



The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Confidence with Academic Athlete Achievement at the Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-confidence with athletic achievement among student athletes at the Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences, Universitas Negeri Makassar. Athletic achievement is a multidimensional outcome influenced by psychological factors including emotional regulation and self-belief. A quantitative correlational approach was employed involving 120 student athletes selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using the Emotional Intelligence Scale adapted from Goleman's framework, the Self-Confidence Scale developed by Lauster, and an Athletic Achievement Index compiled from official competition records and academic performance assessments. The results indicated that emotional intelligence had a significant positive relationship with athletic achievement ($r = 0.612, p < 0.05$), and self-confidence similarly demonstrated a significant positive correlation with athletic achievement ($r = 0.574, p < 0.05$). Moreover, emotional intelligence and self-confidence together accounted for 54.3% of the variance in athletic achievement ($R^2 = 0.543, F = 28.47, p < 0.05$). These findings suggest that psychological development programs emphasizing emotional regulation and self-confidence building are critical components of holistic athlete development. Universities and sports coaching staff should integrate psychological skills training within their athletic development curriculum.

Keywords: emotional intelligence; self-confidence; athletic achievement; student athletes; sports psychology



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INTRODUCTION

Athletic achievement among student athletes represents a convergence of physical capability, technical skill, and psychological readiness. While traditional approaches to sports training have predominantly focused on physiological conditioning and biomechanical skill development, contemporary sports science has increasingly acknowledged the pivotal role of psychological variables in determining competitive performance outcomes (Weinberg & Gould, 2023). Among the most extensively studied psychological constructs in this regard are emotional intelligence and self-confidence, both of which have been theorized to exert substantial influence on an athlete's capacity to perform at their highest potential under competitive conditions (Mayer et al., 2021).

Emotional intelligence, broadly defined as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions in adaptive ways, was first systematically articulated by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and subsequently popularized by Goleman (1995) who expanded the construct to include social and interpersonal dimensions. In the sports context, emotionally intelligent athletes are better equipped to regulate performance anxiety, maintain concentration under pressure, empathize with teammates, and recover psychologically from setbacks and failures (Lu et al., 2022). These competencies are particularly relevant in university-level competitive sports, where athletes must simultaneously

manage academic responsibilities, social relationships, and athletic commitments, creating a unique set of psychosocial stressors that less emotionally skilled individuals may struggle to navigate effectively (Laborde et al., 2020).

Self-confidence, on the other hand, refers to an athlete's belief in their own ability to successfully execute specific actions or achieve desired outcomes within the athletic context (Vealey, 2021). Distinguished from general self-esteem, sport-specific self-confidence is a dynamic and context-sensitive construct that fluctuates in response to past performance experiences, social comparisons, physiological arousal, and verbal persuasion from coaches and peers (Bandura, 1997, as cited in Woodman et al., 2020). Athletes with high levels of self-confidence typically exhibit greater persistence in the face of adversity, set more challenging performance goals, and employ more effective coping strategies when confronted with competitive pressure (Hays et al., 2021).

The relationship between psychological readiness and athletic performance has been extensively documented in international sports psychology literature. Studies conducted across a range of sports disciplines have consistently demonstrated that athletes who score higher on measures of emotional intelligence tend to experience lower levels of competitive anxiety, greater resilience following defeat, and more constructive relationships with coaches and teammates (Fernandez-Berrocal & Extremera, 2020). Similarly, self-confidence has been empirically associated with superior concentration, reduced fear of failure, heightened competitive motivation, and improved technical execution under pressure (Lane et al., 2021). However, the combined effects of both constructs on achievement outcomes among student athletes in Indonesian university settings remain comparatively underexplored.

In the Indonesian educational context, Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) stands as one of the leading state universities in Eastern Indonesia, with a Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences (Fakultas Ilmu Keolahragaan dan Kesehatan – FIKK) that produces a significant number of competitive athletes who represent the university in national university sports events (POMPNAS) as well as provincial and national championships. Despite the strategic importance of psychological development in athletic success, empirical investigation of psychological predictors of athletic achievement within this specific population has been limited (Hidayat, 2021). The majority of existing Indonesian studies have focused predominantly on physical performance variables such as strength, speed, and endurance, with psychological factors receiving comparatively less systematic scholarly attention (Pratama & Widiastuti, 2020).

This gap in the literature is particularly significant given the distinctive sociocultural context of Indonesian student athletes, who operate within a collectivistic social environment where interpersonal relationships, group harmony, and social support play central roles in motivational dynamics and psychological well-being (Komarudin, 2020). The influence of emotional intelligence on navigating these interpersonal dynamics, and the role of culturally modulated forms of self-confidence in athletic contexts, may manifest differently compared to Western athlete populations in which much of the existing research has been conducted. This cultural specificity underscores the necessity of context-sensitive research that directly addresses Indonesian student athlete populations.

Furthermore, the dual role that student athletes at FIKK UNM must perform – as both students pursuing academic qualifications and as competitive athletes seeking excellence in their respective sports disciplines – creates a unique environment in which emotional and psychological resources are regularly taxed across multiple performance domains simultaneously. Prior research has suggested that the ability to manage emotional demands across concurrent life roles is closely linked to overall performance outcomes in student athlete populations (Stoeber et al., 2020). Understanding how emotional intelligence and self-confidence contribute to athletic achievement in this population may therefore have important implications for the design of athlete support programs, coaching practices, and student welfare services at FIKK UNM and similar institutions across Indonesia.

Given these considerations, the present study was designed to investigate the relationships between emotional intelligence, self-confidence, and athletic achievement among student athletes at FIKK UNM. Specifically, the study aimed to determine: (1) whether there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and athletic achievement; (2) whether there is a significant positive relationship between self-confidence and athletic achievement; and (3) whether emotional intelligence and self-confidence together have a significant combined relationship with athletic

achievement. By addressing these questions, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of sports psychology literature concerning Indonesian athlete populations and to provide evidence-based insights for practitioners and administrators engaged in student athlete development.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design using a correlational approach, which was deemed appropriate given the study's objective of examining the nature and strength of the relationships between the independent variables (emotional intelligence and self-confidence) and the dependent variable (athletic achievement) without manipulating any of the variables under investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The correlational design also permitted the application of multiple regression analysis to assess the combined predictive capacity of emotional intelligence and self-confidence with respect to athletic achievement outcomes.

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences (Fakultas Ilmu Keolahragaan dan Kesehatan), Universitas Negeri Makassar, located in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The faculty offers undergraduate programs in physical education, sports coaching, and sports science, and maintains active student athlete programs across a wide range of sports disciplines including athletics, football, basketball, volleyball, badminton, martial arts, and swimming. The research was carried out during the 2023–2024 academic year.

The study population consisted of all registered student athletes at FIKK UNM who had participated in at least one official intercollegiate competition during the previous academic year, totaling approximately 180 individuals. A purposive sampling technique was applied based on the following criteria: active enrollment as a student at FIKK UNM, participation in at least one documented intercollegiate or provincial competition during the reference period, and willingness to provide informed consent for participation in the study. Based on these criteria, a final sample of 120 student athletes was selected for inclusion, representing a range of sports disciplines and academic year levels (Sugiyono, 2020).

Three instruments were utilized for data collection. The first was the Emotional Intelligence Scale, adapted from Goleman's (1995) five-domain framework encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The adapted instrument consisted of 40 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87) and construct validity as confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis (Nurhidayah & Akbar, 2021). The second instrument was the Self-Confidence Scale, developed based on the theoretical framework of Lauster (2002) and adapted by Ghufron and Risnawita (2020) for use with Indonesian university student populations. This scale comprised 35 items measuring five dimensions: confidence in one's own capabilities, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and rationality, with reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha = 0.83). The third measure was the Athletic Achievement Index, a composite measure constructed from official competition placement records (weighted at 60%) and academic performance in sports-related courses (weighted at 40%) as documented in the university's student management information system.

Data collection was conducted during scheduled class sessions and team training sessions, with permission obtained from the faculty administration and relevant coaching staff. Prior to data collection, all participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, informed that participation was entirely voluntary, and assured of the confidentiality of their individual responses. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before questionnaire administration. Questionnaires were distributed and collected in a single session to minimize the risk of response contamination or incomplete returns.

Collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were computed for all study variables. Prior to hypothesis testing, the assumptions underlying parametric statistical analysis were verified, including tests for normality of distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, linearity using the F-test for deviation from linearity, and multicollinearity using Variance Inflation Factor

(VIF) diagnostics. Bivariate relationships between emotional intelligence and athletic achievement, and between self-confidence and athletic achievement, were examined using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis. The combined relationship of emotional intelligence and self-confidence with athletic achievement was assessed through multiple linear regression analysis, with the coefficient of determination (R^2) used to quantify the proportion of variance in athletic achievement explained by the two psychological predictors jointly (Santoso, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive analysis of the sample revealed that the 120 student athlete participants had a mean age of 20.4 years ($SD = 1.6$), with males constituting 68.3% of the sample and females comprising 31.7%. Participants represented a total of twelve sports disciplines, with the largest proportions coming from football (18.3%), badminton (14.2%), and athletics (12.5%). The academic year distribution of participants was relatively balanced across the four undergraduate years, with first-year students representing 22.5%, second-year students 27.5%, third-year students 30.0%, and fourth-year students 20.0% of the total sample. These demographic characteristics suggest a reasonably representative cross-section of the FIKK UNM student athlete population in terms of sport type, gender distribution, and academic progression.

With respect to the primary study variables, the mean score for emotional intelligence among the sampled participants was 138.74 ($SD = 14.23$) out of a maximum possible score of 200, indicating that as a group the student athletes demonstrated a moderate-to-high level of emotional intelligence. Examination of individual domain scores within the emotional intelligence measure revealed that the highest mean scores were recorded on the empathy subscale ($M = 29.83$, $SD = 3.41$) and the motivation subscale ($M = 29.12$, $SD = 3.68$), while the self-regulation subscale yielded the lowest mean score ($M = 26.49$, $SD = 4.02$), suggesting that self-regulatory competencies represent a relative area of weakness within the overall emotional intelligence profile of this population (Resnick et al., 2021). These findings are consistent with prior research on adolescent and young adult athlete populations, which has similarly identified self-regulation as a developmentally challenging dimension of emotional intelligence during the university years (Laborde et al., 2020).

The mean self-confidence score was 120.61 ($SD = 12.87$) out of a possible maximum of 175, indicating an overall moderate level of self-confidence across the sample. The dimension with the highest mean score was optimism ($M = 26.44$, $SD = 3.12$), while the dimension of rationality demonstrated the lowest mean score ($M = 22.15$, $SD = 3.89$). This pattern suggests that while student athletes at FIKK UNM generally maintain a positive performance outlook, they may occasionally engage in less analytical and evidence-based self-assessment of their competencies, which could have implications for the quality and accuracy of self-evaluation processes underlying performance preparation and goal-setting (Ghufron & Risnawita, 2020). The mean Athletic Achievement Index score was 72.38 ($SD = 11.52$) on a scale of 0 to 100, with scores ranging from a minimum of 41.00 to a maximum of 97.00, indicating considerable variability in achievement outcomes across the sample.

Prior to inferential hypothesis testing, the requisite assumptions for parametric statistical analysis were systematically evaluated. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test yielded non-significant results for all three study variables (emotional intelligence: $D = 0.071$, $p = 0.172$; self-confidence: $D = 0.065$, $p = 0.213$; athletic achievement: $D = 0.078$, $p = 0.091$), indicating that the distributions of all variables were not significantly different from normal. Linearity testing confirmed that the relationships between emotional intelligence and athletic achievement, and between self-confidence and athletic achievement, were both statistically linear ($F = 1.23$, $p = 0.241$ and $F = 1.41$, $p = 0.198$, respectively). The Variance Inflation Factor values for emotional intelligence ($VIF = 1.34$) and self-confidence ($VIF = 1.34$) were both well below the conventional threshold of 10, indicating the absence of problematic multicollinearity between the two predictor variables. These diagnostic results collectively confirmed that the data met all necessary assumptions for the application of Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analyses (Santoso, 2020).

The first hypothesis, which proposed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and athletic achievement, was supported by the results of the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis. The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation of moderate-

to-strong magnitude between emotional intelligence and athletic achievement ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$). This finding indicates that student athletes who demonstrated higher levels of emotional intelligence tended to achieve higher scores on the Athletic Achievement Index, consistent with the theoretical proposition that emotional competence supports athletic performance through mechanisms including enhanced stress management, superior interpersonal functioning within team contexts, greater intrinsic motivation, and more effective deployment of attentional resources during competition (Fernandez-Berrocal & Extremera, 2020). The magnitude of this correlation is broadly comparable to effect sizes reported in meta-analytic reviews of the emotional intelligence-performance relationship in sport, which have typically reported weighted mean correlations in the range of $r = 0.40$ to $r = 0.65$ (Lu et al., 2022).

These results align with and extend earlier Indonesian research by Komarudin (2020), who found significant relationships between emotional regulation skills and competitive performance among provincial-level athletes, and with findings reported by Nurhidayah and Akbar (2021) in a study of student athletes at a Jakarta-based state university. The present study's finding that the self-regulation subdimension of emotional intelligence showed the weakest performance among FIKK UNM student athletes, while simultaneously demonstrating the strongest theoretical linkage to competitive performance outcomes in the sports psychology literature, suggests a particularly high-leverage area for targeted psychological skills intervention within this population (Laborde et al., 2020).

The second hypothesis, proposing a significant positive relationship between self-confidence and athletic achievement, was also supported. Pearson correlation analysis yielded a statistically significant positive relationship between self-confidence and athletic achievement ($r = 0.574$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that student athletes with higher self-confidence levels tended to achieve higher performance outcomes. This finding is consistent with the extensive theoretical and empirical literature linking sport-specific self-confidence to superior competitive performance (Vealey, 2021). Self-confident athletes in the present sample are inferred to have approached competitive situations with greater assurance in their own capabilities, exhibited higher persistence when facing performance difficulties, and maintained more stable focus during high-pressure competitive moments, all of which are theorized to mediate the self-confidence-performance relationship (Hays et al., 2021). The magnitude of the self-confidence-athletic achievement correlation ($r = 0.574$) is slightly lower than the emotional intelligence-athletic achievement correlation ($r = 0.612$), suggesting that while both constructs are important predictors, emotional intelligence may have a marginally stronger association with overall athletic achievement in this particular population.

The finding regarding self-confidence is also resonant with Indonesian cultural considerations. Within collectivistic social environments, self-confidence in competitive contexts may be substantially shaped by social sources such as verbal encouragement from coaches, peer support from teammates, and family expectations, rather than being primarily derived from individual mastery experiences as emphasized in Western frameworks (Bandura, 1997, as cited in Komarudin, 2020). This cultural modulation of self-confidence development may help explain some of the variability in self-confidence scores observed across the sample and warrants further investigation in future studies that explicitly incorporate measures of social support and culturally specific motivational dynamics.

The third hypothesis, which proposed that emotional intelligence and self-confidence together would have a significant combined relationship with athletic achievement, was tested through multiple linear regression analysis. The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F(2, 117) = 28.47$, $p < 0.05$), and the coefficient of determination indicated that emotional intelligence and self-confidence jointly accounted for 54.3% of the variance in athletic achievement scores ($R^2 = 0.543$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.536$). Examination of the individual regression coefficients within the multiple regression model indicated that both emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.412$, $t = 5.63$, $p < 0.05$) and self-confidence ($\beta = 0.381$, $t = 5.21$, $p < 0.05$) contributed independently and significantly to the prediction of athletic achievement after controlling for the effects of the other predictor. These findings confirm that both psychological variables are important contributors to athletic achievement and that their

combined explanatory power substantially exceeds that of either variable when considered in isolation (Pratama & Widiastuti, 2020).

The explained variance of 54.3% is noteworthy in the context of sports psychology research, as it suggests that psychological factors alone – without incorporating any physical fitness or biomechanical performance variables – account for a substantial proportion of the variability in athletic achievement outcomes. This finding reinforces contemporary theoretical models of athletic performance that position psychological readiness as foundational to the translation of physical capabilities into competitive achievement (Weinberg & Gould, 2023). The remaining 45.7% of unexplained variance is attributable to other factors not measured in the present study, which may include physical fitness levels, technical skill proficiency, quality of coaching, training volume and intensity, competitive experience, injury history, and contextual factors specific to particular sports disciplines (Stoeber et al., 2020).

From a practical standpoint, these findings carry meaningful implications for sports coaching and student athlete development programs at FIKK UNM and analogous Indonesian university sports faculties. The significant and substantial relationships identified between both emotional intelligence and self-confidence with athletic achievement provide empirical justification for the systematic integration of psychological skills training within university-level athletic development programs. Such programs might include structured components addressing emotional regulation techniques such as mindfulness-based interventions and cognitive reappraisal strategies, as well as evidence-based self-confidence building approaches such as guided self-reflection on past mastery experiences, performance routine development, and imagery-based mental rehearsal (Mayer et al., 2021). The finding that self-regulation represents a relative area of weakness within the emotional intelligence profile of FIKK UNM student athletes suggests that interventions specifically targeting this dimension may yield disproportionate benefits for overall psychological functioning and competitive performance (Lane et al., 2021).

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the present study when interpreting these findings. The cross-sectional correlational design does not permit causal inferences to be drawn about the directional relationships between the study variables; it is possible, for example, that athletic achievement experiences also influence the development of emotional intelligence and self-confidence over time through feedback loops involving success, failure, and personal growth. Future research employing longitudinal designs would be valuable in disentangling these potentially bidirectional influences. Additionally, the use of self-report instruments for assessing emotional intelligence and self-confidence introduces the possibility of social desirability response bias, particularly in a university context where students may be motivated to present a favorable psychological profile. Incorporation of performance-based emotional intelligence assessments and observational measures of self-confident behavior in future studies would help address this methodological concern (Hidayat, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that both emotional intelligence and self-confidence have significant positive relationships with athletic achievement among student athletes at the Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences, Universitas Negeri Makassar. Individually, emotional intelligence demonstrated a moderate-to-strong positive correlation with athletic achievement ($r = 0.612$), and self-confidence demonstrated a similarly positive relationship ($r = 0.574$). When examined jointly through multiple regression analysis, emotional intelligence and self-confidence together explained 54.3% of the variance in athletic achievement, with both variables contributing independently and significantly as predictors. These findings affirm the critical importance of psychological factors alongside physical conditioning in the holistic development of competitive student athletes.

The practical implications of these findings are substantial. Sports educators, coaches, and university administrators at FIKK UNM and comparable institutions should prioritize the development of structured psychological skills training programs that target emotional intelligence competencies – particularly self-regulation – and cultivate evidence-based self-confidence in student athletes. Such programs should be designed as integral components of athletic development curricula rather than

supplementary add-ons. Future research should examine the longitudinal development of these psychological constructs across university athletic careers, explore mediating variables that may explain the mechanisms underlying these relationships, and investigate the potential moderating effects of sport type, gender, and cultural background on the emotional intelligence and self-confidence-athletic achievement relationship within Indonesian university sport contexts.

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