



Research Article

Educator-Athlete Mentorship: Experiences of Secondary School Sports Coaches in Balancing Academic and Sports Responsibilities

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT



Keywords:

Educator-athlete mentorship, teacher-coaches, dual roles, academic-athletic responsibilities, role strain

Article History:

Received: 20-08-2025

Accepted: 19-11-2025

Published: 25-11-2025

It is a qualitative-phenomenological research that examined the lived experiences of teacher coaches in a secondary school based on the private Catholic institution in Tagum City. The data were gathered through in- depth interviews and focus group discussions. Results showed that teacher-coaches had to deal with strong challenges, such as heavy time pressure, role conflict, institutional pressure and role strain, which resulted in exhaustion. However, respondents embraced different coping mechanisms like active planning, support amongst colleagues, and self-coping systems. The paper identifies the need to have well-organized support frameworks and policy changes that will foster sustainability and well-being of teacher-coaches in their holistic well-being and effectiveness as an educator and a sports mentor.

Cite this article:

Abundiente, K., Alindajao, K. E. J., Simbajon, R. C., Berido, C. A., Suarez, C. E., Gamas, J. C. L., Abo-Abo, D. L., Sun, T., & Acosta, M. M. (2025). Educator-Athlete Mentorship: Experiences of Secondary School Sports Coaches in Balancing Academic and Sports Responsibilities. *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(9), 30–40. <https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v4i9.576>

1. Introduction

Efficient production of well-trained sportspeople depends on the availability of successful coaches who influence the individuals into success. The coaches have a significant role to play in ensuring that skill enhancement and achievement of goals are achieved. There is however a significant challenge in managing several responsibilities, which are demanding and at the same time, having multiple roles that are time-consuming will lead to a state of pressure that will negatively affect performance efficacy. The fight to find balance is thus critical to consider since it can have a deep impact on personal health and the accomplishments and growth of the people under their supervision.

Secondary school coaches involved in sports in Georgia face both physical and emotional challenges related to being involved with dual roles. Such challenges are caused by role conflicts, which depend on such factors as work-family conflict, work-aholism, or teacher-coach role conflict (Davis, 2020). Research in the United States also highlights extended hours, task overload, and additional responsibilities as sources of these conflicts (Westmoreland, 2021). According to Zadorozny (2023), there are five major factors that render the challenges of teacher-coach duality: the attempt to combine various roles and responsibilities, the inability to separate different tasks, the rigorousness of time management, the issue of role ambivalence, and the so-called role retreatism.

Similarly, teacher-coaches working in the countries of the ASEAN also face similar limitations. In Malaysia, the heavy teaching load constrains the ability of the coach to focus on athletic training, which will negatively affect the performance of the athletes (Zan & Adnan, 2022). The case of Indonesia where physical education teachers have to balance the elements of coaching with a range of duties associated with sports further reduces the overall performance (Rusandi, 2024). Thailand shows that a lack of administrative assistance by the leaders of schools is a serious hindrance to effective dual roles management (Preechawong et al., 2021).

Inside the Philippines the coaches at secondary-schools often strive to balance school and athletics. Jandongan (2022) notes that the teachers of physical education in Ilonggo region find it exceptionally overwhelming to fulfill two full-time jobs at the same time, but they do it because they still have a strong passion toward coaching. As Concordia (2022) emphasizes, the ability of the coaches to foster respect, confidence, and character in athletes is limited by time factors, which are caused by the needs of the two job descriptions.

At a smaller scale, within Tagum City, many teacher-coaches lack formal training in coaching which poses a setback to their coaching leadership competence. As a result, the stress on their coaching and academic responsibilities increases, which is only made worse by the social norms and their own insufficient

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<https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v4i9.576>

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readiness to meet the athletic and mental needs of students (Caritativo, 2024).

The efficacy of teacher-coaches in guiding athletes and role competence has been investigated in previous studies by Zan and Adnan (2022) and Ghayebzadeh (2023); however, both typically question coaching roles or role competence without exploring the lived experience of handling the dual role of an educator-coach. Since there is a lingering issue about student academic success and athlete performance under teacher-coach guidance in the Philippines, this research aims to help overcome a severe gap by examining how the two roles impact both academic and athletic performance.

The importance of the study is in the fact that teacher-coaches help not only to academic but also to athletic excellence, which leads to the comprehensive development. The results can be used to guide the educational institutions in creating more advanced support systems, policies, and training programmes that would improve time-management practices and provide teacher-coaches with the necessary skills to succeed in both roles. To resolve them is a move that will lead to more organized and enabling sports mentorship and therefore improve the standard of mentorship that can lead to the success of student-athletes both academically and athletically.

1.1 Research Questions

This research paper seeks to explore the lived experiences among secondary-school sports coaches as they go about the pressures of both academic and sporting roles.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers, who are sports coaches?
2. What are the ways through which teachers combine academic and sporting demands?
3. What are the practical lessons that can be learned based on the experiences of teachers?

1.2 Review of Related Literature

The next section has the summary of related research, studies, and literature that sheds some light on experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights of teacher-coaches in terms of dual role.

The Experiences of Teacher-Coaches in the Dual Roles

The sports coaches of secondary-schools in Georgia are exposed to physical and emotional challenges that arise on the basis of the duality of their positions. These are caused by the contradiction between the demands of teaching and coaching practice, which are further exacerbated by the work-family conflict and workaholism (Davis, 2020). In the United States, Westmoreland (2021) found that role congruence indicated by too many coach hours spent on one job, too many tasks, and non-professional jobs were identified in many coaches. Zadorozny (2023) also outlined five major factors aggravating these issues which are role balancing, difficulty in compartmentalizing the responsibilities, time-management requirements, role ambivalence, and role retreatism.

In the United States, coaches have also been challenged in mentoring students in areas other than development of technical skills, including life skills, mental health, and conflict management. Social forces, e.g., the established mentality of win at all costs, burden their ability to help athletes develop as complex beings. Only 18 per cent of coaches who reported that they were certain about their skill to direct athletes to mental-health services illustrate a dire absence of planning and preparation (Aspen Institute, 2021). The primary issue that is also mentioned by

numerous coaches is that the available training programmes are so expensive, time-consuming, or inadequate to support more general developmental requirements (Crown, 2025). The lack of resources is another factor that discourages effective coaching since most of the schools do not have proper facilities. Plans like the Sport Ireland Coaching Plan have highlighted the need to use accessible education and national standards in improving the quality and inclusiveness of coaching (Sport Ireland, 2022).

Coping Mechanisms of Teacher-Coaches

Effective strategies, especially in time-management are needed by teacher-coaches in order to balance their two roles in teaching and coaching. The empirical data on the topic can prove the beneficial effect of time-management competency on performance and well-being across different settings. As an example, Saban (2022) found that in the Philippines, time-management skills of teachers significantly depended on general performance, where better time-management lowers stress and enhances attention to academic and coaching tasks. Equally, research in Indonesia found that novel training programmes increased teacher awareness and use of time-management skills to enhance lesson delivery and address stress (Khan et al., 2021). Task prioritisation, planning, and scheduling are the strategies used by many teachers in Pakistan to have a positive impact on teaching performance (Khan et al., 2023).

The Filipino teachers also take advantage of the digital resources to quickly find the relevant information to plan their lessons, and, therefore, his or her role as a coach and a teacher will be integrated (Olivo, 2021). The literature highlights goal-setting and scheduling as key elements of teacher performance improvement as examples, which follow the pedagogical practices applied by effective coaches in the United States, thus portraying the strong connection between classroom learning and coaching practices (Meyer, 2024). In addition, Egyptian coaches evolve strong coping strategies to track progress, training situations, and game needs and adapt swiftly to changes, which emphasizes the necessity of paradoxical and reactive coping with their two occupations (Ahmed, 2020).

The Insights of Teacher-Coaches in Balancing Dual Roles

Empirical studies conducted in the United States reveal individual and organizational issues faced by teacher-coaches, especially on the role conflict and workload management. Conner (2020) highlights the disproportionate valued reward system in which coaching is ahead of teaching, and thus, it is the teacher-coach who invests more time and effort in coaching due to higher reward rates, recognition and prestige, thus contributing to role conflict. Blazar (2020) emphasizes the fact that time and resources constraint force teacher-coaches to balance lessons preparation, grading, and coaching responsibilities, thus making them especially susceptible to burnout and ineffectiveness. On the same note, Johnson et al. (2023) found out that heavy academic load in Australia is likely to reduce the visibility of coaching, a factor that may deny student-athletes the much-needed guidance and have a detrimental impact on their growth.

In addition, Mellor et al. (2020) compared veteran and novice teacher-coaches in the United States, and the authors found that a major theme of time conflicts, relational tensions, and environmental factors influenced the ways teacher-coaches balanced their overlapping roles and the stress associated with them. In the Philippines, Aquino and Jolo (2024) refer to the holistic approach to coaching, including mentorship and adaptable role modeling, which is one of a teacher, a mentor, and a parent, to promote personal and athletic development in students. At the same time, in the United Kingdom, Wright (2020) recommends systemic changes, such as an organized training

regimen, correct scheduling, and institutional infrastructure, to reduce workload stressors and improve teacher-coach performance.

To sum up, this research highlights that teacher-coaches face further severe issues in the context of the need to fulfill two roles as teachers and sport coaches. According to the empirical evidence, role conflict as a result of competing teaching and coaching needs has a negative effect on the emotional well-being and the professional performance of teacher-coaches. These roles make it necessary to have effective coping skills including time management to help it manage the burden of the responsibilities. Also, there are existing social demands complicating the situation even further, with several teacher-coaches feeling that they are ill-equipped to meet the mental health needs of student-athletes. When such demands are not managed, it can lead to a greater level of stress and lower teaching competence. Therefore, special policies, extensive professional development, and strong supports such as mentorship programs, interprofessional networks and institutional provision should be implemented to meet the specific needs of teacher-coaches, which will in turn promote their professional development and safe effective development of student-athletes.

1.4 Theoretical Lens

The following theories are anchored on this study:

This paper makes use of role theory, defined by George Herbert Mead (1934) and Ralph Linton (1936) which defines the role as the social roles being performed by individuals under different circumstances. Role theory explains the predicaments that teacher-coaches face in their efforts to juggle between academic and athletic duties. The role conflict occurs when teacher-coaches do not focus on specific aspects of their work: teaching and coaching as roles often conflict, causing stress and inability to perform the duties in a proper way. Role strain also arises when they cannot fulfill all role expectations hence not successfully balance the two responsibilities.

By using pickle-jar theory (Wright, 2002), that demonstrates the hierarchies of one task over the other, teacher-coaches will be able to efficiently manage their time when they can evaluate the importance of the tasks they have to do, plan them and spend a lot of time on the work that should be done first. This practice will ensure a healthy and more balanced schedule, reduce pressures and burnout, and allow teacher-coaches to maintain a personal life and other professional commitments without affecting the academic achievement of students and the training of athletes.

Also, this paper relies on Identity Theory that was developed by Ullin Thomas Place, Herbert Feigl, and John Jamieson Carswell Smart during the 1960s in order to gain an understanding of the interaction of role identities, salience, and commitment to create a framework of strategies that help teacher-coaches to maintain a sustainable balance and performance in both professions.

2. METHOD

This chapter dwells on the approach used in this qualitative phenomenological study. Specifically, the research design, selection of the participants, data sources, data collection procedures, data analysis, and the ethical considerations are addressed.

2.1 Research Design

The research design is a qualitative type of research that integrates a phenomenological method of analyzing the lived-experiences of teacher-coaches.

Qualitative research focuses on individuals and their social aspects, which is based on social sciences (Bryman, 2004). Besides, it does not easily admit of cataloguing of pre-conceived

or common-sense ideas but maximizes the creative presence of the researcher and applies theoretical abstraction which is a methodological technique that reinvigorates phenomena to produce extremely generalizable knowledge. This method is suitable in that it supports a thorough investigation of the lived experiences of teacher-coaches working in the secondary schools in order to embody the intricacies and senses around maintaining a dual role in sport and academics.

The phenomenological approach on the other hand explains the lived experience of phenomenon and brings out its essence (Giorgi, 2009). Moustakas (1994) argues that this method is used to explain the meaning of lived experiences of people. In addition, Van Manen (1990) notes that in phenomenology, profound involvement in the phenomenon brings out perspectives that are based on the respondents. The focus of this methodology is especially appropriate to this study as it will enable a thorough, in-depth examination of lived experience of the teachers-coaches in secondary schools in order to obtain a detailed picture of how these professionals cope with the intricacies of the sport and school life balancing.

2.2 Research Participants

The sample population of this phenomenological research comprised 5 to 10 teachers in either of the 3 years in the second or third year of secondary education in a Catholic-based, privately owned school in Tagum City, Davao del Norte. Five of these respondents took part in the in-depth interviews aimed at exploring their dual professional roles management experience, and four teacher-coaches took part in the focused group discussion. The sample selected is in line with the recommendation of 5 to 10 participants selected in qualitative interviews (Renwick, 2022) to reach data saturation and the guideline of 4 to 8 participants in focus groups (Hartmann, 2022) to make members provide substantive information. The purposive sampling, a deliberate technique, was the method to select the participants and focus on those who have the highest level of knowledge related to the topic of the research, which guarantees the relevance and exhaustiveness of the data (Etikan and Babatope, 2020). This research method is especially effective when the purpose of a research is clear and narrowly defined respondents are needed to respond to the research questions (Alchemer, 2023). The adoption of this approach helped the researchers to collect abundant diversified opinions regarding the experiences of teacher-coaches as they balance between education and coaching.

The teacher-coach participants were sampled according to the following inclusion criteria: (1) currently works as a secondary school teacher and as a sports coach in a Catholic private school in Tagum City, Davao del Norte; (2) has a minimum of one year of experience as an instructor and coach of both students and student -athletes in any sport; and (3) has the responsibility of mentoring student-athletes concomitant with meeting academic responsibilities.

2.3 Data Sources

Qualitative research data is not numerical and descriptive as it is non-numerical and it describes subjective and contextual data about human behavior and experiences, which is usually received through interviews, focus groups, and observations (NNLM, 2022). Data were collected in this study using in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion using secondary school sports coaches in one of the private Catholic schools in Tagum City, Davao del Norte. The deep interviews provided comprehensive, subjective views and helped the researchers shed light on the challenges, time-management techniques, and support mechanisms that the participants were exposed to (Taherdoost,

2022; Delve, 2024; Wallace Foundation, 2023). At the same time, the focus group discussions led by the Krueger and Casey (2015) model facilitated the development of group and reflective conversation, during which the participants revealed the challenges and coping strategies in terms of balancing their dual role. Secondary materials, which included previous discussions and interpretations were also used to support the findings of the study.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

To lessen the risk of compromising the integrity and ethical performance of the study, a methodological data collection process was implemented, including several approval and consent stages prior to the collection of the participant data. The researchers first obtained the consent and approval of the Research Adviser. The interview guide was provided to the advisor to validate and give feedback on the questions to be included in the interview guide to meet the objectives and research topics of the study, which involved making appropriate modifications to the guide. The next step was to get signatures of key school officials in a sequential order; the Senior High School Focal Person, who is in charge of academic activities; the Basic Education Department Principal, who would provide facilitation and coordination; and finally, the School Attorney would sign the documents, implying that the entire administration of the school would support the study.

The researchers further got the informed consent of individual Teacher-Coach participants via a comprehensive Informed Consent Form (ICF), which contained the crucial information related to the study and the consent to have audio recordings. They had to undergo the face-to-face in-depth interviews and virtual focus group discussion after briefing on their role and the process of carrying out the research. The semi-structured interviews also permitted a facilitated but open-ended conversation and the duration of the interview was to be based on the availability of the participants and not more than one hour.

The researchers recorded the responses of the participants with audio-recordings and made salient notes in real-time to ensure precision. Open-ended questions were also provided to provide clarification on matters that were not clear and to make it comprehensive. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and all the data were stored safely in password-protected computer files only available to the researchers, research adviser and the data analyst. Thematic analysis was done after transcription in order to discover patterns and themes in data.

2.5 Data Analysis

All of the interviews were transcribed and translated to English after the data collection. The thematic analysis approach, which is described by Nowell et al. (2020), was used in analyzing the data because it has been reported to be especially efficient when it is necessary to understand the experiences of participants. It was analyzed in six stages with the aim to single out recurrent patterns/themes: familiarization with the data; initial codes generated; codes transformed into related themes; names and definitions of the themes; of the draft reviewed, any form of errors; results presented. The transcripts were carefully read and reviewed by the researchers who then identified important codes and compiled themes, which enlightened the researchers on the lived experiences of teacher-coaches in their attempts to strike a balance between academic and athletic roles. Data that were irrelevant were eliminated in order to maintain accuracy and validity. The findings were given with direct quotes by the participants to corroborate the findings.

2.6 Ethical Consideration

The main ethical implication of this research was to protect and safeguard the welfare of the teacher-coaches of a secondary school in Tagum City, a privately owned Catholic school. To ensure their safety, high-level security, and maintain their trust, the researchers had to be guided by the accepted ethical principles during the investigation. Ethical principles identified in the Belmont Report (1978) respect towards individuals, beneficence and justice were strictly followed.

The study also sought to clarify how teacher-coaches strike the right balance between their responsibilities as teachers and coaches, thus offering insights that could help govern the policy and establish mechanisms that would improve their well-being and professional effectiveness. Though the research posed little risks: emotional exhaustion due to workload and stress, these were well controlled and superseded the projected gains to the respondents and the entire teaching society.

In the process of maintaining ethics, the qualification and competency of the research team played the leading role. With the help of a seasoned research consultant and with years of prior academic experience, the researchers showed the technical skill and ethical competence needed, which increased the credibility and ethical standards of the study.

Sufficient financial resources were obtained to support the proper and ethical data gathering. These encompassed access to appropriate literature, organizational authorizations and necessary tools- audio recorders and safe computing items that facilitated effective and accountable data management.

Respect of person was in informed consent taken in each teacher-coach. The consent form also informed participants of the aims of the research, the procedures, the right to participate in the study on a voluntary basis, and the confidentiality issues. The briefing of the participants was done comprehensively, they were assured of the right to withdraw any time without repercussions and duly oriented with regard to their roles and the research process.

As the topic of workload and stress is a sensitive issue, the researchers took a considerable effort to ensure that by asking questions, no one felt upset but used a carefully phrased question that would help the researcher avoid causing any emotional distress to the interviewees. Along the way, the autonomy of the participants and their welfare was prioritized.

All data were important and kept confidential where only the research team and the research advisor and data analyst were allowed to access them. Privacy was strictly maintained and the contacts of the support services including guidance counselors were given to the participants in case they need to seek help.

Equitable purposive sampling of knowledgeable teacher-coaches who could offer useful insights was guaranteed to achieve justice. It was completely voluntary and no one was coerced to participate and incidental costs such as mobile data use would be reimbursed. Researchers were trained on bias in order to be objective and participants were given a safe environment where they could give their honest contribution.

All research phases were typified by transparency, such as open communication, comprehensive institutional approvals, documentation of informed consent, data security, and objective reporting, that ensured complete honesty in the representation of the experience of teacher-coaches.

The research results will directly impact teacher-coaches, as the data about the study have already been gathered. These results can inform the creation of new programs and other support

systems to assist them in dealing with their two roles and duties in a better way.

Every research tool and online equipment were strictly secured when collecting and storing their data, in complete adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). Participants were also well oriented before the interviews took place and access to the data was restricted to the research team only and information utilized was only used to get purposes of the current study. Data collected shall be safely kept in three years after the end of the study and then it shall be destroyed using procedures that would guarantee confidentiality and avoid any unauthorized access and leakage.

3. RESULTS

This segment highlights the experiences of secondary school sports coaches in managing their school duties that involve both academic and sports responsibilities or roles, coping strategies, and opinions and feelings, as well as the thoughts that came to mind after reviewing the information accessed after the in-depth interviews and focused group discussion.

Lived Experiences of Secondary School Sports Coaches in Balancing Their Academic and Sports Responsibilities

After analyzing the lived experiences of teacher-coaches in balancing academic and sports responsibilities, four themes emerged: (a) Inter-role Conflict and Time Management; (b) Role Adaptation and Continuous Learning; (c) Dynamic Relationships and Role Perception; and (d) Institutional Expectations and Support.

Table 1. Lived Experiences of Secondary School Sports Coaches in Balancing Their Academic and Sports Responsibilities

THEMES	CORE IDEAS
Inter-Role Conflict and Time Management	- Competing demands of teaching and coaching lead to exhaustion - Teacher-coaches have limited hours to fulfill dual responsibilities - Professional roles often strain personal relationships - Teacher-coaches often favor coaching over teaching during seasons - Can gain stress from unsustainable workloads - One role suffers due to time and event conflicts
Role Adaptation and Continuous Learning	- Trial-and-error learning due to gaps in formal training - Lack of clear expectations for dual roles - The need to shift teaching strategies based on the setting (classroom vs. field) - Informal guidance from teacher-coach colleagues - Limited institutional support for skill-building - Adjusting focus seasonally (academics vs. athletics)
Dynamic Relationships and Role Perception	- Teacher-coaches often prioritize Trust and emotional support - Adapting coaching styles to individual needs - Having different personas based on context (Educator vs. coach personas) - Addressing systemic biases (e.g., unfair tournaments) - Withdrawing from teaching during

	coaching seasons Balancing competing stakeholder expectations
Institutional Expectations and Support	- Schools always expect athletic success, leading to pressure to win - The school administrators' expectations worsen the role conflict - Lack of training, funding, or policies for dual roles - Poor communication between coaches and administrators - Seasonal fluctuations in workload and stress - Mitigating stress through flexible scheduling

Inter-role Conflict and Time Management

The inter-role conflict and time management issues often associated with the work of secondary teacher-coaches are connected with two-fold roles as a teacher and sports coach. The conflicting interests tend to compel them to take up one aspect leading to incomplete work in classrooms or absent classes to do sports. Time management can be very important, but it is a challenging task, and it creates a constant tension that makes some of them change their priorities to correspond with the current needs, which makes it hard to balance time being a student and an athlete at the same time without disregarding one of the aspects.

Role Adaptation and Continuous Learning

The need to be adaptable in roles and learn on a regular basis is also a distinguishing feature of the lived experiences of these teacher-coaches. Some of the teachers had to coach some sports which they had little to no experience in and had to learn and acquire new skills within a short period of time. Such necessity of adaptation is not only related to learning the technical side of a sport, but also towards learning of the individual needs and capabilities of their sportsters.

Dynamic Relationships and Role Perception

The experiences of teacher-coaches would be based on dynamic relationships and role perceptions. Due to the duality of the role that participants played, they noted that it was necessary to switch between the role of a classroom teacher and a sports coach, and that each demanded different strategies to build relationships. Although a teacher plays a formal and instructive role in the classroom, they tend to form more personal relationships that are rather mentoring with their athletics on the field or court. It is also important to establish trust and rapport with students to enable an environment that is supportive to growth and learning.

Institutional Expectations and Support

The influence of institutional expectations and support systems on the experiences of teacher-coaches cannot be overstated. There is often a strong emphasis on athletic success within schools, which creates pressure to perform well in competitions. Moreover, teacher-coaches are greatly influenced by the lack of support they receive for their athletes, such as providing for the needs of their athletes; however, what they received was lower than what they expected.

The Coping Mechanism of Teachers with Academic and Sports Responsibilities

After careful segregation and classification of the balancing act of teachers with academic and sports responsibilities, four (4) major themes were manifested: (a) Time Management and Organization Strategies; (b) Holistic Health Practices; (c) Support

Systems and Collaboration; and (d) Managing Student Expectation and Performance.

Table 2. The Coping Mechanism of Teachers with Academic and Sports Responsibilities

THEMES	CORE IDEAS
Time Management Strategies	- Plan and create schedules for task management - Maintaining balance and flexibility to adapt to unexpected changes - Strictly tracking lesson plans or practice schedules - Utilization of group chats for disseminating information - Utilization of free time to work on tasks - Utilization of task prioritization and listing method - Turning to hobbies to relax - Attending mass on Sundays or praying for emotional and mental support
	Visiting solitary places for relaxation
	Completion of tasks on Fridays or Saturdays and avoiding the use of electronics on weekends
	- Emphasis on the importance of sleeping or napping to recover energy - Exercising to reduce mental and emotional strains - Seeking guidance from God and significant others
Holistic Health Practices	- Turning to emotional support from colleagues - Displaying independence for self-support - Sharing of experiences with students/athletes - Providing support to fellow teacher-coaches - Seeking support from fellow teacher-coaches in handling dual responsibilities - Checking on the progress of the athletes - Efficiently managing students/athletes through familiarization
	Expressing support to athletes during the sports season
	Laying boundaries for the students/athletes in managing studies and practices
	- Developing mutual understanding to avoid role conflict as a student/athlete and a teacher/coach - Valuing enjoyment over winning during competitions
Support Systems and Collaboration	
Managing Student Expectations and Performance	

Time Management Strategies

Teacher-coaches highlighted time management and proper organization of tasks in balancing both responsibilities in academics and sports. They find that balancing these roles are quite difficult at times, but their determination to complete and perform the tasks without compromising anything, if possible, reflects their sense of responsibility and perseverance to carry out tasks despite the abundance of difficulty in managing them. These strategies aid them in completing the tasks despite their packed schedule.

Holistic Health Practices

The participants expressed their sentiments regarding the ways or strategies they turn to when it comes to self-care and recharging, as balancing their responsibilities from both roles,

being a teacher and a coach, becomes too overwhelming to handle. To ease the burden and lessen the stress that comes along with their heavy workload, the teacher-coaches engage in hobbies and activities to take care of themselves, effectively and efficiently recharging during free times or weekends before facing another week of challenges as they maneuver in balancing their roles as teacher-coaches.

Support Systems and Collaboration

Teacher-coaches, other than turning to activities, such as sleeping, hiking, or hobbies, wherein they listen to music and watch shows to take care of themselves, also seek support from others. Whenever situations become overwhelming and the workload overflows, teacher-coaches turn to seek emotional support from God, parents, colleagues, and even their students/athletes. In this way, they were able to lessen the burden and strain that affected them during overwhelming times, especially when their schedules from both roles collided and they experienced burnout.

Managing Student Expectations and Performance

Other than balancing their roles and responsibilities as teachers and coaches, managing their students' expectations and performance became one of the obstacles in balancing both roles. They often face these challenges during weeks before exams, practices, or sports season, wherein schedules become hectic, as athletes require the guidance of their coach and students would need the instructions of their teacher. This period can be exhausting, but it is necessary to fulfill these roles to help them develop and learn, both in academics and sports.

Insights of Secondary School Sports Coaches in Balancing Their Academic and Sports Responsibilities

After reflecting on the experiences of teacher-coaches, three (3) major themes emerged: (a) Holistic Mentorship and Role Fluidity; (b) Structural Challenges in Balancing Roles; and (c) Recommendations for Sustainable Systems.

Table 3. Insights of Secondary School Sports Coaches in Balancing Their Academic and Sports Responsibilities

THEMES	CORE IDEAS
Holistic Mentorship and Role Fluidity	- Coaches as "second parents" prioritize athletes' safety and emotional support - Discipline as a bridge aligns academic rigor with sports-specific self-confidence - Holistic development balances classroom learning with sports to foster resilience - Proactive adaptability adjusts schedules and uses group chats to manage dual roles - Mentorship beyond wins comforts athletes after losses, and values effort - Complementary learning treats classrooms and sports courts as equal growth avenues
Structural Challenges in Balancing Roles	- Scheduling conflicts disrupt training/teaching plans due to last-minute announcements - Role overload forces a coach to juggle duties like moderator or coordinator without training - Lack of substitutes leaves classrooms understaffed during events - Academic prioritization side-lines sport

	training to focus on classroom duties ● Abrupt role assignments risk poor guidance by appointing untrained coaches ● Compliance-driven coaching stems from “no coach, no pay” policies
Recommendations for Sustainable Systems for Teacher-Coaches	● Structured training programs equip coaches with sport-specific skills ● Clear role definitions prioritize coaching roles during competitions and assign substitutes ● Early scheduling finalizes practice timelines to avoid academic conflicts ● Respect autonomy allows teachers to decline coaching roles they cannot fulfil ● Resource allocation ensures athletes receive materials and allowances ● Advocacy for balance ensures schools value sports training without compromising academics

Holistic Mentorship & Role Fluidity

Teacher-coaches see themselves as educators that are involved in the development of athletes beyond athletics through the integration of academics and sports values. They view both the classrooms and sports courts as spaces to develop, create resilience and teamwork by creating flexible schedules, communication, and emotional support. This highlights the necessity of role fluidity because they strive towards maintaining a balance between their academic as well as athletic roles, the well-being of athletes, the gifts that the athletes possess, and the last one is to establish conditions in which the academic and athletic development go hand in hand without intermingling.

Structural Challenges in Balancing Roles

Teacher-coaches were able to talk about the issues they have experienced in the dual role such as schedule issues, role overload, and getting assigned suddenly without any preparation. They complained that their academic commitments tended to marginalize sports events and that their coaching was also influenced by the necessity to comply with the rules and ended up taking up positions they were not able to perform. According to some of the participants, the absence of substitutes was creating understaffing in classrooms during the events, increasing burnout, and role confusion. These pitfalls showed institutional support and role ambiguity.

Recommendations for Sustainable Systems for Teacher-Coaches

The participants indicated that it is a challenging task of being a teacher-coach because of having to juggle both academic and athletic roles, which in most cases creates stress. To cope with this, they pointed out the necessity to have some structured training, role clearance and facilitation such as materials, to provide fair preparation. There is also the aspect of respecting the autonomy of teachers, including giving them an opportunity to say no to any position that they are not able to handle, so as to avoid burnout. There were also recommendations of institutional backing, which incorporates academics and sports training, and the encouragement of collaboration

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Lived Experiences of Secondary School Sports Coaches in Balancing Their Academic and Sports Responsibilities

Teacher-coaches talked about their experiences on balancing their two roles. Based on their responses, four (4) themes were

identified, which included: (a) Inter-role Conflict and Time Management; (b) Role Adaptation and Continuous Learning; (c) Dynamic Relationships and Role Perception; and (d) Institutional Expectations and Support.

Inter-role Conflict and Time Management

Secondary teacher-coaches face significant inter-role conflict and time-management issues that can be explained by the presence of the two requirements of teaching and coaching. Scheduling conflicts often force them to juggle one part-time job at the expense of the other, and leave the classroom seatwork unfinished or skip lessons to play a tournament (Westmoreland, 2024; Wright, 2020; Ghayebzadeh et al., 2023). The respondents continuously said that time management is critical and exhausting because they have to maintain the classroom duties and at the same time complete a coaching task, which quite often makes them believe that they are being pulled in two opposite directions (Saban, 2022). This balancing act is accompanied by a consistent level of tension; certain teacher-coaches have to change their commitments depending on the situation, which speaks to the challenging nature of meeting the needs of both groups at the same time without neglecting their students or athletes (Ahmed, 2020).

Role Adaptation and Continuous Learning

The necessity of the role adaptation and continuous learning can be evidenced by teacher-coaches, especially those ones who struggle to coach a sport that is foreign to them and have to learn new technical knowledge and skills in a short period of time (Campos et al., 2022; Gruman and Saks, 2022). The participants also stressed that it is not only important to learn the rules of the game, but also to understand the dynamics of the sport and what the players need to know to be able to guide and help them. Although some teachers-coaches were initially reluctant because of the lack of knowledge, a number of them readily proceeded to engage in training and self-education to serve their players, as they are to prevent disadvantages in competitions due to inappropriate coaching (Bagalkoti, 2024; Said et al., 2023).

Dynamic Relationships and Role Perception

The teacher-coaches have a complex experience of relationships and perception of roles as they move between the identity of classroom teacher and sports coach. Most respondents also mentioned that the type of interactions changes according to the environment: in the classroom, relations are more formal and instructional, but on the field they are more personal and allow building closer rapport and genuine relationships (Khushk et al., 2022; Hasnol et al., 2022). Other teacher-coaches did not see much distinction between student relationships in the two positions and saw themselves essentially as guides or mentors regardless of the situation. There were also those who emphasized that coaching made the students get to know their true self, building a deeper level of trust and making the coach a second parental role or a close figure other than academics. Finally, the right to mentoring and formulation of relationships beyond the classroom is seen as essential, and most of them appreciate the exclusive relationships and developmental opportunities that it provides to both teacher-coach and student-athlete (Szymanski et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024).

Institutional Expectations and Support

Interview responses also clarified further that the expectations of the institution and the level of support that schools make available to the teacher-coaches are significant determinants of the experiences that teacher-coaches undergo. The pressure in schools to succeed in athletic activities is often quite high, and as victory is the ultimate goal of sport events, it is being promoted in schools. Teacher-coaches reinforce this anticipation when they

express a goal to win in order to make their work worthwhile in bring home the bacon. However, the real support structures in place are quite varied; a group of teacher-coaches enjoys active support of school leaders, thus motivating and increasing the effectiveness of coaching (Pestano, 2021). On the other hand, some of them also mention that there is a mismatch between the needs of athletes and the resources provided, and coaches need to be creative in addressing shortcomings to allow students to focus on performance instead of logistic issues (Boguel & Junsay, 2023). Even when the person considers themselves undeserving or even disaggregated by the absence of sport-specific knowledge, they undertake the role of managing their sportspeople, whether in maintaining administrative responsibilities or providing them with basic necessities (Baghurst, 2024).

4. 2 The Coping Mechanism of Teachers with Academic and Sports Responsibilities

Combining academic obligations and coaching tasks is the main problem of the teacher-coach role. The responses of the participants indicated four (4) key themes, (a) Time Management Strategies; (b) Holistic Health Practices; (c) Collaboration and Support Systems.; and (d) Managing Student Expectations and Performance.

Time Management Strategies

The ability of teacher-coaches to handle the two roles of academics and sports activities mainly depends on the effective use of time management, organization of tasks, and proactive planning. They lay stress on proactive foresight in which they predict when they are needed in either of the two capacities to avoid the burdening of teaching or coaching roles (Engelbrecht et al., 2021). Organization is supported through such techniques as meticulous lesson planning, the preparation of instructional materials before the classes, and the use of to-do lists to prevent the last-minute cramming (Cristobal & Serrano, 2024). Flexibility is also a key factor since teacher-coaches utilize the idle moments usefully to focus on other activities other than classroom teaching.

Holistic Health Practices

According to teacher-coaches, activities that offer psychological relief to them after hectic days are leisure activities such as listening to music, watching television shows, and using social networks. Rest as a priority in the form of regular sleep and brief naps keeps energy and strength (Yu, 2020). Emotional renewal and strength, which are delivered by spiritual practices like prayer and attendance of religious services, demonstrate the importance of faith-based coping strategies. A conscious dedication to the me-time and division of professional and personal space is put forward as a sign of the active approach to stress management and burnout prevention. Hiking and jogging, as well as planned exercise, do not improve stress and improve mental clarity. Such self-care actions contribute to the maintenance of health, self-discipline, modelling of healthy behaviours, thus allowing teacher-coaches to manage their complex roles successfully (Renstrom, 2024).

Support Systems and Collaboration

In addition to the self-care practices, the teacher-coaches emphasized the need to receive support externally to withstand the challenges of dual roles. Being faced with overwhelming circumstances and demanding workloads, they actively request emotional support in various places, such as divine assistance, parental support, collegial support, or relations with students or athletes (Cohen & McKay, 2020). Through these support networks, teacher-coaches reduce the burden and emotional stress experienced in some especially difficult moments like in

situations where teaching and coaching timetable do not meet or when burnout sets in. This bi-dependence on individual interests and strong support systems lessen the health and sustainability of teacher-coaches, which helps them cope with the complicated nature of their roles (Ostrand, 2020).

Managing Student Expectations and Performance

Based on the experiences of teacher coaches, one of the key challenges is to control the expectations and performance of students especially when it comes to exams, practices or sports seasons which are usually the time of high demand. With several roles under their chest, teacher-coaches find it difficult to fulfill all the requests of the students, including conducting sessions on Saturdays because of conflicting work and personal life. These challenges notwithstanding, they focus on tracking the academic and training outcomes of the students and provide guidance and support in spite of the physical distance (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2020; Pestano, 2021). Teacher-coaches do not focus only on the idea of victory but support students to enjoy their activities and see failures as the possibility to learn and develop (Johnston et al., 2022).

4. 3 Insights of Secondary School Sports Coaches in Balancing their Academic and Sports Responsibilities

The participants shared their experiences and responses, revealing key insights into their experiences in managing their dual roles as teacher-coaches. From their views, three (3) major themes emerged: (a) Holistic Mentorship and Role Fluidity; (b) Structural Challenges in Balancing Roles; and (c) Recommendations for Sustainable Systems.

Holistic Mentorship & Role Fluidity

The observations of teacher-coaches show that they have this passion to make their student-athletes their concern and not only in the classroom but also in other areas. They often act as secondary parents and prioritize the safety and emotional health of athletes as well as instilling discipline that bridges the academic and athletic confidence (Chavez-Guevara et al., 2024). Their flexible nature also incorporates active modifications of schedules and the utilization of the communication in the form of group chats to support two jobs (Aquino and Jolo, 2024). Mentorship also implies comforting the athletes who have lost and appreciating their efforts, and both the classroom and sports setting are the equally important domains of complete development (Thompson et al., 2022).

Structural Challenges in Balancing Roles

Teacher-coaches also mention the challenges in the structure that impedes the balance between the academic and coaching tasks. Scheduling the lesson and training plans are disrupted by frequent time and last-minute changes, whereas being assigned too many roles and being undertrained create excessive workloads (Renstrom et al., 2024; Daly et al., 2023). Lack of substitutes exposes classes to under-serving during events whereby coaches are compelled to get academic work done rather than focusing on sports training. Certain participants were compelled to meet coaching directives under policies that minimize them to formalities, as it is essential that systemic reinforcement needs to be made to overcome these obstacles (Blazar, 2020; Johnson et al., 2023).

Recommendations for Sustainable Systems for Teacher-Coaches

Using their experiences, teacher-coaches highlight the significance of the sustainable support systems. They promote a comprehensive training system that creates sport-specific skills and role definition that focus on coaching on competitions at the expense of classroom coverage (Wright, 2020). Transparency of

work schedules at the beginning allows to prevent the clash of coaching and teaching actions. The decision to leave the coaches or to be a coach should be left to the teachers since it honors their ability and personal health (Yu, 2020). In addition, equitable athletic development is based on the provision of relevant resources and allowances. On the whole, teacher-coaches emphasize that the need to have a balanced school program that takes into account sports and academics equally allows them to effectively perform both functions (Alave & Ancho, 2023).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The combination of abilities, endurance, and commitment as a teacher and a sport coach is specific since being a dual professional, one should deal with competing demands that may lead to stress and conflicts without the appropriate assistance. Most teacher-coaches, not necessarily experts in the sport, attempt to mentor athletes in addition to their responsibility as teachers, which indicates the necessity of institutional ratification and assistance. Good systems require a process of systematic training, role definition, proper scheduling, resources, respect of teacher autonomy, and balance between athletics and academics. Teacher-coaches in their dual positions require sufficient resources and institutional support to be successful. Even though this study focuses on a single case of a private Catholic school in Tagum City, further studies need to adopt a wide range of participants and stakeholders to examine collaboration, barriers, and policies. In the long run, these endeavors are bound to minimize the conflict of roles and enhance their support so that both educators and students could excel academically and athletically.

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