



The Relationship between Social Support and Optimism among Athletes from Bandung City in the Provincial Sports Week Qualification Round

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Abstract

Athletes in competitive sports face high psychological demands, so factors such as social support and optimism are important in maintaining mental function and performance. This study seeks to investigate the association between social support and optimism in athletes, both overall and by sport type, specifically team athletes and individual athletes. The study employs a correlational quantitative technique and includes 47 athletes from Bandung City who competed in the 2025 PORPROV Qualification Round. The Athletes' Received Support Questionnaire (ARSQ) was used to measure social support, while the Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R) was used to assess optimism. Data were gathered online and examined with descriptive statistics, reliability tests, normality tests, and Pearson's correlation. The findings revealed that social support was not significantly connected to optimism among athletes as a whole. Separate analyses revealed no significant association between social support and optimism in either team or individual athletes, however team athletes demonstrated a stronger relationship. These data suggest that athletes' optimism is affected by internal variables rather than social support from their training environment. This study underlines the need for more targeted psychological therapies, such as mental training and self-efficacy reinforcement, to boost athletes' optimism.

How to Cite

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INTRODUCTION

Competitive sports need strong physical and mental capacity, making players' psychological wellness an essential basis for optimal performance. Athletes frequently experience severe strain, injury risk, and high expectations, all of which can have a negative impact on their mental health (Luo et al., 2025). In this situation, social support emerges as an important resource for athletes in managing stress and responding to competitive pressures (Davies et al., 2024). This support from family, coaches, friends, and teammates has been found to reduce competitive pressure, preserve motivation, and promote a sense of connection, all of which are necessary for emotional stability (Huang & Li, 2025; Pineda-Espejel et al., 2021). In fact, research indicates that social support has a direct impact on athletes' resilience and positive and negative affect (Mira et al., 2023), as well as an essential function in developing self-confidence, emotional regulation, and good coping mechanisms (Dai et al., 2021).

Aside from external assistance, internal psychological elements such as optimism have a significant impact on athletes' performance. Optimism is defined as a person's proclivity to anticipate positive outcomes and address problems constructively (Orhan, 2024). Athletes with high levels of optimism have a stronger fighting spirit, the ability to recover rapidly from failure, and higher mental toughness. Optimism not only improves short-term performance, but it also benefits athletes' long-term psychological well-being (Orhan, 2024). Thus, a thorough understanding of how optimism develops and the factors that drive it, particularly the role of social support, is critical in the advancement of sports psychology.

In the context of regional athlete development, such as for the Provincial Sports Week Qualification Round, this dynamic becomes even more important because regional athletes must prepare to compete at the regional level with intense training demands and limited resources, making social support and optimism important psychological aspects in maintaining mental readiness. Fundamental differences in training methods and social interactions between team and individual sports complicate the relationship between social support and optimism. Individual athletes are more likely to experience anxiety or depression than team athletes, according to research (Niyonsenga et al., 2021; Resperger et al., 2025). This is most likely

owing to the pressure they are under in solitude (Teh & Krishnan Vasanthi, 2022). The distinct aspects of each sport alter athletes' psychological experiences and influence their reactions to competitive pressure (Kaur Chawla et al., 2025). Individual athletes frequently endure the burden of failure alone and are more vulnerable to social performance anxiety, which can impair their mental health. However, other research suggest that individual athletes may be more resilient than their teammates (Tutte-Vallarino et al., 2022).

Previous research has looked into the differences in social support and psychological well-being between team and individual athletes (Simons & Bird, 2023). However, studies that specifically analyze the relationship between social support and optimism remain scarce, necessitating further targeted research, particularly in the context of coaching athletes in Bandung City during the Provincial Sports Week Qualification Round. Although earlier research has found a favorable association between social support and athlete well-being, studies that examine the impact of social support on optimism across different sports are still lacking (Luo et al., 2025). Furthermore, differences in research methodology, athlete samples, sport kinds, and assessment equipment make direct comparison of results problematic. As a result, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between social support and optimism among team and individual athletes in Bandung City. This study is likely to expand understanding of psychological variables in sports, while it can also serve as a foundation for developing effective therapies to improve players' mental health and performance.

METHOD

The study employed a correlational quantitative approach to objectively assess the association between variables using numerical data gathered from standardized instruments, with no treatment or intervention. The study looked at the relationship between athletes' social support and their level of optimism about meeting the demands of competitive sports.

The study's subjects were Bandung City athletes who took part in the 2025 Provincial Sports Week Qualification Round. Of the 53 athletes who completed the questionnaire, 47 data sets were declared valid after a series of completeness and criteria suitability checks, ensuring that the respondents accurately represented athletes in the competitive environment of the Provincial Sports Week Qualifying Round.

The research tools included two questionnaires: the Athletes' Received Support Questionnaire (ARSQ) (Freeman et al., 2014) to assess social support and the Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R) (Scheier et al., 1994) to assess optimism. The ARSQ assesses emotional, informational, and instrumental support, whereas the LOT-R evaluates optimistic thinking tendencies and future expectations. Both tests have high reliability and are commonly utilized in sports psychology research.

To allow participants from numerous sports to participate, data was collected online using Google Forms. Researchers initially contacted coaches to acquire permission and give a research cover letter, before sharing the questionnaire link with players over WhatsApp. Respondents were given an explanation of the research aims, data confidentiality, and how to complete the questionnaire. Data collecting lasted ten days, and all responses were reviewed to ensure completeness and applicability.

Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. The study began with descriptive statistics, which described the respondents' characteristics as well as the distribution of the research variable scores. Next, reliability and normality tests were performed as preparations for parametric analysis. Pearson's correlation was applied to all research subjects to examine the association between social support and optimism. In addition, Pearson's correlation analysis was performed independently on team and individual athletes to determine the consistency of the link between variables based on sport type.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	15	31.91
Male	32	68.09
Type of Sport		
Futsal	8	17.02
Water Polo	11	23.40
Rafting	5	10.64
Petanque	3	6.38
Pencak Silat	12	25.53
Tarung Derajat	4	8.51
Rowing	4	8.51
Training Duration		
< 2 years	11	23.40
2-5 years	12	25.53
>5 years	24	51.06

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the research respondents. The majority of respondents were male (68.09%), while female athletes accounted for (31.91%). In the team sports category, respondents consisted of futsal (17.02%), water polo (23.40%), rafting (10.64%), and petanque (6.38%). Meanwhile, the individual athlete group included pencak silat (25.53%), tarung derajat (8.51%), and rowing (8.51%). In terms of training duration, most athletes had more than five years of training experience (51.06%), followed by athletes with 2–5 years of experience (25.53%) and less than two years (23.40%).

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the research variables. The social support score has a minimum value of 15 and a maximum of 80 with an average value of 53.11 and a standard deviation of 15.604, which shows that athletes are at a moderate level of social support with relatively large variations in scores between respondents. Meanwhile, the optimism score has a range of values between 10 and 24 with an average value of 16.72 and a standard deviation of 3.837, reflecting a moderate level of optimism with relatively low score variations.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Social Support	15	80	53.11	15.604
Optimism	10	24	16.72	3.837

Table 3 shows the results of the Shapiro–Wilk normality test. The significance values for the social support ($p = 0.311$) and optimism ($p = 0.078$) variables are above 0.05. Indicating that the data are normally distributed and meet the requirements for parametric analysis.

Table 3. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

Variable	Static	df	Sig	information
Social Support	.972	47	.311	significance
Optimism	.957	47	.078	

Note. The assumption of normality is satisfied and the data can be analyzed using parametric statistics.

Table 4 presents the results of the Pearson correlation test between social support and optimism in all research subjects. The correlation coefficient value obtained was 0.100 with a significance value of 0.502.

Table 4. Correlation Test

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Social Support - Optimism	.100	.502

Note. The correlation shows a positive but weak and non-significant relationship between social support and optimism.

Table 5 shows the results of Pearson's correlation test in the team athlete group. The correlation coefficient between social support and optimism was 0.329 with a significance value of 0.093.

Table 5. Correlation Among Team-Sport

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Social Support - Optimism	.329	.093

Note. The correlation shows a positive and moderate but non-significant relationship between social support and optimism.

Table 6 presents the results of Pearson's correlation test on the individual athlete group. The correlation coefficient value between social support and optimism is 0.127 with a significance value of 0.594.

Table 6. Correlatin Among Individual-Sport

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Social Support - Optimism	.127	.594

Note. The correlation shows a positive but weak and non-significant relationship between social support and optimism.

The study's findings show that there is no substantial association between social support and optimism in athletes, both overall and by sport type. These data suggest that the level of social support athletes receive from their training environment or colleagues does not always correlate with their level of optimism. These results are in line with previous research findings which state that the social support received by athletes does not always have a direct impact on their psychological condition, because its influence is affected by internal factors such as how individuals interpret support and personal characteristics (Katagami & Tsuchiya, 2016). Thus, social support is not a significant or dominant factor in determining athletes' levels of optimism.

Conceptually, optimism is a reasonably stable psychological concept that is impacted more by internal factors such as self-confidence, self-evaluation, and competitive success and failure. Social support is more useful as a source of emotional comfort and stress relief than as a source of long-term positive beliefs. These findings reinforce the concept that, while social support can help athletes cope with pressure, it does not always have a direct impact on optimism (Cho et al., 2020). According to research on student athletes, social support from coaches is positively connected with optimism; however, this effect occurs through indirect processes, such as specific

mediators, contributing to an increase in players' psychological well-being (Cnen et al., 2021).

In a separate research, team athletes had a stronger link than individual athletes, while the difference was not statistically significant. Team sports, with their emphasis on social contact, intense communication, and a sense of togetherness, provide athletes with more consistent emotional and instrumental support. However, the intensity of social engagement is insufficient to cause a significant difference in optimism levels, implying that teamwork serves to maintain emotional stability rather than alter athletes' positive orientations (Bertella et al., 2022; Oh & Gill, 2017).

Among contrast, among individual athletes, the association between social support and optimism is typically modest. Individual sports, which emphasize personal responsibility, independence, and self-control, help athletes rely more on internal resources when under competitive pressure. Individual athletes' optimism is impacted by beliefs of self-efficacy, competition experience, and emotional control skills rather than social support from the training environment (Olefir, 2018).

The study's findings have practical relevance for coaches and athletic training institutions. Given that social support is not always a dominant factor in shaping optimism, the development of optimism in a training environment cannot be based solely on the provision of social support, but must actively integrate more structured psychological interventions (Reinebo et al., 2024). The development of optimism in the training environment cannot be based primarily on social support, but must also include more structured psychological interventions such as mental training, self-efficacy strengthening, positive self-talk, and the development of emotion control methods. Furthermore, psychological coaching tactics must be matched to the peculiarities of the activity, with team athletes benefiting more from increased team cohesion and trust among members, and individual athletes focusing on psychological independence and self-control.

This study has various limitations that must be considered. Because the sample size was limited (47 athletes) has the potential to cause statistical limitations in detecting meaningful effects, making the findings of this study susceptible to bias and unable to be generalized beyond the context of Bandung City athletes Provincial Sports Week Qualification Round (Hecksteden et al., 2023). The athletes completed the questionnaires individually, which may have resulted in

replies that were biased by the respondents' personal assessments (Zuber & Conzelmann, 2019). Furthermore, because this study employs a correlational design, it cannot explain the cause-and-effect relationship between social support and optimism, but rather demonstrates a link between the two.

Given these constraints, future studies should include a larger number of participants from various areas or competition levels to achieve more representative results. Future research should also look into specific kinds of social support, such as support from coaches, families, or teammates, to determine which forms of support have the greatest influence on athletes' optimism. Longitudinal designs and hybrid approaches may also be used to describe variations in optimism over time. Coaches and team management can use the findings of this study to increase social support in the training environment and improve players' mental preparation.

CONCLUSION

This study found that social support from teammates and the training environment has no meaningful relationship with athletes' levels of optimism, both team and individual athletes. Although team athletes have a better bond, social support cannot be used as a predictor of optimism. These data suggest that internal characteristics, such as self-confidence and competitive experience, have a greater influence on athletes' optimism than social support in the training environment. Therefore, the development of optimism requires more specific psychological interventions, such as mental training and self-efficacy reinforcement. This study's sample size and use of perception-based questionnaires are limitations, so more research utilizing a longitudinal design or psychological therapies is required to acquire a better understanding of the dynamics of social support and optimism in athletes.

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