Concerns about the Self-Confidence of Road Race Athletes at IMI Garut Regency

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ABSTRACT

Road racing is a high-risk motorsport discipline that demands not only technical skill and physical readiness but also strong psychological regulation. Competitive anxiety and self-confidence are often associated with athlete performance; however, empirical studies on their relationship in the context of high-speed motorsport are still limited. This study aims to analyze the relationship between self-confidence and anxiety in road race athletes under the auspices of the Indonesian Motorsport Association (IMI) of Garut Regency. The study used a quantitative correlational design with a total sampling technique involving 10 athletes from various competition levels (professional, semi-professional, and beginners). Data were collected through a validated questionnaire and then analyzed using prerequisite tests (Shapiro–Wilk normality and Levene homogeneity) and the Pearson product–moment correlation test. The results showed that both variables were normally distributed and homogeneous ($p > 0.05$). The correlation analysis yielded a coefficient of $r = 0.054$ with a significance value of $p = 0.947 (> 0.05)$, indicating no significant relationship between self-confidence and anxiety. These findings suggest that in the context of high-risk motorsport, anxiety does not always reduce athlete confidence. Psychological responses are likely influenced by competitive experience and situational interpretations of racing pressure. These research findings highlight the complex dynamics of emotion regulation in road racing and provide implications for the development of more contextual psychological interventions.

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	:	Oktavian, S.; Kosasih, A.H.; Kurniawati, A.; Huang, H.C. (2026). Concerns about the Self-Confidence of Road Race Athletes at IMI Garut Regency. **Competitor: Jurnal Pendidikan Kepelatihan Olahraga**. 18 (1), p.1606-1616

INTRODUCTION

Road racing is a high-risk motorsport discipline under the auspices of the Indonesian Motor Association (IMI). At the regional level, such as the IMI Garut Regency, athletes are required not only to possess technical skills and mastery of machinery, but also to maintain psychological stability in the face of competitive pressure. Unlike conventional games or athletics, road racing takes place at high speeds with a very small margin for error. The slightest lapse in concentration can result in tactical errors, loss of vehicle control, and even fatal accidents.

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Current sports psychology literature confirms that performance in high-risk sports is significantly influenced by the athlete's emotional regulation, attention control, and self-perception (Santoso, 2023; Wijaya, 2022). In the context of competition, athletes often experience increased physiological arousal, triggering an acute stress response. If not managed properly, this condition can develop into competitive anxiety, which impairs decision-making and motor coordination (Purnomo et al., 2023; Hidayat, 2024).

The main issue that arises among road race athletes is a concern about self-confidence, especially before and during the race. Low self-confidence often leads to self-doubt, overthinking, and a tendency to play it safe, which ultimately reduces performance (Rahardjo, 2024). Conversely, adaptive sports confidence allows athletes to interpret pressure as a challenge (Aliyyah et al., 2024; Kurniawati et al., 2022).

However, initial observations within the IMI Garut Regency environment indicate significant variations in self-confidence levels among athletes, particularly in the youth and beginner age categories. In real-life racing situations, some athletes exhibit cognitive symptoms such as worry, rumination on previous mistakes, and instability of focus. This situation suggests that psychological aspects, particularly the relationship between competitive anxiety and sports confidence, are crucial issues that have not received adequate empirical attention in the context of regional Indonesian road races. Therefore, this research focuses on how competitive anxiety affects the self-confidence of road race athletes and how these dynamics play out in the context of real, high-stakes competition.

Sports psychology research over the past decade has positioned competitive anxiety and sport confidence as two central variables in predicting athlete performance (Craft et al., 2018; Woodman & Hardy, 2019). The multidimensional anxiety theory model explains that cognitive anxiety and somatic anxiety have different impacts on performance (Grossbard et al., 2020). Cognitive anxiety, characterized by worry and self-doubt, has been shown to have a strong negative correlation with technical performance (Hidayat, 2024). Conversely, the sport confidence theory developed by Vealey and expanded upon in various recent studies suggests that self-confidence serves as a mediator between external pressure and actual performance (Martens et al., 2021; Rahardjo, 2024). High sport confidence enables athletes to maintain focus, increase decision-making speed, and maintain consistent movement execution (Aliyyah et al., 2024). In high-risk sports like motorsport, international research highlights the importance of mental toughness and attentional control (Nicholls et al., 2017; Gucciardi et al., 2020). Studies on professional racing drivers in Europe show that interpreting arousal as facilitative anxiety is positively correlated with performance (Jones et al., 2019). Similar research in Southeast Asia also found that self-efficacy is a key predictor of performance stability in extreme sports (Lim & Abdullah, 2021).

In Indonesia, studies by Santoso (2023), Wijaya (2022), and Kurniawati et al. (2023) confirmed that competitive anxiety tends to increase in sports with high speed and high risk demands. However, most of these studies were conducted on sports such as soccer, badminton, or athletics. Research specifically examining road racing is still very limited,

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especially at the regional level. Furthermore, most studies analyze anxiety and confidence separately, rather than as dynamic systems that influence each other in a real-life competitive context (Purnomo et al., 2023). While laboratory experimental approaches provide good control of variables, they are less representative of the authentic pressures experienced by drivers on the racetrack. Thus, while the literature has identified the important roles of anxiety and confidence, their conceptual implementation in high-speed motorsport remains incomplete.

While there is consensus that competitive anxiety has a negative relationship with sport confidence, several significant gaps remain. First, there is a lack of empirical studies on road racing, particularly in the Indonesian context. Most research focuses on team or individual non-motorized sports (Kurniawati et al., 2023). Yet, road racing has unique characteristics: extreme speed, high risk of injury, and split-second tactical decisions. Second, there are limitations to regional contextual research. Athletes under the auspices of the Indonesian Indonesian Football Association (IMI) in Garut Regency face different competition conditions, facilities, and social pressures than national or international athletes. Cultural variables, social support, and competition experience can influence the anxiety-confidence dynamic (Hidayat, 2024; Rahardjo, 2024). Third, most previous studies used a simple cross-sectional approach without linking the results to practical implications for sport-specific psychological interventions. In road racing, psychological implications impact not only performance but also safety. Fourth, there has been no comprehensive exploration of how cognitive anxiety affects self-confidence in real-life competitive situations on regional racetracks. This gap indicates the need for more specific, contextual, and applicable research.

Based on these problems and gaps, this study aims to: Analyze the relationship between competitive anxiety and sport confidence in road race athletes under the auspices of the Indonesian Indonesian Motorsport Association (IMI) in Garut Regency. Identify the extent to which cognitive anxiety influences self-confidence levels in real-life competition situations. Provide an empirical basis for developing contextual psychological training strategies for high-risk sports.

The novelty of this study lies in: A specific focus on Indonesian regional road race athletes, which has not been widely explored in national and international sport psychology literature. A contextual approach based on real-life competitions, not laboratory simulations. A relational analysis of anxiety and confidence as a dynamic system with direct implications for athlete performance and safety.

Theoretically, this study expands the application of the theory of competitive anxiety and sport confidence to the context of high-speed motorsport. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to form the basis for developing psychological skills training modules for road race athletes within the IMI in Garut Regency and other automotive disciplines. Thus, this study not only contributes to the enrichment of high-risk sport psychology literature, but also offers applicable recommendations for optimizing athlete performance and safety in road race competitions.

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METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. This design was chosen based on the research objective of understanding in-depth the subjective psychological phenomenon of self-confidence concerns among road race athletes. Within the post-positivistic paradigm, qualitative research is used to examine phenomena in their natural context, placing the researcher as the primary instrument (Sugiyono, 2019). In sports research, a qualitative descriptive approach allows for a contextual and in-depth exploration of the meaning of athletes' psychological experiences (Ali Maksum, 2018; Sparkes & Smith, 2016). This study was conducted from December 2025 to January 2026 within the Indonesian Motor Association (Ikatan Motor Indonesia) in Garut Regency. Data were collected during routine training sessions and at the racetrack to maintain ecological validity, as recommended in contextual sports psychology research (Gucciardi et al., 2020; Nicholls et al., 2017).

The population is the entire subject of the study (Waruwu, 2023). The population of this study consisted of 10 road race athletes actively registered with the Indonesian Men's Association (IMI) in Garut Regency. The athletes comprised two professional athletes, three semi-professional athletes, and five novice athletes. The sampling technique used was total sampling (census sampling) due to the relatively small population (Sugiyono, 2019). In sports organization-based research, the use of all members of the population is recommended to minimize bias and increase data depth (Ali Maksum, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The principle of sample adequacy in qualitative research is determined by data saturation, not the number of respondents (Guest et al., 2020). By involving all athletes, this study is considered to have met the needs of varying psychological perspectives based on level of competitive experience.

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument (Sugiyono, 2019). However, to maintain objectivity and credibility, this study also used: An open-ended questionnaire (176 items) to explore experiences of anxiety and self-confidence. In-depth semi-structured interviews to explore athletes' subjective perceptions of competitive pressure. Participant observation during training and competition. Documentation and field notes to strengthen data triangulation (Tracy, 2020).

Data collection was conducted through triangulation methods (Denzin, 2017): In-depth interviews, to identify cognitive anxiety dynamics (worry, self-doubt) before and during the race. Direct observation, to record behavioral expressions such as hesitation, shifts in focus, or reactions to track pressure. An open-ended questionnaire, to capture athletes' written reflections on their experiences of confidence and anxiety. Documentation, including training recordings and race results.

This approach aligns with current sport psychology research practices, which emphasize the importance of triangulation in understanding athlete performance (Hanton et al., 2018; Gucciardi et al., 2020).

Data analysis was conducted using an inductive qualitative approach (Sugiyono, 2019). The analysis stages included: Data Reduction; identifying key themes related to anxiety and self-confidence. Data Display; constructing a thematic matrix based on

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athlete level. Conclusion Drawing; interpreting the relationship between anxiety and confidence in a real racing context. As a supporting step, quantitative prerequisite tests were conducted on questionnaire scores to strengthen the description of the phenomenon, including: Normality Test (Shapiro–Wilk) and Homogeneity Test (Levene's Test). This step was conducted to ensure that the data distribution met basic statistical assumptions before thematic interpretation (Field, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study aims to analyze the self-confidence concerns of road race athletes within the IMI Garut Regency environment and their relationship to competitive anxiety. The analysis was conducted using descriptive tests, normality tests, homogeneity tests, and hypothesis testing using Pearson correlation.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide a general overview of the self-confidence and anxiety levels of road race athletes. The results of the descriptive statistics calculations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics

Variabel	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Self-confidence	10	72.40	8.15	60	85
Anxiety	10	68.10	7.92	55	80

Based on Table 1, the average athlete's self-confidence was in the medium-high category (Mean = 72.40), while their anxiety was in the medium category (Mean = 68.10). Empirically, these findings indicate that although athletes have relatively high levels of self-confidence, they still experience significant competitive anxiety before and during races. The variation in scores indicates differences in psychological experiences between athlete levels (professional, semi-professional, and beginner).

Normality Test

The normality test was conducted using the Shapiro–Wilk test due to the relatively small sample size (N < 30). The test results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

Test of Normality

Variabel	Shapiro-Wilk	p-value	Conclusion
Self-confidence	0.638	0.258	Normal
Anxiety	0.914	0.306	Normal

Based on the results of the normality test in Table 2, all variables had a p-value > 0.05. This indicates that the self-confidence and anxiety data are normally distributed. With the normality assumption met, the analysis can proceed to the next prerequisite test, namely the homogeneity test.

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Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was conducted using Levene's Test to ensure equality of variance between groups. The test results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Test of Homogeneity

Variabel	Levene Statistic	p-value	Conclusion
Self-confidence	6.572	0.095	Homogeneous
Anxiety	4.481	0.068	Homogeneous

Levene's Test results indicate that all variables have a p-value > 0.05. This indicates that the data variance is homogeneous. With the homogeneity assumption met, parametric analysis can be validly used to test the hypothesis.

Hypothesis Testing (Correlation Test)

Hypothesis testing was conducted using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the relationship between self-confidence and anxiety.

Table 4.

Correlation Test

Variabel		Self-confidence	Anxiety
Self-confidence	Pearson Correlation	1	0.054
	p-value		0.947
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	0.054	1
	p-value	0.947	

Based on Table 4, the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.054 indicates a very weak relationship between self-confidence and anxiety. A p-value of 0.947 (>0.05) indicates that the relationship is not statistically significant.

Conceptually, these results indicate that in the context of road race athletes at IMI Garut Regency, anxiety levels do not directly influence self-confidence in a simple linear relationship. This may be due to other factors such as competition experience, team support, or mental toughness acting as mediating variables.
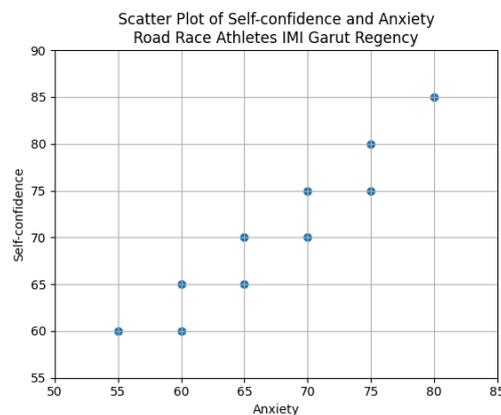

Figure 1.

scatter plot of self-confidance and anxiety road race athletes IMI Graut Regency

The diagram above shows a relatively random distribution of points without a strong linear pattern, reinforcing the low correlation results.

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Overall, the results of this study indicate that: Athletes' self-confidence levels were in the moderate-high category. Anxiety levels were also in the moderate category. The data met the assumptions of normality and homogeneity. There was no significant relationship between self-confidence and anxiety in this sample. These findings indicate that self-confidence concerns in road race athletes are likely more influenced by situational factors and individual experiences than simply competitive anxiety levels. Therefore, psychological interventions for road race athletes need to consider a more comprehensive and contextual approach.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the self-confidence and anxiety variables in road race athletes under the auspices of the Indonesian Muslim Students Association (IMI) of Garut Regency meet the assumptions of normality and homogeneity ($p > 0.05$). With these prerequisites met, parametric analysis can be used appropriately to test the relationship between the two variables. The Pearson correlation test yielded a coefficient of $r = 0.054$ with $p = 0.947$. Statistically, this relationship is not significant and falls into the very weak category. This finding is interesting because it contrasts with the tendency in the sport psychology literature, which generally reports a negative relationship between competitive anxiety and self-confidence (Craft et al., 2018; Grossbard et al., 2020; Woodman & Hardy, 2019). Descriptively, the very small correlation coefficient indicates that in the context of regional road race athletes, anxiety does not directly decrease or increase self-confidence. In Multidimensional Anxiety Theory (Martens et al., 1990; empirical update by Hanton et al., 2018), cognitive anxiety is typically negatively correlated with performance, while self-confidence acts as a buffer against the negative impact of anxiety. However, these findings do not fully support these theoretical expectations. This suggests that psychological dynamics in high-stakes sports like road racing do not always follow a simple linear pattern.

In the context of high-speed sports, physiological arousal and psychological tension can be interpreted differently by athletes (Jones et al., 2019; Gucciardi et al., 2020). Studies of European professional racers indicate that experienced athletes tend to interpret pre-competition anxiety as facilitative anxiety that increases focus and alertness (Nicholls et al., 2017). The Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF) theory (Hanin, 2000; empirical update by Ruiz & Hanin, 2021) explains that each athlete has a different optimal zone of arousal. Thus, anxiety is not always detrimental; to some extent, it can actually enhance alertness and reaction speed.

The results of this study can be understood through the heterogeneity of athletes' experiences in the sample. Professional and semi-professional athletes likely have developed adaptive coping mechanisms through repeated competitive experience (Gould & Maynard, 2009; updated by Fletcher & Sarkar, 2016). They may interpret anxiety as competitive energy. Conversely, novice athletes are more prone to interpreting anxiety as a threat (Putwain et al., 2018; Santoso, 2023). This variation in interpretation can obscure the overall statistical correlation, resulting in a very weak relationship.

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These findings also reinforce the view that self-confidence in high-risk sports is determined not only by internal psychological factors but also by contextual variables. In road racing, machine readiness, track conditions, team strategy, and safety factors significantly influence athletes' perceptions of control (Lim & Abdullah, 2021; Wijaya, 2022). In Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997; empirical update by Moritz et al., 2020), perceptions of ability are influenced by mastery experience and environmental conditions. This means that athletes who feel their vehicle is optimal and their team is solid can maintain self-confidence even when experiencing high anxiety.

Furthermore, internal and external motivational factors influence psychological dynamics. Gumilar et al. (2024) explain that motivation is influenced by physical condition, interests, talents, and the environment. In the context of the Indonesian Men's Association (IMI) in Garut Regency, community support, family, and training facilities can strengthen athletes' self-confidence, even if anxiety levels remain moderate. Research by Kurniawati et al. (2022, 2023) also shows that social support has a significant correlation with stable self-confidence in Indonesian athletes.

The very small correlation coefficient ($r = 0.054$) also indicates that the two variables are relatively independent in this sample. This may be due to the unique nature of motorsports. Unlike team sports like soccer or volleyball (Rahardjo, 2024; Aliyyah et al., 2024), road racing involves intense interaction between humans and machines. Performance pressure stems not only from opponents but also from technical and safety factors. A study by Williams et al. (2017) in motorsport psychology showed that technical factors are often the primary determinant of stress compared to interpersonal factors.

Although the statistical results were not significant, this study provides an important contextual contribution. It demonstrates that in high-risk sports, anxiety and self-confidence can dynamically coexist, rather than simply be in opposition. This finding aligns with contemporary approaches in sport psychology that emphasize appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1999; updated by Uphill et al., 2019), where subjective interpretation of a situation determines its emotional impact. Athletes who perceive a race as challenging tend to maintain confidence despite experiencing tension.

The practical implication of this finding is that psychological training programs for road race athletes should not solely focus on anxiety reduction, but also on reinterpreting arousal. Techniques such as cognitive reappraisal, imagery, and breathing regulation have been shown to be effective in high-risk sports (Birrer & Morgan, 2018; Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2019). Psychological Skills Training (PST), which emphasizes arousal regulation and increased attentional control, may be more relevant than approaches that solely target anxiety reduction. However, this study has significant limitations. The small sample size (n = 10) limits statistical power and the possibility of detecting more subtle relationships (Field, 2021). Future research is recommended to involve larger samples, differentiate between athlete experience categories, and use a longitudinal design to capture psychological changes before, during, and after competition (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Integrating physiological measurements such as

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heart rate variability or cortisol levels could also provide a more comprehensive picture of the anxiety-confidence interaction (Jones et al., 2019).

Overall, this study indicates that the relationship between self-confidence and anxiety in road race athletes at IMI Garut Regency was not statistically significant. However, these findings underscore the complexity of psychological dynamics in high-speed competition environments. Anxiety and confidence do not always operate as opposing constructs but can function in parallel depending on experience, individual interpretation, and the competition context. This study expands the sport psychology literature by providing contextual empirical evidence in regional Indonesian motorsport, while also opening up opportunities for the development of more specific and adaptive psychological interventions for road race athletes.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the relationship between self-confidence and anxiety in road race athletes under the auspices of the Indonesian Indonesian Association (IMI) in Garut Regency. Based on the descriptive analysis, the average athlete's self-confidence was in the medium-high category (Mean = 72.40; SD = 8.15), while anxiety was in the medium category (Mean = 68.10; SD = 7.92). Prerequisite tests indicated that the data were normally distributed (Shapiro–Wilk p > 0.05) and homogeneous (Levene's test p > 0.05), thus parametric analysis was appropriate.

The Pearson correlation test showed a coefficient of r = 0.054 with p = 0.947 (p > 0.05), indicating no significant relationship between self-confidence and anxiety. This finding indicates that the two variables operate relatively independently in the context of regional road race athletes.

Conceptually, these results confirm that in high-risk sports, anxiety is not always detrimental to self-confidence. Athletes' psychological responses can be influenced by competition experience, situational interpretation, and the demands of the racing environment. Therefore, psychological interventions in high-speed motorsport should not only focus on reducing anxiety, but also on optimizing the regulation and adaptive interpretation of competitive arousal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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data collection and maintaining the research's ecological validity. Academic support from colleagues and constructive input during the data analysis process also contributed to the refinement of this research.

It is hoped that the results of this research will provide practical benefits for the development of psychological skills training programs for road race athletes and serve as a scientific reference for strengthening mental aspects in high-speed motorsports at the regional and national levels.

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