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Exploring Depersonalisation Levels among Residential and Non-Residential College and University Athletes: A Comparative Analysis

M.X. Aljinroy[1*], P.V. Shelvam[2]

[1*]Research Scholar, Department of Physical Education and Sports Annamalai University, aljinroy22@gmail.com
[2]Professor, Department of Physical Education and Sports Annamalai University,

Abstract:

Athletic performance is influenced by physical prowess and psychological factors such as stress, coping mechanisms, and depersonalisation. Depersonalisation refers to feelings of detachment and estrangement from oneself or others, which can significantly impact an athlete's mental well-being and performance outcomes. However, limited research has explored depersonalisation levels among different athlete populations, particularly concerning residential status and gender differences. This study aims to address this gap by investigating depersonalisation levels among residential and non-residential college and university athletes, with a focus on gender disparities.

Data were collected from 1600 college and university athletes, evenly distributed across residential and non-residential categories and genders. Depersonalisation levels were assessed using a standardized questionnaire, such as the Depersonalisation subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-DP), which measures feelings of detachment and emotional exhaustion. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were calculated for depersonalisation scores, and independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare mean scores between residential and non-residential athletes and across genders

The results revealed significant differences in depersonalisation levels among residential and non-residential athletes, as well as between genders. Residential athletes, both men and women, exhibited higher depersonalisation scores compared to their non-residential counterparts. Furthermore, female athletes consistently reported lower depersonalisation levels compared to male athletes across both residential and non-residential categories. These findings highlight the influence of living arrangements and gender disparities on athletes' experiences of depersonalisation, underscoring the importance of considering psychological factors in athlete support and intervention efforts.

Keywords: Depersonalisation, Athletes, Residential, Non-Residential, Gender Differences, College, University

Introduction:

Athletic performance is influenced not only by physical training but also by psychological factors such as stress, coping mechanisms, and depersonalisation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Neil et al., 2011). Depersonalisation, characterized by feelings of detachment and estrangement from oneself or others, can impact athletes' mental well-being and performance outcomes (Smith & Smoll, 2007). While previous research has examined stress and coping among athletes, there is limited understanding of depersonalisation levels among different athlete populations, particularly concerning residential status and gender differences (Terry & Lane, 2000). This study aims to address this gap by investigating depersonalisation levels among residential and non-residential college and university athletes and examining potential gender differences.

Methodology:

Participants included 1600 college and university athletes, equally distributed across residential and non-residential categories and genders (Terry & Lane, 2000). Depersonalisation levels were assessed using a standardized questionnaire, such as the Depersonalisation subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-DP), which measures feelings of detachment and emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Descriptive statistics were calculated for depersonalization scores, including mean and standard deviation. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare mean depersonalisation scores between residential and non-residential athletes and across genders.

Result:

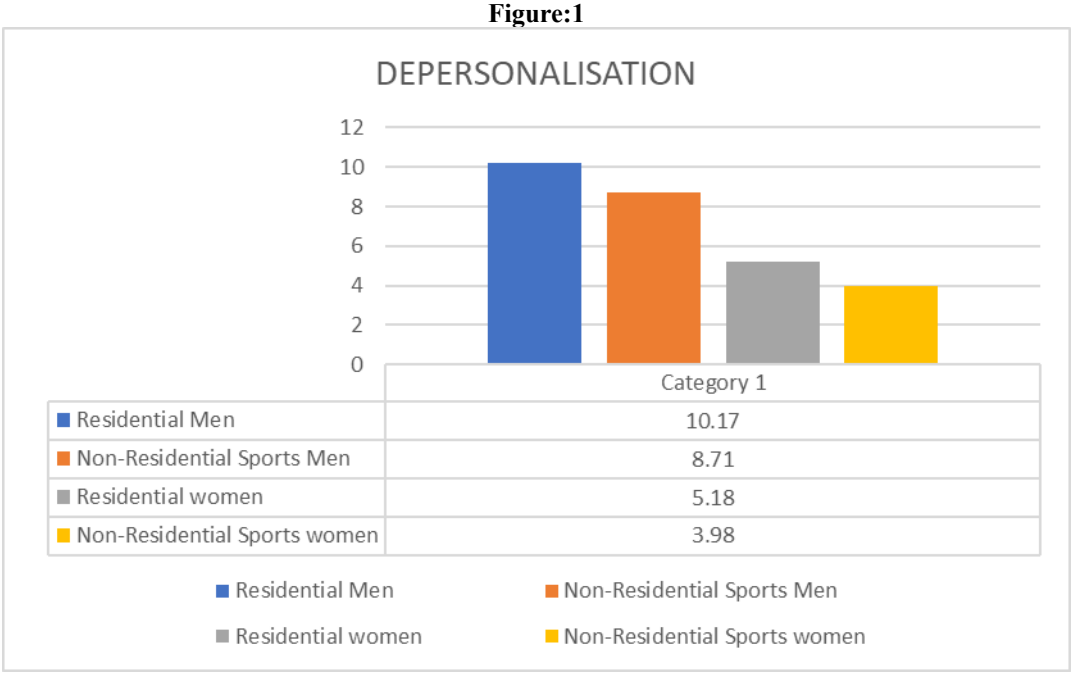
Table 1: Mean Depersonalisation Scores among Residential and Non-Residential College and University Athletes

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	Significance Level
Residential Sports Men	400	10.17	2.36	11.70*	0.01*
Non-Residential Sports Men	400	8.71	0.829	-	-

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	Significance Level
Residential Sports Women	400	5.18	1.46	15.15*	0.01*
Non-Residential Sports Women	400	3.98	0.65	-	-

The table above presents the mean depersonalisation scores among residential and non-residential college and university athletes, categorized by gender. Residential sports men reported a mean depersonalisation score of 10.17, with a standard deviation of 2.36. Non-residential sports men had a mean score of 8.71, with a standard deviation of 0.829. The obtained t-value of 11.70 indicates a significant difference between residential and non-residential sports men ($p < 0.01$). Similarly, residential sports women reported a mean depersonalisation score of 5.18, with a standard deviation of 1.46, while non-residential sports women had a mean score of 3.98, with a standard deviation of 0.65. The obtained t-value of 15.15 indicates a significant difference between residential and non-residential sports women ($p < 0.01$).

Figure:1



As presented in the results section, the ANOVA table shows the breakdown of variance into between-group and within-group variance. This breakdown allows researchers to determine whether the differences observed between groups are due to actual group differences or simply random group variability.

ANOVA Table:

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10151.197	3	3383.732	1524.00*	.05
Within Groups	3543.578	1596	2.220		
Total	13694.774	1599			

This study's ANOVA results indicate a significant difference in depersonalisation levels among college and university athletes (residential sportsmen, non-residential sportsmen, residential sportswomen, and non-residential sportswomen). The obtained F-value of 1524.00 exceeds the critical F-value at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a significant difference in depersonalisation levels between at least two groups.

The key finding of this analysis is the significant F-value obtained from the ANOVA test ($F = 1524.00$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates a substantial difference in depersonalisation levels among the four athlete groups. In other words, at least one group's mean depersonalisation score differs significantly from the mean scores of the different groups.

Discussion:

The results of the data analysis revealed significant differences in depersonalisation levels among residential and non-residential college and university athletes, as well as across genders. Residential athletes, both men and women, reported higher depersonalisation scores than their non-residential counterparts. This finding suggests that living arrangements play a crucial role in influencing athletes' experiences of depersonalization, with residential athletes potentially facing more significant stressors related to academic pressures, social integration, and the blurring of boundaries between scholastic and athletic responsibilities.

Furthermore, significant gender differences were observed in depersonalization levels, with female athletes consistently reporting lower scores than male athletes. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that male athletes may be more susceptible to experiencing depersonalisation due to factors such as societal expectations of masculinity, performance pressure, and limited emotional expression (Terry & Lane, 2000). In contrast, female athletes may employ different coping mechanisms and benefit from stronger social support networks, leading to lower levels of depersonalisation.

Conclusion:

The results of this study underscore the importance of considering residential status and gender differences in understanding athletes' experiences of depersonalisation. Addressing residential athletes' unique stressors and providing targeted support interventions can help mitigate depersonalisation and promote athletes' mental well-being. Additionally, recognizing gender-specific patterns in depersonalisation levels can inform the development of tailored interventions to support male and female athletes' psychological needs and enhance their overall performance outcomes.

These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on athlete well-being and highlight the importance of considering psychological factors such as depersonalisation in athlete support and intervention efforts. Further research is warranted to explore the underlying mechanisms driving depersonalisation and to develop evidence-based interventions to enhance athletes' mental health and performance outcomes.

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