

Relationship between Body Image and Sport Confidence on Athlete

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ABSTRACT

Background: Grounded in the established importance of sport confidence for peak athletic performance, this study investigates body image as a relevant psychological construct. The pressures of meeting physical standards in sport suggest that body image may be a significant antecedent to an athlete's sport confidence. **Objective:** The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship between Body Image and Sport Confidence in athletes. **Method:** The subjects of this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique, with a total sample of 146 athletes from university ball sports clubs. The research method used was a quantitative correlational approach. Both variables were measured using the Body Image Scale and the Sport Confidence Scale. **Results:** The findings revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.592 and $p < .001$, indicating a moderate positive relationship between Body Image and Sport Confidence among the athletes. **Conclusion:** Sport confidence can be enhanced by having a positive body image, one of which is through a positive perception and acceptance of one's own body, which also becomes one of the strategies to improve psychological well-being and achieve more optimal athletic performance.

Keywords: Body image, sport confidence, athlete, ball sports

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Berdasarkan pentingnya kepercayaan diri dalam berolahraga untuk performa atletik puncak, penelitian ini menyelidiki citra tubuh sebagai konstruk psikologis yang relevan. Tekanan untuk memenuhi standar fisik dalam olahraga menunjukkan bahwa citra tubuh mungkin merupakan anteseden yang signifikan terhadap kepercayaan diri seorang atlet dalam berolahraga. **Tujuan:** Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menentukan hubungan antara Citra Tubuh dan Kepercayaan Diri dalam Berolahraga pada atlet. **Metode:** Subjek penelitian ini dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling, dengan total sampel 146 atlet dari klub olahraga bola universitas. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan korelasional kuantitatif. Kedua variabel diukur menggunakan Skala Citra Tubuh dan Skala Kepercayaan Diri dalam Berolahraga. **Hasil:** Temuan menunjukkan koefisien korelasi sebesar 0,592 dan $p < .001$, yang menunjukkan hubungan positif sedang antara Citra Tubuh dan Kepercayaan Diri dalam Berolahraga di antara para atlet. **Kesimpulan:** Kepercayaan diri dalam berolahraga dapat ditingkatkan dengan memiliki citra tubuh yang positif, salah satunya melalui persepsi dan penerimaan positif terhadap tubuh sendiri, yang juga menjadi salah satu strategi untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan psikologis dan mencapai performa atletik yang lebih optimal.

Kata Kunci: Citra tubuh, kepercayaan diri olahraga, atlet, olahraga sepakbola

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Introduction

Every human being has their own ideal body. Especially for an athlete, having an ideal body is a desire or even a demand that needs to be met. Undang-Undang No. 11 of 2022 concerning sports classifies sports into three categories, namely educational, community, and achievement sports (Indonesia, 2022). Athletes are individuals who perform performance sports (Dewi & Jannah, 2019), which is a sport that seeks to improve the ability and potential of athletes, as well as the potential to get achievements. The concept of the ideal body in sports is closely related to the athlete's perception and attitude towards their own body.

A person's perception of their own body is known as Body Image. Grogan (2022) describes body image as an individual's perception and attitude towards the body, as well as the experience of meaning towards the body in each individual (Grogan, 2022). Body image is subjective for each individual. Individuals can feel a positive or negative body image, depending on the psychological process felt by the individual. Body image evaluation reflects an individual's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their body. Body image evaluation is usually heavily influenced by the degree of mismatch or conformity between the physical characteristics perceived by an individual and their ideal appearance.

Negative evaluations of individuals in terms of shape, body size, muscle strength, and weight are referred to as body dissatisfaction (Grogan, 2022). In the athletic context, body image becomes particularly relevant due to the specific physical demands and aesthetic standards often associated with various sports branches. Research conducted by Zaccagni dan Gualdi-Russo (2023) revealed that athletes with different sports groups certainly have differences in the dissatisfaction they feel with their bodies, for example the group of athletes in ballet, rhythmic gymnastics, and cheerleading tend to want a lean and slim body, while the group of ball sports players, weightlifters, and the like tend to want a muscular body shape. Ball sports are a group of sports that do not focus on body aesthetics and tend to only involve a combination of skills, anxiety, strength, and teamwork, showing a level of dissatisfaction with the body (Kristjánsdóttir et al., 2019). However, in the study, it was found that approximately 20% of athletes in ball sports experienced body image dissatisfaction, a figure considered quite high compared to the overall athlete sample's satisfaction rate of 17.9%.

Responding to the prevalence of studies on negative body image and body dissatisfaction, research has begun to shift towards understanding positive body image. This approach is deemed important as it aims to develop interventions that help individuals appreciate, celebrate, and respect their bodies, rather than merely focusing on reducing negative perceptions. A positive body image is usually shown by an individual in the form of a good opinion of his body regardless of how he or she looks, being able to accept his body as it is, and respecting the body (Grogan, 2022). Positive body image is not limited to satisfaction with physical appearance, but rather a feeling of appreciation and respect for the body, a feeling of comfort with the body, and not an excessive self-love (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). A body image that is perceived positively allows individuals to be able to better appreciate the uniqueness and functionality of their body, being able to highlight body assets and minimize imperfections so that individuals feel comfortable, confident, and happy with their bodies.

Positive or negative body image will certainly have a different impact on individuals. The impact felt by athletes who feel dissatisfaction with their bodies is that they tend to be more susceptible to eating disorders, excessive exercise which tends to increase the risk of injury, stress and depression, and decreased performance (Zaccagni & Gualdi-Russo, 2023). Decreased performance occurs when athletes tend to focus on their physical appearance, so they tend to ignore technical and tactical aspects when exercising. Research conducted by Gillen (2015) mentions that a higher positive body image can make individuals feel better mental and physical health, including having fewer symptoms of depression, less unhealthy dietary behaviors, and higher self-esteem. Other studies on student-athletes show that positive body image is positively related to exercise confidence and flow conditions in physical activity (Soulliard et al., 2019).

Preliminary studies conducted on athletes within several Sports Activity indicated that respondents felt that confidence in sports was important for an athlete to have. Similarly, Vealey and Chase (2008) revealed that most athletes, coaches, and even sports psychology consultants believe confidence is considered one of the important keys for an athlete's success in the world of sports. Confidence is an individual's belief about the resources he has, namely the ability, to achieve his success. Vealey (1986) introduced a model of confidence in the realm of sports known as "Sport confidence". Sport confidence is the level of confidence

that individuals have about their ability to succeed in sports (Vealey, 1986). Sport confidence developed by Vealey is based on Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy.

Athletes have different sources of sport confidence (Rintaugu et al., 2018), so it is important to know the source to be able to maximize the development of sports confidence in athletes. There are nine sources of sports confidence revealed by Vealey, one of which is related to physical appearance (Vealey & Chase, 2008). Based on previous research, physical self-presentation as well as physical and mental readiness are one of the most important sources of confidence for a student-athlete (Rintaugu et al., 2018). This aligns with preliminary study findings, where 13 out of 15 athletes in ball sports reported that their perception of their bodies played a fairly important role in increasing their confidence during training or competition. Although two athletes felt their body perception did not affect their confidence, the preliminary study also revealed that athletes in the ball sports have varied levels of body satisfaction among ball sports athletes, 6 athletes reported satisfaction, 7 felt neutral, and 3 expressed dissatisfaction with their current bodies. Athletes satisfied with their bodies tended to be confident in their abilities to succeed in competitions, whereas those dissatisfied sometimes experienced doubts that impacted their on-field performance. Generally, body image demonstrates a positive relationship with self-confidence (Putri & Bajirani, 2024). Athletes who appreciate their bodies and their function in sports can encourage greater confidence to succeed in their sport, which will have an impact on their sports confidence (Soulliard et al., 2019). Therefore, by having a good body image, athletes are expected to have good confidence, which will later lead to good performance (Ricketts et al., 2023).

Confidence in athletes is dynamic and can affect their performance in competitions, the lack of confidence can make athletes hesitate in the decision-making process, it is difficult to create the right momentum when in a competition, and loss of concentration (Setyawati, 2014). In fact, the ability to make decisions, make plans, and have cognitive flexibility is very necessary, especially for strategic types of sports (Krenn et al., 2018). Athletes who do not have enough confidence can experience anxiety because they feel that they do not have adequate abilities according to the demands of the competition (Priambodo, 2017). Previous research on body image in athletes often focuses on sports with high aesthetic demands or those with higher body exposure, leaving an underexplored area for team-based ball sports where body image pressures may manifest differently. In this regard, studies specifically examining the relationship between body image and sport confidence in ball sports athletes, particularly within the Indonesian context, remain limited. This study, therefore, aims to bridge this knowledge gap by investigating the relationship between body image and sport confidence among ball sports athletes in Indonesia, offering unique insights into how Indonesia ball sports athlete's and the specific demands of ball sports may shape these psychological constructs. Furthermore, this study aims to provide new insights into how athletes' perceptions of their bodies can affect their sport confidence levels. In addition, The study is expected not only to provide a new understanding of how athletes' perceptions of their bodies can affect their confidence levels in competing but also to serve as a foundation for coaches, sports psychologists, and educational institutions in designing more effective strategies to enhance athletes' sports confidence through interventions that focus on positive body acceptance and body image.

Material and Method

Participants

A quantitative approach was utilized in this study, as it relies on the collection and processing of numerical data through specific statistical calculations. Based on the purpose of this research, which is to find out the correlation between *body image* and *sport confidence*, the research design used is non-experimental correlation, which is a study whose purpose is to see the correlation between two or more variables (Jannah, 2018). A total of 146 athletes of the Sports Student Activity Unit (SCU) at Universitas Negeri Surabaya were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Inclusion criteria required participants to be actively registered members of the SCU's ball sports branches and to be actively exercising and competing. The sample included 88 male and 58 female athletes, with ages ranging from 18 to 22 years and older.

Procedure

Prior to data collection, a preliminary study was conducted to observe phenomena related to body image and sport confidence among SCU athletes, also serving to identify gaps in previous research. Research instruments, the Body Image scale based on aspects of the theory of Cash (2012) and the Sport Confidence based on aspects of the theory of Vealey and Chase (2008), were developed and subsequently tested for

readability, validity, and reliability using the trial sample. Valid and reliable instruments were then disseminated online via Google Forms to the 146 participants, ensuring ease of access for respondents. The questionnaire items were designed to align with theoretical concepts and indicators of each variable.

Data Collection

The data collected in this study was disseminated through an online platform. The questionnaire that has been prepared is entered through the Google Form, to make it easier for respondents to fill out the questionnaire online.

Data Analysis

This research questionnaire is designed based on the indicators and theoretical aspects of each variable studied. Each variable is measured through a series of question items, both favorable and unfavorable items. The questionnaire preparation process involves the development of items that are in line with the theoretical concepts underlying this research. The data that has been collected will later be continued with analysis using appropriate statistical techniques. The correlation test was carried out using the Pearson Product Moment technique chosen for the reason that the assumption test was fulfilled, namely normal and linear distributed data. The variables of body image and sport confidence are said to have a relationship when $p < 0.05$. The respondents involved in this study were athletes who were members of Student Activity Units in the field of sports, which included Basketball (15.75%), Floorball (28.76%), Futsal (11.64%), Handball (15.75%), Rugby (6.16%), Football (10.95%), and Softball (12.32%). The respondents involved in this study consisted of 88 male athletes and 58 female athletes, with details of 11.64% aged 18 years, 30.82% aged 19 years, 27.39% aged 20 years, 13.69% aged 21 years, and 16.43% aged 22 years and older.

Result

The results of the descriptive analysis test on the research data show the results as seen in the table below.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis Results

Descriptive statistics	Body Image	Sport Confidence
N	146	146
Mean	50,42	62,74
Std. deviation	12,96	13,91
Range	53	67
Max. Score	75	85
Min. Score	22	18

Table 1 shows that that a total of 146 data points were used for the Body Image and Sport Confidence variables, with mean values of 50.42 for Body Image and 62.62 for Sport Confidence.. The standard deviation of the Body Image variable is 12.96 and the Sport Confidence variable is 13.91. Based on table 1, it can be seen that the range in the Body Image variable has a smaller value, which is 53, when compared to the Sport Confidence variable, which is 67. The Body Image variable has a minimum value of 22 and a maximum value of 75. The Sport Confidence variable has a minimum value of 18 and a maximum value of 85.

Data categorization was also carried out in this study and the results were obtained as seen in table 2.

Table 2. Data categorization of body image and sport confidence variables

Category	Body Image	Sport Confidence
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	Interval	Percentage	Interval	Percentage
Very low	$x \leq 30,98$	8,2%	$x \leq 41,88$	7,5%
Low	$30,98 < x \leq 43,94$	21,2%	$41,88 < x \leq 55,80$	21,9%
Netral	$43,94 < x \leq 56,90$	34,9%	$55,80 < x \leq 69,71$	36,3%
High	$56,90 < x \leq 69,86$	30,8%	$69,70 < x \leq 83,62$	30,1%
Very high	$x > 69,86$	4,8%	$x > 83,62$	4,1%
Total		100 %		100 %

Based on the table, it can be seen that the distribution of subjects in the body image variable of the medium category is the largest group (34.9%), followed by the high (30.8%), low (21.2%), very low (8.2%), and very high (4.8%) categories. Likewise, the *sport confidence* variable showed that the majority of subjects had Sport Confidence in the medium category (36.3%), followed by the high (30.1%), low (21.9%), very low (7.5%), and very high (4.1%) categories.

Table 3. Normality Test Result

Variabel	Sig	Information
Body Image	0,099	Normally Distributed
Sport Confidence	0,059	Normally Distributed

The table shows the results of the normality test which shows the significance value for the body image (0.099) and sport confidence (0.059) variables showing a significance value of > 0.05 . Based on these results, the data in this study were confirmed to be normally distributed. Furthermore, a linearity test was carried out to determine the linear relationship between the body image and sport confidence variables, and the result was obtained with a significance value of deviation from linearity of 0.349 ($p > 0.05$), so that the relationship between the variables of Body Image and Sport Confidence in this study has a linear relationship. Furthermore, the significance value of linearity was found to be < 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the data in this study were significantly linear.

Table 4. Correlation Test Result

Variabel	Correlation Coefficients	Sig
Body Image dan Sport Confidence	0,592	< 0.001

The results of the correlation test show the results as seen in Table 4.7. The significance value of the data in the correlation test showed a value of < 0.001 . The significance value showed a value of < 0.05 , so in this study H_1 was accepted and H_0 was rejected. This means that the body image variable has a relationship with the sport confidence variable. The relationship between body image and sport confidence variables in this study can also be observed from Table 4, which shows a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.592. Based on categorization Dancy & Reidy (2017) The figure shows that the relationship between the two variables is included in the moderate positive relationship

Discussion

This research is based on the objective of seeing the relationship between the variable *body image* and the variable *sport confidence* in athletes. Data analysis was carried out on 146 athletes who are members of SCU in the field of sports in the ball sports branch at the State University of Surabaya with results showing that there is a positive relationship between *body image* and *sport confidence* in athletes. This was obtained based on the significance value of the data showing $p < 0.05$, which is $p < 0.001$, and a correlation coefficient

of 0.592, so that the two variables are declared to have a positive and significant relationship. These findings are supported by similar studies showing that an increase in positive body image is associated with an increase in sport confidence, indicating a positive relationship between both variables (Ricketts et al., 2023, 2025; Soulliard et al., 2019).

Positive body image can be formed from respect and appreciation for the features and functionality of the body (Tylka, 2018). The positive body image is also formed from the feeling of comfort and the feeling of being able to accept unique body parts. Athletes with positive body image are expected to be able to focus on assets that can be highlighted, not on existing shortcomings. The positive body image will be displayed in the investment of taking care of the body, which is not a form of obsession (Tylka, 2018). The five aspects of body image will form a complex relationship that forms body image in athletes.

Physical self-presentation is one of the sources that can affect sports confidence (Vealey & Chase, 2008). Source sport confidence This explains that the positive perception that athletes have regarding their bodies can encourage athletes to have confidence in themselves and tend to make athletes more prepared to compete. This will later affect the performance of athletes when on the field. This source of physical self-presentation can be one of the foundations that will manage how an athlete will present himself and will proactively shape his internal perception in building confidence to achieve his optimal performance. This is also strengthened by research conducted by Taniady & Murti (2024) which reveals that when individuals feel satisfied and can accept their body, individuals will be more confident to perform confidently. Feelings of comfort, satisfaction, pride, or acceptance of one's body and appearance which are positive body image is considered to be able to increase self-esteem and encourage a person's confidence, both in the context of sports and in contexts outside of sports (Ouyang et al., 2020).

Feelings of satisfaction and appreciation for their own bodies make athletes more confident in exerting their physical abilities. Ricketts et al., (2023) found that positive appreciation of the body had significant side effects on sport confidence somebody. This attitude of appreciation makes athletes not focus on physical worries, but instead focus on strategies, skills and teamwork. Recent research by Ricketts et al in 2025 also affirmed the positive direct effects given by the appreciation of the body and functionality to the three aspects of the sport confidence. Athletes who have positive body image is considered to be able to trust his body to demonstrate physical abilities, which facilitates skills and training sport confidence larger.

Athletes' positive views of their bodies are also the attention that athletes give to their bodies as a source of encouragement for athletes to be able to confidently carry out their sports skills. In research Ricketts et al., (2023) Athletes' appreciation of their bodies has a higher correlation than appreciation of functionality, meaning that athletes' perceptions and attitudes towards their bodies and body parts have an important role to be able to increase sports confidence. This shows that positive feelings that athletes have towards their bodies, whether it is related to aspects of body areas satisfaction or satisfaction with a particular part of the body, aspects of the self-classified weight or the athlete's views regarding his weight classification, and aspek appearance evaluation or the satisfaction and dissatisfaction that the athlete feels towards his or her entire body. When an athlete feels good about his body, he will be able to perform with confidence (Voelker & Reel, 2018).

Appreciation for the body shows that individuals are able to view themselves holistically, not just focusing on their shortcomings. Individuals who are able to look at their bodies holistically will be better able to see the strength or abilities that their body can do, so that individuals can see their bodies as something positive, valuable, and also feel satisfied with their body. This will later be able to increase athletes' confidence in themselves to be able to achieve success in sports, both regarding the use of their physical or cognitive abilities. This is also supported by research by Soulliard dkk (2019) which reveals that sports activities and competitions carried out by athletes are believed to provide opportunities for athletes to form closer relationships and appreciation for the athlete's body which will later be able to improve their functional abilities.

Feelings of dislike, dissatisfaction, or excessive concern about one's body or appearance, which constitute negative body image, can reduce sport confidence in athletes. This is reinforced by research conducted by Robinson and Lewis (2016) which reveals individuals who have excessive anxiety regarding their appearance tend to have sport confidence lower. This negative mindset towards the body can be a mental distraction that interferes with the focus and self-confidence of athletes when competing. This aligns with findings by Voelker and Reel (2018) that the aspects in positive body image will protect the athlete in terms of his cognition, such as preventing athletes from body image disorders that interfere with mental focus, concentration and effective decision-making. In extreme forms, negative body image will be displayed in the form of body image disorders, which appear as a form of deep hatred, disgust, or other distorted perceptions of their bodies. It is feared that it will persist even after the athlete's career ends and has an impact on athletes' confidence and health (Reel et al., 2021).

Conversely, Ricketts et al. (2023) revealed that a positive body image leads athletes to spend less time criticizing their physical appearance. Athletes with positive body image about its unique features and functionality will give rise to greater confidence when doing sports activities.

Resilience helps athletes adapt and recover from failures, setbacks (Sehrawat et al., 2024), or able to recover from failure or injury (Petersen, 2024). Athletes gain the ability to recover by accepting themselves and evaluating themselves positively. Furthermore, this will make athletes able to have confidence in themselves to be able to recover and return to their optimal performance. When exercising, athletes also need increased awareness and attention to the athlete's body. This implies that athletes need to focus on their body functions. Participation in sports is believed to foster appreciation for the body and its functional abilities, particularly enhancing confidence to be able to use the skills and abilities that athletes have. This relationship can be characterized by increased ability and empowerment, as well as the integration of mind and body. Thus, when athletes appreciate their bodies, they are less likely to blame "physical flaws" for mistakes. Instead, they see it as an opportunity to improve techniques or strategies to be successful. In line with what was conveyed by Ricketts et al. (2025) that appreciation of the body will have a direct relationship with one of the aspects of sport confidence, namely resilience

An athlete's perception of their body can affect confidence in their abilities, and conversely, the level of confidence can shape the way they perceive and feel their body. In team sports, the influence of teammates on body image is likely to be much stronger because the relationships and interactions between them are more intense and frequent (Ricketts et al., 2025). If an athlete feels that his body is not in line with the ideal body in his branch, it can affect sport confidence-his. Athletes may also feel compelled to change their weight, shape, or body size through dietary or exercise changes to meet the demands of exercise or socio-cultural expectations (Voelker & Reel, 2019). This can be a positive and also a negative thing if it reaches a disturbing stage. In the context of sports, negative body image can be lowered by engaging in more sports activities (Robinson & Lewis, 2016).

This research has a research limitation, which is to only focus on the relationship between body image and sport confidence. In addition, the research sample in this study is focused on athletes in the ball sports game. The lack of research that discusses body image in athletes in ball sports or athletes with branches that do not focus on body aesthetics is also a limitation in this study. Therefore, researchers suggest to deepen the research on body image in ball sports, because each sport has different demands.

Conclusion

Body image is a subjective assessment encompassing one's appearance, concerns about appearance, and weight awareness. The relationship between the two variables forms quite complex psychological dynamics. A positive and healthy body image will build a foundation of confidence in athletes to achieve, while a negative body image will be able to hinder athletes' performance, through increased doubts and perceived cognitive distractions. Thus, optimal sports confidence in athletes can be increased and supported

by positive acceptance of their own body which will also have an impact on psychological well-being and maximum performance achievements.

Based on this conclusion, body image is formed not only from external appearance but also from athletes' acceptance and appreciation of their body functions. The relationship between body image and sports confidence is very significant showing the need for body image aspects to be considered in athletes. This can be one of the strategies to improve performance in athletes. Athletes are expected to cultivate good self-regulation regarding their appearance, balancing focus on abilities and strategies with attention to their physical presentation. Athletes are also expected to create a positive team culture, namely by providing support to other athletes who do not feel confident and avoiding jokes that are negative about other athletes' bodies, finding situations or things that make athletes feel uncomfortable with their bodies. Further research can be carried out by involving more varied sports and looking at the comparison of body image in sports with high and low body exposure. In addition, in order to make the results more in-depth, it is necessary to conduct a study that compares the relationship between the body image felt by athletes in the world of sports and body image in their social life. In addition, research on the effectiveness of athlete interventions based on improving body image and its effect on sport confidence also needs to be studied to develop more strategies related to increasing sport confidence in athletes.

Author contribution statement

Dinar Ester M. O. Simanjuntak (A, B, C, D) : Make a research design, collect information and data from athletes, conduct statistical tests, and compile backgrounds, research methods, results, and discussions.

Miftakhul Jannah (A, B, C, D): Manage the process of preparing training designs, assist in the data collection process, assist in the implementation of statistical tests, and provide opinions in writing the background section of the research method, and discussion.

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