

Received : 25 February 2024, Accepted: 31 March 2024

DOI:<https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9i2.141>

## Exploring the Problems of Student-Athletes Participating In Universities

**Anam Noshaba**

Assistant Professor, Department of Secondary Education,  
Lahore College for Women University, Lahore  
[anam\\_pk2006@yahoo.com](mailto:anam_pk2006@yahoo.com)

**Mubashara Akhtar (Corresponding Author)**

Assistant Professor, Department of Secondary Education,  
Lahore College for Women University, Lahore

**Madiha Zahid**

Assistant Professor, Department of Secondary Education,  
Lahore College for Women University, Lahore

**Komal Maria**

Fazaia College of Education for Women, Lahore

**Abstract:** This study was carried out to explore the problems of student-athlete. The study sought to shed light on university students' unique experiences of problems through their dual roles of being students and athletes. This study aimed to describe the different kinds of problems (social, emotional, and academic) that student-athletes experience in their daily lives. This study was qualitative in nature and narrative research design was used. In this study, 8 student-athletes were taken as a sample through the snowball sampling technique. Data were collected through interviews, taken by the participants at the university level. Semi-structured interview was used to collect data. Narrative analysis was used in this study for data analysis. Results showed that student-athletes face different problems in their dual role as they have to give their 100% on both sides. They face social, emotional, and academic issues while managing their student-athlete academic and athletic career. It was also found that the social issues which have been faced like segregation, offseason issues, the effect of failure and success, and less involvement in social activities. Among emotional issues, they face depression, stress, anxiety, being left out, and relationship problems. The academic issues they face were low academic performance, less time for studies, and less attendance in classes.

**Keywords:** student-athletes; social issues; emotional issues; academic issues.

**Introduction**

A student-athlete is a participant in an organized competitive sport sponsored by an educational institution in which he or she is enrolled (Gerdy, 2000). Miller and Kerr (2002) also acknowledged in their report that the transition into college was easier for student-athletes than for other students. However, many participants in their study stated that most of their social experiences came through their teammates and they were unable to sustain previous friendships. Most of a student athlete's time is already accounted for through team obligations and academics, so very little is left to socialize. Unfortunately, student-athletes may tend to stay close to their immediate circle of friends, and their teammates, and not attempt to develop friendships with other classmates.

Many students are liberated by the freedom they encounter in college. But sometimes student-athletes find transition can bring unhealthy, anxiety, and stress. Students face a variety of issues throughout their time in college (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001).

Student-athletes play a dual role in college. Student-athlete may typically balance the roles of being full-time students and at the same time being athletes (Gerdy, 2000). Student-athletes face a period of excitement, sorrow, and stress due to mental, physical, environmental, economic, emotional, and social circumstances in college (Kissinger & Miller, 2009). There are various problems that student-athletes face, one of the most significant is the conflict between sports and study. They have to fulfill their academic responsibilities and duties as college athletes; they don't have time to spend with family and peer groups so it is impossible for them to enjoy normal life activities. They struggle with their dual activities and also with the pressure exerted on them the achievement of academic and sports success. Some student-athletes are confronted by some challenges such as academic difficulties, social and leisure challenges, anxiety, abuse issues, weight management, and eating disorder (Watson, 2003).

The effect of participating in athletics as a youth on academic performance is theoretically ambiguous. Participation may reduce the time available for studying and learning. Conversely, it has been argued that sports participation increases students' motivation and teaches teamwork and self-discipline, resulting in positive academic spillovers. The student which participates in athletics have always better health status and are more active than other students. Student-athletes must also navigate relationships between coaches, parents, family, and friends and as an athlete career (Rees & Sabia, 2010).

Islam (2018) conducted research on factor influencing sports in public and private sector universities of KPK Pakistan. The previous research was conducted at the University of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The current study was planned to investigate the internal or external problems of student-athletes. The data revealed that all the internal and external factors exist in both types

of universities and they have significantly been affecting the university sport both in public and private sector universities of KPK, Pakistan.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to explore the problems of university-level athletes. In this study, researchers focused on different aspects of the athletes problems. This study explored the context of student-athletes experiences related to issues that were faced by the participants such as mismanagement in study and sport, low grades, less time to study, feeling burdened, relationship problems, facing anxiety and depression.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore the problems related to the social issues of university athletes.
2. Explore the problems related to the academic issues of university athletes.
3. Explore the problems related to the emotional issues of university athletes.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the above-mentioned objectives following research questions were formed:

1. What are the problems related to the social issues of university athletes?
2. What are the problems related to the academic issues of university athletes?
3. What are the problems related to the emotional issues of university athletes?

### **Methodology**

This study was qualitative in nature. Narrative research design was used in this study. Narrative research design was used because narrative research is a study of how different humans experience the world around them; it involves a methodology that allows people to tell the stories of their “storied live”. So, through this design researcher will explore the problem of student-athletes and gather data by collecting their life experiences deeply as an athlete. Through the snowball sampling technique, 8 student-athletes were selected as sample. For exploring the student-athlete problems semi-structured interview protocol was used. The instrument was the semi-structured interview protocol. The semi-structured interview questions were answered by each participant in the study. The interview was based on social, emotional, and academic items. The duration of an interview was about 30 minutes. Two student-athletes participated in mock interviews. Data were collected by the researchers personally, and the researchers probed further questions which were important for analysis. Data were analyzed through narratives analysis. This technique was used to analyze the data because the data were collected through interview

and participants shared their stories and then researchers analyzed common themes to produce a description.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretations**

This part included data analysis and interpretations of the current study. The research provided confirmatory evidence about the problems which were faced by student-athletes. The qualitative study reveals three overarching themes:

- Social items
- Emotional items
- Academic items

Firstly, student-athletes described the reason for selection of the field, they stated that they selected this field mostly because they were interested in sports, the primary reason given for choosing the field was because of family support as they are getting scholarships and dailies being a student-athletes. One participant stated that:

*“Firstly, I have an interest in sports and the other thing is that I belong to an athletic family in which my mother, uncle, and auntie were also athletes in their time. That’s why; I selected this field.”* [R 1]

It was noticed that every participant gave the same reason that is stated above. Most athletes are interested in sports and that’s why they choose this field. One or two also stated that they got inspired by their family members. Another participant reported that:

*“I have a passion for the games. I was always interested in gaming and to relieve my stress or to remain in physical fitness, I play cricket.”* [R 4]

Student-athletes experience social issues, categorized into six questions namely themed as the expectations from student-athlete, issues of offseason, segregation, the effect of failure and success, and student-athlete social activities.

### **Social Items**

Athletes are also susceptible to societal pressures that are often conveyed via an athlete's immediate and peripheral social sphere. These pressures heighten the social issues, based on what the institute or organization expected from an athlete and how student-athletes manage their social activities. Student-athletes performance affects their studies. The interviews elicit the social issues that student-athletes face during their university life. University is supposed to be the year that they can establish a lot

of connections, but they can't do that because they are busy in their games and barely know anyone except other athletes.

Student-athletes often described expectations from student-athlete as the dual role expected from the athlete. On one side they are students and on the other side they are athletes, they have to play both roles at the same time. It is hard to achieve the goals as their institute and coaches expect that they will bring medals and trophies for their institute on the other side teachers expect that they will achieve good grades. Why it is difficult to manage both at the same time, one male participant reported that:

*“As a captain of the football team, it is expected from me that I will bring trophies or win price for my team and institute. Also, I have to play well in the field, on the other side it is expected that I will get good grades in my studies which is a bit difficult.” [R 4]*

Almost all the participants mentioned that it is expected of them to bring medals and trophies for their university and that they would give themselves 100% to their game.

**Off-season issues** were difficult to be fulfilled by the student-athletes. As they don't get proper coaching facilities and get less time for practices during the off-season. The student-athletes face different types of issues during the off-season because they have to focus on their studies during the off-season and their routine got disturbed due to less practice and some changes in diet. A participant of the study stated that:

*“As an athlete, it was expected that I should practice during the offseason so I had to be in touch with my games during the off-season, I knew it will be difficult for me to manage the routine. So, when I get a sudden schedule, I can easily maintain my athletic routine. I face different issues during the offseason, I don't get proper coaching which affects my daily practices, and my unhealthy routine affects my health (such as unhealthy food). If an athlete skips one day of training it will affect the athletic performance.” [R 1]*

After listening to every participant, it was estimated that the institute has a different expectation from student-athletes, and the athletes have to meet these expectations which is difficult for the student-athletes as they face unhealthy routines, fewer coaching facilities, and the pressure of studies during the offseason. Another participant reported that:

*“As a player, it is expected that we will maintain ourselves, we will not gain or lose weight, and that we will practice during the offseason. In the offseason, there is usually less practice and we become lazy and lethargic so I have to manage my practice myself and of course, my routine is affected as I do less practice I don’t care about my diet as much as I do during games or tournaments.” [R 2]*

**Segregation** was faced by student-athletes during their athletic and academic career because they carry dual activities. Commonly, everyone thinks that a student-athlete cannot study in the same way as a traditional student. That’s the main reason student-athletes face segregation in their athletic career. Because student-athletes have to give time to their studies along with athletic activities. The athletes stated that even professors sometimes treat student-athletes badly. The athletes speak about how the required lifestyle and their intense interest in sport, combined with feeling misunderstood by society, means that they tend to shy away from talking about their sport or even engaging with non-athletes as part of their social sphere. A participant reported that:

*“I feel that we are segregated or discriminated on the basis that we play sports more and we take fewer classes so generally, teachers don’t like students who skip their classes for the tournament.” [R 1]*

Most of the athletes reported that being an athlete, they face separation from the rest of the students which makes them miss out on most social events with friends and families. One participant also illustrated that:

*“Some students manage both their studies and sports whereas some give more time to the game they’re playing. When the students are having their matches, they’re given favor of leave from their studies and exams. But teachers do not like the students who skip classes for the sake of sports that is why teachers get angry at students and always taunt them because they do not attend classes.” [R 2]*

Being a player, defeat, and victory is a part of life because they have to face these things. Student-athletes describe experiences of athletic success or failure and explain that success and failure are part of their lives. One participant describes that:

*“Success and failure have different effects: failure has a relatively negative impact and I feel a bit depressed, I don’t do practice with the same enthusiasm and passion and sometimes when I win, I get motivated to do more and to do better.”*

Whether someone stated that:

*“Athletics has taught me how to prevail over the failure I faced during the matches. It affects but for a very short time because athletes know how to overcome failure. On the other side, if I talk about success, it affects me, when I set my goals and achieve them. This achievement makes me happy then success gives the courage to perform better in the coming days.” [R 4]*

Failure has also been mentioned as having a negative impact on one's entire life. The student-athletes get depressed and it affects their mental health, and they have to take treatment to overcome depression. The social issues involve the management of social activities, students who participate more in sports are low in academic achievement. For an athlete, it is hard to manage social activities around athletic and academic commitments. As we know that student-athletes do not have enough time to spend on social activities around academic or athletic activities. One participant illustrated that:

*“When a person joins athletics, his social activities are taking place all around the ground, same like if I talk about myself, my social activities start from my football ground I always interact with those who come to play on the ground and my social activities are revolving around my colleagues.”*  
[R 3]

Missing out on social occasions due to sports requirements is a required sacrifice. Another participant recalled her personal experience during her university period:

*“I remember my sister’s wedding on the days of my playing handball on a national level and I had to skip my sister’s wedding because of my matches. It is not easy for any human being but as a player, I have to be strong. This was the case with my sister’s wedding and many other events were missed by me due to my matches. But for now, as a professional athlete, I don’t*

*think it's necessary to attend social events or any involvement in social activities."* [R 1]

The above discussion revealed that participants identified the following social issues they face during their university period. They face different social issues they have to encounter expectations from student-athletes, offseason expectations, segregation, the effect of success or failure on life, and management of social activities. Despite these problems, participants of the study try to give their best in their field and social life of course it's difficult but they always give their 100%.

Emotional concerns such as feeling left out, depression, anxiety, physical or mental stress, and so on affect student-athletes.

### **Emotional Items**

Emotional issues effects student-athlete mentally and physically. Playing sports does not make athletes immune to mental health challenges, with pressures to perform in the game, as well as in the rest of their social lives. Student-athletes have additional pressures to maintain their classwork and grades on top of practice and games. Student-athletes experience stress during their university.

Student-athletes often described the experience of feeling left out. Athletes have to face different issues among which emotional issues affect them the most. They mentioned that it is very difficult to make their own place. Firstly they get to miss out because in the beginning when they are new, they are neglected. That mostly happens when an athlete newly joins the university, in the beginning, they feel left out from others because at that time they are new and the coaches prefer the experienced athletes for the games. They also experienced being isolated in group work as non-athlete classmates do not want to work with them due to difficulty finding the common time. One student-athlete illustrated that:

*"As we know the phrase "greeting the mounting sun". The player who plays well is kept forward and the player who plays badly is kept behind it. I am a senior player and everyone knows that I will play well so I will go ahead and play first. Even if a junior player is playing better than a senior player, the coach prefers always the senior player over the junior player, this is a sad fact of the athletic society."* [R 1]

On the other hand, some athletes mentioned that they didn't feel left out. Someone reported that:



*“I didn’t feel that because if I talk about friend circle my teammates are my friends, they never left me out. They always support me and help me to perform well in the game.” [R 6]*

One athlete stated that even professors sometimes treat student-athletes badly.

The student-athletes explained that the heavy pressure of managing study and sports together is because we have to perform well on both sides. An athlete mentioned, “It is difficult to manage both that’s why I have to choose one at a time.” They face different types of emotional issues during managing study and sports and mentioned that they often do not have enough time to study for a test and are too exhausted from training to keep studying. They experience pressure in maintaining grades for their scholarship or for merit such as dean’s list, pressure in meeting deadlines for academic requirements, and missing out on classes due to training for national or international competitions. Commonly, they face difficulty to balance academics and sports. An athlete reported that:

*“It is not easy to manage sports and studies at the same time. While I try to manage these things, I get depressed because it is very difficult for me when I’m playing for the institute and representing my institute, on the other side I have to focus on my future. It makes me emotionally unstable, but I continuously try to manage both things.” [R 4]*

Another participant stated that:

*“Some students play sports because they are interested in it but others do it for the sake of their studies to get a scholarship but sadly when they don’t get a good GPA, they feel demotivated.” [R 8]*

Being an athlete can be incredibly challenging for a person’s mental health, especially for those who have pressure to perform well in their studies and in their game. Student-athletes experience mental-health stress; one participant illustrated that:

*“Mental health illness affects me when I get injured and am not able to play properly in the game or sometimes the injury affects you badly and you will not be able to play throughout rest of life. These types of issues affect mental*

*health. But even though playing sports on regular basis can boost the physical and mental health of an athlete.” [R 5]*

Games allow individuals to deal with stressful situations actively. Mental health stress effect badly but student-athletes have abilities to overcome the stress they experience during their university. An athlete stated:

*“Sometimes I lose my confidence and think I'm putting too much effort into a game which I can't win; this type of thinking has a negative impact on my mental health, and I've become melancholy as a result of overthinking.” [R 7]*

A participant shared her personal experience that she faced during her university time. She said:

*“I remember very well that I was supposed to get a scholarship from the institute. I had a colleague with me who got a full scholarship from the institute, while I was better than her in sports and I was playing 5-6 games for the institute. It was on my mind because I am not getting a full scholarship since I'm better than her and if I get a scholarship, it is always half. This affected me very much; I went into depression which affected my mental health.” [R 1]*

Student-athletes play more than one game due to financial problems because they know that their university is giving them scholarships for study support and they have to fulfill the demands of the university.

Another issue that makes athletes emotionally unstable is that after failure, they become disappointed and anxious, and they begin overthinking, which affects them emotionally. This includes the stress they feel during games and competitions, as well as the stress they feel after losing a match. Every athlete experiences anxiety prior to their game performance, and failure has a direct impact on mental health, leading to depression. According to one participant:

*“Anxiety and depression are inevitable parts of life, but an athlete may overcome them. Playing the game helps me overcome my depression since it relieves my stress and anxiety as an athlete.”[R 3]*

The student-athletes have a tight schedule due to their dual role; they have to face high pressure to win the game and they also have to achieve good scores in their studies to maintain their scholarship facilities for their family support. These types of issues put them into depression. Another athlete reported the effect of failure:

*“It happens but for a certain time when I lose the match, the failure affects me and puts me into depression. I think it happens to everyone the failure affects very badly and the people go into depression. Likewise, anxiety when I’m under pressure, during the game as a senior player I have pressure from my coach to play well and get the medal for the institute.” [R 4]*

Most of the participants feel that being a student-athlete is an integral part of their overall educational experience as they mentioned that being student-athlete they become strong, active, and more social than the rest of the traditional students. As student-athletes, they fulfill dual responsibilities students on one side and athletes on the other side. And they get an education degree with certificates, medals, and fame. A participant stated that:

*“I can’t imagine my life without sports, as I love to play my game and without it, I’m nothing. I feel blessed as I’m experiencing the lives of an athlete and a common student; both are important and beautiful parts of my educational experience.” [R 5]*

Another participant also illustrates that:

*“Sports has brought the absolute best in me and has groomed me and has increased my patience level. I received a gold medal, and my father hugged me and said, “I am proud of you.” This is my biggest achievement.” [R 4]*

If the athletes are facing difficulty on the field, on the other side they get benefits. As sports is grooming them and making them more confident on the ground. Some personal issues were also raised in an athletic career that brought family or relationship conflict, especially to those who are pressured to perform well in their sports and studies as well. Some athletes are experiencing homesickness as they are living away from their families due to sports. They also experience relationship problems in their

classroom, personal life, and family life. As they are rejected by the class fellows or professors due to work task and personal relationship rejection or failure affect them in their games. One participant reported that:

*“Relationship problems affect student-athlete performance. When you trust someone and you think that person will understand you, but when that same person doesn’t understand you and doesn’t respond to you positively, it affects performance. I face a lot of trouble in my relationship because the person never supports me. He always wants that I give time to him, but I want to achieve my athletic goals and they are becoming my target.” [R 1]*

Most participants stated that they face these problems being an athlete. On the other side, someone also illustrates that:

*“Mature people don’t let it affect themselves and stabilize their lives equally, but sometimes it affects our relationships as we don’t have much time to fulfill our family and relationship goals.” [R 2]*

Fear of performance and loss of confidence was also observed among the student-athletes. The student-athlete faces fear during the performance due to the pressure of the coach in the match. A participant stated about that:

*“I will talk later about the failure. Firstly, the fear of performance is enough. Some student-athletes are strong emotionally and mentally or more confident, but the performance fear affects them negatively as they lose in-game. On the other hand, athletes who are less confident or maybe not strong emotionally or mentally will perform better while facing fear. So, fear of performance sometimes helps the athlete or sometimes gives a negative result as well. It is just a game; every day is not for one person. Today is your next day. Maybe the next day is for someone else. The managers or coaches should also understand that not every day belongs to one athlete, so I think as an athlete defecting in the games should not affect any major player.” [R 2]*

After exploring this theme, that is identified emotional issues which were faced by the student-athletes. Emotional problems are often experienced by student-athletes during periods of high academic and athletic demands. It is also in the same period that many student-athletes experience injuries, relationship problems, fear of performance, anxiety, depression, mental health problems, and athletic and academic-related stress.

Student-athletes are affected by academic issues such as less time to study, mismanagement, burnout, low grades, being more enrolled in games, and so on.

### **Academic Items**

Academic demands are heavy and it is difficult for student-athletes to manage academic and athletic goals. They have to do a lot of training in their studies. It was observed that the student-athletes do not properly attend their classes and experience stress in maintaining grades, it is difficult to balance both at the same time. Athletes struggle very hard to achieve their goals, as they play dual roles in their university.

Student-athletes experience a lack of management between study and sports. They mentioned that during the exams they face hectic days as they have to practice their games and they also have to study for their exams. The hours of practice and preparation for game day undoubtedly take athletes away from their studies. A participant stated that:

*“I don’t have time to study because my schedule is too busy. During the season I have to practice the whole day. After that, as a human, I do not have time for studies but during the off-season when I don’t have my matches, I try to give as much time as possible to study.” [R 5]*

This shows that it is very difficult for the players to keep studying with games and they have to overcome the difficulties. Another participant illustrated that:

*“It never happens that I give equal time to my study, it’s not possible for me. As I’m playing 5 games for the institute. For me, it’s very difficult. Our practice hours are very long and we have to manage our tournaments with our classes so it is not possible to give equal time to study.” [R 1]*

There are many advantages of being an athlete. On the other hand, many disadvantages were being faced by student-athletes. They mentioned that they don’t have enough time to sleep. Due to hard practices, their bodies become hard they usually look different from other students because of their body structure. A female participant of the study also reported that:

*“I cannot wear girlish clothes and I cannot give equal time to my studies which affect my grades while a traditional student can give proper time to their studies, they can attend all classes so this is the disadvantage that we face.” [R 2]*

Some of them also mentioned that they face injuries during gaming. Another participant illustrated that:

*“The downside of being an athlete is that I can’t spend as much time for study as compared to a common student. In addition, an athlete suffers injuries that often become so deep that they can become life-threatening.” [R 5]*

Several students report frustrations with failure in the field, some of the participants mentioned that success and failure are part of an athlete’s life, and they are willing to face victory and lack of success. A participant discussed that:

*“I look at players who spent their whole lives on sports, so if my sports are disturbed, it means my whole life is disturbed and depressed, I start thinking too much, and obviously, due to this, I am not able to pay attention to my studies properly, which affects my grades.” [R 6]*

After failure athletes get depressed and mentally unstable, and in this condition, they can’t study properly and they get low grades. Some of them also mentioned that they don’t often fail but if they will they don’t stick to it instead leaving it and start focusing on their next goal. They stated that they kept sports and studies completely aside.

Due to tournaments, on-season brings a tough schedule in which athletes have to leave classes as they have practiced for many hours and after that, they get tired and can’t have the strength to study. They face decreased performance at the academic level and experience low grades. A participant response on this:

*“Absolutely I face the issue of less attendance because when I am on a tournament or practice, I had missed a lot of classes and I skip my presentations and quizzes due to which my grades are less than a common student.” [R 6]*

Another participant reported that:

*“When I came to the university at first, I was a high scorer, but later when I got more involved in games and I started to skip classes for practice or even tournaments, my grades started to fall also. How can someone study if he or she skips the classes? There is a decrease in academic performance due to less attendance.” [R 2]*

It was observed that most student-athletes are equipped to manage dual roles in athletic careers and they do that. But there is a tendency through which they prioritize their commitments. Most of the students stated that they prioritize their studies as they know that there is less chance of being an international player because out of thousands of players only a few players will be selected to play internationally. That’s why most of them prioritize their educational degree.

*“I give more priority to my studies because, after graduation, I think that I’ll have a brighter future in the job due to my degree than with cricket, so I always prioritize my studies. Yes, student-athletes are equipped to manage both their academic and athletic commitments, but there is difficulty managing them both as it makes life and time management harder.” [R 2]*

It is necessary to provide designated people to work with athletes. This will balance both athletics and academics to create a situation that helps athletes succeed in both fields.

After exploring academic items, the study provides support to identify academic issues. Academic issues are often experienced by student-athletes during periods of high academic demands. It is also in the same period that many student-athletes experience less attendance, the effect of failure on grades, unequal time distribution, and disadvantages of student-athletes.

## **Conclusion**

The narrative analysis of the problems of student-athletes showed the main problems that were faced by the athletes. The first theme showed the social issues which were faced by university athletes. Six out of eight participants of the study reported that student-athletes have the least time for social activities as they have to give time to their games and studies. They reported that student-athletes social activities revolve around their ground and their teammates because they were more involved in their athletic activities. They also feel segregated in front of their class fellows, friends, and family because

they were unable to give proper time to them. Off-Season issues affect their athletic routine, they become lazy and unhealthy. Moreover, it was explored that failure and success affect the athletes socially, they face many obstacles in their social circle.

The second theme showed that emotional issues affect athletes mentally. The three participants of the study specify the problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, injuries, and health issues that affect them emotionally while managing academic and athletic performance. Athletes face a stressful situation in their field but it was explored that they have abilities to overcome their stress through gaming. Although many athletes experienced stress because they could not get the opportunity to play their sport, only one athlete stated that situation caused stress because he was not able to play the game he loved. They also got depressed and anxious after failure and start overthinking which affects them emotionally. They experience negative feedback, pressure in managing study and sports, and a lack of control over relationship problems. They face conflict in their relationships, especially those who are pressured to perform well in their sports and studies as well. Athletes face fear and loss of confidence during failure in their performance. Athletes experienced the stress response because of the intensity of practices, fears about making good impressions, or just because they were tired or mentally unstable.

The third theme showed academic issues that athletes came across during their athletic careers at the university level. It was reported that student-athletes face mismanagement in their study and sport at one time because they have to give time to their academic performance on the other side, it was difficult to balance both at the same time. It was also expressed that it is very difficult for the player to keep studying and games together and they have to confront the difficulties. The failure in the game has a great impact on academic performance as they get depressed and stressed out which affects them mentally and they can't give proper time to their studies. It was observed that most student-athletes are equipped to manage dual roles in athletic careers and they do that but they face decreased performance at the academic level and experience low grades, which affect their academic career. Athletes face also poor attendance in their academic career because they have to practice for many hours and so they have less time to study. The participants of the study reported that they encounter academic conflict being a student-athlete.

On the bases of certain findings of the study, the researchers arrived at the stage to sum up all the details. The main themes of the study were to related to the issues student-athletes encounter in university. It was identified that student-athletes face a wide range of problems in their university life. In this study, it was explored that almost all the student-athletes face social, emotional, and academic issues due to which they cannot give proper time to their academic and athletic performance. They need personal support



from their department and university. From students to coaches, and institutions, we must be able to continue to research and find ways to guide all student-athletes on a successful path that continues throughout their life. Dynamic and active strategies are taught to the student-athletes which increase their involvement in social, emotional, and academic learning. The finding is important for better understanding the problems of university athletes as they are playing a dual role. In light of the findings and conclusion of the study, it may be recommended that the sports department may ensure the provision of qualified coaches and trainers for specific events of sport to enhance the proper skills among the athletes. The university may facilitate their athletes in terms of financial support who participate at national and international level sports.

**References**

- Gerdy, J. R. (Ed.). (2000). *Sports in School: The future of an Institution*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Howard-Hamilton, M. F., & Sina, J. A. (2001). How college affects student athletes. *New Directions for Student Services*, 93, 35-45.
- Miller, P. S., & Kerr, G. (2002). The athletic, academic and social experiences of intercollegiate student-athletes. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 25(4), 346.
- Kissinger, D. B., & Miller, M. T. (2009). *College Student - Athletes*. Information Age Publishing Inc.
- Rees, D. I., & Sabia, J. J. (2010). Sports participation and academic performance: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *Economics of Education Review*, 29(5), 751-759.
- Watson, J. C. (2003). The effect of athletic identity and locus of control on the stress perceptions of community college student-athletes. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 40(9), 729-738.
- Islam, S. Z. U. (2019). *A Comparative Study of the Factors Influencing Sports in Public and Private Sectors Universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Pakistan* (Doctoral dissertation, Gomal University, DI Khan.).