

# EMOTION AND BEHAVIOR ISSUES AND PROBLEMS PREVALENCE AMONG COLLEGIATE ATHLETES OF PRESIDENT RAMON MAGSAYSAY STATE UNIVERSITY (PRMSU) IBA, ZAMBALES, PHILIPPINES

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## Abstract

Explanatory mixed method research design was utilized on the investigation on the emotion and behavior issues of student-athletes of President Ramon Magsaysay State University (PRMSU) Iba, Zambales, Philippines, conducted during the first semester of school year 2024-2025. A population of one hundred four (104) student-athletes from different colleges of the university were identified as respondents. The emotion and behavior issues were categorized into excessive anxiety and stress; and aggressive behavior and violent activity. A descriptive and inferential statistics were employed as statistical tools for the analysis in the quantitative phase of the study. The qualitative part used interview in data gathering. The study found that the student athlete-respondents agreed to have manifested excessive anxiety and stress mainly by worrying about their performance in their trainings and competition; and by experiencing pressure of winning the game and/or competition. They moderately agreed that they showed aggressive behavior and violent activity showing anger and bent on physically harming an opponent, inciting verbal assaults with opponents; and dominance with other athletes. To address the emotion and behavior issues, the student-athletes preferred and valued unity and focus towards a team working and functioning together throughout the training and actual competition. They proposed a psychological preparation; confidence building; recognition of their skills and contribution; and orientation on aspects such as tolerance and patience. Moreover, student-athletes also sought from coaches, trainers and teammates' friendly and supportive relations. The t-test result showed a no statistically significant difference in the perceptions between male and female student-athletes on the manifestations of emotional and behavior problems and issues.

**Keywords:** Behaviors, Emotions, Issues, Problems, Student Athletes, Coping.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The benefit of sports is the character-building element (UNESCO, 2024); can yield desirable psychological effect (UNICEF, 2024); changes individuals with regard to their well-being, social networks, sense of social connection and skills (Kerr, 2015a). Participation in sports and athletics takes a considerable amount of dedication by athletes, especially to make choices regarding athletic, academic and personal commitments.

Student athletes are under immense pressure to excel in their sport and in the classroom, the requirements of strict training schedules, team commitments and competitions can make it difficult for these individuals to find time and energy to devote to their studies (Dalaguít, 2019). Student athletes face a unique set of challenges as they try to balance the requirements of academic responsibilities with sporting obligations.

Each student-athletes reacts to sports in different way. They, unlike other students, are influenced by various stressors acting together (Surujlal, Nolan & Ubane, 2012 also discussed in Redondo-Flórez, et al., 2022). Many researchers have identified the detrimental impact of behavior problems (anxiety, aggression and violent activities) of student athletes has on individuals, teammates, and performance. Kerr (2015b) revealed that student-athletes experience unique forms of stress due to the dual demands of academics and athletics. Many student athletes experience anxiety (Green & Gabbard, 2014). Pressures associated with sports can promote excessive anxiety and aggressive behavior.

Maintaining a balance between the dual roles of being both a student and an athlete can be challenging for many college student-athletes (Knott, 2016). Those that engage in highly competitive contact sports may promote violence among participants (Jones-Palm & Palm, 2014 also discussed in Davoren & Hwang, 2022). Cakir & Acet (2015); and Becker (2024) revealed that student athletes participating in team sport are more aggressive due to the fact that those athletes are much more affected by spectators and they have to encourage team mates to win the game.

The ability to cope with pressure and anxiety is an integral part of sports, particularly among elite athlete. Ganaden (2018), reiterated that it is important for athletes to mentally focus on the game, allocating the majority of their mental resources to thinking about the competition and how they will perform well than engaging in anti-social behaviors and conducts. The Republic Act No. 10676, also known as the Student-Athletes Protection Act, aims to safeguard the rights and interests of student-athletes in the Philippines. This act regulates residency requirements, prohibits commercialization, and grants various benefits to student-athletes, with penalties for violations.

The present study is also guided by this mandate. This study explored the support needs of student-athletes, highlighting the importance of resources and interventions that can help them succeed in both areas.

On the other hand, the results of the study of Mostefa (2025); and Farid & Fethi (2024) can be a model in developing sports training and education programmes, improve the support of student athletes from teachers, trainers and parents and provide a supportive environment to help them successfully achieve their goals.

The aim of this paper was to examine the manifestations of emotion and behavior issues in sport such as anxiety and stress; and aggression and violent activities of student athletes and how to help athletes prevent their unsanctioned behavior being a problem. With the findings of the present study, the university administrators and sports official can implement more effective measures, remedies and projects that may counter the issues and problems at hand.

Coaches and trainers on the other hand would better understand how to tailor coaching strategies, training tactics and communication messages to improve student-athletes' behavior and attitudes as well as performances. The results of the present study hope to shed light on the behavioral intention, issues and problems of student-athletes and intervention tactics that the university may put to use.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research study investigated the emotion and behavior issues and problems of collegiate athletes of PRMSU, Zambales, Philippines and identified the ways to address or resolve the linked problems and issues.

Specifically, the intention of the study is to determine the profile of the student-athletes as to sex; to describe the student-athletes' emotional issues in terms of excessive anxiety and stress; to determine the student-athletes' behavior problems in aspects aggressive behavior and violent activity. This study identified ways to address student-athletes' emotion and behavior issues; and to test the difference on the perception between male and female student-athletes on the described behavior and emotional issues.

## III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

An explanatory mixed method was utilized as research design in this study. The analysis was quantitative in the first phase followed by qualitative. The survey checklist and interview guide were used as the main instruments of data collection from the collegiate athlete-respondents of PRMSU, Zambales, Philippines who were enrolled during first semester school year 2024-2025. A population of one hundred four (104) from different colleges of the university were identified as respondents.

Most of the indicator in the survey checklist were modelled and lifted from the questionnaires of the studies Athlete Aggression by Papas (2014); Davoren & Hwang (2022); and Becker (2024). Psychological Factors Affecting Sports Performance by Bali (2015); and Emotion and Behavior Issues of Student-Athletes by Redondo-Flórez, et al. (2022) and Ganaden (2018).

This survey checklist contains twenty (20) items that investigated the evidences of emotion and behavior issues/problems of the athletes categorized into excessive anxiety and stress (10 items) and aggressive behavior and other violent activity (10 items). The athletes responded on a 5-point Likert type scale where scale 5 is Strongly Agree, scale 4 is Agree, scale 3 is Moderately Agree, scale 2 is Disagree and scale 1 is Strongly Disagree. The athletes were interviewed of the strategies/techniques which can potentially address or solve the experienced and manifested emotion and behavior problems of the athletes.

Test of validity and reliability were considered in this research study to ensure that the right instrument and measurement were used and taken. To improve the content validity of the survey checklist, it subjected to checking by experts in the Sports Department (e.g., coaches, trainers, sports officials and sports psychologists) and the Physical Education Department of Presidents Ramon Magsaysay State University, Iba, Zambales, Philippines. The survey checklist was also pilot tested for reliability purpose. The pilot test was conducted among 10 students athletes of Polytechnic College of Botolan (PCB), Botolan, Zambales, Philippines. Cronbach's alpha values were computed and the result was found to be excellent and acceptable. After all these rocess and tests were conducted, the researcher sought the approval of the University President of PRMSU to adminisiter the research instrument to the target respondents. The resaercher explained to the respondnets the purpose and the possible outcome

of the study. The respondents were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentage, frequency rank, weighted mean and t-test were utilized. Data were analyzed using the SPSS version 28.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the student athlete-respondents with regards to sex.

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Student Athlete-Respondents as to Sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	67	64.42%
Female	37	35.58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Out of 1044 respondents, 37 or 35.58% are female and 67 or 64.42% are male. Results show that majority of the collegiate athlete respondents of PRMSU, Zambales are male which constitute 64.42% of the total population. This is consistent with the study of Ganaden, Bantolo & de Guzman (2017); and Redondo-Flórez, et al. (2022) on the sex profile result indicating that an overwhelming majority of the collegiate athlete-participants are male.

#### Perceived Emotion Issues of Student Athletes

Table 2 shows the perceived Emotion Issues of the student athlete-respondents in terms of Excessive Anxiety and Stress.

**Table 2: Perceived Excessive Anxiety and Stress by Student Athlete - Respondents**

Excessive Anxiety and Stress	AWM	D.E.	Rank
1. Student-athletes experience pressure of winning the game/competition	3.58	A	2
2. Student-athletes feel worries about performance	3.64	A	1
3. Student-athletes feel images of failure	3.29	MA	9
4. Student-athletes feel inability to concentrate	3.37	A	5
5. Student-athletes feel disrupted attention	3.35	A	6
6. Student-athletes feel nervous and uneasy	3.12	MA	10
7. Student-athletes feel overwhelming emotion that causes a decline in the performance	3.30	MA	8
8. Student-athletes feel unmanageable emotion that causes a decline in the productivity	3.44	A	3
9. Student-athletes experience burnout and exhaustion	3.40	A	4
10. Student-athletes experience illogical perceptions and fears	3.34	MA	7
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>Agree (A)</b>	

Indicator 2 stated as “Student-athletes feel worries about performance” gained an average weighted mean of 3.64 (rank 1); and Indicator 1 stated as “Student-athletes experience pressure of winning the game/competition” gained an average weighted mean of 3.51, ranked; and both obtained a descriptive interpretation of Agree.

Worrying about their performance; and the feeling of pressure of making it every game a winner were the emotion issues specifically excessive anxiety and stress experiences as student athletes of the present study. These results signify that the athletes really have emotional issues specifically the feeling of uneasiness and stress associated with their task and goal to be victorious and successful in sporting competition. Constant pressure can lead to burnout, where athletes feel exhausted, demoralized, and unable to perform effectively. However, the pressure to win can be a powerful motivator, encouraging athletes to train harder and improve their skills.

The research of Becker (2024); and Ganaden (2018) stressed that this pressure can motivate athletes and teams to perform at their best, push boundaries, and strive for excellence. However, excessive pressure can lead to anxiety, stress, and even hinder performance. Ford Health Staff (2021); and Lindberg (2021). argued that student athletes may manifest in fear of losing, disappointing others, or failing to meet expectations can lead to anxiety and stress, impacting mental and physical well-being.

Indicator 8, “Student-athletes feel unmanageable emotion that causes a decline in the productivity” gained an average weighted mean of 3.44 and ranked 3; Indicator 9, “Student-athletes experience burnout and exhaustion” with average weighted mean of 3.40 and ranked 4; Indicator 4, “Student-athletes feel inability to concentrate” (AWM=3.37, ranked 5); Indicator 5, “Student-athletes feel disrupted attention” (AWM=3.35, ranked 6). The computed average weighted mean of indicators 8, 9, 4, and 5 obtained a descriptive equivalent of agree respectively. The student-athletes of the present study agreed that they also feel varied excessive anxiety and stress as emotional issues primarily uncontrollable emotion that causes a decline in the output and efficiency; experience burnout and exhaustion; inability to concentrate and focus to attain the target as student-athletes. This result only proves that the student-athletes are prone to manifest and feel anxiety and stress and indicative to these were their manifested feelings of uncertainties, uncontrollable emotions, tiredness, not able to focus and disturbed.

Student-athletes often experience unmanageable emotions, such as stress and depression, which can significantly impact their productivity in both academics and athletics (Morris, et al., 2020). These states can make it difficult to focus, be motivated, and engage in tasks effectively (Morris, et al., 2020); often struggle to concentrate due to a combination of factors related to their dual roles (Strauss, 2021); often experience disrupted attention due to a combination of factors including time management difficulties, academic pressures (Chang, et al., 2020), making it harder for them to concentrate on both their academics and athletics pursuits (Davoren & Hwang, 2022).

The indicators that gained the least average weighted means were indicator 3, “Student-athletes feel images of failure” with average weighted mean of 3.29 (rank 9) and indicator 6, “Student-athletes feel nervous and uneasy” with average weighted mean of 3.12 (rank 10). Both indicators obtained a descriptive equivalent of moderately agree. Student-athletes often experience feelings of failure due to high expectations, performance pressure, and the potential for disappointment in both their athletic and academic pursuits. However, the student-athletes are still optimistic on winning and tries to contain their emotion and be focused on task.

The overall weighted mean was 3.40 with descriptive equivalent of Agree. The student athlete-respondents moderately felt and encountered excessive anxiety and stress before and during sports competition. Being a student-athlete is no walk in the park because it requires balancing between being a student and an athlete, and between physical and mental tiredness. They often have requirements that could cause great pressure, loneliness, and psychological problems. These challenges should not be neglected because such awareness makes it possible to assist student-athletes.

### Perceived Behavior Issues of Student Athletes

Table 3 shows the perceived Behavior Issues of the student athlete-respondents in terms of Aggressive Behavior and Violent Activity.

**Table 3: Perceived Aggressive Behavior and Violent Activity of the Student Athlete - Respondents**

Aggressive Behavior and Violent Activity	AWM	D.E.	Rank
1. Student-athletes intention is to increase relative social dominance	3.36	A	3
2. Student-athletes show anger and bent on physically harming an opponent	3.41	A	1
3. Student-athletes provoke physical assaults with opponents	3.23	MA	6
4. Student-athletes show hostility because of frustration	3.24	MA	5
5. Student-athletes show resentment because of low goal orientation	3.26	MA	4
6. Student-athletes display intimidations when there is big difference in scores	3.09	MA	10
7. Student-athletes behavior is forceful and unfriendly	3.14	MA	9
8. Student-athletes engage in rough contacts during games	3.22	MA	7
9. Student-athletes incite verbal assaults with opponents	3.40	A	2
10. Student-athletes create gossips, rumors and murmuring	3.20	MA	8
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	3.26	<b>Moderately Agree (MA)</b>	

Indicator 2 stated as “Student-athletes show anger and bent on physically harming an opponent” gained an average weighted mean of 3.41, rank 1; and indicator 9 stated as “Student athletes incite verbal assaults with opponents” gained an average weighted mean of 3.40 and ranked 2; and Indicator 1 stated as “Student-athletes’ intention is to increase relative social dominance gained an average weighted mean of 3.36 and ranked 3. These indicators obtained a descriptive equivalent of Agree respectively. The aggressive and violent behaviors observed and manifested among student-athletes were anger and resorted to physically harming an opponent; incite and provocative verbal assaults with opponents; and increase some social dominance and recognition. The results signify that the student-athletes have issues on anger, propensity to physical violence and verbal aggression which may contribute to athletes’ low performance.

Aggression is an overt verbal or physical act that can psychologically or physically injure another person or oneself’ (Brooks, 2012, also cited in Ganaden, 2017). Aggressive behavior and/or violent can potentially leading to negative consequences and impacting both the athlete



and the sport (Redondo-Flórez, et al., 2022). Verbal and physical aggression, including bullying, can occur in sports, impacting athletes' well-being and sportsmanship. Bekiari (2014 also discussed in Ator & Ortizo, 2024; and Ganaden, 2018) reported that aggression, like verbal, appears to be a discouraging force in the sports setting and as a result lead to an increased anxiety. The idea that student-athletes are solely driven by a desire to increase relative social dominance (Ator & Ortizo, 2024). However, the pursuit of social dominance might be a factor for some, but it is not the sole or primary motivation for all student-athletes.

Indicator 5, “Student-athletes show resentment because of low goal orientation” gained an average weighted mean of 3.26, ranked 4; Indicator 4, “Student-athletes show hostility because of frustration” with average weighted mean of 3.24, ranked 5; Indicator 3, “Student-athletes provoke physical assaults with opponents” gained an average weighted mean of 3.23 and ranked 6. Indicators 5, 4, and 3 obtained a descriptive equivalent of moderately agree respectively. It was revealed that student-athletes are vulnerable to aggressiveness of behavior and low morale. These negative feelings can manifest during, training and actual competition. Specifically, the student athletes moderately agreed that they felt unmotivated having low direction/target; tendency to be hostile; and can provoke physical assaults with opponents and probably co-athletes or teammates.

Revealed in Krishnaveni & Shahin (2014, also discussed in Ganaden, 2018) that aggression is caused by reduced goal orientation which is manifested if the ego state of the athlete increases and shows general lack of respect and esteem. Student-athletes with low goal orientation are those who do not prioritize achievement or have little desire for success in their sport or academic pursuits (Yukhymenko-Lescroart, 2023).

Student-athletes experiencing frustration can exhibit hostility in various ways, ranging from verbal aggression to physical actions (Basile, et al., 2022). Aggression in sports can stem from various factors, including the competitive nature, also frustration (Kerr, 2015).

The indicators that gained the least average weighted means were indicator 7, stated as “Student-athletes’ behavior is forceful and unfriendly” with average weighted mean of 3.14 (rank 9); and indicator 6, stated as “Student athletes display intimidations when there is big difference in scores” with average weighted mean of 3.09 (rank 10) both with descriptive equivalent of moderately agree.

Student-athletes moderately agreed that they have exhibited unfriendly behavior and this could be due to high-pressure environment of sports; intensity of training and competition; and difficulties in managing time that can potentially impact mental and physical well-being. In modern day sporting events (Krishnaveni & Shahin, 2014 as cited in Ganaden, 2018), aggression happens especially games that have high emotional content and where there is a big difference between scores.

The overall weighted mean was 3.26 with descriptive equivalent of Moderately Agree. The student athlete-respondents moderately agreed showing and manifesting behavior issues specifically aggressiveness and violent activity during sports competition.

### **Perceived Strategies to Address Excessive Anxiety and Stress Issues**

To encourage athletes to unite and emphasize the importance of working together as a team throughout the competition was proposed to counter the negative behaviors manifested by the student athletes. They also preferred unity and focus on the value of a team working and functioning together throughout the competition. This result conveys that student-athletes acknowledge that they feel emotional issues mainly anxiety and stress but are receptive on ways to control the feeling. Encouraging, inspiring and uniting the student athletes towards the competition and showing them the value of unity and teamwork can greatly help overcome anxiety and stress. The student athletes also proposed that the institution and its Sports Department will focus on psychologically preparing the athletes for what they will face during the rigid training and competition; orienting the athletes to stay positive and acknowledge the importance of confidence in one's abilities; recognizing and building confidence of teammates' abilities and skills; and making the student athletes understand that problems and challenges are not within themselves only, there are many factors and these can be managed and overcome eventually. The athletes coping skills should focus on behavioral adjustment, confidence and goal-setting. Chang, et al., (2020) argued that athletes must rationalize his thinking about the importance of competition and overcome stress by increasing the chances of success and minimize failure. Ganaden (2018); and Strauss (2021) found that the common coping strategies for effectively managing emotional responses like anxiety, stress and tension would include requiring the athlete to learn to feel the demands of the situation and making efforts on the part of the coach to help athletes to avoid thinking irrational fears. Bali (2015 also discussed in Strauss, 2021; and Davoren & Hwang, 2022) argued that athletes should focus on what can be controlled and be constantly reminded that they are better trained and have acquired and developed better techniques in their sport.

### **Perceived Strategies to Address Aggressive Behavior and Violent Activity Issues**

The student athletes proposed that their coaches and team leaders further establish a friendly and supportive relation and atmosphere. They proposed regular orientation of athletes on tolerance, non-aggressive and assertive behaviors; activities that would regulate student-athletes' anger feelings; and role playing aimed to reduce delinquency among athletes. The student athletes preferred maintaining friendly relation within their group and/or with their teammates. These proposed actions, activities and ways signifies that the student athletes favored a sports team where coaches, trainers, officials and teammates are in good shape with each other and maintain positive and understanding environment. Moreover, the student athletes at all times wanted orientation focused on developing non-hostile behaviors, anger management, and more positive attitudes and actions towards others (coaches, trainers, teammates and opponents).

Controlling aggression and violence by athletes can be done through proper counseling and rehabilitation; regulating anger through proper role play; patience of coach or leader; and rewarding athletes for appropriate conduct (Basile, et al., 2022; and Morris, et al., 2020). Creating an environment where student-athletes feel comfortable discussing their emotions and challenges is crucial (Redondo-Flórez, et al., 2022). To effectively address, a multi-faceted



intervention approach is necessary such as fostering positive relationships and communication, and providing mental health support.

**Table 4: Test of Difference on the Perceived Behavior and Emotion Issues as to Sex**

Behavior and Emotion Issues	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Dev	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision/ Interpretation
Excessive Anxiety and Stress	Male	67	3.2364	0.5170	102	-0.702	0.67	<b>Accept Not Significant</b>
	Female	37	3.5903	0.3638				
Aggressive Behavior and Violent Activity	Male	67	3.2411	0.7652	102	-0.641	0.71	<b>Accept Not Significant</b>
	Female	37	3.4311	0.6514				

Table 4 shows that the significant values for Excessive Anxiety and Stress (0.65) and Aggressive Behavior and Violent Activity (0.71) were higher than the (0.05) alpha level of significance. In this respect the null hypothesis is accepted and the result was not significant. There is no significant difference on the perceptions between male and female student-athletes on the observed, experienced, manifested excessive anxiety and stress and aggressive behavior and violent activity. The male and female student-athletes have similar insights, showed and expressed sports-related emotion and behavior issues.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this paper was to use this as illustrative example of examining the manifestations of emotion and behavior issues in sport such as anxiety and stress; and aggression and violent activities of student athletes and how to help athletes prevent their unsanctioned behavior being a problem for team performance in the future. Once the manifestations and indications were established, a number of possible options for individually or group - focused intervention strategies were suggested.

The study found that the student athlete-respondents agreed to have manifested excessive anxiety and stress mainly by worrying about their performance in their trainings and competition; and by experiencing pressure of winning the game and/or competition. They moderately agreed that they showed aggressive behavior and violent activity showing anger and bent on physically harming an opponent, inciting verbal assaults with opponents; and dominance with other athletes. To address the emotion and behavior issues, the student-athletes preferred and valued unity and focus towards a team working and functioning together throughout the training and actual competition. They proposed a psychological preparation; confidence building; recognition of their skills and contribution; and orientation on aspects such as tolerance and patience. Moreover, student-athletes also sought from coaches, trainers and teammates' friendly and supportive relations. The t-test result showed a no statistically significant difference in the perceptions between male and female student-athletes on the manifestations of emotional and behavior problems and issues.

Addressing the emotional and behavioral problems and issues of student-athletes requires coordinated efforts from university administrators, sports officials, coaches and trainers, parents and the student athletes themselves. In an effort to enhance student-athletes' well-being and sports performances, institutionalization of effective and efficient behavioral health

programs is highly suggested. Universities should prioritize a multi-faceted approach that includes comprehensive mental health services, a culture of support and understanding, and clear communication strategies. It is also proposed that issues on violence and aggressiveness should be integrated in different subjects of physical education and sports classes so that student-athletes be informed well enough. Lastly, carry out similar studies in other universities and colleges of the country for validation purpose.

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