



## Academic Demands and Athletic Commitments: A Cross-Sectional Study on Student-Athletes' Time Management

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### Article Information

**Received:** November 01, 2025

**Accepted:** January 14, 2026

**Published:** May 21, 2026

### Keywords

*Academic Demands, Academic Life Balance, College Students, Student Athletes, Time-Management*

### ABSTRACT

Balancing academics and athletics requires student-athletes to navigate competing demands that often test their ability to organize time effectively. Their experiences highlight the need for both personal discipline and supportive structures to achieve success in both areas of life. Data were gathered from the total population of student-athletes enrolled at San Isidro College using a validated survey instrument with acceptable reliability, providing an overview of time management practices and challenges faced by the student-athletes. Student-athletes demonstrate effective time management in handling academic and athletic responsibilities while continuing to face consistent challenges across multiple areas of their lives. These findings show that time management supports balance but does not eliminate the pressures linked to dual academic and athletic demands.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Student-athletes carry a unique dual role within their academic journey. They must excel in their studies while dedicating significant time and energy to training, practices, and competitions. This combination often makes their daily schedules more demanding than those of their peers (Salas *et al.*, 2024). Time management becomes an essential skill for them, as it helps balance maintaining strong academic performance with meeting the rigorous expectations of athletics. Without effective planning, student-athletes may find themselves overwhelmed, struggling to fulfill both commitments in a way that supports their success and well-being (Liu & Taresh, 2024).

While many student-athletes develop strategies to manage their time, challenges persist. Academic demands often overlap with training schedules, competitions, and personal responsibilities, creating conflicts that are difficult to navigate (Jaspe *et al.*, 2024). Even with effort, the balance between these commitments is not always achieved, leading to stress, fatigue, or compromised performance in one area (Ines, 2021). The struggle to manage academics alongside athletic and personal life remains a central issue that highlights the need to understand better how student-athletes can effectively cope with these overlapping demands (Blando, 2024).

Although time management has been widely discussed in both educational and athletic settings, there remains a gap in understanding how student-athletes personally

experience and apply these practices (Steele *et al.*, 2020). Much of the existing guidance is general and does not fully capture the realities of students who must move between classrooms, training grounds, and competitions daily. This gap limits the ability of schools and athletic programs to provide practical support that addresses the unique challenges faced by student-athletes. Exploring this experience in detail is necessary to bridge the divide between theory and practice.

Recognizing the challenges faced by student-athletes makes it clear why examining their time management practices is important. Effective time management is not just about scheduling but also about creating a sustainable balance that allows them to succeed academically without compromising their athletic growth or personal well-being. The study underscores the value of developing strategies, programs, and interventions that empower student-athletes to manage their roles more effectively by highlighting the importance of this balance. This ensures they do not have to sacrifice one commitment for the sake of another.

The study seeks to explore how student-athletes manage their time and how this affects their academic performance. It aims to understand the relationship between time management practices and the ability to meet academic demands while maintaining their commitments to athletics.

### Statement of the Problem

Balancing academic responsibilities with athletic

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commitments remains a pressing concern for many student-athletes, as the demands of both areas often compete for time and attention. While some students can apply strategies to manage their schedules, others continue to struggle with issues such as missed classes, reduced study hours, and heightened stress due to overlapping priorities. These challenges highlight the need to understand better how student-athletes cope with such situations and what factors contribute to their success or difficulties. In light of this, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do student-athletes manage their time between academic and athletic responsibilities?
2. What challenges do student-athletes encounter in balancing academic demands with athletic commitments?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Academic Demands and Challenges of Student-Athletes

Student-athletes face academic demands that often go beyond those experienced by non-athlete students due to their dual responsibilities. Studies have shown that balancing coursework, examinations, and academic deadlines alongside training and competitions can lead to increased pressure and limited study time (Ammaar *et al.*, 2024; Liu & Taresh, 2024). Frequent class absences, fatigue, and difficulty maintaining focus are commonly identified challenges that affect academic engagement (Ines, 2021; Levering, 2024). These demands highlight the need for effective support systems and personal strategies that allow student-athletes to meet academic expectations while fulfilling their athletic roles.

### Athletic Commitments and Their Impact on Academic Performance

Athletic commitments require consistent time, physical effort, and mental focus, which can influence academic performance in different ways. Training sessions, competitions, and travel schedules often overlap with classes and study periods, reducing the time available for academic tasks (Steele *et al.*, 2020; Liu & Taresh, 2024; Storey *et al.*, 2024). Several studies suggest that without proper balance, these commitments may lead to missed coursework, delayed submissions, and lower academic outcomes. The intensity of athletic participation can also contribute to physical exhaustion, making it harder for student-athletes to maintain academic concentration (Salas *et al.*, 2024; Steele *et al.*, 2020; Bowers, 2025).

At the same time, literature also recognizes that athletic involvement can positively influence academic performance when managed well. Participation in sports has been linked to improved discipline, motivation, and goal-setting skills, which can support academic success (Levering, 2024; Hart *et al.*, 2025). These mixed findings suggest that the impact of athletic commitments largely depends on how student-athletes manage their time and responsibilities (Amfo, 2024; Blando, 2024). This reinforces the importance of examining how balance is

achieved in real academic settings.

### Time Management Strategies and Practices among Students

Time management has been widely recognized as a key factor in academic success, particularly among students with multiple responsibilities. Research indicates that effective planning, goal setting, and prioritization help students manage academic workloads more efficiently (O'Neil *et al.*, 2021; Bowers, 2025). The use of schedules, planners, and structured routines has been shown to reduce stress and improve task completion (Steele *et al.*, 2020; Jaspe *et al.*, 2024; Storey *et al.*, 2024). These strategies allow students to allocate time more intentionally and avoid last-minute academic pressure.

For student-athletes, time management practices play an even more critical role due to the demands of both academics and sports (Steele *et al.*, 2020; Ammaar *et al.*, 2024). Studies emphasize that students who actively reflect on their schedules and adjust their strategies are better able to maintain balance. Seeking support from teachers, coaches, and peers also appears to strengthen time management practices (Amfo, 2024; Blando, 2024; Liu & Taresh, 2024). These findings support the need to examine how student-athletes apply time management strategies in their daily lives and how these practices relate to their academic and athletic experiences.

### Conceptual Framework

The study draws from established theories to guide its focus on time management among student-athletes. Self-Regulation Theory (De Bruin *et al.*, 2020) emphasizes the ability of individuals to control their behavior, emotions, and actions in pursuit of goals. This is highly relevant to student-athletes who must regulate their schedules and priorities between academics and sports. Time Management Model (Aeon & Aguinis, 2017) complements this by addressing how individuals plan, organize, and use their time effectively. Together, these theories create a foundation for examining the skills, strategies, and challenges that define student-athletes' experiences.

Alongside these conceptual perspectives, the Student-Athletes Protection Act (RA 10676) provides a legal framework that safeguards the rights of student-athletes in the Philippines. This law emphasizes the importance of ensuring that athletes' education is not compromised by their sports commitments. By including this policy within the framework, the study not only considers how time management affects individual outcomes but also how institutional and structural support can promote balance between academics and athletics. This integration ensures that the study reflects both the personal and systemic dimensions of the issue.

Together, the theories and the law form a comprehensive perspective on student-athletes' time management. Self-Regulation Theory highlights personal responsibility, Time Management Theory provides the practical

processes, and RA 10676 reinforces external protection and support. These elements complement one another, showing that effective time management is not only a personal skill but also a collective responsibility shared by educational institutions and athletic organizations. This combination offers a well-rounded understanding of the challenges student-athletes face and the mechanisms that can help them thrive.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Research Design and Locale**

The research employed a cross-sectional design (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2024) to capture the experiences of student-athletes at a single point in time. This approach was chosen because it allows for the collection of data across different groups simultaneously, providing an overview of how students manage their academic and

athletic responsibilities within a given period. The design was particularly suited to the context of San Isidro College, as it made it possible to include the entire population of student-athletes enrolled at the institution during the study period.

**Sampling Method and Respondents**

The study used total population sampling (Rai & Thapa, 2015) to ensure that all were represented. The method means that every college student-athlete enrolled at San Isidro College during the conduct of the study was included as a participant. The method was selected because the population of student-athletes was manageable in size, and including the entire group helped avoid sampling bias. This approach provided a more comprehensive understanding of the time management practices within this particular population.

**Table 1:** Gender profile of the student-athletes (N=43).

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	21	48.8
	Female	22	51.2
Year	First	9	20.93
	Second	16	37.21
	Third	13	30.23
	Fourth	5	11.63

The participants in the study, as presented in Table 1, were student-athletes currently enrolled at San Isidro College. These individuals represented different sports teams and academic programs, reflecting the varied commitments that student-athletes balance. Their inclusion was essential to provide insights into how they navigate the demands of academics alongside athletics, making their experiences central to the understanding of the research focus.

**Data Gathering Procedure and Data Analysis**

The primary tool for data collection was a researcher-made survey questionnaire designed to assess time management practices, challenges, and academic experiences. To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, it was reviewed by three experts in the field before administration. After validation, the instrument yielded a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.774, indicating acceptable reliability. This process strengthened the credibility of the data and ensured that the questions were aligned with the study’s objectives.

Data were gathered using both online and printed questionnaires to ensure accessibility and convenience for all respondents. Prior to data collection, the researchers clearly explained the purpose and procedures of the study, after which the respondents were asked to read and sign an informed consent form to confirm their voluntary

participation. This process ensured that participants were fully aware of their rights, including confidentiality and the option to withdraw at any time. Once consent was obtained, the questionnaires were distributed and collected within the agreed period, allowing respondents sufficient time to answer honestly and carefully. This approach supported ethical standards and helped ensure that the data gathered were reliable and responsibly obtained.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide a clear and organized summary of the participants’ responses. Measures such as means and standard deviations were used to describe how participants generally responded to each item and to identify common patterns and trends within the dataset. This approach allowed the researchers to summarize responses, identify patterns, and present findings in a way that highlighted the general tendencies of the participants.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the key findings of the study, highlighting patterns and trends that reflect the experiences of student-athletes in managing academic and athletic responsibilities. The results provide a clear basis for understanding how these students organize their time and the challenges they encounter in fulfilling their roles.

Table 2 provides an overview of how student-athletes manage their time in relation to their academic and athletic responsibilities. The table offers a structured view

of the different aspects of time management, reflecting how these practices are applied in daily academic and athletic activities.

**Table 2:** Student-athletes level of time management towards academic and athletic responsibilities.

Variable	$\bar{x}$	$\sigma_x$	Qualitative Interpretation
Time, Planning, and Organization	3.76	0.723	Effective Time Management
Academic Responsibilities	3.90	0.583	Effective Time Management
Athletic Commitment	3.90	0.654	Effective Time Management
Time Management Strategies	3.82	0.697	Effective Time Management
<b>Time Management</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>0.597</b>	<b>Effective Time Management</b>

The student-athletes demonstrated effective time management across all assessed areas. They showed strong abilities in planning and organizing their schedules, managing academic responsibilities, fulfilling athletic commitments, and applying practical time management strategies. The consistency of these results across all domains reflects a generally effective approach to balancing their dual roles as students and athletes. Overall,

the findings suggest that the student-athletes are able to manage their academic and athletic responsibilities in a structured and efficient manner.

Table 3 presents the extent of the challenges experienced by student-athletes as they balance academic demands with athletic commitments. The table reflects the range and level of difficulties encountered across different areas of their academic, athletic, and personal lives.

**Table 3:** Challenges of the student-athletes in balancing academic demands with athletic commitments.

Variables	$\bar{x}$	$\sigma_x$	Qual. Int.	F	p
Academic	3.44 a	0.793	High Level	1.544	0.205
Athletic	3.74 a	0.704	High Level		
Time and Energy Management	3.60 a	0.729	High Level		
Personal and Social	3.72 a	0.733	High Level		

Despite showing effective time management, the student-athletes still reported high levels of challenges across academic, athletic, time and energy management, and personal and social areas. This means that even though they manage their responsibilities well, they continue to experience significant pressures that make balancing these roles difficult. The comparison of challenge levels across categories showed no significant difference, indicating that the difficulties they face are relatively uniform across different aspects of their lives. This suggests that while student-athletes are able to manage their time effectively, they still encounter considerable challenges that come with balancing the demands of academics and athletics.

**Discussions**

The discussion that follows explains the meaning of the results and relates them to the experiences of student-athletes in managing multiple responsibilities. It provides a deeper understanding of the findings and highlights their significance within the academic setting.

**Student-Athletes’ Level of Time Management toward Academic and Athletic Responsibilities**

The results indicate that student-athletes are generally

able to manage their time effectively across academic and athletic responsibilities. This suggests that they are capable of organizing their schedules, setting priorities, and balancing competing demands in a structured manner. In relation to the guiding question on how student-athletes manage their time, the findings show that most participants demonstrate control over their daily activities, allowing them to meet both academic and athletic expectations without one consistently overpowering the other.

The presentation of the results reflects a consistent pattern across different aspects of time management, showing that student-athletes apply similar approaches in handling academic tasks, athletic commitments, and daily planning. This consistency implies that their time management is not limited to a single area but is practiced across multiple responsibilities (Ammaar *et al.*, 2024; Blando, 2024; Liu & Taresh, 2024). Such an approach highlights their ability to regulate behavior, plan ahead, and adjust schedules when necessary, which supports a balanced engagement in both roles.

The implications of these findings suggest that student-athletes possess functional skills that allow them to respond effectively to academic and athletic

demands. Their ability to manage time well points to a level of independence and discipline that supports both performance and responsibility. However, this effectiveness also places emphasis on the importance of continued institutional support to sustain these practices and ensure that academic obligations remain protected alongside athletic participation (Amfo, 2024; Jaspe *et al.*, 2024; Levering, 2024; Storey *et al.*, 2024; Bowers, 2025).

### Challenges in Balancing Academic Demands and Athletic Commitments

Despite demonstrating effective time management, the student-athletes still experience considerable challenges in balancing academic and athletic demands. These challenges reflect the pressure that comes from handling multiple responsibilities at the same time, even when individuals are capable of organizing their schedules. In relation to the guiding question on challenges encountered, the results show that managing academics, athletics, personal well-being, and social life remains demanding despite the presence of effective time management skills. The analysis of the results shows that the challenges experienced by student-athletes are similar across different areas of their lives. The lack of significant variation among these challenges suggests that no single area stands out as more difficult than the others. This indicates that the strain of balancing responsibilities is spread evenly across academic, athletic, and personal domains, reinforcing the idea that time management alone does not remove the pressures linked to multiple role demands (Amfo, 2024; Storey *et al.*, 2024; Hart *et al.*, 2025).

The implications of these findings highlight that effective time management does not eliminate challenges but helps student-athletes cope with them. The presence of high challenge levels alongside effective time management suggests that student-athletes are functioning under constant pressure, requiring both personal effort and external support (O'Neil *et al.*, 2021; Liu & Taresh, 2024). This underscores the importance of creating environments that recognize these ongoing challenges and provide systems that protect students from being overwhelmed while fulfilling their academic and athletic roles.

### Synthesis

Considering all factors, the findings show that student-athletes are able to manage their time effectively while still experiencing significant challenges in balancing academic and athletic demands. This indicates that time management functions as a coping mechanism rather than a complete solution. Student-athletes are able to organize their responsibilities and meet expectations, yet the demands placed on them remain high and persistent across different areas of their lives.

This synthesis highlights the complexity of the student-athlete experience, where effective personal management exists alongside structural and role-related pressures. The results emphasize that while student-athletes demonstrate

responsibility and discipline, their success depends not only on individual skills but also on continued support that ensures academic responsibilities are not compromised by athletic involvement. Together, these findings provide a balanced understanding of how student-athletes manage their time and the challenges they continue to face.

### CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicate that student-athletes are able to manage their time effectively across academic and athletic responsibilities, as reflected in their consistent use of planning, organization, and self-regulation in daily activities. These practices support continued academic participation while meeting athletic commitments, showing that student-athletes are capable of handling their dual roles within the academic setting. However, the results also show that effective time management does not remove the challenges linked to balancing multiple demands. Pressures related to academics, athletics, and personal life remain evident, suggesting that time management functions as a coping mechanism rather than a complete solution.

This pattern highlights that student-athletes rely on structured planning and discipline to sustain performance, yet they continue to experience ongoing strain that requires institutional understanding and support. The study acknowledges limitations related to its cross-sectional design, self-reported data, and single-institution scope, which frame the findings within a specific context. Based on these results, the paper emphasizes the need for continued academic support, coordination between academic and athletic units, and programs that promote balance. Directions for future research are framed around examining changes over time and exploring broader contexts to strengthen understanding of student-athletes' experiences.

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