

Other than Athletic Performance? The Pursuit of Student-Athletes' Academic Psychological Capital and Well-Being

Kim, Minjung¹; Chin, Ji-Hyoung² and Sung, Yoon Tae³

Organisation(s): 1: University of Mississippi; 2: Yonsei University; 3: University of Northern Colorado

mk55@olemiss.edu

Aim

Due to the competitive environment in collegiate athletics, many universities have been faced with a variety of huge challenges such as assault, cheating, and drug abuse (Hums & MacLean, 2004). Even under the amateurism principle, student-athletes are pressured to achieve athletic performance, resulting in high levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout. Accordingly, sport management and psychology studies have focused on determining the factors that decrease athletes' stress levels and help to overcome performance slumps. However, positive organizational behavior scholars (Luthans, 2002) have recently argued that taking a positive approach to individual strengths is a pivotal component for not only promoting individuals' well-being but also achieving sustainable competitive advantages. In doing so, it is time to consider positive psychological capital beyond higher performance in amateur sport teams. The current study provides a conceptual framework to answer the following research questions: (1) how to promote student-athletes' academic psychological capital? and (2) what is the role of academic psychological capital on student satisfaction and their well-being?

Theoretical Background

In promoting student development in the academic setting, student engagement plays a crucial role in desirable outcomes such as cultural attitudes, positive self-concept, communication and, learning skills (Gayles & Hu, 2009). There are four areas of student engagement closely related to student development: (1) interaction with faculty members, (2) interaction with students other than teammates, (3) participation in student organizations and other activities, and (4) participation in academic related activities. In regards to student-related outcomes of student engagement, little attention has been paid to their psychological capital and well-being. The concept of psychological capital focuses on individuals' strengths and how they thrive in organizational settings. While the influences of psychological capital have been empirically examined in various business and educational settings, only few studies (e.g., Kim, Perrewé, Kim, & Kim, 2017) recently discussed the impacts of psychological capital on positive organizational behavior outcomes in the context of sports, especially for student-athletes. Through various empirical tests, it is concluded that psychological capital consists of the psychological resources of hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism, and it emphasizes not only state-like capacities but also a pursuit of positive impacts (Luthans, 2002).

Research Design and Data Analysis

The conceptual framework consists of three main components. First, the proposed conceptual model includes the propositions that each sub-construct of student engagement (e.g., interaction with faculty members) enhances their academic psychological capital. The results of Gayles and Hu's (2009) study concluded that student-athletes' engagement showed higher levels of cognitive and affective outcomes in the context of intercollegiate Division I schools. Similarly, we assert that more engaged students are likely to have a high level of academic psychological capital by experiencing more interactions with faculty members and other

students. Participating in academics and other educationally purposeful activities can positively contribute to their personal development outside of the classroom and off the fields. Second, the proposed conceptual model includes the postulate that each student-athlete's academic psychological capital influences the level of their student satisfaction and their well-being. Student-athletes with high levels of psychological capital may be more motivated to create a plan and pursuit realistic goals, which enhance their belief about better performance. Because student-athletes' positive academic experiences, they are more likely to be satisfied with their academic work. More importantly, through their psychological functioning through subjective experiences, academic psychological capital ultimately promotes their psychological well-being, including six dimensions (Ryff, 1989): self-acceptance, positive relationship with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

Results and Conclusions

This model is an initial attempt to describe how student-athletes' engagement can enhance their satisfaction as a student and psychological well-being through academic psychological capital. The inclusion of student-athletes' academic psychological capital and well-being offers another criteria of student-athletes success in sport management. In practice, this model directly contributes to athletic departments and sport teams in colleges and universities by providing a new framework for creating more competitive and positive collegiate sport teams.