3%)	35 (4.7%)	58 (7.7%)	750 (100%)			

Remark: $p < 0.05$

Table two revealed that 37.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is significant relationship between confidence in sport psychology and attitude towards seeking sport psychology services, 18.5% moderately agreed, 19.6% agreed, 6.4% neutral, 5.3% disagreed, 4.7% moderately disagreed while 7.7% strongly disagreed. Furthermore, the calculated Chi-square value was 133.663 while the P-value is .000 at 24 degree of freedom. Therefore, the finding

reveals a significant influence of confidence in sport psychology on attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State Sports Council.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant influence of stigma tolerance on attitude towards seeking sport psychology service among athletes and coaches in Kwara State

Table 3: Chi-square analysis on stigma tolerance and attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara state sport council

S/N	Item	SA	MA	A	N	D	MD	SD	Raw Total	df	Cal χ^2 Value	Remark
1.	I would work with a sport psychology consultant even though some people might label me a mental patient or problem athlete.	73	32	36	6	1	0	2	150	24	173.737*	.000
2.	If I thought I needed mental training to improve my sports performance, I would get help even if other knew about it.	60	30	47	7	1	4	1	150			
3.	I would work with a sport psychology consultant despite some peoples belief that athlete do not need that type of assistance.	80	32	24	4	2	7	1	150			
4.	Working with a sport psychology consultant is bad for an athlete's reputation	24	10	20	8	26	28	34	150			
5.	If I worked with a sport psychology consultant, I would not want my team mate to know about it	57	25	30	12	9	7	10	150			
Column Total		294	129	157	37	39	46	48	750			
		(39.2%)	(17.2%)	(20.9%)	(4.9%)	(5.2%)	(6.1%)	(6.4%)	(100%)			

$P < 0.05$

Table three revealed that 39.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a significant relationship between stigma tolerance and attitude towards seeking sport psychology services, 17.2%, moderately agreed, 20.9% agreed, 4.9% neutral, 5.2% disagreed, 6.1% moderately disagreed while

6.4% strongly disagreed. The calculated Chi-square value was 173.737 while the p is .000 at 24 degree of freedom. Therefore, the finding shows a significant influence of stigma tolerance on attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State Sports Council.

Hypotheses 3: There is no significant influence of personal openness on attitude towards seeking sport psychology service among athletes and coaches in Kwara State?

Table 4: Chi-square analysis on personal openness and attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State Sport Council

S/N	Item	SA	MA	A	N	D	MD	SD	Raw Total	df	Cal χ^2 Value	Remark
1.	I would openly discuss my thoughts and feelings with a sport psychology consultant	79	25	35	4	2	1	4	150	24	60.664*	.000
2.	I do not have much respect for sport psychology consultants	22	12	17	6	18	30	45	150			
3.	I respect athletes who seek help when they are unable to cope with their problems by themselves	71	25	38	4	1	9	2	150			
4.	There are certain personal issues that I would not discuss with a sport psychology consultants	60	31	42	3	4	2	8	150			
5.	Considering the time and commitment involved in working with a sport psychology consultants, it would have little value for me	74	20	41	6	4	3	2	150			
Column Total		306 (40.8%)	113 (15.1%)	173 (23.1%)	23 (3.1%)	29 (3.8%)	45 (6%)	61 (8.1%)	750 (100%)			

$P < 0.05$

Table four revealed that 40.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a significant relationship between personal openness and attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State Sport Council, 15.1%, moderately agreed, 23.1% agreed, 3.1% neutral, 3.8% disagreed, 6% moderately disagreed while 8.1% strongly disagreed. The calculated Chi-square value

was 60.664 while the p is .000 with a degree of freedom of 24. Based on this finding, there is a significant influence of personal openness on attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State Sports Council.

Discussion of Findings

From the findings, there was significant influence of confidence in sport psychology

practitioner on seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State. Confidence in sport psychology consulting refers to an individual's belief that sport psychology service can be effective. From the findings, it could be affirmed that the level of confidence in sport psychology consulting is a representation of how an individual perceives sport psychology services and mental skills training as useful. Zakrajsek and Zizzi (2007); Zakrajsek (2011) found confidence in sport psychology consulting as the most significant predictor of intentions to use, or not use, sport psychology services.

The finding further revealed a significant influence of stigma tolerance on seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State. Stigma tolerance reflects a negative attitude toward sports psychology and refers to the belief that others will negatively label athletes or coaches as having psychological problems if they work with a sport psychology consultant. Some coaches hold the misconception that sport psychology is for problem athletes only while some individuals may be hesitant to seek sport psychology services for fear that others will perceive them as "weak" or having psychological problems. Some coaches have expressed fear that sport psychology would make their athletes think too much about their game, which might reduce performance. These misconceptions could have strong influence on seeking sport psychology services.

The outcome of the study further reveals significant influence of personal openness on seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches' in Kwara State. Personal openness addresses a person's willingness to try sports psychology consulting and mental skills training. Openness borders on willingness to approach a sport psychology consultant in discussing concerns; goals; apprehensions; and other issues which may influence willingness to be involved with employing

sport psychology services. This finding is in agreement with the submission of Zakrajsek et al., (2011) that as coaches' openness increased their intentions to use sport psychology services also increased. In addition, Martin (2005) stated that other expectations about the process of sport psychology consultation may influence willingness to seek service use.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. There was significant influence of confidence in sport psychology services on attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State Sports Council.
2. There was significant influence of stigma tolerance on attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State Sports Council.
3. There was significant influence of personal openness on attitude towards seeking sport psychology services among athletes and coaches in Kwara State Sports Council.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should assist in breaking the barrier of access to sport psychology services by employing sport psychology professionals in Kwara State Sport Council. This will assist to overcome perceived barriers to coaches' sport psychology service use and raise their confidence.
2. Coaches in the study area are encouraged to integrate sport psychology services into their training right from the beginning of their programme by realizing that functions of sports psychologists are distinct from theirs but there are areas of overlapping.
3. Coaches should assist their athletes through re-orientation by making them realize that every member of the team,

coaches and other officials need adequate psychological preparation for sports engagement. Therefore, they should seek the services of sport psychology for help whenever the need arises.

4. Sport psychology practitioners should demonstrate their professional prowess by structuring their consulting services to address the potential barriers and increase their effectiveness with their clients.

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