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### Striking the Balance of Academic and Sports: The Experiences of Philippine Student-Eskrimador

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#### Abstract

The experiences during the student-athlete's formative years significantly shape their self-perception as either students or athletes. As they advance in their academic pursuits and move into higher academic levels, they often come to understand that their sense of self is closely linked with their involvement in athletics. This descriptive phenomenological study delves into the experiences of six student-athletes from the Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT) in various Philippine universities. Employing Colaizzi's phenomenological approach, four key themes emerged. The findings reveal that PNAT student-athletes adeptly navigate their priorities, time, and decisions to surmount individual challenges. Notably, an invaluable network of familial, social, educational, and communal support acts as a driving force. The demanding equilibrium between rigorous athletic training, academic pursuits, and personal hurdles

necessitates a reservoir of resilience, cultivating enduring attributes of determination and adaptability. This steadfast commitment yields commendable accomplishments. Nonetheless, the study highlights the imperative requirement for external motivation and positive reinforcement, particularly from academic institutions. Recommendations advocate for granting student-athletes the due recognition in both academic and extracurricular domains, enabling a harmonized pursuit of their dual roles. The research stands as a testament to the distinctive trials confronted by PNAT student-athletes and underscores the pivotal role of comprehensive institutional support in fostering their roles as both scholars and athletes, affirming the vital symbiosis between academic and athletic pursuits in their development and success.

**Keywords:** Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT), Achievements and Outcomes, Personal Attributes, External Factors

#### Introduction

Numerous student-athletes face considerable challenges during their college journey. (Huml *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[15]</sup>. Since athletes mature at a younger age, their performance on the field of sport and in the classroom is strengthened in a negative as well as positive way. The experiences during their formative years can significantly influence whether they see themselves as students or athletes (Watt & Moore, 2001 as cited in Huml *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[32, 15]</sup>. These experiences as student-athletes, especially for Arnis, the focus of this study is crucial and should not be undervalued. Previous research indicates that student-athletes who strongly identify with their athletic roles may face potential delays in their academic, social, and personal growth. (Bimper, 2014 <sup>[3]</sup>; Brewer *et al.*, 1993; Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996 <sup>[24]</sup>; Watson & Kissinger, 2007; Woodruff & Schallert, 2008 as cited in Huml *et al.*, 2019 <sup>[15]</sup>). In a particular study, an admissions counselor noted that athletic prowess is "the one aspect of a person's extracurricular involvement that can have the greatest impact on their academic qualifications." (Kilgore, 2009, p. 479 as cited in Huml *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[18, 15]</sup>. In other words, a college or university may admit an outstanding athlete solely based on their athletic prowess, without considering their academic preparation or intellectual capabilities. However, there are only a

few studies that describe the experiences of Arnis student-athletes. This phenomenological study aims to describe the experiences faced by student-athletes of the Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT). Exploring their experiences is essential in order to grasp the challenges that Arnis student-athletes encounter in higher education. This study seeks to furnish valuable insights and suggestions for practitioners in the field to enhance their support.

Numerous research findings suggest that when an athlete does not meet a college or university's academic admission requirements, it is often attributed to either (a) insufficient academic support for high school student-athletes or (b) high schools encouraging student-athletes to prioritize sports over academics (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011) [4]. As anticipated, student-athletes conditionally admitted based on their athletic ability by a specialized admissions committee face a heightened risk of struggling to balance both their academic performance and athletic eligibility (Ingram & Huffman, 2017) [16].

However, it is pertinent to note that academic support services for athletes may, at times, pose challenges to the overall experience of student-athletes, who often rely on these provisions for guidance throughout their collegiate journey (Bell, 2009 as cited in Huml *et al.*, 2019) [2, 15]. While these issues are prevalent, they are not uniform across all institutions. Several establishments go above and beyond, offering an array of services through specialized offices that transcend basic tutoring and eligibility advising. Certain universities have implemented mentorship initiatives, engage in collaborations with diverse campus departments to furnish supplementary resources, and place emphasis on the comprehensive development of student-athletes, as opposed to singularly focusing on their eligibility. Nevertheless, constrained resources, limited availability of support, time constraints, or a confluence of these factors may render many of these support offices faced with challenges in effectively aiding student-athletes beyond the scope of ensuring their eligibility (Huml *et al.*, 2019) [15].

As student-athletes progress in their academic journey and transition into upperclassmen, they increasingly acknowledge that their identity is closely linked to their involvement in athletics (Miller & Kerr, 2003 as cited in Huml *et al.*, 2019) [22, 15]. A study by Huml *et al.* (2019) [15] reveals that many admit to prioritizing athletic performance over academics in their early college years. Now, as the focus shifts towards academics, they still face challenges such as time constraints and external pressures from coaches and administrators to excel in sports.

Analyzing the literature pertaining to the collegiate experience of student-athletes elucidates the academic hurdles they face. In light of these challenges, it is imperative to underscore potential remedies that universities can employ to bolster support for these individuals. Given the study's specific focus on the Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT), its objective is to delineate the experiences of student-athletes, with a particular emphasis on the discipline of Arnis.

Arnis, also known as Kali or Escrima, is the designated national martial art of the Philippines, with a primary focus on self-defense techniques involving weapons. It encompasses hand-to-hand combat, joint locks, and strategies for disarming opponents. Notably, Republic Act 9850, signed by President Gloria Arroyo on December 11, 2009, formally recognized Arnis as the national sport of the

Philippines (Nogral, 2009). The Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT) is the exclusive national representative in the sport, holding accreditation from the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) and endorsement from the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC). The team operates under the auspices of the Philippine Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (PEKAF), the sport's governing authority in the country. Their primary mission is to advance the practice of Arnis and showcase the rich cultural heritage of the Philippines through their performances (Philippine Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation).

This phenomenological research describes the experiences faced by Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT) student-athletes, and emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing these challenges for their overall success in higher education. Understanding their lived experiences is essential to gain insights into their dual roles as athletes and students. This study can provide a foundation for enhancing campus connections within and beyond the athletic department and for creating an academic advising model for athletic advisors.

### Domain of Inquiry

The study aims to describe the lived experience of Philippine National Arnis Team student-athletes.

### Philosophical Stance

This study holds the potential to enrich the body of knowledge in the realm of sports and contribute to the enhancement of the well-being of both the nation and universities with regard to athletes and performers. It may serve as a catalyst in unveiling the challenges faced by participants during challenging periods. Drawing from personal experiences in similar circumstances, the researcher investigated issues that were also encountered during the academic year. These genuine experiences revealed gaps that warranted more substantial intervention and focus. Consequently, this study was underpinned by three foundational assumptions: ontological, epistemological, and axiological.

### Ontological Assumption

Perception of reality is inherently diverse and subjective, varying from individual to individual based on their unique perspectives, experiences, beliefs, and opinions. Consequently, this study aims to elucidate the firsthand experiences of Philippine National Arnis Student-Athletes in both their academic and athletic pursuits, with a specific emphasis on recognizing and addressing the obstacles they encounter in achieving success in higher education. Through this exploration, the student-athletes are afforded the opportunity to articulate their viewpoints, beliefs, and opinions on specific phenomena. The researchers contend that due to distinct experiences and perspectives, multiple interpretations of reality emerge. By affording them the platform to share their voices, it not only shapes their own understanding but also contributes to the collective construction of various realities.

### Epistemological Assumption

This study embraces a constructivist epistemological approach, asserting that there is no singular, objective truth. Instead, knowledge and comprehension are forged through an individual's experiences. To ensure the emergence of

genuine truth, the study leverages three fundamental types of knowledge in epistemology: factual knowledge, practical knowledge, and knowledge of individuals and locales. These knowledge frameworks serve as the guiding principles for the researcher. Throughout the study, the researcher relied on evocative descriptions provided by the participants as compelling evidence. While the researcher assumed the role of a knowledgeable facilitator, the accounts shared by the Philippine National Arnis Student-Athletes regarding their experiences as both students and athletes hold intrinsic truth and represent genuine knowledge.

### Axiological Assumption

The objective of this study is to elucidate the experiences of Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT) student-athletes and underscore the significance of comprehending and addressing these challenges in their overall success in higher education. The prospective key informants' narratives about their lived experiences hold intrinsic value, providing them with valuable insights and numerous opportunities for growth. The researchers will delve into the values that shape their stories, establishing a connection between their interpretation and that of the participants. Additionally, the study's significance extends beyond academia, offering benefits to various stakeholders, including policymakers and the National Association of Sports. Chapter 1 of the manuscript delineates the purpose behind this study and how it stands to benefit a wide range of individuals and organizations.

### Methodology

#### Design

The researchers employed Edmund Husserl's descriptive phenomenological research design, with the primary objective being the attainment of a state of transcendental subjectivity (as outlined by Lopez & Willis, 2004, as cited in Shorey & Ng, 2022<sup>[29]</sup>). This meant that the researchers continually evaluated their influence on the inquiry, striving to eliminate any biases or preconceptions that might have affected the domain of study (According to Lopez & Willis, 2004 cited by Shorey & Ng, 2022<sup>[29]</sup>). The descriptive phenomenological design was considered the most suitable approach for the researchers to gather information and provide a description of the lived experience of Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT) student-athletes, as it strictly prohibited any biased thoughts and descriptions towards the key informants.

#### Key Informants and Sampling Design

The key informants for this study are the six Arnis national athletes who are enrolled in any of the universities in the Philippines. They are chosen based on their participation in arnis competitions at the national or international level, their willingness to share their experiences and insights about their academic struggles and challenges faced during their time practicing. The interviews will be conducted through one-on-one conversations, comprising both face-to-face interactions and video calls (VC). The key informants are anticipated to provide comprehensive insights into the difficulties they encounter in harmonizing their academic and athletic commitments, along with the tactics they employ to manage these challenges. The key informants' information and their responses are respected and the confidentiality of the research process.

### Locale



The Philippines is the locale of the study since this is where research is conducted. Philippines with a geographical location of 13°00'N 122°00'E. The Philippines is an archipelago comprising islands with a total land area of 300,000 square kilometers (115,831 sq mi). The Philippines with a total population of 117,337,368 (2023 CENSUS).

### Instrumentation

Given the study's characteristics, the researcher acted as the primary data collection tool (Creswell, 2018)<sup>[7]</sup>. The study's success also hinged on the use of semi-structured interviews, guided by predefined questions, employed as a supplementary method for data collection (Creswell, 2018)<sup>[7]</sup>. For the documentation of the key informants responses, the researchers will be utilizing cell phones to record the entire interview.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers employed the purposive snowball sampling method to select prospective key informants. Emails containing invitation letters were sent to the identified participants. The informed consent forms were provided on the day of the interviews to the prospective key informants. Once negotiations with the key informants were successfully concluded, the interviews promptly commenced.

### Data Analysis

The researchers conducted a thematic analysis of the gathered data, utilizing Colaizzi's (1978) method in descriptive phenomenology. This method involved seven steps: transcription of data, identification of significant statements, formulation of meanings, clustering of themes, development of an exhaustive description, creation of the fundamental structure, and finally, seeking verification of the fundamental structure. Each step in this process entailed a comprehensive analysis while ensuring a robust alignment with the collected data (Morrow *et al.*, 2015)<sup>[23]</sup>.

### Rigor of the Study

In order to guarantee the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study, the researchers put into practice four approaches

recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1989). These methods encompassed credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, and were systematically applied to all facets of the research.

### **Credibility**

As proposed by Maher *et al.* (2018), credibility ensured that the study accurately measured its intended variables and truly reflected the responses of the participants. To establish this credibility, the researcher initiated a connection with the participants before gathering data and nurtured a relationship built on trust. The key informants were invited and briefed about the research's purpose prior to the interviews. This allowed the researcher to become familiar with the participants and facilitated the establishment of rapport during the interviews. Additionally, this initial phase served as a means to assess the key informants to ensure they met the predetermined criteria. The researcher employed a purposive technique to select potential key informants, excluding those who did not meet the criteria. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the researcher, along with experts, manually coded the transcripts. This ensured that only the actual words of the key informants were used. The verbatim statements of the key informants were translated accurately and validated by an expert. The data was then subjected to Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. Credibility was further enhanced by systematically selecting key informants, reviewing their recordings and transcripts repeatedly to further investigate the challenges faced by the student athletes of the Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT) and to emphasize further understanding and addressing the challenges they faced in their overall success in higher education.

### **Dependability**

To ensure that comprehensive details were provided and to facilitate potential replication by other researchers, the study applied dependability systematically (Maher *et al.*, 2018). In this study, the socio-cultural conditions of student athletes from selected state universities in the Philippines, particularly those affiliated with the Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT), were described. The entire dataset relied exclusively on information provided by key informants. The researchers took measures to ensure that the data collected were authenticated by the key informants following the transcription of the interview recordings. Two open-ended questions were presented, and any subsequent inquiries were guided solely by the responses of the key informants. A panel of research experts reviewed the questions for validation. After scrutinizing the data, an expert subsequently corroborated the findings to affirm the phenomenon under study.

### **Confirmability**

To ensure the confirmability of the study, the researcher incorporated data analysis techniques that were tailored to the study's nature, aiming to prevent biases. Additionally, the manuscript explicitly outlined that manual coding was carried out in collaboration with an expert, following Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. This step was taken to guarantee a thorough and accurate analysis of the gathered data. Review and verification were consistently integrated into the data analysis process. Every detail was cross-checked to confirm that the data was derived solely from the

informants' responses, with no bias influencing the analysis.

### **Transferability**

To establish the applicability of the study in other contexts or research, the concept of transferability was applied (Maher *et al.*, 2018). The study delved into the socio-cultural circumstances of student athletes affiliated with the Philippine National Arnis Team (PNAT) from specific state universities in the Philippines. The researcher functioned as both the instrument and investigator of the study. Recordings and field notes were utilized, encompassing the researcher's notes, journal entries, manuscript, and details regarding how the data was analyzed. The study's specifics, particularly the selection process and qualifications of key informants, were thoroughly elucidated. This transparency allowed other researchers to evaluate whether the study's findings could be transferred or applied to their own research.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical standards were upheld throughout the entirety of the study. The research received ethical approval from the university Research Ethics Committee (REC). When collecting data, the researcher provided participants with an informed consent form, underscoring that their involvement was entirely voluntary and they could opt out without facing any repercussions. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the identities of the informants were protected and replaced with pseudonyms. Additionally, each informant received an honorarium as a token of the researcher's appreciation for their participation.

### **Result and Discussion**

This section presented the comprehensive analysis of the data collected through interviews and surveys with Philippine National Arnis student-athletes. The research identified one hundred fifty-eight significant statements, from which nine themes emerged. These themes were further categorized into four main groups, represented by the acronym "CAPE," denoting Challenges of a Student-Athlete, Achievement and Outcome, Personal Attributes, and External Factors. The subsequent discussion will delve into each theme, providing insights into the experiences of these dedicated student-athletes.

#### **Theme 1: Challenges of a Student-athlete**

The study revealed that Student-Athletes had challenges encountered being a student-athlete. The sudden shift of environment, especially those student-athletes who transfer from city to city. Moreover, due to distance learning, student-athletes had to rely on online platforms to participate in their courses, given the absence of in-person interactions.

One key informant said:

*"Ahh una gyud ato is e ko'g struggle especially katong pag pagbalhin na namo dire sa manila kay nainform mi nga naapil mi sa national team dayon ari nami magpuyo." (First of all, I encountered heaps of struggles as a student-athlete, especially when we transferred here in Manila after we qualified to be one of the national team "Arnis" and as part of the team, we were obliged to live here in the headquarters. That*



*said, the problem doubled and for our study to not be compromised, we sought consideration to our schools for us to have an online class instead.)*

The informants shared the importance of time management because being away from school, attending online classes, doing your projects, assignments and with your training you can't achieve that without the proper time management. According to study, it's crucial to recognize that student-athletes have distinct challenges compared to incoming students in the general student population. They must effectively balance the demands of athletics, academics, and social aspects of the college experience. Despite these challenges, student-athletes are still expected to achieve growth in student learning and personal development during their college years, much like their peers that are non-athletic (Gayles & Baker, 2015) <sup>[11]</sup>. These student-athletes are obliged to excel in their respective sports and manage demanding academic schedules while navigating the challenges (Parker *et al.*, 2016) <sup>[26]</sup>.

Another informant said:

*“Grabe akong juggle sa akong academics, juggle sa sport, labi na sa katong time nga graduating student ko, like naa nako sa internship na ano, then nag training ko for national battle of champions in which mao ang basehan para ma national team ka so grabe kaayo akong mga like akong mga decision making adto like what should I ah prioritize, ang akong academics ba or akoang ah pagka athlete.” (I put a lot of effort in juggling academics and sport. Especially when I was a graduating student, like I was in my internship at that time while I'm also training for the national battle of champions where it will be the basis to be included in the national team. Because of that, I put a lot of effort and critically think about my decisions. What things should I prioritize first, my education or my athletic journey)*

The key informants shared her/his experience on how she/he balances academics while being a national athlete. According to study, balancing athletic and academic responsibilities is a common challenge for many student-athletes, often leading to academic underperformance (Constantinou, 2019) <sup>[5]</sup>. The findings of a research project have highlighted two primary concerns in terms of student engagement: First, student-athletes struggle with demanding schedules that leave them with limited opportunities for active participation on campus. Their commitments to athletics impose constraints on their daily flexibility. Second, a significant portion of student-athlete engagement is centered around programs that are devised and managed by the coaching staff of their respective teams (Hendricks & Johnson, 2016) <sup>[14]</sup>. Another challenge for student-athletes is the limited amount of free time available to them. Their busy and tightly packed schedules often make it difficult for them to attend events or spend quality time with loved ones (David, 2022) <sup>[8]</sup>. It is a matter of choice whether to prioritize the other side or the other way around. But doing both academic and athletic will always be a challenge and will never be easy. It will always be your decision making that prevails at the end.

## Theme 2: Achievement and Outcomes

One of the most rewarding and relieving moments of being a hardworking student-athlete is to gain and earn results and outcomes that gives someone satisfaction and pride to themselves. One of the most crucial traits someone may possess is achievement. The more you accomplish, the better you get and the more opportunities you'll have to get a new career. (Woolf, 2019). These heart-warming moments was clearly expressed by the student-athletes throughout their careers.

One key the informants noted:

*“So, ah I would say nga ang pinaka highlight sa akoang life is this year 2023 I was able to bring home a silver medal during the SEA Games then ni graduate ko as Magna Cum Laude dinhi sa Cebu Normal University.” (So uhm I would say that the biggest highlight of my life is this year 2023 when I was able to bring home a silver medal during the SEA Games and I graduated as Magna Cum Laude here in Cebu Normal University.)*

The satisfaction of achieving a goal provides us with the drive we need to achieve our other goals (Guberti, 2014). The key informant expressed how relieving and joyful it is to gain achievements and positive outcomes with all the hard works and sacrifices executed throughout their careers as student-athletes.

Another informant said:

*“Bagohay ra baya ko ni graduate baya. uhhh naka graduate ko while student Athlete ko tapos nala graduate ko nga wala ko ka experience ug hagbong kana gyud” (I currently just graduated and uhhh I graduated while also being a student athlete and I graduated where I did not experience failed grades so that's it.)*

The key informant expressed how relieving it is to graduate while being an athlete and without even failing once. It shows their testament of hard work and dedication that led into the achievements and outcomes where there will always be moments of unforgettable experiences of each student-athlete.

## Theme 3: Personal Attributes

Personal attributes are crucial in understanding how these athletes fulfill their unique roles, handle challenges, and navigate the complexities of their dual responsibilities. Each student-athlete possesses distinct qualities, such as determination, familial support, adaptability, and resilience. Menke (2016) <sup>[21]</sup> found that student-athletes believes the attributes they gained from from their participation in collegiate sport positively influenced their professional and personal lives. The six key informants shared twelve personal attributes and it was clustered into two.

One key informant said:

*“Labaw najud ang responsibilidad kay syempre imong gina represents dili na ano school, dili na city*

*kung dili ang tibuok Pilipinas najud.” (Especially the responsibility of being a national athlete because you are no longer representing the school or city but the whole country which is the Philippines.)*

This statement of the informant showed a clear awareness of the unique and significant responsibilities that come with being a national athlete. It highlights a pivotal shift in their role, moving from representing a school or city to representing the entire country, the Philippines. This shift in responsibility holds a substantial weight, and the informant seems to acknowledge the magnitude of this transition. Imm (2021) said that the responsibilities of a student-athlete include fulfilling the responsibilities of both a student and a young athlete. Research has shown that witnessing athletes representing the nation at international sporting competitions can inspire national pride, happiness, and a sense of belonging (Hilvoorde, et al. 2010) [30]. While not explicitly stated, there's a sense of national pride and accountability implied, underscoring the personal attributes of patriotism and dedication that are essential for such athletes in their journey to represent their nation. National pride is a powerful motivator for athletes, as it gives them a sense of purpose beyond personal achievement (Voa, 2009) [31].

Another key informant shared:

*“Okay so, first jud no nga nakatabang nako nga nakaya gyud nako tanang struggles, tanang challenges is my parents, like they really believe nga, bisan pag nag breakdown nako sa ilang atubangan they really believe nga kaya nako, and that thought na naay ni salig nako ang akong parents, akong parents is proud kaayo sa akong gipangbuhat so nipadayun gyud ko.” (The first thing that truly helped me overcome all struggles and challenges is my parents. They firmly believe that even when I break down in front of them, they truly believe that I can handle it. Their unwavering support gives me the confidence to keep going. My parents are incredibly proud of what I'm doing, so I persevere.)*

The testimony provided by one of the key informants underscores the vital role of personal attributes such as resilience, robust family support, and self-confidence in the lives of student-athletes. As outlined in the study, parental support has been linked to the level of youth engagement in sports, the physical and mental well-being of the child, as well as their overall success and passion for the sport (Nunomura et al., 2013) [25]. The informant's testimony underscores the crucial role that parents play in the athletes' journey, emphasizing their unwavering belief in their child's abilities even during moments of vulnerability. The mention of parents' pride adds another dimension to the personal attributes, reflecting the motivation drawn from a desire to make one's family proud. It illustrates that personal attributes extend beyond the individual athlete, touching upon the vital role of familial relationships and emotional strength in navigating the challenges faced by the student-athletes. According to Escoto & Alfarero (2022) [9], parents should give full support to their student-athletes and should be made aware of the impact of their encouragement towards the achievement of these athletes' goals.

#### Theme 4: External Factors

This study revealed the things and factors that help and support the Philippine national athlete through their journey of becoming the representatives of our nation. These factors may cause positive or negative reinforcement to the student athletes' influence to pursue and chase their journeys. Through this, we recognize Factors that are not manipulated but are experienced and supported. Through this, let it be known the external factors creating motivation and drawing inspiration to our athletes.

Key informant once stated:

*“Okay so, first jud no nga nakatabang nako nga nakaya gyud nako tanang struggles, tanang challenges is my parents, like they really believe nga, bkanang bisan pag nag breakdown nako sa ilang atubangan they really believe nga kaya nako, and that thought na naay ni salig nako ang akong parents, akong parents is proud kaayo sa akong gipangbuhat so nipadayun gyud ko.” (Okay, so the first people who helped me handle all the struggles and challenges I faced were my parents. They always believed that I could overcome anything, even when I would bow down and break down in front of them, saying that I couldn't continue. Instead, they would lift me up, believing that I could achieve those things. The fact that they trusted me, were proud of me, and acknowledged my achievements is what motivated me to keep going.)*

The key informant expressed how important that there is someone who supports you, especially your loved ones, that gives you strength and motivation to go forward and fight.

Another informant said:

*“So usa sad na siya and ang pinaka nindut jud ana is kanang ang mga maestro muingon sila nga ‘sige pag duwa lang didtu, nya dayun ug kung maka gold ka kay okay ra ang tanan’.” (One of the best when the teacher said ‘Go play, and then if you can get gold then you are good in all activities’.)*

The key informant expressed how rewarding and happy it is to succeed and experience success after putting in so much effort and making so many sacrifices.

Another key Informants added:

*“Ang akoa is naa sa amoang dorm man gud naa miy mga kauban or grupo, mao sad na naka advantage sa amoa kase katong akong mga kauban murag... kani galeng murag sundalo na ano kanang pakikisama murag brotherhood kaayo ba.” (Back in our dormitory, the bond that we created with my teammates and colleagues is like an army or more like a brotherhood and that is an advantage for me.)*

These responses with the key informants shows that a support system also can be found with your peers and friends inside to which sport you are into. Sharing the same passion and creating bonds can deeply motivate and enhance one's ability and stability. It shows that external factors can

evidently be a way to cause the athlete to have an impact on their game and the process of them as being their coping mechanism and support system. According to Bissett *et al.* (2022), Athletes' coaches have been recognized as sources of support, and it is hypothesized that student-athletes constitute an at-risk demographic for psychological discomfort. But little is known about how student-athletes and their coaches communicate when an athlete discloses psychological problems. This concludes that external factors like coaches have a significant impact on their athletes' psychological and mental capacity. According to a different study, parents can interact and engage with their children during these formative years of sport engagement before the middle and college years (Dorsch, Smith, & McDonough, 2015), when parents are crucial in promoting their child's participation in sports and ongoing development.

Fostering a positive relationship with coaches can cultivate a culture within the department that emphasizes the significance of academics and the commitment of academic support staff to the academic achievements of student-athletes. Although these connections cannot guarantee enhanced academic performance, increased support and involvement from different parties can contribute to the creation of a favorable academic atmosphere for student-athletes (Huml *et al.*, 2019)<sup>[15]</sup>. His decision to specialize in running and aim for higher levels of competition was encouraged by his family's involvement in a running group. In addition, families were able to foster positive interactions inside the family unit when they engaged in sports together. Support and companionship allow parents to actively participate in the development of the athlete's sports engagement. This research provides and realizes the importance of factors affecting student-Athletes mental, and behavioral capacity in handling and playing the sports especially in arnis.

### **Exhaustive Description of the Lived Experience of Philippine National Arnis Student-Athletes**

The lived experience of the student-athlete of Philippines Arnis Team is categorized in the abbreviation 'CAPE' which represents: Challenges of a Student-Athlete, Achievement and Outcomes, Personal Attributes, and External Factors. The path of being a student athlete is not solely marked by excitement; it demands significant effort, responsibility, and numerous sacrifices. As student-athletes, the challenge lies in the complicated balance between their academic and athletic commitments. It's a daily struggle to balance academic and athletic commitments, necessitating meticulous planning and discipline. Many student-athletes find themselves unable to attend regular classes due to the geographical separation between their training base and universities. This often compels them to rely on teachers and classmates for guidance, intensifying their challenges.

Maintaining progress in their skills and performance is an ongoing challenge as they represent their nation in international competitions. The pressure is immense, with each performance carrying the weight of their country's pride and reputation. These student-athletes must draw upon their determination, resilience, and passion to rise to these challenges, showcasing their unwavering commitment to personal growth and national pride. Despite numerous challenges, their journey is fortified by external factors like family support, motivation from friends, and the encouragement of teachers. This support network enables

them to achieve their ambitions and represent their nation with pride, both in the field of sports and academics.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, the experiences of Philippine National Arnis Student-Athletes can be categorized into four main areas. They face individual challenges but overcome them through personal growth in areas such as prioritization, time management, and decision-making. Support from family, friends, teachers, schools, and communities motivates them to persevere. These challenges, both physical and mental, contribute to their personal development, instilling qualities like determination and resilience.

### **Recommendation**

Institutions should offer specific external incentives and positive reinforcements for Philippine National Arnis Student-Athletes. Establishing satellite training facilities in nearby areas would not only cut down expenses but also make it more convenient for these dedicated student-athletes. Schools should develop a unique learning platform tailored for them. Moreover, affording these student-athletes accommodations in school events and assessments would facilitate their academic advancement and involvement in extracurricular activities. These steps would foster a more harmonious and encouraging atmosphere, ultimately boosting their efforts in both academics and athletics.

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