

Family Economic Conditions and Performance of Athletes: The Importance of a Social Approach in Sports Development

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ABSTRACT

Family economic conditions are a crucial determinant of athlete performance, particularly during the training and development stages of a sports career. This study aims to examine the relationship between family economic conditions and athlete performance and the urgency of a social approach within the sports training system. Based on literature review and previous empirical findings, adequate family economic conditions contribute to optimal athlete performance through the provision of basic needs such as nutrition, training facilities, sports equipment, and participation in competitions. This research uses qualitative methods. Qualitative methods aim to understand the meaning behind behaviour, experiences, and individuals' perspectives on a phenomenon deeply and contextually. This research was conducted in Sinjai Regency, with 50 athletes from various sports branches as research subjects. The research focuses on two main variables, namely family support (independent variable) and athlete performance (dependent variable). Data collection techniques in this study include semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Field data shows that differences in family emotional and financial support create significant variation in athletes' physical and mental readiness to compete. Social inequality in sports creates dynamics that reflect disparities in society. According to Sarason, family support can be emotional, instrumental, and financial. Access becomes a major issue, with participants from higher social strata more easily accessing facilities and support compared to those from lower strata, who face obstacles. The structure of sports competitions functions as an extension of this inequality, affecting competition outcomes. These findings indicate that improving athletic performance can be achieved not only through intensive training but also requires social interventions and supportive policies.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 2025/10/13

Accepted: 2025/07/19

Published: 2025/10/25

KEYWORDS

Family;
Economic Conditions;
Performance of Athletes;
Social Approach;
Sports Development..

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

- A. Conception and design of the study;
- B. Acquisition of data;
- C. Analysis and interpretation of data;
- D. Manuscript preparation;
- E. Obtaining funding

Cites this Article : Husna, Friska Enytama El; Nurfadillah, Nurfadillah; Hudain, Muh. Adnan; Alwi, Alimin. (2025). Family Economic Conditions and Performance of Athletes: The Importance of a Social Approach in Sports Development. **Competitor: Jurnal Pendidikan Kepeatihan Olahraga**. 17 (3), p.2723-2731

INTRODUCTION

Sports are one of the fields that can bring achievement and pride to a nation. However, optimal sporting performance depends not only on the athlete's talent and hard

work but is also influenced by various external factors, including the athlete's family's socioeconomic status.

In the world of sports, good physical ability and structured training are two essential components for producing high-achieving athletes. However, it cannot be denied that an athlete's success is determined by more than just technical and physical factors. Social aspects play a crucial role and are often the hidden determinants behind an athlete's performance. One concrete example can be seen in cases where an athlete possesses excellent physical ability and has undergone training according to national standards, yet still fails to achieve maximum results in competition.

This problem can arise due to obstacles stemming from social factors, particularly those related to the family's economic situation and the surrounding social environment. For example, an athlete from a family with a low economic income may struggle to meet their daily nutritional needs, which are balanced and appropriate for their body's needs as an athlete. Even if a player receives maximum support from a professional trainer at the training ground, if nutritional needs are not met at home, muscle recovery, physical growth, and endurance will be disrupted. This will directly impact performance during competitions.

Furthermore, economic constraints can lead to a lack of support facilities, such as personal training equipment, additional supplements, or transportation to training and competition venues. In some cases, athletes must also help their parents earn a living, ultimately reducing rest time and focus on training. A family environment that lacks emotional and psychological support can also be a source of stress, affecting an athlete's motivation and self-confidence.

Thus, social factors such as economic background, family circumstances, and lifestyle outside the training environment have a significant impact on the development of an athlete's character and performance. Therefore, a more comprehensive and holistic approach to athlete development is needed, emphasizing not only physical training but also social conditions and the athlete's overall well-being. This approach is crucial to ensure that each athlete's potential can develop optimally without being hindered by factors beyond their capabilities.

Athlete performance is the result of a complex interaction between various factors, both internal and external. Internally, performance is determined by physical, psychological, and technical aspects, such as muscle strength, endurance, motivation, concentration, and mastery of sports skills (Azizy, 2024). These elements include physical abilities such as muscle strength, endurance, and agility; psychological abilities, including motivation, concentration, and mental toughness; and technical skills related to mastery of basic techniques and strategies in a particular sport. Maximum performance can be achieved if all these aspects are developed in a balanced and integrated manner. However, external factors such as the social environment and family support also contribute significantly to achieving optimal performance for an athlete. Family support is a crucial element, providing not only emotional encouragement but also material assistance that supports the training and competition process.

The family plays an early foundation in developing an athlete's character, discipline, and work ethic from an early age. The presence and involvement of the family in training and competitions can foster self-confidence and increase an athlete's motivation to excel (Tomi et al., 2021). In addition to moral support, the family's economic situation is also a key determinant in the athlete's development process. Training costs, equipment purchases, transportation, and meeting nutritional needs to support performance require substantial financial support. Therefore, the family's level of well-being directly impacts an athlete's opportunity to consistently develop.

Various studies have shown that a family's economic situation is closely related to access to the nutrition and healthcare services needed by athletes. (Yuliasitri, 2021) emphasized that low-income families tend to have limited support for their children's sports training needs. Low-income families tend to be unable to provide adequate support for their children's various athletic needs.

A family's economic situation is a major factor determining a child's quality of life, including education and the development of athletic talent. This is reinforced by (Werdiningsih & Astarani, 2012), who stated that a family's economic status influences the fulfilment of basic needs such as nutritious food, health care, and opportunities for children to participate in self-development activities, including sports. This is in line with Santoso's (2018) opinion, which states that many talented athletes cannot develop optimally due to limited funds. Families with limited economic conditions often experience various obstacles in supporting the needs of children who participate in sports training. The costs required to attend training, purchase equipment, transportation to training venues, and fulfil adequate nutrition are often a significant burden. These limitations directly impact children's opportunities to develop optimally in the world of sports. As a result, children with great talent and potential can miss out on golden opportunities due to a lack of access to the facilities and supporting resources needed in the development process.

Nutrition is a crucial factor in supporting athlete performance (Safitri, n.d.). Adequate nutrition is directly related to stamina, strength, and endurance. Families with middle- to upper-income families generally have greater access to balanced, nutritious meals, supplements, and healthcare services. Conversely, families with limited financial resources are more likely to be unable to meet athletes' nutritional needs, negatively impacting performance (Yuliana & Fajar, 2021).

Furthermore, access to healthcare services also differs. Athletes from wealthy families can afford routine health checks, injury therapy, and specialized care. Meanwhile, athletes from lower-income families often delay injury treatment due to financial constraints, which can lead to decreased performance.

Beyond economic factors, a social approach to sports development also plays a crucial role in improving athlete performance. This approach emphasizes the importance of collaboration between families, coaches, schools, and the sports community. Zhang et al. (2025) indicated that the active presence and involvement of parents in their children's sports activities can be a balancing factor that mitigates the negative impact of family financial constraints. This approach emphasizes the importance of.

According to Zein, Juniar, Fadillah, and Fidrayani (2024), the family plays a crucial role in fostering a child's social and emotional development. Children who receive strong support from their families tend to be better able to interact with friends, manage their emotions, and adapt to their surroundings.

A stable family socioeconomic situation enables parents to consistently provide attention and emotional support to their children. This support helps children adjust more easily to changes in school and their social environment. With family support, children are better prepared to face social and emotional challenges and can build healthy relationships. Therefore, family socioeconomic factors play a crucial role in supporting children's social and emotional development, enabling them to grow into balanced individuals who are able to adapt to their surroundings.

According to Subhi et al. (2023), social support provided by those around them, such as family, friends, and the community, significantly increases a person's motivation. When individuals feel supported by their social environment, they tend to have a stronger drive to strive and achieve their desired goals.

Furthermore, a positive social environment also plays a role in building self-confidence and enthusiasm. Support from the surrounding environment helps individuals better prepare for various challenges and difficulties, thus making them more motivated to keep moving forward and not give up easily in achieving success.

Mikdar et al. (2025) stated that social conditions and family education levels play a crucial role in shaping an athlete's character and discipline. These two factors not only influence daily behavior and attitudes but also serve as a foundation for developing a strong mental attitude and work ethic. The discipline and character developed within the family environment significantly impact an athlete's abilities and performance during training and competitions. Therefore, good parenting and family support are the primary foundations for athletes to achieve maximum performance in their chosen sport.

On the other hand, economic disparity also creates disparities in opportunities for athletes to compete and develop their sports careers. Athletes from wealthy families have a greater chance of participating in national and international tournaments due to adequate financial support, while athletes from less fortunate families are often hampered by the costs of transportation, accommodation, and competition registration (Santoso, 2018). This situation indicates an inequality that has the potential to hinder equal opportunities for achievement in sports.

The opportunity to participate in tournaments or competitions provides valuable experience for an athlete's development. According to Santoso (2018), the more frequently an athlete participates in competitions, the greater their confidence and competitive experience. However, the costs of transportation, accommodation, and competition registration often pose a barrier for athletes from less fortunate families. In many cases, athletes with great potential fail to reach the national or international level due to the inability to cover travel and equipment costs. This demonstrates the gap between athletes from wealthy and less fortunate families in terms of opportunities to achieve.

Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that athlete performance is not only influenced by individual ability alone, but also greatly influenced by family, social and economic support. Emotional and financial support, as well as access to nutrition and healthcare, are crucial factors in shaping an athlete's optimal performance. Therefore, a deeper study of the role of economic conditions and family support on athlete performance is relevant to provide a scientific basis for formulating more inclusive and equitable sports development policies and strategies.

METHODS

This research employed qualitative methods. Qualitative methods aim to understand the meaning behind an individual's behavior, experiences, and perspectives on a phenomenon in depth and context (Creswell, 2018). Through this approach, researchers attempt to realistically depict the experiences and social dynamics experienced by the research subjects. A qualitative approach positions participants as research subjects, who are assumed to have direct knowledge and experience related to the phenomenon being studied (Sugiyono, 2019).

This research was conducted in Sinjai Regency, with 50 athletes from various sports as subjects. The research focused on two main variables: family support (the independent variable) and athlete performance (the dependent variable). Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively, following the interactive analysis steps outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which include:

1. Data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw data obtained from the field.
2. Data presentation is organizing data in narrative, tabular, or matrix form to facilitate understanding of the relationships between categories.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification, namely the process of interpreting the analyzed data to find patterns, themes, and deeper meaning.

To ensure data validity, this study used source and method triangulation techniques (Denzin, 2017; Sugiyono, 2019).

1. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from athletes, coaches, and peers.
2. Method triangulation was conducted by combining the results of interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Furthermore, member checking was also conducted by asking participants to double-check the researcher's interpretations to ensure they aligned with their experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to understand the relationship between family support and economic conditions on athlete performance in Sinjai Regency. Based on in-depth

interviews with several athletes and coaches, social and economic inequalities were found to affect motivation, training consistency, and athlete performance. Field data indicate that differences in emotional and financial family support create significant variations in athletes' physical and mental readiness for competition.

Social inequality in sport creates dynamics that reflect disparities in society. According to Sarason et al. (in Smith et al., 2020), family support can be emotional, instrumental, and financial. Access is a key issue, with participants from higher income groups having easier access to facilities and support than those from lower income groups, who face barriers. The structure of sporting competition serves as an extension of this inequality, impacting competition outcomes. According to Maslow (modern relevance: McLeod, 2018; Rahman, 2022), physiological needs (food, transportation) must be met before individuals can pursue higher-level needs such as achievement. Ikhsan's constraints reflect barriers to basic needs that impact performance. Differences in recognition and opportunity also play a significant role, with certain groups receiving greater recognition and opportunities, while others experience discrimination. This suggests that sporting competition not only reflects but also reinforces existing patterns of social inequality. Coleman (in Putra, 2021) explains that social networks and support from family or the community can increase an individual's chances of achieving success.

A family's economic situation plays a crucial role in sustaining an athlete's training. Family financial and emotional support contribute to motivation, consistency, and achievement. Athletes with limited economic resources tend to face barriers related to transportation, nutrition, and training time. This finding reinforces social and sport psychology theory that family is a key external factor in athlete development.

Economic Disadvantages and Their Impact on Athlete Performance

Interviews with athlete Ikhsan indicate that economic limitations are a major inhibiting factor in the training process. Ikhsan admitted to frequently experiencing transportation difficulties to training venues and a lack of adequate nutrition, which directly impacts endurance and stamina. As a result, physical performance declines and training participation becomes inconsistent.

These findings reinforce Maslow's (McLeod, 2018; Rahman, 2022) view that physiological needs, such as nutritious food and transportation, are fundamental to individuals' ability to fulfil higher-level needs, such as achievement. In other words, when an athlete's basic needs are not met, their ability to focus and perform is impaired.

Socially, economic constraints also limit athletes' access to adequate training facilities, professional coaches, and standard sports equipment. This situation reflects social inequality in sport, where groups with limited economic resources face structural barriers that are difficult to overcome without external support (Coakley, 2021; Smith et al., 2020).

Family Support as a Pillar of Motivation and Training Consistency

In contrast to Ikhsan, athlete Rifka described a positive experience thanks to the full support of her family. Rifka received emotional support in the form of motivation

from her parents, as well as financial support in the form of purchasing sports equipment, transportation costs, and direct parental attendance at competitions. This support fostered self-confidence, commitment to training, and strong intrinsic motivation.

These results align with the view of Sarason et al. (in Smith et al., 2020) that family support consists of three main forms:

1. Emotional support, in the form of attention, empathy, and motivation;
2. Instrumental support, in the form of practical assistance such as transportation or the provision of facilities;
3. Financial support, in the form of funding for training equipment and necessities.

These three forms of support play a crucial role in maintaining athletes' motivation and psychological well-being, which indirectly improves athletic performance (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004; Harwood & Knight, 2015). In this context, family support serves as a mediator between socioeconomic conditions and athlete performance.

Coaches' Perspective: Training Consistency as a Reflection of Economic Support

Interviews with athletic coaches confirmed that differences in family economic support create disparities in training frequency and consistency. Athletes who receive financial support from their families are better able to train regularly and with focus, while athletes facing economic hardship often have to divide their time between training and side jobs to support their families. This situation results in decreased training intensity and performance quality.

This finding aligns with Coleman's theory (in Putra, 2021) on social capital, which emphasizes that social support from family and community networks can expand an individual's opportunities for success. In the context of sports, socioeconomic support acts as social capital that strengthens athletes' competitiveness in the competitive arena.

These findings reinforce the theory of Social Support and Structural Inequality (Sarason et al., 1990; Coakley, 2021), which states that social structures in sport reflect general societal inequalities, where access to resources determines the extent to which individuals can participate and achieve.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Overall, this study shows that:

1. Family economic conditions directly influence access to training. Athletes from disadvantaged families face logistical and physiological barriers that reduce performance.
2. Family support acts as a reinforcing factor, increasing athletes' motivation and self-confidence. Emotional and financial support have been shown to strengthen competitive spirit and mental resilience.
3. Social inequalities in sport remain significant, with athletes from more economically advantaged backgrounds having greater opportunities to

develop. Coaching and competition structures often reinforce these inequalities if not countered by inclusive policies.

Research Implications

These findings indicate that improving athlete performance cannot be achieved solely through intensive training, but also requires social interventions and supporting policies, such as:

1. Nutrition and transportation subsidy programs for high-achieving athletes from low-income families;
2. Training for parents on the importance of psychological support in developing young athletes;
3. Development policies that prioritize equal access to sports facilities across all social strata.

CONCLUSION

Sport can provide achievement and pride, but it doesn't solely depend on an athlete's talent and hard work. The family's socioeconomic status plays a crucial role in achieving success. Factors such as nutritional intake and support for training facilities are significantly influenced by economic disadvantage. Athlete development needs to be conducted holistically, taking into account their social well-being. Qualitative research was conducted in Sinjai Regency with 50 athletes, using semi-structured interviews and qualitative analysis. Social inequality creates dynamics in sport, where family support and access to facilities are key issues. These findings underscore the importance of family support in the development of athlete achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank Dr. Alimin Alwi, S.Sos., M.Pd., and Dr. Muh Adnan Hudain, M.Pd., for providing invaluable guidance, direction, and knowledge during the preparation and writing of this work. Their support and knowledge were crucial to the completion of this research.

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