

STUDENT-ATHLETES' PERSPECTIVES ON BALANCING SPORTS AND ACADEMICS

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ABSTRACT:

Student-athletes face the unique challenge of balancing rigorous academic responsibilities with demanding athletic commitments (Weatherford, 2024). This study examines the lived experiences of student-athletes at a Philippine state university, focusing on how they balance academic and athletic demands, the coping strategies they employ, and the support systems they utilize. Existing literature, both international and local, highlights issues such as time-related stress, identity conflict, and diminished academic performance; however, much of this research employs quantitative methods and lacks a narrative perspective. This study addresses that gap by employing a qualitative case study design, using purposive sampling and thematic analysis of face-to-face and online interviews with university student-athletes from State Universities. Findings reveal five central themes: (1) Time Management Challenges, including conflicting schedules and limited rest time; (2) Impact on Academic Performance, where missed deadlines and lowered grades are common during competition season; (3) Psychological and Emotional Strain, with burnout, anxiety, and loss of motivation frequently reported; (4) Support Systems, including the vital roles of family, professors, teammates, and coaches; and (5) Coping and Adaptation Strategies, such as planner use, rest, personal hobbies, and emotional acceptance. Participant narratives shed light on the emotional and mental burden that student-athletes carry and emphasize the importance of flexible academic support and motivational environments. By addressing these themes, the study answered its three guiding research questions and contributed a deeper, humanized perspective to the literature. It highlights the importance of empathy-driven, student-centered academic and athletic policies. The findings emphasize the need for coordinated institutional support systems that reflect the actual, lived realities of student-athletes. Ultimately, this research calls for educational reforms promoting equity, psychological well-being, and success across academic and athletic domains.

Keywords: student-athletes, academic performance, coping strategies, support systems, qualitative case study, Philippines

1. INTRODUCTION

The unique challenge of student-athletes is divided into two areas where they need to balance between their roles as learners and athletes. This balance usually involves maneuvering through time constraints, physical fatigue, and psychological stressors that are a result of their tight schedules in athletic training, and their academic demands (Martin et al., 2023). It is important to know how the student-athletes overcome these difficulties so that they can support them in the needed manner and the improvement of academic and athletic performances. This paper examines the views of these people in a bid to understand them better, and get to

know how they do this balancing in their day to day lives. In this world, the researchers have observed the challenging stress that the student-athletes undergo in the course of balancing academic and athletic requirements.

Besides, Johnson and Richards (2023) also stressed that sometimes student athletes encounter time-related negative emotions. Stress and conflict of identity influence their motivation towards their studies and academic achievement. Similarly, according to Cline (2024), most of the athletes end up compromising their academic activities in the name of sports or vice versa. International studies have also revealed that resilience, goal-setting, and institutional support are critical factors in managing this balancing act (Zhang & Li, 2025). In the context of Finnish universities, Cline (2024) found that soft skill development, including time management and emotional regulation, was closely tied to students' ability to succeed in both domains.

In the Philippines, the pressures of balancing academics and athletics are compounded by a lack of institutional support and access to tailored academic accommodations. Local studies underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions. For instance, Pasno (2024) found that enjoyment in sports positively correlates with academic resilience among student-athletes at Bulacan State University, suggesting that motivation in sports could spill over into academic persistence. Lamban et al. (2025), in a phenomenological study of student-athletes at Taguig National High School, reported that athletes relied heavily on self-directed strategies like Eisenhower's matrix and daily goal-setting to handle academic deadlines while maintaining sports performance. Pacres and Babiera II (2025) also highlighted the importance of self-efficacy and leadership skills as strong predictors of sustained engagement in both academics and athletics, particularly in public school settings. Furthermore, Manimtim et al. (2025) observed that student-athletes who demonstrated a strong sense of perceived control were more likely to thrive academically and psychologically, suggesting that mindset and internal belief systems play a vital role in managing dual responsibilities.

Regardless of growing local and international interest in the experiences of student-athletes, most existing research, particularly in the Philippine context, relies heavily on quantitative methods that primarily measure variables such as resilience, self-efficacy, or academic performance (Pasno, 2024; Pacres & Babiera II, 2025; Zhang & Li, 2025). While these studies provide useful statistical insights, they often miss the complex experiences and daily realities that shape how student-athletes balance sports and academics. Lamban et al. (2025) identified time management strategies, such as prioritization and goal setting, yet their investigation did not explore the personal or emotional factors that drive these decisions. Similarly, while Manimtim et al. (2025) and Pasno (2024) established links between psychological traits and academic success, they did not examine how these traits are supported or maintained in practical contexts. This reveals a significant gap in belief in the how and why behind these coping strategies, distinctly within local contexts where institutional funding can vary substantially.

This qualitative case study aims to fill that gap by tackling three primary questions. First, it explores the core obstacles that student-athletes handle when attempting to balance their athletic and scholarly responsibilities—an area that existing survey typically summarizes quantitatively but rarely examine in depth from the student-athletes' own perspective (Johnson & Richards, 2023; Cline, 2024). Second, it investigates the coping mechanisms and strategies that student-athletes utilize, moving beyond the surface-level observations of previous studies to amplify the voices of the being behind the statistics (Lamban et al., 2025). Lastly, it explores the support systems—namely, family, coaches, scholastic advisors, and peers—that athletes rely on to sustain their educational and athletic performance. This framework offers a rich, context-based understanding that can help define more targeted and effective institutional policies (Manimtim et al., 2025; Pacres & Babiera II, 2025). By capturing these lived encounters, this study contributes to a rich, narrative-driven conversation that supports the overall development of student-athletes in Philippine universities.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This investigation employed a qualitative case study design to look at the lived experience of student-athletes at state universities as they navigate the dual demands of academics and athletics. A qualitative case

investigation approach is compelling for attaining a deeper, contextual apprehension of building complex social phenomena, especially in real-life settings where many contributors restrain behavior and decision-making. This method enabled the investigator to examine the obstacles, coping strategies, and documentation systems from the perspective of the student-athletes themselves.

Participants

The participants were student-athletes enrolled at state universities who compete in sports and study in unison. The investigation concentrated on students with one year of experience in competitive athletics at the university level. The researchers used a purposive sampling method to include participants who had good info related to the view goals. This approach helped them concentrate on those who could offer considerable insight into balancing academics and athletics.

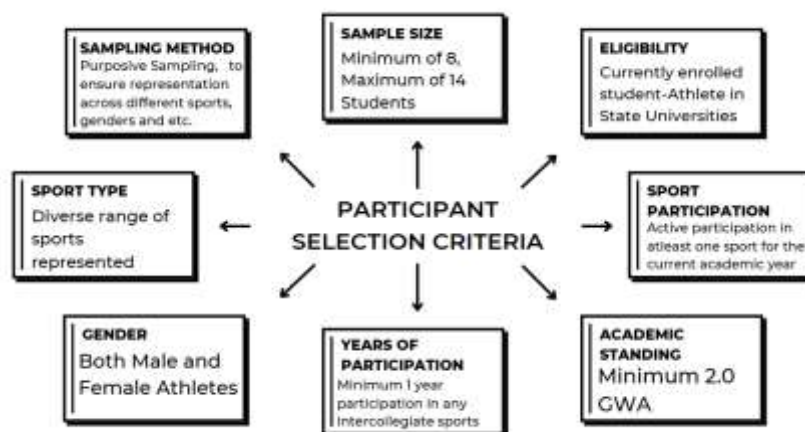


Figure 1. Criteria for Participant Selection

Research Locale

The survey took place at a State University in Central Luzon Region, Region 3, Philippines. This university has a different group of student-athletes participating in many different sports. The active sports programs and the intriguing intellectual environment at the State University create a suited setting for studying how student-athletes balance their dual roles.

Data Collection

The data collection process started with getting formal approval from the survey advisers, the course professor, and the mandatory institutional office staff to follow ethical standards and investigation protocols. Participants were chosen based on their knowledge of managing scholarly and athletic responsibilities. Each player received an informed consent form that explained the investigation's purpose, ascertained confidentiality, and underscored their right to adjourn at any time without penalty. Involvement was entirely voluntary, and only those who signed the consent form took part in the survey.

Data were collected through audio-recorded, face-to-face interviews that used structured, open-ended questions. These questions aimed to kindle serious and detailed responses related to time management, educational pressure, athletic demands, emotional difficulties, and available documentation systems. This format promoted deep thoughtfulness while restraining consistency across all participants. Interviews were conducted in person, with the support of coaches and university staff. The researchers explained the interview procedure, answered any clarifying questions, and recorded responses, making sure that participants' responses remained self-directed and unbiased.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis helped interpret the qualitative data from the interviews. Researchers started by looking back at the transcripts to become conversant with the participants' stories. They noted frequent ideas, emotions, and

difficulties. Primal idiom and affirmation meet befool based on fall back rule in the responses. These codes were sorted into expansive categories that reflected noteworthy concerns related to balancing academics and athletics. From these categories, a critical paper is formed to address the investigation's goals, ensuring a clear response to each investigation question. To ameliorate the analysis's integrity and depth, researchers selected example excerpts from the participants to exemplify each identified theme. They then compared the emergent themes with existing literature from 2019 to 2025. This comparison demonstrated both consistencies and fresh contributions to the field. Finally, the results were interpreted within the relevant educational and psychological fabric to try out their broader results for the collegiate performance, acrobatic devotion, and personal condition of student-athletes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Time Management Challenges Faced by Student-Athletes

Student-athletes often face overlapping demands from academics and sports, requiring them to develop adaptive strategies to maintain balance. Their responses show recurring themes of academic fatigue, competing deadlines, and difficulties managing unpredictable athletic schedules. These challenges result in disrupted study routines, missed deadlines, and reduced personal time for rest and socialization.

Theme 1: Overlapping Commitments and Fatigue

This theme highlights the constant tug-of-war between training schedules and academic deadlines. Respondents repeatedly shared that late-night training sessions made it difficult to focus on schoolwork.

"After a three-hour practice that ends at night, I still have to do school requirements. Sometimes I end up staying up late just to finish them." – P2

"When it's SCUAA season, we don't attend class for one or two weeks. When we return, everything has piled up." – P32

"I try to finish school tasks before the deadline, so after training, I can rest or review if there's a quiz the next day." – P20

The experience of being physically and mentally drained after long practices directly affects their ability to manage time effectively. These findings are supported by Ator and Ortizo (2024), who emphasized that student-athletes often struggle with fatigue, especially when training and academic assessments overlap, leading to performance dips in both areas. Similarly, Lamban et al. (2025) observed that many athletes experience chronic time pressure due to uncoordinated schedules, which affects academic engagement and sleep quality. However, Kuroda et al. (2023) reported that school-level athletes with supportive academic structures often maintained strong academic performance, suggesting that institutional coordination may offset the effects of fatigue and missed classes.

Theme 2: Lack of Structured Time Management Strategies

Several participants admitted they lacked a consistent strategy for handling academic and athletic tasks, often going with the flow and cramming when deadlines approach.

"I don't have a fixed plan. I just do tasks when I'm free." – P7

"Sometimes I prioritize the nearest deadlines, but when things pile up, I get overwhelmed." – P34

"I go with the flow most days. It depends on what the day brings." – P42

This reactive approach often results in missed deadlines and reduced academic output. Clince (2024) noted that the absence of a time management routine among student-athletes increases academic stress and leads to a lower sense of control over their schedules. On the other hand, those who adopt structured planning—such as setting alarms or blocking study time—report more stability. This aligns with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes that autonomy and competence in planning one's time significantly enhance motivation and performance. In contrast, Saarinen et al. (2025) found that adolescent student-athletes who lacked structured time management and experienced high parental expectations were more vulnerable to chronic burnout, indicating that unstructured approaches may have long-term psychological costs.

The Impact of Athletics on Academic Performance

Student-athletes report that their participation in sports has both positive and negative impacts on their academic performance. While some struggle with focus and meeting academic deadlines due to physical exhaustion or schedule conflicts, others credit athletics for improving their discipline, motivation, and overall time use.

Theme 1: Athletic Commitments Disrupt Academic Focus

Many student-athletes admitted that when training or competition intensifies, academic performance often suffers. Fatigue, late training hours, and missed classes lead to backlogs and reduced quality of schoolwork.

"Sometimes my performance drops in class, especially when training overlaps with deadlines." – P2

"After games, I feel mentally tired and can't focus well in class." – P4

"We had two weeks of training for SCUAA. When I got back to class, I was overwhelmed with all the missed lessons." – P32

These disruptions mirror findings by Johnson and Richards (2023), who noted that student-athletes frequently struggle during peak seasons, leading to academic dips. Similarly, Weatherford (2024) emphasized the emotional and academic cost of such missed classroom engagements, particularly when not supported by recovery systems. Conversely, Kuroda et al. (2023) and Santos et al. (2019) expressed that participation in athletics was positively associated with academic performance when sports were integrated into the school ecosystem with proper academic support, challenging the notion that competition alone harms academic output.

Theme 2: Sports Build Discipline and Academic Resilience

Despite the difficulties, many student-athletes claimed that their involvement in sports has helped them build better habits like goal-setting, structured scheduling, and discipline—skills that benefit their academics.

"Training has taught me discipline. I apply it by using a planner to finish school tasks before the deadline." – P20

"When I'm focused on my goals—like competing and graduating—it helps me push through the fatigue and keep going." – P31

"I became more responsible over time. Balancing both academics and sports made me stronger." – P28

These sentiments support Deci and Ryan's (2000) theory that self-determined behaviors driven by intrinsic goals—such as mastery and achievement—enhance academic motivation. Likewise, Pacres and Babiera II (2025) emphasized that self-efficacy developed through sports engagement plays a major role in academic perseverance. Ator and Ortizo (2024) also found that athletes who learn to manage their time well often maintain above-average academic performance, showing that sports can enhance—not hinder—academic success when properly managed. Still, Glandorf et al. (2023) cautioned that this benefit can be undermined by cumulative burnout, particularly in high-pressure environments where resilience is overextended without recovery, suggesting a potential reversal of these benefits over time.

Psychological and Emotional Strains Faced by Student-Athletes

Balancing academics and athletics not only requires time and physical energy, but also places a heavy emotional and psychological toll on student-athletes. Many experience stress, mental exhaustion, and emotional overwhelm, especially during overlapping deadlines and competitions. Despite this, they develop ways to emotionally cope and build psychological resilience.

Theme 1: Mental Fatigue and Academic Stress

Student-athletes frequently reported feeling emotionally drained and mentally fatigued due to consecutive responsibilities. The inability to rest fully, coupled with pressures from both academics and training, often leads to emotional shutdown.

"When training and deadlines happen at the same time, I just want to sleep to avoid thinking about everything." – P22

"I get exhausted especially when training and schoolwork pile up. I feel like there's no time left for myself." – P43

"Sometimes I cry when I can't handle the pressure anymore." – P3

These results mirror the findings of Young et al. (2023), who emphasized the rising mental health challenges among student-athletes due to intense performance expectations. Emotional overload from time conflict,

pressure to excel, and lack of sleep were key stressors. Similarly, Wang et al. (2023) noted that when athletes perceive high psychological pressure without proper support, hopelessness and emotional fatigue increase significantly. Similarly, Barbosa et al. (2025) found that mental fatigue and sleep restriction negatively affect cognitive performance in trained athletes, reinforcing that physical exhaustion impairs academic focus and emotional regulation.

Theme 2: Limited Opportunities for Relaxation and Personal Time

While some student-athletes find occasional time to rest, most admit that meaningful relaxation is often compromised. Athletic demands usually overshadow opportunities for hobbies, personal reflection, or social interaction.

"The only time I can relax is at night, and even that isn't guaranteed." – P3

"When it's SCUAA season, my only break is lunch with my teammates." – P26

"I rarely get time for social media or just resting. I still make time to breathe, but it's not enough." – P13

These findings reflect Kimball and Freysinger's (2003) conclusions that limited leisure time contributes to burnout and poor well-being among collegiate athletes. Lack of proper rest reduces emotional bandwidth and increases the likelihood of emotional withdrawal. Saarinen et al. (2025) emphasized that student-athletes with limited recovery time and elevated expectations—particularly those without strong emotional support—were more likely to follow a trajectory toward burnout, supporting this theme's concerns.

Theme 3: Internal Motivation and Emotional Resilience

Despite high emotional strain, many student-athletes emphasized the value of inner strength, motivation, and passion for their sport in helping them endure difficulties. Sports became both the stressor and the source of motivation.

"Even if it's hard, I'm happy because I'm doing what I love." – P14

"Every drop of sweat and all the tiredness is worth it. It's fulfilling." – P30

"This is my dream, so I must keep going. Like people say, 'Cry if you must, but don't give up.'" – P40

This emotional resilience aligns with Horcajo, Santos, and Higuero's (2021) findings that athletes with high self-efficacy are better able to manage both cognitive and emotional performance under stress. Likewise, Zhang and Li (2025) found that psychological resilience and growth mindset buffer the negative effects of exhaustion and improve long-term academic and athletic outcomes. However, Glandorf et al. (2023) found that high intrinsic motivation, while protective in the short term, may contribute to burnout if it leads athletes to push through excessive workloads without acknowledging the need for psychological rest.

Support Systems that Sustain Academic and Athletic Roles of Student-Athletes

Support systems play a vital role in sustaining student-athletes' ability to manage dual roles. Across responses, participants emphasized that encouragement and assistance from their families, coaches, professors, peers, and institutional staff not only provided emotional stability but also tangible relief during critical periods. These networks served as buffers against stress and academic setbacks.

Theme 1: Family Encouragement and Emotional Support

Most student-athletes cited their families as their emotional backbone. Even when families couldn't provide financial or academic support, their encouragement and reminders for rest motivated student-athletes to persevere.

"Even if they can't watch my games live, they remind me to rest and take care of myself." – P23

"The love they give is what keeps me going, especially because I'm financially supporting myself." – P37

"They're proud of me and that makes me want to keep going." – P40

Li, Zhao, and Wang (2025) highlighted that family support enhances self-efficacy and mental toughness among adolescent athletes. Similarly, Wang et al. (2023) found that emotional support from close family significantly moderates psychological pressure and reduces the risk of hopelessness in student-athletes. Yet, Saarinen et al. (2025) also noted that when familial expectations are perceived as pressuring rather than supportive, they may contribute to stress and burnout among adolescent athletes, showing that family dynamics can cut both ways.

Theme 2: Supportive and Understanding Coaches

The majority of respondents described their coaches as mentors who understand the academic responsibilities of athletes. Coaches often advocate for their athletes by communicating with teachers or offering training flexibility during exam periods.

"Our coaches are like second parents. They give advice and even let us skip training if we need to study." – P23

"Sometimes, the coach is the one who talks to the professor for us." – P25

"He allows us to miss practice to review for exams." – P46

Simons and Bird (2022) stressed the importance of coach-athlete relationships in maintaining student-athletes' psychological well-being. Supportive coaches not only improve performance but also help athletes navigate academic stress through empathy and clear communication. In contrast, Glandorf et al. (2023) highlighted that inadequate emotional support from coaches especially in elite or competitive environments can exacerbate burnout symptoms, especially when coaching styles prioritize results over well-being.

Theme 3: Peer and Team Support as Motivation and Academic Help

Peer and team support were consistently described as both emotionally comforting and academically beneficial. Teammates often share strategies, notes, or even advocate on one another's behalf to reduce collective stress.

"We remind each other when we need to submit schoolwork or skip training because of deadlines." – P23

"They're the reason I keep training. Without them, I probably wouldn't continue." – P37

"They always check on me and tell me I can do it. That means a lot." – P36

These accounts align with Johnson and Richards (2023), who reported that positive peer relationships help student-athletes navigate the pressures of dual roles. Additionally, Manimtim et al. (2025) emphasized that social engagement fosters a sense of control and belonging, helping athletes remain committed and focused. However, Saarinen et al. (2025) suggested that peer groups with overly competitive norms or shared academic struggles may unintentionally amplify stress, particularly when team success is prioritized over individual coping.

Theme 4: Faculty Consideration and Academic Adjustments

Faculty members who showed understanding and flexibility during competition seasons were seen as major contributors to students' success. Students appreciated teachers who extended deadlines, provided makeup tasks, or simply acknowledged their efforts.

"When I explain my situation, professors usually give consideration." – P25

"They give us time to catch up after competitions." – P10

"Professors still appreciate the effort we put in despite our absences." – P35

Ator and Ortizo (2024) noted that supportive academic environments greatly enhance performance and retention among student-athletes. Faculty flexibility serves as a protective mechanism against academic decline, especially during peak athletic periods. Still, Rutledge (2023) and Martin et al. (2017) warned that academic accommodations if not paired with skill-building may reduce students' internal motivation and self-management over time, particularly if athletes come to rely too heavily on leniency rather than academic growth.

Coping and Adaptation Strategies of Student-Athletes

Managing the dual demands of academics and athletics requires more than discipline it also demands consistent, adaptive coping mechanisms. Student-athletes described a range of strategies to handle stress and stay productive, from time-based tactics to emotional regulation and recreational outlets. These coping tools were essential to maintaining balance and motivation throughout demanding schedules.

Theme 1: Use of Time Management Tools and Prioritization

Many student-athletes reported using planners, to-do lists, or personal deadlines to avoid academic overload. Tasks closest to deadlines were prioritized, and some adopted structured study routines around training schedules.

"I prioritize the activities with the nearest deadline. That way I don't get overwhelmed." – P42

"I do things step by step, and before I know it, I've finished everything." – P20

"I follow my personal routine. I review, eat, and sleep based on the time I set." – P48

These findings echo Ator and Ortizo (2024), who emphasized that time management significantly influences academic performance among student-athletes. Similarly, Lamban et al. (2025) concluded that those who develop personalized time management strategies especially deadline-based planning experience lower stress and higher task completion. Nevertheless, Glandorf et al. (2023) observed that time management without adequate emotional support may not prevent burnout particularly when athletes are managing high expectations with limited recovery opportunities.

Theme 2: Emotional Release through Hobbies and Nature-Based Activities

Student-athletes often turned to hobbies like music, social media, or nature trips to release stress. Engaging in these non-academic, non-athletic activities served as a mental reset that helped them avoid burnout.

"When I'm stressed from school or training, I go on road trips to the mountain or the beach." – P24

"I just go eat out with my boyfriend when I'm tired from school." – P37

"Playing with my teammates already feels like relaxation." – P26

These emotional breaks reflect the idea of "leisure-as-coping" as described by Kimball and Freysinger (2003). The authors found that student-athletes use recreational time to regulate emotions, particularly during highly demanding periods. Recreational coping also helps maintain motivation and energy. Barbosa et al. (2025) also noted that while passive recovery like leisure can reduce acute stress, it may not be sufficient for cognitive recovery when sleep deprivation or overtraining persists—indicating limits to these coping strategies.

Theme 3: Cognitive and Emotional Regulation Techniques

Some student-athletes practiced mindfulness strategies like deep breathing, music therapy, and reflection to stay grounded. When pressure mounted, they also leaned into self-encouragement or withdrew briefly to reset their mindset.

"Reading AU stories helps lessen my stress. It's effective for me." – P49

"I use deep breathing and music to calm down before games or deadlines." – P44

"Sometimes, I just take a step back to avoid emotional breakdowns." – P22

This aligns with the concept of meta-certainty and self-regulation discussed by Horcajo, Santos, and Higuero (2021), who concluded that psychological tools like self-efficacy and emotional clarity significantly improve mental endurance among athletes. However, Glandorf et al. (2023) noted that sporadic or informal use of emotional regulation techniques may be insufficient during prolonged stress cycles, especially without structured mental health support systems.

Theme 4: Drawing Motivation from Goals and Passion for Sports

Several athletes highlighted that their passion for sports and personal goals helped them persist through physical and mental fatigue. This internal motivation was cited as the core reason they could manage both roles despite exhaustion.

"Even if it's hard, I'm happy because I'm doing what I love—volleyball." – P14

"This is my dream—so I must keep going. Cry if you must, but don't give up." – P40

"I push through the tiredness because I'm motivated by my deadlines and dreams." – P31

These responses align with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which posits that intrinsic motivation, when fueled by personal values and purpose, enhances perseverance and well-being. Pasno (2024) also emphasized that enjoyment in sports strengthens academic resilience. Conversely, Glandorf et al. (2023) along with Martin & Santos (2019) reported that when athletes' identities are overly tied to performance outcomes, motivational passion may become maladaptive making setbacks more psychologically damaging and contributing to emotional exhaustion.

4. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to investigate the experiences of student-athletes as they meet the demands of academics and athletics. Through thematic analysis of interview data, the survey turned to three main interrogative sentences and filled meaningful gaps left by earlier surveys. The first interrogation depended on the main obstacles student-athletes encounter in balancing their school and sports responsibilities. The paper of Time Management Difficulties and Impact on Scholarly Carrying into Action helped answer this question. Players

report conflicts between class schedules and training, along with feelings of emotional and physical exhaustion. They also struggle to meet rational requirements during competition periods. Quotations like *"We train from 6 to 9 p.m., and by then I'm too tired to do activities"* exhibit how daily responsibilities can clash. These findings declare an expanded conception of the time-related struggles student-athletes encounter, a perspective habitually overlooked in quantitative surveys (Johnson & Richards, 2023; Cline, 2024).

The second inquiry concentrated on the strategies used by student-athletes. The study demonstrated a variety of approaches, from integrated planning methods like utilizing calendars and time-blocking to informal, emotion-focused tactics as an example stress-eating and maintaining a flexible mindset. Quotations like *"I use a planner to block time for civilize and training"* and *"I go with the flow. No exact strategy"* play up the different agency athletes cope with pressure. These insinuations are built on earlier probes that typically list coping methods without exploring the reasonableness behind them (Lamban et al., 2025). By becharm the part of student-athletes, this survey provided a richer picture of how coping happens in real-life situations.

The third question looked at the support organizations student-athletes rely on for intellectual success meanwhile competing in sports. This was explored through the report of Financial Support Systems, where participants identified the critical roles played by peers, professors, family members, and sometimes coaches. Namely, one participant said, *"My teammates give me pine tree state strength when I break down,"* though another gave thanks to a professor who accepted belated submissions. Though participants also noted incompatibility in coaching support. This inquiry went beyond ecumenical supposition by examining the selection and composition of these support systems, adding context-specific perception that could help make institutional insurance (Manimtim et al., 2025; Pacres & Babiera II, 2025).

By handling these three survey questions through detailed qualitative inquiry, the survey adds respect to the existing literature. It responds to calls for more student-centered surveys by tendering a narrative account of the difficulties, coping strategies, and documentation experiences of student-athletes. What's More, the research provides practical consequences for educational establishments, stressing the need for coordinated collegiate and athletic support platforms that reflect the real experiences of student-athletes. In this manner, it supports the creation of more equitable and efficient strategies that assist student-athletes in succeeding in both their collegiate and athletic endeavors.

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