



Kinestetik : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Jasmani 9 (3) (2025)

Kinestetik : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Jasmani

<https://ejournal.unib.ac.id/index.php/kinestetik/index>

DOI : 10.33369/jk.v9i3.42626



Literature Review : Relationship Between Mental Toughness And Athlete Performance In Basketball Matches

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Article Info

Article History :

Received : June 2025

Revised : September 2025

Accepted : September 2025

Keywords:

Athlete
Basketball
Mental Toughness
Performance

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between mental toughness and basketball athlete performance by analyzing scientific journals published between 2020 and 2025. Athlete performance is determined not only by physical and technical abilities, but also by psychological factors, where mental toughness plays a crucial role in dealing with competitive pressure. Therefore, this study is highly relevant to understanding more deeply how these psychological attributes influence athlete performance on the court. The method used in this study was a systematic literature review of various relevant scientific journals from 2020-2025. The results of the analysis of various studies indicate that mental toughness has a significant positive relationship with improved athlete performance in basketball matches. This relationship has been shown to influence various aspects of performance, including technical abilities such as shooting accuracy and decision-making under pressure, mental aspects such as focus and stress resilience, and social aspects such as leadership and teamwork. This research provides important practical implications for coaches and athletes to develop effective psychological training programs and solid social support, to optimize athlete potential holistically.

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ISSN 2685-6514 (Online)

ISSN 2477-331X (Print)

INTRODUCTION

Sports are one of the activities that significantly affect human life. Sports activities not only affect individual health, but can also be an effective trigger for developing various components such as economic, social, and political life. In sports, especially competitive sports, athletes are required to have qualified abilities, both in terms of physical, technical, and mental abilities. In a championship, of course, an athlete's target is to become a champion. However, the obstacles that the athlete will face are not easy. The athlete will face various kinds of pressure to become a champion, for example, such as jeers from opposing supporters, unusual fields, tougher opponents, the burden of being able to become a champion, and so on. Here, mental factors usually affect an athlete's abilities. Whether the athlete can overcome the various pressures he faces or not will affect the athlete's performance during the match.

One of the popular sports in Indonesia is basketball. Basketball was created by Dr. James Naismith in 1891 and until now this sport has developed rapidly to various parts of the world. The definition of basketball itself according to the official basketball rule book according to (Suardika & Irawan, 2024) "Basketball is played by two teams, each consisting of five players. The goal of each team is to score points in the opponent's basket and try to prevent the opposing team from scoring points." Something similar is also explained by (Aris & Mu'arifuddin, 2020) "basketball

is a game of two opposing teams, played by five players who aim to put as many balls as possible into the opponent's basket and prevent them from getting into their own basket."

In competitive sports, there are 4 aspects that can determine the success of a team or athlete, namely: technique, physical, tactics/strategy, and mental. (Wiguna, 2023) explains that "there are four aspects of training that need to be considered and trained carefully by athletes, namely: physical training, technical training, tactical training, and mental training". Likewise, as stated by (Candra et al., 2025) who stated that "The basic factors of training include physical, technical, tactical, and psychological preparation". These four aspects are interrelated and must be possessed by an athlete in order to excel. Physical factors are the basis of an athlete's ability, after the physical condition is good, of course the technique that is mastered will be even better, after the technique is good, the tactics will be able to run according to the strategy that will be applied, and finally the mental factor that will affect a match. As stated by (Kamaruddin, 2020) that "physical ability is needed in learning movement so that the results achieved are quite efficient". What is meant is that good physical condition will help techniques and tactics run well for as long as possible. In addition, mental abilities that have resistance to psychological pressure will encourage an athlete to excel. The mental aspect cannot be separated from the success of an athlete in achieving the highest achievement

including in basketball (Guspa et al., 2025). As has been stated, mental training is the peak of the hierarchy of aspects needed to achieve optimal sports performance (Stambulova & Schinke, 2025).

Training is not only to improve physical condition to be more optimal in working, but training in mental or psychological aspects needs to be done to support the physical, technical and tactical aspects of athletes (Putra et al., 2024). Training in the mental aspect is done to foster self-confidence, never give up, be sporty, and brave in competing even with athletes who have less experience and achievements. The definition of mental put forward by (Rosady 2021) is as follows: "mental refers to the problem of thoughts, reason or memory, the adjustment of organisms to the environment, and specifically refers to adjustments that include symbolic functions that are realized by the individual." Meanwhile, according to (Amalia 2020) explains that mental is "an integrated self-condition of an individual, a unity of emotional and intellectual responses to their environment."

Athlete performance in competitive sports is the result of synergy between various aspects, including physical condition, technique, tactics, and psychological factors. In recent years, psychological aspects have begun to receive more serious attention in the context of improving athlete performance, one of which is mental toughness. Mental toughness is seen as the ability to survive and perform

optimally under pressure, stay focused in difficult situations, and recover quickly from failure (Clough, Strycharczyk, and Perry 2021).

One of the mental aspects that is of concern among athletes is mental toughness. In several countries such as America and China, psychology has been applied related to mental training in sports. The basic idea is that the mental toughness factor can affect the successful performance of athletes in matches. Several expert opinions on the meaning of mental toughness in an online reference written by (Akbar et al., 2024), including according to Sudibyo Setyobroto, state that "mental toughness is a dynamic mental condition that contains the ability to develop abilities in any situation, both in the face of disturbances and threats from outside and one's own condition."

In basketball, a fast-paced, high-pressure, and quick-decision game, mental toughness is one of the key elements that differentiates high-performing and low-performing athletes. A player with high mental toughness will be able to overcome pressure from opponents, spectators, or unfavorable match situations, and still be able to contribute maximally to his team (Chauke & Malatji, 2022).

Several studies have shown a positive relationship between mental toughness and athlete performance. A study by (Putra et al., 2023) found that athletes with high levels of mental toughness have more stable competitive performance compared to those with low

levels of mental toughness. However, this aspect often receives less attention in the athlete development process, which tends to emphasize physical and technical training. In Indonesia itself, research on the relationship between mental toughness and athlete performance, especially in the sport of basketball, is still relatively limited. In fact, a deeper understanding of this relationship can be a foundation for coaches, sports psychologists, and related stakeholders in developing more holistic training strategies.

Athlete performance in basketball matches is influenced by various factors, including physical, technical, tactical, and psychological. One psychological aspect that has received great attention in sports psychology is mental toughness. Mental toughness refers to an individual's capacity to remain focused, confident, and resilient in the face of competitive pressure and difficult situations. This study aims to examine the literature published between 2020 and 2025 regarding the relationship between mental toughness and athlete performance in basketball matches.

METHODS

The research method used in this study is the Literature Review Methodology. The literature analyzed is journal articles obtained through searches in databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, and Garuda. Inclusion criteria include: (1) published between 2020-2025, (2) focused on basketball athletes,

(3) discussing mental toughness and performance. Articles were selected and analyzed using narrative methods.

RESULT

Based on the results of the analysis of several relevant journals, the results are as follows:

1. Mental Toughness and Competitive Anxiety

A study by (Annisa & Kurniawan, 2022) shows that mental toughness has a significant negative relationship with cognitive and somatic anxiety, as well as a positive relationship with self-confidence. This means that athletes with high mental toughness tend to be more confident and able to control anxiety during matches.

2. Mental Toughness and Technical Skills

A study by (C. N. Putri et al., 2024) found a positive relationship between mental toughness and free throw accuracy. This shows that mental toughness supports consistency in technical skills in high-pressure situations. This finding is reinforced by a study by (Hsieh et al., 2024) which states that aspects of emotional control and focus in mental toughness contribute directly to precision in the execution of sports movements.

3. The Effect of Psychological Training

(Rachman et al., 2024) showed that the Psychological Skills Training (PST) program can improve mental toughness and match performance, as measured by official match statistics. This training includes visualization techniques, breathing control, and self-talk. In line with that, (Weinberg & Gould, 2023) in their book "Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology" emphasized that PST is one of the effective interventions in improving the mental readiness of athletes in various sports, including basketball.

4. Social and Environmental Factors

(N. C. Putri, 2024) reported that social support from the surrounding environment has a significant influence on the mental toughness of athletes. A supportive environment can improve mental resilience which ultimately contributes to optimal performance. This study is in line with a study by (Gucciardi et al., 2021) which found that coaches who provide positive feedback and a supportive team environment can significantly increase the dimensions of mental toughness

5. Different Results in Adolescents

A study by (WILDA, n.d.) showed different results in adolescent athletes, where mental toughness and emotional intelligence did not significantly affect match anxiety. This may be due to differences in the level of psychological

maturity and competitive experience. According to (Miszczak, 2024), the development of mental toughness in adolescence is indeed very dependent on exposure to competitive experiences and consistent parenting support.

DISCUSSION

The results of the literature review of this study indicate that mental toughness has a significant influence on the performance of basketball athletes, based on the findings of (Nurcahyadi & Trihandayani, 2024), which stated that athletes with high levels of mental toughness show more stable and effective competitive performance. Mental toughness helps athletes maintain focus, regulate emotions, and act adaptively to match pressure. Factors in mental toughness such as self-confidence, commitment, challenge, and control, according to (Clough et al., 2021), are crucial aspects that allow athletes to perform optimally even under pressure. In the context of a dynamic and stressful basketball game, mentally tough athletes tend to be better able to manage stress and still make the right decisions on the field. A study by (Sella, n.d.) also supports this finding, by showing that rugby players who have high levels of mental toughness tend to show consistent performance in various match situations. In other words, this psychological aspect plays an important role in competitive success, as is also the case in the sport of basketball. However, mental training is often neglected in many athletic training programs, which tend to focus on physical and technical abilities. The results of this study indicate the need for integration of mental training into routine training programs so that athlete development becomes more comprehensive and effective.

CONCLUSION

The results of the literature review show that mental toughness has a positive relationship with athlete performance in basketball matches. Optimal performance can be achieved by strengthening this psychological aspect, either through structured training or social support. However, further studies are needed with longitudinal designs and larger samples.

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