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## Interpersonal Communication of Coaches and Athletes' Achievement Motivation: A Descriptive Study of Athletes with Disabilities in Athletics

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**Abstract:** In the world of sports, interpersonal communication between coaches and athletes is key to influencing an athlete's performance and achievement motivation. This is especially true for athletes with disabilities, who often face unique physical and mental challenges. Therefore, the role of coaches is crucial in addressing these challenges. This study aims to explore the relationship between coaches' interpersonal communication and the achievement motivation of athletes with disabilities. A descriptive method was employed in this study, employing a correlational design. The subjects involved in this study were 40 disabled athletes (31 male and 9 female) in athletics in Bandung City, aged 18-45 years. A questionnaire on coaches' interpersonal communication and achievement motivation was used as the research instrument, administered once to the subjects via Google Form. A Pearson correlation test using SPSS version 25 was used for data analysis. The results showed a significant relationship between coaches' interpersonal communication and athletes' achievement motivation. This study concluded that coaches' interpersonal communication and athletes' achievement motivation are interconnected, particularly for athletes with disabilities, who tend to require a more involved coach role in their training. This study suggests that coaches should improve interpersonal communication to further enhance the achievement motivation of athletes with disabilities.

**Keywords:** Achievement Motivation, Athletes with Disabilities, Interpersonal Communication, Coaches

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## INTRODUCTION

The coach is not only a technical director, but also a source of emotional support and motivation for athletes. In everyday training situations, athletes often look to their coach not just for instruction, but also for encouragement and understanding, especially during challenging moments (Martens & Vealey, 2023; Otte et al., 2020). With diverse limitations, athletes with disabilities require a sensitive and adaptive communication approach (Judge et al., 2025). Interpersonal communication in this context refers to the direct, face-to-face verbal and non-verbal exchanges between coaches and athletes, encompassing elements such as active listening, empathy, clarity of instruction, and

emotional responsiveness. This means coaches need to be more attentive to individual needs, adjusting how they communicate so that every athlete feels understood and valued. Ultimately, strong interpersonal communication helps build a sense of safety and comfort, which plays an important role in fostering athletes' motivation to achieve (Burns et al., 2019).

According to Purnamasari & Novian, (2021) revealed that effective interpersonal communication between coaches and disabled athletes is crucial for building trust and motivation. In the study Kim & Park, (2020) Revealing that good interpersonal communication between coaches provides opportunities for athletes to increase their motivation during competitions. Effective communication can increase trust between athletes and coaches, thus demonstrating athlete success (Aleksandra, 2025; Nikolic, 2025). Addressing this issue can be achieved through the initial communication process, which ultimately creates a way for coaches and athletes to communicate. Second, the instructional communication methods used by coaches in the training process include practical work and discussion. Third, instructional communication between coaches and athletes is conducted through verbal communication (Ismail et al., 2024).

Interpersonal communication between coaches is something that has a big influence on athletes' motivation in achieving success (Burns et al., 2019). In daily training, the way a coach interacts with athletes can shape not only their confidence but also their willingness to keep improving (Forlenza et al., 2018; Foulds et al., 2019). This becomes a real issue when coaches do not actively build open and supportive communication during the training process. Research indicates that athletes with disabilities frequently report lower levels of achievement motivation compared to their non-disabled counterparts, often due to limited access to adaptive coaching, social stigma, and insufficient emotional support from their training environment (Liu et al., 2025). Athletes often mention that one of the main barriers is not really knowing their coaches well, which can make them feel as if they are being treated differently from others (Novian & Noors, 2020). As a result, many athletes hesitate to speak openly about the difficulties they face, leading to limited communication and increasing the risk of misunderstandings between athletes and coaches (Novian et al., 2024).

In addition, the motivation to achieve is the basis for all sports people, real situations, this motivation often becomes the driving force that keeps athletes pushing forward, even when training feels exhausting or progress seems slow. Achievement motivation comprises two key dimensions: the motive to achieve success (MAS) and the motive to avoid failure (MAF), both of which influence how athletes set goals, respond to challenges, and persist under pressure (Boileau-Perreault, 2025). Having strong achievement motivation can lead to better performance, both during competition and in daily training routines. Many psychologists emphasize that in competitive settings, this type of motivation plays a crucial role in determining an athlete's success (Bayani et al., 2024; Sholihah & Pudjijuniarto, 2021; Wati & Jannah, 2021). With a clear desire to achieve, athletes are more likely to put in consistent effort and actively work on improving their performance over time (Clarasasti & Jatmika, 2017; Permata et al., 2024).

This study focuses on interpersonal communication between coaches and achievement motivation in athletes with disabilities, with the subjects being athletes with disabilities in Bandung City Athletics. The choice of this group is important because athletes with disabilities often face unique challenges that require more than just physical training support. This study used a descriptive method with a correlational design to better understand how communication relates to motivation in this specific context. Previous

research has mostly examined interpersonal communication between coaches and athlete motivation in non-disabled athletes (Refiater & Haryanto, 2024). While those studies highlight the role of communication in improving performance (Permata et al., 2024; Purnomo et al., 2024), there is still a need to explore how these dynamics work among athletes with disabilities in a more focused way.

## METHODS

This study used a descriptive method with a correlational design to examine the relationship between variables without manipulating them (Fraenkel et al., 2022). This design was chosen to determine the degree of association between coach interpersonal communication and athlete achievement motivation. The research was conducted at the Bandung City athletics branch, involving athletes with disabilities registered under the local sports organization. The population of this study comprised athletes with disabilities affiliated with the Bandung City athletics branch. The sample consisted of 40 athletes with disabilities from the Bandung City athletics branch using a purposive sampling technique. The characteristics were those aged between 18–45 years. Subjects came from various disability classifications based on competition regulations, ranging from T11 (visual impairment) to T54+ (hearing impairment). The research instrument was a closed questionnaire, that measured the coach's interpersonal communication and athlete achievement motivation, each adopted from Rahayu, (2016) and Prihandrijani, (2016), with a Likert scale of 1–5. Data collection was carried out once through Google Forms with the hope that respondents would provide answers that correspond to actual conditions so that the instrument is declared reliable. Data analysis used the Pearson correlation test and simple linear regression to determine the relationship and influence of coach interpersonal communication (X) on athlete performance motivation (Y), with the help of SPSS software versions 25 and 29.

## RESULT

**Table 1. Statistical Description**

Variables	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interpersonal Communication Coach	31	51	1537	38.42	5.861
Achievement Motivation	51	87	2750	68.75	7.285

Table 1 shows the statistical descriptions of two variables: Coach Interpersonal Communication and Achievement Motivation. The results of the coach interpersonal communication with a minimum value of 31, while the maximum value shows the number 51, and has a total of 1537, with an average of 38.42 and a standard deviation of 5.861, this indicates the level of variation of the data from the average value. Then the results of achievement motivation are, with a minimum value of 51, a maximum of 87, a total of 2750, an average of 68.75 and a standard deviation of 7.285 which shows how much the data is spread from the average. Next in Table 2 the author presents the results of the normality test.

**Table 2. Normality Test**

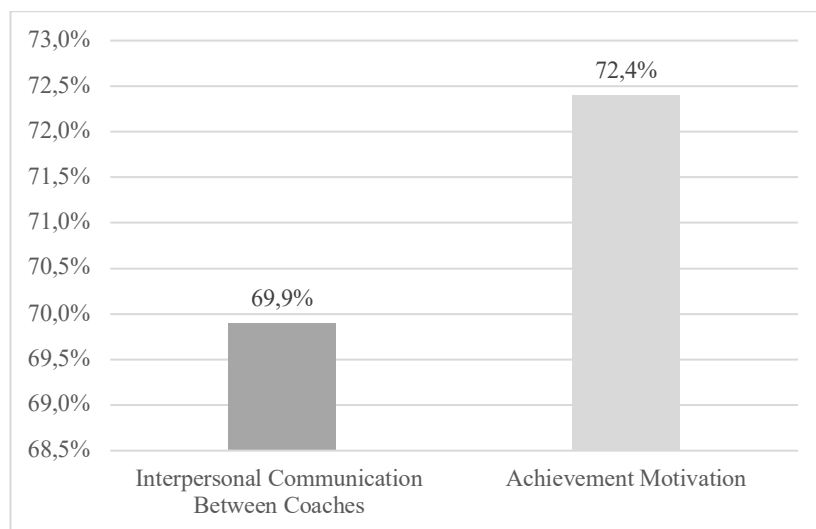
Variables	Statistic	df	Sig.
Interpersonal Communication Coach	.129	40	.092
Achievement Motivation	.094	40	.200

Table 2 shows the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, which shows that the two variables above have a total of 40 subjects. With a significance value of .092 for the coach's interpersonal communication and .200 for the athlete's achievement motivation. The normality test states that the data is normally distributed if the significance value is greater than 0.05. Table 3 the author presents the results of the hypothesis test.

**Table 3. Hypothesis Testing**

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Interpersonal Communication Coach	.338	.033
Achievement Motivation	.338	.033

Table 3 shows a correlation coefficient of .338 with a significance value/p-value of .033. Since the significance value of  $p > 0.05$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected, meaning there is a significant positive relationship between the coach's interpersonal communication and the athlete's achievement motivation. The better the coach's interpersonal communication, the higher the athlete's achievement motivation. The positive results from the correlation calculation indicate a tendency for a significant unidirectional relationship between the coach's interpersonal communication and the athlete's achievement motivation.



**Figure 1.** Percentage of Interpersonal Communication Between Coaches and Achievement Motivation of Athletes with Disabilities in Athletics

Figure 1. Shows the presentation of interpersonal communication between coaches and achievement motivation of disabled athletes in athletics. The graph above shows a percentage of 69.9% for interpersonal communication between coaches and

72.4% for achievement motivation. This figure explains that the better the interpersonal communication between coaches, the higher the achievement motivation of athletes. It can be concluded that the research data is normally distributed and the regression model meets the assumption of normality.

## DISCUSSION

In the context of sports achievement, the coach's interpersonal communication is a supporter of the athlete's success (Turman, 2016; Vella et al., 2013). In everyday training, the way a coach speaks, listens, and responds can shape how athletes see themselves and their abilities. This finding is in line with previous research that emphasized the importance of communication in increasing athletes' self-confidence and motivation (Carpentier & Mageau, 2016). Coaches who are able to communicate effectively with their athletes can create a more conducive training environment, so that athletes feel more appreciated and motivated to achieve their best performance (Atmanegara & Zulfiningrum, 2023; Novian & Noors, 2020). A coach must have his own communication style when interacting with his athletes in building good communication (Novian, 2019).

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to respondents via Google Form, the interpersonal communication of coaches and the motivation of athletes to achieve have a close relationship with each other. In practice, this shows that the way coaches communicate can directly influence how athletes view their own abilities and progress. This makes athletes more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, helping them build confidence while also finding ways to improve when facing challenges in competition (Beaumont et al., 2015; Ludlam et al., 2017). Overall, these findings suggest that better interpersonal communication from coaches is associated with higher levels of achievement motivation among athletes (Sholihah & Pudjijuniarto, 2021).

In addition, the results of this study also indicate that the communication methods used by trainers can influence the effectiveness of interpersonal relationships (Kurnia & Apsari, 2020). In real training situations, this means that how a coach delivers messages can shape how well athletes understand and respond to instructions. The use of verbal and nonverbal communication that is appropriate to the needs of athletes with disabilities is very important in building good interactions (Susilawati & Lubis, 2024). For example, a blind athlete will rely more on verbal communication, while a deaf athlete will require a clearer visual communication approach (Muhtar & Lengkana, 2019). Therefore, trainers must have a good understanding of how to communicate effectively with various types of disabilities.

Overall, this study confirms that interpersonal communication with coaches plays a crucial role in increasing achievement motivation in athletes with disabilities. In everyday training, athletes are not only looking for technical guidance but also for understanding, encouragement, and a sense of connection with their coach. Because of that, coaches need to continuously develop their communication skills so they can respond to the unique needs of each athlete. When coaches are able to build strong and positive interpersonal relationships, the training environment becomes more supportive and comfortable for everyone involved. In the end, this kind of environment helps athletes stay motivated and perform at their best consistently.

## CONCLUSSION

Based on the research results, it was found that there is a significant positive relationship between coach interpersonal communication and achievement motivation in athletes with disabilities, with interpersonal communication accounting for of the variance in achievement motivation. it can be concluded that interpersonal communication. it can be concluded that interpersonal communication between coaches and athletes with disabilities plays a significant role in increasing achievement motivation, where better communication is associated with higher motivation to achieve better results and helps create an environment that supports the development of skills and confidence in athletes. This study also confirms that coaches serve not only as technical guides but also as emotional supporters, especially since athletes with disabilities often face additional challenges in both training and competition. Because of these challenges, a more personalized and adaptive communication approach becomes necessary so that athletes feel understood and supported. Coaches who are able to recognize and adjust to their athletes' communication needs tend to be more effective in providing motivation and building stronger, more trusting relationships. In addition, these findings highlight that good interpersonal communication can reduce the risk of miscommunication between coaches and athletes. Barriers such as limited understanding of the characteristics of athletes with disabilities or differences in verbal and nonverbal communication styles need to be addressed carefully through appropriate strategies. Therefore, it is important for coaches to continuously develop communication skills that are tailored to the specific needs of each athlete they work with.

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