

# Psychological Well-Being and Goal Attainment in College Student-Athletes

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## Background & Purpose

Psychological well-being (PWB) is a multidimensional concept that incorporates social, psychological, and other health-related domains and highlights the benefits of positive mental health (Boland, 2015). As college student-athletes (CSAs) balance the usual transition challenges encountered by traditional college students, CSAs report additional stress and mental health concerns at a higher rate than traditional students (Edwards, 2018). Goal attainment has been described as "... the capacity to master important tasks, self-improve in the practice of one's sport, and outperform competitors" (Schellenberg et al., 2013, p. 271).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between student-athletes' PWB and goal attainment. Current research suggests there is an increase in mental health concerns among college students across the United States (U.S.), especially among the student-athlete population. Americans between the ages of 18-25 report the highest risk for developing a mental health condition and this risk is even higher for CSAs. Not only do CSAs have to balance the typical responsibilities of college students, but there is an expectation to meet heightened athletic demands.

## Methods



### Target Population:

Varsity student-athletes at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke

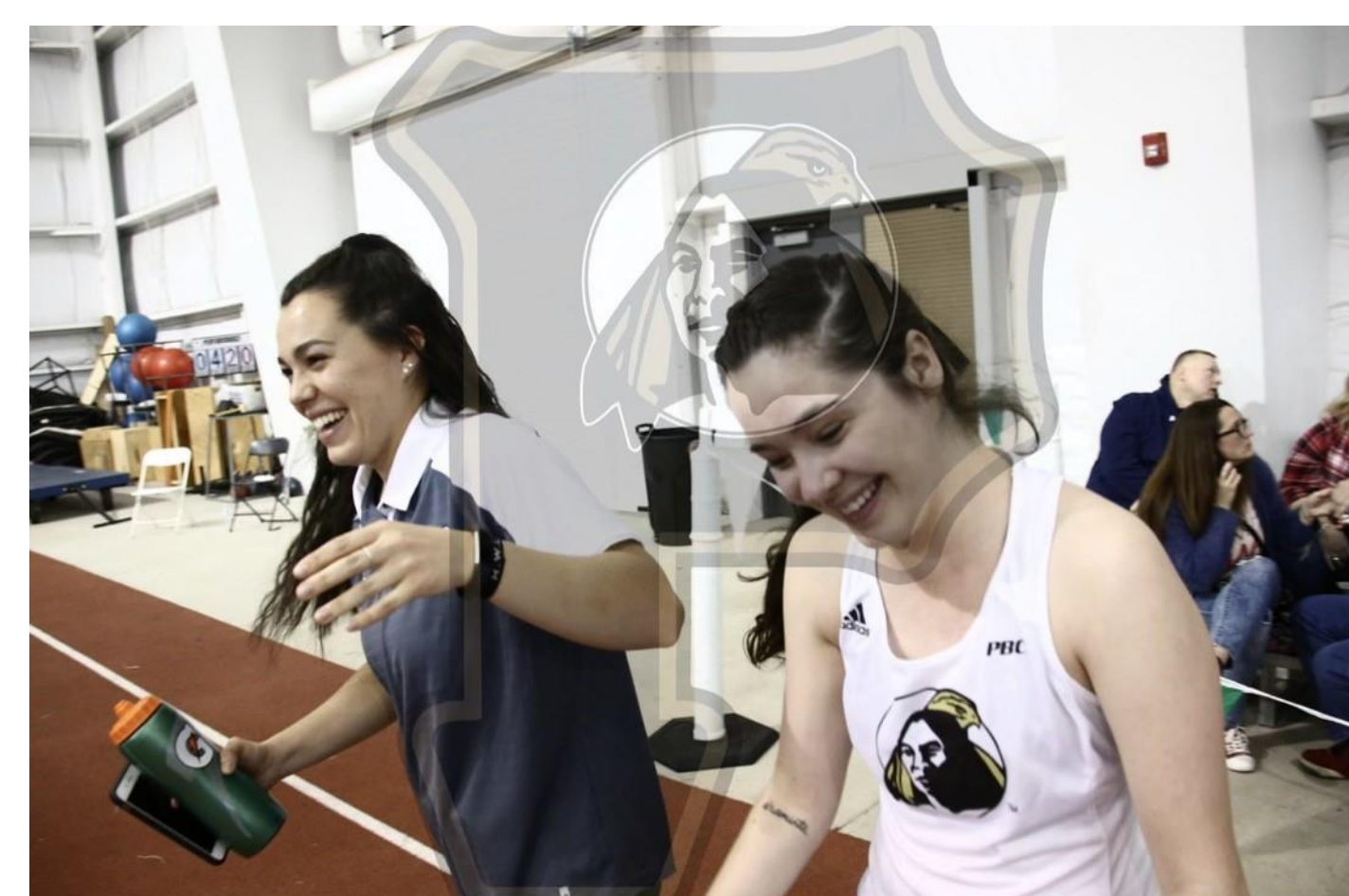
### Survey Instrument:

The online confidential *Fonseca PWB and Goals Survey* was used to collect data for this study. This survey included four sections: demographic information (gender, ethnicity, and sport affiliation), PWB items, goal attainment items, and general questions about the impact of COVID-19 on student-athletes. The survey included two questionnaire instruments: the *Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)* and the *Fonseca Fiorentino Goal Attainment Instrument (FFGAI)*.

### Response Rate:

262 out of 425 CSAs, 61.6% (Table 1)

Category	Count
Survey Response	286
Excluded Responses	24
Analyzed Responses	262



## Hypotheses

- H1:** There will be no statistically significant difference in goal attainment scores based on gender.
- H2:** There will be no statistically significant difference in psychological well-being scores based on gender.
- H3:** There will be no statistically significant difference in goal attainment scores based on ethnicity.
- H4:** There will be no statistically significant difference in psychological well-being scores based on ethnicity.
- H5:** There will be no statistically significant difference in goal attainment scores based on sport type.
- H6:** There will be no statistically significant difference in psychological well-being scores based on sport type.
- H7:** There will be no statistically significant relationship between psychological well-being scores and goal attainment scores.

## Data Analysis & Results

### Data Analysis:

Data were collected through *Qualtrics* and exported to *SPSS* for analysis

- Independent t-tests were used for **H1** and **H2**
- ANOVA tests were performed for **H3**, **H4**, **H5**, and **H6**
- Pearson correlation was used to test **H7**

### Results:

#### Demographic Profile

Participants: 262

Gender: 106 female CSAs, 154 male CSAs

#### Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result	Significance
<b>H1</b> – GA & Gender	Failed to reject	$p = .864 > \alpha = .05$
<b>H2</b> – PWB & Gender	Reject	$p = 0.020 < \alpha = .05$
<b>H3</b> - GA & Ethnicity	Failed to reject	$p = .072 > \alpha = .05$
<b>H4</b> – PWB & Ethnicity	Reject	$p = .023 < \alpha = .05$
<b>H5</b> – GA & Sport Type	Failed to reject	$p = .314 > \alpha = .05$
<b>H6</b> – PWB & Sport Type	Reject	$p = 0.00002 < \alpha = .05$
<b>H7</b> – PWB & GA	Reject	$p = .000008 < \alpha = .05$

## Conclusion & Future Research

### Conclusion

From this research, we can conclude that PWB impacts the achievement of goals in CSAs. The results of this study suggest that CSAs with higher psychological distress have a harder time achieving their goals. We can also conclude that women are more likely to report higher levels of psychological distress than men. PWB scores were also found to have significant differences based on ethnicity and sport type.

### Future Research

Future research can expand the target population to include additional universities and NCAA Divisions. Additional demographic questions could include access to mental health treatment or counseling services for CSAs. Future researchers may look to investigate PWB with championship history, nutritional habits, and injury rehabilitation in CSAs.

### References:

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- Schellenberg, B. J. I., Gaudreau, P., & Crocker, P. R. E. (2013). Passion and coping: Relationships with changes in burnout and goal attainment in collegiate volleyball players. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 35(3), 270–280. <https://doi.org.proxy181.nclive.org/10.1123/jsep.35.3.270>