

Exploring Challenges, Resources and Support Networks in Access to Higher-Level Sports Meets for Hinterland Athletes: A Qualitative Study from the Lens of Teacher –Coaches

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore the challenges, available resources, and support networks influencing access to higher-level sports meets for hinterland athletes, as experienced by teacher–coaches. Specifically, the study sought to understand how teacher–coaches navigate structural and environmental constraints while facilitating athletes' participation in competitive sports events.

The research was conducted in selected hinterland schools in the New Corella District, Division of Davao del Norte, Philippines.

Participants were purposively selected teacher–coaches who were directly involved in training athletes and coordinating their participation in sports competitions. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings from their lived experiences.

Findings revealed that teacher–coaches faced multiple interconnected challenges, including limited sports facilities and equipment, financial constraints, geographical isolation, transportation difficulties, and insufficient institutional support.

Despite these barriers, significant forms of support emerged through the personal commitment and resourcefulness of teacher–coaches, collaborative efforts with fellow coaches, support from school administrators and parents, and assistance from local communities and local government units.

These coping mechanisms and support systems played a crucial role in sustaining athletes' participation in higher-level sports meets.

The study concludes that equitable access to competitive sports opportunities for hinterland athletes requires strengthened institutional policies, improved resource allocation, and enhanced multi-sectoral collaboration to support teacher–coaches in resource-limited contexts.

Keywords: hinterland athletes; teacher–coaches; higher-level sports meet; phenomenology; institutional support

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Sports participation promotes physical health, social cohesion, and personal development. In the Philippines, students in hinterland areas face limited access to high-level sports competitions due to inadequate facilities, lack of equipment, financial constraints, and logistical challenges.

Teacher-coaches in these schools play a vital role in bridging these gaps, providing technical training, psychological support, mentorship, and resource mobilization.

Despite their importance, the experiences, coping strategies, and perspectives of teacher-coaches remain underexplored.

Understanding their lived experiences can inform strategies to enhance athlete participation, optimize resource use, and strengthen sports programs in resource-constrained settings.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to explore the experiences of teacher-coaches in hinterland schools in assisting athletes to access higher-level sports competitions. Specifically, it seeks to answer:

1. What are the lived experiences of teacher-coaches in supporting hinterland athletes to participate in elite sports meets?
2. How do teacher-coaches cope with challenges in facilitating athletes' access to competitions?
3. What insights can teacher-coaches provide to improve access to higher-level sports meets for hinterland athletes?

Objectives of the Study

General Objective: Investigate the experiences, coping strategies, and perspectives of teacher-coaches assisting hinterland athletes in competing in high-level sports competitions.

Specific Objectives

1. Describe experiences of teacher-coaches in preparing athletes for competitive events.
2. Identify coping mechanisms employed to overcome resource limitations.
3. Synthesize insights to improve athletes' access to higher-level sports meets.

Significance of the Study

Policymakers: Support resource allocation, facility development, and coach training in rural areas.

Schools and communities: Enhance collaboration, community involvement, and support networks.

Teacher-coaches: Validate challenges and strategies, offering guidance for best practices.

Future researchers: Provide framework for sports development research in resource-constrained settings.

Scope and Limitation

Focuses on teacher-coaches in hinterland schools of Davao del Norte, Philippines, assisting student-athletes in higher-level competitions. Emphasizes experiences, coping strategies, and perspectives, excluding direct assessment of athlete performance metrics.

Definition of Terms

Teacher-Coach: Educator who also coaches' sports teams.

Hinterland Schools: Geographically remote or resource-limited schools.

Higher-Level Sports Meet: Competitive sports events beyond school level.

Coping Mechanisms: Strategies employed to overcome challenges.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

The Role of Teacher-Coaches

Teacher-coaches balance academic responsibilities and sports coaching duties. They facilitate physical, psychological, and social development, providing structured training, motivation, and mentorship (Savory, 2022; Arcenas et al., 2025).

Challenges in Hinterland Sports Development

Limited facilities, financial constraints, and inadequate equipment affect athletic preparation in rural areas (Magalona et al., 2025; Alasinrin et al., 2024). Transportation and logistical barriers limit participation in high-level competitions (Rivas et al., 2023).

Coping Mechanisms in Resource-Constrained Environments

Teacher-coaches innovate training routines, use improvised materials, and seek community support to overcome resource limitations (Bashiir, 2025; Colmer, 2024). Positive reinforcement, structured leadership, and collaboration strengthen athlete motivation and program sustainability (Alkawasbeh & Akroush, 2025; Hohl et al., 2024).

Community Involvement and Support Systems

Strong community and institutional support enhance program sustainability, reduce barriers, and promote inclusive participation. Volunteerism, parental involvement, and partnerships with local government units are critical for maintaining access to sports opportunities (Mahinay & Ortiz, 2025; Al-Kumaim et al., 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Phenomenological qualitative approach was used to understand lived experiences of teacher-coaches assisting hinterland athletes.

Participants: 10–15 teacher-coaches from hinterland schools in Davao del Norte actively facilitating athletes' participation in higher-level competitions.

Data Collection Methods

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Explored shared experiences. In-Depth Interviews (IDIs): Captured individual narratives and coping strategies.

Instrument Validation

Research questions and interview guides were validated by experts in sports education, qualitative research, and rural sports development.

Data Analysis

Data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Recurring patterns and themes were identified to address research questions.

Ethical Considerations

Participants provided informed consent. Confidentiality was maintained, and participation was voluntary.

RESULTS

Lived Experiences of Teacher-Coaches

Table 1 displays the five essential themes and concepts that emerged from the data analysis. These themes were supported and validated by direct quotes from focus group discussion and in-depth interview participants.

| ESSENTIAL THEMES | CORE IDEAS |
|--|---|
| Strengthening Athletes' Physical and Mental Preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building motivation and enjoyment in sports training • conducting consistent and long-term training • preparing athletes holistically • instilling good Physical preparatory training for athletes |
| Experiencing Lack of Equipment and Facilities for Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing perseverance and Teamwork while facing limitations in sports equipment and facilities • innovating available local resources for sports • sourcing out personal financial resources for athletes' training • committing to athletes training amid distance challenges • shouldering financial struggles to support student-athletes |
| Balancing Academic Responsibility and Sports Commitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managing limited time for training and academic tasks • negotiating class exemptions for athletes during training • adjusting schedules to accommodate both academics and training |
| Building Community and Institutional Support Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging collaboration among co-teachers and school heads • experiencing community financial and material assistance • gaining support from barangay officials and stakeholders • receiving support through community service • getting cooperation from teachers, parents, and local officials • integrating support system from co-teachers to avoid discouragement • calling for financial assistance from LGU and DepEd for sports funding and logistics |
| Promoting Awareness and Value of Sports in the Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highlighting the presence of the School Principal in inspiring and motivating student athletes in the game • raising community awareness on the importance of sports in the holistic development of student • motivating students through exposure and recognition • recognizing the important role of parents in student-athletes motivation • conducting refresher course for teacher coaches |

Coping Mechanisms

The five main themes and fundamental ideas that emerged from the data analysis are shown in Table 2. Direct quotes from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with the participants validated and supported these ideas.

| ESSENTIAL THEMES | CORE IDEAS |
|---|---|
| Innovating Training Strategies through Resourcefulness and Adaptability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilizing digital media for technical improvement • using equipment made from local materials in training athletes • improvising equipment and training spaces to sustain physical fitness drills and practices |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exposing student athletes to stronger opponents for experience and gaining confidence |
| Motivating Athletes through Rewards and Positive Reinforcement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offering food and simple treats as motivation • recognizing effort through praise and monetary appreciation • establishing personal connection and emotional support • providing incentives to encourage participation • pushing athletes' full potentials to win |
| Strengthening Discipline and Commitment through Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • instilling consistency and dedication in practice • cultivating team spirit and accountability • giving opportunity to deal with different behaviors • promoting self-discipline and sportsmanship • developing teamwork through sports training |
| Collaborating with the Community and External Stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partnering with LGU and NGOS for financial and material support • engaging barangay officials for transportation assistance • seeking sponsorship from local benefactors for sporting needs of student athletes • encouraging parental involvement • strengthening partnerships with LGU and community |
| Overcoming Financial and Logistical Barriers through Cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sourcing out funds from PTA contributions for travel expenses • pooling resources among teachers and coaches • relying on collective effort to sustain participation • fostering a spirit of volunteerism |

Insights for Improving Access

Table 3 presents the six emerging themes together with the key concepts that connect them. The insights of teacher-coaches regarding their experiences helping athletes from the hinterland compete in elite athletic events are captured.

| ESSENTIAL THEMES | CORE IDEAS |
|--|---|
| Strengthening Support Systems for Sustainable Sports Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing financial assistance for athletes' participation • building strong partnerships with LGUs, NGOs, and alumni in developing student athletes • establishing proactive partnership with LGU • increasing stakeholder support in sports programs • ensuring support from administrators • boosting athletes' motivation through teacher and parent moral support |
| Enhancing Quality Training through Exposure and Coaching Expertise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conducting refresher course for teacher coaches • assigning experienced player as coach • conducting sports clinics inclusive with student athletes participants • increasing exposure through school invitation of friendly marches with big schools • preparing athletes for the competitions |
| Fostering Positive Attitude and Sportsmanship among Athletes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasizing humility and resilience despite loss • encouraging student athletes performance through intrinsic motivation and enjoyment • giving opportunity to deal with different behaviors |

| | |
|--|--|
| Addressing Financial and Logistical Barriers through Community Involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing fundraising activities for athletic programs • pooling resources among teachers and coaches • building partnerships in the barangays • strengthening partnership with LGU and DepEd |
| Developing Health, and Facilities for Athletic Growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing sports facilities and equipment • encouraging consistent support from the LGU for hinterland schools • addressing student athletes’ health and nutrition needs • securing partnerships for equipment and facility improvement and other financial needs |
| Promoting Awareness and Recognition among parents and teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising awareness on the significance of sports in education • advocating equal recognition for sports achievers • conducting Meetings to introduce the benefits of sports • establishing localized reward and recognition systems |

DISCUSSION

Lived Experiences of Teacher–Coaches from Hinterland Schools in Accessing Higher-Level Sports Meets

This section presented the experiences of teacher-coaches who supported athletes from the hinterland in gaining entry to higher level athletic tournaments. Participants shared about the strategies they implemented to support their athletes' competitive, mental, and physical development while overcoming adversities.

Strengthening Athletes’ Physical and Mental Preparation

The participants shared how they actively strengthen their athletes’ physical and mental preparation despite challenges such as limited resources and demanding schedules. They described tailoring training programs, implementing conditioning exercises, and monitoring recovery to enhance physical readiness. At the same time, they emphasized mental resilience through motivation, goal-setting, and confidence-building exercises during practice and competitions.

Strengthening athletes’ physical and mental preparation is crucial for optimal performance under pressure. According to Hufton et al. (2024), athletes, coaches, and sports professionals identify mental toughness, confidence, and focus as key components for performing effectively, and they suggest strategies such as goal setting, visualization, and positive self-talk to enhance performance. Similarly, Low et al. (2023) emphasize that excelling under pressure is a defining element of high-performance sports, and sport psychologists play a vital role in helping athletes maintain composure and thrive in stressful situations.

Experiencing Lack Equipment and Facilities for Training

The theme emphasized the challenges brought on by inadequate training facilities and sports equipment, which affect both teacher-coaches and student-athletes. Despite fulfilling their professional duties, teacher-coaches often faced resource limitations that hindered their ability to fully support athletic development. This lack of resources made it more difficult for student-athletes to practice effectively and for teacher-coaches to provide the right kind of coaching. It became very challenging to balance professional responsibilities, training requirements, and skill development as a result, highlighting the urgent need for more resources and support to improve both athletic performance and coaching effectiveness.

The participants’ experiences revealed that a lack of proper athletic equipment and training facilities hinders student-athletes’ performance, highlighting the importance of adequate resources for skill development, as noted by Magalona et al. (2025). Similarly, Alasinrin et al. (2024) argue that well-equipped, modern sports facilities not only reduce the risk of injuries but also foster overall athlete growth, highlighting that optimal performance relies on both quality equipment and infrastructure.

Balancing Academic Responsibility and Sports Commitment

As they described their daily routines, participants emphasized the need for a schedule that accommodates both academic and athletic demands. They shared that careful planning helps them stay focused and fulfill obligations in both areas. Balancing academic responsibilities and sports commitments requires teacher-coaches to implement effective time management strategies, as supported by Savory (2022), who emphasized that a well-organized schedule integrating study sessions, teaching duties, training, and personal time fosters control, reduces stress, and promotes experiential learning for continuous professional and personal growth. Similarly, Arcenas et al. (2025) highlighted that achieving work-life balance is crucial for teacher-coaches worldwide, as it allows them to fulfill both personal and professional responsibilities, while Faber et al. (2021) further demonstrated that their success in athletic events is directly influenced by diverse and strategic time management practices.

Building Community and Institutional Support Systems

This theme highlights the critical role of collaboration among schools, institutions, and communities in creating environments that foster growth. When teacher-coaches, administrators, local governments, and community members work together, they can pool resources, share expertise, and address logistical challenges that often hinder athlete development in remote areas. The implications of this finding suggest that schools should actively cultivate partnerships and networks to ensure sustainable support for sports programs, which can lead to increased participation, inclusivity, and long-term empowerment of both students and educators. Moreover, policymakers can leverage these insights to prioritize funding and community engagement strategies that strengthen institutional support systems.

As Sherlock (2024) emphasized, community sports programs break down barriers and foster social cohesion by bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds through shared physical activities. Similarly, Brennan et al. (2025) argued that integrating sports with broader community initiatives enhances resilience and inclusivity, highlighting the importance of collaborative engagement across social sectors. Supporting this, Ferreira et al. (2024) found that social support from friends, family, and colleagues not only improves athletes' well-being but also reduces stress, prevents burnout, and promotes work-life balance, underscoring the critical role of both community and institutional support in sustaining effective sports environments.

Promoting Awareness and Value of Sports in the Community

In this theme it underscores how important it is to increase community awareness of and passion for sports. It highlights how social contact, physical health, and a sense of community may be effectively fostered through sports. By valuing sports, communities may promote active participation and cultivate a culture of fitness and teamwork among individuals.

Promoting awareness and the value of sports in the community has been shown to enhance both individual and societal well-being. Zhu et al. (2025) found that effective community sports governance promotes physical activity by improving local infrastructure and public awareness, while coordinated efforts in infrastructure, education, and governance are essential for sustainable health promotion. Similarly, our study revealed that teacher-coaches from hinterland schools rely on community support and collaboration to encourage students' participation in sports, highlighting the critical role of local awareness and resources. Gallant (2021) emphasized that increasing parents' understanding and involvement in sports policies through education campaigns and neighborhood initiatives supports children's engagement in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA), which mirrors our finding that parents' active participation strengthens student-athletes' motivation and consistent engagement in physical activities.

Coping Mechanism of Teacher Coaches in Overcoming Challenges Experienced in Accessing Higher-Level Sports Meet

This section discusses the coping mechanism that teacher-coaches face on the challenges experienced of the athletes from the hinterland to compete at a higher-level sports meet. The participants discussed about how,

despite many limitations, they assisted their athletes' emotional and physical development as well as their readiness for competition.

Innovating Training Strategies through Resourcefulness and Adaptability

The theme revealed that teacher-coaches demonstrated strong resourcefulness and adaptability by innovating their training strategies despite limited facilities, equipment, and funding. They modified drills, improvised materials, and redesigned training routines to suit their context without compromising skill development. Through creative problem-solving, they ensured continuous athlete preparation for higher-level competitions. These practices highlight how flexibility and innovation became essential coping mechanisms in resource-constrained environments.

As stated by Bashiir (2025) demonstrated that athletes can overcome equipment limitations and still enhance training and competition outcomes through creative use of available resources. Similarly, Colmer (2024) emphasized that adapting drills and using improvised tools sustain athletes' psychological and physical engagement while developing problem-solving, adaptability, and motivation. In addition, Nesperos and Magbanua (2025) found that improvisation ensures the continuity and sustainability of school-based sports programs, maintaining student-athletes' interest despite limited facilities.

Motivating Athletes through Rewards and Positive Reinforcement

The theme emphasized how rewards and positive reinforcement served as powerful motivators that sustained athletes' commitment to training and performance. Verbal praise, symbolic incentives, and public recognition strengthened athletes' confidence, sense of value, and willingness to persevere despite challenges. This supportive approach fostered a culture of encouragement that inspired consistent effort and goal-directed behavior.

This aligns with findings that positive reinforcement such as compliments, rewards, and timely feedback can momentarily enhance athletic performance, especially when these extrinsic motivators are supported by strong intrinsic drive (Alkawasbeh & Akroush, 2025). In addition, coaches who integrate constructive criticism, visualization, and consistent affirmation help athletes build confidence and perform effectively under pressure (Gearity et al., 2024).

Strengthening Discipline and Commitment through Leadership

This theme highlights how teacher-coaches strengthen athletes' discipline and commitment through effective leadership. By setting clear expectations, modeling responsibility, and providing consistent guidance, they inspire students to take ownership of their training and behavior. Such leadership fosters not only improved performance but also a supportive and resilient team culture. Ultimately, teacher-coaches play a key role in shaping both the skills and character of their athletes.

The participants emphasized that teaching athletes' virtues such as obedience, loyalty, and order fosters discipline, with family influence and support reinforcing these values, while sports provide a structured framework that cultivates time management, self-control, responsibility, and teamwork essential for success in and beyond the classroom (Nangare et al., 2025). Similarly, participation in sports promotes moral development, instilling accountability, respect, and cooperation, as athletes with strong moral integrity demonstrate fairness and good sportsmanship, benefiting both their teams and the broader sports community (Padli et al., 2024).

Collaborating with the Community and External Stakeholders

This theme emphasizes the vital role of teacher-coaches in fostering collaboration with schools, local communities, and external stakeholders to support sports programs. Such partnerships provide access to additional resources, expertise, and opportunities, helping teacher-coaches enhance athletes' skills and overall development. Collaboration also promotes inclusive environments that encourage sustained engagement in physical activities. Ultimately, teacher-coaches act as bridges, linking athletes to broader community support that strengthens both program effectiveness and student well-being.

Collaborating effectively with community members and external stakeholders enhances the relevance, equity, and sustainability of programs, as successful partnerships are often supported by sport and leisure organizations, diverse resources, and formal agreements (Hohl et al., 2024). Similarly, transparent resource arrangements and power-sharing mechanisms are critical for meaningful collaboration, as concentrated decision-making within institutions limits community ownership and undermines partnership success (Petkovic et al., 2023). Conversely, clear agreements on co-leadership, budgeting, and recognition foster trust, equalize power, and strengthen collaborative outcomes (Petkovic et al., 2023).

Overcoming Financial and Logistical Barriers through Cooperation

The theme of overcoming financial and logistical barriers highlighted the critical role of collaboration among teacher-coaches, school administrators, local government units, community members, and partner organizations. Teacher-coaches emphasized that pooling resources, sharing responsibilities, and coordinating efforts allowed them to sustain training programs and provide athletes with essential support despite limited budgets and facilities. This aligns with recent studies showing that cooperative strategies enhance program effectiveness in resource-constrained educational and sports settings. Ultimately, teamwork emerged as a key factor in ensuring athlete development and access to opportunities.

This study highlights that collaboration among stakeholders plays a crucial role in overcoming financial and logistical barriers. Consistent with Al-Kumaim et al. (2021), cooperative involvement facilitates resource pooling and sustains programs despite budgetary constraints, a finding reflected in participants' emphasis on shared fundraising, partnerships with local businesses, and volunteer support. Similarly, Nguyen and Jones (2022) argue that cooperative structures enhance efficiency by fostering co-ownership and shared financial responsibility, which participants echoed by citing collaboration as essential for improving access to transportation and participation in school-based activities.

Insights from Teacher-Coaches from Hinterland Schools on Their Experiences to Improve Access to Higher-Level Sports Meets

This section presents the overall findings of the study, focusing on the insights drawn from the lived experiences of teacher-coaches who support hinterland athletes in accessing higher-level sports meets. Their shared narratives deepen the understanding of the challenges and opportunities within this context and highlight essential actions that may enhance athletes' participation and performance.

Strengthening Support Systems for Sustainable Sports Development

This theme reveals that institutional, community, and policy-level support systems are vital to sustainable sports development. Participants emphasized the need for well-maintained facilities, continuous capacity building, and strong governance supported by active community involvement.

Literature affirms that strengthening support networks is crucial for long-term sports growth. According to research, in addition to short-term successes and talent discovery, long-term success in sports programs depends on strong governance, involved community members, long-lasting infrastructure, and continuous capacity building. Strategies including coach education, volunteer retention, and family and community support networks are used to sustain athlete involvement and program quality (Alarслан et al., 2023).

Enhancing Quality Training through Exposure and Coaching Expertise

This theme highlights how structured exposure and the expertise of teacher-coaches significantly enhance athletes' performance and readiness for competitive events. For athletes, particularly those from rural areas with limited resources, access to high-quality coaching, well-designed training programs, and opportunities to participate in competitions and specialized workshops is essential for reaching their full potential.

This underscores the critical role of teacher-coaches not only in skill development but also in creating equitable opportunities that foster growth, resilience, and competitive success among student-athletes.

This result supports the argument that enhancing the quality of training relies heavily on coaching expertise and exposure. Specifically, training quality is shaped not only by technical and tactical knowledge but also by psychological and social competencies, which are developed through structured, ongoing professional development involving formal training, self-reflection, and adaptation to athletes' diverse needs (Pires et al., 2021). Moreover, coaches who possess these skills are more likely to deliver flexible, high-quality, and sustainable training programs. Research further indicates that factors such as remote coaching, digital technologies, and athletes' varied backgrounds influence how coaching is experienced, suggesting that learning through diverse coaching environments can be more impactful than formal education alone (Kirkland & Cowley, 2023).

Fostering Positive Attitude and Sportsmanship among Athletes

This theme highlights the critical role of teacher-coaches in fostering athletes' positive mindset and sportsmanship. By guiding athletes to embrace fair play, resilience, teamwork, and respect for others, teacher-coaches contribute not only to improved performance but also to their overall personal development on and off the field.

These findings suggest that regular participation in sports—whether competitive, recreational, or culturally based—can enhance student-athletes' physical fitness while fostering moral behavior and social values. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were found to significantly influence sportsmanship, with intrinsic motivation promoting genuine respect for the sport, and extrinsic factors, such as praise or rewards, reinforcing fair play and ethical behavior (Julaimi & Kamal, 2024).

Addressing Financial and Logistical Barriers through Community Involvement

This theme highlights the critical significance of community involvement as a practical and effective strategy for overcoming the logistical and financial barriers that typically keep kids from engaging in academic and athletic activities, especially in areas with limited resources or rural areas. One efficient strategy to minimize these impediments is by community involvement, which can take the form of financial help, material contributions, volunteer work, and the mobilization of local resources.

The participants emphasized that community contributions—through material and financial support from local groups, PTAs, NGOs, and stakeholders—are crucial for sustaining programs that might otherwise fail due to limited resources. Engaging the community not only helps secure funding but also enables collective problem-solving, such as volunteer-run learning centers, community-organized transportation, or pooled resources to ease burdens on students and families (Mahinay & Ortiz, 2025). This aligns with research showing that participation in organized sports is heavily influenced by financial and socioeconomic disparities, with children from lower SES households less likely to engage in or continue sports due to “pay-to-play” structures, which can exclude talented but disadvantaged youth and reinforce existing inequities (Ebert, 2022).

Developing Health, and Facilities for Athletic Growth

This theme emphasize the significance of well-designed sports and fitness facilities for encouraging physical activity, athletic growth, and general health outcomes. Recent evidence indicates that having access to first-rate sports facilities greatly raises the probability that people, particularly young people, will participate in regular physical exercise, which promotes athletic development.

The availability and accessibility of sports facilities have been shown to significantly influence physical activity, athletic development, and overall health. Karemu et al. (2024) found that individuals who engage in sports from childhood through adulthood exhibit better physical fitness, healthier body composition, and fewer mental health issues, while schools with higher-quality facilities report greater student participation and improved performance, suggesting that early access to facilities fosters talent development. Similarly, Jeong (2025) highlighted that well-maintained, easily accessible community and club-based facilities reduce financial, geographical, and motivational barriers, encouraging consistent engagement in physical activity and promoting better self-perceived health.

Promoting Awareness and Recognition among Parents and Teachers

This theme underscores the critical role of parents and educators in shaping the success of hinterland athletes. By deepening their understanding of the athletes' needs and achievements, parents and teacher-coaches can foster a supportive environment that not only encourages consistent participation but also enhances motivation and recognizes the accomplishments of young athletes in competitive events.

Promoting awareness and recognition among parents and teachers plays a crucial role in enhancing children's physical activity and overall development. Hosokawa et al. (2023) found that children are more likely to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activities when parents provide logistical support, such as transportation and participation in sports, highlighting the importance of parental encouragement. Martinez-Yarza et al. (2024) emphasized that educating parents on school policies and structured physical exercise enhances children's social-emotional development and school engagement, showing that family involvement benefits not only physical but also emotional and cognitive growth.

CONCLUSION

The complex environment that impacts students' athletic paths in remote places is highlighted in the research study "Exploring Access to Higher-Level Sports Meet for Hinterland Athletes: A Qualitative Study from the Lens of Teacher–Coaches". The experiences of teacher-coaches demonstrate that qualifying for higher-level competitions is not solely based on skill but rather on several interconnected factors that reflect the realities of hinterland sports.

These investigations focus on the ongoing problem of insufficient financing, facilities, and equipment, which has a direct impact on athletes' physical and mental preparation. Teacher-coaches have continuously demonstrated innovation and adaptation by developing novel training methods despite their limitations. They play an important role as mentors who, in addition to being trainers, help athletes develop resilience and character by supporting their dedication, self-control, and leadership.

The study also highlights the importance of finding a balance between academic and athletic responsibilities, a challenge that is especially challenging for students from the hinterland who lack academic support networks. Because of their coaches' outstanding guidance, support, and incentives, athletes persevere in the face of these challenges.

One recurring theme in the participants' experiences is the lasting nature of institutional and community support networks. Cooperation with local stakeholders, such as parents, schools, barangay authorities, and even private partners, is necessary to overcome logistical and financial challenges. Community involvement not only keeps players interested, but it helps create a culture that sees athletics as a vital tool for developing young people. The study also highlights how important it is to improve training quality through exposure and coaching skills so that athletes from the hinterland may compete more fairly and confidently with their urban rivals.

Lastly, raising awareness and recognition among educators, parents, and the public is a crucial first step in promoting sustainable sports growth. Stakeholders create a more welcoming and encouraging atmosphere that boosts athletes' motivation and involvement when they recognize the importance of sports and recognize athletes' accomplishments.

In conclusion, the experiences of teacher-coaches demonstrate that a common commitment to developing youth potential, strategic support systems, and collaboration may significantly expand rural athletes' access to higher level sports meet. By addressing these challenges comprehensively, we can create a more equal and empowering sports environment where all athletes, regardless of geography, can aspire and succeed.

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