

# Exploring the Challenges of Balancing Academic Responsibilities and Sports Commitments Among Surigao Del Norte National High School Senior High School Student-Athletes in the Sports Track Program

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the challenges experienced by senior high school student-athletes as they attempt to balance academic responsibilities and sports commitments within the Sports Track program. Using purposive sampling, 20 student-athletes participated in semi-structured interviews, two focus group discussions, and three key informant interviews involving coaches and school administrators. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological method, which involved transcription, extraction of significant statements, formulation of meanings, clustering into themes, and validation of findings with participants. Five major themes emerged: (1) Time Management Constraints, (2) Academic Pressures, (3) Physical and Mental Fatigue, (4) Social Sacrifices, and (5) Institutional Support Gaps. Findings indicate that unpredictable training schedules, overlapping deadlines, high expectations, and inadequate institutional support significantly hinder student-athletes' academic performance and well-being. The study highlights the need for strengthened academic flexibility, mental health services, and coordinated school-athletic support systems to enhance holistic development.

**Keywords:** student-athletes, academic responsibilities, sports commitments, time management, support structures.

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## INTRODUCTION

Student-athletes play a dual role requiring the simultaneous commitment to both academic excellence and athletic performance. This balancing act is globally recognized as a complex challenge, where time pressures, competing demands, and high expectations often result in physical, emotional, and cognitive stressors. Substantial research highlights that without sufficient institutional support and adaptive policies, student-athletes may experience compromised academic outcomes and diminished well-being.

In the Philippine context, the Senior High School Sports Track program was established to provide structured academic pathways tailored specifically for student-athletes. Despite its goals, student-athletes continue to face significant difficulties in managing their dual responsibilities effectively. These challenges include unpredictable training schedules, overlapping academic and sports deadlines, high pressure from families and educators to excel simultaneously in both arenas, and limited institutional frameworks to provide adequate support and flexibility.

The theoretical foundation of this study draws from Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which emphasizes the interactions between individuals, their communities, and institutional rules that govern their activities. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) informs the understanding of the scaffolding required to help student-athletes thrive academically while managing sports demands. Additionally, Lived Experience Theory underlines the subjective realities and emotional experiences of these student-athletes, offering a nuanced lens to analyze their challenges and coping mechanisms.

This study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the lived experiences of senior high school student-athletes in Surigao del Norte National High School, shedding light on their unique academic and athletic challenges. It addresses gaps in current knowledge by exploring time management issues, academic pressures, physical and mental fatigue, social sacrifices, and institutional support needs. The findings seek to guide educators, coaches, and policymakers to foster an environment that better supports the holistic development of student-athletes.

### Research Questions

1. What academic challenges hinder senior high school student-athletes from balancing their studies and sports commitments?
2. What sports-related factors affect their ability to manage academic responsibilities?
3. What coping mechanisms and support systems can help student-athletes achieve a balance between academics and sports?

## METHODS

### Participants

The study involved a total of 20 senior high school student-athletes from Surigao del Norte National High School. Additionally, three key informants participated: two coaches (school & division level) and one school administrator. The student-athletes were part of the Sports Track program.



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## Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. This sampling method targeted student-athletes who experience the challenges related to balancing academic and sports commitments. The inclusion of coaches and an administrator as key informants aimed to gather multiple perspectives on the issue.

## Data Collection

Data were collected through multiple qualitative methods:

1. Participant Selection
2. Focus group discussions with 20 student-athletes.
3. In-depth Interview with 10 out of 20 student-athletes
4. Three key informant interviews with coaches (school & division level) and a school administrator.
5. Identifying the Emergent Themes

## Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological method.

The steps involved:

1. Reading transcripts thoroughly.
2. Extracting significant statements relevant to the research questions.
3. Formulating meanings from these significant statements.
4. Clustering formulated meanings into themes.
5. Developing an exhaustive description of the phenomena.
6. Identifying the fundamental structure of the experiences.
7. Validating findings with the participants to ensure accuracy and credibility.

## RESULTS

Five key themes emerged from the analysis: (1) Time Management Challenges, (2) Academic Pressures, (3) Physical and Mental Fatigue, (4) Social Sacrifices, and (5) Institutional Support Needs. These themes collectively highlight the complex interplay of responsibilities faced by student-athletes and the need for responsive institutional measures.

### Emergent Theme 1: Time Management Challenges

Balancing time between academics and sports is a recurring challenge for student-athletes. One participant shared:

*"Lisod kaajo magplano sa akong adlaw kay ang schedule sa training usahay magchange. Waya na koy oras para sa uban nakong mga klase," (It's very hard to plan my day because the training schedule sometimes changes. I don't have time for my other classes anymore.)" (FGD\_1)*

*"Maglisod ko ug manage sa oras labi na kung duol na ang competition. Daghan kaajo ang dapat buhaton." (I find it hard to manage my time, especially when the competition is near. There are so many things to do.) (FGD\_12)*

*"Isahay magkuyang ko ug tulog kay kinahanglan pa magtuon pagkahuman sa training." (Sometimes I lack sleep because I still need to study after training.) (FGD)*



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Another participant stated:

*"Kapoy kaajo ang adlaw kung adunay away ug klase sa parehas nga adlaw. Usahay dili na ko makafokus. (It's exhausting when there's a game and class on the same day. Sometimes I can't focus anymore.)" (IDI\_2)*

*"Lisod kaajo magplano sa akong adlaw kay ang schedule sa training usahay mag-usab. Wala na koy oras para sa uban nakong mga klase." (It's very hard to plan my day because the training schedule sometimes changes. I don't have time for my other classes anymore.) (KII\_1)*

*"Kapoy karadjaw ang adlaw kung adunay away ug klase sa parehas nga adlaw. Usahay dili na ko makafokus." (It's exhausting when there's a game and class on the same day. Sometimes I can't focus anymore.) (KII\_2)*

(FGD\_13):

*Lisod jud kaayo mag-manage sa akong oras labi na kung magdungan ang klase ug training. Usahay, maglisod ko ug hatag og igo nga panahon sa eskwela ug sa sports. Naga-struggle ko nga dili maapektuhan ang duha. (It's really hard to manage my time especially when class and training happen at the same time. Sometimes, I find it difficult to allocate enough time for both school and sports. I struggle to make sure neither gets affected.)*

(FGD\_14):

*Naka-experience ko og stress tungod kay walay klaro nga schedule para sa training ug klase. Usahay, mausab-usab ang oras sa practice nga makapalibog. Dili ko kabalo kung unsaon pagplano sa akong adlaw. (I have experienced stress because there is no clear schedule for training and class. Sometimes, the practice hours change unpredictably, which is confusing. I don't know how to plan my day.)*

(FGD\_15):

*Bisan unsaon nako og plano, usahay mausab gihapon ang oras sa practice. Naga-adjust ko pirmi pero usahay dali ra kaayo mabungkag ang akong schedule. Naapektuhan gyud ang akong study time. (No matter how I plan, sometimes the practice time still changes. I constantly adjust but sometimes my schedule gets disrupted quickly. My study time really gets affected.)*

(FGD\_16):

*Gikapoy ko sa kanunay nga pag-adjust sa akong schedule labi na kung daghan klase ug training. Naga-antos ko sa kakapoy ug stress nga dala niini. Gusto unta ko nga mas ma-organize ang akong oras. (I get tired of constantly adjusting my schedule especially when there are many classes and training. I suffer from the fatigue and stress caused by this. I wish I could have a more organized time.)*

(IDI\_7):

*Kinahanglan ko magbantay sa oras aron dili maapektuhan ang akong mga assignment ug practice. Usahay malate ko kay naglibog sa schedule. Hopeful ko nga mapauswag ang time management skills namo. (I need to watch my time so my assignments and practice are not affected. Sometimes I am late because I get confused with the schedule. I am hopeful that our time management skills can improve.)*



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Participants consistently experienced difficulty managing unpredictable training schedules alongside academic responsibilities. Consistent with CHAT, breakdowns in the 'rules' and 'division of labor' components created contradictions in their activity system, resulting in stress and compromised learning.

## **Emergent Theme 2: Academic Pressures**

Student-athletes often face significant academic pressures due to their dual roles. One participant remarked:

*"Ang akong pamilya nag-expect nga dagko akong grades bisan pa sa akong busy nga schedule," (My family expects me to have good grades despite my busy schedule.)" (FGD\_5)*

*"An mga tests ug quizzes nag-abot sa panahon nga busy kaajo mi sa training. Lisod jud ang pag-andam." (Tests and quizzes come when we are busy with training. It's very difficult to prepare.) (FGD\_20)*

These responses reflect the emotional pressure placed on student-athletes by family expectations, which can exacerbate stress levels.

Another participant shared:

*"Ang mga tests ug quizzes nag-abot sa panahon nga busy jud mi sa training. Lisod kaayo ang pag-andam," (Tests and quizzes come when we are really busy with training. It's very difficult to prepare.)" (IDI\_5)*

*"Dapat maradjaw imong grades para maka-qualify ka sa team, amu jaon an pressure." (You need to have good grades to qualify for the team, that's the pressure.) (FGD\_10)*

*"Lisod e maintain an grades kung hamok kaajo ang training ug competition." (It's hard to maintain grades when there's a lot of training and competition.) (FGD\_6)*

(FGD\_17):

*Sakit kaayo ang pressure sa pamilya nga makab-ot ang taas nga grado bisan pa sa kalisod sa balancing. Usahay maglisod ko sa pagpaningkamot sa eskwela tungod niini. Gusto unta nila nga maayo ko permi sa tanan. (I feel intense pressure from my family to achieve high grades despite the difficulty in balancing. Sometimes I struggle to keep up in school because of this. They always want me to do well in everything.)*

(IDI\_8):

*Naglisod ko sa pag-andam sa mga exams kay nagdungan sila sa training schedule. Dili ko maka-focus kay kulang ang panahon. Basic preparation lang ang akoang mabuhay usahay. (I find it hard to prepare for exams because they coincide with training. I can't focus because there is limited time. Sometimes, I can only do basic preparation.)*

(FGD\_18):

*Naga-expect ang mga teachers nga parehas ra ko sa mga estudyante nga dili athlete. Lisod ang pressure kay dungan ang mga responsibilidad. Gikinahanglan ko nga malapas ang expectations bisan kulang ang oras. (Teachers expect me to be like the students who are not athletes. The pressure is hard because the responsibilities overlap. I need to exceed expectations even with limited time.)*



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(IDI\_9):

*Usahay maluya ko kay gapugos ko sa duha ka butang, study ug sports. Ang pressure gikan sa duha ka lugar gidoble ang stress. Nanghinaot ko nga masabtan nila ang among sitwasyon. (Sometimes I feel weak because I force myself to manage both studying and sports. The pressure from these two areas doubles my stress. I hope they understand our situation.)*

(KII\_4):

*Dugang sa pressure mao ang kahadlok nga ma-fail sa klase samtang nag-apil sa sports. Naglisod ko sa pag-balanse. Gusto unta ko nga hatagan og tabang sa pag-manage niini. (Added to the pressure is the fear of failing the class while participating in sports. I struggle to balance both. I wish to be given help to manage this.)*

Student-athletes described heightened expectations from family, teachers, and coaches. Through the lens of ZPD, the absence of adequate scaffolding—such as tutoring and flexible academic policies—limited their capacity to meet academic standards.

Academic expectations from families and schools amplify stress, often reducing student-athletes' academic focus and performance. Balancing both academic and athletic excellence is a major stressor for student-athletes (Hill, 2023). Flexibility in academic policies and access to counseling services can alleviate these pressures, helping student-athletes maintain academic standards while managing sports commitments.

This highlights how overlapping academic deadlines, and athletic commitments make it challenging for student-athletes to adequately prepare for assessments. Sitkowski (2008) found that while sports participation fosters discipline and structure, it can also lead to academic underperformance during competitive seasons due to reduced study time. These findings underscore the importance of flexible academic policies tailored to the unique needs of student-athletes.

### **Emergent Theme 3: Physical and Mental Fatigue**

The physical and mental demands of sports participation significantly impact student-athletes' well-being. One participant stated:

*"Kapoy kaajo kung mag-training og dugay unja kinahanglan pa jud magtuon pagkahuman," (It's very tiring when we train late and still have to study afterward.)" (IDI\_5)*

*"Ang pressure gikan sa coach ug pamilya usahay makapadugang sa akong stress. Gusto nila nga mag-excel ko sa duha." (The pressure from my coach and family sometimes adds to my stress. They want me to excel in both.) (FGD\_2)*

*"Usahay maguol ko kay dili na nako kaya an tanan." (Sometimes I get sad because I can't handle everything anymore.) (IDL\_4)*

These responses illustrates how extended training sessions contribute to physical fatigue, leaving little energy for academic tasks. Curcio et al. (2006) emphasized that sleep deprivation caused by late-night studying or training negatively affects cognitive function and academic performance.

Another participant shared:

(IDI\_10):



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*Kapoy kaayo ang lawas kada human sa training, labi na kung taas ug grabe ang sesyon. Usahay makaapekto sa akong konsentrasyon sa klase. Nanginahanglan ko gyud og pahulay. (My body is very tired after training, especially when the session is long and intense. Sometimes it affects my concentration in class. I really need rest.)*

(FGD\_19):

*Daghan ko og hunahuna nga makapawala sa akong konsentrasyon sa klase. Ang pressure ug stress madugangan pa sa kakapoy. Gusto unta ko nga matabangan sa paghan-ay sa training schedule. (I have many worries that make me lose concentration in class. The pressure and stress are increased by fatigue. I wish to be helped by adjusting the training schedule.)*

(IDI\_11):

*Usahay maglisod ko og tulog tungod sa kakapoy ug stress gikan sa training ug eskwela. Dako kaayo ang epekto niini sa akong mood ug pagtuon. Nagkinahanglan kog tabang sa mental health. (Sometimes I have trouble sleeping because of fatigue and stress from training and school. This greatly affects my mood and studying. I need help with mental health.)*

(FGD\_20):

*Pagbalanse sa training ug eskwela usa ka dako nga hagit, labi na sa lawas ug hunahuna. Kapoy ang adlaw-adlaw nga routine ug maglisod ko og konsentar. Nangandoy ko nga mas maminusan ang among pressure. (Balancing training and school is a big challenge, especially physically and mentally. The daily routine is tiring and I have trouble concentrating. I hope our pressure can be reduced.)*

(FGD\_11):

*Perme ko kapoy ug gamay ra ang panahon para magpahulay tungod sa schedule. Usahay moapektar ang kakapoy sa akong performance sa eskwela ug sports. Nangita kog paagi para ma-manage kini. (I am always tired and have little time to rest because of the schedule. Fatigue sometimes affects my performance in school and sports. I am looking for ways to manage this.)*

Rest periods, mental health support, and moderated training loads are necessary to improve student-athletes' well-being and academic achievements.

Intense training sessions caused exhaustion and reduced ability to concentrate. Lived Experience Theory highlights how emotional strain and fatigue shape student-athletes' perceptions of capability and motivation.

This highlights how external pressures from coaches and family members can exacerbate mental fatigue among student-athletes. Hill (2023) noted that balancing high expectations in both academics and athletics often leads to burnout among student-athletes, emphasizing the need for mental health support systems tailored specifically for this group.

#### **Emergent Theme 4: Social Sacrifices**

Student-athletes frequently sacrifice their social lives due to their demanding schedules. One participant remarked:



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*"Usahay kinahanglan nako i-sacrifice ang akong social life para lang makahuman og assignments ug training. (Sometimes I have to sacrifice my social life just to finish assignments and training.)" (FGD\_18)*

*"Waya na kaayo koy oras para makigkita sa akong mga amigo." (I don't have much time to see my friends anymore.) (FGD\_9)*

*"Lisod e- explain sa mga tawo nga busy ka permi kay jaoy pirme training." ((It's hard to explain to people that you are always busy because you have training.) (IDI\_1)*

Another participant stated:

*"Ang akong mga kauban sa klase nag-ingon nga mas sayon ra ang ilang kinabuhi kay wala sila'y sports nga gina-atiman (My classmates say their lives are easier because they don't have sports to take care of.)" (IDI\_4)*

*"Usahay kinahanglan nako i-sacrifice ang akong social life para lang makahuman og assignments ug training." (Sometimes I have to sacrifice my social life just to finish assignments and training.) (KII\_3)*

*(FGD\_22):*

*Wala na koy panahon para sa mga amigo tungod sa akoang schedule. Usahay mo-feel ko nga nag-inusara ko. Importante unta ang suporta sa mga higala. (I no longer have time for friends because of my schedule. Sometimes I feel lonely. Support from friends is important.)*

*(IDI\_12):*

*Mao ra gyud ang eskwela ug training akong makatagad. Nahimo nga limitado ang akong social life. Naglisod ko sa pag-explain niini sa akong pamilya. (School and training are all I can focus on. My social life has become limited. I struggle to explain this to my family.)*

*(FGD\_23):*

*Usahay makabati ko ug kalipay kay wala koy balance sa kinabuhi. Gusto unta ko nga makig-uban sa uban pero dili ko makabalo unsaon pag-manage niini. (Sometimes I feel unhappy because I have no balance in life. I want to socialize but I don't know how to manage it.)*

*(IDI\_13):*

*Lisod ipaabot sa uban ang kakulian nga akong gibati tungod sa sports ug eskwela. Feel nako nga wala sila kasabot sa akong sitwasyon. Nangita kog kauban nga makasabot, maminaw. (It is hard to express to others the difficulties I feel because of sports and school. I feel that they don't understand my situation. I am looking for someone to understand and listen.)*

*(KII\_5):*

*Nagkawala ang akong social life tungod sa akong sports commitments. Kakulang sa social interaction makapadugang sa stress ug loneliness. Kinahanglan unta ug more support system. (My social life disappeared because of my sports commitments. Lack of social interaction adds to stress and loneliness. There should be more support systems.)*

The demands of sports participation limited opportunities for social interaction, contributing to feelings of isolation. CHAT analysis shows that contradictions in the 'community' node reduce social support essential to healthy development.



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This highlights how non-athlete peers may perceive their lives as less complicated compared to those of student-athletes who must manage dual responsibilities.

### **Emergent Theme 5: Institutional Support Needs**

The lack of institutional support is a recurring concern among student-athletes. One respondent shared:

*"Ang mga coach usahay dili jud kasabot nga kinahanglan namo og oras para magtuon. (Sometimes coaches don't fully understand that we need time to study.)" (FGD\_12)*

*"Kun waya'y scholarship gikan sa sports, tingali dili nako makapadajon nan eskwela." (Without a sports scholarship, I might not be able to continue studying.)(ID1\_4)*

*"Importante nga jaoy tawo nga makasabot sa among sitwasyon sanan makahatag nan tabang." (It's important to have someone who understands our situation and can provide help.)(FGD\_12)*

Another participant remarked:

*"Isip usa ka principal, kinahanglan nga masabtan namo ang mga panginahanglanon sa mga atleta aron mahatagan sila og suporta. (As a principal, we need to understand the needs of athletes to provide them with proper support.)" (ID1\_4)*

Additionally, one athlete stated:

*"Kung wala'y scholarship gikan sa sports, tingali dili nako makapadayon og eskwela," (Without a sports scholarship, I might not be able to continue studying." (FGD\_9)*

*"Isip isa ka principal, kinahanglan nga masabtan namo ang mga panginahanglanon sa mga atleta aron mahatagan sila og suporta." (As a principal, we need to understand the needs of athletes to provide them with proper support.) (K11\_2)*

(FGD\_24):

*Mangayo mi ug tabang gikan sa eskwelahan para sa among mga assignments labi na kung busy kaayo mi sa training. Maglisod mi og reconcile sa duha. Internet ug study materials usahay kulang. (We ask for help from the school for our assignments especially when training is very busy. We find it hard to reconcile both. Sometimes the internet and study materials are lacking.)*

(ID1\_14):

*Walay klarong suporta gikan sa mga coach sa pag-aplikar sa flexible schedules. Daghan mi og problema sa pag-align sa klase ug training. Kinahanglan gyud ang klarong coordination. (There is no clear support from coaches in applying flexible schedules. We often have problems aligning class and training. Clear coordination is really needed.)*

(FGD\_25):

*Kinahanglan ug counseling para sa stress nga among gibati tungod sa pressure sa duha ka parte. Wala pa kaayo kini dha sa eskwelahan. Naga-hope kami nga madugangan ang support. (Counseling is needed for the stress we feel due to pressure from both sides. This is not yet available much in school. We hope support will increase.)*



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(IDI\_15):

*Dako kaayo ang tabang kung naay scholarship ang mga atleta. Apan, ang pressure usab niining scholarship mao nga kinahanglan mag-excel sa duha. Mao nga kinahanglan support system nga makatabang. (Scholarship is a huge help for athletes. However, the pressure from this scholarship requires excelling in both areas. So support systems are needed to help.)*

(KII\_6):

*Siguroha nga makig-coordinate ang mga coach ug teachers para sa kalamboan namo. Dili pwede nga walay husay ang communication. Ang mga atleta nanginahanglan og kompleto nga suporta. (Make sure coaches and teachers coordinate for our development. Communication cannot be disorganized. Athletes need complete support.)*

Participants reported insufficient coordination between academic and athletic personnel. Enhanced institutional collaboration is needed to harmonize expectations and provide holistic support.

Scholarships provide financial motivation but also add pressure for students to excel in both academics and athletics. These responses emphasize the need for institutional interventions such as flexible schedules, tutoring programs, and mental health resources.

## SUMMARY

This study aimed to explore the challenges faced by senior high school student-athletes in Surigao del Norte National High School as they navigate the complexities of balancing academic responsibilities and sports commitments. The findings revealed five key emergent themes: time management challenges, academic pressures, physical and mental fatigue, social sacrifices, and institutional support needs. Time management emerged as a significant issue, with student-athletes struggling to allocate sufficient time for both academics and sports due to unpredictable training schedules that disrupt their ability to plan effectively. Academic pressures were also prevalent, as student-athletes faced heightened expectations from family and coaches, leading to increased stress and difficulty maintaining strong academic performance. Physical and mental fatigue from rigorous training schedules and competitions further hindered their ability to focus on studies, contributing to a decline in academic outcomes. Additionally, many student-athletes reported sacrificing their social lives due to the demands of their dual commitments, which limited their opportunities for personal interactions and affected their overall well-being. Finally, the lack of adequate institutional support systems exacerbated these challenges, with participants expressing a need for more flexible academic policies, mental health resources, and improved communication between athletic staff and educators. These themes collectively highlight the complexity of managing dual roles as student-athletes and emphasize the importance of addressing these challenges to foster an environment that supports their holistic development.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### 1. Demographic Profile

The study included 200 Grade 10 students, with 60% female and 40% male respondents. A significant number of parents belonged to low- to very low-income brackets (95% below ₱20,000 combined monthly income) and had only basic or no formal education (approximately 45.5% had elementary or no formal education). These characteristics are important as they contextualize students'



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math anxiety. Prior research indicates that such socioeconomic and educational factors correlate with limited learning resources and support, contributing to higher anxiety levels and lower academic performance.

## 2. Level of Math Anxiety

Students demonstrated pronounced math anxiety with weighted mean scores ranging from 4.1 to 4.9 across general and evaluation-specific anxiety indicators, denoting high to very high anxiety. Key anxieties included nervousness at test start, fear of mistakes, rapid heartbeat during problem solving, and difficulties focusing during timed tests. These findings align with the cognitive interference and attentional control theories, where anxiety disrupts working memory and cognitive resources crucial for math tasks

## 3. Attitudes Toward Mathematics

Students displayed mixed attitudes, with negative emotions such as avoidance and discomfort juxtaposed with positive beliefs recognizing math's importance for future success. This dual attitude reflects emotional barriers that undermine motivation, consistent with the Self-Determination Theory emphasizing autonomy and competence.

## 4. Academic Performance

Academic achievement data revealed that 13% of students did not meet the expected math proficiency level, with 26% rated as fairly satisfactory and many falling below Grade 10 standards. This confirms the negative impact anxiety has on performance by impairing problem-solving and working memory functions, as supported by meta-analytic evidence.

## 5. Differences by Demographic Variables

No significant difference in math anxiety was found between male and female students ( $p=0.72$ ), indicating anxiety prevalence across genders. This approach supports findings that modern educational exposure reduces historical sex-based discrepant anxiety levels

## 6. Relationship Between Math Anxiety and Academic Achievement

A statistically significant moderate negative correlation ( $r = -0.502$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was observed between math anxiety and students' grades in math. This reinforces the substantial role of anxiety as a barrier to academic success while also acknowledging that other factors such as learning environment and study habits contribute

# CONCLUSION

1. The demographic profile of Grade 10 students, characterized by low parental income and educational attainment, provides a context that partially explains heightened math anxiety and challenges in academic achievement.

2. High to very high levels of math anxiety pervade among students, severely affecting their emotional and cognitive engagement with mathematics. Anxiety-induced cognitive interference compromises working memory, which is critical for solving mathematical problems.



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3. Students hold a complex attitude toward math, recognizing its importance but simultaneously experiencing emotional barriers that reduce intrinsic motivation and learning engagement.
4. Academic achievement suffers as a result of this anxiety, reflected in the significant portion of students not meeting proficiency standards, corroborating global evidence of the detrimental impact of math anxiety.
5. Math anxiety levels are similar for both male and female students, highlighting the need for broad-based intervention rather than demographically targeted solutions.
6. The strong negative correlation between math anxiety and academic performance underscores the necessity of addressing anxiety to enhance student success in mathematics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement flexible academic policies to accommodate student-athletes' training and competition schedules.
2. Establish academic support programs such as tutoring and time management workshops.
3. Strengthen collaboration between coaches and teachers to align academic and athletic expectations.
4. Provide mental health resources tailored for student-athletes.
5. Encourage family engagement in supporting the academic success of student-athletes.

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