
FROM THE FIELD TO THE BENCH: THE NARRATIVE OF STUDENTS IN OVERCOMING BROWNOUT AND REPETITIVE INJURIES

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Abstract

Students of Sports Coaching Education (PKO) and Sports and Health Education (PORKES) have dual demands in undergoing academic and sports activities. They must attend lectures as well as undergo exercises and practical activities that require good physical condition and concentration. These conditions can cause fatigue, burnout, and increase the risk of repetitive injuries. This study aims to understand the experiences of PKO and PORKES students in dealing with burnout and repetitive injuries while undergoing academic and sports activities. The research uses a qualitative approach with the narrative inquiry method. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with 3–5 students who were selected purposively based on their experiences of experiencing repetitive injuries and symptoms of academic-athletic burnout. The data were analyzed thematically to identify students' experiences, impacts, and strategies in dealing with these conditions. The results of the study show that academic load and unbalanced training can cause emotional fatigue, decreased concentration, decreased performance, and the appearance of burnout. These conditions are also related to repeated injury experiences and cause psychological impacts and obstacles in completing academic activities. To deal with this, students use various strategies, such as organizing and modifying exercises, rehabilitating, communicating with lecturers, and utilizing peer support. This research shows that managing academic and sports load and appropriate support are needed to help students maintain health, complete education, and carry out sports activities in a more balanced manner.

Keywords: Student sports, Burnout, Repetitive , Dual roles, Coping strategies, Narrative inquiry

INTRODUCTION

The world of higher education for students of the Sports Coaching Education (PKO) and Sports and Health Education (PORKES) study programs is a double arena that demands unlimited loyalty. On the one hand, institutions require them to master academic, theoretical, and pedagogical competencies in the lecture bench in order to produce prospective educators or coaches who are insightful. On the other hand, their integrity as sports practitioners is tested through the obligation to maintain excellent physical performance on the field, both as athletes, assistant

coaches, and instructors.

The consequence of this dual role is the emergence of overlapping workloads. The demands to consistently perform exceptionally in every competition, an energy-draining physical training schedule, and a stack of layered academic tasks, often trigger massive vulnerability, both physically and psychologically. When the balance between recovering the body and replenishing the brain fails, sports students are faced with two destructive scourges: burnout and the risk of recurrent injuries).

Burnout in the context of academics and sports is not just a form of fatigue or seasonal laziness. It is a chronic psychological syndrome that manifests in three main dimensions: intense emotional exhaustion, devaluation of sports activities or cynical attitudes towards the surrounding environment (depersonalization), and reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

PKO and PORKES students who experience burnout will lose their intrinsic motivation. When this psychological energy is depleted but they are still forced by the academic system or coaching targets to continue to sweat on the field, there is a decrease in focus and motor dysfunction. This mental stress directly disrupts the neuromuscular system, increases muscle tension, and narrows their situational alertness on the field. As a result, the threshold of self-protection collapses, and the body becomes highly susceptible to physical injury.

The relationship between poor psychological conditions and physical trauma creates a vicious cycle that is very difficult to break. When a college student suffers an initial injury, the pressure does not immediately go away. Often, in order to catch up on the practice curriculum or the demands of defending the team, they force themselves to return to the field before the recovery phase is fully completed. This imperfect handling of injuries triggers recurrent injuries in the same body location or mechanical compensation that damages other parts of the body.

Psychologically, repeated injuries have profound traumatic impacts. Every time the injury recurs, students will experience academic frustration, anxiety about their future careers, and loss of self-identity as a "sports person". This physical pain combined with mental despair exacerbates existing burnout. On the other hand, worsening burnout makes concentration when competing or practicing decrease drastically, which ultimately triggers new accidents or injuries. This destructive cycle from the field to the college continues to rotate, taking away their psychological well-being as well as their academic performance.

Although this phenomenon is evident in the hallways of the faculties of Education and the faculty of sports sciences, the attention of the public and institutions is often biased. The majority only focus on the final results, medals achieved, or GPA grades listed on the transcripts, while forgetting the full process of suffering that students go through. Therefore, this article/research



aims to explore in depth and specifically the subjective narratives of PKO and PORKES students in navigating their complex lives.

METHODOLOGY

Through a qualitative approach with narrative analysis, this study seeks to dissect the "silenced voices" of students. This research will reveal how they interpret physical pain, what coping strategies they formulate to overcome the frustration of repetitive injuries, and how they survive in the midst of the squeeze of academic and athletic expectations. This holistic understanding based on students' lived experiences is crucial. The results of this narrative reconstruction are expected to be able to make a real contribution in the form of more humane academic policy recommendations and an adaptive psychological mentoring system in the sports college environment.

RESULTS

The Dynamics of Asymmetric Time Allocation: The Reality of the Dual Role Burden of PKO and PORKES Students

Based on the results of the narrative analysis, it was found that the argument that all sports students always start physical exercise activities in the morning is not completely accurate. The reality in the field shows that the daily activity circuits of students of the Sports Coaching Education Study Program (PKO) and Sports and Health Education (PORKES) have a varied manifest pattern and tend to be erratic. Some participants narrated that they had to take a dense theoretical lecture from morning to noon, then immediately continued with a sports training session (sports) or pedagogical-sociological competency practicum that lasted until the afternoon. On the other hand, some other participants had to undergo physical exercises or field practice courses in the morning, then immediately move to the classroom in a tired physical condition in order to digest theoretical material on sports medicine or learning strategies until the end of the day. This asymmetrical and overlapping allocation of time consistently triggers the emergence of three main dimensions of academic-athletic burnout syndrome.

Emotional Exhaustion

Participants experienced extreme depletion of psychic energy. The fatigue felt was no longer just macroscopic physical fatigue after physical activity, but cognitive boredom due to the rapid forced transition from dynamic field activities to a theoretical classroom environment that demanded static concentration. However, there were some participants who claimed that they did not experience emotional fatigue due to good living habits.



Sport Devaluation

Due to the high frequency of monotonous workload from the field to college, students began to view sports activities that were originally the fulfillment of intrinsic motivation and self-actualization turned into an oppressive and stressful structural obligation.

Reduced Sense of Personal Accomplishment

This dimension is manifested when students realize a decline in motor performance in the field (such as a reduction in speed, endurance, and tactical precision) that occurs simultaneously with a decline in the academic achievement index in college due to failure to retain focus. Conceptually, this hybrid stress phenomenon confirms the athlete burnout model developed by Raedeke and Smith (2001). When the demands of the academic curriculum intersect with physical performance targets without an adequate recovery window, the integrity of the student's psychological system will be degraded.

Psychophysiological Correlations, The Effect Of Cognitive Fatigue On The Incidence Of Repetitive Injuries

The results of the reconstruction of the participants' subjective experiences rejected the simplification that sports injuries were purely caused by a factor of bad luck (*force majeure*) or mechanical technical errors alone. The student narrative indicated that the majority of recurrent injuries occurred when their cognitive capacity was in a saturated state due to the theoretical lecture load or assignment pressure that accumulated until the afternoon.

This causality mechanism can be validated through the Model of Stress and Athletic Injury initiated by Andersen and Williams (1988). Based on this theoretical model, when an individual experiences psychological stress or high levels of cognitive fatigue, the body will activate a stress response that manifests in impaired neuromuscular function:

- a. Increased generalized muscle tension that reduces anatomical flexibility.
- b. The occurrence of peripheral vision narrowing which reduces situational alertness.

The impact on the field is very destructive; students experience delays in anticipating the opponent's tactical movements, misstep when landing, or experience muscle tears (such as hamstrings or ankle strains) due to biomechanical stiffness of the body triggered by mental stress. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the existence of institutional structural pressures and rigid practical course graduation targets, so that students often force themselves to return to compete before the healing phase is clinically completed, which ultimately triggers repeated injuries at the same anatomical location and erroneous mechanical compensation in other parts of the body.

Layered Psychological Impacts, Academic-Practice Frustration and the Athletic Identity Crisis

Repeated injuries not only bring clinical implications on students' bodies, but also collapse



the structure of psychological well-being and threaten the sustainability of their academic studies. Every time the trauma of the physical injury recurred, participants experienced multi-layered psychological trauma that led to an athletic identity crisis. Students who from the beginning constructed their concept through physical capacity and existence in the field, suddenly experienced disorientation in social roles due to limited motor dysfunction of their bodies.

The most significant impact in this context is the emergence of Academic Frustration. As PKO and PORKES students, they are required to complete various practical courses that require direct physical performance demonstrations (such as athletics, gymnastics, swimming, and games). The presence of repeated injuries automatically eliminates their ability to follow the standardized evaluation of these practices. As a result, students are faced with the risk of not graduating from courses, postponement of the study period, a decline in the Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA), and financial consequences. This combination of guilt due to performance failures in the field and systemic anxiety about the academic future triggers an escalation of burnout to a more pathological stage. These empirical findings are closely aligned with Kurniawan's (2020) research which confirms that unintervened physical trauma from the psychosocial aspect is linearly correlated with a drastic decline in mental health and triggers generalized anxiety disorders.

Coping Strategies, Navigating Healing and Reconstructing Academic Resilience

Meskipun narasi para mahasiswa diwarnai oleh tekanan dan frustrasi ganda, fase akhir dari lintasan hidup mereka merefleksikan sebuah proses resiliensi dan agensi pemulihan yang adaptif. Mahasiswa olahraga terbukti tidak bersikap pasif terhadap determinisme lingkungan; mereka merumuskan dan mengaplikasikan dua bentuk strategi koping guna menavigasi transisi dari lapangan ke bangku kuliah

Koping Berfokus pada Masalah (Problem-Focused Coping)

When realizing that their physical capacity in the field is limited due to repeated injuries, students consciously shift their energy orientation to mastering the cognitive and theoretical components in the lecture hall. Concrete actions taken include self-modification of the intensity of physical exercise to prevent inflammation of the injury, seeking professional rehabilitation assistance (physiotherapy), and initiating honest persuasive communication with the teaching lecturer or coach in order to obtain an alternative to fulfilling equivalent academic grades.

Emotion-Focused Coping

In order to reduce emotional distress due to burnout, students utilize a social support network. They actively construct interaction spaces with fellow colleagues in the PKO/PORKES environment who have a history of similar experiences. This process of sharing the narrative of suffering (shared suffering) serves as an effective emotional catharsis mechanism to validate their



feelings and eliminate feelings of inferiority.

Through this narrative reconstruction process, it can be concluded that the experience of physical trauma and academic boredom experienced by students from the field to college does not ultimately weaken them. This experience actually transforms the perspective of students: from those who originally relied on physical aspects alone, to prospective educators or coaches who have intellectual maturity, high empathy for athlete safety, and psychological resilience who are ready to face professional dynamics in the future.

DISCUSSION

Findings on the dynamics of asymmetrical time allocation show that the experience of PKO and PORKES students in carrying out academic and athletic roles cannot be understood through a uniform pattern of activities. Variations in schedules between theoretical lectures, practicums, exercises, and sports activities result in different transition demands on each student (Stambulova & Wylleman, 2019); Condello et al. (2019). These conditions show that the burden of dual roles is not solely determined by the number of activities, but also by the continuity, uncertainty, and lack of recovery opportunities between these activities. Thus, the more often students move from physical demands to cognitive demands or vice versa without adequate pause, the more likely it is that there will be accumulated fatigue that affects the continuity of academic and sports activities.

The emergence of emotional fatigue, devaluation of sports activities, and decreased perception of personal achievement also show that burnout in sports students has complex characteristics because it occurs in two domains at once (Sorkkila et al., 2020); Kim (2019). Sports activities that can initially be a source of pleasure, self-actualization, and personal identity have the potential to change their meaning when the frequency of practice and academic demands are perceived as a continuous obligation (Sun et al., 2021); Almonroeder et al. (2020). However, the finding that there are participants who do not experience emotional fatigue shows that a high activity load does not automatically result in burnout in every student. These differences indicate the existence of protective factors, such as life habits, the ability to manage time, perception of activities, and individual adaptive capacity that can affect students' responses to the demands of dual roles.

The relationship between cognitive fatigue and repetitive injuries in this study further suggests that injury risk needs to be understood through an approach that is not only oriented to biomechanical aspects (Ardern et al., 2016). When students come to the field in a state of decreased concentration and experience psychological distress, the ability to maintain attention, make decisions, and respond to changes in sports situations can be impaired. These conditions have the



potential to increase motion errors and decrease the quality of motor control, especially in activities that require coordination, reaction speed, and decision-making accuracy. Therefore, the experience of repetitive injuries found in this study can be seen as part of a complex interaction between psychological conditions, activity demands, physical capacity, and the academic environment.

The findings regarding the tendency of students to return to practical activities before optimal recovery also show a conflict between the body's biological needs and academic demands. On the one hand, the rehabilitation process requires time and restrictions on activities so that bodily functions can gradually return; on the other hand, students face the obligation to complete practical courses and meet academic evaluation standards (Nyland et al., 2022). The tension between these two needs can encourage students to make decisions oriented towards solving short-term demands, even though their physical condition is not fully ready. This situation shows the importance of coordination between students, lecturers, coaches, and related professionals so that the recovery process is not positioned as an academic obstacle, but as an integral part of the sustainability of the sports student education process.

The psychological impact of repetitive injuries also shows that the consequences of injuries do not stop at physical limitations, but can affect the way students perceive themselves as athletes as well as students. When the ability to participate in sports activities decreases, students can experience changes in the meaning of their athletic identity, especially if academic success in practical courses is highly dependent on physical ability. These obstacles can then develop into frustration due to delays in completing assignments or courses, concerns about academic achievement, and uncertainty about the sustainability of their role as athletes. Thus, the rehabilitation of students who have experienced repetitive injuries needs to consider the psychological and academic dimensions simultaneously, not just the restoration of their physical function.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that PKO and PORKES students face a complex dual role dynamic between academic demands and sports activities, with asymmetrical time allocation and lack of recovery opportunities contributing to the emergence of academic-athletic burnout. Cognitive and psychological fatigue experienced by students is also related to increased susceptibility to movement errors and repetitive injuries, while injuries experienced have an impact on psychological conditions, academic achievement, and the sustainability of students' athletic identities. Nevertheless, students show adaptive abilities through coping strategies focusing on problems and emotions, such as training modification, rehabilitation, communication with



lecturers, and the use of social support. Thus, the experience of dealing with burnout and repetitive injuries is not only a challenge for sports students, but also an adaptation process that can form resilience, awareness of the importance of recovery, and professional maturity as prospective educators and sports coaches.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest in the preparation of this article

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