

Factors Shaping the Perceptions of Student-Athletes on Sports-Related Injuries

Ernie Chino D. Cañeda ^a, Veronica S. Merlas ^b

^a*erniechino.caneda@hcdc.edu.ph*; & ^b*veronica.merlas@hcdc.edu.ph*;

^a*Holy Cross of Davao College, NHA Bangkal, Davao City, 8000, Philippines*

^b*Holy Cross of Davao College, Sta. Ana Avenue, Corner C. De Guzman
Street, Davao City, 8000, Philippines*

Abstract

Perceptions on sports-related injuries are poor. With this, I explored the factors that shape the perceptions of student-athletes on sports-related injuries. Using qualitative descriptive, interviewing six purposively selected participants, and analyzing the data via thematic analysis, I found that student-athletes' injury perceptions are shaped by personal, behavioral, environmental, and contextual factors that influence how they interpret and respond to injuries. Collaborative support from coaches, healthcare providers, and school leaders may improve student-athletes' perceptions and management of sports-related injuries. I see the importance of testing and identifying key predictors of student-athletes' injury perceptions using multiple regression analysis and developing survey instruments through Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Keywords: Factors shaping perceptions, student-athletes, sports-related injuries

Introduction

Poor perceptions of student-athletes regarding sports-related injuries are a growing concern in global sports and health discourse, as many young athletes still do not fully realize how serious sports-related injuries can be or how important it is to treat and manage them properly (Khanan et al., 2023). Recent global health reports emphasized that many student-athletes still demonstrate inadequate understanding and awareness of injury prevention, rehabilitation, and the long-term consequences (Gao, 2025).

Poor perceptions of student-athletes on sports-related injuries are also documented in the United States. Based on reports, I noticed that many student-athletes often see pain and minor injuries as just a normal part of playing sports and performing well, suggesting limited awareness of injury severity and recovery needs (Castro et al., 2021). Likewise, in Australia, studies and national sports safety guidelines suggested that some young athletes continue to underestimate injury risks, particularly in high-contact sports (Lindman et al., 2024). Further, in Japan, sports health initiatives also raised similar concerns, where I learned that many student-athletes continue to compete despite experiencing injury symptoms due to limited risk perception and competitive pressure (Sheehan et al., 2024).

Here in the Philippines, poor perceptions on sports-related injuries among student-athletes are also observed across school-based sports-related programs. Reports from national sports and education authorities indicated that many student-athletes tend to regard injuries as minor setbacks rather than serious health conditions requiring proper management and rehabilitation (Clavaton et al., 2022). Likewise, school-based observations indicated that limited awareness and understanding of injury prevention and care persist among young athletes, particularly in highly competitive school environments (Tabiando, 2024).

The persistence of poor perceptions on sports-related injuries among student-athletes may lead to serious consequences. When injuries are underestimated or disregarded, athletes may continue to participate without proper recovery, increasing the risk of worsening conditions and prolonged physical limitations (Cachola-Miñas et al., 2025). This situation may also negatively affect athletic performance, academic responsibilities, and overall well-being, as untreated or improperly managed injuries can disrupt both sports participation and daily functioning. It is for this reason that I conducted this study.

Significance of the study

My study is significant because it explores the factors that shape student-athletes' perceptions on sports-related injuries. By understanding these factors, my study provides valuable insights that may guide coaches and trainers in adopting safer training methods, designing effective injury-prevention programs, and offering appropriate support during rehabilitation. This study aligns with the Department of Education (DepEd)'s mandates to promote holistic learner development through a balanced integration of academics and extracurricular activities. It supports the creation of inclusive, learner-centered environments that recognize the importance of sports in fostering well-rounded individuals. It also supports the Vision, Mission, and Goals of Holy Cross of Davao College (HCDC) by promoting both academic growth and physical well-being, encouraging responsible athletic participation, and strengthening the culture of care, safety, and excellence within the college community. My study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) by emphasizing the importance of injury prevention, rehabilitation, and overall well-being in the holistic development of student-athletes. It also connects to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), as the findings may help schools strengthen support systems and policies that prioritize students' health and learning alongside performance.

Research Questions

In this study, I explored the factors that shape the perceptions of student-athletes on sports-related injuries. Specifically, I sought answers to my question:

1. What are the factors that shape the perceptions of student-athletes on sports-related injuries?

Theoretical Framework

My study is grounded on the Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura in 1986. This theory posits that human behavior is shaped by the reciprocal interaction of personal factors, behavior, and environment. Specifically, Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes that individuals are not merely influenced by their surroundings, but they also actively shape their own experiences through their beliefs, choices, and actions. Social Cognitive Theory explains that human actions are best understood through the constant interaction of three elements: personal factors (such as knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and self-efficacy), behavioral factors (the actions and strategies individuals adopt), and environmental factors (social influences, facilities, and external conditions).

In the context of this study, student-athletes' perception of sports-related injuries are shaped by how they perceive and interpret these injuries, the behaviors they engage in to manage or prevent them, and the influence of their environment during athletic involvement. This framework highlights that athletes' responses to sports-related injuries are the product of a dynamic interplay between the self, their actions, and the environment in which they are situated.

Conceptual Framework

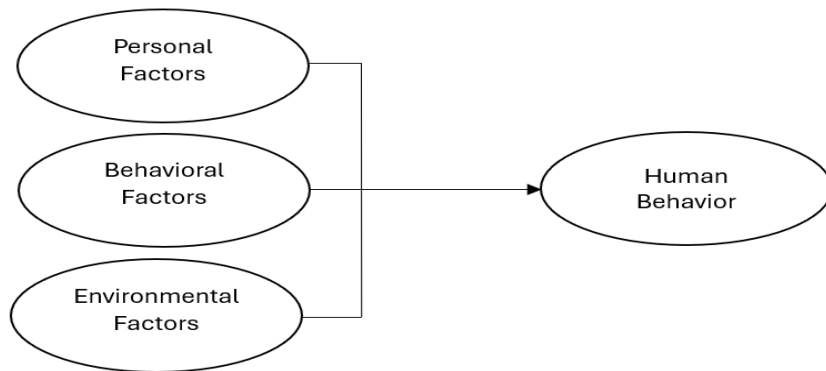


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study based on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) Developed by Bandura (1986)

Assumptions

As a researcher, I assumed that reality is multiple and subjective, as each student-athlete experiences sports-related injuries differently during athletic involvement, and these realities are valid in their own contexts. Knowledge about these injuries is grounded in students-athletes' perceptions, which encompass not only the physical pain and recovery process but also the emotional and social challenges they face. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study assumed that interviews and narratives would yield meaningful insights and that patterns and themes could be drawn from their stories. It also assumed that student-athletes' perceptions can be best understood through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory, which highlights how their responses to injuries are shaped by personal beliefs, self-efficacy, behaviors, and environmental influences, such as coaches, peers, and medical support. Additionally, it is assumed that cultural norms and values in sports influence how athletes perceive and respond to injuries, with endurance, resilience, and the continued pursuit of competition despite pain often valorized. At the same time, teamwork, discipline, and the pursuit of excellence shape their recovery and coping strategies.

Method

In this chapter, I presented the methodology I used in this study. I discussed the research design, locale of the study, sample and sampling technique, the data gathering technique I followed, the data analysis technique, and the measures I took to ensure the study's trustworthiness.

Research Design

In this study, a descriptive qualitative research design was employed, which is a method used to systematically explore and provide a comprehensive summary of participants' experiences in their natural context. Qualitative descriptive research focuses on producing straightforward descriptions of phenomena while remaining close to participants' own words and meanings (Kim et al., 2023). It is appropriate when the goal is to understand real-life experiences without heavy theoretical interpretation. This design is commonly applied when researchers aim to examine experiences, perceptions, or practices, especially in educational settings where understanding participants' viewpoints is essential (Sandelowski, 2023). By centering on their subjective perspectives, descriptive qualitative research design provides a pathway to uncover the essence of their experiences and to give voice to the challenges and meanings that shape their journey as student-athletes.

Research Locale

My study was conducted among the student-athletes in Davao City. It is a region of the Philippines located in the Southern part of Mindanao. I specifically selected these student-athletes within Davao Region due to their efforts in engaging in sports. Davao Region was chosen as my study's focus with its reputation as one of the country's emerging hubs for athletics and sports development.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Six purposively selected student-athletes were considered appropriate for a Focus Group Discussion (FGD), as it allows for diverse opinions while maintaining a manageable group dynamic and encouraging shared reflections, comparisons, and interactions among student-athletes with similar experiences (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 5). My study participants are three male and three female student-athletes to ensure gender representation in the discussion. The inclusion criteria required that participants be bona fide student-athletes who are currently enrolled and have sustained at least one sports-related injury during their athletic involvement. Those student-athletes who have not experienced any sports-related injuries or who choose to withdraw from the study will be excluded, ensuring that only participants central to the phenomenon are included and providing authentic, experience-based perspectives on how student-athletes perceive, cope with, and are shaped by sports-related injuries.

In this study, purposive sampling was utilized by deliberately selecting student-athletes in Davao City who have sustained at least one sports-related injury during their athletic involvement, as they are in the best position to provide rich and meaningful insights into the phenomenon. Purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of individuals who possess specific knowledge or experience relevant to the research phenomenon.

making it highly suitable for qualitative studies that require in-depth understanding (Campbell et al., 2023). This method ensures that participants are not chosen randomly but rather based on their direct experience and ability to articulate how such injuries affect their physical performance, emotional well-being, and overall athletic journey (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024).

Data Gathering Technique

As a researcher, I adhered to the following technique to obtain adequate information from the participants:

In this study, I employed a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as the primary method of data collection. The FGD is a qualitative method that involves guided group conversations to explore participants' shared experiences, ideas, and perspectives (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 5). This approach allowed my participants to interact with one another while discussing their perceptions related to sports-related injuries during athletic involvement, resulting in rich and comprehensive insights.

An interview guide with open-ended questions was used to facilitate the discussion, allowing flexibility for probing questions. The group interaction encouraged participants to build on each other's responses, creating a supportive environment for open sharing (Nyumba et al., 2018). This method enabled me to capture authentic voices, obtain rich information, and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Data Analysis Technique

The data collected from the FGD were analyzed using thematic analysis following the framework proposed by Colaizzi (1978). In this process, I first read and re-read the transcripts to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' responses. Then, I extracted significant statements, formulated meanings, clustered them into themes, and developed an exhaustive description that captures the essence of the factors shaping the perceptions of student-athletes on sports-related injuries. Then, I carefully examined the transcribed data and applied thematic coding to identify patterns and meanings, ensuring that the findings remained grounded in the participants' narratives. This approach allowed me to develop a focused interpretation of student-athletes' perceptions on sports-related injuries.

Trustworthiness

In conducting this study, I strictly adhered to the ethical standards set forth in Republic Act No. 10532 and the guidelines of Holy Cross of Davao College's Society for Moral Integration and Legal Ethics (HCDC-SMILE). Also, to ensure the trustworthiness of my study, it is guided by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria, which include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I established credibility through direct engagement with student-athletes and the use of semi-structured interviews, allowing them to openly share their perceptions of sports-related injuries. Transferability was addressed by providing rich, detailed descriptions of student-athletes, their sports involvement, injury experiences, and the situations they encountered. Dependability was ensured by clearly documenting the research procedures, including data collection, coding, and theme development, making the process consistent and traceable. Confirmability was achieved by grounding interpretations in student-athletes' accounts using verbatim responses and maintaining objectivity through reflexivity. Together, these criteria establish rigor and strengthen the overall trustworthiness of qualitative research.

Results and Discussion

In this section of my study, I presented the modified paradigm and the themes that emerged from the focus group discussion derived from perceptions of student-athletes with sports-related injuries.

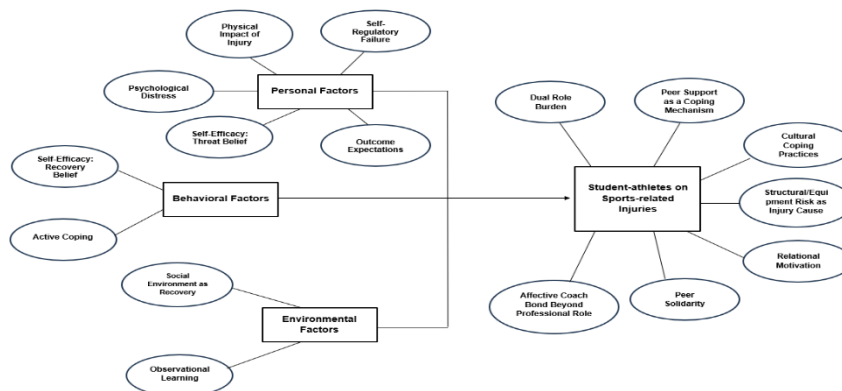


Figure 2: Modified Paradigm of Social Cognitive Theory

Factors shaping the perceptions of student-athletes on sports-related injuries

To explore the factors shaping the participants' perceptions of sports-related injuries, as the participants shared their stories, there was a silent pain in their words but also a determination to persist even in the face of challenges. One of my participants said:

Wala kaayo'y kuan sir kanang... warm-up sir dili kaayo maga... dili kaayo maga warm-up tapos namali nako siyag form like pag ambak nako pero nakahibalo najod ko sir nga di najod kaya pero gipugos nako kay gusto lage ko maka dula sa next game pero saakong pagpugos nainjured na hinoon ko. (I did not warm up properly. I jumped with the wrong form, and even though I knew I could not do it safely. I forced myself because I wanted to play in the next game.) – P1 (Line No. 12-14)

Building from this idea, I saw how injuries created physical limitations that affected even their simplest movements and overall performance. The significance of this physical impact is clearly reflected in their own words. For instance, one of them said:

Naka experience ko og injury sa akong tuhod ug ankle samtang nagdula, nga nakaapekto sa akong lihok ug performance. (I got an injury on my knee and ankle while playing, which affected my movement and performance.) – P1 (Line No. 8-9)

Another participant added:

Dako kaayo og epekto sa akong ang injury kay halos dili ko maka training sulod sa mga 3 ka semana tungod sa grabe nga kasakit sa akong likod ug sa akong ankle. (That injury affected me so much that it made me not able to train for almost 3 weeks because of the severe back pain and pain in my ankle.) – P6 (Line No. 530-531)

As I listened to the participant, I could feel the weight of her words when she expressed psychological distress as she recalled her experience, stating:

Nakuratan sir kay unexpected kaayo kay pag ambak nimo (nako) kay na injure dayon. Wala gyud ko naka-expect nga mahitabo to mao nga medyo na-shock ko ug wala ko kahibalo unsa dayon akong buhaton ato nga moment. (I was shocked because it happened suddenly when I jumped. I didn't know what to do at that moment.) – P1 (Line No. 57-58)

As I listened to the participant who spoke of threat belief, I felt the worries in her words. Her voice stuttered a bit when she said:

Kuan sir... kanang (sniffed) hmmm... ma... mahad... mahadlok naka sir kay basig dili na nimo sya matarong nya dili na mabalik imohang kusog last... last dula namo kaysa sa current na dula nimo. (I felt scared that I might not fully recover and lose my strength compared to my last game.) – P5 (Line No. 452-453)

From their stories, I could see a cautious mindset reflected in how they spoke as they demonstrated outcome expectations anticipating the possible worsening of their condition. One participant said:

Serious sir... kay kuan man gud sya sir... dapit sya sa tuhod ba which is meniscus sya sir... so delikado kaayo sya sir og... kuan sir... Mo crack man samot. (It was serious, sir, because it was in my knee (meniscus), which is very delicate and could get worse.) – P2 (Line No. 134-135).

As I listened deeper to the stories of my participants, I was drawn into the emotional turning point reflected in their sense of self-efficacy particularly their belief in recovery and return to performance. One participant shared this shift clearly:

Sa una, na-frustrate ko ug nagduha-duha ko kung makabalik pa ba ko sa akong dating level sa pagdula. Pero pagbag-o nako sa akong mindset nga makarecover ko, mas nahimo kong positive ug mas naningkamot ko nga mag-ayo ug tarong. (At first, I felt frustrated and doubted if I'd ever play at the same level again. But once I shifted to believing I could fully recover, it made me much more positive and proactive.) – P2 (Line No. 167-169)

I also heard some participants describe how they actively took steps to manage their recovery, reflecting strong use of active coping strategies in dealing with sports-related injuries. While one participant was in conversation, his voice remained steady and composed as he carefully listed the steps he took in his recovery process. The participant shared:

Nagahimo ko og recovery journal aron ma-track nako ang akong progress, gisunod nako og tarong ang akong rehabilitation plan bisag sa mga adlaw nga dili ko ganahan, ug gihatagan nako og gi prioritize nako ang tulog og nutrition nako. (I started keeping a recovery journal to track my progress, followed my rehabilitation plan consistently even on days I didn't feel like it, and prioritized proper sleep and nutrition.) – P2 (Line No. 159-161)

Another participant shared her experience; she spoke in a direct and matter-of-fact manner as she described how she managed her recovery. She shared:

Nag-agto ko og professional medical help ug nag self-care. Gisunod nako ang mga paagi sa pag-atiman sa akong lawas pareha sa proper rest ug pagkaon og maayo aron mas paspas ko maka-ayo. (I went to professional medical help and also used self-care. I followed self-care tips like proper rest and nutrition to speed up healing.) – P5 (Line No. 487-489)

Similarly, one participant highlighted the importance of guidance from experts:

Nag professional medical help ug self-care. Nangayo pud ko og advice sa coach o health professional aron mas masabtan nako akong injury ug kung unsa ang sakto nga buhaton para sa maayo. (I used both professional medical help and self-care. I asked advice from a coach or health professional to understand my injury.) – P3 (Line No. 295-296)

There is determination in what they do, a drive that keeps them going even on tough days.

As I listened more closely to their stories, one participant spoke in a calm tone as he described his coach's support, showing that recovery was not a process he experienced alone but was strongly influenced by social support. The participant said:

Kuan after injury kay akong coach supportively navigating my condition kay... encourage me to stay positive and gina remind ko niya na mag focus ko saakong recovery and dili magdali-dali saakong pagbalik. (My coach checked on me, encouraged me to stay positive, and reminded me to focus on recovery without rushing.) – P2 (Line No. 190-191)

Another participant also emphasized the strong support system surrounding their recovery:

Gisuportahan ko sa akong coach, og mga kauban, ug pamilya sa pag-encourage saako nga magpahulay, mosunod sa akong mga recovery exercises, ug positive samtang nagapaayo ko. (My coach, teammates, and family supported me by encouraging me to rest, follow my recovery exercises, and stay positive while healing.) – P5 (Line No. 501-502)

Another participant spoke about observational learning. I could sense the tone of happiness and pride as the participant shared:

Tungod kay nagatuo sila nga makarecover ko, ningtuo pud ko sa akong kaugalingon. Ang encouragement nakapawala sa akong kabalaka bahin sa akong injury. (Because they believed that I could recover, I also believed in myself. Their encouragement made me feel less worried about my injury) – P3 (Line No. 314-315).

Another participant further emphasized this influence:

Yes, uhm kanang pag naga support sila kay mas mo taas imong confidence nya murag ma motivate imong sarili na para ma proud ang coach. (Yes, their support increased my confidence and motivated me to make my coach proud. Knowing they believed in my recovery made me less afraid of getting injured again.) – P5 (Line No. 509-511)

As I listened to the stories of dual role burden, I could sense the weight of pressure as they struggled to balance their identity as both students and athletes, fearing the impact of injury on both roles. Some participants expressed their burden through their words:

First thought jud nako sir kay dili jud ko maka training or maka dula ani sa club man or school kay dili jud mo sugot ang coaches na mo dula ko. (My first thought was that I wouldn't be able to train or play in the club or school because the coaches wouldn't allow me to.) (P4, Line No. 359-360).

Another participant said:

Ang pagka-injured nako tungod sa sports kay lisod kaayo nga experience para sa akoo. Dili lang siya nakaapekto sa akong lawas ug sa akong pagdula, pero naapektuhan pud akong daily nga routine as student nga ginabalance ang skwela ug

sports. (Sustaining a sports-related injury has been a challenging experience that affected not just my physical ability to play, but also my daily routine as a student balancing academics and sports). P2 (Line No. 107-109).

I also heard how cultural coping practices add another important layer to the participants experiences. They proudly expressed reliance on family-based care and traditional healing practices. One of the participants said:

Sir self-care lang jud from the help from my parents tapos ako lang naga hilot para ma control nako kung sakit kaayo or dili (I mostly rely on self-care with help from my parents, using massage to manage pain). P4 (Line No. 386-387).

Another participant shared a similar experience of combining personal knowledge with family support:

Naga-rely ko sa duha, husahay self-care kay naa koy gamayng nahibaloan, unya mangayo pud kog tabang sa akong mama. (I rely on both — I sometimes do self-care as I knew some basics and seek help from my mom) —P6 (Line No. 568-569).

I also heard the positive experience of peer support as a coping mechanism, where student-athletes found comfort and encouragement from their social circle during injury recovery. One participant shared:

Akong mga friends og kauban nako kay ginaubanan ko nila while injured ko og ginatabangan ko nila. (My friends and teammates they keep me company while I'm injured and help me.) —P6 (Line No. 571-572).

I also heard about how peer solidarity emerged as an important form of support in their recovery experience. I felt the sense of belongingness and emotional reassurance in their narratives, as they described how coaches and teammates continued to include them despite being injured. One participant shared:

Ang akong coach nag-support nako pinaagi sa paghimo og modified plan para makapadayon gihapon ko og engage sa team... Ang akong teammates nag-share gihapon og practice updates ug naga-invite nako sa team gatherings. (My coach made a modified plan so I could still engage with the team... teammates shared practice updates and invited me to gatherings.) —P2 (Line No. 201-203).

As I listened to Participant 5 who spoke about relational motivation, I felt the sense of admiration when she said:

Yes, uhm kanang pag naga support sila kay mas mo taas imong confidence nya murag ma motivate imong sarili na para ma proud ang coach. (Yes, their support increased my confidence and motivated me to make my coach proud.) —P5 (Line No. 509-510).

Similarly, the participant spoke about affective coach bond beyond professional role as an emotional connection. I felt the sense of warmth, gratitude, and emotional reassurance as she said:

My coach sir si maam emjay like siya joy nagmotivate saakoa during tong na injured ko she helps me nga di jod mo give up and siya sad nag hatod saakoa sa clinic. Mura najod namo na siyag mama. (My coach, ma'am Emjay, motivated me and helped me not to give up. She even took me to the clinic. I felt like she was like a mother to us.) —P1 (Line No. 81-83)

Another participant also emphasized the positive emotional presence of their coach:

Ang paagi nilag pa kita saakoa sir kay happy ug friendly lang jud sir naka tabang jud saakoa. (Their happy and friendly attitude really helped me.) —P4 (Line No. 406)

I also heard the frustration over structural/equipment risk as an injury cause. I felt the disappointment

when unsafe facilities and inadequate equipment contributed to their injuries and physical strain as the participant explained:

Nasabit akong tiil sa bakal, unya nalupad ko ug naliko akong ankle, dayon natumba ko nga natukod akong lubot, mao to nga nisugod ang sakit sa akong likod. (My leg got caught in the metal, and it sent me flying and twisted my ankle and landed in my butt, causing my back pain to arise.) —P6 (Line No. 525-527)

Going back to our conversations, I mostly heard common ideas about self-regulatory failure, physical impact of injury, psychological distress, threat belief, outcome expectations, recovery belief, active coping, social environment as recovery, observational learning, dual role burden, peer support as coping mechanism, cultural coping practices, relational motivation, affective coach bond beyond professional role, peer solidarity, and structural/equipment risk as injury cause surfaced even through our online setup, the pauses before answering, the slight changes in tone, and the moments when their voices softened or became uncertain. Some would look away from the screen, as if relieving the experience, while others gave short, hesitant smiles that seemed to mask frustration or disappointment. There were times when they sighed deeply or took a few seconds before continuing, which shows how heavy those experiences still felt. Even without physical presence, their facial expressions, shifting eye contact, and subtle gestures revealed the weight of their stories showing that beyond the words, the impact of their injuries was not only physical but deeply emotional and personal. From these, I realized that sports-related injuries during athletic involvement, as perceived by student-athletes, are not merely physical setbacks but complex experiences that disrupt their emotional stability, decision-making, and sense of identity as both athletes and students

Summary of Findings

Student-athletes' perceptions of sports-related injuries are shaped by personal factors such as self-regulatory failure and physical limitations; behavioral factors, such as self-efficacy in recovery and coping strategies (active and cultural); and environmental factors such as social and peer support and observational learning. Furthermore, contextual factors emerged which includes dual role burden, peer support as a coping mechanism, cultural coping practices, relational motivation, peer solidarity, affective coach-athlete bonds, and structural or equipment-related risks cause pressure, motivation, or perceived vulnerability, which in turn influence how student-athletes construct meaning from and respond to sports-related injuries within their sporting environment.

Discussions

This section presents the discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature and theoretical perspectives. The themes derived from the participants are examined alongside relevant studies.

Factors Shaping the Perceptions of Student-Athletes on Sports-related Injuries

I found out that student-athletes' perceptions of sports-related injuries are shaped by personal factors such as self-regulatory failure and physical limitations; behavioral factors, such as self-efficacy in recovery and coping strategies (active and cultural); and environmental factors such as social and peer support and observational learning. Furthermore, contextual factors emerged which includes dual role burden, peer support as a coping mechanism, cultural coping practices, relational motivation, peer solidarity, affective coach-athlete bonds, and structural or equipment-related risks cause pressure, motivation, or perceived vulnerability, which in turn influence how student-athletes construct meaning from and respond to sports-related injuries within their sporting environment.

My finding agrees with the claims of Zimanyi et al. (2025), stating that athletes' responses to injury are influenced by a dynamic interaction of personal factors such as individual differences and motivation and contextual factors such as injury severity and social support, which shape how athletes cognitively appraise and emotionally respond to injury situations. Similarly, my finding affirms Leguizamo et al. (2023), who revealed that injured athletes' experiences are strongly influenced by coping strategies, attribution processes, and social support systems, highlighting how behavioral responses such as coping mechanisms and environmental influences such as peer and team support affect how athletes interpret and deal with injury.

In contrast, the current findings disagree with Cardoso-Marinho et al. (2022), who stated that athletes tend

to view injury risk mainly in terms of physical conditions such as fatigue, muscle strength, and training demands, while giving less importance to psychological, social, and contextual influences. While their findings emphasize a primarily physical interpretation of injury risk, my findings show that student-athletes' perception of injuries extends beyond physical factors and is also shaped by behavioral responses, environmental influences, and contextual pressures such as dual role burden, peer support systems, and coach-athlete bonds.

Future Direction

Future research may examine the factors shaping the perceptions of student-athletes on sports-related injuries using multiple regression analysis to identify which personal, behavioral, and environmental factors significantly predict injury perceptions and responses. Additionally, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) may be conducted to develop and validate an instrument based on personal factors, behavioral factors, and environmental factors. Data suitability may be assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, with principal axis factoring and ProMax rotation applied. Furthermore, reliability of the identified factors may be evaluated using Cronbach's alpha.

Implications for practice

The findings of my study highlighted practical ways to improve student-athletes' perceptions of sports-related injuries through collaborative efforts among coaches, healthcare providers, and school leaders. Coaches may focus on personal factors by teaching proper warm-up and cool-down routines, correct sport-specific techniques, and safe movement patterns, which may enhance students' awareness of injury prevention and promote responsible participation in sports. Providing consistent instruction and reinforcement may serve as a foundation for developing safe habits and positive perceptions toward injury risks.

Healthcare providers may strengthen behavioral factors by conducting proper injury assessment and accurate diagnosis, designing individualized rehabilitation programs, and teaching correct recovery exercises. These practices may help student-athletes understand the importance of proper injury management and adherence to recovery protocols. Continuous guidance and education may serve as a support system that encourages responsible health behaviors and improves their overall perception of injury care and recovery.

At the same time, school leaders may enhance environmental factors by implementing safety rules and policies, maintaining safe and well-equipped facilities, and fostering a culture of care within the school community. They may promote shared responsibility among students, teachers, and coaches in ensuring a safe sporting environment. Initiatives such as safety orientations, regular facility inspections, and injury prevention programs may help create a secure and supportive space for student-athletes.

My finding indicates that student-athletes' perceptions of sports-related injuries may be improved by addressing personal factors through proper training and technique, strengthening behavioral factors through guided injury management and recovery practices, and enhancing environmental factors through safe policies and supportive school systems. These coordinated efforts may promote a culture of safety, awareness, and shared responsibility in sports participation.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the following individuals who, in one way or another, have offered their generous and unselfish support to make this study a reality:

To Almighty Father, for blessing me with good health, wisdom, and guidance throughout this study.

To my thesis adviser Dr. Veronica S. Merlas, for her patience, guidance, and unwavering support in teaching and in helping me finish my paper.

To the participants in my study, your valuable assistance and cooperation are deeply appreciated.

Finally, to my parents and friends, for their unwavering love, encouragement, and support, this provided me with the strength to persevere.

References

- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Cachola-Miñas, G., Gabunilas, J. M. C. M., Panganiban, T. D., & Lobo, J. (2025). Improving sports rehabilitation for athletes: Addressing gaps in current practices to improve recovery outcomes. *Sportis: Scientific Journal of School Sport Physical Education and Psychomotricity*. <https://doi.org/10.17979/sportis.2025.11.3.11643>
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- Cardoso-Marinho B, Barbosa A, Bolling C, Marques JP, Figueiredo P, Brito J. The perception of injury risk and prevention among football players: A systematic review. *Front Sports Act Living*. 2022 Dec 7;4:1018752. doi: 10.3389/fspor.2022.1018752. PMID: 36570494; PMCID: PMC9768495.
- Castro, M. Y., Orriols, L., Basha Sakr, D., Hours, M., & Ndiaye, A. (2021). A web-based prospective cohort study of home, leisure, school and sports injuries in France: A descriptive analysis. *Injury Epidemiology*, 8(1), 50. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-021-00343-9>
- Clavaton, M. S., Gumangan, A. I. C., Bay, D. F. G., Castillo, R. M. D., Marquez, G. E. P., Surot, N. U., Moksir, T. G., Benares, A. B., & Mercado, M. J. D. (2022). The buzzer's call: Understanding the lived experiences of injured athletes, a phenomenology. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications*, 5(1), 14–23.
- Colaizzi, P. F. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In R. Valle & M. King (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology* (pp. 48–71). Oxford University Press.
- Gao, Q. (2025). A quantitative approach to the impact of physical injuries on athlete performance. *Pacific International Journal*, 8(4), 110–115. <https://doi.org/10.55014/pij.v8i4.853>
- Khan, A., Jamil, M., Butti, S., Ahmad, I., Ullah, H., Khan, A., & Imtiaz. (2023). Causes, precautions and management of risk factors associated with sports injuries. *THE THERAPIST (Journal of Therapies & Rehabilitation Sciences)*, 4(03), 56–58. <https://doi.org/10.54393/tt.v4i03.143>
- Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 40(1), 23–42. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21768>
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Leguizamo F, Núñez A, Gervilla E, Olmedilla A and Garcia-Mas A (2023) Exploring attributional and coping strategies in competitive injured athletes: a qualitative approach. *Front. Psychol.* 14:1287951. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1287951
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(85\)90062-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(85)90062-8)
- Lindman, I., Augustsson, S. R., Baranto, A., Sansone, M., & Abrahamson, J. (2024). Prospective cohort study identifying risk factors for sports injuries in adolescent athletes: The HIFAA study. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine*, 10, e002253. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjsem-2024-002253>
- Nyimbili, F., & Nyimbili, L. (2024). Types of purposive sampling techniques. *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*, 5(1), 90–99. <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0419>
- Nyumba, T. O., Wilson, K., Derrick, C. J., & Mukherjee, N. (2018). The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, 9(1), 20–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.12860>
- Sandelowski, M. (2010). What's in a name? Qualitative description revisited. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 33(1), 77–84. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20362>
- Sheehan, N., Summersby, R., Bleakley, C., Caulfield, B., Matthews, M., Klempel, N., & Holden, S. (2024). Adolescents' experience with sports-related pain and injury: A systematic review of qualitative research. *Physical Therapy in Sport*, 68, 7–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ptsp.2024.05.003>
- Tabiando, J. C. (2024). Impact of sports injuries on psychological well-being. *International Journal of Novel Research and Development*, 9(9), e30–e35.
- Zimanyi, Z., Radtke, V., & Schüler, J. Felt social support in sport injuries—personal and contextual predictors. *Ger J Exerc Sport Res* 56, 40–51 (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12662-025-01055-8>

Appendix A. Interview Guide Questions

Research Title: Factors Shaping the Perceptions of Student-Athletes on Sports-Related Injuries

Research Questions	Interview Questions	Probing Questions
1. What are the factors that shape the perceptions of student-athletes on sports-related injuries?	Can you describe your experience as a student-athlete who sustained a sports-related injury during athletic involvement?	1. What type of sports-related injury did you experience? 2. Can you describe how and when the injury happened? 3. Did the injury affect your ability to continue training or competing? In what way?
	Personal Factors What personal factors shape your experiences as a student-athlete with sports-related injuries?	1. How did you personally react to your injury when it first happened? 2. How did you initially view your injury—serious, minor, or manageable? Why? 3. What were your initial thoughts about how the injury might affect your sports participation? 4. How did you feel emotionally after the injury (e.g., frustrated, disappointed, anxious)? 5. Did you feel prepared to deal with the injury, or were you caught off guard? Why?
	Behavioral Factors What personal behaviors or habits helped you cope with a sports injury?	1. How did your thoughts, confidence, or mindset affect the way you handled your injury? 2. Did believing that you could recover help you stay positive?

		How? 3. Did you seek professional medical help, rely on self-care, or both? Why? 4. What helped you stay motivated throughout your recovery?
	Environmental Factors What environmental factors have influenced your experiences as a student-athlete with a sports-related injury?	1. How did your coach, teammates, or family support you after your injury? 2. Did their support—or lack of it—affect your confidence in returning to play? 3. How did their attitudes toward your injury influence the way you thought about recovery?

