

Navigating Dual Roles: Coping Mechanisms of Physical Education Teachers in Higher Education

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Abstract

Physical Education (PE) teachers in higher education often perform the dual roles of classroom instructors and athletic coaches, requiring them to manage diverse professional responsibilities simultaneously. This study explored the coping mechanisms employed by Physical Education teachers in managing these dual responsibilities. A qualitative research design was utilized, involving semi-structured interviews with 15 purposively selected Physical Education teachers who actively served as both instructors and coaches in higher education institutions. The collected data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and shared experiences. The findings revealed that participants encountered challenges related to role conflict and workload pressure, physical and emotional exhaustion, and limited institutional support. To address these challenges, participants adopted various coping mechanisms, including effective time management and prioritization, personal well-being and self-care practices, and collaborative support from colleagues, administrators, and family members. Participants likewise emphasized the need for institutional support through flexible workload policies, adequate resources and facilities, and continuous professional development and wellness initiatives to enhance their ability to fulfill both teaching and coaching responsibilities effectively. The study concludes that successfully managing the dual roles of teaching and coaching requires a combination of individual resilience and supportive institutional environments. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the experiences of Physical Education teacher-coaches and provide practical insights for higher education administrators in developing policies and support systems that promote faculty well-being, sustainable workload management, and improved professional performance...

Keywords : Physical Education teachers, teacher-coaches, coping mechanisms, higher education, dual roles, institutional support

INTRODUCTION

Physical Education (PE) teachers in higher education perform multiple professional responsibilities that extend beyond classroom instruction. In addition to delivering academic content, many also serve as athletic coaches, mentors, and coordinators of sports-related activities. These overlapping roles contribute significantly to students' academic, physical, and personal development; however, they also expose educators to increased workload, competing priorities, and heightened occupational stress (Richards & Templin, 2012; Konukman et al., 2010). Balancing instructional responsibilities with coaching commitments presents considerable challenges for PE teachers. Academic duties such as lesson preparation, classroom instruction, student assessment, and administrative tasks frequently coincide with training sessions, athletic competitions, and extracurricular activities. As a result, many teacher-coaches experience role conflict, time constraints, emotional exhaustion, and difficulties maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Richards, 2013). When these competing responsibilities are not effectively managed, they may negatively affect teaching performance, coaching effectiveness, and overall well-being.

Previous studies have identified various strategies that educators employ to cope with the demands of dual professional roles. Time management, task prioritization, social support, and adaptive coping behaviors have been recognized as practical approaches for reducing occupational stress and enhancing resilience (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Nguyen et al., 2021). Likewise, organizational resources—including supportive leadership, manageable workloads, and access to professional development opportunities—play an important role in helping teacher-

coaches sustain their professional responsibilities (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Nevertheless, individual coping strategies alone may not be sufficient when institutional support systems remain inadequate.

Within the Philippine higher education context, research on teacher stress and work-life balance has increased in recent years. Existing studies primarily examine workload, occupational stress, and general coping practices among teachers (Bhusan, 2022; Velasco, 2023). Although these investigations provide valuable insights into educators' professional experiences, they seldom focus specifically on Physical Education teachers who simultaneously perform instructional and coaching responsibilities. Consequently, limited qualitative evidence exists regarding how PE teachers navigate these dual roles and the coping mechanisms they employ within the unique institutional and cultural environment of Philippine higher education.

Addressing this research gap is essential because the experiences of PE teachers differ from those of educators whose responsibilities are confined primarily to classroom instruction. The physical demands of coaching, extended working hours, competition schedules, and additional administrative responsibilities create unique challenges that require context-specific coping strategies. Understanding these lived experiences may provide valuable information for educational leaders and policymakers in designing programs and institutional policies that promote teacher well-being and professional effectiveness.

Guided by the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), Role Theory (Biddle, 1986), and the Job Demands–Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), this study explores the coping mechanisms employed by Physical Education teachers in managing their dual responsibilities as educators and athletic coaches in higher education. By examining their lived experiences, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how teacher-coaches sustain their professional performance while maintaining their psychological well-being and work-life balance. The findings are expected to provide evidence that may inform institutional policies, faculty support programs, and workload management initiatives aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and welfare of Physical Education teachers in higher education.

2. Methods

2.1. Research design

This study employed a qualitative research design to examine the coping mechanisms of Physical Education (PE) teachers who simultaneously perform instructional and athletic coaching responsibilities in higher education. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences, perspectives, and adaptive practices within their professional settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design provided rich descriptions of how PE teachers navigate the challenges associated with balancing academic and coaching responsibilities while maintaining their professional and personal well-being.

2.2. Population and sampling

The participants consisted of fifteen (15) Physical Education teachers from selected public and private higher education institutions who were actively engaged in both classroom teaching and athletic coaching. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit information-rich participants who possessed direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015).

To be included in the study, participants were required to: (1) be currently employed as Physical Education teachers in a higher education institution; (2) perform formal coaching responsibilities in addition to their teaching duties; (3) have at least two years of experience handling both instructional and coaching roles; and (4) voluntarily agree to participate in the study. The selected participants represented diverse institutional settings to capture varied experiences and perspectives regarding dual-role responsibilities.

2.3. Instrument

Data were gathered using a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide. The instrument was designed to encourage participants to openly describe their experiences while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions and clarification (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Prior to data collection, the interview guide underwent expert validation by specialists in qualitative research and Physical Education to establish content validity. A pilot interview involving two PE teachers who met the inclusion criteria but were excluded from the final sample was also conducted to improve the clarity and sequencing of the interview questions. **Table 1** presents the instrument of the study:

Table 1. Instrument of the study.

Objectives	Interview questions
To explore the coping mechanisms employed by Physical Education teachers in managing the dual responsibilities of academic instruction and athletic coaching.	What challenges do you experience in balancing your teaching and coaching responsibilities? What coping strategies help you manage these dual responsibilities? What institutional support would help you perform both roles more effectively?

2.4 Data gathering procedure

After securing the necessary institutional approvals, eligible participants were invited to participate through formal communication. Before each interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, discussed ethical considerations, and obtained informed consent.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through secure online conferencing platforms, depending on participants' availability and preference. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' permission. The recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim and reviewed for accuracy before analysis. To protect confidentiality, all identifying information was removed and pseudonyms were assigned to each participant.

2.5. Data analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. Initially, the researcher became familiar with the data through repeated reading of the transcripts. Significant statements were then coded to identify meaningful units related to the participants' experiences and coping mechanisms. Similar codes were grouped into broader categories, from which major themes were generated and refined.

Throughout the analysis, the researcher maintained an audit trail and practiced reflexivity to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Member checking was also conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to verify the accuracy of the identified themes and ensure that the findings faithfully represented their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

2.6. Ethical considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards for qualitative research. Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate Institutional Review Board prior to data collection. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was secured before the interviews commenced. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning pseudonyms and removing all identifying information from interview transcripts and research reports. Digital files, including interview recordings and transcripts, were stored in password-protected devices accessible only to the researcher. All collected data were used solely for research purposes and handled in accordance with accepted ethical guidelines to safeguard participants' privacy and welfare.

3. Results

Research Objective. To explore the coping mechanisms employed by Physical Education teachers in managing the dual responsibilities of academic instruction and athletic coaching.

Interview Question 1: What challenges do you experience in balancing your teaching and coaching responsibilities?

1.1 Role Conflict and Workload Pressure

The majority of participants explained that managing classroom responsibilities while preparing athletes for training sessions and competitions often resulted in conflicting schedules and competing priorities. Lesson preparation, assessment, student consultations, and administrative work frequently coincided with coaching activities, making it difficult to devote sufficient time and attention to both responsibilities. Participants reported that these overlapping commitments required constant prioritization and schedule adjustments, often leaving them feeling overwhelmed.

"Teaching and coaching both demand my full attention. There are days when I have to finish grading papers while preparing training plans for an upcoming competition. It becomes difficult to give my best in both responsibilities." (Participant 3)

"During tournament season, my teaching responsibilities continue as usual. Balancing both roles requires careful planning, but unexpected activities often disrupt my schedule." (Participant 7)

1.2 Physical and Emotional Exhaustion

Beyond workload demands, participants described experiencing considerable physical fatigue and emotional strain. Long working hours, continuous movement between classrooms and sports facilities, and the expectation to remain physically and mentally engaged contributed to exhaustion. Several participants acknowledged that maintaining enthusiasm for both teaching and coaching becomes increasingly difficult during periods of heavy workload.

"By the end of the day, I am physically tired from coaching and mentally exhausted from teaching. Sometimes I feel that I have very little energy left for myself or my family." (Participant 9)

"There are times when I continue working late at night preparing lessons after coaching practice. The routine becomes exhausting, especially during sports competitions." (Participant 14)

1.3 Limited Institutional Support

Participants also highlighted the lack of institutional resources and organizational support as a significant challenge. Many believed that coaching responsibilities are often viewed as additional duties rather than an

integral component of their profession. Consequently, they reported inadequate access to facilities, limited manpower, insufficient administrative assistance, and unclear workload policies.

"We are expected to perform both responsibilities effectively, but the available resources and support are often inadequate. Most of the time, we manage everything on our own." (Participant 5)

"Additional personnel or more flexible schedules would greatly reduce the pressure experienced by teacher-coaches." (Participant 15)

Interview Question 2: What coping strategies help you manage these dual responsibilities?

2.1 Effective Time Management and Prioritization

Participants identified time management as their primary coping strategy for balancing academic and coaching responsibilities. They emphasized the importance of organizing daily activities, prioritizing urgent tasks, and maintaining structured schedules to minimize conflicts between teaching and coaching commitments. Many relied on planners, digital calendars, and weekly schedules to organize lesson preparation, student assessments, training sessions, and competitions.

"Planning my schedule ahead of time allows me to meet both teaching and coaching responsibilities. I prioritize urgent tasks and adjust my plans whenever unexpected activities arise." (Participant 2)

"I make it a habit to organize my week before it starts. Having a clear schedule helps me avoid overlapping responsibilities and manage my workload more efficiently." (Participant 8)

2.2 Personal Well-Being and Self-Care

Participants also recognized the importance of maintaining their physical and emotional well-being as a coping mechanism. They reported establishing healthy routines such as obtaining adequate rest, engaging in regular exercise, maintaining balanced nutrition, and setting personal boundaries between work and personal life. Several participants emphasized that self-care allowed them to sustain their motivation and prevent burnout despite the demands of their profession.

"I realized that taking care of myself is just as important as taking care of my students and athletes. Rest, exercise, and proper sleep help me stay focused throughout the week." (Participant 5)

"I set limits on my work after office hours whenever possible. Giving myself time to recover allows me to return to work with more energy and a positive mindset." (Participant 15)

2.3 Collaborative Support and Teamwork

Another important coping mechanism identified by the participants was seeking support from colleagues, administrators, family members, and fellow coaches. They explained that collaboration, open communication, and task delegation reduced their workload and provided emotional encouragement during demanding periods. Participants acknowledged that working within a supportive professional environment helped them cope with occupational stress more effectively.

"My colleagues and assistant coach are always willing to help whenever my schedule becomes overwhelming. Knowing that I have people to rely on makes the workload more manageable." (Participant 4)

"Sharing experiences with fellow coaches reminds me that I'm not facing these challenges alone. Their encouragement and practical advice help me stay motivated." (Participant 10)

Interview Question 3: What institutional support would help you perform both roles more effectively?

3.1 Flexible Workload and Administrative Support

Participants expressed the need for more flexible workload policies that recognize the additional responsibilities associated with athletic coaching. Many suggested that teaching loads, schedules, and administrative tasks should be adjusted during peak sports seasons to reduce role conflict and improve work-life balance. They also emphasized the importance of administrators acknowledging coaching as an essential professional responsibility rather than an extracurricular assignment.

"If the administration could provide more flexible schedules during tournaments, it would help us focus on both teaching and coaching without sacrificing the quality of either responsibility." (Participant 6)

"Coaching requires as much preparation as teaching. Recognizing this through reasonable workload adjustments would greatly reduce our stress." (Participant 15)

These responses indicate that supportive administrative policies can help teacher-coaches manage their responsibilities more effectively while maintaining high standards in both instructional and athletic performance.

3.2 Adequate Resources and Facilities

Participants also highlighted the importance of having sufficient facilities, equipment, and personnel to support their work. Limited access to sports venues, outdated equipment, and the absence of assistant coaches or support staff were identified as barriers to effectively carrying out their responsibilities. They believed that improving these resources would lessen their workload and enhance both teaching and coaching outcomes.

"Having better facilities and additional coaching staff would allow us to focus more on developing our students instead of worrying about logistical concerns." (Participant 5)

"Sometimes we spend more time looking for equipment or arranging schedules than actually teaching or coaching. Better resources would make our work much more efficient." (Participant 11)

3.3 Professional Development and Wellness Initiatives

Another important form of institutional support identified by participants was the provision of professional development opportunities and employee wellness programs. Participants expressed interest in seminars on stress management, leadership, coaching, time management, and work-life balance. They also emphasized the value of counseling services, mental health programs, and wellness activities that promote resilience and prevent burnout.

"Training on stress management and work-life balance would help us become more effective in handling our responsibilities." (Participant 9)

"It would be beneficial if the university offered wellness programs or counseling services specifically for faculty members with multiple responsibilities." (Participant 13)

4. Discussion

Interview Question 1: What challenges do you experience in balancing your teaching and coaching responsibilities?

The findings demonstrate that Physical Education (PE) teachers in higher education encounter significant challenges in fulfilling their dual responsibilities as classroom instructors and athletic coaches. The overlapping demands of academic instruction and coaching require them to continuously manage competing priorities, often resulting in role conflict, physical and emotional exhaustion, and limited opportunities for recovery. These findings reinforce the notion that balancing multiple professional responsibilities extends beyond effective time management and involves navigating complex organizational and occupational demands.

One of the major challenges identified in this study is role conflict and workload pressure. Participants described how academic responsibilities, including lesson preparation, classroom instruction, assessment, and administrative tasks, frequently coincide with training sessions, competitions, and athlete supervision. The simultaneous expectation to perform effectively in both domains creates competing priorities that often exceed available time and resources. This finding supports Role Theory, which explains that individuals occupying multiple roles may experience conflict when the expectations associated with one role interfere with the successful fulfillment of another (Biddle, 1986). Likewise, Richards (2013) emphasized that teacher-coaches frequently encounter scheduling conflicts and competing professional expectations that negatively affect their effectiveness in both teaching and coaching.

The findings further suggest that workload challenges are not solely a consequence of poor time management but are largely influenced by the structural demands associated with dual-role responsibilities. Similar observations were reported by Konukman et al. (2010), who found that teacher-coaches often work beyond regular hours because of overlapping instructional and athletic commitments. As these responsibilities continue to accumulate, teachers are compelled to make difficult decisions regarding task prioritization, which may contribute to reduced job satisfaction and diminished work-life balance.

Another significant finding is the physical and emotional exhaustion experienced by participants. Beyond the extensive time devoted to teaching and coaching, participants reported persistent fatigue resulting from prolonged working hours, continuous physical activity, and the emotional responsibility of supporting both students and athletes. This finding aligns with the Job Demands–Resources Model, which posits that excessive job demands without sufficient organizational resources increase the likelihood of occupational stress and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Consistent with this perspective, Madigan and Kim (2021) reported that educators exposed to sustained workloads are more vulnerable to emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and decreased professional engagement.

The findings also indicate that the emotional burden associated with dual responsibilities extends beyond workplace performance. Participants acknowledged that the demands of teaching and coaching often affect their personal lives by limiting opportunities for rest, family interaction, and psychological recovery. Such experiences highlight the importance of maintaining a balance between professional responsibilities and personal well-being to sustain long-term effectiveness.

The third challenge identified by participants involves limited institutional support. Although participants demonstrated commitment to both teaching and coaching, many perceived that institutional policies and available resources did not adequately recognize the complexity of their dual roles. Inadequate facilities, limited personnel, insufficient administrative assistance, and inflexible scheduling were frequently cited as barriers that intensified their workload. These findings support previous studies indicating that organizational support plays a crucial role in reducing occupational stress and enhancing employee performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Luna et al., 2023). When institutions provide sufficient resources, clear workload policies, and supportive leadership, educators are better equipped to manage competing professional responsibilities.

Overall, the findings suggest that the challenges experienced by Physical Education teachers are multidimensional, encompassing personal, professional, and organizational factors. While individual competencies such as adaptability and commitment enable teacher-coaches to perform multiple responsibilities,

sustainable performance ultimately depends on supportive institutional environments that acknowledge the demands associated with dual professional roles. Strengthening administrative support, improving workload management, and providing adequate resources may therefore contribute to enhanced teacher well-being and more effective delivery of both academic instruction and athletic coaching.

Interview Question 2: What coping strategies help you manage these dual responsibilities?

The findings reveal that Physical Education (PE) teachers employ a combination of personal and interpersonal coping strategies to effectively manage the demands of teaching and athletic coaching. Despite the challenges associated with dual-role responsibilities, participants demonstrated resilience by adopting practical approaches that enhanced productivity, reduced stress, and promoted work-life balance. The identified coping mechanisms include effective time management and prioritization, self-care practices, and collaborative support systems, highlighting that successful role management depends on both individual initiative and supportive professional relationships.

One of the primary coping strategies identified in this study is effective time management and prioritization. Participants emphasized the importance of organizing daily activities, setting priorities, and establishing structured schedules to accommodate both academic and coaching responsibilities. By planning tasks in advance and allocating sufficient time for instructional and athletic commitments, participants were able to reduce scheduling conflicts and improve productivity. This finding is consistent with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which explains that individuals actively employ problem-focused coping strategies to manage stressful situations by modifying or controlling the sources of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Previous studies similarly recognize time management as an essential strategy for addressing occupational demands among educators. Claessens et al. (2007) reported that effective planning and prioritization contribute to improved job performance by reducing time-related stress and enhancing task completion. Likewise, Aeon and Aguinis (2017) argued that strategic time management promotes work-life balance by enabling professionals to allocate their limited resources more efficiently. These findings suggest that structured planning not only improves productivity but also strengthens teachers' confidence in handling multiple professional responsibilities.

Another important coping mechanism identified by participants is maintaining personal well-being through self-care practices. Participants acknowledged that preserving their physical and emotional health is essential for sustaining long-term performance in both teaching and coaching. Activities such as obtaining adequate rest, engaging in regular physical exercise, maintaining healthy eating habits, and establishing boundaries between work and personal life were perceived as effective ways of managing occupational stress. These practices enabled participants to recover from demanding work schedules while maintaining motivation and professional commitment.

The significance of self-care is supported by previous research emphasizing the relationship between personal well-being and occupational effectiveness. Madigan and Kim (2021) found that educators who intentionally engage in recovery activities experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion and burnout. Similarly, Sonnentag and Fritz (2015) argued that psychological detachment from work and adequate recovery periods contribute to increased energy, improved concentration, and greater job satisfaction. These findings reinforce the importance of self-care as an essential component of resilience among educators with multiple professional responsibilities.

The findings further highlight the importance of collaborative support and teamwork in managing dual roles. Participants described how assistance from colleagues, administrators, assistant coaches, and family members reduced their workload and provided emotional encouragement during demanding periods. Open communication and task delegation allowed participants to focus on essential responsibilities while minimizing occupational stress. Beyond practical assistance, supportive professional relationships fostered a sense of belonging and reassurance, enabling participants to cope more effectively with workplace challenges.

This finding supports the growing body of literature emphasizing the value of social support in educational settings. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) reported that collegial relationships and supportive leadership significantly reduce emotional exhaustion while enhancing teachers' professional commitment. Similarly, Richards et al. (2018) observed that collaborative working environments promote resilience and improve the ability of Physical Education teachers to manage the competing demands of teaching and coaching. These studies suggest that coping is not solely an individual process but is strengthened through positive interpersonal relationships and collaborative workplace cultures.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that coping with dual professional responsibilities requires a holistic approach that integrates effective planning, personal well-being, and collaborative support. While individual strategies enable teachers to respond proactively to occupational demands, supportive relationships within the workplace further enhance resilience and professional effectiveness. Consequently, higher education institutions should cultivate organizational environments that encourage teamwork, promote healthy work practices, and provide opportunities for professional collaboration to help Physical Education teachers sustain their dual roles successfully.

Interview Question 3: What institutional support would help you perform both roles more effectively?

The findings indicate that while individual coping strategies enable Physical Education (PE) teachers to manage the demands of teaching and coaching, sustained effectiveness depends largely on institutional support. Participants consistently emphasized that organizational policies, adequate resources, and professional development opportunities are essential in helping them fulfill their dual responsibilities. These findings underscore that effective role performance is a shared responsibility between individual educators and the institutions in which they work.

One of the most frequently identified forms of support is flexible workload and administrative assistance. Participants expressed the need for workload policies that acknowledge the additional responsibilities associated with athletic coaching. They suggested that teaching schedules, administrative duties, and academic requirements should be adjusted during periods of intensive coaching activities, such as athletic competitions and training seasons. Such flexibility would allow teacher-coaches to meet both instructional and athletic obligations without compromising the quality of either role.

This finding aligns with organizational support theory, which proposes that employees are more motivated and committed when they perceive that their institution values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Similarly, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) found that supportive leadership and reasonable workload distribution contribute to lower stress levels and higher job satisfaction among educators. When administrators recognize the unique demands of teacher-coaches, they create working conditions that promote both employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Participants also emphasized the importance of adequate resources and facilities. Insufficient sports equipment, limited access to training venues, and the lack of assistant coaches or administrative personnel were viewed as obstacles that increased their workload. Participants believed that improving these resources would allow them to focus more on teaching and athlete development rather than addressing logistical and operational concerns.

Previous studies similarly demonstrate that access to sufficient institutional resources enhances educators' ability to perform their responsibilities effectively. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) explained through the Job Demands–Resources Model that organizational resources reduce the negative effects of high job demands while improving work engagement and performance. In the context of Physical Education, adequate facilities, equipment, and staffing not only improve instructional quality but also reduce unnecessary stress associated with resource limitations. These findings suggest that investments in institutional infrastructure directly contribute to better educational and athletic outcomes.

Another significant finding is the participants' call for continuous professional development and wellness initiatives. Participants expressed interest in training programs focusing on leadership, coaching strategies, stress management, time management, and work-life balance. They also emphasized the need for mental health services, counseling, and wellness activities designed to support faculty members with multiple professional responsibilities. Such initiatives were viewed as opportunities to strengthen professional competence while promoting psychological well-being.

This finding is consistent with previous literature highlighting the importance of continuous learning and employee wellness in sustaining professional effectiveness. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) argued that meaningful professional development improves educators' instructional practices, confidence, and adaptability to evolving workplace demands. Likewise, Sonnentag and Fritz (2015) emphasized that wellness initiatives and recovery opportunities play an essential role in preventing burnout and maintaining long-term occupational health. Providing these forms of institutional support enables educators to remain resilient while adapting to the challenges associated with multiple professional roles.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that institutional support serves as a critical foundation for helping Physical Education teachers successfully balance teaching and coaching responsibilities. Although individual resilience and effective coping strategies remain important, they are insufficient when organizational systems fail to address excessive workloads, resource limitations, and professional development needs. Institutions that promote flexible policies, provide adequate resources, and invest in faculty development create environments where teacher-coaches can perform their responsibilities more effectively while maintaining their professional well-being. Consequently, strengthening institutional support should be regarded as a strategic priority for higher education institutions seeking to improve both educational quality and athletic program outcomes.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the coping mechanisms employed by Physical Education teachers in higher education as they navigated the dual responsibilities of academic instruction and athletic coaching. The findings revealed that balancing these professional roles presents multidimensional challenges characterized by competing responsibilities, physical and emotional demands, and limited institutional support. These challenges demonstrate that the complexity of the teacher-coach role extends beyond individual capability and is shaped by the organizational environment in which educators perform their duties.

Despite these demands, participants demonstrated resilience by adopting effective coping strategies, including strategic time management, self-care practices, and collaborative support from colleagues, administrators, and family members. These approaches enabled them to maintain professional effectiveness while minimizing the negative effects of workload pressures. However, the findings also indicate that personal coping strategies alone are insufficient to sustain long-term performance when organizational support systems are lacking.

The study further highlights the importance of institutional initiatives that recognize the unique responsibilities of Physical Education teachers who simultaneously serve as educators and coaches. Flexible workload policies, adequate facilities and resources, professional development opportunities, and faculty wellness programs were identified as essential forms of support that can strengthen teachers' capacity to fulfill their dual roles effectively. Developing supportive institutional environments not only enhances teacher well-being but also contributes to improved instructional quality, athletic program success, and overall organizational performance.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on teacher-coaches in higher education by providing a deeper understanding of the coping mechanisms they employ and the institutional conditions that influence their professional experiences. The findings offer practical insights for higher education administrators and policymakers in designing evidence-based strategies that promote sustainable workload management, faculty well-being, and organizational support. Future studies may expand this line of inquiry by including participants from different educational contexts, employing larger and more diverse samples, or utilizing mixed-methods and longitudinal approaches to examine how coping strategies and institutional support evolve over time.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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