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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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INFLUENCE OF HEALTH LOCUS OF CONTROL AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON CHILDREN ATHLETES' RESILIENCE DURING SPORTS COMPETITION IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of health locus of control and emotional intelligence on the resilience of child athletes during competitions in Oyo State. Resilience is crucial for athletes to manage competitive pressures, yet many struggle without adequate support. The research utilized a descriptive survey design involving 200 child athletes across nine sports, employing standardized instruments such as the Health Locus of Control, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10, and the Emotional Intelligence Scale. Data analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics, with a focus on relationships between variables. Key findings revealed a significant positive correlation between internal locus of control, chance, and resilience, accounting for 20.8% of the variance. Internal locus of control and chance significantly influenced resilience, while the influence of powerful others was negligible. Emotional intelligence factors, particularly accurate self-awareness and self-control, also significantly impacted resilience, contributing to 20.5% of the variance. No significant gender differences in resilience were found. The study highlights the need for parents and coaches to foster resilience through positive support and motivation, as current practices often undermine athletes' morale. Overall, promoting resilience in child athletes is essential for their development both in sports and life.

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INTRODUCTION

Consequently, this study aims to examine the impact of health locus of control and emotional intelligence on the resilience of child athletes during competitions. Resilience refers to the ability to adapt successfully after experiencing stress or challenges. It is crucial for athletes who face continuous pressure to perform at high levels. According to Sarkar and Fletcher (2013), Resilience plays a crucial role in sports because athletes must continuously handle various pressures to reach and maintain high performance. However, Seery (2011) notes that performance situations, driven by motivation, can also induce stress due to their significant consequences and the uncertainty of success. Research indicates that athletes lacking resilience often struggle under competitive pressures, which can hinder their performance. In contrast, only a few athletes manage to endure these pressures and achieve peak performance. A challenge in enhancing resilience lies in distinguishing resilience-focused strategies from those aimed at general positive child development. This ambiguity is compounded by the limited availability of assessment tools specifically designed to measure resilience, which affects the evaluation of interventions.

Yates and Masten (2004) emphasize the importance of a developmental perspective in understanding resilience outcomes, as expectations and markers of success vary with age. Interventions should be tailored to realistic expectations and developmental needs, focusing not only on the absence of risks but also on fostering resources, adaptive capabilities, and positive development, such as healthy peer relationships. Resilience can be bolstered by the presence of certain assets, rather than merely the absence of risks. As risk levels increase, it is essential to recognize that the accumulation of risk factors poses a significant threat to children's mental and physical health. Garbarino et al. (2002) suggest that child welfare research should focus on "accumulated possibilities" rather than "accumulated risk," proposing that risk factors can be mitigated by providing opportunities in various aspects of a child's life. Therefore, this study aims to explore the influence of health locus of control and emotional intelligence on the resilience of children athletes during competitions in Oyo state, highlighting the need for interventions that develop opportunities, resources, and strengths within children, families, and communities for optimal outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive quantitative approach, focusing on child athletes in Ibadan. A total of 200 child athletes were selected using a simple random sampling technique across nine different sports. Data was collected using a standardized questionnaire divided into four sections: demographic information, level of children's participation in sports, resiliency in sports performance, and the influence of health locus of control on resilience during competitions. The instrument was validated through examination by the research supervisor, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.7. Three researchers obtained data by administering the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, were used for demographic information, while inferential statistics such as regression, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and t-tests were employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 alpha level.

S/N	Sport Type	Number of Respondents
1	Hockey	20
2	Taekwondo	20
3	Swimming	20
4	Athletics	40
5	Soccer	20
6	Table Tennis	20
7	Judo	20
8	Badminton	20
9	Basketball	20
	Total	200

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the analysis and discussion of the findings. The results and discussion of findings were presented based on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, research question, and hypotheses as follows:

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents by age

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percent (%)
10-12 years	48	24.0
13-15 years	88	44.0
16-19 years	64	32.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 4.1, showed that 48 (24.0%) respondents were in the age range of 10-12 years, 88 (44.0%) were between 13-15 years, and 64 (32.0%) were between 16-19 years. It implied that most of the respondents were in the age range of 13-15 years.

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents by sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	117	58.5
Female	83	41.5
Total	200	100.0

As shown in table 4.2, 117 (58.5%) respondents are male, 83 (41.5%) are female. It implied that most of the respondents were male.

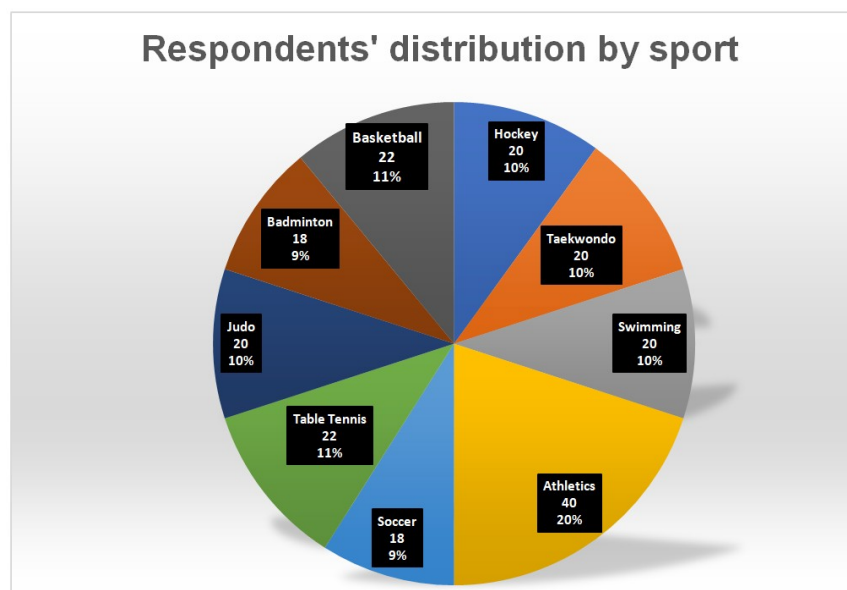


Figure 1. Distribution of the respondents by sport

Table 3. Summary of results showing resilience in Children athletes

S/N	Question Items	NTA	RT	ST	OT	TNA	Mean	Std. Dev
1	I am able to adapt when changes occur	5 2.5%	35 17.5%	59 29.5%	59 29.5%	42 21.0%	2.49	1.08
2	I can deal with whatever comes my way	14 7.0%	43 21.5%	83 41.5%	32 16.0%	28 14.0%	2.09	1.10
3	I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems	22 11.0%	36 18.0%	67 33.5%	39 19.0%	36 18.0%	2.16	1.23
4	Having to cope with stress can make me stronger	53 26.5%	44 22.0%	44 22.0%	28 14.0%	31 15.5%	1.70	1.40
5	I tend to bounce back after illness, injury or other hardship	30 15.0%	32 16.0%	35 17.5%	47 23.5%	56 28.0%	2.34	1.42
6	I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles	4 2.0%	26 13.0%	12 6.0%	40 20.0%	118 59.0%	3.21	1.15
7	Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly	23 11.5%	27 13.5%	47 23.5%	34 17.0%	69 34.5%	2.50	1.38
8	I am not easily discouraged by failure	18 9.0%	32 16.0%	29 14.5%	40 20.0%	81 40.5%	2.67	1.38
9	I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges and difficulties	13 6.5%	29 14.5%	40 20.0%	35 17.5%	83 41.5%	2.73	1.31
10	I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear and anger	25 12.5%	19 9.5%	53 26.5%	57 28.5%	46 23.0%	2.40	1.28
Weighted Mean=2.43 Criterion=2.50								

Note: NTA= Not true at all, RT= Rarely true, ST= Sometimes true, OT= Often true, TNA= True nearly all the time

Table 3 further revealed that the obtained weighted mean value of 2.43 was less than the criterion of 2.50; hence, it could be inferred that parents and coaches do not appropriately foster resilience in children athletes. This means that the parents and coaches of children athletes in Oyo State do not appropriately foster resilience in such athletes.

Test of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant relationship between internal locus of control, powerful others, chance, and athletes' resiliency during competitions.

Table 4. Correlation matrix, mean, and standard deviation of locus of control components and resiliency

Variables (sub-scales)	Mean	Std. Dev	Resiliency	Internal Locus of Control	Powerful others	Chance
Resiliency	24.43	6.79				
Internal Locus of Control	43.14	7.37	.451**	1		
Powerful others	31.05	9.71	.023	.023	1	
Chance	35.62	8.82	.208**	.192	.452**	1

in Table 4.8, there w** $p < .01$ = Significant; * $p < .05$ = Significant

As shown a significant positive relationship between internal locus of control ($r=0.451$, $p<0.05$), chance ($r=0.208$, $p<0.05$) and resiliency, while powerful others ($r=0.023$, $p>0.05$) did not. This implied that internal locus of control and chance independently had a significant positive relationship with athletes' resiliency during competitions. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant relationship between locus of control, chance, and athletes' resiliency during competitions, was rejected. This finding means that an increased internal locus of control and chance of Oyo State children athletes could improve resiliency during competitions.

Table 5. Correlation matrix, mean and standard deviation of emotional intelligence variables and athletes' resiliency

Variables (sub-scales)	Mean	Std. Dev	Resiliency	Emotional Awareness	Accurate Self-Awareness	Self-Confidence	Self-Control	Adaptability
Resiliency	24.43	6.79	1					
Emotional Awareness	7.85	1.81	.339**	1				
Accurate Self-Awareness	7.88	1.99	.314**	.438**	1			
Self-Confidence	7.53	1.92	.303**	.375**	.276**	1		
Self-Control	7.16	2.16	.375**	.381**	.275**	.317**	1	
Adaptability	7.66	1.89	.271**	.357**	.332**	.311**	.404**	1

** $p < .01$ = Significant; * $p < .05$ = Significant

As shown in Table 5, there was a significant positive relationship between emotional awareness $p<0.05$), accurate self-awareness ($r=0.314$, $p<0.05$), self-confidence ($r=0.303$, $p<0.05$), self-control ($r=0.375$, $p<0.05$), adaptability ($r=0.271$, $p<0.05$) and athletes' resiliency during competitions. This implied that emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, and adaptability independently had a significant positive relationship with athletes' resiliency during competitions. This finding means that increased emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, and adaptability of Oyo State children athletes could result in improved resiliency during competitions. As indicated in Table 4.10, it was found that the linear combination of health locus of control components (internal locus of control, powerful others and chance) on athletes' resiliency during competitions was tested significantly ($F(3,196) = 18.375$, $p<0.05$). The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regression of $R=0.469$ and multiple R-square of 0.220. The result also revealed the Adjusted $R^2=0.208$; indicating that about 20.8% of variance was accounted for by the independent variables. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The finding showed that health locus of control components of internal locus of control, powerful others, and chance had a significant joint influence on Oyo State children athletes' resiliency during competitions.

Table 6. Summary of regression on the joint influence of health locus of control components on athletes' resiliency during competitions

R=.469R ² =.220Adj. R ² =.208Std. Error=6.04375						
Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	2013.595	3	671.198	18.375	.000	Sig.
Residual	7159.280	196	36.527			
Total	9172.875	199				

Table 7. Summary of regression on the relative influence of health locus of control components on athletes' resiliency during competitions

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig. (p-value)	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)			
(Constant)	4.4242	2.997		1.476	.141	
Internal locus of control	.390	.060	.423	6.529	.000	Sig
Powerful others	.022	.050	.031	.442	.659	Not Sig
Chance	.109	.056	.141	1.946	.053	Sig

Table 7 showed the internal locus of control, powerful others and chance, the unstandardized regression weight (B), the standardized error of estimate (SEB), the standardized coefficient, the t-ratio and the level at which the t-ratio was significant. As indicated in the table, internal locus of control ($\beta=0.423$, $t=6.529$, and chance ($\beta=0.141$, $t=1.946$, $p<0.05$) were tested significantly on athletes' resiliency, while powerful others ($\beta=0.031$, $t=0.442$, $p>0.05$) did not. The finding means that the internal locus of control and chance of children athletes in Oyo State independently significantly influenced their resiliency during competitions while powerful others did not.

Table 8. Summary of regression of relative influence of health locus of control on children athletes' resiliency during competitions

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig. (p value)	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)			
(Constant)	12.097	2.841		4.258	.000	
Health locus of control	.112	.026	.298	4.397	.000	Significant

Table 8 shows the health locus of control, the unstandardized regression weight (B), the standardized error of estimate (SEB), the standardized coefficient, the t-ratio, and the level at which the t-ratio is significant. As indicated in the table, the health locus of control significant on resiliency during competitions ($\beta=0.298$, $t=4.397$, $p<0.05$) implied that health locus of control had a significant influence on children athletes' resiliency during competitions, the hypothesis was therefore rejected. This means that the health locus of children athletes in the State significantly influenced their resiliency during competitions. There will be no significant joint influence of emotional intelligence variables (emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, adaptability) on athletes' resiliency during competitions.

Table 9. Summary of regression on the joint influence of emotional intelligence variables on athletes' resiliency during competitions

R=.474R ² =.225Adj. R ² =.205Std. Error=6.05399						
Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)	Remark
Regression	2062.620	5	412.524	11.256	.000	Sig.
Residual	7110.255	196	36.651			
Total	9172.875	199				

As shown in Table 9, it was found that the linear combination of emotional intelligence variables (emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control and adaptability) on athletes' resiliency during competitions was tested significantly ($F_{(5,196)}=11.256$, $p<0.05$). The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regression of $R=0.474$ and multiple R-square of 0.225. The result also revealed the Adjusted $R^2=0.205$; indicating that about 20.5% of variance was accounted for by the independent variables. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The finding showed that emotional intelligence variables of emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control and adaptability had a significant joint influence on Oyo State children athletes' resiliency during competitions.

Hypothesis 7: Summary of regression of relative influence of emotional intelligence on children athletes' resiliency during competitions

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig. (p-value)	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)			
(Constant)	6.596	2.444		2.698	.008	
Emotional intelligence	.468	.063	.466	7.407	.000	Significant

Table 7 shows the emotional intelligence, the unstandardized regression weight the standardized error of estimate (SEB), the standardized coefficient, the t-ratio, and the level at which the t-ratio is significant. The table shows that emotional intelligence was tested significantly on children athletes' resiliency during competitions ($\beta=0.466$, $t=7.407$, $p<0.05$). This implied that emotional intelligence had a significant influence on children athletes' resiliency during competitions. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This means that the emotional intelligence of children athletes in Oyo State significantly influenced their resiliency during competitions.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Overall, it was deduced from the hypotheses tested above that the health locus of control of children athletes in Oyo State significantly influenced children athletes' resiliency during competitions. In this regard, the findings above imply that the degree to which children athletes in Oyo State believed that they had control over the outcome of events had a strong impact on the way they showed resiliency during competitions. The outcome of these findings was in line with the assertion of MacAdams (2008) that people often show resilience in the face of adversity

rather than ruminate over the bad things that happen in their lives. On the other hand, the outcome of the present study about the influence of locus of control on children athletes' resiliency during competitions was in contrast with the finding of Palen and Coatsworth (2007) that participation in organized physical activities was an external factor that is associated with how young people use and develop their inner strengths and resources to succeed in diverse physical activities. According to Cobb in Shehu and Mokgwathi (2008), resilience is predicated on a sense of self-control, self-worth, self-reliance, a positive approach to life, intrinsic motivation, intelligence, and a good sense of humour that enables a young person to thrive in the face of adversity and achieve wholesome development. Lack of internal resilience factors as interesting by Rew and Horner (2003) and Everall *et al* (2006) has been consistently identified as a precursor to maladaptive behaviours that compromise adolescents' health and overall well-being. Blaxter in Shehu and Mokgwathi (2008) in his literature indicates that people with an internal locus of control are more likely to engage in a wide range of health-enhancing behaviours than those who believe in chance or social influence on health.

The finding as shown in Table 4.9 indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between emotional awareness ($r=0.339$, $p<0.05$), accurate self-awareness ($r=0.314$, $p<0.05$), self-confidence ($r=0.303$, $p<0.05$), self-control ($r=0.375$, $p<0.05$), adaptability ($r=0.271$, $p<0.05$) and athletes' resiliency during competitions. This implied that emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control and adaptability independently had a significant positive relationship with athletes' resiliency during competitions. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding means that an increased emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control and adaptability of Oyo State children athletes could result in an improved resiliency during competitions. The finding as shown in table 4.12 clarified that the linear combination of emotional intelligence variables (emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control and adaptability) on athletes' resiliency during competitions was tested significant ($F(5,196)=11.256$, $p<0.05$). The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regression of $R=0.474$ and multiple R-square of 0.225. The result also revealed the Adjusted $R^2=0.205$; indicating that about 20.5% of variance was accounted for by the independent variables. The finding showed that emotional intelligence variables of emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, and adaptability had a significant joint influence on Oyo State children athletes' resiliency during competitions.

The finding as seen in Table 4.13 showed that emotional awareness, accurate self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, and adaptability, the unstandardized regression weight (β), the standardized error of estimate ($SE\beta$), the standardized coefficient, the t-ratio and the level at which the t-ratio was significant. As indicated in the table, accurate self-awareness ($\beta=0.146$, $t=2.015$, $p<0.05$) and self-control ($\beta=0.228$, $t=3.129$, $p<0.05$) were tested significantly on athletes' resiliency, while emotional awareness ($\beta=0.123$, $t=1.614$, $p>0.05$), self-confidence ($\beta=0.129$, $t=1.828$, $p>0.05$) and adaptability ($\beta=0.047$, $t=0.638$, $p>0.05$) did not. This implied that accurate self-awareness and self-control had a relatively significant influence on athletes' resiliency during competitions, while emotional awareness, self-confidence and adaptability did not.

Overall, it was also deduced from the other three hypotheses tested above that the emotional intelligence of children athletes in Oyo State significantly influenced their resiliency during competitions. These findings mean that the degree to which children athletes in Oyo State believed that they could manoeuvre their way through stressful circumstances had a strong impact on the way they showed resiliency during competitions. The outcome of this study was in line with the finding of Stough and Clement (2009) who asserted that emotional intelligence is essential in both individual and team sports and can be the key factor in an athlete's functioning within a team setting. Likewise, Armstrong *et al.* (2011) opined that emotional intelligence is antecedent to resilience rather than encompassing resilience, such that emotional intelligence functions through its composite dimensions to facilitate resilience. Magnano *et al.* (2016) also asserted that highly resilient people proactively cultivate their positive emotionality by strategically eliciting positive emotions through the use of humour, relaxation techniques, and optimistic thinking.

It was discussed in chapter two of the study that sports psychologists and professional athletes have started to evaluate the linkages between emotion and competitive sporting performance, and in particular, how moderating and appropriately expressing the experience of emotions can facilitate performance. Vallerand in Magnano, Craparo, and Paolillo (2016) said that while it is generally well acknowledged that emotions play an important role in the sporting arena, the exact nature of their role in sporting performance is still very under-researched. It has been argued that not only is the expression of emotion highly prevalent on the sporting field, but an essential aspect of performance in all sports. However, some of the debate around the concept of emotional intelligence has considered emotional intelligence as a stable set of dispositional attributes, for example, personality traits, character, and core values, as compared to a set of social-emotional skills that can be learned and developed (Mayer *et al.* 2004). As competencies, they encompass personality traits, motives, bodies of knowledge, and skills that can potentially facilitate individual achievement of positive work outcomes in such areas as job performance, career advancement, customer service, teamwork, and leadership (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2000).

CONCLUSION

The answer provided to research questions revealed that parents and coaches do not foster resilience in children athletes appropriately. This means that the parents and coaches of children athletes in Oyo State do not foster resilience in such athletes appropriately. Based on the assertion of the Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University (2018), it was believed that the most common single factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adults (coach), also children who do well in the face of serious hardship typically have a biological resistance to adversity and strong relationship with the important adults in their family and community. Therefore, parents, coaches, and other significant adults play important roles in structuring the environment and providing athletes with opportunities for the development of both physical and psychological characteristics, such as those associated with resilience (Fountain, 2017). Support mobilisation from significant others is also considered key to the resilience process within adolescents (Vetter *et al.* 2010). Within junior sport, support is necessary not only for the most traumatic injury incidents but also for the numerous competitive and personal stressors associated with this stage, which are arguably much smaller. Research has shown that positive parental engagement and coach interaction in junior sports can help to alleviate performance stressors (Jowett and Timson-Katchis, 2005), and can promote foundations such as hard work, effort, and perseverance through the modelling of their own beliefs and behaviours (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, and Whalen, in Fountain, 2017). It is no doubt and has been established that resilience plays a vital role in the achievement of success in sports competitions, as sports achievement and success are largely influenced by typical stressors in sports, which prompt resiliency in athletes. Findings of the study indicated that the parents and coaches of children athletes in Oyo State do not foster resilience in such athletes appropriately, meaning that most parents and coaches do not encourage children when faced with adversities and sport-related stress during sports competitions. Based on the assertion of the Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University (2018), it was believed that the most common single factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult (coach), and children who

do well in the face of serious hardship are said to typically have a biological resistance to adversity and strong relationship with the important adults in their family and community. It was also noted that resilience as a coping behaviour to sport-related stress among children athletes during competitions is influenced by health locus of control and emotional intelligence. The study's findings also showed no significant gender difference in children athletes' resiliency during competitions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that;

1. Parents and coaches of children athletes should appropriately foster resilience in them as this will help them in the face of adversity and when encountering sport-related stress. It is reiterated that parents, coaches, and other significant adults play important roles in structuring the environment and providing athletes the opportunities for the development of both physical and psychological characteristics, such as those associated with resilience. Adherence to this will bring about great sports achievement and success.
2. Coaches should devise a way by which the perception and orientation of children athletes toward circumstances of life will be positively geared towards the achievement of success both within and outside the realm of sport.
3. Adequate support be given to children athletes by their parents and other significant others as this will motivate them to strive to render the best of performance. It was believed that the perception of available support from a variety of social agents underpinned the resilience-stress-performance relationship in the world's best athletes.
4. The government of the state and the school management that the children athletes represent should adequately and appropriately remunerate their efforts in a bid not to discourage them. This will go a long way to strengthen children athletes' courage to exert even more effort to give the best performance.
5. Coaches should be aware of the different approaches to promoting resilience in children's athletes. Resilience-promoting interventions need to be defined in relation to positive age-appropriate development, such as positive peer relationships, resources, and adaptive capabilities, and not just rely on the absence of symptoms or risks.

Future studies in this area should critically examine resilience and gender differences so that knowledge will be provided on who is more resilient among male and female athletes in competitive sports atmospheres, as they are influenced by health locus of control and emotional intelligence.

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