



Building Resilience and Well-being: Psychological Interventions for Second Division Footballers in Hosanna City, Ethiopia.

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of psychological interventions on the well-being and resilience of second division football players in Hosanna City, Central Ethiopia Region, using a mixed-methods approach. The research involved 120 football players from four second-division zone football clubs in Hosanna City, with 20 players aged 20-26 selected from each club for the intervention. The study utilized sport psychology techniques and was conducted pre- and post-intervention assessments, including cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness-based training over a 12-week period. The results showed a significant decrease in players' stress levels and an increase in self-confidence, resilience, positive emotions, and improvements in physical fitness components, with a decrease in injury rates. The study also revealed the importance of mental stability for optimal performance and found positive correlations between physical well-being, mental well-being, and resilience. Integrating sport psychology interventions can lead to significant improvements in both the emotional and physical aspects of football players, potentially resulting in better

Received in Sep.2025 Revised from Sep-Nov.2025 Accepted: Dec, 2025 Ethiopian Journal of Sport Science (EJSS), Volume VI, and Issue I, Published by Ethiopian Sport Academy 2025

Keywords: Resilience, Football players,

psychological intervention, performance outcomes and reduced injury occurrences. mental well-being, Physical fitness.

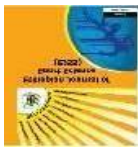


Introduction

Football, as a globally celebrated sport, holds profound cultural, social, and economic significance in Ethiopia. In cities like Hosanna, Central Ethiopia, football clubs transcend their role as mere sports entities, acting as vital hubs for community cohesion, youth empowerment, and local identity (Totten, 2018). Researchers acknowledge resilience as a crucial psychological phenomenon for understanding the positive development of individuals who overcome diverse challenges (Wright et al., 2012). Within elite sport, teams often face adversity, and positively adapting to these situations poses a significant challenge for athletes and coaches. When looking at resilience and optimal sport performance, Fletcher & Sarkar (2012) found many different factors are needed to overcome stressors and produce a positive response and therefore optimal performance. The study found that competitors with higher levels of resilience exhibited better mental adjustment and adherence to recovery protocols, leading to faster recovery and a return to sport (Den Hartog et al., 2024). Psychological resilience is crucial in sport because athletes must utilize and optimize a range of mental qualities to withstand the pressures they face (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Psychological resilience-building approaches, including mental toughness training, coping mechanisms, and motivation strategies.

The study of psychological and team resilience has contributed to a better understanding of how players achieve and maintain high levels of performance over time despite the challenges of high-performance sport. In relation to team sports, (Nicholls et al., 2007) found that whilst male athletes described more stressors relating to injuries, female athletes reported more stressors concerning communication and interpersonal relationships with their teammates. Researchers believe team resilience can develop over time. Research on team resilience has shown that leveraging a team's individual and collective resources enhances their ability to withstand stressors (Szabadics et al., 2025). Implementing team resilience practices can increase the team's performance and the well-being of its members (Sarkar & Page, 2022). Fletcher & Sarkar (2012) found that many factors help athletes overcome stressors and achieve optimal performance when they examined resilience and optimal sport performance.

Fletcher & Sarkar (2012) suggest that in order to improve resiliency in athletes, the psychological factors that influence resiliency should be identified and closely monitored, as well as the athlete's environment. Therefore, interventions should be used in order to reach the optimal level and balance of the factors. These interventions could include guided imagery and reappraisals in



order to improve self-confidence, perceived control and focus on approach goals. As mentioned earlier, Turner & Barker (2013) found that exposure and overcoming stressors is an effective way of achieving the challenge state; therefore, they also recommend exposing athletes to pressure as an effective strategy in building resilience. By understanding how clubs can enhance both structural and psychological resilience, this research provides valuable insights for club managers, policymakers, and stakeholders to strengthen football development at the grassroots level. Therefore, this research aimed building resilience of second division football clubs in Hosanna city, central Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Football clubs in Ethiopia's lower levels, especially those in Hosanna City, confront systemic issues that risk their sustainability and progress. Second-division football clubs in Hosanna City, Central Ethiopia, face tremendous competitive challenges, financial instability, and minimal institutional backing. While these clubs are critical for developing local talent and fostering community identity, their athletes, coaches, and staff face ongoing psychological stressors such as performance stress, self-confidence, emotion, and physical performance such as injury rate, flexibility, oxygen uptake, and speed, which risk mental well-being and their long-term survival.

Despite growing global recognition of psychological resilience as a vital aspect in athletic achievement, there is a shortage of research and support systems addressing mental health issues in lower-division football clubs, particularly in resource-constrained areas such as Ethiopia. In Hosanna City, players and personnel at second-division clubs frequently lack access to sports psychologists, mental health resources, or established coping mechanisms for dealing with stress, setbacks, and the emotional toll of precarious careers. This disparity exacerbates concerns such as burnout, talent attrition, and reduced team cohesion, further limiting clubs' capacity to compete or keep skilled individuals. This study fills a key vacuum by looking into the psychological pressures that athletes endure in Hosanna City's second-division football clubs, as well as exploring how physical performance might be used to improve psychological resilience.

1.3. Objective of the study

1.3.1. General Objective

To investigate building resilience of second division football clubs in Hosanna city, central Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

1. To identify the psychological stressors ability of resilience, emotion, stress level and self-confidence players in second-division football clubs in Hosanna City.



2. To assess the physical performance challenges injury rates, flexibility, oxygen uptake, speed that intersect with psychological well-being and resilience in these football clubs.
3. To explore the relationship between physical performance metrics and psychological resilience among athletes in resource-constrained settings.
4. To evaluate psychological and physical performance intervention for players in second-division football clubs in Hosanna City.

1.4 Hypothesis of the study

H0: There is no significant effect of psychological and physical performance interventions on resilience of second-division football clubs in Hosanna City, Central Ethiopia.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study investigate the systemic, psychological, and physical factors influencing the resilience. The study focus exclusively on second-division football clubs registered and operating in Hosanna City, Central Ethiopia.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study design

The study employed a quasi-experimental approach, involving the recruitment of football players from various second division football clubs in Hosanna City, Central Ethiopia Region, and Ethiopia. Participants were randomly assigned to control and intervention groups, and initial

assessments of mental and physical well-being, resilience, and performance-related variables were conducted for all participants.

2.2. Study Population

The study aimed to integrate sport psychology concepts to enhance the emotional and physical well-being of football players from four second division football clubs in Hosanna. A sample of 20 football players were selected for the experimental group to undergo pre- and post-intervention evaluations.

2.3. Experimental Group

A sample of 20 football players from the Hosanna City Second Division Zone Football Clubs underwent testing using the paired sample t-test. Following the receipt of psychological therapies, the pre-intervention and post-intervention variables of each player were examined, resulting in 20 pairs of observations for the analysis.

2.4. Participant Characteristics

The average age of the research participants was (n=23). Players had an average playing experience of (n=5), and the sample solely included male football players. Participants represent a variety of football positions, including attackers, midfielders, defenders, and goalkeepers.

2.5. Exclusion Criteria

The study excluded players who had any pre-existing mental or physical health issues that may



have a major influence on their participation or performance.

2.6. Method of Data collection

Football players from teams were chosen based on specified criteria, such as being from the second division zone, being between the ages of 20 and 26, and being willing to engage in the study.

2.7. Data collection Instrument

The study utilized various data gathering tools to assess and enhance the emotional and physical well-being of football players, including measures for stress, self-confidence, resilience, positive mood, oxygen consumption, speed and explosive strength, flexibility, and injury rate. These instruments were employed both before and after the intervention to evaluate the impact of integrating sport psychology techniques on the variables of interest.

2.7.1. Pre-Intervention Assessment

Baseline data was collected using various instruments prior to the intervention. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) assessed stress levels, the Sport-Specific Self-Confidence Scale (SSSC) evaluated self-confidence, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) measured resilience, and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) gauged positive emotion. Additionally, the VO2 Max Test assessed oxygen consumption, the 40-Yard Dash measured speed and explosive strength, the Sit-and-Reach Test examined

flexibility, and the Injury Surveillance System tracked injury rates.

2.7.2. Intervention Implementation

Sport psychology concepts were included into the football players' training and assistance. The intervention program lasted a total of 12 weeks, with interventions taking place twice a week. Every intervention session lasted around 60 minutes. These interventions intended to improve their mental and physical health, resilience, self-confidence, stress level, strength, oxygen intake, and positive mood.

2.7.3. Post-Intervention Assessment

After the intervention, the same pre-intervention evaluation instruments were used to gather post-intervention data, allowing for a comparison of variables before and after the intervention. Develop a set of open-ended interview questions and a guide aligned with the study's objectives and focused on physical and mental well-being. These questions should encourage detailed responses from participants.

2.8. Methods of Data Analysis

The study summarized quantitative data, including resilience levels, mental well-being scores, and physical performance measurements, using descriptive statistics such as range, mean, and standard deviation. It compared pre- and post-intervention data for each player using paired sample t-tests and examined relationships using Pearson's correlation coefficient.



3. Result and Discussion

Table 1 shows that the majority of Hosanna City's second division football players are aged between 20 and 26 (35%), with 20% under 20 and 20% over 30. Most players have 1-3 years of experience (45%) and play in the forward position (35%). In terms of education, 50% have a high school diploma, 30% have a college/university diploma, and 20% have a vocational/technical diploma. Resilience levels are 45% poor, 30% moderate, and 25% strong. Self-confidence is 55% low, 25% moderate, and 20% strong. Positive emotion levels are 40% low, 45% moderate, and 15% high. Stress

levels are 55% high, 30% moderate, and 15% mild.

Oxygen intake is average for 55%, above average for 30%, and below average for 15%. Speed-wise, 60% have average speed, 30% above-average, and 10% below-average. Adaptability scores are 65% normal, 20% above-average, and 15% below-average. Finally, 60% have an average injury rate, 25% low, and 20% high.

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Table 1: Demographic and Performance Characteristics of Hosanna City Second Division Football Club Players (n=20).

<i>Demographic variable</i>	<i>Category/option</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Age</i>	Under 20	4	20
	20-26	7	35
	27-30	5	25
	30+	4	20
<i>Gender</i>	Male	20	100.0
<i>Year of playing experience</i>	Less than 1 year	4	20
	1-3 years	9	45
	4-6 years	5	25
	6+ years	2	10
<i>Playing Position</i>	Forward	7	35
	Midfielder	5	25
	Defender	5	25
	Goalkeeper	3	15
<i>Educational level</i>	High school	10	50.0
	Collage/university	6	30
	Vocational/Technical	4	20
<i>Resilience level</i>	Low resilience	9	45
	Moderate resilience	6	30
	High resilience	5	25
<i>Self-confidence</i>	Low self-confidence	11	55
	Moderate Self-confidence	5	25
	High –self confidence	4	20
<i>Positive emotion</i>	Low positive emotion	8	40
	Moderate positive emotion	9	45
	High positive emotions	3	15
<i>Stress level</i>	Low stress level	3	15
	Moderate stress level	6	30
	High stress level	11	55
<i>Oxygen uptake</i>	Below average	3	15
	Average score	11	55
	Above average	6	30
<i>Speed</i>	Below average	2	10
	Average score	12	60
	Above average	6	30
<i>Flexibility</i>	Below average	3	15
	Average score	13	65
	Above average	4	20
<i>Injury rate</i>	Low Injury rates	5	25
	Average Injury rates	12	60
	High Injury rates	4	20



The paired samples descriptive statistics for mental and physical well-being in Hosanna City Second Division Zone Football Club players, as shown in Table 2, revealed significant changes. The mean stress level decreased from M=6.85 before the intervention to M=4.09 after, indicating a potential reduction in stress levels. Additionally, the mean self-confidence improved from M=4.40 before to M=6.75 after, suggesting a positive influence. Furthermore, the mean resilience increased from 5.26 to 6.895, indicating a strengthening of players' resilience. The mean positive emotions also

increased from 5.04 to 6.38, suggesting an increase in positive feelings. Moreover, the mean oxygen uptake increased from 37.85 ml/kg/min to 46.65 ml/kg/min, indicating improved physical fitness. Additionally, the mean speed dropped from 5.80s to 4.27s, showing improved speed. The mean flexibility also increased from 13.25cm to 23cm, indicating a positive effect. Finally, the mean injury rate dropped from 5.7/1000 hours to 2.45/1000 hours, suggesting a reduction in injuries due to the intervention.

Table 2: Paired Samples Descriptive Statistics for Mental and Physical Wellbeing in Hosanna City Second Division Zone Football Club Players.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Stress level (Before)	6.8500	20	2.70039	.60383
	Stress level (After)	4.0900	20	2.69696	.60306
Pair 2	Self-confidence(Before)	4.4050	20	2.71283	.60661
	Self –confidence (After)	6.7500	20	2.89964	.64838
Pair 3	Resilience (Before)	5.2600	20	2.73811	.61226
	Resilience (After)	6.8950	20	2.78917	.62368
Pair 4	Positive emotion (Before)	5.0450	20	2.56484	.57352
	Positive emotion (After)	6.3800	20	2.75635	.61634
Pair 5	Oxygen uptake	37.8500	20	7.67960	1.71721
	Oxygen uptake	46.6500	20	9.08599	2.03169
Pair 6	Speed (Before)	5.8050	20	1.22624	.27419
	Speed (After)	4.2750	20	1.04623	.23395
Pair 7	Flexibility (Before)	13.2500	20	4.37547	.97838
	Flexibility (After)	23.0000	20	4.55377	1.01825
Pair 8	Injury rate (Before)	5.7000	20	1.59275	.35615
	Injury rate (After)	2.4500	20	1.05006	.23480



The statistical results from (Table 3) indicate significant changes in the players' well-being. There was a decrease in stress levels, an increase in self-confidence, resilience, positive emotion,

oxygen uptake, speed, flexibility, and a decrease in the injury rate, all demonstrating significant effects of the psychological intervention on the players' well-being.

Table 3: Paired Samples Comparison of Pre- and Post-Intervention Measures for Building Resilience in Hosanna City Second Division Zone Football Clubs

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Stress level (Before) Stress L(After)	2.76000	1.46953	.37943	1.81953	3.44713	6.940	14	.000
Pair 2	Self-confidence(Before) Self-confidence(After)	-2.34500	2.87021	.74108	-7.25614	-4.07720	-7.646	14	.000
Pair 3	Resilience (Before) Resilience(After)	-1.63500	.59584	.15384	-2.38730	-1.72737	-13.373	14	.000
Pair 4	Positive emotion(Before) Positive emotion (After)	-1.33500	.41404	.10690	-3.02929	-2.57071	-26.192	14	.000
Pair 5	Oxygen uptake (Before) Oxygen uptake (After)	-8.80000	149.60265	38.62724	-399.51385	-233.81948	-8.198	14	.000
Pair 6	Speed (Before) Speed (After)	1.53000	21.66850	5.59478	-43.33295	-19.33372	-5.600	14	.000
Pair 7	Flexibility(Before) Flexibility (After)	-9.75000	1.30201	.33618	-2.18770	-.74564	-4.363	14	.001
Pair 8	Injury rate(Before) Injury rate(After)	3.25000	2.13363	.55090	.35177	2.71490	2.783	14	.015

The correlation matrix in Table 4 shows that physical well-being is moderately positively correlated with mental well-being ($r = 0.489$, $p = 0.014$) and strongly positively correlated with resilience ($r = 0.755$, $p = 0.001$). Additionally, there is a slight positive correlation between mental well-being and resilience ($r = 0.306$, $p = 0.007$). These findings suggest that improving physical well-being can lead to improvements in mental well-being and resilience in football players.



Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Physical Well-being, Mental Well-being, and Resilience in Hosanna City Second Division Zone Football Clubs.

		Physical well being	Mental well being	Resilience
Physical well being	Pearson Correlation	1	.489	.755**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.014	.001
	N	15	15	15
Mental well being	Pearson Correlation	.489	1	.306
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014		.027
	N	15	15	15
Resilience	Pearson Correlation	.755**	.306	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.007	
	N	15	15	15

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Conclusions

To build resilience for Hosanna City second-division football clubs, this study investigate psychological and physical performance interventions on resilience in second-division football clubs. Based on finding of the study the following conclusion was drawn:-

- Psychological interventions positively impact the resilience of second-division football players.
- There is a significant reduction in stress levels post-intervention.
- Self-confidence, positive emotions, and resilience scores improved among players.
- Physical fitness indicators, including oxygen intake, speed, and flexibility, showed improvement.

- The injury rate significantly decreased after implementing resilience-building strategies.
- Physical well-being is strongly correlated with mental well-being and resilience.

Recommendation

- Football clubs should integrate psychological resilience training to enhance player performance.
- Stress management programs should be incorporated into training routines.
- Regular fitness monitoring should be conducted to maintain physical well-being.
- Future studies should explore long-term effects of such interventions on athletes' mental health.
- Coaches and sports psychologists should collaborate to develop holistic training approaches.



Competing of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Funding The author(s) received no specific funding for this work.

Author Contributions Bemnet Telemos was involved in the conceptualization, design, data collection, and evaluation of the findings. He also provided valuable insights and actively participated in the production of the publication, ensuring adherence to ethical guidelines and the overall coherence of the study. Samson Getu made

substantial contributions to the research by aiding in data gathering, analysis, and the paper writing process, as well as examining the findings and assisting with interpretation. Samson Getu assisted with data collection, ensuring data accuracy and completeness, and contributed to the study's theoretical foundation through literature reviews and input on the study design. Played a key role in refining the research technique and contributed to the writing process by examining the final manuscript. All authors reviewed the manuscript



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