

ELUCIDATING Well-Being of Amateur Gymnasts: A Phenomenological INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study explores the well-being of amateur gymnast student-athletes from Region XII, Philippines, by examining their lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and the factors influencing their physical, emotional, and mental health. The research design is qualitative, with data collected through in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD). Participants were selected from regional to national-level competitions such as the Regional Meets, Palarong Pambansa, and Batang Pinoy, ensuring a diverse representation of student-athletes. Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes, including the role of discipline, emotional support, and goal setting in their well-being, as well as the impact of social support systems on their mental resilience. Findings reveal that gymnast student-athletes in Region XII face significant stress from balancing academic and athletic demands, yet they also exhibit strong resilience and motivation through goal-oriented engagement, positive relationships, and personal growth. The study emphasizes the necessity of creating supportive environments for athletes to thrive both academically and athletically. These insights contribute to the development of wellness programs and mental health support systems for student-athletes in the Philippines.

KEYWORDS: *Education, well-being, amateur gymnast student-athletes, phenomenology, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Well-being is a multidimensional concept critical to life satisfaction (Dodge et al., 2012). For amateur gymnast students-athletes, balancing intensive athletic training with academic demands poses significant challenges (Gouttebarga et al., 2019). Studies indicate that student-athletes, frequently face academic stress (Reardon & Factor, 2020), anxiety related to injury (Gustafsson

et al 2021) and mental health strain (Schaal et al., 2021; Eysenck et al., 2020). Furthermore, the lack of robust social support systems often leads to loneliness and disengagement, exacerbating burnout risks (Smith et al., 2022; Stambuloa, Wyllleman, & McDonald, 2019; Kremer & Moran, 2022).

In the Philippines, socio-cultural and economic factors intensify these pressures, as student-athletes struggle with institutional lapses and limited access to mental health services (Reyes & Medina, 2020; Santos & Ramos, 2021; De Guzman & Garcia, 2022). Research specifically in Region XII highlights that restricted access to psychological support and trained coaches further amplifies stress and burnout among amateur student-athletes (Alcantara & Juntilla, 2023; Lim & Bacus, 2023).

Despite these findings, current research largely focuses on elite competitors, leaving a significant gap in understanding amateur youth gymnasts within the Philippine context. Further investigation is essential to understand the roles of family, coaches, and community support systems in fostering mental resilience, which is crucial for developing targeted interventions for Filipino student-athletes (Sadeghi, Rad, & Asgarian, 2020; Jones & Hanton, 2021).

This research addresses this gap by examining the specific concerns of Filipino amateur gymnasts regarding the intersection of academic and athletic demands. The study aims to inform the development of wellness programs and support systems in the Philippines, particularly in Mindanao, by emphasizing the critical role of social support in mitigating stress and fostering mental toughness. These findings will be disseminated to educators, policy-makers, and the wider community through academic publications, collaborative workshops, and policy briefs to promote evidence-based support for young athletes.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of gymnast as regards their well-being?
2. How do gymnast cope with the challenges as regards their well-being?
3. What insights can the participants share with the community as regards well-being?

METHODOLOGY

Research Participants. The 16-student-athletes participants were amateur gymnasts from Region XII who competed at regional to national levels. Participants were purposively selected using snowball sampling, with coaches providing referrals. To ensure ethical standards, criteria included willingness to share experiences and the exclusion of individuals with mental health concerns or those unable to provide full informed consent.

The study size was determined by the principle of data saturation, with 16 participants aligning with phenomenological study standards of five to twenty participants (Creswell, 2013). Data was collected via 9 in-depth interviews (IDI) and 7 focus group discussions (FGD) after obtaining clearance from the UIC Research Ethics Committee.

Data Collection Procedures. The data collection process adhered to rigorous ethical and administrative standards. After securing clearance from the University of the Immaculate Conception (UIC) Research Ethics Committee and permission from regional school authorities, recruitment was initiated. Ethical compliance was prioritized through informed consent and assent protocols, where participants and legal guardians were fully briefed on study objectives, voluntary participations, and the right to withdraw.

Adhering to the Data Privacy Act of 2012, all personal identifiers were anonymized, with data stored securely in encrypted devices for a five-year retention period before scheduled disposal. To safeguard participants' well-being, face-to-face interviews included protocols for identifying and supporting emotional distress, including provisions for immediate debriefing and referrals to guide counselors when necessary.

Data Analysis. I utilized Colaizzi's method of data analysis, as it was specifically designed to rigorously explore and interpret the lived experiences of people, making it suitable for studying the well-being of athletes in Region XII who participated in the Regional Meet, Palarong Pambansa, and Batang Pinoy. This method provided an in-depth qualitative data analysis by capturing the essence of the participants' experiences. Its systematic approach began by reading participants' descriptions to understand things holistically and then identifying and extracting significant statements regarding the athletes' well-being. These statements were organized into meaningful units and clustered

into themes that precisely described the athletes' challenges, stressors, and coping mechanisms.

The iterative process of the method ensured that no aspect of the participants' experiences was overlooked, which was critical in a culturally rich and diverse region like Region XII. Moreover, Colaizzi's approach revisited the interviewees to validate the findings, ensuring that the themes and inferences were meaningful to them. This validation allowed the data collected to remain valid, especially where sensitive and complex issues concerning the psychology and well-being of athletes engaging in competitive sports were concerned. Using the Colaizzi method for this study likely guaranteed a deep and culturally contextualized understanding of the subject of well-being as related to the athletes, enabling insights with actionable construction based on tailored and unique support systems. The Colaizzi method for this study ensured an in-depth and culturally situated understanding of well-being among the athletes, with actionable insights toward building uniquely supportive environments.

Ethical Considerations. The researcher ensured that all ethical criteria were complied with. This research protocol underwent a thorough review by the University of Immaculate Conception Research Ethics Committee.

RESULTS

This chapter presents the concepts from examining the participants' responses to this qualitative study. The analysis was of the participants' lived experiences regarding their well-being, coping with their lived experiences, and their insights.

Profile of the Participants

Table 1.1 presents the profile of participants, detailing their gender, age, competition participation, and type of school. It lists a total of 16 participants, with codes assigned to each. The participants' ages range from 10 to 18, and they have participated in regional and national competitions. The table includes both male and mostly female participants, with the majority attending public schools, while a few are enrolled in private schools. The data highlights a diverse group of amateur gymnasts with varying levels of experience in competitions.

Table 1.1
Profile of the Participants

Participant's Code	Gender	Age	Competition Participated	Type of School
IDIP1	Male	15	Regional	Public
IDIP2	Male	14	Regional & National	Private
IDIP3	Male	10	Regional & National	Public
IDIP4	Male	11	Regional & National	Public
IDIP5	Female	14	Regional & National	Public
IDIP6	Female	11	Regional & National	Public
IDIP7	Female	11	Regional	Public
IDIP8	Female	14	Regional	Public
IDIP9	Female	14	Regional	Public
FGDP1	Female	14	Regional	Public
FGDP2	Female	14	Regional	Public
FGDP3	Female	14	Regional	Public
FGDP4	Male	18	Regional & National	Public
FGDP5	Male	18	Regional & National	Public
FGDP6	Female	18	Regional & National	Public
FGDP7	Male	18	Regional & National	Public

Lived Experiences of the Participants as regards their Well-being

Table 1.2 presents the lived experiences of the participants as regards their well-being. Thematic analysis generated the following themes: cultivating inner drive and purpose through discipline, support, and goal-oriented engagement; overcoming physical and mental challenges in amateur gymnastics; fostering joyful engagement, ownership, and growth through purposeful gymnastics participation; and strengthening confidence and performance through mastery, support, and self-awareness. These experiences provide insights into how discipline, emotional support, and goal-setting shape the participants' physical and emotional growth.

Table 1. 2
Lived Experiences of the Participants as regards their Well-being

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Cultivating Inner Drive and Purpose Through Discipline, Support, and Goal-Oriented Engagement	Deriving joy, pride, and motivation despite the physical demands Engaging in full concentration achieved through discipline Nurturing belief in one’s capacity to succeed

	Providing emotional support and motivation for perseverance. Having sense of purpose, identity and belonging
Fostering Joyful Engagement, Ownership, and Growth Through Purposeful Gymnastics Participation	Engaging in gymnastics out of the inherent enjoyment and satisfaction Thriving to feel ownership in the participation in gymnastics Recognizing improvement through training and competition Recognizing the instrumental gymnastics value of a future- oriented goal.
Juggling academics and athletics Pursuits	Lack of Time Management Academic Underachievement Burnout Guilt
Physical Strain and Injury	Mental Pressure to "Keep Up" Increased Risk of Long-term Injury Lack of Proper RecoveryTime
Self-Doubt and Insecurities	Imposter Syndrome Negative Self-Talk Comparing to Others Lack of Confidence

Coping Mechanism of the Participants as regards their Well-being

Table 2 shows the participants' coping mechanisms and insights regarding their well-being, focusing on their experiences in sports and how they navigate challenges. The themes that emerged from the data are Nurturing Well-Being Through Joy, Support, and Purpose in Sports; Persevering with Focus, Support, and Emotional Control; and Shaping Identity and Purpose Through Shared Struggles and Team Belonging. As shared by the participants,

Table 2
Coping Mechanism of the Participants as regards their Well-being

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Nurturing Well-Being Through Joy, Support, and Purpose in Sports	Maintaining well-being by focusing on joyful aspects of sports Immersing oneself in training performance helps distract from stress having a supportive family, coaches and peers setting personal goals
Persevering with Focus, Support, and Emotional	Persevering through tough routines and emotional setbacks seeing peers perform well encourages

Control	athletes to persist gaining verbal encouragement from trusted figures applying techniques to calm oneself Focusing on routines and removing distractions developing self-regulation over behavior mastering routine and coping with pressure Learning to bounce back from failure
Shaping Identity and Purpose Through Shared Struggles and Team Belonging	Providing a context for identity exploration channeling struggles into purposeful action getting a strong identification being a gymnast using experiences a motivation for growth and mental toughness reframing setbacks as opportunities for growth becoming more aware of their evolving roles and responsibilities Being part of a team provides emotional support sharing identity with the team enhances well-being
Strengthening Confidence and Performance Through Mastery, Support, and Self-Awareness”	Repeated success in routines builds confidence and reinforces belief in personal ability. Observing teammates’ success or challenges fosters comparative learning and motivation. Encouragement from coaches, parents, and peers enhances self- belief and persistence. Interpretation of physical and emotional responses influences confidence and performance. Developing self-awareness and concentration skills contributes to task success and emotional control.

Insights shared to the community as regards their Well-being

Table 3 presents participants' observations concerning their well-being, highlighting the aspects of gymnastics experiences and factors influencing emotional and psychological development. The themes from the data emphasize the importance of supportive environments, personal commitment, shared growth, and resilience in overcoming challenges.

Table 3
Insights shared to the community as regards their Well-being

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Fostering Joy, Commitment, and Growth in a Supportive	Encouraging each other to find happiness committing to routines and physical challenges for discipline and dedication having an encouraging and supportive

Environment	environment focusing on long-term goal
Empowering Youth Through Shared Growth, Support, and Inspiration	Supporting young people in trying new things building belonging through shared experiences affirming and supporting youth dreams getting inspiration from success stories sharing how challenges were overcome can empower others Recognizing stress and emotions is the key to personal and collective growth.

DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents a discussion of the results that surfaced during the qualitative data analysis. This involves interpreting the results and supporting literature to establish a stable and credible research finding.

Lived Experiences of the Participants as regards their Well-being

Based on the findings that emerged during the analysis, this study's participants had varied experiences regarding their well-being. The essential themes identified from the data are discussed, providing insights into how discipline, emotional support, and goal setting shape the participants' physical and emotional growth.

Cultivating Inner Drive and Purpose Through Discipline, Support, and Goal-Oriented Engagement. Amateur student-gymnasts are motivated by an intrinsic motivation based on the enjoyment and pride they feel from their performance, even though the sport is physically demanding. As discussed by Deci and Ryan (2020), the theory of intrinsic motivation indicates that people do things because of the satisfaction they get from the experience and not for extrinsic rewards. For amateur gymnasts, this happiness is essential for their dedication to rigorous training and competition. This happiness is essential for amateur gymnasts, as it fuels their dedication to rigorous training and competition. One of the attendees said, "I won and brought the first gold, my capacity shocked me, and I started to fall in love with gymnastics." This highlights the importance of personal accomplishment and connection to the sport. Motivation is the gratification from improving and surpassing in the sport. It helps the athlete develop their mental toughness, allowing them to surpass emotional tension and physical tiredness in their quest (Thompson et al., 2022).

One cannot underline enough the need for discipline in focusing and

succeeding. Gagne et al. (2021) state that sports training requires discipline in the form of persistence, time management, and prioritizing. Such discipline is important for amateur gymnasts to be able to concentrate on long hours of practice and strict routines. The participant stated, "Training should be taken seriously," and they recognized that achieving success in their sport requires focus and a methodical approach. Moreover, having well-set goals helps such athletes remain motivated and focused, directing their involvement in training. The sense of identity, purpose, and belongingness as part of the gymnastics fraternity gives an emotional basis that inspires and keeps them engaged in the sport even during tough times (Garcia & Perez, 2022).

Finally, emotional support from family members, teammates, and coaches is also critical in allowing gymnasts to overcome failures. According to the Brown and Thompson (2023) study, the presence of an inspiring social network is one way through which perseverance and mental resilience are fostered among athletes. Through social support, gymnasts become more confident, can handle the physical and mental pressures of training, and can push themselves towards success. As one athlete pointed out, "Coach will always say that you can do it," which shows how a coach's belief in an athlete's potential can reinforce their self-belief. Blending individual motivation, self-disciplined focus, and emotional support produces a strong base for ongoing success in gymnastics.

Fostering Joyful Engagement, Ownership, and Growth Through Purposeful Gymnastics Participation. For amateur student gymnasts, their inner joy and fulfillment from the sport are key to their continued involvement. "I think training in gymnastics is a stress reliever rather than always thinking about my stressful classes," said another member. This shows that the sport has more mental and emotional benefits than physical ones. This idea is supported by research carried out by Watson et al. (2020), which explains that athletes who love their sport are more likely to be committed and have constant, long-term participation. This internal pleasure is needed to maintain motivation and help with the psychological welfare of the athlete, offering quality stress relief and promoting a well-balanced life.

One important part of being an amateur gymnast is taking ownership of your own growth. Taking charge of their own sports development encourages independence and responsibility, two traits that are needed to keep people motivated and help them continue making progress. If I win, I will train more,"

one of the participants said, demonstrating that a significant motivating factor is the ambition to perform better and be successful in the following events. Brown and Thompson's (2023) definition of ownership helps the individual athlete accept personal responsibility for their growth and generate more significant goals. The athlete's dedication rises with a sense of ownership, fostering a growth mentality of always learning and developing.

The gymnast's idea of growth and success is based on how much she knows she has improved through training and competition. One player said, "I had new friends," one athlete said, "and honestly, it greatly impacted my life." Gymnastics is good for you in more ways than just your athletic ability. Gymnasts feel more successful and committed to the sport when they improve themselves, whether it is by learning new skills or setting new personal bests during competitions. According to Nguyen and Rivera (2021), athletes who can track their improvements and see tangible results from their efforts are more likely to stay engaged and set further goals. Additionally, the recognition of the instrumental value of gymnastics in achieving future goals, such as becoming a coach or trainer, as expressed by the participant, "In the future, I want to be a coach and trainer at the same time," demonstrates how long-term aspirations provide a purpose-driven engagement in the sport, motivating athletes to continue pushing forward (Garcia & Perez, 2022).

Juggling Academics and Athletics Pursuits. The difficulties amateur student gymnasts frequently encounter in juggling their scholastic and athletic obligations can negatively impact their well-being. According to research, many athletes struggle with time management, and some claim that the pressure to perform well in both areas leads to feelings of inadequacy and subpar performance overall (Williams & Jenkins, 2022). There is always friction between the two domains because of the necessity of rigorous training hours while meeting academic deadlines and expectations. Time management becomes a significant concern, and gymnasts complain that there aren't enough hours to complete their obligations (Nguyen & Rivera, 2021). Athletes frequently feel short in both areas, so this fight is psychological and logistical.

Academic underachievement is often the result of this imbalance. Research has indicated that gymnasts who spend significant time practicing frequently struggle to stay up with their coursework and tests (Robinson & Sutherland, 2023). Gymnasts who perform poorly may experience increased stress and guilt because they believe they put their sport above their academic

responsibilities. Their confidence may be damaged by such academic disappointments, which can lead to a vicious cycle wherein subpar academic achievement fuels feelings of failure in sports and vice versa. Having to deal with the physical demands of gymnastics and the mental pressure of schoolwork at the same time can have a significant effect on their well-being, causing emotional problems and low self-esteem.

Additionally, persistently balancing academics and athletics can result in burnout, a condition of physical and emotional tiredness that impairs an athlete's capacity to perform well in either domain. Chronic and mental exhaustion might result from gymnasts' frequent reports of feeling overburdened by the unrelenting demands of their training and coursework (Thompson & Carter, 2021). Gymnasts who feel conflicted between the two activities experience persistent guilt due to the pressure of never fully committing to one. This guilt can cause additional emotional discomfort and lessen their passion for academics and athletics, especially with the dread of disappointing friends, coaches, or family. Athletes must have strong support networks, including peers, family, and coaches, to manage these conflicting demands and preserve their general mental and physical well-being.

Physical Strain and Injury. Amateur student gymnasts often face more physical strain and injury because of the pressures from both sports and school. A significant reason for the higher risk of long-term injury is that they sometimes push their bodies too hard, trying to do things they aren't ready for yet. Studies have shown that when athletes, especially at the amateur level, attempt complex skills without adequate training or preparation, they are more likely to sustain chronic injuries. For example, a study by Choi et al. (2020) found that gymnasts often develop long-term musculoskeletal injuries due to overtraining and improper technique. These injuries can impact an athlete's future performance and well-being, making it harder for them to continue in their sport and causing emotional pain as they deal with the effects of the physical strain. Difficulty juggling rigorous gymnastics training with academics, which leaves little time for healing between practices, frequently results in overuse injuries and strains. Because gymnastics involves high-impact routines and repetitive motions, athletes must give their bodies enough time to recuperate. However, because of the demands of their studies, amateur gymnasts—especially student-athletes—often find themselves in a vicious cycle of overtraining. Insufficient recovery time was a key factor in overuse injuries among student-athletes, especially those participating in high-intensity sports

like gymnastics, according to a study by Smith et al. (2022). Even though they are generally avoidable, these injuries result from an imbalance between sports demands and the need for rest, which students' hectic schedules usually disregard.

The emotional pressure to "keep up" with peers can substantially negatively impact an athlete's well-being and raise their risk of injury and physical strain. Many amateur gymnasts experience pressure to keep up with their teammates or competitors, which can lead to pain and suffering. The urge to prove oneself or the fear of appearing weak often drives this mindset. According to studies, this mental strain can cause athletes to overlook important indications of exhaustion or pain, which can lead to severe injuries (Pilar et al., 2021). Physical injuries during training can get worse because of the mental stress of trying to keep up with others, which can also cause stress and burnout. It's important to recognize these pressures to create a supportive environment that focuses on student gymnasts' physical and mental health, helping them succeed without hurting their well-being.

Self-Doubt and Insecurities. Amateur student-gymnasts often contend with persistent self-doubt and insecurities, especially when balancing the demands of academics and athletics. One common experience among athletes is impostor syndrome, a psychological pattern where individuals feel like a fraud despite their achievements, unable to internalize success (Williams & Jenkins, 2022). Such feelings can show up for amateur student gymnasts as an overwhelming feeling that they don't deserve their achievements, be it a competition performance or an academic grade. Instead of citing their abilities or diligence, they could blame their accomplishment on chance or outside influences. Because of this self-perception, they feel additional pressure to perform flawlessly in both domains, which further undermines their confidence and feeds a vicious cycle of anxiety and doubt.

Negative self-talk is another crucial element of gymnasts' internal battle. Because gymnasts frequently evaluate their performance in sports and academics, self-criticism can be particularly harmful (Nguyen & Rivera, 2021). When they fall short of their goals, many athletes vent their dissatisfaction and disappointment, internalizing these emotions as failures. This incessant and frequently severe internal conversation hampers improvement. Negative self-talk exacerbates insecurities and lowers self-worth, leading people to view setbacks as chances for personal development. Gymnasts are emotionally exhausted and

unable to fully embrace their potential because of the pressure to perform well in academics and athletics, fostering a culture of perpetual self-doubt.

These concerns are worse than others because gymnasts usually assess their value compared to their peers in academic and athletic contexts. Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority can result from the pressure to perform at the highest level and external expectations from family, coaches, and teachers (Johnson & Li, 2022). When gymnasts see their teammates or classmates succeed in areas where they struggle, their self-doubt and lack of confidence grow. Comparing oneself to others leads to a destructive loop in which failure is internalized as a reflection of one's value rather than a normal aspect of learning, and success seems unachievable. Feeling "less than" all the time can harm a gymnast's ability to bounce back from setbacks, which can further hinder their performance in academics and athletics. One requires a supportive environment that encourages self-compassion, resilience, and a focus on personal growth to break out from this pattern.

Coping Mechanism of the Participants as regards their Well-being

The outcomes and discussion of participants' coping strategies and comments about their well-being are centered on their sport experience and the management of problems. The findings emerging from the data describe how the athletes sustained their well-being, coped with adversity, and gave meaning to their sports careers. The analysis will relate these findings to general psychological and sports concepts, discussing how emotional regulation, social support, and goal-oriented coping affect participants' well-being.

Nurturing Well-Being Through Joy, Support, and Purpose in Sports.

Amateur gymnasts find a sense of well-being and balance through their profound engagement in sports, where their passion becomes a refuge from the stresses of daily life. One participant shared, "I consider training in gymnastics as a stress reliever rather than thinking about my stressful academics all the time," demonstrating physical activity's emotional and psychological benefits. Thomas et al.'s (2020) research backs this up, showing that sports like gymnastics can help people deal with stress by giving their minds a break from the problems they face every day. This mental break helps players manage their emotions and feel better by giving them time to reconnect with themselves. These activities help gymnasts handle stress and develop better mental well-being, which is beneficial for their overall well-being.

While emotional timeouts are as vital as they are, having a support network of family members, coaches, and friends to call on is essential to staying healthy. A participant explained, "My family motivates and supports me by pushing me to train more." This made the group think about the importance of a solid support system. This backs up what Watson et al. (2021) found: athletes' motivation and mental strength are greatly affected by the support they receive from close family and friends. Family support helps gymnasts get through tough times by giving them the mental stability and confidence they need to keep training and competing. A coach who believes in an athlete's potential adds another layer of motivational support, which helps the athlete develop a growth mindset and raises their chances of success (Brown & Thompson, 2023-6).

Setting personal goals is also essential for athletes who want success and happiness. "My goal in gymnastics is to join the Philippine team so I can compete in international competitions," said one gymnast. This shows how having a clear picture of the future can give you drive and purpose. According to Gagne et al. (2022), goal setting is an effective strategy for athletes to maintain focus, build motivation, and track progress toward long-term aspirations. Having big goals, such as participating in national or international competitions, keeps amateur gymnasts on track. It gives them a clear sense of direction, which keeps them going through their trip's good and bad experiences. Such goals, thus, are not just performance indicators; they are also a tool of self-discovery, boosting motivation and solidifying the commitment of the gymnast to the sport.

Persevering with Focus, Support, and Emotional Control. Amid the inherent pressures of competitive sports, amateur gymnasts find resilience through perseverance, focus, and emotional control, drawing strength from the supportive communities around them. As one participant related, "We are like a family here, particularly during training and in matches. It gives me energy; they always support and comfort me when I win or lose," highlighting camaraderie and mutual support as key. As Johnson and Li (2022) found in their research, this phenomenon is expected as strong social ties in sports teams increase emotional resilience, motivating the athletes to endure stress and setbacks. The team environment provides emotional support and motivation that help build resilience in the face of challenges. The shared emotional experience of winning and losing helps players deal with problems suitable for individual and team growth.

The athlete and teacher also have a support system, essential to keeping emotions in check and performing well. The statement, "My coach always tells me that I can do it, that I don't think about my opponent so much, and that my real opponent is myself, to help me focus more," demonstrates how coaching can provide the mental tools necessary to combat distractions and refocus on personal growth. According to Thompson et al. (2021), positive coaching behaviors based on intrinsic drive and self-reflection have been shown to help athletes focus and control their emotions and improve performance. This feedback boosts gymnasts' confidence and helps them see problems as opportunities to learn and improve, not threats to their self-esteem. Such interactions enable athletes to learn how to cope with anxiety, enhance self-regulation, and learn to deal with the psychological challenges of competitive sport.

In addition, self-regulation techniques play an essential role in sustaining concentration and regulating stress. As expressed by one participant, "I'd like to take some time alone to calm myself down," which reflects the significance of individual techniques in dealing with emotions and sustaining concentration. A study conducted by Garcia and Perez (2021) has highlighted the importance of self-regulation for athletes, as it enables them to deal with stress and stay centered, especially when things are highly intense. Mindfulness, deep breathing, and visualization are some of the techniques that can assist gymnasts in staying calm, focused, and composed while training and competing. These techniques help control emotions and improve performance by minimizing stressful situations' cognitive and emotional distractions.

Shaping Identity and Purpose Through Shared Struggles and Team Belonging. Amateur student-gymnasts often experience a strong sense of identity and purpose through their involvement in a team. As described by one participant, "I met new friends and went to different places." The social aspect of gymnastics provides opportunities for physical development and fosters personal growth through shared experiences. Being on a team is especially beneficial for players' sense of self, according to Watson et al. (2020), because they can find their place in the team as they work together to reach their goals. This sense of connection is essential for gymnasts because it keeps them going when things go wrong and strengthens the group's commitment. The team's successes and difficulties collectively foster a feeling of purpose among gymnasts, augmenting their dedication to their sport and fellow athletes.

Identity discovery is crucial for the gymnast's personal development, enabling them to convert problems into deliberate actions. As one gymnast shared, "I already knew how to do tumbling when I was very young, and when I discovered gymnastics and tried to join, it all made sense. I felt I belonged and fit in right away, which indicated how the sport provided a context for discovering my strengths and passions. According to a study by Gagne et al. (2022), sports give athletes a meaningful way to explore who they are because the challenges they face and the parts they play on their teams help them better understand who they are. As gymnasts work through challenges and successes as a team, they build mental toughness, resilience, and self-awareness to help them in their personal and business lives.

In addition to personal development, the support system within the team plays a significant role in emotional growth and mental toughness. The statement, "I always give myself time to train more and initiate by inviting my teammates to join me in training rather than being distracted by stress," reflects how gymnasts actively engage with their teammates to foster a positive training and personal development environment. Team cohesion and mutual support are essential for improving mental health, according to Brown and Thompson (2023). This is so because they equip athletes to negotiate personal obstacles and competitive pressures. By reminding gymnasts that they are not alone on their path, this group emotional support helps them overcome barriers and strengthens their dedication to the sport.

Strengthening Confidence and Performance Through Mastery, Support, and Self-Awareness. Amateur student-gymnasts strengthen their confidence and performance through mastery of their routines and the encouragement they receive from their social support networks. As stated by a participant, "If I win, I need to train and practice more." Repeated success in gymnastics boosts self-esteem, making it easier for dancers to deal with problems and keep improving (Thompson et al., 2022). Gymnastics requires hard work, dedication, and practice to get good at it. All of these things help the athlete believe in their powers. Regular praise and support from coaches, teammates, and family members is critical because it makes gymnasts feel good about their progress and builds a positive self-image (Robinson & Sutherland, 2023).

Seeing their friends' successes and struggles boosts an amateur gymnast's confidence and drive. Watson et al. (2020) say that athletes often get ideas from how their peers perform and use those achievements to guide their

goals. Gymnasts can be very motivated to do better in practice and competitions when they see their friends do well. Also, sharing experiences in a helpful team setting can build camaraderie, which can help reduce feelings of loneliness and self-doubt (Johnson & Li, 2022). Comparative learning in a team setting improves individual ability, which makes it an important part of a gymnast's growth.

Self-awareness and emotional control are important for gymnasts to do well under pressure. One participant said, "I always train and practice more to ensure I can do my routine perfectly in the competition." Gymnasts can improve their routines and handle their feelings better by evaluating themselves. Gagne et al. (2021) say that becoming more self-aware helps athletes stay focused on the job, keep their concentration, and control their feelings when facing challenges. This skill improves athletic success and makes people more mentally tough overall. Gymnasts can develop the mental control they need to do their best by practicing regularly and thinking about themselves. This builds their confidence and helps them do better in competitions.

Insights Gained from the Experiences of the Participants as regards their Well-being

Grounded in findings and analysis of the participants' insights gained from the experience and their well-being. The themes present in the findings highlight the salience of encouraging environments, personal dedication, shared development, and resilience in resisting adversity. These themes are placed in the context of a broader awareness of how athletes cope with their emotional and psychological lives to develop and stay well.

Fostering Joy, Commitment, and Growth in a Supportive Environment. For amateur student gymnasts, being in a supportive atmosphere is very helpful and necessary for their joy and personal growth. That's why peer support is essential for staying motivated: "My teammates are my support system; they motivate me and help me build the faith that I can do it," one participant said. The study by Garcia et al. (2021) supports this perspective. It shows that an athlete's emotional strength is significantly increased by having people who are there for them and help them keep going when things go wrong. As Watson et al. (2020) say, a helpful team environment can help gymnasts feel connected and valued, which is beneficial for their overall health and encourages them to stay disciplined and committed to their training.

The athletes' commitment to strenuous workouts and routines builds their discipline, which is essential for long-term success. Johnson and Li (2022) said that organized, regular training is the basis for athletic growth because it makes you stronger physically and mentally. "We are like family here, especially when training and competing," said one participant. "It keeps me going; they always cheer for me and comfort me whether I win or lose" shows how a strong sense of community within the team makes people feel accountable and like they belong. This peer support gives players a key way to deal with problems, helping them grow and do well in their sport. Athletes stay focused on their goals thanks to routines that don't change and the support of their team. This leads to steady progress and a sense of success.

Also, the best way to stay motivated is to focus on long-term goals instead of letting short-term mistakes get you down. Seeing how a dancer focuses on long-term goals instead of getting sidetracked by short-term problems illustrates the importance of setting goals for improving performance. As Garcia and Perez (2022) argue, long-term goals provide athletes with a clear sense of purpose, helping them maintain focus and perseverance throughout their training. The statement, "My coach always gives tips on how to execute specific skills and guides me on proper execution," further emphasizes how important mentoring is for improving an athlete's technical skills and mental toughness. Gymnasts stay focused on growth by getting feedback and help all the time. They use each challenge as a chance to improve and learn new things.

Empowering Youth Through Shared Growth, Support, and Inspiration. For amateur gymnasts, stepping outside their comfort zones and trying new things is essential to their growth as athletes and individuals. As one participant stated, "I will encourage others to pursue their sports now, but if they think they can't grow in it, just try another type of sport or concentration," reflecting the importance of openness to new experiences and the courage to explore different paths. These ideas are similar to those of Thompson and Carter (2021), who say that getting kids to try new things can help them feel more confident and help them grow as people. People who try new things learn new skills and go beyond the limits they set for themselves, which boosts their self-esteem and belief in their abilities.

When team members share experiences, they feel like they belong, which is an essential part of emotional growth. "My teammates are one of my support systems during competitions; they always remind me that I can do

it," said another participant, pointing out how support from each other strengthens the team. Fostering community and inclusion on sports teams makes players feel respected and connected, which is beneficial for their mental health (Watson et al., 2020). This sense of belonging drives players and reduces loneliness, especially for players going through hard times. The experience of overcoming obstacles and reaching objectives as a team strengthens team bonds and gives athletes the confidence to face personal and athletic challenges. When people face challenges and achieve their goals together, they improve team cohesion and gain confidence as they deal with individual and athletic problems.

Inspiration is a big part of what drives young players to pursue their goals. One participant said, "I saw a video of a gymnast performing, and as soon as I saw them, I was interested in it." This shows how outside role models can make someone love the sport. According to Gagne et al. (2022), exposure to success stories and the experiences of others who have solved problems is very motivating because it shows athletes that they can succeed even when things go wrong. This kind of motivation can come from seeing others perform, hearing about their problems, or learning how they overcame issues to reach their goals. Such stories teach us a lot about the strength and persistence we need to be successful in sports, giving people who want to be athletes hope and drive.

Sharing personal experiences and ways to get past problems is also essential for growth as a group. As one participant reflected, "Always think positively; there might be challenges or circumstances that you will encounter, but still think positively and need to focus on practicing your skills," emphasizing the importance of resilience and optimism. This view aligns with a study by Thomas et al. (2020), which shows that athletes who learn to control their emotions and deal with stress are better at doing well in their sport and life. The experience of working together to solve problems strengthens the bonds between peers, creating a culture of mutual support and empowerment that is beneficial for everyone.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the findings from this research, I am deeply impressed by how much emotional support, discipline, and goal-setting influence the well-being and growth of amateur student gymnasts. The participants' lived experiences show how these factors, especially when put together, build resilience and mental toughness that help athletes keep going when they face

physical and emotional obstacles. As a coach or teacher, I now know how important it is to create an atmosphere that puts mental support first and supports personal growth. A whole-person approach improves students' emotional and mental health and athletic success.

One important thing I can do to improve my practice is to make it more welcoming and helpful for everyone, especially juggling school athletes and intense training plans. The results of this study show how important it is for athletes to have emotional and social support systems like family, coaches, and peers. I'm committed to making my coaching more emotionally supportive in the future so that my athletes feel valued and encouraged as they go through their journey.

I want to improve how I coach in the future by emphasizing my athletes' well-being, training with goals in mind, and emotional control. Gymnasts will be more likely to be successful in the long run if they practice mindfulness, build endurance, and feel like they own their own growth. I will also look for new ways to help student-athletes balance their academic and athletic obligations healthily, giving them the tools they need to do well without hurting their mental or physical health.

As a teacher, my main job is to create an atmosphere that encourages physical excellence and helps people grow emotionally. I can ensure that my athletes build the mental and emotional strength they need to do well in their sport and life by pushing them to work together, celebrating their progress, and keeping the environment open and friendly. The experience of overcoming challenges and fostering a culture of mutual support will enable them to reach their full potential in gymnastics and all aspects of their personal and academic lives.

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