



Impact of Military Training Regimen on Student Wellness: A Multidimensional Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of structured military training on the holistic wellness of students in a military college setting. Drawing on empirical research demonstrating the positive effects of military-style training on psychological resilience and depression reduction (Guo et al., 2021), this paper expands the discussion to include physical, emotional, and social dimensions of wellness. Utilizing a pre-post intervention design, data were collected from 300 cadets at the Nigerian Army School of Education before and after a 4-week intensive military training regimen. Measures included the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), physical fitness assessments, and social cohesion scales. Results indicated significant improvements in resilience ($p < 0.001$), reductions in depressive symptoms ($p < 0.001$), enhanced physical fitness, and increased peer cohesion. The study concludes that a well-structured military training regimen serves as a potent intervention for promoting multidimensional student wellness and recommends its integration into broader educational and leadership development programs.

Keywords: military training, student wellness, psychological resilience, depression, physical fitness, social cohesion, Nigeria

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I. Introduction

Student wellness—encompassing physical, psychological, and social well-being—is a critical determinant of academic performance, leadership development, and long-term career success (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). In military colleges, where discipline, resilience, and teamwork are paramount, structured training regimens are often employed to cultivate these attributes. Recent research has shown that military-style training can significantly enhance psychological resilience and reduce depressive symptoms among college freshmen (Guo et al., 2021). However, most studies have focused narrowly on mental health outcomes without considering the broader wellness spectrum. This study investigates the multidimensional impact of a military training regimen on student wellness in a Nigerian military educational institution. By evaluating changes in physical fitness, psychological resilience, depressive symptoms, and social cohesion, this research provides a holistic view of how structured, disciplined training influences cadet development.

II. Literature Review

Military training is traditionally associated with physical conditioning and skill acquisition, but its psychological and social benefits are increasingly recognized. Guo et al. (2021) demonstrated that a 3-week military training program improved resilience and reduced depression among Chinese college freshmen, particularly among males and urban residents. Similarly, studies in Western contexts highlight that physical fitness training—a core component of military regimens—correlates with lower depression and higher resilience (Crowley et al., 2015; RAND Corporation, 2011). In Nigeria, military training is integral to officer education, yet its impact on holistic wellness remains understudied. This research bridges that gap by adopting a wellness framework that includes:

- **Physical wellness:** fitness, endurance, health behaviors
- **Psychological wellness:** resilience, mood, stress management
- **Social wellness:** teamwork, cohesion, communication

III. Methods

I. Design

A pre-post intervention design was employed without a control group, consistent with feasibility constraints in mandatory training environments (Guo et al., 2021).

II. Participants

A total of 300 cadets (225 male, 75 female) from the Nigerian Army School of Education participated. Mean age was 20.4 ± 1.8 years. All were enrolled in a 4-week mandatory military training module.

III. Intervention

The training regimen included:

- Daily physical conditioning (running, calisthenics, obstacle courses)
- Drill and ceremony exercises
- Team-building activities
- Leadership simulations
- Ethics and discipline lectures

Training was conducted 6 hours per day, 6 days per week, under the supervision of experienced military instructors.

IV. Measures

- Psychological Resilience: Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003)
- Depressive Symptoms: Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9; Kroenke et al., 2001)
- Physical Fitness: Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) scores (push-ups, sit-ups, 2-mile run)
- Social Cohesion: Perceived Cohesion Scale (PCS; Bollen & Hoyle, 1990)
- Demographic and Background Variables: age, gender, prior training experience, childhood trauma history (Childhood Trauma Questionnaire – Short Form; CTQ-SF)

V. Procedure

Surveys and fitness tests were administered one week before and one week after the training. Informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was assured.

IV. Results and Data Analysis

Paired t-tests compared pre-post scores. Multiple regression analysed predictors of wellness changes. SPSS v26 was used for analysis.

Table 1: Pre-Post Changes in Wellness Indicators

Measure	Pre-Training	Post-Training	t-value	p-value
CD-RISC Total	68.4 ± 12.3	74.8 ± 11.7	-7.89	<0.001
PHQ-9 Total	6.2 ± 4.1	4.1 ± 3.5	6.45	<0.001
APFT Score (out of 300)	210 ± 45	260 ± 40	-9.12	<0.001
Social Cohesion (PCS)	22.5 ± 6.3	28.7 ± 5.8	-8.34	<0.001

Predictors of Change

Regression analysis indicated that baseline resilience ($\beta = -0.35, p < 0.001$), baseline depression ($\beta = -0.22, p < 0.01$), and childhood trauma ($\beta = -0.18, p < 0.05$) negatively predicted resilience gains. Gender and prior fitness levels were not significant predictors in this sample.

V. Discussion

This study demonstrates that a structured military training regimen can significantly enhance multiple dimensions of student wellness. The findings align with Guo et al. (2021), confirming that such training boosts psychological resilience and reduces depressive symptoms. Additionally, the observed improvements in physical fitness and social cohesion highlight the holistic value of military training. The negative predictive role of baseline depression and childhood trauma suggests that students with prior psychological vulnerabilities may require supplemental support. This aligns with global literature on trauma-informed training approaches (Southwick & Charney, 2012).

Implications for Military Education

1. Integrated Wellness Programs: Military colleges should design training that explicitly targets physical, psychological, and social wellness.
2. Tailored Support: Subgroups with prior trauma or high depressive symptoms may benefit from adjunctive counselling or resilience-building workshops.
3. Longitudinal Tracking: Follow-up studies are needed to assess the sustainability of wellness gains post-training.

Limitations

- Lack of control group limits causal inference.

- Self-report measures may be subject to bias.
- Sample limited to one institution; generalizability may be constrained.

VI. Conclusion

Military training regimens offer a powerful, multidimensional intervention for enhancing student wellness. By fostering resilience, reducing depression, improving fitness, and strengthening social bonds, such programs prepare cadets not only for military service but for lifelong well-being. Future research should explore long-term outcomes and cultural adaptations across different educational contexts.

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