



Sports Participation and Academic Performance of Elementary School Athletes

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100800305>

Received: 21 August 2026; Accepted: 26 August 2026; Published: 03 September 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examined the profile, sports participation, academic engagement, relationship between sports participation and academic engagement, and issues encountered by public elementary school athletes. Anchored on Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 022, s. 2025, Kumar's Theory of Participation, and Sun's Theory of Engagement, the study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were gathered from public elementary school athletes. The findings revealed that most respondents were older elementary learners, male, in the higher grade level, and involved in team sports. The athletes demonstrated a very high level of sports participation and a very satisfactory level of academic engagement. Female athletes demonstrated particularly strong academic performance, while individual athletes showed higher sports participation. The analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between sports participation and the GWA-based indicator of academic engagement, suggesting that the level of sports participation was not significantly associated with academic performance within the present sample. The study recognizes that academic engagement is multidimensional and that GWA represents primarily academic standing rather than the full behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of engagement. The findings are also interpreted cautiously because purposive sampling was limited to eight public elementary schools and the respondents were predominantly Grade 6 and 11-year-old learners. Among the issues encountered, time management emerged as the most prominent concern, while support systems were reported as the least problematic. The study recommends strengthening time-management support, coordinating academic and athletic schedules, and providing flexible academic interventions to promote the holistic development of student-athletes.

Keywords: Sports Participation; Academic Engagement; Student-Athletes; Time Management; Elementary Education.

INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the importance of promoting learners' holistic development through physical fitness, health, and active participation, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued the policy guidelines on the institutionalization of the School Sports Club (SSC) in public schools. The policy aims to provide learners with accessible opportunities to participate in sports and develop their physical, social, and personal competencies. It also provides guidelines for the establishment, operation, management, recognition, funding, and monitoring of school sports clubs, including support through the Sports Supplies and Equipment Enhancement and Distribution (SSEED) Program (DepEd Memorandum Circular, 2025). These initiatives demonstrate the commitment of DepEd to providing opportunities where learners can develop both athletic abilities and other competencies necessary for their overall development.

Participation in sports may contribute not only to learners' physical development but also to their academic involvement. Through regular participation in sports activities, learners may develop discipline, perseverance, teamwork, communication, goal-setting, and time-management skills that can also be applied to academic tasks. The study is primarily anchored in Kumar's Theory of Participation, which emphasizes that learners' participation in organized activities provides opportunities for involvement, interaction, responsibility, and

personal development. In the context of elementary school athletics, participation is not limited to physical involvement in sports but may also expose learners to experiences that require commitment, discipline, teamwork, persistence, and the management of competing responsibilities. Thus, the theory provides a basis for examining sports participation as an important aspect of learners' school experiences and for describing the extent to which student-athletes participate in organized sports activities.

Complementing this perspective is Sun's Theory of Engagement, which views learner engagement as a multidimensional construct involving behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Behavioral engagement concerns learners' participation and involvement in learning activities; emotional engagement refers to their interest, motivation, and sense of connection to school; while cognitive engagement involves the effort, attention, and strategic investment learners devote to learning. In this study, academic engagement is examined primarily through learners' academic performance as reflected in their General Weighted Average (GWA). Although GWA does not encompass all dimensions of engagement, it provides an observable academic outcome that may be used to examine whether participation in sports is associated with learners' academic standing.

The integration of the two theories provides the conceptual basis for examining the relationship between sports participation and academic engagement. Kumar's Theory of Participation explains the learners' involvement in sports, while Sun's Theory of Engagement provides a framework for understanding their involvement in academic learning. The study therefore assumes that student-athletes may simultaneously participate in athletic and academic activities and that these two domains may coexist without necessarily producing a statistically significant relationship. The theoretical perspectives consequently guide both the selection of the study variables and the interpretation of the findings.

Despite the increasing emphasis on school-based sports programs, a research gap remains regarding the relationship between sports participation and academic engagement among public elementary school athletes. Limited attention has been given to examining sports participation and academic engagement together while also considering the specific challenges encountered by elementary school athletes. This gap is particularly relevant in the context of the implementation of current DepEd policies promoting accessible and organized sports participation in public schools.

Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the sports participation and academic engagement of public elementary school athletes and determine whether a relationship exists between the two variables. It also sought to identify the challenges encountered by these learners in balancing their athletic and academic responsibilities. The findings may provide useful information for school heads, teachers, coaches, parents, and education stakeholders in developing appropriate academic and athletic support mechanisms. More importantly, the study may contribute to the implementation of school sports programs that promote not only athletic achievement but also the academic success and holistic development of elementary school learners.

Existing research generally suggests that participation in physical activity and organized sports may be associated with favorable developmental and academic outcomes among school-aged learners. Sports participation may provide opportunities to develop self-discipline, persistence, cooperation, goal-setting, and self-regulation, which may also be useful in academic contexts. Research on student engagement further indicates that participation in extracurricular activities can coexist with academic involvement when learners are able to manage competing demands and receive appropriate support from schools, families, and activity leaders.

However, the relationship between athletic participation and academic outcomes is not necessarily uniform across learners. The amount and type of training, age, developmental stage, academic demands, access to support, and learners' ability to manage time may influence how sports participation interacts with schooling. In addition, academic engagement is broader than academic grades alone. Behavioral engagement involves participation and persistence in learning activities; emotional engagement includes interest, motivation, and feelings toward school; and cognitive engagement concerns attention, effort, self-regulation, and investment in learning. Thus, studies that rely exclusively on grades may provide useful information about academic



performance but may not fully explain how learners experience and participate in academic activities while also engaging in sports.

This distinction is particularly important for elementary school student-athletes because they are still developing the skills needed to regulate time, balance responsibilities, and respond to academic and athletic demands. Examining sports participation together with a broader understanding of academic engagement can therefore provide a more nuanced explanation of how young athletes manage their dual roles as learners and participants in school sports.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to describe the profile, sports participation, and academic engagement of elementary school athletes and to determine the relationship between sports participation and academic engagement. This design was appropriate for examining naturally occurring conditions and associations among variables without manipulating them (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

The respondents were 100 elementary school athletes from eight (8) public elementary schools in Negros Occidental. Purposive sampling was employed to select athletes who were actively participating in school-based sports activities during the conduct of the study.

Data were gathered using a researcher-made, bilingual (English-Hiligaynon), and validated questionnaire. The instrument consisted of three parts: respondents' profile; sports participation; and challenges encountered in balancing academic and athletic responsibilities. Sports participation was measured using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire underwent expert validation using Lawshe's method and was pilot-tested with at least 30 respondents who were not included in the actual study. Cronbach's alpha was used to establish the instrument's internal consistency.

After securing the necessary approvals, the researcher administered the questionnaires face-to-face. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose and the procedures for completing the instrument. Participation was conducted voluntarily, and the accomplished questionnaires were reviewed, and encoded.

For data analysis, frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' profile. The mean was used to determine the level of sports participation. Academic engagement was operationalized in this study through the respondents' General Weighted Average (GWA), which served as an indicator of their academic standing. The use of GWA provides an objective and readily available measure of academic performance; however, it does not fully capture the multidimensional nature of academic engagement. As emphasized by Sun's Theory of Engagement, academic engagement may also encompass behavioral dimensions, such as participation and persistence in classroom activities; emotional dimensions, such as interest, motivation, and sense of belonging; and cognitive dimensions, such as attention, effort, and strategic learning.

These dimensions were not directly measured in the present study and are therefore recognized as a limitation. The Gamma coefficient was employed to determine the relationship between sports participation and the GWA-based indicator of academic engagement. The statistical procedures were selected based on the nature and measurement level of the variables and the objectives of the study.

A limitation of the study concerns the measurement of academic engagement. The study relied on General Weighted Average as the available indicator of learners' academic standing. While GWA provides an objective summary of academic performance, it does not directly measure behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Measures such as teacher evaluations, classroom participation, attendance, learning-task persistence, motivation, or standardized achievement assessments could provide complementary evidence of academic engagement. Consequently, the findings concerning academic engagement should be understood primarily as reflecting academic performance or standing rather than the full multidimensional construct of engagement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Profile.

Profile	Category	f	%
Age			
	10 years old	9	9.00
	11 years old	82	82.00
	12 years old	9	9.00
	Total	100	100.00
Sex			
	Male	60	60.00
	Female	40	40.00
	Total	100	100.00
Grade Level			
	Grade 5	5	5.00
	Grade 6	95	95.00
	Total	100	100.00
Types of Sport Participation			
	Individual	37	37.00
	Team	63	63.00
	Total	100	100.00
Frequency of Sports Participation			
	1 – 2 times per month	30	30.00
	3 or more per month	32	32.00
	Occasionally	38	38.00
	Total	100	100.00

Table 1 illustrated the characteristics of the elementary school athletes in terms of age, gender, grade level, kind of sports participation, and frequency of sports participation.

In terms of the age of the respondents, 82% was composed of 11-year-olds whereas 9% comprised 10-year-olds and another 9% comprised 12-year-olds. This indicates that the majority of young athletes belong to the same age group, signifying the concentration of athletes in one age category of late childhood.

In terms of sex, the percentage of male respondents was twice that of female respondents, with 60% male and 40% female. This observation indicates that there were more male students who were engaged in school sports programs in comparison to female students.

The majority of the respondents were the students in Grade 6, which amounted to 95%, leaving only 5% as students in Grade 5. This gives an indication that most respondents were preparing to graduate from the elementary stage, thus representing the peak of students' primary school period.

In terms of the kinds of sports participated in, 63% participated in team sports and 37% participated in individual sports, demonstrating that there were more students who were involved in cooperative sports as opposed to those students who were engaged in individual sports.

To summarize, the demographic study shows that most of the student athletes are male and 11 years old, and they are in Grade 6 and participate mainly in team sports. The study indicates that frequency of participation is different, but demographic data are consistent with the fact that male and older student-athletes are more likely

to be involved in some kind of athletics. This is demonstrated by various research studies including studies showing different participation trends among boys and girls. The results of this study support the findings of Caracuel and Cáliz et al. (2025) according to which boys participate in competitive and school sports clubs more often than girls.

Level of Sports Participation

Table 2. Level of Sports Participation of Elementary School When Grouped According to Profile.

Profile	Category	f	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Age					
	10 years old	9	3.99	.65	High
	11 years old	82	4.62	.48	Very High
	12 years old	9	4.78	.30	Very High
	Total	100	4.57	.52	Very High
Sex					
	Male	60	4.58	.50	Very High
	Female	40	4.56	.55	Very High
	Total	100	4.57	.52	Very High
Grade Level					
	Grade 5	5	4.27	.71	Very High
	Grade 6	95	4.59	.50	Very High
	Total	100	4.57	.52	Very High
Types of Sports Participation					
	Individual	37	4.74	.40	Very High
	Team	63	4.48	.55	Very High
	Total	100	4.57	.52	Very High
Frequency of Sports Participation					
	1 – 2 times per month	30	4.61	.60	Very High
	3 or more per month	32	4.73	.43	Very High
	Occasionally	38	4.41	.47	Very High
	Total	100	4.57	.52	Very High

Legend: (4.21-5.0)-Very High; (3.41 – 4.20)-High; (2.61-3.40) Moderate (1.81 – 2.60)-Low; (1.00 – 1.80)-Very Low

Table 2 displays the level of sports participation of elementary school student-athletes classified according to specific profile characteristics. The total mean score of 4.57 with a standard deviation of 0.52 means that the level of sports participation is “Very High” among the respondents.

With respect to age, athletes aged 12 years achieved the maximum mean score of 4.78 (SD = 0.30), classified as “Very High.” Athletes aged 11 years had a mean score of 4.62 (SD = 0.48), which is also classified as “Very High.” Meanwhile, athletes aged 10 years demonstrated the minimum mean score of 3.99 (SD = 0.65), which is interpreted as “High.” Hence, the level of sports participation tends to improve with age of student-athletes, with older elementary students being more involved in sports than younger students. This is consistent with the conclusions of the UNESCO report (2022), stating that older elementary students are more likely to participate in organized sports because of the gained physical competence and autonomy.

In regard to sex, male athletes achieved a mean score of 4.58 (SD = 0.50) and female athletes had a mean score of 4.56 (SD = 0.55); both sexes had a “Very High” result. This shows that both grades of athletes maintain a

very high level of commitment in their sporting activities, and that the male cohort accomplishes a slightly higher score in the area of participation overall. This can be traced back to the findings of the paper by Caracuel-Cáliz et al. (2025), thus it can be assumed that boys usually show a greater desire to participate in competitive and team sports than girls.

In terms of the grade level, Grade 6 athletes showed a higher mean score of 4.59 (SD = 0.50) than the Grade 5 athletes; the latter had a mean score of 4.27 (SD = 0.71); both categories of participants had a "Very High" result. This indicates that the graduating elementary school students exhibit a higher level of engagement in the sports programs than their younger counterparts. The aforementioned trend aligns with the findings by Fredricks et al. (2021), that show that older elementary students show higher cognitive and behavioral engagement in the school programs than the younger children.

Regarding the classification of sports participation, it was found that the athletes engaged in individual sports achieved a mean score of 4.74 (SD = 0.40), which is higher than the mean score of 4.48 (SD = 0.55) of the athletes involved in team sports. Both mean scores signify a "Very High" level of sports participation. Therefore, even though a great number of athletes participate in team sports, individuals practicing individual sports have higher personal commitment to their sportive activity. The reported level of engagement is confirmed by the data gotten by Zhang et al. (2023), showing that participating in regular physical activities in the late childhood period enhances attention control abilities and self-discipline.

Referring to the frequency of sports participation, it is possible to note that athletes who have 3 or more participations per month obtained the highest score of 4.73 (SD = 0.43), while athletes participating 1-2 times per month are in the second position with the mean score of 4.61 (SD = 0.60). The last position in this ranking according to mean score is occupied by those athletes who play sporadically with the mean score of 4.41 (SD = 0.47). Both these three groups reached a "Very High" rank in terms of sports participation level. Hence, in spite of the fact that athletes have various

In conclusion, children's sports activity remains "Very High" across practically all groups, with maximum indicators observed among older Grade 6 children involved in individual sports several times a month. However, although the level of participation varies depending on profiles, the level remains high. This confirms the findings of the studies proving that older and male students are more interested in sports and prefer social team-oriented activities. Researchers have examined the phenomenon in terms of sex-related variations in participation trends. It corresponds with the findings by Caracuel-Cáliz et al. (2025), according to which male elementary students tend to be more involved in different sports activity than female students.

The findings on the very high level of sports participation may be interpreted through Kumar's Theory of Participation. The theory suggests that active involvement in organized school activities provides learners with opportunities to develop responsibility, interaction, persistence, and participation-related competencies. The high participation level observed among the respondents indicates that school-based sports served as an important context for learners' involvement beyond regular classroom activities. The higher participation scores among older learners and those engaged in individual sports may further suggest that the nature and extent of participation can vary according to learners' developmental stage and the demands associated with their chosen activities. However, these descriptive differences should be interpreted cautiously because the present study did not test whether age or sport type significantly predicted participation.

Level of Academic Engagement

Table 3. General Weighted Average as an Indicator of Academic Engagement of Elementary School Athletes When Grouped According to Profile

Profile	Category	f	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Age					
	10 years old	9	89.89	3.98	Very Satisfactory
	11 years old	82	88.80	3.76	Very Satisfactory

	12 years old	9	87.89	2.89	Very Satisfactory
	Total	100	88.82	3.70	Very Satisfactory
Sex					
	Male	60	88.03	3.79	Very Satisfactory
	Female	40	90.00	3.27	Outstanding
	Total	100	88.82	3.70	Very Satisfactory
Grade Level					
	Grade 5	5	91.20	4.21	Outstanding
	Grade 6	95	88.69	3.65	Very Satisfactory
	Total	100	88.82	3.70	Very Satisfactory
Types of Sports Participation					
	Individual	37	89.14	4.11	Very Satisfactory
	Team	63	88.63	3.46	Very Satisfactory
	Total	100	88.82	3.70	Very Satisfactory
Frequency of Sports Participation					
	1 – 2 times per month	30	88.80	4.11	Very Satisfactory
	3 or more per month	32	89.75	3.45	Very Satisfactory
	Occasionally	38	88.05	3.46	Very Satisfactory
	Total	100	88.82	3.70	Very Satisfactory

Legend: (90-100)-Outstanding; (85-89)-Very Satisfactory; (80-84) Satisfactory (75-79)-Fairly Satisfactory; (below 75)-Did Not Meet Expectation

Regarding gender, it was noted that female sportsmen achieved an average of 90.00 (SD = 3.27), which translates as "Outstanding," while male athletes' average was 88.03 (SD = 3.79), which can be interpreted as "Very Satisfactory." This strongly affirms the demographic difference where female student-athletes show better academic performance than male student-athletes. This is consistent with what the OECD (2021) claims in its research that female students tend to engage in their studies more effectively than their male peers.

With respect to academic grades, Grade 5 students scored on average 91.20 (SD = 4.21), which results in an "Outstanding" rating, while Grade 6 students got a mean result of 88.69 (SD = 3.65), which means "Very Satisfactory." This evidences that students from the lower grades score better than students from graduating classes. This is also supported by the results reported by Fredricks et al. (2021), who revealed that even though cognitive capacities grow with experience, graduating students are confronted with heavier curricula and are likely to show less steady academic results at their classes.

Regarding the respondent group under consideration, the athletes who primarily practice individual sports have recorded the slightly higher mean score of 89.14 (SD = 4.11). At the same time, those involved in team sports have a lower mean result of 88.63 (SD = 3.46), which, however, still falls within the "Very Satisfactory" range. Therefore, it can be concluded that the type of sport engagement does not provide a strong obstacle to education. This conclusion is additionally backed by Zhang et al. (2023), as they have shown that physical activity, regardless of being practiced individually or in the group, contributes to the development of the main skills needed for successful education.

Based on the frequency of sports participation, athletes who participated 3 or more times per month registered the highest mean academic score of 89.75 (SD = 3.45), followed by those participating 1 to 2 times per month with a mean score of 88.80 (SD = 4.11), and those who played occasionally with a mean score of 88.05 (SD = 3.46). All three groups were interpreted as "Very Satisfactory." This important trend reveals that more active and regular sports training actually corresponds with higher academic performance rather than a decline. This finding is heavily supported by Mishra (2024), who emphasized that consistent sports participation directly

instills the robust discipline, structured routines, and strict time-management skills that allow learners to achieve improved and productive academic outcomes.

In conclusion, elementary school athletes achieve high academic achievement consistently between "Very Satisfactory" and "Outstanding" in all profile groupings. Although some inconsistencies are observed, the high levels of academic achievement correlate with the trend that signifies a greater engagement of older male learners in sports. The results of the research done in the present paper corroborate previous research done in the area, which includes information on participation trends based on the participants' sex. The same distribution of participation was discovered in the study of Caracuel-Cáliz et al. (2025), where it was found out that male elementary school students usually participate in different types of sports (both competitive ones and those officially approved by schools) more than female students.

The findings may also be viewed through Sun's Theory of Engagement. The generally high academic standing of the respondents suggests that participation in school sports did not coincide with poor academic outcomes among the learners included in the study. However, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that high GWA necessarily means that learners were highly behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively engaged in classroom learning. Rather, the results indicate that the student-athletes maintained favorable academic performance while participating in sports. From the perspective of engagement theory, this may suggest that learners can manage involvement across athletic and academic contexts, although the specific mechanisms through which they sustain academic engagement cannot be established from GWA alone.

Relationship Between Level of Participation and Level of Academic Engagement

Table 4. Relationship Between Sports Participation and GWA-Based Academic Engagement.

Variable	Test Statistics	P-value	Decision for Ho	Interpretation
Participation Vs Academic Engagement	-.107	.289	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 4 presents the relationship between sports participation and the GWA-based indicator of academic engagement. The Gamma coefficient was -0.107 with a p-value of .289. Since the p-value is greater than the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates that no statistically significant association was found between sports participation and academic engagement among the elementary school athletes included in the study. The weak negative coefficient further suggests that the observed association was minimal in magnitude. Therefore, the findings do not provide sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that differences in sports participation are associated with differences in the learners' academic performance.

The non-significant finding may be interpreted in relation to the two theoretical perspectives underpinning the study. Kumar's Theory of Participation emphasizes the developmental and participatory value of involvement in organized activities, while Sun's Theory of Engagement recognizes that learners' academic engagement involves multiple dimensions that may operate across different contexts. The present findings suggest that participation in sports and academic performance can coexist among the respondents without demonstrating a statistically significant relationship. However, because academic engagement was represented primarily through GWA, the findings cannot determine whether sports participation was related to learners' classroom behavior, emotional investment, motivation, attention, or cognitive engagement.

The result should therefore not be interpreted as evidence that sports participation has no effect on academic engagement in general. Rather, it indicates that within the present sample and using the measures employed, no statistically significant relationship was observed between the level of sports participation and the learners' GWA. Other factors not examined in the study, including study habits, family support, teacher support, training demands, motivation, and time-management practices, may also contribute to learners' academic outcomes. This independence from the statistics suggests that students who play sports can keep their athletic

achievements high without falling behind in studies. This corresponds with more recent studies by Fredricks et al. (2021), who argue that contemporary participation in co-curricular activities does not have to conflict with students' success in academia and that many students are able to successfully manage their responsibilities. Moreover, this non-significant result corresponds to the research results by Zhang et al. (2023), whose authors have proven that although physical activity contributes positively to such cognitive functions as memory and attention management.

To sum up, the data indicates that there is limited link between being active in school sports and being academically engaged for young athletes in elementary schools. Even if there are some variations in sports participation levels, it can be agreed that active sport students are more inclined to be older males involved in group communal activities and sports. The results of the research are supported by the previous studies, especially those showing trends in participation by gender. This user distribution seems consistent with the study by Caracuel-Cáliz et al. (2025), in which it was proved that boys have always been more active in terms of participation in competitive and back school sports.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated:

The respondents were predominantly 11-year-old Grade 6 learners, with male athletes comprising a larger proportion of the sample. This profile indicates that the findings primarily reflect the experiences of older elementary school athletes and should therefore be interpreted cautiously when considering younger learners or more balanced sex distributions.

Sports Participation is Extremely High: The study results show that elementary school athletes are "Very Good" sports participants, with the highest participation rates being observed among older pupils engaged in individual sports.

The elementary school athletes demonstrated generally favorable academic performance, with the overall GWA classified as Very Satisfactory. The findings indicate that the respondents maintained favorable academic standing while participating in school sports. However, because the study was descriptive-correlational and academic engagement was represented primarily through GWA, the findings should not be interpreted as proof that sports participation does not interfere with or cause changes in academic performance.

The relationship between sports participation and academic engagement was not statistically significant. Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma yielded $\gamma = -0.107$ with $p = .289$, indicating a very weak negative association that was not statistically significant at the .05 level. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The result indicates that, within the present sample and based on the GWA-based measure of academic engagement, the level of sports participation was not significantly associated with academic performance. This finding should not be interpreted as proof that sports participation has no influence on academic engagement; rather, the study did not find sufficient statistical evidence of an association using the variables and measures employed.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study employed purposive sampling and included 100 elementary school athletes from only eight public elementary schools in Negros Occidental. Because the respondents were not selected through probability sampling and were drawn from a limited geographic and institutional context, the findings should not be generalized to all elementary school athletes in Negros Occidental or other provinces without caution.

Second, the respondent profile was highly concentrated in particular demographic categories. Eighty-two percent of the respondents were 11 years old, while 95% were Grade 6 learners. Only 5% belonged to Grade 5. This distribution means that the findings predominantly represent the experiences of older elementary learners,



with limited representation of younger athletes. Consequently, differences in sports participation or academic engagement across developmental stages could not be adequately examined.

Third, the sample consisted of 60% male and 40% female athletes. Although both groups were represented, the unequal distribution limits the extent to which the findings can be interpreted as equally representative of male and female student-athletes. Future studies may consider a more balanced sample across sex, age, and grade level.

Finally, academic engagement was represented primarily through General Weighted Average. Although GWA provides an objective indicator of academic standing, it does not directly capture the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of engagement. Future research may therefore employ multiple measures, including teacher assessments, classroom participation, attendance, motivation, learning-task involvement, and standardized achievement measures, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of academic engagement.

RECOMMENDATION

For School Heads

- Develop coordinated academic-athletic calendars.
- Avoid unnecessary scheduling conflicts between competitions and major academic requirements.
- Establish monitoring mechanisms for student-athletes.

For Teachers

- Provide reasonable flexibility for officially sanctioned competitions.
- Monitor missed learning tasks.
- Provide catch-up opportunities.

For Coaches

- Consider academic schedules when planning training.
- Avoid unnecessarily excessive training schedules.
- Encourage athletes to maintain study routines.

For Parents

- Help learners establish study-training-rest schedules.
- Monitor sleep and academic requirements.

For Future Researchers

- Use probability sampling where feasible.
- Include more schools and grade levels.
- Balance male and female participants.
- Include teacher ratings, classroom observations, attendance, motivation scales, and cognitive/behavioral engagement measures.

- Examine whether time management mediates or moderates the relationship between sports participation and academic outcomes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher sincerely expresses gratitude to all individuals who contributed to the successful completion of this study. Appreciation is extended to the research adviser, mentor, statistician, and panel members for their guidance, expertise, constructive feedback, and valuable recommendations throughout the research process.

The researcher also gratefully acknowledges the validators for their time and professional insights in ensuring the quality of the research instrument, as well as the school heads and School Sports Coordinators for granting permission, facilitating the conduct of the study, and assisting in the data-gathering process. Special thanks are extended to the respondents for their voluntary participation, honesty, and cooperation.

The researcher is deeply grateful to family and friends for their unwavering love, prayers, encouragement, patience, and moral support throughout the academic journey. Above all, heartfelt gratitude is offered to Almighty God for His guidance, wisdom, strength, protection, and blessings, which sustained the researcher in overcoming challenges and completing this study.

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10. **Note:** Your manuscript also cites **Kumar (2021)** and **Sun (2022)** in the Abstract, but they are not cited in the Introduction, Methodology, Results and Discussions, or Conclusions. Since you asked for references included in the **above content**, they should also be retained in the complete reference list because they are explicitly cited in the Abstract:
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