

Student Athlete Well-Being and its Relation to Interpersonal Confidence and Risk-Taking

Ian Birky, Ph.D.
Gabrielle Rocchino, M.Ed.
Malaika Gutekunst, M.Ed.

Background

- Individuals' feelings of connectedness are important to college students' experience of social acceptance (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).
- Being socially, emotionally and psychologically connected to teammates has a significant impact on athletes' well-being or sense of flourishing (Wayment & Walters, 2017).

Procedure

- Data was collected from first-year varsity student-athletes who participated in a speed-friending event (see below).

- Measures used included:
 - Relational quality of past and future friendships
 - Social Demographics Survey (CCMH, 2017)
 - Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2010)
 - A life satisfaction question (Cheung & Lucas, 2014)

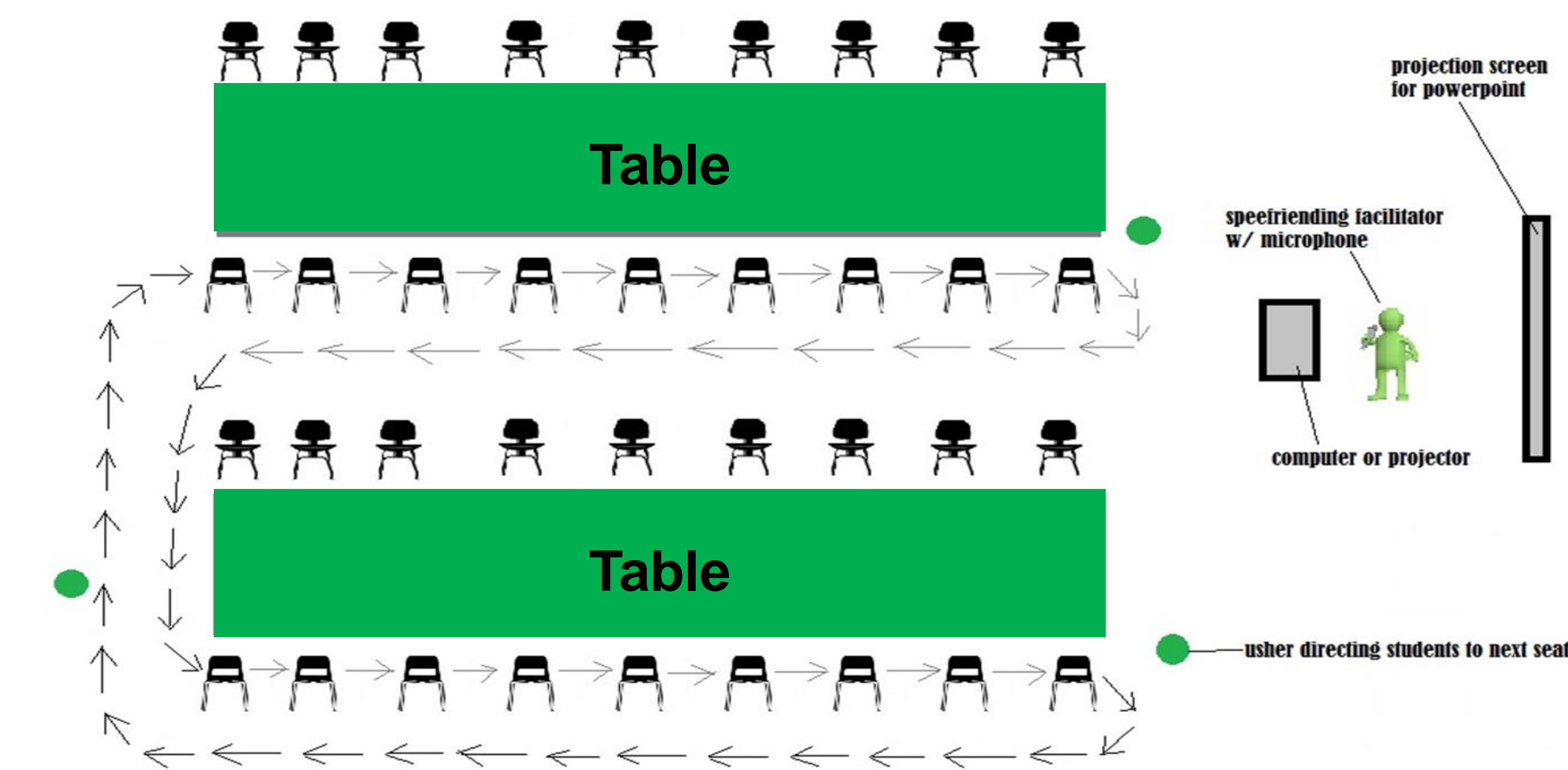
Sample Description

- This study focused on 151 undergraduate student-athletes (70 females, 79 males and 2 unidentified) who were members of 13 Division I varsity sports.
- The majority of the sample self-identified as Caucasian/White (84.1%).

When first-year student athletes' practice greater openness, and are authentic and active in their relationships, they are likely to have a deeper sense of well-being, to feel relationally connected, and peak perform.



For additional information contact
Dr. Ian Birky at itb0@lehigh.edu



Results

- Athletes' relational connectedness is positively related with confidence in relationship building ($r = .255$, $p = .002$), as well as their report of well-being, or flourishing ($r = .719$, $p < .001$).
- Athletes' experience of connection and relational confidence in their relationship building ability is positively related to their openness to being authentic and actively engaged in relationships ($r = .640$, $p < .001$).

Table 1. Correlations for variables in the model ($N = 151$)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Relational connectedness	1				
2. Confidence in relationship building	.255**	1			
3. Relational confidence and connection	.756**	.825**	1		
4. Openness and active engagement	.283**	.357**	.640**	1	
5. Flourishing	.719**	.404**	.487**	.730**	1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Conclusion

- Given the importance of relational connectedness to an individual's overall wellbeing, sport psychologists who work with student athletes can help them understand the benefits of intentional relationship building relative to greater flourishing in their lives.