

# The Level of Stress Management Among Athletics Student-Athletes in Cluster 14, Davao City, Philippines

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## Abstract

This study assessed stress management among 73 athletics student-athletes in Cluster 3, Davao City, Philippines focusing on their ability to handle academic and athletic pressures. Using descriptive and comparative analysis, results showed a moderate overall stress management level, with strengths in emotional and competition-related areas, but weaker coping strategies in substantial and mental domains. A significant difference was found based on age, while other demographic factors showed no impact. The findings support Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984), which explains that stress responses depend on individual appraisal and coping resources. The results highlight how cognitive appraisals influence stress management, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to improve coping in less-developed areas. Schools are encouraged to implement stress-relief programs and supportive policies to enhance student-athletes' resilience and well-being.

*Keywords:* stress management; student-athletes; intervention plan; academic-athletic balance

## I. Introduction

Stress management refers to the ways individuals cope with and reduce stress to maintain their mental and physical well-being. Among student-athletes, especially those in junior high school, effective stress management is a significant concern, as they often struggle to handle the pressures of balancing academic tasks with athletic commitments. Research indicates that many young student-athletes experience high levels of stress, which can negatively affect their performance both in school and in sports (Smith, 2024). The challenge of managing these dual roles creates substantial pressure, making it difficult for student-athletes to cope effectively with stress. This problem emphasizes the need for developing targeted stress management strategies tailored to the specific needs of junior high school athletes (Ines, 2021). Furthermore, studies suggest that inadequate stress coping mechanisms among young athletes can contribute to mental health issues, highlighting the importance of establishing proper support systems to assist them (Gustafsson et al., 2018).

Globally, the issue of stress among student-athletes is increasingly recognized. In the United States, studies show that up to 58% of college athletes experience stress related to competition, academic demands, and personal issues (Gustafsson et al., 2017). Similar concerns are observed in various countries, where research highlights the widespread nature of stress in athletic environments worldwide, underscoring the importance of implementing effective stress management programs (Rice et al., 2016). These programs are essential to support athletes in managing their mental health and improving their overall well-being. In Australia, research reveals that student-athletes often experience stress due to high training loads, academic pressures, and injury concerns, which can lead to anxiety and burnout if not properly managed (Gustafsson et al., 2018). Similarly, in Japan, studies have shown that young athletes face stress related to rigorous training schedules and expectations from coaches and peers, often lacking adequate mental health support (Yamamoto et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, the issue of stress management among student-athletes is a significant concern that affects their overall well-being and performance. Studies reveal that Filipino student-athletes face unique challenges as they try to balance their academic responsibilities with their sports commitments, which often leads to heightened stress levels (Kiong et al., 2019). Despite this, many educational institutions across the country do not prioritize the development and implementation of effective stress management programs tailored specifically for student-athletes (Amaranto & Amaranto, 2025). This gap indicates a lack of adequate support systems to help these young athletes cope with their mental health challenges. Furthermore, research

shows that the majority of student-athletes in the Philippines do not have sufficient access to mental health resources or guidance on managing stress, making it a pressing issue that needs urgent attention (Alberto et al., 2021).

There is very little research about how public high school athletics student-athletes in Cluster 14, Davao City manage their stress. While many studies around the world show that young athletes face mental health challenges (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014; Walton et al., 2021), few have looked into how Filipino student-athletes in Davao cope with stress in their daily lives. This is important because the pressure from school and sports can cause anxiety and other mental health problems (Lopes Dos Santos et al., 2018). Unlike studies done in other parts of the Philippines, this research focuses on Cluster 14, Davao City, which has its own unique culture and school environment that might affect how athletes handle stress (De Café & Salva, 2024). Conducting this study is urgent because it will provide local information that can help schools in Cluster 14, Davao City create better support programs for athletics student-athletes, making sure they stay healthy both mentally and academically.

## **II. Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study is to describe the level of stress management of high school athletics athletes within Cluster 14 of Davao City, Region XI, Philippines. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. To describe the profile of respondents in terms of:
  - 1.1 age;
  - 1.2 year-level;
  - 1.3 sex;
  - 1.4 event;
  - 1.5 competition;
  - 1.6 years of experience.
2. To determine the level of stress management techniques in terms of:
  - 2.1 competition
  - 2.2 emotional
  - 2.3 substantial
  - 2.4 mental
3. To determine the significant difference in the level of stress management and respondent's profile.
4. To determine the suitable interventions based on the findings of the study.

## **III. Theoretical Framework**

The study is based on Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984), which views stress as a result of the interaction between an individual and their environment, occurring when perceived demands exceed personal resources. It highlights two key processes: cognitive appraisal, where individuals evaluate the threat or challenge of a stressor, and coping strategies, which include problem-focused and emotion-focused approaches to manage stress. This approach helps explain how high school student-athletes perceive and respond to stressors related to academics, sports, and peer interactions, informing effective stress management practices.

## **IV. Method**

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the stress management levels of athletics student-athletes in Cluster 14, Davao City, Philippines. It also incorporates descriptive-comparative methods to describe and compare stress levels and coping strategies among different groups within the population. The research will focus on public high school athletics student-athletes actively participating in athletic programs, using purposive sampling to select participants who can provide rich, relevant insights based on their experiences with stress and stress management. This approach ensures that data collection targets individuals with varied stress experiences, facilitating a deeper understanding of coping mechanisms among student-athletes.

An adapted questionnaire from the study "Analysis of Stress Management in Karate Athletes: Survey in West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia" (Yusup et al., 2024) will be used to collect data. Descriptive statistics, specifically frequency counts as defined by Babbie (2013), will describe the respondents' profiles in terms of age, year level, sex, event, competition, and years of experience. The mean will be calculated to assess stress management in the areas of competition, emotional, and mental aspects. To determine if there are significant differences in stress management across different respondent groups, Analysis of Variance

(ANOVA) will be employed, following Carver (2013). This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of the data to identify patterns and differences related to respondents' profiles. Overall, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of stress management practices through focused, purposive participant selection and comparative analysis.

## V. Results and Discussion

This chapter outlines the discussion of the results and the analysis of the data. By employing suitable statistical methods, the gathered information was examined to address the issues outlined in the introduction of this study. The discussion is organized according to the order of the research objectives. Related literature is integrated to support and provide context to the findings.

*Table 1 provide a detailed demographic profile of the High School Athletics Student-Athletes involved in the study. Outlined in the table are age distribution, sex, year level, event and years of experience of the student-athletes.*

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the High School Athletics Student-Athletes for Age, Sex, Year Level, Event and Years of Experience Frequency

| Category          | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>Age</b>        |           |             |
| 13                | 5         | 7.0         |
| 14                | 12        | 16.0        |
| 15                | 29        | 40.0        |
| 16                | 23        | 32.0        |
| 17                | 4         | 5.0         |
| Total             | 73        | 100.0       |
| <b>Sex</b>        |           |             |
| Female            | 23        | 32.0        |
| Male              | 50        | 68.0        |
| Total             | 100       | 100.0       |
| <b>Year Level</b> |           |             |
| Grade 7           | 10        | 14.0        |
| Grade 8           | 15        | 20.0        |
| Grade 9           | 26        | 36.0        |
| Grade 10          | 20        | 27          |
| Grade 11          | 2         | 3.0         |
| Total             | 73        | 100.0       |

The table highlights the demographic characteristics of the High School Athletics Student-Athletes, categorized by age, sex, year level, event, and years of experience. The majority of respondents belong to the 15-year-old age group, representing forty percent, followed by sixteen years old at thirty-two percent and fourteen years old at sixteen percent, with smaller proportions for other age groups. The sex distribution is unevenly split, with sixty-eight percent male and only thirty-two percent female as respondents, reflecting the demographic composition of the population. Regarding year level, the majority of respondents are Grade 9 students, comprising thirty-six percent of the total sample. This is followed by Grade 10 students, who make up twenty-seven percent. Grade 8 students account for twenty percent, while Grade 7 students represent fourteen percent. Lastly, Grade 11 students have the lowest representation, comprising only three percent of the respondents. This distribution highlights a stronger participation from students in the middle grade levels.

*Table 2 Level of Stress Management of High School Athletics Student-Athletes*

The stress management of high school athletics student-athletes are an essential result from the variable of this study.

Table 2. Level of Stress Management of High School Athletics Student-Athletes

| Stress Management (SM) | SD         | Mean        | Interpretation  |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Competition            | 1.17       | 3.51        | High            |
| Emotional              | .68        | 3.80        | High            |
| Substantial            | .74        | 2.64        | Moderate        |
| Mental                 | .95        | 2.80        | Moderate        |
| <b>Overall Mean</b>    | <b>.85</b> | <b>3.19</b> | <b>Moderate</b> |

Presented in table 2 are the descriptive statistics for the Stress Management of High School Athletics Student-Athletes, measured across four dimensions: competition, emotional, substantial and mental, as well as the overall mean.

The overall stress management has a mean of 3.19, which is interpreted as Moderate means that the stress management of high school athletics student-athletes are good. This suggests that while student-athletes demonstrate some level of stress management strategies, there is room for improvement in enhancing their overall stress coping abilities as student-athletes. The relatively high scores in the competition and emotional dimensions indicate effective mechanisms for managing stress related to competitive situations and emotional challenges; however, the moderate ratings in the substantial and mental dimensions reveal critical weaknesses that could leave athletes vulnerable to stressors. This gap may not only hinder their performance in sports and academics but also impact their overall stress management and well-being, potentially leading to higher dropout rates from athletics sports programs and difficulties in personal development.

The result of this study supports the findings of the study “Prevalence of Stress Amongst High School Athletes” by Ward et al. (2023) align with existing research on stress management in student-athletes, revealing that about 91% experience stress from sports, primarily due to fear of failure (64%) and self-pressure (66.5%). Interestingly, 34% noted that stress had a positive impact on their performance, indicating a skillful approach to managing competitive stress, which mirrors our high ratings for competition stress management. Furthermore, the link between emotional regulation and athletic performance is supported by Lane et al. (2012), whose study found that effective emotion management correlates with improved performance. The data corroborate this with a mean score of 3.80 in emotional stress management among participants. However, scores for managing substantial and mental stress were moderate (2.64 and 2.80), suggesting difficulties with stressors outside of sports, a challenge echoed in Lopes Dos Santos et al. (2020) regarding college athletes’ struggles with balancing academic and athletic responsibilities.

In this variable, the indicator emotional achieved the highest mean score of 3.80, categorized as High which means that the stress management of high school athletics student-athletes is very good. This indicates that the stress management strategies used by high school athletics student-athletes are often evident and generally good at handling stress, especially when it comes to their emotions. Their strong scores in emotional stress management show that they have useful coping strategies, likely developed from playing competitive sports like athletics.

This finding of high emotional stress management observed among student-athletes, supports a systematic review by Eime et al. (2013) highlights the psychological and social benefits of sports participation, linking it to improved mental health outcomes like reduced depression and anxiety. Although this review does not directly address emotional regulation, the mental health improvements it discusses are closely related to managing emotions. Additionally, a study by Zamanian et al. (2011) found that elite student-athletes demonstrated higher emotional intelligence compared to non-athletes, suggesting that involvement in competitive sports could enhance emotional regulation skills. However, contrasting findings from Stansbury, Noah (2023) indicate that student-athletes may report negative emotional states more frequently than their non-athlete peers, pointing to the need for further research on the emotional experiences of student-athletes.

Similarly, competition, with a mean score of 3.51, interpreted as High that means that the stress management of high school athletics student-athletes is also very good. This highlights that high

school student-athletes exhibit a relatively high level of stress management skills, particularly in competitive settings, as indicated by the mean score of 3.51. This indicates that the stress management strategies used by high school athletics student-athletes are often evident. Consequently, a dependable ability to manage competition-related stress might enhance their overall athletic performance and contribute positively to their psychological well-being.

The result of this study supports the study that explores the role of competition in the performance and stress management of high school athletes, emphasizing structured training programs that integrate mental preparation techniques by Gould et al. (2002). The research outlines how competition serves as a significant stressor for student-athletes and highlights strategies to enhance their coping mechanisms through focused physical training. The findings suggest that effective preparation and mental conditioning can positively influence athletes' responses to competitive stress, ultimately leading to improved performance. Moreover, the structured training programs not only enhance physical readiness but also boost athletes' stress management techniques during competitions.

Another variable, mental registered as the second lowest mean score at 2.80, interpreted as Moderate means that the stress management of high school athletics student-athletes is good. This highlights that the stress management strategies used by high school athletics student-athletes are sometimes evident, that it may not be consistently applied or fully developed among the high school athletics student-athletes. The moderate level indicates an opportunity for improvement in mental coping mechanisms, which are crucial for dealing with the unique pressures faced in both academic and athletic environments.

The result of this study supports the recent findings suggesting that while some coping strategies are evident, there is ample opportunity for further development. Reflecting a similar trend in elite athletic populations, Pensgaard and Ursin (1998) stated that "the capacity to cope with stress is not merely an inherent trait but a skill that evolves through systematic training and experience." This insight reinforces the notion that the mental coping mechanisms currently employed by these students, although beneficial, may not be fully optimized to manage the dual pressures of academic and athletic demands.

Lastly, substantial registered as the lowest mean score at 2.64, interpreted as Moderate means that the stress management of high school athletics student-athletes is also good. The findings indicate that the substantial stress management strategies employed by high school athletics student-athletes are sometimes evident, as reflected in the moderate mean score of 2.64. This suggests that while these athletes have some mechanisms in place to cope with stressors, they may not be fully developed or consistently utilized in their routines. The moderate level of substantial stress management underscores a critical gap, highlighting that these athletes could benefit from enhanced strategies tailored to their unique challenges in balancing academic and athletic commitments. The variability in the application of these coping mechanisms suggests that many student-athletes may struggle to effectively manage the pressures they face, potentially impacting their overall well-being and performance.

The findings of the current study, which revealed a moderate mean score (2.64) in substantial as last variable among high school student-athletes, align with the longitudinal mixed-methods research by Sorkkila et al. (2018), titled Development of School and Sport Burnout in Adolescent Student-Athletes. Their study emphasized that the dual demands of academic and athletic environments contribute to burnout, particularly when coping strategies are inconsistently applied or underdeveloped. Sorkkila et al. (2018) noted that "the interplay of chronic stressors in school and sport settings often outpaces the maturation of adaptive coping mechanisms in adolescents", underscoring how student-athletes' partial reliance on stress management strategies leaves them vulnerable to burnout over time. This resonates with the present results, where the moderate stress management score reflects intermittent use of coping techniques, suggesting these strategies are not yet fully integrated into daily routines. Both studies highlight a critical need for structured interventions to strengthen stress management skills, ensuring student-athletes can sustainably navigate academic and athletic pressures.

*Table 3 Significant Difference of the level of stress management of high school athletics student-athletes when analyzed according to profile*

Table 3. The Difference in the Level of Stress Management of High School Athletics Student-Athletes when analyzed according to Demographic Profile.

| Stress Management of High School Athletics Student-Athletes |         |         |                             |                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Demographic Profile                                         | F-value | P-value | Decision @ 0.05 Alpha Level | Interpretation                      |
| Age                                                         | 4.103   | 0.042   | Reject null hypothesis      | There is significant difference.    |
| Sex                                                         | 1.042   | 0.465   | Accept null hypothesis      | There is no significant difference. |
| Year Level                                                  | 3.650   | 0.120   | Accept null hypothesis      | There is no significant difference. |
| Event                                                       | 2.132   | 0.336   | Accept null hypothesis      | There is no significant difference. |
| Years of experience                                         | 12.468  | 0.099   | Accept null hypothesis      | There is no significant difference. |

Presented in Table 3 are the findings on the variations in stress management levels among high school athletics student-athletes across different demographic factors. The analysis utilized statistical tests to evaluate differences, with ANOVA results indicating a significant difference in stress management based on age ( $F = 4.103$ ,  $p = 0.042$ ), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Conversely, no significant differences were observed for sex ( $p = 0.465$ ), year level ( $p = 0.120$ ), event type ( $p = 0.336$ ), or years of experience ( $p = 0.099$ ), as their respective p-values exceeded the 0.05 significance threshold, resulting in the acceptance of the null hypotheses. These outcomes suggest that age uniquely influences stress management in this cohort, while other demographic variables do not demonstrate statistically meaningful disparities.

The analysis revealed that the p-value for age is 0.042, which is lesser than the significance level of 0.05 rejecting the null hypothesis. The result suggests that older or younger student-athletes may employ varying coping strategies, potentially due to developmental or experiential factors influencing their ability to handle stressors.

In terms of sex, the result revealed a p-value 0.465, which exceeds the threshold of 0.05 thus accept the null hypothesis. This implies that there is no significant difference in stress management between male and female respondents, highlighting that sex/gender does not distinctly shape how student-athletes navigate stress in their dual roles.

The p-value for year level is 0.120, which also exceeds the 0.05 significance level accept the null hypothesis. This result demonstrates that the year level of the respondents, whether they are grade 7, grade 8, grade 9, grade 10 or a senior high school student-athlete, have no statistical difference on their stress management capabilities. This implies that the challenges of balancing academics and athletics and the coping strategies used are relatively consistent regardless of how far a student has progressed in high school.

The p-value for event is 0.336, which surpasses the 0.05 significance level accept the null hypothesis. Athletics student-athletes face pressure to succeed on their own, while team athletes such as basketball, volleyball and etc. deal with group goals and teamwork. However, the study found no major difference in how well they handle stress, whether they play alone or on a team. This might mean strategies like planning ahead or leaning on friends help everyone, or that all sports create similar stress levels, no matter the type.

The p-value for years of experience is 0.099, which similarly surpasses the 0.05 significance level accept the null hypothesis. This result demonstrates that the number of years of experience of the



respondents have no statistical difference on their stress management. Student-athletes who've played sports longer might handle stress a bit better because they've practiced dealing with tough situations. However, the study found this isn't always true. It could just be luck, good coaches, or personal growth, not just experience. Being in sports for years doesn't guarantee better stress skills.

### *Intervention Plan*

As what have the study shown, substantial got the lowest mean score of 2.64 suggest that for a student-athlete manage stress, schools will create a free, easy-to-follow program where coaches and teachers' team up. For instance, coaches will teach quick stress-relief tricks like breathing exercises during practice, while teachers will give athletes flexible deadlines for assignments when they're busy with games or tired from training. With school principal's approval, sports coordinators consistently remind all teachers especially those teachers who are not sports enthusiast, who are not P.E teachers, who are not sports coaches and who are not sports technical officials, to make them realize how hard it is for student-athletes to balance school and sports. In this way the said teachers might choose to understand the situation of every student-athletes. Additionally, coaches must remind student-athletes to be responsible enough and not to waste the considerations given. Athletes will also get "recovery breaks" after tough workouts and can join peer support groups to share tips. This way, everyone works together to help athletes focus on school, perform better in sports, and feel less stressed—all while representing the school's pride!

## **VI. Conclusion**

Based on the findings, significant age-related differences in stress management strategies among high school student-athletes, indicating that younger athletes face distinct stressors and require tailored support, while no notable differences were observed based on sex, year level, event and years of experience, suggesting similar coping mechanisms across genders, grades, track and field events and cumulative athletics participations. These results align with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping proposed by Lazarus and Folkman, emphasizing the necessity for adaptive strategies that enhance resilience among athletics student-athletes. Ultimately, the study underscores the significance of addressing age-related differences in stress management while recognizing that effective coping strategies can be cultivated across diverse demographic backgrounds through supportive interventions and guidance.

## **VII. Recommendation**

The results of this study may enhance the approach to stress management among high school athletics student-athletes. It is recommended that schools develop comprehensive programs focused on improving stress management techniques tailored to the unique challenges athletics student-athletes face. These programs should include workshops and training sessions led by experienced coaches, mental health professionals or the school guidance counselors, and educators who understand the pressures of balancing academics and athletics. Additional future research could examine how specific interventions, such as mindfulness training, peer support groups, and flexible academic policies, can further alleviate stress for athletics student-athletes. A qualitative approach is advisable to investigate personal experiences, coping strategies, and the overall effectiveness of existing stress management programs. This insight will help schools design better support systems to promote athletes' mental well-being and foster an environment conducive to both academic achievement and athletic success.

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**Appendix A. Survey Questionnaire**

**Research Title: THE LEVEL OF STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG ATHLETICS  
STUDENT-ATHLETES IN CLUSTER 14, DAVAO CITY,  
PHILIPPINES**

**Part 1: Profile of the student-athletes**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Event (Running, Jumping or Throwing): \_\_\_\_\_

Years of Experience as Athletics Student-Athlete: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II. Athletics Student-Athlete Stress Management (Research instrument adapted from Yusup et al., 2024)**

| <b>A. Competition</b>                                                 | <b>5</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. I feel my body is stiff or hard before a game.                     |          |          |          |          |          |
| 2. I feel my legs are heavy before a game.                            |          |          |          |          |          |
| 3. I feel my muscles tighten during a game.                           |          |          |          |          |          |
| 4. I feel tired before competing.                                     |          |          |          |          |          |
| 5. I feel pain in my muscles before a game.                           |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>B. Emotional</b>                                                   | <b>5</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> |
| 6. I have negative thoughts that make it hard to focus during a game. |          |          |          |          |          |
| 7. I have a lot of power in my body.                                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 8. I am stronger than most people of my age.                          |          |          |          |          |          |
| 9. I would do well in a test of strength.                             |          |          |          |          |          |
| 10. I am good at lifting heavy objects.                               |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>C. Substantial</b>                                                 | <b>5</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> |
| 11. I feel my heart beating very fast before a game.                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 12. I feel my body shaking before a game.                             |          |          |          |          |          |
| 13. I make mistakes during a game because I cannot focus.             |          |          |          |          |          |
| 14. I sweat a lot before a game.                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
| 15. I always feel like I need to pee before a game.                   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 16. I drink a lot of water before a game.                             |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>D. Mental</b>                                                      | <b>5</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> |
| 17. I feel nervous before a game.                                     |          |          |          |          |          |
| 18. I feel discouraged quickly during a game.                         |          |          |          |          |          |
| 19. I doubt myself when playing.                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
| 20. I think too much before and during a game.                        |          |          |          |          |          |

## Appendix B. Likert Scale

The Likert scale below was used to analyze the result:

| Range of Means | Description | Interpretation                                                                                                             |
|----------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4.20 – 5.00    | Very High   | This indicates that the stress management strategies used by high school athletics student-athletes are always evident.    |
| 3.40 – 4.19    | High        | This indicates that the stress management strategies used by high school athletics student-athletes are often evident.     |
| 2.60 – 3.39    | Moderate    | This indicates that the stress management strategies used by high school athletics student-athletes are sometimes evident. |
| 1.80 – 2.59    | Low         | This indicates that the stress management strategies used by high school athletics student-athletes are rarely evident.    |
| 1.00 – 1.79    | Very Low    | This indicates that the stress management strategies used by high school athletics student-athletes is never evident.      |