

Family and Coach Support on Motivation and Performance in Adolescent Athletes: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Introduction: Athletic achievement is influenced not only by physical talent and training but also by socio-psychological factors. Parental and coach support has been identified as crucial for fostering motivation, self-confidence, and performance in adolescent athletes. This systematic review aims to examine the impact of family and coach support on adolescents' psychological development and athletic performance.

Methods: A systematic literature search was conducted in PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, covering publications from 2020 to 2024. Inclusion criteria were original research in English or Indonesian, studies involving student athletes aged 8–20 years, and publications within the past five years. The review followed the PRISMA guidelines. Four studies meeting the criteria were included for qualitative synthesis.

Results: Consistent evidence across all included studies indicates that social support from parents and coaches significantly enhances intrinsic motivation, resilience, and competitive performance among adolescent athletes. Findings align with Self-Determination Theory and Achievement Goal Theory, which emphasize fulfilling psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness to promote motivation and performance. Parental involvement contributes to persistence and intrinsic motivation, while coaches who provide an empowering and supportive climate facilitate both personal growth and athletic success.

Conclusion: Family and coach support are critical for optimizing motivation and performance in adolescent athletes. Interventions aimed at strengthening parental involvement and coach–athlete relationships are recommended. The small number of studies and absence of meta-analysis limit generalizability, highlighting the need for broader and more diverse research in this field.

Keywords

Adolescent athletes, Motivation, Athletic performance, Family support, Coach–athlete relationship, Sports psychology

Introduction

Athletic performance is not solely determined by talent and intensive training but is also shaped by environmental support from families and coaches, which fosters achievement motivation as a key factor for optimal performance.¹ In the field of sport psychology, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) are widely applied to explain the relationship between social support and athlete motivation. Motivation plays a central role, as it is closely linked to engagement, commitment, and psychological resilience in coping with competitive pressures.² Conversely, a lack of psychosocial support may increase the risk of burnout, decreased motivation, and even dropout from sports.

The coach–athlete relationship represents one of the most critical external factors. A positive relationship has been shown to satisfy psychological needs, enhance motivation, and drive athletic performance.³ Furthermore, a task-oriented motivational climate nurtures self-confidence, enthusiasm, and dedication among young athletes.^{4,5} Parental support is equally significant. Supportive parenting styles and positive parent–child relationships have been associated with increased intrinsic motivation.⁶ Parental presence, constructive communication, and granting autonomy in decision-making foster feelings of security and competence, ultimately strengthening athletes' commitment to sport.

Empirical findings further reinforce the importance of social support. For instance, parental involvement—directly or through achievement motivation—significantly influences the performance of elite athletes in South Kalimantan.⁷ Similarly, both parental support and the motivational climate established by coaches affect psychosocial behavior, vitality, and academic performance of young athletes, mediated by intrinsic motivation.⁸ In addition, service quality, family support, and coach–athlete closeness contribute to student-athletes' motivation and performance, although the direct association between coach–athlete closeness and performance appears nonsignificant.⁹ In more

specific contexts, family involvement has also been found to shape the career orientation of indigenous student-athletes, mediated by peer and coach support.¹⁰

Nevertheless, limited research has investigated the role of social support for adolescent athletes within local cultural contexts, such as Indonesia. This underscores the need for a systematic review that examines the contribution of parental and coach support to motivation, self-confidence, and performance among young athletes. The present review focuses on adolescents aged 12–18 years, evaluating the influence of social interventions from their immediate environment without direct comparators, and assessing relevant psychological and performance outcomes.

Methods

This study was designed as a systematic literature review conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. A literature review is a systematic examination and synthesis of prior research, theories, and practices conducted by researchers and practitioners to provide a critical evaluation of a specific topic or issue.

Articles were retrieved from three electronic databases: PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. The keywords applied were “*parental support*”, “*coach motivation*”, “*youth athletes*”, and “*achievement outcomes*”. Searches were restricted to articles published within the last five years (2020–2024).

The inclusion criteria for this review were original research articles with study populations consisting of student or adolescent athletes aged 8–20 years, written in either English or Indonesian, and directly examining the role of parental or coach support on athlete motivation or performance. Studies were excluded if they were review articles, editorials, or commentaries; if the full text was unavailable; or if the focus was on professional or adult athletes.

A total of 30 articles were initially identified (PubMed = 1, ScienceDirect = 20, Google Scholar = 9). Eighteen were excluded based on title and abstract screening for not meeting eligibility criteria. Twelve articles were assessed in full text, and ultimately four met all inclusion criteria and were analyzed further.

The four included articles were analyzed descriptively and comparatively to identify the role of parental and coach support in adolescent athletes' motivation and performance. This review was not prospectively registered in systematic review registries such as PROSPERO.

Results

Literature Search Outcomes

The literature search across PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar yielded 30 articles. The search was conducted between 26–30 May 2025, covering publications from January 2020 to May 2025. Following screening of titles, abstracts, and full-text review, only four articles fulfilled all inclusion criteria and were included for further analysis. The article selection process is illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1).

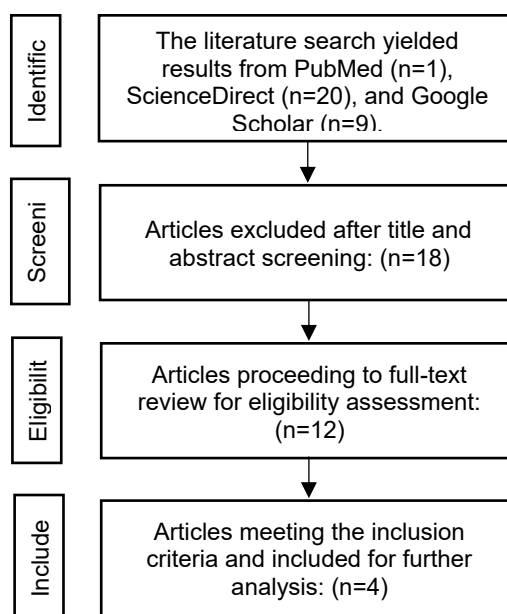


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram.

Results

All four studies analyzed employed a quantitative cross-sectional design with adolescent athletes aged 8–20 years. Research foci varied, including the role of parental support, coach motivational climate, and peer involvement in influencing motivation and performance. Table 1 presents a summary of the empirical studies included in this systematic review, highlighting key characteristics such as study design, sample size, age range of participants, type of sport, measures of parental and coach support, and main findings related to adolescent athletes' motivation and performance. This table provides a concise overview of the current evidence, facilitating comparison across studies and illustrating how family and coach support contribute to psychological development and athletic outcomes.

Table 1. Summary of Empirical Studies on Parental and Coach Support for Adolescent Athletes' Motivation and Performance

No	Authors & Year	Sample	Key Variables	Instruments	Main Findings
1	Krommidas et al.	N=494 youth soccer players aged 8–15 (Greece)	Parental support, coach motivational climate	BRSQ, IMI, Subjective Vitality Scale	Both parental and coach support significantly influenced intrinsic motivation ($p<0.001$). Coaches reduced aggressive behavior, while parents influenced GPA.
2	Chia-Wen et al.	N=354 indigenous student baseball athletes	Parental involvement, peer and coach support, career orientation	Likert Scale 1–5 (PI, PS, CS, CO)	Parental support directly influenced career orientation ($\beta=0.76$). Peer and coach support were significant mediators.
3	Mandan et al.	N=125 athletes	Service quality, family support, coach–athlete closeness	SERVQUAL, FSS, CART-Q, SMS-II, SCAT, CSAI-2	Family support and service quality significantly affected motivation and performance. Coach–athlete closeness showed no direct effect unless mediated by motivation.
4	Imtihansyah et al.	N=120 athletes (mean age 20.2 years)	Parental support, achievement motivation, athletic performance	Locally validated questionnaire, SmartPLS	Parental support \rightarrow motivation ($\beta=0.625$), motivation \rightarrow performance ($\beta=0.772$), strong mediation effect ($\beta=0.802$).

Across these studies, consistent patterns were observed. Parental support, including emotional, instrumental, informational, and affirmational forms, plays a crucial role in enhancing intrinsic motivation and persistence in young athletes. An empowering coach motivational climate fosters confidence, enjoyment, and performance, whereas a disempowering climate tends to reduce motivation. Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, emerges as the primary mediator linking social support with athletic achievement. In addition, peer support complements the roles of family and coaches, particularly in shaping career orientation among adolescent athletes. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that social support from families and coaches is a strong predictor of young athletes' motivation and performance across diverse cultural and sporting contexts.

Table 2. Risk of Bias Assessment of Included Studies

Authors & Year	Study Design	JB1 Items (Max = 8)	Score Achieved	Overall Quality
Krommidas et al.	Cross-sectional	8	7	Low risk of bias
Chia-Wen et al.	Cross-sectional	8	6	Moderate risk of bias
Mandan et al.	Cross-sectional	8	7	Low risk of bias
Imtihansyah et al.	Cross-sectional	8	6	Moderate risk of bias

Note: The JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for cross-sectional studies includes 8 items.

The methodological assessment of the four studies indicated overall low-to-moderate risk of bias. The consistency of findings strengthens the evidence base; however, the moderate methodological quality in some studies suggests that conclusions should be interpreted with caution.

Discussion

Findings from the four articles analyzed in this review consistently demonstrate that social support from the immediate environment—particularly parents and coaches—plays a crucial role in shaping the motivation and performance of adolescent athletes. These results support the theoretical frameworks of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Achievement Goal Theory (AGT), which emphasize the importance of fulfilling basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness to foster intrinsic motivation and optimal achievement.¹¹ The age range of 8 to 20 years spans distinct developmental stages, from childhood to early adulthood, and motivational approaches must therefore be adapted to the psychosocial characteristics of each age group. Despite consistent findings, most included studies applied cross-sectional designs, limiting causal inference.¹²

Among children aged 8–12 years, motivation in sports is strongly influenced by enjoyment, positive play experiences, and direct parental support. Krommidas et al. found that parental involvement—such as praise, empathy, and active engagement (e.g., attending practice and providing encouragement)—significantly enhanced intrinsic motivation and enjoyment.⁸ At this age, children are less capable of managing stress and competitive pressure, making overly outcome-focused approaches potentially harmful to long-term commitment.

In adolescence (13–17 years), psychological needs shift toward identity formation, autonomy, and self-esteem. Adolescents begin to recognize the personal value of sport and seek deeper meaning in their participation. An empowering coaching climate that offers choice, supports decision-making, and fosters equitable relationships has been shown to enhance intrinsic motivation, confidence, and long-term engagement.¹ In contrast, authoritarian and controlling climates increase the risk of burnout and long-term performance decline. Peer support also becomes increasingly relevant during this stage, contributing to social competence, group identity, and motivation reinforcement.^{13,14}

By early adulthood (18–20 years), athletes' motivations are shaped by career orientation, scholarship opportunities, and professional aspirations. Chia-Wen et al. reported that parental involvement remains important, but the influence of coaches and peers as mediators of motivation and career orientation becomes more dominant.⁹ At this stage, coaches assume a mentoring role, guiding not only technical development but also athletes' long-term career planning.

Parental support consistently emerges as a strong predictor of athlete motivation. Effective forms include emotional support, instrumental assistance (e.g., training facilities), informational feedback, and affirmational reinforcement.^{13,14} Studies also show that autonomy-supportive parenting is positively associated with intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and resilience, thereby strengthening long-term commitment to sport.^{6,7}

Coaches play a pivotal role in shaping the motivational climate. Empowering environments that encourage decision-making, personal growth, and positive relationships foster intrinsic motivation, while disempowering climates focused solely on winning undermine motivation and increase emotional stress.^{1,8} Although coach–athlete intimacy does not always directly predict performance, it indirectly contributes by enhancing motivation, which serves as the primary mediator between social support and athletic achievement.⁹

Motivation—both intrinsic and extrinsic—was consistently identified as the key mediator linking social support to athletic outcomes. Evidence indicates that the positive effects of parental and coach support on performance are largely explained by their capacity to strengthen motivation.^{7,9,10,11} In the absence of adequate motivation, social support alone is insufficient to ensure optimal outcomes.

Social support from family, coaches, and peers operates synergistically to foster psychosocial development and career orientation in young athletes. In some cultural contexts, family involvement extends beyond material assistance to include symbolic and identity-based roles. Coaches also act as cultural and social agents, shaping aspirations and career pathways within community-based settings.¹⁰

Overall, this review highlights the importance of integrating family support, motivational climates fostered by coaches, and peer involvement in enhancing adolescent athletes' motivation and performance. Context-sensitive, age-appropriate, and relationally grounded approaches are more effective than standardized strategies. These findings have significant implications for youth sport coaches, parents, career counselors, and talent development institutions focusing on athletes aged 8–20 years.

This review has several limitations. First, the number of included studies was relatively small (n=4), restricting the generalizability of findings. Article selection was also limited to publications from 2020–2024 with full-text availability, which may have led to the exclusion of relevant research.

Second, all included studies employed quantitative designs, leaving qualitative dimensions—such as athletes' subjective experiences of social support—underexplored. Cultural and geographical diversity further limits comparability, as few studies originated from Indonesia or local contexts.

Third, this review did not include meta-synthesis or meta-analysis, and conclusions remain interpretive and descriptive rather than statistically robust. Future research should adopt broader literature coverage, mixed-method approaches, and a stronger focus on local and cultural contexts to enhance understanding of how social support influences adolescent athletes' motivation and performance.

These findings offer several practical implications for youth athlete development. Coaches should be trained not only in technical sport-specific skills but also in emotional intelligence, leadership psychology, and interpersonal communication. Interventions should account for cultural and socioeconomic contexts, especially for athletes from vulnerable or minority groups. Tailored strategies that integrate parental involvement, empowering coaching climates, and peer support are likely to be the most effective in sustaining motivation and optimizing performance among adolescent athletes.

Conclusion

This review demonstrates that adolescent athletes' success is shaped by the combined influence of parental, coaching, and peer support, with intrinsic motivation as the main mediator of performance. Social support plays a more decisive role than technical or physical factors, highlighting motivation as the foundation for long-term engagement in sport.

Strong interpersonal relationships, particularly within the coach–athlete dyad, enhance motivation and contribute to holistic athlete development, including performance, career orientation, and psychological well-being. This review specifically emphasizes the joint role of parents and coaches across ages 8–20, addressing a gap in the literature and underscoring the importance of socially grounded interventions, especially in contexts such as Indonesia. Youth sport programs should therefore involve families, strengthen coaches' interpersonal communication skills, and establish integrated support systems to promote both performance and well-being in young athletes.

Author Contribution

Sarah Alhariza Akines: Conceptualization, Literature Search, Data Analysis, Manuscript Drafting, Corresponding Author.

Ayu Riesky: Literature Screening, Data Extraction, Manuscript Writing.

Luh Marchintya Orientini Putri Devi: Data Synthesis, Critical Review, Manuscript Editing.

I Gede Pasek Wira Bhuna: Methodology, Data Interpretation, Manuscript Revision.

Ni Made Swasti Wulanyani: Psychological Framework Consultation, Manuscript Review, Final Approval.

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this study.

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Ethics Statement

This study is a systematic review of previously published articles and does not involve direct participation of human or animal subjects. Therefore, ethical approval and informed consent were not required. All included studies were conducted in accordance with the respective ethical standards of their institutions.

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