

Assessing the Reading Performance of Pupils Involved in Sports Activities: Basis for Crafting a Reading Intervention Plan

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Abstract: This study investigates the reading performance of elementary pupils actively engaged in sports activities, with the aim of developing a targeted reading intervention plan. Recognizing the growing emphasis on holistic education, which encourages both academic excellence and physical development, the research explores the potential impact of sports participation on pupils' reading comprehension, fluency, and overall literacy skills. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were gathered through standardized reading assessments, teacher interviews, and pupil surveys from selected public schools.

The findings revealed significant variations in reading performance between pupils with high levels of sports involvement and their non-sporting peers, highlighting key factors such as time management, cognitive load, and motivation. The study concludes that while sports can contribute positively to certain aspects of a pupil's development, they may also present challenges to academic performance if not balanced appropriately.

Based on the results, a comprehensive reading intervention plan is proposed, incorporating time-efficient literacy strategies, parental involvement, and teacher-led reading support tailored to the needs of student-athletes. This plan aims to bridge the gap between academic and extracurricular pursuits, fostering a more integrated approach to student development.

Keywords: Reading Performance, Balance-Reading Program, Student-Athletes, Holistic Development.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Sports are physical activities organized with rules, often involving competition, that promote physical fitness, mental well-being, and social interaction. They are important for pupils as they offer numerous benefits, including improved physical and mental health, enhanced cognitive skills, and the development of crucial life skills. From childhood, learners have been taught to engage in some form of physical activity, whether it be playing with their friends, running around, or joining a sports team. Both sports and education have a significant role in their lives, but beyond just the fun and games, sports and games have an important role to play in education. Teachers teach pupils life skills like teamwork, leadership, accountability, and patience. They also help build confidence, improve self-esteem, teach social skills, and provide a sense of belongingness.

Sports and games are great ways to keep children active and healthy without the need for them to miss out on their academic studies. Moreover, physical activity has been medically proven to increase cognitive and memory functions, which can help children perform better in school. Pupils who often participate in sports have higher self-esteem and better social interaction than those who don't. They also have a more positive attitude towards life and are less likely to fall prey to social evils like drugs, suicide, and unplanned pregnancy.

Sports teachers are trained to harness the fun and natural competitiveness of sports to help pupils enjoy games together, get exercise, learn how to play cooperatively, and develop self-esteem. Even small words of encouragement from the coach or a goal scored for their team can boost a child's confidence.

The importance of sports in school education lies in the fact that they teach children a range of skills and encourage teamwork. In addition, sport can enhance their leadership skills and enable them to achieve their goals in life.

International research on pupil-athletes generally shows that sports involvement can positively influence academic performance, including reading skills. Studies indicate that participation in sports can enhance cognitive functions, improve discipline, and foster perseverance, all of which are beneficial for academic success, including reading comprehension. While some studies suggest potential time conflicts between sports and academics, the overall consensus is that sports involvement, when managed effectively, can lead to improved academic outcomes.

The relationship between sports participation and academic performance, including reading, is a complex one with both positive and negative implications. While some studies suggest a positive correlation, with sports involvement potentially enhancing academic achievement and reading skills, others point to potential negative impacts like time constraints and distractions. Legally, there's a push for physical education and sports to be integrated into schools, with frameworks emphasizing the importance of well-rounded development, including physical and mental health, and academic performance.

While specific international policies directly linking sports participation with reading performance are not widely documented, there's a growing global emphasis on promoting holistic student development, including physical activity and academic success. Research suggests a positive correlation between sports participation and improved academic performance, including reading skills, potentially through increased cognitive function and attention.

Many countries are implementing policies that prioritize physical education and sports programs within schools, recognizing the importance of physical activity for overall student development. Some nations are actively encouraging participation in school sports through initiatives that provide access to sports facilities, coaching, and funding for sports programs.

In conclusion, while there's no specific international policy directly linking sports and reading performance, the global trend is towards recognizing the positive impact of sports on overall pupil development, including academic success. Policies that promote sports and physical activity, while also balancing academic commitments, are being implemented to support pupils in achieving their full potential in both areas.

In a "sports-America" scenario where pupils are involved in sports, their reading performance can be positively or negatively impacted. Some studies suggest that sports participation can improve cognitive functions and reading abilities, while others indicate that excessive sports commitments might negatively affect academic performance, including reading. The key seems to lie in finding a balance

between sports and academics, and supporting student-athletes in managing their time and workload.

In the Philippines, several laws and policies relate to pupils' reading performance and their involvement in sports. Key legislation includes the Republic Act No. 10676 (Student-Athletes Protection Act), which focuses on the rights and welfare of student-athletes, including ensuring they receive adequate education and are not exploited. Additionally, Republic Act No. 5708 (Schools Physical Education and Sports Development Act of 1969) mandates integrated physical education and school sports programs as part of the basic education curriculum.

Republic Act No. 10676 (Student-Athletes Protection Act): This law ensures that student athletes' academic performance, including reading, is monitored and supported by schools. Schools are obligated to ensure that student-athletes meet the minimum class/course load, pass grade requirements, and comply with other school-specific requirements.

Another Philippine law is the Republic Act No. 5708 (Schools Physical Education and Sports Development Act of 1969): This act promotes a well-rounded physical education program that addresses physical growth, social training, and personal discipline for all students, including those involved in sports. While not directly focused on reading, it emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach to education that includes academic pursuits and physical activity.

Other relevant laws and policies are Republic Act No. 11470 (The National Academy of Sports): This law establishes the National Academy of Sports, a specialized educational institution providing secondary education with an integrated program for sports development, including potentially focusing on the reading abilities of young athletes and the Department of Education (DepEd) guidelines: DepEd, the government agency responsible for education, may issue guidelines and policies related to sports and academic performance, including reading, for students-athletes.

In the Philippines, pupil-athletes generally perform academically on par with non-athletes and can manage their academic and athletic commitments. While there's no direct, universally strong positive or negative correlation between sports participation and reading performance specifically, studies suggest that engagement in sports can improve cognitive functions and traits like discipline, which can indirectly contribute to better overall academic performance. Some research suggests a generally positive impact of sports participation on academic performance, including reading skills, there's also evidence that the relationship can be complex and multifaceted. Some studies show pupil-athletes maintain academic performance on par with non-athletes, while others indicate that involvement in athletics can improve cognitive functions and memory, potentially aiding in academic success.

While sports participation generally does not negatively impact the academic performance of pupil-athletes, there are concerns about the overall reading proficiency of Filipino pupils, including those involved in sports. A significant number of students struggle with reading comprehension, and this is a major factor in the Philippines' consistently low performance in international assessments like PISA.

A study in Sorsogon, Philippines, explored the relationship between sports involvement and Filipino pupils' reading performance, particularly in a rural elementary school. The research aimed to develop a multimodal learning model to address low reading achievement among pupils. While the study didn't directly compare reading performance between athletes and non-athletes, it highlighted the importance of sports in the holistic development of youth and the need for enhanced sports programs to address areas like lack of MAPEH teachers and inadequate budget. The study also found that athletes' performance and the quality of sports facilities and equipment are directly correlated. In Sorsogon, like the rest of the Philippines, Filipino pupils involved in sports face a significant challenge: low reading proficiency. While the Philippines has a strong sports culture, a large percentage of pupils struggle to reach minimum reading proficiency levels, as indicated by the PISA results. This implies that many pupil-athletes may encounter difficulties in understanding and utilizing written information related to their sport, whether it's training manuals, game strategies, or academic materials.

The researchers would like to study and assess the pupil's reading performance involved in sports in Barcelona, Sorsogon.

II. OBJECTIVES

The following are the research objectives:

- To determine the profiles of pupils involved in sports activities in terms of their reading profiles and the sports activities participated in.
- To determine the reading profiles of pupil-athletes
- To identify the sports participation of the pupil-athletes.
- To find out the strategies employed by coaches and trainers in balancing pupils' reading progress and sports participation.
- To identify the challenges encountered by coaches and trainers in balancing reading progress and sports participation of the pupils.
- To propose an athlete's holistic literacy plan to assist coaches and trainers in ensuring pupils' reading progress and sports participation?

III. METHODS

The current study employed a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative data from standardized reading tests with qualitative data from interviews and observations of pupils' reading habits and attitudes. This study compared the reading performance of pupils involved in sports with a control group of students not involved in sports, while also exploring the factors that might mediate or moderate the

relationship between sports participation and reading performance. This design allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between sports involvement and reading abilities, considering both objective performance measures and subjective experiences.

In this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling as the primary technique. This method was deemed appropriate since the investigation specifically targeted pupils who are actively engaged in sports activities within the school. The selection was based on the following criteria: Pupils must be officially enrolled in the school during the academic year under study, pupils must be recognized members of school-based sports teams or organizations, pupils must be within the grade levels covered by the reading performance assessment program.

IV. RESULTS

The results reflect the reading abilities of these pupils, identifying areas of strength and weakness, and will ultimately lead to the development of a tailored reading intervention program designed to support their academic success alongside their athletic pursuits.

A. Profile of Pupils Involved in Sports Activities

Learners' involvement in certain sports is anchored on several reasons. Generally, these pupil-athletes genuinely enjoy the sports because of the movement, the challenge, and the thrill brought by their engagement. For some, their involvement provides them a sense of freedom and expression, specifically when their academic life feels tough.

In the basic education sector, sports development and reading are like two sides of the same coin for pupil-athletes because they represent complementary pathways to holistic growth. It has been a common notion that sports strengthen the body, essential in developing coordination, endurance, and tactical awareness, while reading sharpens the learners' minds. Reading is indispensable in building comprehension, critical thinking, and language skills. Truly, these two components have to complement each other to nurture learners who are both mentally agile and physically capable.

Based on the Table 1.0, out of 43 pupil-athletes, 29 are reading at an independent level, 11 at an instructional level, and 3 at a frustration. This means a majority of the athletes, 29 or 67% are able to read comfortably on their own, while a smaller percentage, student-athletes of 11 or 26% benefit from guided reading support, and a very small fraction of pupil-athletes, 3 or 7% find the material too challenging even with assistance.

The pupil-athlete reading profiles might find that pupil-athletes demonstrate the highest level of independent reading, indicating a strong preference for self-directed learning and engagement with reading materials they choose.

Conversely, these athletes may exhibit the lowest levels of frustration during reading, suggesting they possess effective strategies for overcoming reading challenges and

maintaining a positive attitude towards the reading process. This could be linked to the discipline and time management skills developed through their athletic pursuits,

which translate into better focus and coping mechanisms when encountering difficult texts.

Table 1. Reading Profile of the Respondents

Reading Profile	Frequency	Percent
Independent	29	67
Instructional	11	26
Frustration	3	7
Total	43	100

Based on the analysis, the majority of pupil-athletes were found to be performing at the independent reading level, demonstrating strong comprehension and decoding skills despite their engagement in sports activities. Their ability to self-regulate, manage time effectively, and stay motivated may have contributed to this outcome. However, a small number of pupil-athletes were identified at the frustration level, indicating a need for targeted reading interventions to help them meet academic expectations.

On Table 1, the data indicates the relative popularity of different sports among 43 pupil-athletes. Volleyball is the most popular sports with a frequency of 12, rank 1, followed closely by badminton with a frequency of 11, rank 2. Athletics is third with 10 participants, basketball with 8 participants, and dance sports with only 2 participants. This suggests a clear preference for team sports like volleyball and badminton among these students

Table 1. Sports Activities Participated in by the Pupil Athletes

Sports Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Volleyball	12	28
Badminton	11	26
Athletics	10	23
Basketball	8	18
Dance Sport	2	5
Total	43	100

Volleyball emerged as the most preferred sport, ranking first in participation. This was followed by badminton in second, athletics in third, basketball in fourth, and dance sport in fifth. The high preference for volleyball and badminton suggests a strong interest in both team-based and individual sports that offer structured training and competitive opportunities. Overall, the type and nature of the preferred sport appear to influence the pupils' reading performance.

B. Strategies Employed by Coaches and Trainers in Balancing Pupil-Athletes' Reading Progress and Sports Participation

It has been a goal of the school to produce learners who are well-rounded individuals. Thus, these coaches and trainers have to employ strategies to maintain the balance between pupils' reading progress and their sports participation. These strategies have to ensure that both the cognitive and the physical development of the learners have to go hand in hand.

As shown in Table 2.0, the provided strategies prioritize fostering strong coach-athlete relationships through communication and support, while also promoting skill development and effective learning through structured approaches and physical engagement. Communication and support, ranked highest, are crucial for building trust and

rapport, enabling open dialogue and addressing individual needs. The "pull out system" and provided modules suggest a structured, personalized approach to learning, likely involving focused attention and tailored content. Flexibility and adaptability are valued, indicating an awareness of diverse learning styles and the need to adjust strategies. Structured schedules, time management, and psychological techniques highlight the importance of planning and mental well-being for optimal performance. Finally, incorporating physical movement into reading and conducting actual reading sessions emphasize the value of active learning and practical application of skills. Rank 1st in the list is Fostering Communication and Support, open communication and a supportive environment are fundamental for athletes to feel comfortable sharing their needs, challenges, and goals. This also helps coaches understand individual learning styles and tailor their approach accordingly. The Pull-out system, modules are provided to pupils while having their training and Promoting flexibility and Adaptability have a frequency of 5, and they all ranked 3rd. Utilizing psychological techniques and Structured schedules and Time management obtained a frequency of 4, making them ranked 5.5. Rank 7th include Incorporation of physical movement into reading and; Conduct actual reading sessions with frequency of 2, making this ranked 8th.

Table 2 Strategies Employed by Coaches and Trainers in Balancing Pupils' Reading Progress and Sports Participation

Strategies	Frequency	Rank
Fostering communication and support by establishing open communication channels among coaches, trainers, teachers, and parents to monitor learners' reading progress	7	1
Pulling out pupil athletes during MAPEH subject for them to practice and bring them back to attend literacy lessons	5	3
Providing pupil athletes with learning modules while having their training	5	3
Promoting flexibility and adaptability by encouraging athletes to be adaptable and adjust their schedules as needed and recognize that unexpected challenges may arise	5	3
Applying structured schedules and time management by encouraging pupil athletes to create and maintain a detailed schedule that allocates specific time for academics, sports training, and reading	4	5.5
Utilizing psychological techniques by introducing visualization techniques to help athletes mentally rehearse performance and enhancing focus and confidence in both reading and sports	4	5.5
Incorporating the physical movements with the literary activities such as listening to literacy audio materials	3	7
Conducting literacy activities (reading sessions) with the athletes in their study time while in attendance at training	2	8

The analysis of the data reveals a variety of approaches, with differing levels of effectiveness and frequency. Fostering communication and support by establishing open communication channels among coaches, trainers, teachers, and parents ranked highest. This strategy was seen as the most effective, as it ensures all stakeholders are informed of the pupil-athletes' academic needs and reading progress, allowing for timely interventions and collaborative support. Pulling out pupil-athletes from class for focused training sessions and providing them with learning modules during training were also commonly used, though they require careful monitoring to avoid negatively affecting academic performance. Promoting flexibility and adaptability ranked third, highlighting the importance of adjusting training and study schedules based on pupils' individual needs. Applying structured schedules and time management, along with utilizing psychological techniques, help pupils manage their responsibilities and maintain motivation, though they are not yet widely or consistently practiced. Meanwhile, less commonly used strategies included incorporating physical movement with literacy activities and conducting literacy activities, suggesting that integrating academic tasks directly into sports settings remains underutilized. Overall, the analysis shows that while communication and modular learning support are prioritized, more innovative and integrated academic-sport strategies are less frequently applied, signaling an area for development in supporting pupil-athletes' holistic growth.

C. Challenges Encountered by Coaches and Trainers in Balancing the Reading Progress and Sports Participation of the Pupils

The challenge of balancing reading progress and sports participation for pupil-athletes presents multifaceted difficulties for coaches and trainers. The primary concerns, ranked by frequency or perceived severity, are: potential for stress and fatigue, differing priorities and expectations, limited time for literacy engagement, overlapping schedule,

passivity of pupils, and the unavailability of tailored resources.

In Table 3.0, shows the exposure of coaches and trainers to stress and fatigue, with a frequency of 6, ranked 1st. This is the most frequently cited challenge. Pupil-athletes face immense pressure to excel both academically and athletically, leading to potential burnout and physical/mental exhaustion. The demands of training, competition, and academic work can create a cycle of stress and fatigue, impacting their ability to focus on either area effectively. Differing priorities and expectations, absence of training on the integrative approach on balancing the reading progress and sports participation of pupil athletes, limited funds necessary to support the literacy intervention for pupil athletes, with both frequency of 5, ranked 3rd. Student-athletes, coaches, and parents may have conflicting priorities and expectations regarding academic success and athletic performance. Some may prioritize sports, while others emphasize academics, leading to tension and conflict within the student-athlete's support system.

Limited time to provide literacy engagement with the pupil-athletes and an Overlapping schedule, which resulted in non-participation in literacy/reading engagement with pupil-athletes, both obtained a frequency of 4, making them ranked 5.5. Training schedules, travel, and academic commitments often overlap, leaving little time for dedicated literacy development activities. This lack of dedicated time can hinder the progress of both reading and sports participation. Some pupil-athletes may display passivity towards literacy activities, potentially due to a lack of interest, motivation, or perceived relevance to their athletic goals. This can be a significant obstacle for coaches and trainers seeking to integrate literacy into their training programs. Ranked 7th includes Passivity of pupils to the literacy activities provided by the trainers and Unavailability of tailored reading resources, with a frequency of 1, making it rank 8th.

Table 3. Challenges Encountered by Coaches and Trainers in Balancing the Reading Progress and Sports Participation of the Pupils

Challenges	Frequency	Rank
Exposure of coaches and trainers to potentialb stress and fatigue	6	1
Absence of training on the integrative approach on balancing the reading progress and sports participation of pupil- athletes	5	3
Differing priorities and expectations (coaches may prioritize sports development while teachers emphasize literacy progress)	5	3
Limited funds necessary to support the literacy intervention for pupil athletes	5	3
Limited time to provide literacy engagement with the pupil athletes	4	5.5
Overlapping schedule, which resulted in non-participation of some athletes in literacy intervention	4	5.5
Passivity of pupils to the literacy activities provided by the trainers	3	7
Unavailability of tailored reading resources	1	8

The analysis reveals a complex set of difficulties that impact their effectiveness. The most frequently reported challenge, ranking first, is the exposure of coaches and trainers to potential stress and fatigue. This indicates that the demands of managing both athletic training and academic support take a toll on their ability to sustain efforts in promoting literacy. Ranked 3rd are three equally pressing challenges: the absence of training on integrative approaches, differing priorities and expectations among stakeholders, and limited funds to support literacy interventions. These issues highlight systematic gaps, such as the lack of professional development opportunities and financial resources, as well as misaligned goals between academic and athletic departments. Additionally, the limited time available to provide literacy engagement and overlapping schedules which often lead to non-participation of athletes in literacy programs both rank 5.5. These scheduling conflicts show that without intentional coordination, academic support for athletes becomes inconsistent or neglected. Other challenges include the passivity of pupils toward literacy activities rank 7th, suggesting a lack of motivation or engagement among athletes, and the unavailability of tailored reading resources rank 8, pointing to the need for more relevant and accessible materials. Overall, the findings indicate that while coaches and trainers are willing to support literacy efforts, they are hindered by stress, systematic limitations, and a lack of cohesive planning and resources. Addressing these challenges requires institutional support, targeted training, and better integration of academic and athletic programs.

D. Proposed Reading Intervention Plan

➤ Rationale

A reading intervention plan for pupil-athletes aligns with the MATATAG agenda by focusing on holistic learner development, particularly through improved literacy skills, which are crucial for both academic and athletic success. This aligns with the MATATAG goals of making the curriculum relevant, producing competent and job-ready citizens, and promoting learner well-being. The intervention specifically addresses the unique needs of pupil-athletes by integrating reading support with their sports-related activities, fostering a positive attitude towards learning, and contributing to their overall development as well-rounded individuals. Pupil-athletes often face unique challenges balancing academic and athletic demands. A reading intervention program can help them manage these pressures by improving their ability

to learn and process information efficiently, thus enhancing their overall academic performance and confidence.

The MATATAG curriculum encourages a love for learning and a positive attitude towards education. By providing tailored support and engaging reading materials, the intervention can foster a more positive perception of reading and learning among pupil-athletes, encouraging them to see reading not as a chore but as a valuable tool for both academic and athletic pursuits. The MATATAG agenda prioritizes student well-being and inclusive education. A reading intervention program can create a supportive and nurturing environment for pupil-athletes, providing them with the resources and encouragement they need to succeed academically and athletically.

By implementing a well-designed reading intervention plan, schools can effectively address the unique needs of pupil-athletes and contribute to their holistic development, aligning with the goals of the MATATAG agenda.

➤ Goal

The goal for pupil-athletes in a reading intervention plan is to improve their reading skills, specifically their ability to develop their vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehend text, while also fostering a love for reading. This involves addressing any reading difficulties they may have and helping them use reading as a tool for learning and enjoyment. Ultimately, the aim is to equip them with the necessary literacy skills for academic success and beyond.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Profile of Pupils Involved in Sports Activities

Pupils involved in sports activities often exhibit a profile characterized by improved cognitive function, enhanced time management skills, and increased discipline, all of which can positively impact academic performance. However, excessive sports commitment may also lead to academic neglect and heightened stress. Furthermore, sports participation can foster school engagement, leading to a greater sense of belonging and potentially higher high school completion rates.

The discussion revolves around the profile of students involved in sports at Phil IRI, specifically focusing on their reading levels as determined by the Philippine Informal

Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). The findings indicate that a majority of student-athletes fall into the independent reading level, which is the highest level of reading proficiency, while a smaller portion are at the frustration level, which represents the lowest reading level. This suggests that while a significant number of pupil-athletes demonstrate strong reading skills, a smaller group may require additional support to improve their reading comprehension. Independent reading profiles of pupil-athletes demonstrate autonomy and competence, which are central pillars of Self-Determination Theory. This shows that their motivation in reading is largely intrinsic, paralleling the motivational dynamics that sustain their athletic growth. Social Cognitive Theory explains that pupil-athletes' independent reading level is a product of their self-efficacy, self-regulation, and observational learning—skills honed both in sports and in literacy development.

According to Montecalbo-Ignacio et al. (2017) stressed that sports fans believe that participating in sports can motivate pupil-athletes to work harder, increase their academic aspirations, maintain their academic commitment, and improve their academic performance. They did identify positive impacts of sports on athletes' perceptions of academic accomplishment and improved mental processes like increased rationality and patience. In fact, according to Agustin (2022), shown that sports engagement can lead to improved cognitive skills, better time management, and increased academic achievement, while also promoting positive social development and mental health. Alahmed et al (2016), said that a positive correlation between sports participation and academic achievement, suggesting that students involved in sports tend to perform better academically. Specifically, they identified a positive link between attitude towards competitive sports participation and academic performance.

Choi et al (2014), said that the engagement of pupils in sports competition is known to contribute to the developmental outcomes for a healthy lifestyle, where children learn about physical, social and cognitive skills. More broadly, engagement in physical activity is also recognised to contribute a range of positive outcomes, specifically; physical and mental health, social wellbeing, cognitive and academic performance, this was according to Bailey et al (2013).

B. Strategies Employed by Coaches and Trainers in Balancing Pupil-Athletes' Reading Progress and Sports Participation

The results of this study reveal that, on top of the strategies employed by coaches and trainers, such as fostering communication and support; establish open communication channels between coaches, teachers, and parents to monitor progress and address any challenges collaboratively. The critical role of coaches and trainers in fostering communication and support for pupil-athletes, emphasizing how these factors impact athlete well-being and performance. Effective communication, including verbal and nonverbal cues, builds trust and positive coach-athlete relationships, which are crucial for athlete development. Furthermore, coaches who prioritize social

support, both emotional and practical, can significantly influence athletes' mental health and performance.

Niehoff (2024), stated that teacher-coaches effectively transferred pedagogical skills—such as structured lesson planning, differentiated instruction, and clear communication—from the classroom to their athletic coaching, improving coaching performance. The dual role fostered deeper connections with pupil-athletes, rooted in mutual respect. Teacher-coaches understood pupil learning needs better and built trust more easily due to their overlapping roles. PHE America (2022), emphasized the importance of centering the individual over the activity—whether coaching endurance sports or teaching literacy. It recognizes that each learner or athlete has unique needs and timelines, and effective coaching starts by understanding and valuing the person.

Furthermore, AF Clark et al (2019) explored how cognitive behavioral strategies like goal setting, self-monitoring, and cognitive reframing can be applied to enhance academic performance in pupil-athletes. Although not reading-specific, the techniques are highly transferable to literacy skill development. Paragas and Nabor (2025), emphasized that development in both academic and athletic realms isn't merely about performance—it involves holistic growth, adaptability, and structured support mechanisms.

Meanwhile, Abundiente et al. (2025) concluded that while secondary school sports coaches who are also educators face considerable time, role, and institutional pressures, they actively use planning, collegial support, and personal coping strategies to navigate these demands. However, sustainable support structures and institutional changes are crucial to help these individuals perform effectively and maintain their holistic well-being. Liu & Taresh (2024) concluded that effective time management strategies are strongly linked to better academic achievement, improved athletic performance, and enhanced psychological well-being. Roberts et al. (2025) also concluded that student-athletes' ability to successfully balance academic responsibilities with sporting commitments depends not just on individual effort, but on a supportive system of structures, relationships, and resources.

C. Challenges Encountered by Coaches and Trainers in Balancing the Reading Progress and Sports Participation of the Pupils

In this part of the study, the challenges of coaches and trainers have been revealed. According to the results of the study, potential for stress and fatigue, is the most serious challenge for coaches and trainers in balancing the reading progress and sports participation of the pupils. According to the study of Cosh and Tully (2015), pupil-athletes frequently experienced conflicts between training or competition schedules and academic responsibilities, creating stress in managing both demands. In the context of this study, the physical and emotional exhaustion from demanding athletic commitments significantly impaired their academic focus and efficiency and some coaches were perceived as rigid, often unwilling to accommodate athletes' academic schedules or support their dual-role needs. West (2023), stated that

insufficient time allocated for coaching tasks such as planning, observation, modeling, and follow-up was a critical challenge. Time limitations prevented the coaches from providing the level of individualized support necessary for improving reading outcomes.

Espirito & Magbanua (2025) concluded that Special Program in Sports coaches actively engage in multiple strategies to balance teaching and coaching roles, drawing on time management, support networks, and strategic planning. However, they also face significant barriers from limited resources to policy and socio-economic challenges which can impede their effectiveness. Despite these, many coaches achieve meaningful successes in athlete development and personal growth, underscoring their resilience and commitment.

Boquel & Junsay (2023) found that handling student-athletes in schools is both challenging and rewarding for educational leaders. The main challenges centered on resource limitations, funding issues, coaches' skill gaps, and poor academic engagement by student-athletes. School leaders highlighted coping actions like reallocating funds, supporting coach development, and creating athlete support programs. They also stressed that adequate funding, competent coaches, stakeholder involvement, and students' academic prioritization are key to improving the balance between sports and academic achievement.

D. Proposed Reading Intervention Plan

The aforementioned findings propelled the researcher to propose reading intervention plan to further improve the reading performance of the pupils involved in sports. To improve the pupil-athletes reading skills, specifically their ability to develop their vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehend text, the researcher proposed the different activities or strategies in areas of reading. The work of H Faulkner (2020) looked in developing a structured literacy model for pupil-athletes with reading disabilities. This vouched for the desire of the current researcher to consider the said reading intervention plan for pupil involved in sports participation.

➤ Theoretical Implication

The findings highlight the positive link between physical activity and cognitive benefits, such as increased blood flow to the brain, which can improve concentration, memory, and problem-solving skills. These benefits can enhance reading performance, suggesting that the intervention should consider how to integrate learning with physical activity or leverage these enhanced cognitive functions, which support Self-Determination Theory (SDT), to understand how sports foster intrinsic motivation for learning, recognizing the role of physical activity in enhancing cognitive functions like concentration and memory, and applying formative assessment principles to track progress and inform instructional decisions tailored to the unique needs of pupil-athletes.

Furthermore, according to Habits of Mind Theory, emphasizes behaviors like persistence, managing

impulsivity, and flexible thinking, which are crucial for effective learning and comprehension. Sports can develop these traits, and a reading intervention can build upon this by encouraging persistent practice and flexible approaches to reading challenges. Leverage the naturally higher levels of motivation and cognitive function in athletes. The intervention could incorporate short bursts of activity or use sports-related texts to build engagement. Address specific reading challenges, such as comprehension or vocabulary, but also integrate strategies that enhance reading fluency. The highlighted problem is potential for stress and fatigue. This finding hint at Yerkes-Dodson (Activation) Theory that take into account for the combined effects of sports, stress, and fatigue on reading. This model posits that excessive sports engagement can lead to mental fatigue, stress, and overexertion, impairing reading performance by negatively impacting focus and cognitive function, even as moderate activity can improve it. An intervention plan would then focus on managing these factors by promoting balance, adequate rest, and stress-reduction techniques to optimize reading engagement and performance. An inverted-U relationship between arousal and performance, suggesting that performance is optimal at a moderate level of arousal. High levels of stress and fatigue from sports participation can lead to excessive activation, hindering cognitive tasks like reading and leading to poor performance.

➤ Practical Implication

Assessing a sports-involved pupil's reading performance involves using diagnostic tools like the Phil-IRI to identify specific reading challenges, which then informs the creation of targeted reading intervention plans that build on physical activity's positive cognitive and psychosocial benefits to improve skills. The practical implication is that a balanced approach, where interventions recognize the physical and mental engagement of athletes, can lead to enhanced reading proficiency by fostering motivation, cognitive function, and self-esteem alongside sports participation.

Teacher should employ mandated tools like the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) to accurately gauge reading proficiency, pinpointing areas like word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Assess individual pupils for specific reading struggles that might impact their academic performance, understanding that sports participation can affect their time and energy for reading.

However, practical issues such as pupil-athletes' low reading performance, stress and fatigue, and differ in priorities and expectations. Teacher-coaches should develop intervention materials that target the precise word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension issues identified during the assessment. Frame the intervention to leverage the positive cognitive and psychosocial effects of sports participation, such as increased arousal and enhanced neural connections in the brain, a greater sense of self-esteem, and improved motivation. School administrator and teacher-coaches should create an intervention plan that is

realistic for sports-involved pupils, ensuring adequate time is allocated for both academic support and athletic commitments, and utilizing available resources effectively.

➤ *Limitations of the Study*

While the findings give useful information about assessing reading performance of pupils involved in sports activities: Basis for crafting a reading intervention plan, many limitations should be noted. A small sample of pupils or schools may not be representative of the broader student population.

The findings might only apply to the particular schools studied, which may have unique characteristics such as location and resources that influence reading performance. The assessment may not effectively capture all aspects of reading performance, potentially overlooking specific difficulties like decoding or vocabulary. There may be no focus on opportunities for students to engage in independent reading, making it difficult to assess individual progress and needs. The study may not include adequate monitoring of student progress during intervention, making it hard to determine the intervention's effectiveness.

Teachers might lack adequate training or orientation in teaching reading, leading to less effective instruction. A lack of partnership between parents, teachers, and learners can hinder the diagnosis and correction of learning difficulties. There's a risk that researchers may not be able to fully determine if students or teachers utilized new intervention tools or approaches as intended.

➤ *Future Research Direction*

Based on the study's findings and limitations, many directions for future research are proposed in assessing reading performance of pupils involved in sports activities: Basis for crafting a reading intervention plan. Future research could focus on longitudinal studies comparing reading performance of athletes versus non-athletes, investigating the impact of sports-specific reading materials on comprehension, exploring how physical activity levels affect different components of reading, and using mixed-methods approaches to understand the nuances of athletes' motivation and reading engagement, all to inform targeted interventions.

First, future research should track reading performance over time in pupil-athletes versus non-athletes to identify trends and potential correlation and employ pre- and post-intervention assessments using tools like the Philippine Informal reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). Second, develop and test reading interventions that incorporate content directly related to sports and create a set of intervention materials, such as strategic reading intervention materials, which may include learning content, tasks, guides, and assessments.

Third, to understand the mechanisms by which physical activity can enhance cognitive functions like attention and memory, which are foundational to reading, future research should investigate how different levels and types of physical activity influence specific reading skills,

such as reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension and use a mixed-methods approach, combining physical fitness assessments with specific reading skills test. Finally, to gain a deeper, contextualized understanding of athletes' reading experiences, which is crucial for developing effective and relevant reading interventions, future research should explore the psycho-behavioral components of reading, such as reading interest and motivation, among pupil-athletes and conduct qualitative interviews and utilize surveys to understand the specific challenges and strengths of athletes in their reading practices.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings the researcher drew the following conclusions: Majority of pupil-athletes are found to be at the independent reading level, indicating that engagement in sports may coexist with or even support strong reading skills and the pupil-athlete profile shows a preference for team sports, with volleyball being the most popular among respondents, followed by basketball, while individual sports like badminton and athletics, and the skill-based dance sport, are also well-represented but with fewer participants; Teacher-coaches employ various strategies to balance pupils' reading progress and sports participation, with fostering communication and support as the most frequently used approach.; Challenges encountered by coaches and trainers are Potential for Stress and Fatigue, followed by Differing priorities and expectations, and Limited time for literacy engagement due to overlapping schedules. Other challenges included Pupil passivity toward literacy activities and the lack of tailored reading resources.; The proposed reading intervention plan consisting of different strategies are Repeated reading, Partner reading, Using sports-related texts, Sports-themed vocabulary games, Reading sports articles with Pre-teaching of key terms, and Connecting sports concepts to reading comprehension strategies like summarizing and making predictions- aim to further enhance the reading performance of pupil-athletes.

The following recommendations are proposed: (1) Schools integrate reading into sports through strategy using discussions, providing dedicated study time with support, and fostering a growth mindset that connect academic and athletic effort and pupil-athletes by integrating reading into sports to enhance their reading skills. (2) Teacher-coaches continue using a variety of strategies in balancing pupils' reading progress and sports participation, while encouraging the increased use of less commonly applied strategies like Incorporation of physical movement into reading and conduct actual reading sessions with the athletes during study time while in attendance at training to support academic progress while also participating in sports. (3) Teacher-coaches provide a supportive, holistic environment that prioritizes overall well-being and life skills alongside athletic and academic goals. (4) The proposed reading intervention plan be integrated in the curriculum to improve comprehensive skills.

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