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The Effect of Social Support and Self Efficacy on The Performance of Youth Swimmers

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Abstract

Background : In competitive sports, athletes rely not only on physical strength but also on mental resilience. Low levels of social support and self-efficacy among athletes can lead them to doubt their own abilities. This uncertainty hinders performance, making it difficult for athletes to reach their full potential. This research is crucial because support from coaches, family, and friends can guide athletes in building self-efficacy and improving their performance. **Purvouse :** This study aims to determine the significant effect of social support and self-efficacy on the swimming performance of adolescent athletes. **Methods :** The researchers used a quantitative descriptive method with a correlation approach and found that 11 athletes met the criteria. Measurement tool used was the MSPSS questionnaire with a validity value of 0.81 to 0.98 and reliability of 0.92 to 0.94, the GSE questionnaire with a validity value of 0.76 and reliability of 0.90, and performance assessment using a pre-provided judgment assessment rubric without conducting any training or treatment interventions, with only one data collection. **Results :** The results of the study indicate that social support and self-efficacy have a significant influence of 0.00 < 0.05 on athlete performance. **Findings and Novelty** : Although many previous studies have addressed social support and self-efficacy, the majority of these studies focused on academic settings in other countries. Furthermore, focus on regional athletes is often overlooked, even though athletes at the regional level may face different challenges compared to those in major cities.

Keywords: Adolescents, Self Efficacy, Social Support, Swimming, Performance

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A. Introduction

In the world of competitive sports, athletes rely not only on physical strength but also on mental resilience. Globally, the greatest challenge for young athletes is the high level of competitive pressure and stress during training, which often leads to a decline in motivation or even burnout (Bompa & Sarandan, 2022; Khan et al., 2026). The main issue lies in how an athlete maintains their self-efficacy amidst high performance demands (Linge et al., 2021). Without a strong mental foundation, even the greatest physical potential will struggle to be fully realized in competition (R. S. Weinberg & Gould, 2023), particularly among teenage swimmers in Lubuk Linggau City. A common phenomenon observed is that many athletes are technically proficient but often doubt their own abilities when environmental pressure increases. This issue frequently stems from a lack of support within their immediate environment, such as from family, coaches, and peers (Freeman, 2021).

In fact, for adolescent athletes, support from those around them serves as a primary source of motivation that determines whether the athlete will remain optimistic or instead feel burdened by expectations (Sabato et al., 2016). Numerous studies, including a literature review by (Kurniawan & Setiyowati, 2025), highlight the disparity between potential and performance. The findings clearly indicate that social support serves as a bridge that strengthens self-efficacy. Furthermore, a common issue in related studies is that athletes' self-efficacy becomes unstable when social support is lacking, which automatically reduces their desire to perform well. Negative social interactions or a lack of support make athletes vulnerable to stress, preventing their performance in the pool from reaching its optimal level (Gunes & Yetim, 2023). Low levels of social support and self-efficacy among athletes can cause them to doubt their own abilities. This uncertainty hinders athletic performance, making it difficult for athletes to reach their full potential (Wibowo, 2024). This is influenced by both internal and external support provided by the athlete's environment (Y. Wang et al., 2024). For example, social support from family, coaches, and friends can help foster and enhance athletes' sense of self-efficacy (Teck Koh et al., 2019).

This research is essential because support from coaches, family, and friends can serve as a guide for athletes in building self-efficacy and enhancing athletic performance. This, in turn, influences athletes' performance both on the field and in competitions (Casa et al., 2019). However, coaches often overlook the psychological aspects that athletes should possess (Frost et al., 2026; Komarudin et al., 2024). Furthermore, this study can provide insights for sports practitioners to create a more supportive environment for athletes, enabling them to achieve better results. It is also expected to yield significant improvements in performance from a psychological perspective, particularly regarding social support and athletes' self-efficacy.

Although many previous studies have addressed social support and self-efficacy, the majority of these studies have focused on academic settings in other countries, such as China (Zhang & Qian, 2024), or on physical activity in general (Ren et al., 2020). The gap identified in this study lies in coaches' lack of understanding regarding the specific psychological aspects necessary to enhance self-efficacy. Furthermore, the focus on regional athletes is often overlooked, even though athletes at the regional level may face different challenges compared to those in major cities (Book Jr et al., 2022). Since sports play a crucial role in improving human health and financial well-being, particularly in competitive sports (Febrianty et al., 2024). Therefore, further research is needed

to explore how social support and self-efficacy may interact to improve the performance of adolescent swimmers.

Social support and self-efficacy are key factors in an athlete's success (van Raalte & Posteher, 2019). Support from the surrounding environment not only makes a person feel comfortable but can also directly boost an athlete's confidence in their ability to face challenges (Albaloul et al., 2026). Additionally, this success is influenced by other supporting factors such as past success experiences, gender, age, and internal motivation (Ntshangase et al., 2026; Ye, 2026). When social support, self-efficacy, and motivation converge, they create a powerful driving force that significantly enhances an athlete's engagement and performance (Li et al., 2026).

B. Methods

In this study, the researcher used a quantitative descriptive method with a correlational approach. Quantitative descriptive research is a type of research that focuses on describing phenomena or characteristics of an object (Gumilang, 2016). The type of population taken in this study was a finite population (Dumelle et al., 2022). The researcher selected the sample subjects based on characteristics or criteria relevant to the research objectives (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). The sample criteria in this study were active teenage breaststroke swimmers who had participated in regional championships, aged 13 to 18 years old, and of both male and female genders. Eleven athletes were found to meet the criteria determined by the researcher. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a research instrument containing a series of statements used to collect data from respondents (Singh, 2017). A closed questionnaire was used in this study because a closed questionnaire provides choices with answers predetermined by the researcher (Hadler, 2023).

This social support instrument adopts the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) questionnaire developed by (Zimet GD, Dahlem NW, Zimet SG, 1988). This instrument consists of 12 questions and has been widely used and well validated, showing good to excellent internal consistency and test-retest reliability with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.81 to 0.98 in non-clinical samples and 0.92 to 0.94 in clinical samples. This instrument uses a 1 to 7 Likert scale, where 1 is "Strongly Disagree (STSS)", 2 is "Disagree (SaTS)", 3 is "Somewhat Disagree (SeTS)", 4 is "Neutral (N)", 5 "Slightly Agree (SeS)", 6 "Strongly Agree (SS)", 7 "Strongly Agree (SSS)". The self-efficacy instrument in this study adopted the General Self Efficacy Scale (GSE) proposed by Schwarzer (Ummah, 2019). The General Self Efficacy Scale (GSE) instrument has a Cronbach's alpha validity and reliability value between 0.76 and 0.90, with a total of 10 items covering emotions, optimism, self-satisfaction, depression, stress, health complaints, fatigue, and anxiety. The General Self Efficacy Scale (GSE) has a Likert scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is "Not at all true (SSTB)", 2 is "Hardly true (HTB)", 3 is "Somewhat true (CB)", and 4 is "Very true (BS)". The instrument for performance refers to judgmental assessment. Judgment is an assessment method used to measure the ability of a person or athlete through direct observation of the athlete's actions or work results (Scharfen & Memmert, 2019). Judgment assessment is carried out based on a structured but subjective assessment by an assessor. The assessment components include breaststroke techniques such as streamline (body position), leg movement (kick), arm movement (pull), breathing, coordination, and gliding (timing and glide).

The researcher then conducted the research procedure by first determining the population. After determining the population, the researcher took samples from that population. Next, the researcher collected data using the Multidimensional

Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) social support instrument and the General Self Efficacy Scale (GSE) self-efficacy instrument. After collecting the data, the researchers analyzed it by measuring two or more variables. Data analysis in this study used Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software to determine the influence between variables, which would later be used to draw conclusions in the study.

C. Result and Discussion

Result

The results of the study were conducted to provide an overview of the basic characteristics of 11 athletes. Thus, demographic data analysis of the research subjects was carried out, involving the grouping of athletes based on gender, age, and education level variables, and the data was then visualized in Table 1.

Tabel 1. Demographic Data of Research Subjects

Item			Amount	Persentase
Gender Variable	Male		5	45%
	Female		6	55%
Total Amount			11	100%
Age Variable	12 Years Old	Male	1	9%
		Female	0	0%
	Total		1	9%
	13 Years Old	Male	3	27%
		Female	1	9%
	Total		4	36%
	14 Years Old	Male	0	0%
		Female	1	9%
	Total		1	9%
	16 Years Old	Male	1	9%
		Female	1	9%
	Total		2	18%
	17 Years Old	Male	0	0%
		Female	1	9%
	Total		1	9%
	18 Years Old	Male	0	0%
		Female	2	18%
	Total		2	18%
Total Amount			11	100%
Level Of Education Variable	JHS	Male	4	36%
		Female	2	18%
		Total	6	55%
	SHS	Male	1	9%
		Female	4	36%
		Total	5	45%
Total Amount			11	100%

*JHS (Junior High School), SHS (Senior High School).

Table 1 shows the demographic data of the research subjects based on gender, age, and education level. There were 11 teenage swimmers in the study. Five of the subjects were male, representing 45% of the total, while six were female, representing 55%. After collecting demographic data on gender, demographic data on the age range

of the adolescents was collected. There was 1 adolescent aged 12 years old, representing 9% of the sample, 4 adolescents aged 13 years old, representing 36% of the sample, one subject aged 14 years with a percentage of 9%, two subjects aged 16 years with a percentage of 18%, one subject aged 17 years with a percentage of 9%, and two subjects aged 18 years with a percentage of 18%. Then, for the education level, there were 6 subjects at the junior high school level with a percentage of 55% and 5 subjects at the senior high school level. Next, a statistical description will be carried out covering the number, minimum value, maximum value, average, and standard deviation for the variables of social support, self-efficacy, and performance in Table 2 below.

Table 1. Statistical Description

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Support	11	61.00	78.00	69.09	5.96
Self Efficacy	11	24.00	39.00	32.92	4.87
Performance	11	11.00	20.00	15.64	2.87

*N (Amount), Min (Minimum), Max (Maximum), Std. (Standar).

Table 2 shows that there are a total of 11 teenage swimmers. For the social support item, the minimum value was 61.00, the maximum value was 78.00, the average value was 69.09, and the standard deviation value for social support was 5.96. Then, for the self-efficacy item, the minimum value was 24.00, the maximum value was 39.00, the average value was 32.92, and the standard deviation for self-efficacy was 4.87. The performance item had a minimum value of 11.00, a maximum value of 20.00, an average value of 15.64, and a standard deviation of 2.87. Next, a description will be provided through percentages for each item, starting from the social support, self-efficacy, and performance items, as shown in the following figure 1.

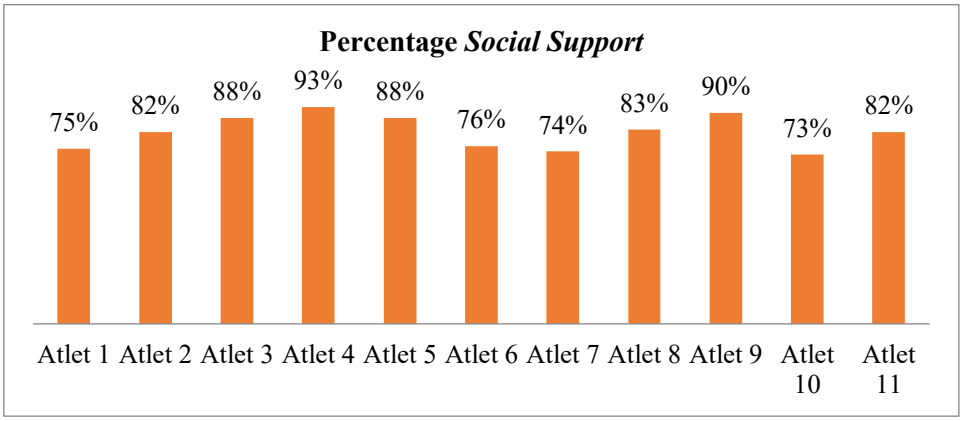

Figure 1. Percentage Social Support

Figure 1 shows the percentage of social support for 11 teenage swimmers. Athlete 1 received 75% social support, athlete 2 received 82% social support, athlete 3 received 88% social support, athlete 4 received 93% social support, athlete 5 received 88% social support, athlete 6 received 76% social support, athlete 7 received 74% social support, athlete 8 received 83% social support, athlete 9 received 90% social support, athlete 10 received 73% social support, and athlete 11 received 82% social support. The overall average for all athletes for the social support item was 82.25%. Next, the self-efficacy item will be explained in Figure 2 as follows.

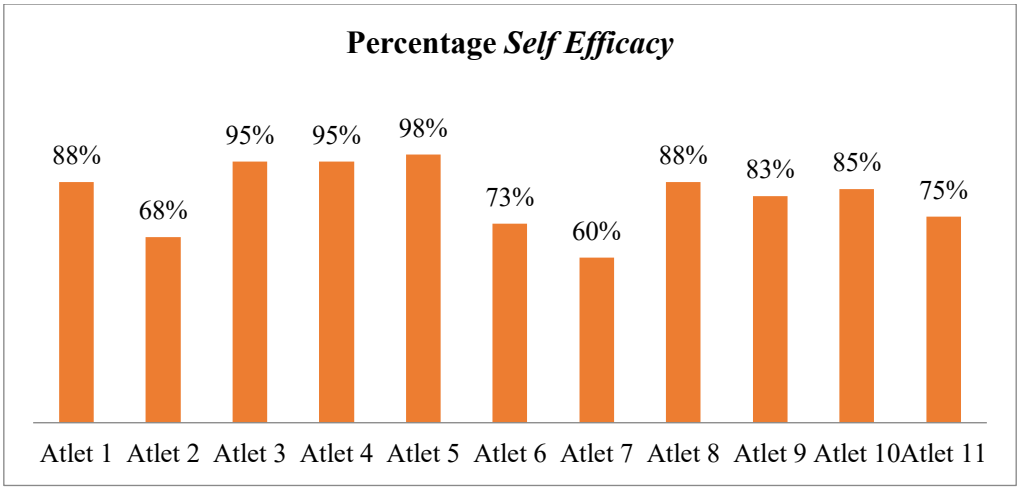

Figure 2. Percentage *Self Efficacy*

Figure 2 shows the percentages for the self-efficacy item of 11 teenage swimmers, which were obtained for athlete 1 with 88% self-efficacy, athlete 2 with 68% self-efficacy, athletes 3 and 4 with 95% self-efficacy, athlete 5 with 98% self-efficacy, athlete 6 with 73% self-efficacy, athlete 7 obtained 60% self-efficacy, athlete 8 obtained 88% self-efficacy, athlete 9 obtained 83% self-efficacy, athlete 10 obtained 85% self-efficacy, and athlete 11 obtained 75% self-efficacy. The overall average for all athletes for the self-efficacy item was 82.27%. After describing the self-efficacy percentage, the performance of the 11 athletes will be described using the percentage that will be visualized in Figure 3 as follows.

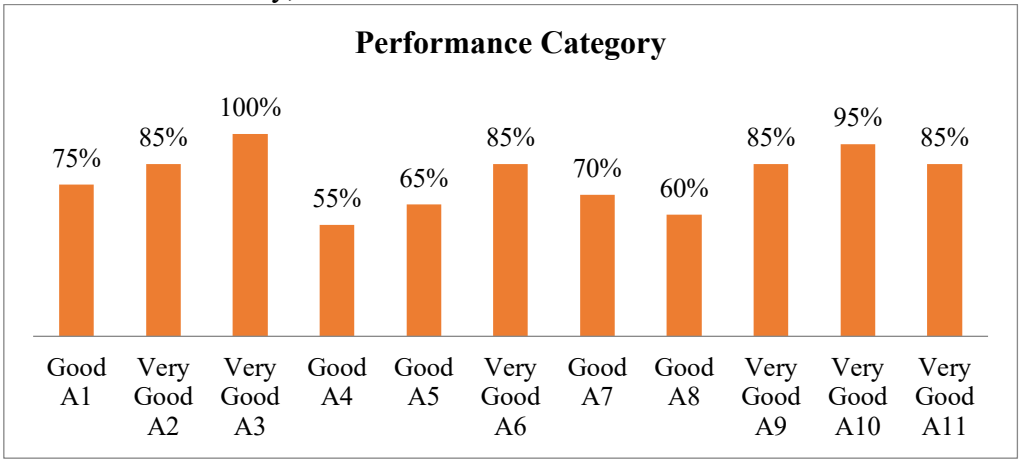

Figure 3. Perfromance Category

Figure 3 shows the performance result categories for 11 teenage swimmers. It was found that 75% of the performance scores for athlete 1 were in the good performance category, 85% of the performance scores for athlete 2 were in the very good performance category, 100% of performance scores for athlete 3 in the excellent performance category, 55% of performance scores for athlete 4 in the excellent performance category, 65% of performance scores for athlete 5 in the excellent performance category, 85% of performance scores for athlete 6 in the good performance category, 70% performance score for athlete 7 in the good performance category, 60% performance score for athlete 8 in the excellent performance category, 85% performance score for athlete 9 in the excellent performance category, 95% performance score for athlete 10 in the good performance category, 85% performance score for athlete 11 in the excellent performance

category. The average score for all athlete performance data was 78.18%. Then, the percentage of performance improvement will be calculated, starting from social support to self-efficacy. After categorizing the performance results for each athlete, the performance assessment results for the categories of excellent to poor will be displayed as follows.

Table 2. Performance Assessment Results

Value	Result	Frequency	Percentage
80%-100%	Very Good	8	73%
81%-50%	Good	3	27%
49%-30%	Enough	0	0%
< 30%	Less	0	0%
Total		11	100%

Table 3 shows that the performance assessment results produced scores of 80% to 100% with a very good rating, which had a frequency of 8 athletes and a percentage of 73%. scores of 81% to 50% with a rating of good, which had a frequency of 3 athletes with a percentage of 27%, and ratings of fair or poor had a frequency of 0, meaning that there were no athletes in that category and a percentage of 0%. The researcher will then conduct a normality test to determine whether the data is normally distributed or not in the next section.

Table 3. Normality Test

Variable	Sig.	Result
Social Support	0.59	Normal
Self Efficacy	0.54	Normal
Performance	0.59	Normal

Table 4 shows the normality test values for each item, starting from social support, self-efficacy, and performance. Data is said to be normally distributed if the Sig. value is ≥ 0.05. Based on Table 4, the normality test obtained the following values: Sig. (0.59,0.54,.0,59) > 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data (Social Support, Self Efficacy, Performance) is normally distributed. After conducting the normality test and finding that the data is normally distributed, a homogeneity test will be conducted to determine whether two or more sample data groups come from populations with the same or homogeneous variance, using the following table.

Table 4. Homogeneity Test

Variable	Sig.	Result
Social Support_Performance	0,18	Homogeneous
Self Efficacy_Performance	0,08	Homogeneous

Table 5 shows the homogeneity test values for each variable, starting from social support for performance and self-efficacy for performance. Data is considered homogeneous if the Sig. value is ≥ 0.05. Based on Table 5, the homogeneity

test obtained the following values: Sig. (0.18,0.08) > 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data (Social Support on Performance, Self-Efficacy on Performance) is homogeneous. Next, we will test the hypothesis of the two variables on performance in the following table.

Table 5. Hypothesis Test

Variable	Sig. (2-tailed)	Result
Social Support_Performance	0.00	Significant
Self Efficacy_Performance	0.00	Significant

Table 6 illustrates the hypothesis test values for each variable, starting from social support on performance and self-efficacy on performance. Data is considered significant if the Sig. value is ≤ 0.05. Based on Table 6, the hypothesis test obtained Sig. (2-tailed) values (0.00,0.00) < 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data (Social Support on Performance, Self-Efficacy on Performance) shows a significant influence of social support and self-efficacy on the performance of teenage swimmers. The researcher will discuss this further in the following section.

Discussion

Based on the results of the research described above, the researchers showed that the hypothesis proposed regarding the influence of social support on adolescent swimming performance was very strong and influential. This is proven and reinforced when athletes receive external support from parents and coaches, as athletes will feel that they have a support system that will keep their mental state stable (Kegelaers & Wylleman, 2019; Tamás-Szora & Béki, 2026). This support can help athletes reduce the excessive anxiety that often arises just before they jump into the pool or when heading to a competition (Rice et al., 2019). Therefore, the emotional investment of those closest to the athlete is key to improving the mental strength and resilience of adolescent athletes (Sabato et al., 2016). The second hypothesis proposed states that there is a significant influence of self-efficacy on performance, as evidenced by a similar Sig. (2-tailed) value. This confirms that an athlete's belief in their abilities greatly determines their final performance. Athletes who believe that they have trained properly will have more consistent motivation during competitions or matches (McGuigan, 2017). This sense of self-confidence functions as an internal drive that prevents athletes from giving up easily when they feel tired or discouraged (Gunes & Yetim, 2023). Thus, building mental confidence in one's abilities is a key step in improving the performance quality of youth swimmers (Brooks, 2019). This means that both hypotheses indicate that psychological aspects, both external and internal, work together to improve the performance of young swimmers (Morais et al., 2021). This study reveals that athletic performance is not only about physical ability but also about how athletes feel supported and how confident they feel in themselves (Fadare et al., 2022). The combination of high social support and strong self-efficacy creates a good mental state for adolescent swimmers (Shi et al., 2025). Thus, the results of this study provide a solid and strong theoretical basis, especially for coaches to start paying more serious and regular attention to the mental health of their students (Crothers et al., 2020; Driscoll, 2026). Thus, the hypothesis proposed in this study makes a real contribution to understanding how social support and self-efficacy influence the performance of adolescent swimmers.

Furthermore, based on the data in the graph, it is shown that social support

contributes significantly to improving athlete performance, with a performance increase of 47.98%. This figure far exceeds the influence of self-efficacy, which only accounts for a performance increase of 22.85%. This striking difference shows that external factors in the form of environmental support have a stronger influence on adolescent athletes because the presence of parents, coaches, and peers is the main foundation for maintaining the stability of athletes' performance (Knight et al., 2018). Social support is also higher because adolescent athletes tend to be highly dependent on validation and motivation from those around them (Shi et al., 2025). When receiving direct encouragement, an athlete will feel a greater sense of positive responsibility and security when competing (Fransen et al., 2018). This is different from self-efficacy, which is internal and often fluctuates, especially when athletes face intense mental pressure (Popovych et al., 2020). Psychologically, the figure of 47.98% proves that athletes who feel supported will have much better stress resistance in their minds. Self-efficacy is indeed important, but for adolescent athletes, belief in one's own abilities is often not yet firmly established without external reinforcement (Lopez-Garrido, 2023). When social support is consistently present, athletes not only feel capable, but also feel loved and appreciated regardless of the outcome (Brown et al., 2018). This sense of emotional security then releases the burden on the mind so that athletes can move faster and focus on their desired goals (Sabato et al., 2016b). Thus, social support from those closest to them indirectly gives athletes self-confidence and will affect their performance (Zeb et al., 2023).

The performance of a teenage swimmer is not only determined by physical training, but also by mental strength built through social support and self-efficacy (Xu et al., 2024). Social support provides a sense of security from the outside, while self-efficacy provides strength of belief from within the athlete's soul (Russell III, 2023). When these two factors work together, athletes will have a very strong psychological foundation to deal with the pressure of competition (R. S. Weinberg & Gould, 2023). Support from coaches and family creates a positive environment for the growth of confidence in the athlete's personal abilities (Lundy et al., 2019). Based on research data, social support plays the most significant role, contributing to a 47.98% increase in performance. This high figure proves that the presence of loved ones has a significant influence on the fighting spirit of young athletes (Rossing et al., 2018). Young people tend to crave recognition and external motivation to feel valued. Then, even though the self-efficacy figure is below social support, self-efficacy still makes an important contribution of 22.85% to performance. Self-efficacy is an internal engine that convinces athletes that they are capable of overcoming any challenge, no matter how difficult (Linge et al., 2021). Without self-confidence, even substantial social support will not be fully absorbed by athletes (Pastimo & Muslikah, 2022). Belief in technical ability and physical endurance makes athletes more willing to take risks to accelerate arm strokes, kicks, and even breathing and movement coordination, especially in breaststroke swimming (Hawke, 2024). This process helps athletes remain calm and not panic even when their opponents are in a more advantageous position (Chang et al., 2020). This awareness will enable athletes to maintain consistent performance from one competition to another (McGuigan, 2017).

The relationship between social support and self-efficacy is complementary in improving the performance of young swimmers in the field (Xu et al., 2024). Consistent social support will gradually foster athletes' self-efficacy, making them stronger and more independent (P. Wang et al., 2024). Conversely, athletes with high self-efficacy will be more open to receiving guidance and positive support from their

environment (Popovych et al., 2020). Thus, athletes feel confident in themselves and fully supported by their team, and mental barriers will disappear on their own (Chang et al., 2020). This connection ensures that athletes will maintain stable motivation both during routine training and during competitions or major matches (Jordalen et al., 2020). Improved performance is a tangible result of the harmony and connection between social support and self-efficacy in athletic performance (Ren et al., 2020).

Thus, overall, maximizing the use of these two factors is key to the long-term success of young swimmers (Morais et al., 2021). Coaches must be more aware that providing moral support is just as important as providing correct swimming technique instruction (Nicol et al., 2022). Parents also need to create a calm and comfortable home environment so that their children's self-efficacy can develop optimally (Peacock-Chambers et al., 2017). When these social and personal aspects come together as a whole, athletes will have mental toughness that cannot be shaken by any competitor or opponent (R. Weinberg et al., 2017). Significant performance improvement is the reward and gift of hard work supported by a caring environment and a confident spirit (Victor & Hoole, 2017). Focusing on developing these two aspects will lead athletes to have a more balanced psychological approach to athletic performance (Schinke et al., 2018). Many previous studies have not examined the relationship between social support and self-efficacy in relation to athletic performance. Thus, this study addresses this gap in the field of athletic performance by investigating how self-efficacy, social support, and motivation are related to the performance of adolescent swimmers. This study specifically addresses this gap by focusing on the non-academic domain namely, athletic performance since the research conducted by (Zhang & Qian, 2024) remains limited to non-academic fields. Additionally, by focusing on athletes' competitive performance, particularly among local athletes in the region, this study is expected to provide more accurate recommendations regarding the relationship between social support and self-efficacy, which will ultimately impact athletic performance, specifically in the Lubuk Linggau area.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that social support and self-efficacy have a very significant influence on improving the performance of teenage swimmers. It proves that the role of the environment is not merely an additional source of motivation but also a psychological foundation for athletes. The presence of supportive parents and coaches has been proven to maintain the emotional stability of athletes during competitions. In addition to external factors, self-efficacy or self-confidence has also been proven to have a significant influence on athletes' performance on the field (Ahmed, 2026). Athletes who have high confidence in their abilities tend to be more focused and less nervous during competitions (Ihsan et al., n.d.; Rahmatilah et al., 2026). Overall, the combination of social support and self-efficacy creates a solid psychological foundation for young athletes. These two factors work together to ensure that athletes remain resilient in the face of intense competitive pressure. This study successfully proves that mental aspects are directly related to athlete performance. The acceptance of these two hypotheses provides a clear picture for the development of future athlete training curricula.

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F. Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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