

Parental Involvement in Sport: Does it Help? Assessing the Role of Parental Support in Shaping Athletic Motivation and Success from Athlete's Point of View

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between parental involvement and support with athletes' performance outcome, particularly in KARISMA athlete at Universiti Teknologi MARA Seremban Campus. A total of 198 respondents (121 males and 77 females) took part in the research. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the first two research objectives and the third objective was addressed with Pearson correlation analyses exploring the relationships in parental involvement support and athlete performance. To measure parents' involvement, the Parental Involvement in Sports Questionnaire (PISQ) was used which reflects four dimensions of parental involvement: Active Involvement, Directive Behavior, Praise and Understanding, and Pressure. Sports Performance was assessed via the Athlete's Subjective Performance Scale (ASPS) in three subscales: General Performance, Team Contribution and Personal Ability. The highest mean score for PISQ was Pressure then Directive Behavior, and for Praise and Understanding this with the lowest, with Active Involvement scoring was 3.42 mean score. ASPS: Team Contribution and Personal Ability had the highest mean scores. Results of Pearson correlation delineated a significant relationship between Parental involvement support and athlete performance with ($r= 0.609, p < 0.01$). This is a moderately high correlation but one that probably indicates, nevertheless, just how influential parent support can be in athlete performance. In short, parental involvement is a source of positive influences and has positive outcomes and consequences.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Athlete Performance, Parental Support, Youth Athletics, Parental Pressure

Introduction

Athlete performance is predominantly assessed through their competitive capabilities within their sport. Many athletes dedicate years to refining their physical and athletic skills to compete at elite levels. According to Bonavolontà et al (2021), participation in sports during childhood and adolescence is associated with the development of an active lifestyle, which significantly increases the likelihood of sustained physical activity throughout one's life. Furthermore, the sporting environment, particularly the support network of athletes' fans, plays a critical role in achieving these outcomes (Dorsch et al., 2022). Research indicates that perceived support from key figures such as parents, coaches, and peers can yield lasting positive psychological effects for athletes (Lee et al., 2018). The support that could improve motivation of the athletes in sports play that comes from different source and factors which are intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation (Aina et al., 2023).

Parental involvement has been shown to enhance children's performance and participation across various domains, including sports (Babiak & Kihl, 2018; Furusa et al., 2021). There exists a strong correlation between parental support and children's engagement in sports, self-esteem, and performance evaluations (Lev et al., 2020). Various factors, including enjoyment, influence a child's decision to partake in sports (Furusa et al., 2021). Importantly, both extrinsic and intrinsic factors affect a child's enjoyment in a particular sport, with parental participation being a key extrinsic variable. Moreover, Krijan et al (2023), emphasize that a child's enjoyment of a specific sport is significantly influenced by appropriate parental support. Additionally, a child's perception of their parents' involvement can affect their likelihood of participating in sports. On the contrast, involvement in sports help students to be away from screen time and prevent addiction towards the social media (Apandi et al., 2023). The vital role of parents within the intricate landscape of adolescent sports and the necessity of understanding the factors influencing parental involvement (Elliott et al., 2023; Sazali et al., 2023). This emphasizes the need for a greater focus on parental responsibilities in shaping their children's sporting aspirations. The literature presents a mixed picture, with some studies reporting positive outcomes while others indicate negative results, leading to inconclusive findings regarding the impact of parental support. Furthermore, it suggests that certain types of parental involvement may be more beneficial than others and can lead to diverse outcomes. Consequently, the aim of this study is to investigate the influence of parental engagement and support on athlete performance with the research objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the primary sources of engagement within parental involvement and support as perceived by athletes during the KARISMA competition.
2. To identify the factors contributing to athlete performance during the KARISMA competition.
3. To examine the relationship between parental involvement and support and athletes' performance outcomes.

Literature Review*Parental Involvement and Support*

Athlete performance encompasses an individual's ability to exhibit expertise and skill within a specific sport, influenced by various physical, mental, and environmental factors (Park et al.,

2017). Research indicates a strong correlation between children's sports participation, increased self-esteem, and performance evaluations, all of which are significantly enhanced by parental support (Gardner et al., 2017). Furthermore, parental involvement is widely recognized as a crucial determinant of children's motivation and enjoyment in sports (Lev et al., 2020). The level of engagement from parents, including the balance of pressure and encouragement they provide, plays a pivotal role in an athlete's continued participation in sports. Positive parental behaviors such as support, praise, and understanding are essential for fostering a conducive environment for athletic development (Knight et al., 2011). A systematic review by Maciel et al (2021), stated that parents serve as a primary source of material, emotional, and informational support for young athletes. When parents exhibit support, encouragement, and understanding, the holistic development and well-being of athletes are greatly enhanced. Parental backing can provide emotional stability and comfort, leading to increased resilience and confidence among athletes. Burke et al (2023), found that athletes' performance improves when they feel understood and supported by their parents. Additionally, parental involvement through attendance at competitions and encouragement of efforts—significantly contributes to athletic performance (Padaki et al., 2017).

Impact on Athlete Performance

Parental support is a crucial factor in the developmental trajectory of young athletes. The benefits of such encouragement can be multifaceted, including boosts in self-esteem, emotional regulation, life satisfaction, psychological resilience, cooperation, social intelligence, and overall well-being (Teques et al., 2019). Positive emotional experiences such as enjoyment and happiness, are crucial for sustaining engagement and commitment to physical activity (Carvalho et al., 2017). When parents provide praise and support, they enhance their children's motivation to excel, instilling high standards and a commitment to training. Moreover, parental approaches that nurture psychosocial growth, both in and out of elite sports can significantly enhance performance (Kramers et al., 2023). Emotional support, encouragement, and understanding from parents are fundamental in fostering children's enjoyment and fulfillment in sports. Research by Krommidas et al (2022), indicates that parental encouragement and positive reinforcement can bolster children's motivation, self-confidence, and overall enjoyment of sports. Children who receive such support exhibit higher self-determination and improved psychosocial behavior, further enhancing their well-being.

Conversely, parental engagement can also negatively affect the enjoyment of sports, particularly when it is lacking. Studies have demonstrated that young athletes often experience stress stemming from parental expectations, which can arise from awareness of their parents' investment in their success (Bonavolontà et al., 2021). Excessive pressure from parents can impact athletic performance, leading to feelings of anxiety, dissatisfaction, and risk aversion (Bonavolontà et al., 2021). Dunn, Dorsch, King, and Rothlisberger (2016), as cited in Mastroilli and Greco (2020), suggest that parental expectations can be a source of significant stress for young athletes. This pressure may come from athletes' awareness of the depth of their parents' commitment. Negative influences certainly can hinder athletes' focus and performance. Parental behavior and pressure can alter a child's sporting experience, potentially resulting in diminished performance outcomes (Padaki et al., 2017). An athlete subjected to excessive parental "coaching" may encounter heightened stress, leading to

performance anxiety, burnout, and a loss of motivation. In summary, negative parental influence can contribute to diminished motivation, focus, and athletic performance.

Athlete Perception of Parental Support

The cultivation of adaptive outcomes for adolescents involved in organized sports is significantly influenced by positive parental participation (Dorsch et al., 2020). Reasonable parental expectations can serve as a motivational force, encouraging athletes to excel. Parents who focus on their child's development rather than solely on winning tend to foster better performance outcomes (Dorsch, 2017). A nurturing and encouraging home environment often correlate with positive performance results. Conversely, parental behavior and excessive pressure can skew a child's sport-related experiences and potentially impair athletic performance (Padaki et al., 2017; Siekańska, 2012). Unrealistic expectations or excessive criticism can negatively affect an athlete's performance and overall well-being. Positive outcomes in sports enjoyment and sustained participation are linked to athletes' perceptions of parental support. When athletes feel they are receiving strong parental support, their overall performance and engagement in sports are likely to improve (Burke et al., 2023). It has been posited that children's perceptions of their parents as models of perseverance and high achievement influence their own sporting success. Parental directive actions, such as technical guidance, also impact children's engagement in sports. Wuerth et al (2004), as cited in Teques et al (2019), found that athletes who advanced in their careers reported greater directive behavior from their parents, characterized by encouragement to train harder and guidance on performance improvement. These behaviors were often accompanied by warmth, understanding, and praise for effort. Additionally, Teques et al. (2018), highlight that parents can offer technical guidance, fostering the development of proper technique and form, which is crucial for performance enhancement. According to Kovács et al (2022), Bronfenbrenner's (1995), bioecological theory of human development posits that parents constitute a key component of their child's microsystem, thus directly influencing their athletic career. However, parental attitudes and behaviors may also be shaped by external systems, including workplace expectations and their relationship with the child's sports club. It is therefore essential for parents to strike a balance between providing guidance and allowing athletes to cultivate autonomy and decision-making skills, which can further enhance performance.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative research methodology, targeting KARISMA athletes participating in inter-branch competitions through a random sampling approach. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were utilized to derive insights from the data collected. The descriptive analysis aimed to identify the perceived engagement of athletes' parents during competitions. In contrast, the inferential analysis focused on measuring the differences in preferred coach leadership styles across genders and examining the relationship between parental involvement and athlete performance outcomes. A total of 198 athletes were selected as respondents for this study. The questionnaire used in this research comprised three sections (Sections A, B, and C) and employed a 5-point Likert scale to gauge respondents' perceptions. Section A collected socio-demographic information, including five items related to respondents' backgrounds: age, gender, current enrollment program, type of sport involved, and years of involvement in sports.

Section B utilized the Parental Involvement in Sports Questionnaire (PISQ) to assess parental involvement. The PISQ, adapted from Lee and MacLean (1997), includes 20 items covering four dimensions: Active Involvement (AI), Praise and Understanding (PU), Directive Behavior (DB), and Pressure (PR). Section C employed the Athlete's Subjective Performance Scale (ASPS) to evaluate respondents' sports performance. The ASPS, adapted from Nahum et al. (2016), consists of six items that assess General Performance (GP), Team Contribution (TC), and Personal Ability (PA). To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with 30 non-KARISMA athletes serving as respondents. The reliability of the questionnaire was interpreted using the Cronbach Alpha value, as outlined by Konting et al. (2009). The results indicated an excellent level of reliability for the questionnaire. Tables 1 and 2 present the interpretation and results of the Cronbach Alpha values, confirming the reliability of the instrument utilized in this research.

Table 1

The Interpretation of Cronbach Alpha Value

Cronbach Alpha Value	Interpretation
0.91-1.00	0.91-1.00
0.81-0.90	0.81-0.90
0.71-0.80	0.71-0.80
0.61-0.70	0.61-0.70
0.01-0.60	0.01-0.60

Table 2

Cronbach Alpha Values for questionnaire used in the study

Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Parental Involvement Sport Question (PISQ)	0.881	20
Athlete's Subjective Performance Scale (ASPS)	0.951	6

Result and Discussion

The results presented in Table 3 indicate a significant disparity in parental involvement in the context of athlete performance during the KARISMA competition at UiTM Seremban 3. The data reveals that the highest mean score for parental support was attributed to "Pressure" (M=4.56, SD=0.58), while "Active Involvement" received the lowest mean score (M=3.42, SD=0.33). This suggests that while parents exert considerable pressure on their children, they are less actively involved in their sporting activities. The implications of these findings are profound, as they highlight a potential misalignment between the types of support parents believe they are providing and what athletes perceive as beneficial.

Table 3

Result of the type of engagement from the parent

	Domain	M	SD	Rank
Parental Involvement Support	Pressure	4.56	0.58	1
	Directive Behaviour	4.53	0.43	2
	Praise and Understanding	4.40	0.56	3
	Active Involvement	3.42	0.33	4

Research has consistently shown that parental pressure can lead to negative outcomes for young athletes, including increased anxiety and diminished enjoyment of the sport (Bremer, 2012; Bean et al., 2014; Knight et al., 2016). Bremer (2012) emphasizes that child athletes who experience high levels of parental pressure often report a tolerance for directive behavior, suggesting that while some athletes may thrive under pressure, many do not, leading to a complex dynamic between parental expectations and athlete satisfaction. Furthermore, studies indicate that excessive pressure can create an ego-oriented climate, which is detrimental to athletes' psychological well-being (Bean et al., 2014; Knight et al., 2016). This aligns with the findings from the current study, where the high-pressure score may reflect a prevailing attitude among parents that prioritizes performance over the holistic development of the athlete. In contrast, the lower score for "Active Involvement" indicates a lack of engagement from parents in their children's sporting lives. This finding resonates with the work of Capranica et al. (Capranica et al., 2022), who argue that effective parental support should encompass not only emotional backing but also active participation in the athlete's journey. The lack of active involvement may hinder athletes' perceptions of support, as they may feel isolated in their endeavors. Varga et al. (2021), further explained that parental involvement should be multifaceted, incorporating emotional, practical, and educational support to foster a nurturing environment for dual-career athletes. The absence of such involvement may lead to feelings of neglect, which can adversely affect athletes' motivation and performance.

The interplay between pressure and active involvement is critical. While some athletes may respond positively to parental pressure, it is essential that this pressure is balanced with supportive behaviors that promote autonomy and personal growth (Lemelin et al., 2022; Dorsch et al., 2016). Knight et al. (2011) found that athletes prefer parents to provide encouragement without overshadowing their experiences, suggesting that the quality of parental involvement is as crucial as the quantity. This indicates that parents must navigate the fine line between motivating their children and overwhelming them with expectations. The findings from the KARISMA competition underline the necessity for a paradigm shift in parental involvement strategies. Parents must recognize the importance of balancing pressure with active, supportive engagement to foster a positive sporting experience for their children. As the literature suggests, a supportive environment that encourages autonomy and personal development is vital for the psychological well-being and performance of young athletes (Rumahpasal et al., 2020; Park & Kim, 2014; Dorsch et al., 2016). Future research should explore effective strategies for parents to engage with their children in a manner that promotes both performance and well-being, ensuring that the athlete's experience is both fulfilling and enjoyable.

Acknowledging and understanding, constructive involvement, and support can all lead to increased motivation and wellbeing. On the other hand, applying excessive pressure and acting in a directive manner may have negative consequences. Parents may help their child develop as an athlete and a person by instilling a positive and balanced outlook. Studies directed by Mastrorilli and Greco (2020) support past research that a positive relationship usually does not exist between pressure and athlete's performance. This is because parental pressure makes athletes feel upset and guilty, reducing their enjoyment and concentrate on their sport. Parental conduct and pressure can influence an athlete's experience and

potentially have a negative impact on their performance. When confronted with negative influences, athletes may find it difficult to keep concentrate and perform well. Parental pressure and behaviour can alter a child's sports experience and possibly reduce athletes' performance (Padaki et al., 2017). With these findings, providing guidance on a proper parental involvement support will influence factors of athlete's performance.

Table 4

The source that contributes toward athlete performance

	Domain	M	SD	Rank
Athlete's Performance	Team Contribution	4.71	0.56	1
	Personal Ability	4.71	0.66	2
	General Performance	4.64	0.73	3
	Team Contribution	4.71	0.56	1

In the data collected in Table 4, the domain of athlete's performance was listed out in terms of general performance, team contribution and personal ability. Based on the data, it was proven that both team contribution is mostly influenced when parental involvement support occurred.

The data presented in Table 4 indicates that team contribution and personal ability are the primary factors influencing athlete performance, both rated equally high with a mean score of 4.71. This finding showcases the critical role of collaborative dynamics and individual competencies in enhancing athletic outcomes. The significance of team contribution aligns with existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of social support systems, including parental involvement, in fostering athlete development and performance (Wekesser et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2021). Literature has consistently shown that athletes who perceive strong support from their teams and families exhibit higher levels of motivation and self-efficacy, which are crucial for optimal performance (Sivrikaya, 2019; Rice et al., 2016). For instance, the role of parental involvement in sports has been highlighted as a key factor that not only boosts athletes' confidence but also enhances their commitment to training and competition (Wekesser et al., 2021). This is particularly evident in team sports, where the collective effort and synergy among team members can significantly impact performance outcomes (Khan et al., 2021).

Moreover, the findings suggest that personal ability, while equally rated, may be influenced by the quality of training and coaching received by the athletes. Effective coaching behaviors, characterized by autonomy support and positive reinforcement, have been shown to enhance athletes' self-efficacy and performance (Wekesser et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2021). The interplay between individual skills and team dynamics is critical; athletes with high personal ability can thrive in environments where team contribution is prioritized, leading to improved overall performance (Setiawan, 2023). The results from the SPSS analysis highlight the intertwined nature of team contribution and personal ability in shaping athlete performance. The findings advocate for a holistic approach to athlete development that emphasizes both individual skill enhancement and the cultivation of supportive team environments. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, particularly the impact of parental and coaching influences on athlete performance across different sports contexts.

Meanwhile, to analyze the data on the relationship perspective, the researcher used the Pearson's Correlation. Pearson's correlation analysis is characterized in statistics as the

estimation of the strength of the connection between two factors and their relationship with one another. In other terms, it is used to compute the impact of change in one variable when the other variable changes. Using Shapiro-Wilk, the central limit theorem, and the histogram, all items passed the normality test. Therefore, the statistical impact has been determined using the Pearson Correlation.

Table 5

Relationship between parental involvement support and athlete's performance

		Athlete's Performance
Parental Involvement Support	Pearson Correlation	0.609**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000
	N	198

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The correlation between parental involvement support and athlete performance, as indicated by the SPSS results, reveals a significant positive relationship ($r= 0.609$, $p < 0.01$). This finding aligns with existing literature that present the critical role of parental support in enhancing athletic performance among youth athletes. Research has consistently shown that parental involvement can significantly influence various aspects of an athlete's development, including motivation, self-esteem, and overall performance outcomes.

Bremer (2012), emphasizes that parental involvement can manifest in various forms, including emotional support and guidance, which are crucial for young athletes navigating the pressures of competitive sports. The study highlights that while parental pressure can sometimes lead to negative outcomes, supportive involvement tends to foster a positive motivational climate, which is essential for athletes' performance (Bremer, 2012). Similarly, Rumahpasal et al (2020), found that parental social support is a significant predictor of athletes' sports orientation, suggesting that effective parental involvement can enhance athletes' commitment and performance in their respective sports. Moreover, Gao (2024) discusses the importance of parental goals and values in shaping young athletes' motivation, indicating that when parents adopt a supportive approach, it positively correlates with the athletes' intrinsic motivation and performance (Gao, 2024). This is further supported by Kolayış et al (2017), who argue that a mastery-oriented climate initiated by parents contributes to athletes' self-determined motivation, which is closely linked to improved performance outcomes (Kolayış et al., 2017). The findings of this study also resonate with the work of (Knight et al., 2015), who assert that emotional support from parents, particularly during challenging times, plays a pivotal role in youth athletes' performance. This emotional backing can help athletes manage performance anxiety and maintain a positive outlook, which is crucial for optimal performance. Additionally, Pambudi (2022), highlights that social support from parents is a key predictor of athletes' achievement motivation, further reinforcing the notion that parental involvement is integral to athletes' success.

The significant correlation found in this study between parental involvement support and athlete performance provide the necessity of fostering a supportive environment for young athletes. This aligns with the broader body of literature that advocates for active parental engagement in sports, which not only enhances performance but also contributes to the overall well-being and development of young athletes.

Conclusion

Findings of this study reveal the significant role that parental involvement plays in shaping athlete performance, particularly in youth sports. The data indicate that parental support, characterized by high levels of involvement and directive behavior, ranks highest among the various forms of engagement, with a mean score of 4.56. This suggests that parents who actively support their children in sports contribute positively to their performance outcomes, aligning with previous research that highlights the importance of parental engagement in fostering a supportive environment for young athletes (Bremer, 2012; Knight et al., 2015; Knight et al., 2016).

Moreover, the correlation between parental involvement support and athlete performance was found to be substantial ($r = 0.609$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that as parental involvement increases, so does the performance of the athlete. This finding is consistent with the literature that emphasizes the positive impact of parental behaviors on children's sports experiences and outcomes (Dorsch et al., 2016; Dorsch et al., 2015; Dorsch et al., 2015). Specifically, the results resonate with the work of Dorsch et al. (Dorsch et al., 2016), who noted that supportive parental behaviors can enhance athletes' motivation and emotional well-being, thereby improving their performance. Additionally, the study reveals that team contribution and personal ability are perceived as critical factors influencing athlete performance, both receiving a mean score of 4.71. This highlights the multifaceted nature of performance in youth sports, where both individual capabilities and collective team dynamics are essential (Dunn et al., 2016; Teques et al., 2019). The findings suggest that while parental involvement is crucial, it must be complemented by the athlete's personal skills and the support of their teammates to achieve optimal performance outcomes (Tamminen et al., 2017; Knight et al., 2011).

In summary, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence that underline the importance of parental involvement in youth sports. By fostering a supportive and understanding environment, parents can significantly enhance their children's athletic experiences and performance. Future research should continue to explore the nuanced dynamics of parental involvement, athlete performance, and the interplay of various factors that contribute to success in youth sports.

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