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"WE ALL HAVE THE SAME 24 HOURS": EXPLORING THE PREVALENCE AND IMPACT OF HUSTLE CULTURE' AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE



Introduction

Hustle culture is a phenomenon which has created an environment at universities where students feel pressured to push themselves past their limits by being constantly productive (Youngminds, 2024). Student athletes have the additional pressure at university of balancing training and competitions alongside their academic commitments. This research explores the prevalence of hustle culture in UK university sports through first hand accounts from current student athletes.

Methodology

Data was collected through semi-structured one-on-one interviews with current student athletes studying at UK universities. Participants are members of a range of team and individual sports such as rowing, football, rugby, and triathlon. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase approach to inductive thematic analysis.

Research Aims

This research aimed to answer three questions:

- I) What is student hustle culture?
- II) How does hustle culture affect student athletes?
- III) What can be done to prevent hustle culture in university sports?

Influences of Team Dynamics

Participants suggested that hustle culture is less prevalent in teams with lower training and competition levels such as collegiate sports. University characteristics such as pressure and opportunity to compete in national competitions increases the prevalence of hustle culture.

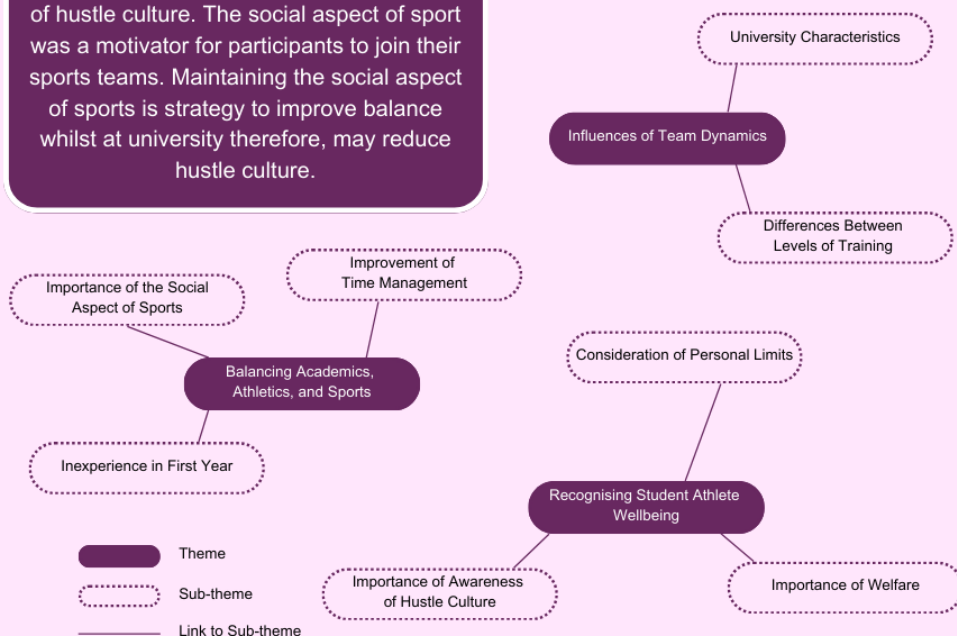
Balancing Academics, Athletics, and Social Life

Participants train for their sport between 5 and 15 hours per week. Participants suggested the pressure to be constantly productive whilst balancing their academic commitments alongside their sports is particularly difficult due to inexperience during first year. However, participants suggested that involvement in sports increases their ability to manage their time, suggesting that being constantly productive is not always a negative aspect of hustle culture. The social aspect of sport was a motivator for participants to join their sports teams. Maintaining the social aspect of sports is a strategy to improve balance whilst at university therefore, may reduce hustle culture.

"I do think that it's a lot, especially if you're competing in multiple teams and you feel pressure to compete in matches at the weekend from coaches who don't stop messaging you saying 'Will you play a match for us?' when you actually want to be writing, finishing your assignment. I think, yeah, you can feel pressure."

Recognising Student Athlete Wellbeing

Consideration of student athletes' mental health is vital during university. Participants suggested that hustle culture results in student athletes pushing past their personal limits when training such as training whilst ill or injured. This demonstrates the importance of awareness of hustle culture and the necessity of welfare in sports.



Conclusion

This research found that hustle culture is prevalent in university sports teams throughout the UK. Student athletes suggested that a lack of balance between academics, sports, and social life is a contributor of hustle culture. Team dynamics contribute to the prevalence of hustle culture, such as having a lower prevalence in college teams. Increasing awareness and increased funding to improve existing welfare structures in place in university sports teams are strategies to reduce hustle culture in university sports. Future research could include more student athlete participants from a greater range of universities to gain a further understanding of student athlete hustle culture.

References:

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77–101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp0630a.

Youngminds (2024) The double-edged sword of 'hustle culture'. Available at: [https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/blog/the-double-edged-sword-of-hustle-culture/#:~:text=quickly%20becomes%20problematic,-.Hustle%20culture%20equates%20busyness%20with%20productivity%2C%20exhaustion%20with%20accomplishment%2C%20and,it%20can%20be%20rather%20harmful\(Accessed%2026%20June%202024\).](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/blog/the-double-edged-sword-of-hustle-culture/#:~:text=quickly%20becomes%20problematic,-.Hustle%20culture%20equates%20busyness%20with%20productivity%2C%20exhaustion%20with%20accomplishment%2C%20and,it%20can%20be%20rather%20harmful(Accessed%2026%20June%202024).)