

## Coach-athlete emotional relationships in football and their impact on achievement motivation

Las relaciones emocionales entre el entrenador y el deportista en el fútbol y su impacto en la motivación de logro

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**Abstract.** Using the systematic literature review, this study investigates the emotional relationships between coaches and athletes in soccer and their impact on achievement motivation. Data were obtained from articles searched through Google Scholar. The search focused on the following keywords: "Emotional Relationship AND Coach AND Athlete AND Soccer AND Achievement Motivation". During the search, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. For example, the selected articles must be published in Scopus-indexed journals between 2019 and 2024. With these criteria, 17,300 articles were found. They were screened again in several stages, and 16 articles that fit the theme and met the inclusion requirements were chosen. During the article selection, this study followed the PRISMA guidelines, generating several key findings. The first finding of this study confirmed that emotional relationships between coaches and athletes in soccer are important in influencing motivation. A positive relationship, characterized by trust, emotional support, and effective communication, creates a conducive environment for athletes to develop intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which ultimately impacts their performance on the field. Another finding revealed that a coach's emotional intelligence is a crucial factor in building such relationships, as the coach's ability to understand and respond to athletes' emotional needs can increase athletes' self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, which in turn strengthens performance. Effective communication was also identified as a key element that enables coaches to provide constructive feedback and establish open channels of communication, thereby creating a climate that supports the development of athletes' achievement motivation.

**Keywords:** Emotional Connection, Coach-Athlete, Football, Achievement Motivation.

**Resumen.** Mediante la revisión sistemática de la literatura, este estudio investiga las relaciones emocionales entre entrenadores y deportistas en el fútbol y su impacto en la motivación de logro. Los datos se obtuvieron de artículos buscados a través de Google Scholar. La búsqueda se centró en las siguientes palabras clave «Emotional Relationship AND Coach AND Athlete AND Soccer AND Achievement Motivation». Durante la búsqueda, se aplicaron criterios de inclusión y exclusión. Por ejemplo, los artículos seleccionados debían estar publicados en revistas indexadas en Scopus entre 2019 y 2024. Con estos criterios, se encontraron 17.300 artículos. Se revisaron de nuevo en varias etapas y se eligieron 16 artículos que se ajustaban al tema y cumplían los requisitos de inclusión. Durante la selección de artículos, este estudio siguió las directrices PRISMA, generando varios hallazgos clave. El primer hallazgo de este estudio confirmó que las relaciones emocionales entre entrenadores y deportistas en el fútbol son importantes para influir en la motivación. Una relación positiva, caracterizada por la confianza, el apoyo emocional y la comunicación eficaz, crea un entorno propicio para que los deportistas desarrollen una motivación intrínseca y extrínseca, que en última instancia repercute en su rendimiento en el campo. Otro hallazgo reveló que la inteligencia emocional del entrenador es un factor crucial en la construcción de tales relaciones, ya que la capacidad del entrenador para comprender y responder a las necesidades emocionales de los atletas puede aumentar la autoeficacia y la motivación intrínseca de los atletas, lo que a su vez refuerza el rendimiento. La comunicación eficaz también se identificó como un elemento clave que permite a los entrenadores proporcionar comentarios constructivos y establecer canales abiertos de comunicación, creando así un clima que favorece el desarrollo de la motivación de logro de los deportistas.

**Palabras clave:** Conexión emocional, entrenador-atleta, fútbol, motivación de logro.

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## Introduction

The emotional connection between coaches and athletes is a crucial aspect of sports, especially in soccer, which is known for its high intensity. In this sport, success is not only determined by physical skills and tactics but also by the psychological synergy formed between coaches and athletes. Research shows that the emotional interactions that occur in this relationship can influence athletes' motivation to achieve maximum performance. For example, Behan (2020) emphasizes that a positive coach-athlete relationship can improve athletes' performance at various levels, while a negative relationship can adversely affect the athlete's life outside of sport. Such relationships are typically determined

by the coach's competencies, including technical ability and character, which can contribute to athletes' motivation and improve their performance (Mu'ammal et al., 2022). According to Purnomo et al. (2024), coaches who can build good relationships with athletes can create a supportive environment where athletes feel valued and motivated to perform better. These coaches usually have effective communication, which is also a key element in the coach-athlete relationship. Thus, Purnomo et al. emphasized that the coach should be able to deeply understand the athlete's condition and ability to maximize communication functions that strengthen this relationship. Meanwhile, Kassim and Boardley (2018) added that positive coach behaviors can be manifested in several actions, such as providing constructive

feedback. They believe that these actions can increase athletes' self-confidence and encourage them to achieve higher goals (Kassim & Boardley, 2018). Furthermore, athletes' perceptions of coach effectiveness are directly related to their level of attachment and performance (Kassim & Boardley, 2018). Therefore, a positive relationship between coaches and athletes not only increases motivation but also contributes to achieving better performance on the field.

While the emotional bond between coach and athlete is crucial for motivation, its deeper implications extend beyond just performance outcomes. Choi et al. (2020) revealed that the psychological well-being of athletes is another area significantly influenced by coach competence. They found that coaches who foster autonomy in their athletes can help reduce issues like burnout and stress, particularly through good communication and positive coach-athlete relationships (Choi et al., 2020). This suggests that a good emotional connection between coaches and athletes not only contributes to motivation but also to athletes' mental and physical health. Although many studies have addressed coach-athlete relationships, there is still a lack in the literature that specifically highlights the emotional aspects of soccer. It shows that, when built on trust and autonomy, emotional relationships can increase athletes' satisfaction with their individual performance (Ahmad et al., 2021). This suggests that strong emotional relationships can serve as a driver of motivation and satisfaction, which in turn can improve athletes' performance on the pitch.

In football, the importance of communication in the coach-athlete relationship cannot be overlooked. Fan et al. (2023) emphasized that good relationship maintenance behavior can create a positive social interaction environment where athletes feel more motivated and experience less burnout. This suggests that effective communication between coaches and athletes not only strengthens emotional connections but also increases athletes' motivation to perform. Furthermore, research by Davis et al. (2018) suggested that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship can influence athletes' psychophysiological fatigue, which impacts their physical and cognitive performance. Athletes who perceive their relationship with their coach positively tend to feel less stress when facing challenges on the field. This suggests that a good emotional connection can serve as a buffer against the stress that athletes face in competition.

The quality of the coach-athlete relationship is also related to athletes' satisfaction with their experience in sports. Although there is no reference directly supporting this claim, research suggests that emotional closeness in the coach-athlete relationship may predict levels of global burnout and athlete engagement (McGee & DeFreese, 2019). This suggests that strong, positive relationships not only increase motivation but also assist athletes in managing the stress and fatigue they experience. In this context, it is important to consider how a coach's leadership style can influence these emotional connections. Transformational leadership style, as described by Wang and Hu, can improve the

coach-athlete relationship and reduce athletes' intention to quit the sport (Wang & Hu, 2017). A supportive and empowering leadership style can create an environment conducive to the development of positive emotional relationships. However, not all interactions between coaches and athletes are positive. Research also reported verbal aggression from coaches to athletes. The researchers argue that it can reduce athletes' motivation and affect their perception of the coach's credibility (Mazer et al., 2013). This suggests that the coach's approach to communicating and interacting with athletes is critical in building healthy emotional relationships.

In football, where the pressure to perform is very high, a strong emotional connection between coaches and athletes can be a decisive factor in achieving success. Jowett et al. (2017) argue that a high-quality relationship between coaches and athletes can increase athletes' satisfaction and their intrinsic motivation. This suggests that investment in building positive emotional relationships can have significant payoffs in athlete performance. The importance of this emotional connection is also reflected in research showing that athletes who feel supported by their coaches tend to be more motivated and more satisfied with their sporting experience (Zaker & Parnabas, 2018). This suggests that emotional support from coaches can serve as a key driver for athletes to continue striving towards their goals. Overall, the emotional connection between coaches and athletes in soccer is very important to influence athletes' motivation and performance. Research shows that the quality of this relationship can affect a variety of aspects, from motivation to athletes' mental health. Therefore, coaches need to realize the importance of building positive and supportive relationships with their athletes to achieve success in competition.

The emotional relationship between coaches and athletes in soccer is very important for supporting athletes' achievement motivation. Research shows that coaches are not only technical leaders but also serve as sources of emotional support that can influence athletes' motivation and performance. Thus, it is important to understand how these emotional relationships are formed and what factors contribute to them. One key factor is the coach's ability to support athletes' autonomy. Autonomy-supportive coaches help athletes build their emotional competence and psychological well-being (José et al., 2023), reinforcing the basic needs theory, which states that support from coaches can increase athletes' intrinsic motivation, which in turn has a positive impact on their performance on the field. Furthermore, Zaker and Parnabas (2018) found that the quality of a positive coach-athlete relationship is closely related to athletes' motivation, with autonomy support playing a pivotal role in driving this connection (Zaker & Parnabas, 2018).

Another key factor that plays a role in this emotional connection is the coach's leadership style. Scholars believe that transformational leadership style can improve coach-athlete relationships and reduce athletes' intention to quit

the sport (Wang & Hu, 2017). This leadership style emphasizes the importance of building trust and respect between coaches and athletes, which can create a supportive environment for athletes to thrive. A strong emotional connection between coaches and athletes can be a determining factor in achieving success. In addition, effective communication between coaches and athletes is also very important in building positive emotional relationships. Purnomo et al. (2024) emphasizes that coaches need to understand the athlete's condition and maximize the communication function to create a mutually supportive relationship. The coaches must perform good communication as it can help athletes feel more connected, which in turn can improve their motivation and performance. Research also shows that coaches who adopt a servant leadership approach can better align team goals with athletes' needs and aspirations (Kim et al., 2018).

Based on the above elaboration, it is important to explore how coaches can optimize emotional connection to increase athletes' achievement motivation. For example, coaches might want provide consistent positive feedback and emotional support. Moreover, scholars argue that coaches who are approachable and can communicate well with their athletes tend to be more successful in creating positive relationships (Bennie & O'Connor, 2012). Constructive feedback and recognition of athletes' achievements can boost their confidence and motivation to perform better. Furthermore, coaches also need to understand the importance of managing their own emotions in interactions with athletes. Research suggests that emotional intelligence can influence their reactive behavior during matches, which in turn can affect their relationships with athletes (Teques et al., 2019). Coaches who can regulate their emotions and respond calmly to situations can create a more stable and supportive environment for athletes, which is particularly important in the context of intense competition.

In order to achieve this goal, coaches need to develop good communication skills and build trust with athletes. Research shows that trust in coach-athlete relationships can serve as a powerful mediator in improving the quality of these relationships (Lee et al., 2023). Coaches who can build trust with their athletes tend to have better relationships and can be more effective in motivating athletes to reach their full potential. Overall, the emotional connection between coaches and athletes in soccer is a very important factor in influencing athletes' achievement motivation. Coaches need to recognize their role not only as technical leaders, but also as a source of emotional support that can help athletes overcome challenges and achieve their goals. By understanding the factors that contribute to this emotional connection, coaches can optimize their interactions with athletes and create a supportive environment for athlete development.

Indeed, research on human movement has touched on many areas. For example, some popular studies investigated the achievement of physical education learning outcomes (Martono et al., 2024; Komari et al., 2024a; Komari et al., 2024b; Septiantoko et al., 2024; Suyato et al., 2024; Widiyanto et al., 2024; Putro et al., 2024; Harmanto et al., 2024; Zulbahri et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2024a), motor development (Susanto et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2024), physical education or sport health and fitness (Widiyanto et al., 2024a; Widiyanto et al., 2024b; Syaokani et al., 2024; Pranoto, et al., 2024; Astuti et al., 2024; Wayoi et al., 2024; Akhmad et al., 2024), law and sports (Ardiyanto et al., 2024; HB et al., 2024a; HB et al., 2024b), sports communication (Charlina et al., 2024), active lifestyle with exercise (Tafuri et al., 2024a), interval training and physiological (Latino et al., 2024a), circuit training programme (Tafuri et al., 2024b; Tafuri et al., 2024c; Latino et al., 2024b; Latino et al., 2024c; Adirahma et al., 2024), injury risk on sports (Anam et al., 2024a; Fahrosi et al., 2024), endurance training and physiological (Latino et al., 2024c), therapeutic sports (Zanada et al., 2024), movement skills (Susanto et al., 2023; Anam et al., 2024b; Pranoto et al., 2024), and sports training and performance (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2024), curriculum and management of physical education learning (Mardiyah et al., 2024a; Yani et al., 2024; Mardiyah et al., 2024b), and the management of sports education and archery (Hamsyah et al., 2024; Mulyanti et al., 2024; Setyawan et al., 2023a; Setyawan et al., 2023b; Setyawan et al., 2024a; Setyawan et al., 2024b; Destriani et al., 2024), students' motor skills (Sayekti et al., 2024), and adaptive physical education (Susanto et al., 2024b)

Despite the wealth of existing research on the above topics, there is still a lack of scientific research on the emotional relationships between coaches and athletes in soccer and their impact on achievement motivation. The lack of research on this topic may hinder understanding, research findings and scientific development in the field. Therefore, it is important to conduct studies related to this topic by thoroughly reviewing the existing literature.

## Materials & Methods

Employing a systematic literature review, this study identified, evaluated, and interpreted the results of relevant research articles. The keywords used in the journal search were "Emotional Relationship AND Coach AND Athlete AND Soccer AND Achievement Motivation". The search was based on several inclusion and exclusion criteria. For instance, the study only involved articles published in Scopus-indexed journals between 2019-2024. The complete list of inclusion and exclusion criteria are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Period	Journals published in 2019 - 2024	Journals published outside 2019-2024
Indexed	Scopus-indexed international journal	Non-scopus-indexed international journal
Access	Open access	Close access (Subscription)
Language	English language journal	Non-English language journal
Article Type	Original research article	Review article, conference proceeding, book, book chapter, book series, editorial, etc.
Full Text	Articles fulfill the scope/topic of research	Articles do not fit the scope/topic of the research
Topic of Discussion	The article's content is relevant to the theme of coach-athlete emotional relationship in soccer and its impact on achievement motivation	The article's content is not relevant to the theme of coach-athlete emotional relationships in soccer and their impact on achievement motivation.

The initial results of the search generated 17,300 articles from an international journal indexing database, Scopus. Furthermore, the articles went through other stages of the screening process. From those stages, 16 articles that fit the theme and met the inclusion requirements were selected. During the article selection, this study followed the "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses" (PRISMA) guidelines. These guidelines are expected to produce systematic literature review reports that are more transparent, complete, and accurate, thus facilitating evidence-based decision-making (Page et al., 2021). The procedure of the PRISMA guidelines is illustrated in Figure 1.

Results

This section presents the findings from a comprehensive literature review on the influence of coach-athlete emotional relationships on achievement motivation in soccer.

These findings provide insights into the dynamics that contribute to athletes' motivation levels. Detailed results from the reviewed studies are shown in Table 2.

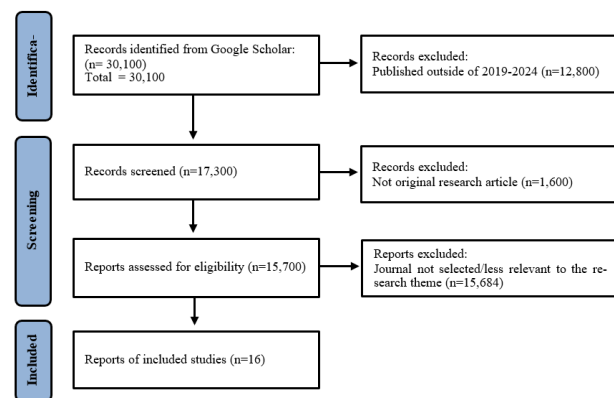


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart of the article selection process

Table 2.

Literature Review Results

Author	Study Objectives	Study Design	Main Findings
(Zhang & Rhim, 2024)	The purpose of this study is to investigate how the coach-athlete relationship affects motor behavior in college athletes, with a focus on the mediating role of psychological needs. The research explores whether the quality of the relationship between athletes and coaches influences athletes' psychological needs, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. It also examines how these needs subsequently impact their athletic performance and motor behavior during training and competition.	RCT	The study revealed that the coach-athlete relationship had a direct, positive effect on motor behavior in college athletes. Furthermore, the athletes' psychological needs in this study played a significant mediating role, accounting for 41.56% of the effect. This finding emphasizes that a strong, supportive coach-athlete relationship enhances athletes' psychological satisfaction, thereby improving their motor behavior and overall athletic performance. The closeness factor in the relationship was found to have the most significant influence on promoting positive motor behaviors.
(García-Ceberino et al., 2022)	The study aims to examine the determinant factors that contribute to achievement motivation in school physical education. Specifically, the research seeks to identify how different variables, such as teacher-student relationships, teaching methods, and students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, influence the overall motivation of students to achieve success in physical education activities.	RCT	The study found that intrinsic motivation, driven by a supportive teacher-student relationship and engaging teaching methods, significantly enhanced students' achievement motivation in physical education. Factors such as positive feedback, autonomy-supportive teaching, and opportunities for personal growth contributed to higher levels of student engagement and motivation to excel in physical activities. Meanwhile, external rewards were found to have a lesser impact compared to intrinsic factors such as personal interest and satisfaction derived from participation.
(Haugan et al., 2021)	This research explores the impact of a mentor program for coaches on the quality of coach-athlete relationships. The goal is to determine whether the implementation of mentor programs improves coaches' ability to foster more effective and supportive relationships with athletes, which in turn could enhance athletes' performance, well-being, and satisfaction with their training experiences.	RCT	The study showed that the mentor program positively influenced the coach-athlete relationship, leading to improvements in communication, mutual respect, and emotional support. Coaches who participated in the mentor program were better equipped to understand and respond to their athletes' psychological and emotional needs, resulting in enhanced athlete satisfaction and performance. The findings suggest that continuous professional development for coaches is crucial for maintaining strong and effective relationships with their athletes.
(Wilczyńska et al., 2022a)	This study aims to explore how the dimensions of the athlete-coach relationship and levels of sports anxiety predict changes in the psychomotor and motivational well-being of child athletes. It focuses on understanding the role of emotional and psychological dynamics within the coach-athlete relationship and how these	RCT	The research findings indicated that a strong, supportive coach-athlete relationship was a key predictor of improved psychomotor and motivational well-being in child athletes. Conversely, high levels of sport anxiety negatively impacted both areas, leading to reduced performance and increased stress. The study highlights the importance of addressing

	factors influence young athletes' mental and physical performance.		sports anxiety through better coach-athlete communication and emotional support, which can help mitigate its negative effects on young athletes' development.
(Moen et al., 2020)	The purpose of this study is to examine the potential effects of a one-year coach-education program on the professional development of coaches and its subsequent impact on the coach-athlete relationship and athlete performance. The research focuses on how structured education programs can equip coaches with skills and knowledge to improve their coaching practices and relationships with athletes.	RCT	The study found that the one-year coach-education program had a positive effect on coaches' professional development, particularly in areas related to communication, feedback, and motivational techniques. Coaches who completed the program demonstrated improved relationships with their athletes, characterized by greater trust, respect, and mutual understanding. This, in turn, led to better athlete performance and higher levels of satisfaction with their training experiences.
(Chang & Tsai, 2022)	This study investigates how emotional intelligence, learning motivation, and self-efficacy affect the academic achievement of university students, particularly in online English courses. The research explores whether these psychological factors significantly contribute to student success in a remote learning environment.	RCT	The findings showed that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy were strong predictors of academic achievement in online English courses. Students with higher levels of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy were more motivated and capable of managing their learning processes, leading to better performance. Learning motivation also played a significant role, as students with intrinsic motivation to succeed in their studies demonstrated higher academic achievement than those relying on external motivation.
(Miller et al., 2020)	The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of an athletic coach-delivered program aimed at preventing gender violence in middle schools. The study investigates how coaches, as influential figures, can be trained to deliver interventions that address and reduce gender-based violence and promote healthy relationships among middle school students.	RCT	The results showed that the coach-delivered program was successful in raising awareness and reducing instances of gender-based violence among middle school students. Coaches who underwent the training were able to effectively communicate messages about respect, consent, and healthy relationships, leading to positive changes in students' attitudes and behaviors regarding gender violence. The program also improved students' understanding of gender equality and respect in interpersonal relationships.
(Katz et al., 2020)	The study assesses the impact of an emotion coaching intervention for parents and children exposed to intimate partner violence. The research seeks to determine whether teaching parents emotional coaching strategies can improve the emotional regulation of both parents and children, reduce trauma symptoms, and foster healthier family dynamics.	RCT	The intervention was found to be highly effective in improving emotional regulation and reducing trauma symptoms in both parents and children. Parents who participated in the emotion coaching program were better at managing their emotions and providing emotional support to their children. The program seemed to improve parent-child relationships and lower levels of emotional distress. The study highlights the value of emotional coaching in helping families.
(Wang et al., 2024)	This study aims to explore the effectiveness of the Tactical Games Model (TGM) in enhancing university students' motivation and engagement in basketball courses. The research focuses on understanding how TGM influences the development of tactical awareness, decision-making skills, and overall motivation in physical education settings. By assessing students' responses to TGM, the study seeks to provide insights into how innovative teaching models can improve both cognitive and physical outcomes in sports education.	RCT	The findings of the study demonstrated that the Tactical Games Model significantly improved students' motivation and tactical awareness in basketball. Students who were taught using TGM showed higher levels of engagement, better decision-making skills, and more enjoyment in the learning process compared to those in traditional teaching methods. The model's focus on real-game situations and decision-making allowed students to feel more competent and autonomous, which contributed to their overall motivation and improved performance in basketball.
(Bølstad et al., 2021)	The primary objective of this pilot study is to investigate the effects of a parent emotion socialization intervention on parents' behaviors and its subsequent impact on children's self-regulation and emotional adjustment. The research seeks to understand how parents' emotional responses and regulation strategies influence children's development of self-regulation, with the ultimate goal of improving family dynamics and child outcomes.	RCT	The results indicated that the parent-emotion socialization intervention positively impacted parent-child interactions, leading to improved emotional regulation in both parents and children. Parents who participated in the intervention were more adept at managing their own emotions and exhibited more supportive behaviors toward their children, which in turn enhanced the children's ability to self-regulate and adjust emotionally. This suggests that parental involvement in emotional education can have a significant influence on children's emotional and behavioral development.
(Wilczyńska et al., 2022b)	The study investigates how levels of state and trait anxiety differ between young soccer players of varying performance levels. Additionally, it seeks to explore the relationship between anxiety and psychomotor performance during specific cognitive tasks to determine whether anxiety affects athletic performance in young athletes.	RCT	The findings revealed that higher levels of anxiety were associated with faster response times and more accurate responses in psychomotor tasks among young soccer players. Specifically, athletes with higher trait anxiety demonstrated quicker reaction times, particularly in lower-level performance groups. The study suggests that anxiety, when properly managed, may enhance focus and improve psychomotor performance, especially in youth athletes of lower performance levels.
(García-Ceberino et al., 2019)	The objective of this study is to compare the effectiveness of two different intervention programs for teaching soccer to school-age students: one based on the tactical learning model and the other on a technical, skills-based approach. It evaluates the best method that supports the development of both technical skills and tactical understanding in young soccer players.	RCT	The study concluded that students who participated in the tactical learning model showed greater improvements in decision-making and tactical awareness. Meanwhile, those in the technical, skills-based program demonstrated more refined technical abilities. However, the tactical model was more effective overall in promoting comprehensive learning outcomes, as it engaged students in realistic game situations, encouraging them to think critically and apply skills in context.
(Gamero et al., 2021)	This study assesses how different pedagogical models and levels of player experience influence internal and external task loads during basketball practice in school settings. The research focuses on determining how these variables affect students' physiological responses and skill acquisition during basketball training sessions.	RCT	The research findings indicate that the pedagogical model and the experience level of players significantly impact both internal and external task loads. Specifically, experienced players had lower internal loads but could sustain higher external loads when exposed to tactical learning models. In contrast, less experienced players experienced higher internal stress but benefited from the tactical model in terms of skill development. This suggests that pedagogical strategies should be adapted based on player experience to optimize training outcomes.
(García-Ceberino et al., 2020)	The study elucidates how different teaching methodologies impact technical and tactical learning in football among school-aged students. Specifically, it compares the outcomes of a traditional	RCT	The study found significant differences in learning outcomes based on the teaching methodology employed. The tactical approach yielded superior results in terms of students' tactical awareness and decision-mak-

	teaching approach focused on technical skills versus a tactical approach emphasizing decision-making and strategy in gameplay.		ing during games, while the traditional, technical approach was more effective for developing specific motor skills. The tactical method, however, fostered a deeper understanding of game situations and improved overall performance in real-match settings.
(Egam, 2023)	The objective of this study is to explore and identify the key factors that enhance learning and self-efficacy among midwifery students in Indonesia. Using an SEM-PLS analysis, the research aims to assess the impact of factors such as learning methods, lecturer quality, and social support on the student's academic performance and perceived self-efficacy.	RCT	The findings revealed that learning methods and lecturer quality played crucial roles in improving both the learning experience and self-efficacy of midwifery students. The study found a strong correlation between the quality of teaching and the students' confidence in their abilities, emphasizing the importance of effective educational strategies and a supportive learning environment for fostering self-efficacy and skill acquisition in midwifery education.
(Sánchez-Jiménez et al., 2024)	The study evaluated the effectiveness of the Virtual-PRO program, a virtual reality intervention designed to prevent peer sexual harassment among adolescents. The research seeks to understand whether immersive virtual reality can be an effective tool for educating teenagers about appropriate behavior and improving their understanding of peer relationships and consent.	RCT	The initial findings showed that the Virtual-PRO program had the potential to be an effective tool for preventing peer sexual harassment in adolescents. Adolescents who participated in the virtual reality sessions demonstrated a better understanding of harassment issues and reported feeling more confident in recognizing and responding to inappropriate behavior. The immersive nature of virtual reality appeared to enhance engagement and retention of the material, indicating that this technology could be a promising approach for educational interventions on sensitive topics.

## Discussion

The emotional connection between coaches and athletes is a crucial aspect of achievement motivation in soccer. The results of this study support previous findings, emphasizing the importance of emotional bonds between coaches and athletes, with various components such as mutual trust, emotional support, and good communication (Dela, 2022; Firdaus & Kurniawan, 2023). These aspects create a positive and supportive environment for athletes to develop both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which ultimately impacts their performance on the field. A key factor within these emotional bonds was the coach's emotional intelligence, which this study identified as an important factor in influencing the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. Coaches with high emotional intelligence were reported to better understand and respond to athletes' emotional needs, thus creating a conducive environment for developing athletes' achievement motivation (Muhamad & Zawi, 2022). This is consistent with the findings of Chang and Tsai (2022), which showed that high emotional intelligence correlates with better learning motivation. Therefore, coaches' emotional intelligence can be viewed as an important skill that should be developed to improve athletes' motivation and performance.

In addition to emotional intelligence, self-efficacy or self-belief in accomplishing a task also plays an important role in achievement motivation. Athletes with high self-efficacy tend to be more motivated and perform better (Muhamad & Zawi, 2022). This indicates that coaches who can encourage and strengthen athletes' self-efficacy through support and positive feedback can help athletes achieve higher performance. A study (Zhang & Rhim, 2024) also found that emotional attachment between coaches and athletes directly improved motor behavior and performance, with psychological needs being met by acting as a mediator in the relationship.

Effective communication between coaches and athletes is another primary element in building positive emotional relationships. Coaches who can provide constructive feedback, listen to athletes, and keep communication channels open can facilitate the development of athletes' achievement

motivation (Charolin et al., 2021). Research shows that good interpersonal communication between coaches and athletes is closely related to increasing athletes' achievement motivation (Charolin et al., 2021; Firdaus & Kurniawan, 2023). This suggests that coaches must pay attention to their communication skills as an integral part of managing a successful team. In addition to the interpersonal relationship between coaches and athletes, other factors such as group cohesiveness and social support also influence athletes' achievement motivation. High group cohesiveness, for example, can create a supportive climate in which athletes feel more motivated to contribute to the team and achieve together (Saifuddiin & Setyawan, 2021). Similarly, social support from teammates can increase athletes' self-confidence and motivation, especially in stressful competition situations (Firdaus & Kurniawan, 2023). Therefore, the relationships between team members in the management of a soccer team should be paid attention.

Based on the above findings, this study supports the view that coaches have a central role in shaping an environment that supports athletes' achievement motivation. Coaches who can develop emotional intelligence, build effective communication, and strengthen athletes' self-efficacy are more likely to generate a positive impact not only on motivation but also on technical and tactical performance on the field (Bakhas & Angga Wiksana, 2022; Dela, 2022). This emphasizes the importance of the coach's interpersonal skill development as part of a holistic team development strategy. The emotional relationship between coaches and athletes significantly influences athletes' achievement motivation. Coaches' interpersonal skills, such as emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and effective communication skills, are important in building strong relationships with athletes. Therefore, coaches need to pay special attention to developing healthy emotional relationships with athletes to maximize athletes' potential and improve team performance.

### *The Role of Emotional Connection in Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation and Achievement*

Positive emotional relationships between coaches and athletes have been evidenced to increase athletes' self-confidence and motivation (Haugan et al., 2021; Wilczyńska et

al., 2022a). This relationship aligns with attachment theory, which asserts that strong interpersonal relationships can influence athletes' motivation to perform. Coaches who can provide constructive feedback and consistent emotional support are able to encourage athletes' intrinsic motivation (García-Ceberino et al., 2022), which ultimately reinforces success on the field. Thus, a good training program, especially one supported by coaches' professional development, should be directed to enhance coaches' ability to provide effective feedback and build stronger emotional relationships with athletes (Moen et al., 2020). Stronger relationships not only increase achievement motivation but also reduce anxiety that can hinder athlete performance (Wilczyńska et al., 2022a). Besides, they also have a positive impact on social awareness (Miller et al., 2020) and on the reduction of gender-based violence among students.

The role of the coach's emotional intelligence in building supportive relationships with athletes is an important factor that cannot be ignored. According to Kasyfillah and Utami (2023), emotional intelligence allows coaches to understand and respond to athletes' emotional needs, which in turn creates stronger bonds and increases athletes' self-confidence. Social support from coaches also serves as a mediator in this relationship, as it increases athletes' achievement motivation. Thus, it is fair to say that it has a direct impact on improving their performance (Prasetyo & Yunarta, 2023). Other research by (Farhansyah et al., 2023; Firdaus & Kurniawan, 2023) showed that supportive and positive leadership styles from coaches can increase athletes' engagement and intrinsic motivation. Therefore, strong emotional relationships between coaches and athletes, supported by emotional intelligence and social support, are essential in maximizing athletes' potential and achievement. It can thus be asserted that the emotional aspect of the coach-athlete relationship is very important. Emotionally supportive and socially intelligent coaches contribute greatly to athletes' intrinsic motivation and performance, both in sport and academics, and have an impact on broader social awareness.

#### ***Mediating and Moderating Factors in Coach-Athlete Emotional Relationships***

The impact of emotional relationships between coaches and athletes on achievement motivation is a topic that cannot be separated from significant mediating and moderating factors. Research by Zhang and Rhim (2024) showed that athletes' psychological needs played an important mediating role, with 41.56% of the emotional connection effect being mediated by psychological satisfaction. This indicates that coaches who respond effectively to athletes' emotional as well as psychological needs are more likely to increase their athletes' achievement motivation. García-Ceberino et al. (2019) reinforce these findings by showing that tactical learning models in sports can improve tactical awareness and decision-making, ultimately boosting athlete performance, particularly in soccer. On the other hand, coaches' communication strategies and learning methods also play an important role. For example, Wang et al. (2024) revealed

that the application of a tactical learning model in basketball increased not only students' motivation but also their tactical awareness, which in turn had a positive impact on their performance. Similarly, Bølstad et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of social-emotional interventions, which can be adapted to the coach-athlete relationship, suggesting that coaches' emotional engagement is instrumental in supporting athletes' emotion regulation and personal development.

In addition to psychological needs and learning methods, the emotional relationship between coaches and athletes is influenced by interpersonal factors, such as communication and emotional intelligence. Effective communication between coaches and athletes is the foundation for forming trust and emotional support, mediating the relationship, and promoting athletes' motivation (Dela, 2022); Mulyawan & Iman, 2023). Research shows that positive and open communication patterns have been shown to increase athletes' achievement motivation (Faisal et al., 2018). In addition, coaches' emotional intelligence and athletes' self-efficacy are moderating factors that strengthen these emotional relationships. Coaches' emotional intelligence influences the way they interact with athletes, which has a direct effect on increasing athletes' motivation and performance (Mulyawan & Iman, 2023). Meanwhile, self-efficacy, or athletes' beliefs in their own abilities, is a factor that strengthens the impact of coach support on athletes' motivation (Muhamad & Zawi, 2022). Thus, developing communication skills and understanding psychological factors are key for coaches in creating an optimal environment for improving athlete performance. By leveraging these mediating and moderating factors, coaches can foster a competitive yet supportive climate that supports athletes' motivation and achievement.

#### ***Gaps and Implications for Further Study***

While there is much positive evidence on the impact of emotional connection on achievement motivation, this study also identified gaps that need to be filled through further study. One prominent gap was the lack of research focused on soccer, which has unique group dynamics and cultural aspects. Given the importance of teamwork and collaboration in football, coach-athlete emotional relationships in a team context should be further researched to understand how such dynamics can be optimized to improve performance at both individual and group levels (García-Ceberino et al., 2020). Future research directions could also explore the findings of Egam (2023). He emphasized that learning methods and instructor quality are important in improving students' learning experience and self-efficacy. The quality of coach-athlete interactions in soccer, similar to formal educational contexts, may also contribute significantly to developing athletes' motivation and skills. In addition, variations in competition levels, from amateur to professional, need to be considered in fu-

ture research. This study could explore how emotional relationships develop and influence achievement motivation across different levels of competition. This is important because players at different levels may have varying emotional and psychological needs, which may influence how coaches approach their interactions with athletes (Sánchez-Jiménez et al., 2024). Thus, the findings of this study confirm the importance of emotional connection in shaping achievement motivation in soccer. Coaches who build positive emotional relationships with athletes through good communication, emotional support, and an autonomy-supportive approach are likely to produce more motivated and accomplished athletes on the field.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study confirms that the emotional relationship between coaches and athletes in soccer influences achievement motivation. A positive relationship, characterized by trust, emotional support, and effective communication, creates a conducive environment for athletes to develop both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which ultimately impacts their performance on the field. A coach's emotional intelligence is a crucial factor in building such relationships, as the coach's ability to understand and respond to athletes' emotional needs can increase athletes' self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, strengthening performance. Effective communication was also identified as a key element that enables coaches to provide constructive feedback and establish open channels of communication, thereby creating a climate that supports the development of athletes' achievement motivation.

A strong emotional connection between coach and athlete not only increases intrinsic motivation but also reduces anxiety levels that can hinder performance. In this context, social support from coaches and teammates is an important mediator that helps increase athletes' self-confidence, reinforces their involvement in the team, and encourages shared achievement. In addition, mediating factors such as psychological need fulfillment and tactical learning methods strengthen these emotional connections, suggesting that coaches who are responsive to athletes' psychological needs may be more effective in promoting motivation and performance. Moderating factors, such as coach emotional intelligence and athlete self-efficacy, also strengthen the impact of these emotional relationships on motivation and performance. Coaches with high emotional intelligence can create more meaningful interactions with athletes, which in turn increases intrinsic motivation and performance. Athlete self-efficacy, which is influenced by positive feedback and support from coaches, is an important factor that strengthens achievement motivation, especially in stressful competitive settings.

The implication is that coaches need to improve their interpersonal skills, including emotional intelligence and effective communication, to build healthy emotional relationships

with athletes. In addition, learning strategies that support autonomy and emotional skill development can help create an optimal environment for athletes' motivational development and achievement. Future studies could deepen the understanding of the dynamics of emotional relationships in soccer, especially in the context of group dynamics and culture, and look at how these relationships develop across different levels of competition, from amateur to professional.

## Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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