

MOTIVATION AND SELF-CONFIDENCE OF MALE RUGBY 7s ATHLETES BEFORE A FRIENDLY MATCH IN EAST JAVA

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Abstract

In Indonesia, rugby has several competition categories. Rugby is a team sport played between two sides. It is a game full of tactics, in which various patterns of play are carefully designed. Although players with high skill levels may dominate in certain situations, every player is still required to work together with teammates to create a solid game and achieve the desired goals. Athletes must prepare four essential aspects when facing a championship: technical, tactical, physical, and mental. The psychological aspects that must be considered in athletes are motivation and self-confidence. The purpose of this study is to determine the level of motivation and self-confidence of the male athletes of the Unesa Rugby 7s Student Activity Unit (UKM Rugby 7s Unesa). This research used a quantitative descriptive method with data collected through a closed questionnaire adopted from Arieputra's (2018) study, which has been validated by an expert lecturer in sports psychology. The research subjects were 15 male athletes from the Unesa Rugby 7s team who were preparing for a friendly match, with the sample selected using purposive sampling. The results showed that the level of motivation (33.3%) was in the "moderate" category, while the level of self-confidence (46.7%) was also in the "moderate" category. The conclusion of this study is that the levels of motivation and self-confidence of the male athletes of the Unesa Rugby 7s team before the friendly match against the East Java rugby team were in the "moderate" category participant performance. Certain leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, can have a positive impact on student satisfaction and engagement while minimizing feelings of boredom.

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INTRODUCTION

Sports play an essential role in maintaining both physical and mental health. In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 of 2022, sports are defined as activities that promote, nurture, and develop physical, spiritual, social, and cultural talents, interests, and abilities in a systematic manner. These activities are not only intended to maintain physical fitness but also serve as a means of character development, achievement attainment, and

discipline building. Kamal Firdaus (2012) It is stated that sports can foster qualities such as discipline, sportsmanship, teamwork, decision-making ability, and mental resilience. The development of modern sports is not only focused on physical health but also provides opportunities for talent development and achievement attainment. Various sporting activities can be manifested through championships with different levels of competition. This has led to the emergence of several disciplines within sports science, such as biomechanics, physiology, sport psychology, sport massage, and motor development studies. (Musrifin & Bausad, 2021). The development of achievement-oriented sports is carried out in a structured and continuous manner, supported by sports science and technology as the foundation for improving athletes' quality. (Muammar, 2024).

Sport psychology examines individual behavior and experiences in sports activities, both in social interactions and in situations that require mental endurance. Personality, according to Firdaus (2012:62) Personality is a set of stable traits within an individual that influence behavior and athletic performance. Changes in an athlete's performance are often reflected in their psychological condition, particularly in the levels of motivation and self-confidence. Athletic performance is determined by the synergy between physical, technical, tactical, and mental aspects, which complement each other in achieving optimal results. Physically, rugby athletes are required to possess excellent physical conditions, including strength, speed, endurance, and agility, in accordance with the characteristics of a high-intensity sport that involves sprinting, tackling, and physical contact. (Zabaloy et al., 2021). Technical aspects such as mastery of passing, catching, kicking, and tackling enable athletes to execute game strategies effectively. (Marani et al., 2020). Game tactics serve as the framework for team strategy, in which coordination, communication, and patterns of play play a crucial role in the success of a match. (Simanihuruk et al., 2022). The mental aspect, where motivation and self-confidence facilitate training consistency and enhance athletes' courage to face competitive pressure, plays a vital role in performance stability. (Mukhtarsyaf et al., 2022). Research Mawo Paisei et al.

(2024) It is explained that motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety contribute to athletes' performance.

Motivation is an internal and external drive that directs individuals to take action. Susanto (2022) It is stated that motivation can be observed through the intensity of one's determination to achieve goals. Umami & Ratna (2021) Motivation is distinguished into intrinsic motivation, which originates from within the individual, and extrinsic motivation, which comes from external factors. Firdaus (2012:81) It is explained that motivation consists of direction and intensity, where direction indicates the tendency to act, and intensity reflects the level of determination. Self-confidence, according to Hakim et al. (2024) is the individual's belief in their own abilities. Nisa & Jannah (2021) It is further stated that self-confidence generates a strong drive to overcome obstacles, work hard, and compete fairly. The combination of motivation and self-confidence serves as a psychological factor that influences athletes' readiness in training and competition, as well as determines the achievement of optimal performance (Firdaus, 2012:92 ; Mawo Paisei et al., 2024).

Rugby, as a team sport, requires a high level of skill, effective communication, and strong cohesion among players (Marani et al., 2020). Its physically intensive nature makes physical fitness a primary factor; however, psychological aspects such as motivation and self-confidence also determine athletic performance. (Mukhtarsyaf et al., 2022; Zabaloy et al., 2021). Observations of the Rugby 7s Student Activity Unit (UKM) at the State University of Surabaya over the past three years indicate that, despite improvements in technical and physical abilities, the team has struggled to reach the championship title. In 2023, the team achieved third place in the Rektor Cup at Unugiri Bojonegoro and did not place in the Buleleng Cup. Meanwhile, in the 2024 National University Championship, the team became the runner-up, and in the 2025 Rektor Cup, it again finished in second place, showing a pattern of stagnation in the final stages of competition. This suggests that psychological aspects, particularly motivation and self-confidence, are factors that need to be

strengthened in order to maximize the athletes' potential. Mental readiness in team sports such as rugby is largely determined by motivation and self-confidence, which influence athletes' ability to train consistently and to cope with competitive pressure. (Abdullah & Azhari, 2024; Mukhtarsyaf et al., 2022). A study assessing the levels of motivation and self-confidence among Rugby 7s athletes of the State University of Surabaya prior to competition is therefore considered relevant. This research is expected to provide an overview of the athletes' psychological condition, as well as serve as an evaluation material for coaches and UKM administrators in designing more effective training and development strategies. (Mawo Paisei et al., 2024; Nisa & Jannah, 2021).

In the world of sports, motivation and self-confidence are interrelated factors that influence athletic performance. Athlete motivation serves as the driving energy that encourages them to train regularly, master game techniques, and adapt to team tactics. Motivation can be observed through the intensity of training, seriousness in following the program, and continuous efforts to improve personal quality over time. Intrinsic motivation, which originates from an individual's internal drive, encourages athletes to achieve personal targets, develop their abilities, and maintain a learning spirit when facing game challenges (Firdaus, 2012:90; Wijaya, 2016). Extrinsic motivation originates from external factors such as coach's praise, peer support, recognition, or rewards that can stimulate athletes' participation and maximize their effort in both training and competition (Shalahudin & Sifaq, 2023). Both types of motivation shape athletes' behavior, foster discipline, and enhance their ability to adapt in competitive situations under pressure. Self-confidence represents a psychological dimension that determines an athlete's success in competition. It reflects the individual's belief in their own abilities, the capacity to handle opponents' pressure, make appropriate decisions, and maintain consistent performance on the field. Confidence also plays a crucial role in emotional control, focus, and the execution of game strategies during matches (Aguss & Fahrizqi, 2020; Wijaya, 2015). Internal factors such as training experience, technical mastery, and physical

condition contribute to building an athlete's self-confidence. Meanwhile, external factors, including coach support, training environment, and sports facilities, influence athletes' mental readiness in facing competitions. The interaction between motivation and self-confidence indicates that athletes with strong drive and high belief in their abilities tend to demonstrate stable performance, overcome challenges, and execute game strategies more effectively.

Previous studies on athletes' motivation and self-confidence have shown that these two factors play a significant role in achieving sports performance. Arieputra (2018) shows that athletes' motivational drive determines their participation and commitment in competitions, while Setyaningrum (2018) shows that achievement motivation can enhance training outcomes and the quality of performance among athletes with disabilities. The level of motivation and self-confidence among indoor hockey athletes differs between male and female teams; however, both factors influence athletes' mental readiness in facing competitions. The study Sholeh & Hakim (2019) revealed that futsal athletes with a high level of self-confidence were able to prepare themselves mentally before matches. Research Aguss & Fahrizqi (2020) also explains that self-confidence contributes to performance stability among pencak silat athletes, while Hidayatullah (2024) found that internal factors play a more dominant role in building self-confidence among rugby athletes of the PON XX training camp. These findings strengthen the argument that developing motivation and self-confidence is a crucial aspect of athlete development, particularly in team sports that require intensive coordination and cooperation, such as rugby.

Furthermore, an athlete's success does not solely depend on individual factors but is also influenced by the competition atmosphere and social interactions. Support from coaches and teammates provides positive stimulation, while pressure from opponents and spectators can trigger psychological responses that affect performance. Evaluating training and match outcomes, such as recording progress and identifying weaknesses, can help refine strategies and improve quality. In addition to internal athlete factors, the development of

motivation and self-confidence should also be linked to effective team training strategies. Within the Rugby 7s Student Activity Unit at Universitas Negeri Surabaya, mental development strategies can be implemented through match simulation training, stress management, and habituation to competitive situations. Match simulation exercises help athletes recognize real pressures on the field, sharpen decision-making abilities, and foster psychological resilience. Moreover, stress management techniques such as relaxation, visualization, and controlled breathing can enhance concentration and reduce anxiety when facing strong opponents. The consistent application of these methods helps develop self-confidence through positive experiences, self-awareness, and gradual achievement of training goals.

In team rugby training, communication and coordination among players significantly influence team performance. High motivation encourages athletes to participate actively, while self-confidence enables them to take initiative and perform effectively within the team's gameplay patterns. A player with a high level of self-confidence tends to respond more quickly in executing passing or tackling strategies, allowing the team to maintain game rhythm and minimize technical errors.

Research by Zabaloy et al. (2021) explains that the synergy between physical condition, technical mastery, and mental readiness serves as a key predictor of rugby team performance. By conducting routine performance analyses, coaches can identify athletes' strengths and weaknesses in terms of technical, physical, and psychological aspects. Furthermore, assessing motivation and self-confidence through questionnaires or interviews helps coaches understand the factors influencing each athlete's psychological readiness. These data can then be used to design individual and team-based interventions that support optimal performance achievement. (Aguss & Fahrizqi, 2020; Nisa & Jannah, 2021).

The role of the coach as a mentor and motivator plays a crucial part in shaping athletes' motivation and self-confidence. Coaches who are able to

recognize individual characteristics, adjust training methods, and foster self-belief can enhance athletes' adaptability in dynamic competition situations. Conversely, training that focuses solely on physical aspects without considering psychological factors may lead to stress, mental fatigue, and a decline in athletic performance during competitions. (Hidayatullah, 2024)(Mukhtarsyaf et al., 2022). From a long-term development perspective, motivation and self-confidence not only influence current competitive performance but also have an impact on the retention and development of young athletes. Research by Mawo Paisei et al. (2024) shows that teams with well-structured training programs that emphasize motivation, self-confidence, and mental strengthening are able to enhance collective performance and achieve more consistent competitive results.

METHOD

This study was conducted to obtain a clear description of the level of motivation and self-confidence among male athletes of the Rugby 7s Student Activity Unit (UKM) at Universitas Negeri Surabaya prior to a friendly match against the East Java Rugby Team. The researcher employed a quantitative descriptive method to portray the athletes' psychological condition based on data obtained from questionnaires. Through this method, the research results can accurately reflect the actual conditions in the field without the need for specific treatments or interventions.

The questionnaire instrument consisted of two main sections: a motivation questionnaire and a self-confidence questionnaire. The motivation questionnaire was adapted from the study conducted by Arieputra (2018), comprising 37 statement items that had been tested for validity and reliability by sports psychology experts using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation and Cronbach's Alpha at a 5% significance level. The content of the motivation questionnaire was divided into two major categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation included factors such as self-control, discipline, ability, self-awareness, concentration, and personal goals in training and competition. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation was related to external factors such as rewards, praise, training facilities, and social support received from the

surrounding environment. The blueprint of the motivation questionnaire is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Indicators and Item Distribution of the Motivation Questionnaire

Variable	Sub-Variable	Factor	Indicator	Item Number	N
Intrinsic	Achievement	Knowledge	Self Control	1, 12*, 17, 29	4
			Discipline	13, 22,	4
		Ability	Self	30, 31, 14*, 16	2
			Awareness	18, 27,	3
			Concentration	32	
				4*, 25	2
Motivation	Stimulation	Goal Orientation	3, 10*, 26, 33*	4	
		Reward	Gift	6, 20, 34	3
Extrinsic Motivation	Facilities and Infrastructure	Competition Venue	Praise	5, 8, 23, 35*	4
			Training	15, 24, 36, 37	4
		Attention	Equipment	2, 7, 28	3
			Response	9*, 11, 19, 21	4
Total					37

Note : (*) Statement Negative

In addition to the motivation questionnaire, the researcher also employed a self-confidence questionnaire adapted from the study by Wijaya (2015). This instrument consists of 26 statements that have been tested for reliability and have been widely used in various studies of sports psychology at the university level. In this research, self-confidence is explained through two main factors, namely internal factors and external factors. The internal factors include self-concept, self-esteem, physical condition, and life or competition experience. Meanwhile, the external factors consist of educational background, parents' occupation, and social environment where the athletes interact. Each factor is further elaborated into several indicators to provide a more comprehensive description of athletes' self-confidence aspects. The blueprint of the self-confidence questionnaire is presented in the following table.

Table 2. Confidence Research Questionnaire Grid

Variable	Factor	Indicator	Item Number		Total
			Positif	Negatif	
Variable Confidence	Internal	Self-concept	2,8,9,26	22,11	6
		Self-esteem	1,7,14	12,16	5
		Physical condition	3,10,23	20,13,5	5
		Life or Competition Experience	4,25	21	3
	External	Education	5	24,15	3
		Parents occupation.	6	18	2
		Environment	17	19	2
Total					26

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 15 male athletes who are active members of the UKM Rugby 7s Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Based on the collected data, the respondents were between 19 and 23 years old, with an average age of 21 years. The majority of athletes had participated in at least one regional or national-level competition, and all had been involved in regular training for a minimum of six months. This indicates that the respondents had sufficient experience and physical readiness to represent the team during the friendly match against the East Java Rugby Team. The characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 3

Table 3. Characteristics of Respondents

Respondent	N	Percentage (%)
Male Rugby 7s Athletes of UNESA	15	100%
Competition Experience		
1 match	6	40%
2 match	2	13.3%
3 match	2	13.3%
4 match	5	33.3%
Age Group (Male)		
16-18 years	4	26.7%
19-21 years	8	53.3%
22-24 years	3	20%
	15	100%

The results of the motivation questionnaire were then analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to obtain the mean values and data distribution, as presented in the following table.

Table 4. Statistical Results of the Motivation Questionnaire

TEAM	Statistic Measure	Score
MALE	(Mean)	118.93
	Standart Deviation	11.029

Based on Table 4, the mean score of the athletes' motivation questionnaire was 118.93, with a standard deviation of 11.029. These values indicate a variation in the level of motivation among athletes, where some showed higher motivation scores while others were in the moderate or lower range. Overall, the mean score lies above the midpoint of the scale, suggesting that the team's general level of motivation is relatively high. To further analyze the distribution of motivation levels, the data were classified into five categories based on score intervals, as presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Motivation Questionnaire Category Results

No	Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Categori
1.	$X > 136$	0	0%	Very Good
2.	$125 \leq X \leq 135$	5	33.3%	Good
3.	$114 \leq X \leq 124$	5	33.3%	Fair
4.	$103 \leq X \leq 113$	4	26.7%	Poor
5.	$X \leq 102$	1	6.7%	Very Poor
	Total	15	100%	

These results indicate that most athletes have a generally positive level of motivation, although there remains considerable variation among individuals within the team. Subsequently, the measurement of athletes' self-confidence was conducted using an instrument consisting of 26 statement items. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to determine the mean value and data distribution, as shown in the following table.

Table 6. Statistical Results of the Confidence Questionnaire

TEAM	Statistic	Score
Male	(Mean)	72.47
	Standart Deviation	6.988

To provide a clearer picture of the data distribution, the results were further classified into five categories as shown in the following table.

Table 7. Categories of Self-Confidence Questionnaire Results

No	Interval	Frequency	Percentage	Category
1.	$X > 93$	1	6.7%	Very Good
2.	$76 \leq X \leq 82$	3	20%	Good
3.	$69 \leq X \leq 75$	7	46.7%	Fair
4.	$62 \leq X \leq 68$	3	20%	Poor
5.	$X \leq 61$	1	6.7%	Very Poor
	Total	15	100%	

Overall, these results indicate that most athletes possessed a moderate level of self-confidence, with a small proportion showing high or low levels. This distribution pattern is similar to the motivation results, where the majority of athletes were positioned in the middle category, and only a few reached the extreme levels (very good or very poor). This suggests that the team's overall psychological condition was relatively stable before the friendly match, although some individual variations in motivation and self-belief remained.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the motivation and self-confidence levels of male athletes in the Rugby 7s Student Activity Unit (UKM Rugby 7s) at Universitas Negeri Surabaya were within the moderate to good range. The mean score of motivation (118.93) and self-confidence (72.47) reflect a psychologically stable but not yet optimal condition among the athletes. These findings suggest that most athletes already possess sufficient drive to train and compete; however, confidence in their own abilities is not yet evenly distributed across the team.

This condition is relatively common in team sports that are still in the developmental and mental training stages. Motivation is a driving factor that encourages individuals to engage in purposeful and conscious activity. In sports, motivation plays a crucial role in stimulating athletes to train diligently, enhance their skills, and achieve the desired level of performance. According to

Susanto (2022), motivation represents an internal force that directs an individual's actions toward achieving specific goals.

Athletes with high motivation tend to be more persistent during training and less likely to give up when facing challenges. Based on the findings of this study, most Unesa rugby athletes demonstrated a good level of motivation,

indicating a strong enthusiasm to improve and achieve through both training and competition. However, a portion of athletes still fell within the lower category, which may be attributed to factors such as differences in competition experience, environmental influences, or suboptimal physical condition.

Meanwhile, external motivation originates from external factors such as coaches, teammates, or the surrounding environment that provide encouragement and support. Among these, the coach's role is particularly significant; through guidance, praise, and constructive feedback, athletes feel appreciated and become more enthusiastic during training. In team sports like rugby, a sense of unity and belonging within the team also serves as a strong motivational factor—athletes strive to perform well not only for their own success but also for the collective achievement of the team.

Beyond motivation, self-confidence represents an inseparable component of an athlete's mental readiness. Self-confidence reflects the degree to which an athlete believes in their ability to deliver optimal performance during competition. In this study, the average self-confidence score was categorized as moderate. Most athletes felt reasonably confident in their abilities, yet not fully prepared to handle competitive pressure.

This condition is commonly found among teams with many young or less experienced players. Experience plays a vital role in developing confidence, as each match teaches athletes how to manage anxiety, control emotions, and adapt to the dynamics of the game. Athletes who rarely compete tend to experience higher anxiety levels, whereas those who have competed more frequently develop stronger self-belief in their abilities.

Rugby, being a high-intensity and full-contact sport, places substantial physical and emotional demands on athletes, particularly those who are still adapting to competitive situations. The pressure from opponents, the crowd's reactions, and the responsibility toward the team's performance can create fear of making mistakes or losing focus during play. According to Zabaloy et al. (2021), oSports that involve physical contact, such as rugby, require a high level of

psychological readiness so that players do not easily lose emotional control. Athletes who are unable to manage tension or anxiety tend to experience a decline in performance quality. Within the Rugby 7s team of Universitas Negeri Surabaya (Unesa), several athletes are still adapting to the competitive atmosphere, which differs significantly from regular training sessions. This adjustment process requires time and mental preparation.

Differences in competition experience also appear to influence variations in motivation and self-confidence within the team. Athletes who have participated in several tournaments generally demonstrate greater enthusiasm, composure, and mental resilience compared to those competing for the first time. According to Hakim et al. (2024), Competition experience can strengthen mental readiness and foster self-belief in athletes. Each match provides direct experience in dealing with pressure, managing emotions, and making quick decisions on the field. Based on the characteristics of the respondents, 53.3% of athletes had participated in only one to two competitions, indicating that most of them are still in the stage of development and adaptation to the competitive atmosphere. This condition explains why some athletes demonstrated high motivation but relatively unstable self-confidence.

Motivation and self-confidence are closely interrelated. Athletes with high motivation generally put in greater effort during training and actively seek ways to improve their performance, which in turn strengthens their self-belief. Conversely, when motivation decreases, self-confidence also tends to decline because individuals feel less capable of achieving their goals. The same pattern was observed in this study, where athletes with higher motivation levels also exhibited stronger self-confidence compared to those with lower motivation. This finding indicates that both factors work in tandem and mutually reinforce each other in shaping athletes' mental readiness.

In the training process, coaches play a crucial role in maintaining the balance between motivation and confidence. Coaches who provide positive feedback can help athletes assess their abilities realistically without losing

enthusiasm. Effective communication between coach and athlete fosters a supportive and productive training environment that contributes to mental development. For example, coaches can offer praise for effort and constructive feedback when mistakes occur. Through this approach, athletes are less likely to view errors as failures, but rather as valuable opportunities for growth and learning.

In sports psychology, motivation and self-confidence can also be explained through the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to complete tasks or handle specific situations. Athletes with high self-efficacy tend to believe that they can overcome obstacles on the field, whereas those with low self-efficacy are more likely to give up easily or feel anxious under pressure. In this study, some athletes demonstrated relatively good self-efficacy, as reflected in their consistent training enthusiasm and willingness to make continuous improvements. However, others still exhibited doubt when faced with real competition situations.

This difference indicates that self-confidence is influenced not only by physical ability but also by emotional experience and small successes achieved throughout the training process. Mental training can serve as an effective approach to strengthen athletes' self-confidence. Techniques such as goal setting, positive self-talk, and visualization have been proven to help athletes maintain composure and focus during competition. These simple practices can be integrated regularly at the end of training sessions to develop into sustainable habits. When athletes habitually engage in positive self-dialogue and visualize their best performance, their confidence gradually increases. Furthermore, coaches may include brief reflection sessions after matches, encouraging athletes to express their experiences and emotions during competition. This approach not only enhances team cohesion but also helps athletes recognize their potential and weaknesses more objectively

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study on the motivation and self-confidence of

male athletes of the UKM Rugby 7s team at Universitas Negeri Surabaya prior to the friendly match against the East Java Rugby Team, it can be concluded that the overall psychological condition of the athletes is in the moderate category. The analysis shows that the athletes' level of motivation is relatively strong, indicating that most of them possess the drive to train and compete, although it has not yet reached an optimal and consistent level of enthusiasm. Similarly, their self-confidence is categorized as moderate, suggesting that the athletes generally believe in their abilities but still experience doubt and anxiety when facing competitive pressure.

These two aspects motivation and self-confidence are interrelated in shaping the athletes' mental readiness, where motivation serves as the driving force during training, while self-confidence determines their courage to perform optimally during competition. Mental conditioning thus becomes an essential component that complements the physical and technical training already established within UKM Rugby 7s Unesa.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that athletes understand the importance of motivation and self-confidence as key factors influencing their performance during competition. Athletes are expected to cultivate intrinsic motivation, maintain consistent training discipline, and strengthen their belief in personal abilities to achieve optimal performance in every match. For coaches, team managers, and fellow teammates, it is essential to provide continuous positive support through open communication, constructive feedback, and a training environment that fosters team cohesion and enthusiasm. Support from coaches and teammates can significantly enhance self-confidence and promote a healthy sense of competitive spirit among athletes.

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