



## **Differences in The Character of Team Athletes and Individual Athletes**

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### **Abstract**

**Study purpose.** This study aims to identify differences in the psychological characteristics of athletes participating in team sports and individual sports, specifically students of the Jadimulya Badminton Coach and the Putra Bisma Football School. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research involved athletes from both institutions as subjects. Human beings functioned as the main research instrument, supported by observation and interview guidelines used to explore psychological traits relevant to each sport context.

**Material and methods.** The results show that clear psychological differences exist between team and individual athletes. Team athletes, such as football players, rely heavily on cooperative abilities, effective communication, and collective motivation to achieve shared goals. They must navigate team dynamics, manage interpersonal relationships, resolve conflicts, and maintain team cohesion to ensure optimal performance. Leadership, adaptability, and the ability to function within a structured social environment emerge as essential characteristics. In contrast, individual athletes such as badminton players demonstrate stronger independence, personal motivation, and self-regulation. Their success depends largely on individual skill mastery, consistency, and mental resilience under pressure. Individual athletes develop personal strategies, emphasize innovation in technique, and are required to manage competitive stress without relying on teammates. Creativity in badminton is rooted in technical execution, while creativity in football tends to emerge through collective strategy and team formations.

**Result.** The findings also highlight distinct character tendencies: badminton athletes show a high level of autonomy and focus on personal performance refinement, whereas football athletes depend on teamwork, coordination, and group synergy.

**Conclusion.** significant psychological differences distinguish team athletes from individual athletes. Team-sport athletes require communication skills, collective motivation, and the ability to adapt within team dynamics, while individual-sport athletes prioritize independence, mental endurance, self-motivation, and autonomous skill development.

**Keywords:** Athletes; Individual Athletes; Badminton; Football

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## **Introduction**

An athlete is someone who has his own uniqueness and talent and then has a pattern of behavior and personality and life background that affects specifically himself. A person who is involved in sports activities with achievements in the field of sports can be called an athlete (Asykur et al., 2023).

An athlete is someone who is trained, has uniqueness and talent in the field of sports who is trained in sports. (Anastasya, Maressa; 2022). According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2005 concerning the national sports system, sportsmen are sportsmen who participate in regular training and championships with a dedication to achieving achievements.

Exercise is a physical activity that has many benefits, both for a person's physical and mental health. In the world of sports, there are various types of branches that can be distinguished into two main categories, namely team sports and individual sports. Each of these categories has unique characteristics that not only affect the way they train and compete, but also affect the character and behavior of the athletes involved in them. Team athletes, such as football, basketball, or volleyball players, compete as part of a team made up of several individuals (Nurhayati & Rusdianto, 2022).

They must work together, understand each other, and support each other to achieve common goals. Character developed in this environment often includes communication, cooperation, and leadership skills. In addition, shared responsibility in achieving victory or facing defeat also plays an important role in shaping the character of team athletes (Candra & Mislana, 2021).

On the other hand, individual athletes, such as runners, tennis players, or swimmers, compete independently. They rely on themselves in preparation and during competitions. Characters formed in this context tend to focus on independence, personal discipline, and responsibility for one's own achievements. The pressure to succeed and overcome failure personally also contributes significantly to the formation of individual athletes' character (Smith, 2019; Brown & Fletcher, 2021). Research on the differences in character between team athletes and individual athletes is important to understand, especially for coaches, sports psychologists, and team managers. Understanding the distinctive characteristics of these two types of athletes can help in the development of more effective training programs, improve athlete performance, and build more solid teams (Gonzalez et al., 2023; Patel & Thompson, 2021).

Sports and personality turn out to be interconnected. There are athletes who are competitive, anxious, risky, aggressive, impulsive, individualistic, or disciplined, to name a few examples of characteristics related to their personality.

In sports, a person's character and personality are influential in his personal life as if he were an athlete. An athlete must have a more special character than an ordinary person and does not bear the name of an athlete. Athletes have a high sense of social and a higher sense of confidence as well as more discipline (Guntoro et al., 2020).

The difference in character between team athletes and individual athletes is often a topic of interest in the field of sports psychology. Team athletes, who compete in teams such as soccer, basketball, or volleyball, tend to develop characters that focus on cooperation, communication, and synergy between team members. In this context, success depends not only on individual abilities but also on how well team members work together to achieve a common goal. Therefore, team athletes typically have a higher level of tolerance for differences and have strong interpersonal skills to resolve conflicts and reach consensus. They learn to put team interests above personal interests and often develop a strong sense of responsibility towards teammates (Mardiana et al., t.t.).

In contrast, individual athletes, who compete in sports such as tennis, badminton, or swimming, tend to develop a more independent and self-oriented character. They are fully responsible for the outcome of the game, which means that their success or failure is a direct reflection of their own efforts and abilities. Individual athletes often have strong mental resilience as they have to face pressures and challenges alone. They are also more focused on developing personal abilities and often have a strong determination to continue improving their performance. In many cases, they develop strong introspective skills to continuously evaluate and improve themselves (Nopiyanto et al., 2022).

However, the differences in character between team and individual athletes can also create unique challenges in terms of coaching and mental development. Team athletes may have difficulty developing a strong individual identity because they tend to see themselves as part of a group. This can hinder character development that focuses on personal initiative and creativity, which is precisely necessary in situations where they have to make quick decisions or overcome difficult situations outside of the scenarios the team has planned. Meanwhile, individual athletes can become overly focused on themselves and may lack in effective collaboration or communication skills when faced with situations that require cooperation with others, such as in relay or doubles teams (Sari, t.t.).

These character differences not only affect the performance of athletes on the field but also how they interact with coaches, teammates, and others outside of sports. Coaches who understand these differences can tailor their approach to maximize each athlete's potential. For team athletes, coaches may place more emphasis on teamwork and communication exercises, while for individual athletes, training may be more focused on developing technical skills and a champion mentality. By understanding and managing these character differences, sports coaches and coaches can help each athlete reach the peak of their performance, both as individuals and team members (Hardinoto et al., 2017).

In the Jadimulya Badminton Training, observations show that individual character development is highly prioritized in the training process. Badminton athletes here train with a great focus on improving personal abilities, such as technique, physical strength, and mentality. Training is often done individually or in pairs with a coach to hone the specific skills needed in a one-on-one match. In training, athletes are encouraged to develop strong mental and physical endurance, given that badminton as an individual sport requires them to take full responsibility for the outcome of the match. The coaches at Jadimulya emphasize the importance of self-reflection and the ability to make quick decisions in unexpected situations on the field, which strengthens the independent and autonomous character of the athletes. This creates an environment where wins and losses are seen as a direct result of individual effort and ability, motivating athletes to continue to improve their performance independently.

Meanwhile, at the Putra Bisma Football School, observations reveal a very different approach to developing athletes' character. In contrast to the Jadimulya Badminton Training, the training here focuses more on teamwork, communication, and collective character building. Football as a team sport requires synergy and coordination between players, which encourages coaches at Putra Bisma to teach the importance of team strategy and the role of each player in achieving common goals. During the training sessions, the players are encouraged to interact, discuss strategies, and provide support to each other, which helps to strengthen team bonds and a sense of collective responsibility. Athletes learn to put team interests above individual achievements, develop strong communication skills, and overcome differences through negotiation and compromise. This approach fosters an adaptive and cooperative character, which is essential for success in team sports such as soccer.

Based on the description above, the author tries to make a study on team athletes and individual athletes who are in the Surajaya Badminton Training to find out the significant differences in psychological character between team athletes and individual athletes.

## **Materials and Methods**

### ***Study participants.***

The study participants consisted of athletes from two sports categories:

- Individual sport: badminton athletes from *Pelatihan Bulutangkis Jadimulya*
- Team sport: football athletes from *Sekolah Sepak Bola Putra Bisma*

Participants were selected purposively based on their active participation in training activities and relevance to the research objectives. All athletes involved had sufficient training experience to provide reliable insights regarding motivation, teamwork, independence, mental resilience, and other psychological characteristics examined in the study.

### ***Study organization.***

The study was conducted at *Pelatihan Bulutangkis Jadimulya* and *SSB Putra Bisma*. The research process followed several stages including proposal preparation, proposal seminar, field data collection, data analysis, report writing, and presentation of findings, carried out between May and August.

Data collection techniques included:

- Observation: direct observation and recording of athlete behaviors related to teamwork, communication, independence, and training dynamics.
- Interview: semi-structured interviews with athletes to explore psychological characteristics, including motivation, decision-making, mental toughness, cooperation, and self-development focus.
- Document analysis: examination of training schedules, attendance lists, coach notes, and related documentation.
- Literature review: analysis of theoretical references used to build a strong conceptual framework.

Instrument development followed the stages recommended by Suharsimi Arikunto: identifying variables, determining indicators, deriving descriptors, and designing guidelines. Observation and interview instruments were developed based on variables such as teamwork, leadership, conflict management (for team athletes), and independence, mental resilience, and creativity (for individual athletes).

### ***Statistical analysis.***

Data were analyzed using qualitative interactive analysis consisting of:

1. Data condensation: selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw data from field notes, interview transcripts, and documents into meaningful units.
2. Data display: organizing data into structured formats such as matrices and thematic clusters to facilitate interpretation.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification: developing interpretations, identifying patterns, and continuously validating conclusions through triangulation and cross-checking with observation notes and documentation.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed:

- Credibility checks through triangulation of sources (interviews, documents, and observations).
- Transferability through detailed and systematic reporting.
- Dependability through auditing of research processes.
- Confirmability through independent verification by supervisors and reviewers.

Ethical procedures included informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

## **Results**

### **The difference in the psychological characteristics of athletes in team sports and individual sports in the Jadimulya Badminton Coach and the Putra Bisma Football School.**

The difference in psychological characteristics between team and individual athletes is striking, especially in the context of Badminton Coach Jadimulya and Putra Bisma Football School. Athletes in team sports, such as those found at the Putra Bisma Football School, generally require strong communication and cooperation skills. They must be able to interact effectively with other team members, understand each other's roles, and work toward a common goal. The main psychological characteristics here include the ability to work within a team structure, social awareness, and the ability to align personal goals with team goals.

On the other hand, individual sports athletes such as those in Jadimulya Badminton Coach, tend to focus more on self-development and independence. They must make strategic decisions independently and manage their preparation and performance without direct team support. Prominent psychological characteristics include independence, mental resilience, and intrinsic motivation. Individual athletes often face challenges personally and must rely on their own strengths to cope with stress and achieve their goals.

Leadership and motivation also differ between these two groups. Team athletes typically require more structured and transactional leadership to ensure that all team members function well in their roles. Motivation in a team context is often collective, where team achievements are more important than individual achievements. In contrast, individual athletes often need more participatory and democratic leadership, which gives them the freedom to explore and develop their own strategies. The motivation here is more personal, with a focus on achieving individual goals and self-improvement.

In terms of creativity and innovation, team athletes may focus more on innovation in team strategy and coordination, while individual athletes often innovate in personal techniques and training methods. Team athletes at Putra Bisma Football School may try different formations and strategies to find the most effective in the context of team play. In contrast, badminton athletes at Jadimulya Badminton Coach may place more emphasis on individual technique experimentation and unique game strategies to improve personal performance.

Mental resilience also plays a different important role in both contexts. Team athletes face pressure from team dynamics and the need to maintain cooperation, while individual athletes face pressure from personal expectations and their own performance. Mental resilience for team athletes involves the ability to handle team conflicts and maintain collective motivation, while for individual athletes, mental resilience focuses more on managing personal stress and anxiety during competition.

These different psychological characteristics reflect the unique needs of each type of athlete. Team athletes require social skills and the ability to work in complex team structures, while individual athletes need to focus on self-development, independence, and mental resilience. Understanding these differences is important to tailor effective training and

leadership approaches for each group, so as to maximize their potential in their respective sports.

### **Significant differences in psychological character between team athletes and individual athletes**

The difference in psychological character between team athletes and individual athletes is very striking and affects the way they train and compete. These different psychological characteristics reflect the unique challenges and demands of each type of sport.

- a. Independence vs. Social Connectedness: Individual athletes, such as badminton players, tend to have a high level of independence. They often make strategic decisions on their own, managing their training and preparation without direct team support. The main psychological characteristics here include self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and strong mental resilience. They must be able to deal with pressure and stress independently, as well as focus on achieving personal goals. In contrast, team athletes, such as soccer players, rely more on interaction and social connection with team members. They must function in a team structure that is interdependent, requires communication skills, and cooperation. Psychological characteristics are important to them including adaptability in a team context, social awareness, and cooperative skills.
- b. Personal Motivation vs. Collective Motivation: Individual athletes are often driven by personal motivation and individual achievement. They have specific goals and ambitions that drive them to continue to improve. Intrinsic motivations, such as the drive to master skills or reach personal standards, are a major factor. On the other hand, team athletes are usually influenced by collective motivation. They work towards a common goal and often need to balance personal ambition with team needs. Collective motivation includes a sense of responsibility towards the team and a drive to contribute to mutual success.
- c. Mental Resilience in Different Contexts: Mental resilience in individual athletes focuses on the ability to cope with the stress and pressure of competition personally. They often face challenges alone, such as poor performance or injury, and must manage stress and stay motivated without immediate team support. In team athletes, mental resilience involves the ability to handle team dynamics and internal conflicts. Team athletes must maintain team spirit, handle differences of opinion, and stay focused on a common goal despite conflicts or tensions within the team.
- d. Leadership and Support: Individual athletes may need more support from a coach who encourages autonomy and self-development. A leadership style that is participatory and allows for experimentation can increase their creativity and independence. In contrast, team athletes often require more structured and directed leadership. Clear and organized leadership helps ensure that all team members function well and coordinate toward a common goal.
- e. Innovation in Technique and Strategy: Individual athletes often focus on innovation in personal technique and training methods. They can try different techniques to improve individual performance. Their creativity is often centered on developing personal skills and competition strategies. On the other hand, team athletes may focus more on innovation in team strategy and coordination between members. They often experiment with formations and tactics that can improve the team's overall performance.
- f. Conflict Management: In individual athletes, conflict management typically involves personal stress management and facing challenges solo. Individual athletes need to overcome negative feelings and difficulties without the support of the team. Team athletes, on the other hand, must face and resolve conflicts in a team context, such as disputes with teammates or coaches. The ability to resolve conflicts and work closely with other team members is essential to maintain team dynamics and achieve mutual success.

### **Differences in the character of Badminton and Football Athletes**

The differences in character between badminton and football athletes reflect differences in the type of sport, game structure, and psychological demands of each. Here is an in-depth analysis of the differences in psychological and strategic characteristics between badminton athletes and football athletes:

- a. **Independence vs. Cooperation:** Badminton athletes generally operate individually in matches, although they may train in groups. They must be able to manage their own strategies, techniques, and mentality. The main characteristics of badminton athletes are independence and the ability to make decisions quickly on the court. They take full responsibility for their performance, so self-development and mental resilience are the main focus. In contrast, soccer athletes operate in teams with high need for cooperation. They must interact with other team members to coordinate strategies, formations, and movements. Effective cooperation and communication are the keys to success in the game. Soccer athletes need to build synergy and understand each other's roles in the context of the team, as well as have good social skills to function effectively in the group
- b. **Individual Motivation vs. Collective Motivation:** The motivation of badminton athletes is often personal and intrinsic. They are motivated by personal goals, such as scoring achievement or technique improvement. Their intrinsic motivation focuses on achieving personal standards and mastery of skills. They often train independently and strive to achieve their own best performance. Football athletes, on the other hand, are often driven by collective motivation. They work towards team goals and often have to balance personal ambition with the needs of the team. Their motivations include contributing to team victory, a sense of responsibility towards teammates, and achieving common goals. Their satisfaction often depends on the overall success of the team.
- c. **Mental Resilience:** The mental resilience of badminton athletes focuses on the ability to deal with the stress and pressure of competition individually. They must overcome challenges and negative feelings independently, as well as maintain focus and motivation in one-on-one matches. In contrast, the mental resilience of a football athlete includes the ability to handle team dynamics and internal conflicts, such as disputes with teammates or coaches. They must maintain team spirit and adapt to changes in team strategy or formation. The ability to function well in stressful team situations and maintain positive relationships with team members is an important aspect of their mental resilience.
- d. **Leadership and Support:** In badminton, the leadership of the coach is often individual and focuses on developing personal skills and strategies. Coaches support athletes in improving their technique and mentality, with an approach that is often more personalized and focused on individual needs. In football, coach leadership is more structured and focuses on overall team management. Coaches need to manage team dynamics, plan strategies that involve all team members, and ensure that all players function synergistically. Coach support includes managing relationships between players and developing effective team strategies.
- e. **Creativity and Innovation:** Badminton athletes often innovate in their personal techniques and strategies. They may develop new training methods or try different techniques to improve individual performance. Their creativity is more focused on developing skills and strategies that can be implemented individually. In football, innovation often involves team tactics and formations. Soccer athletes work with coaches to devise strategies that involve coordination and synergy between team members. Creativity in football revolves around how teams can exploit the opponent's strengths and create opportunities together.
- f. **Conflict Handling:** Badminton athletes face conflicts mainly related to self-management and personal stress. They must be able to cope with feelings of frustration or dissatisfaction in a way that does not interfere with their performance. Instead, soccer athletes must handle

conflicts in a team context, such as disagreements with strategy or roles in the team. The ability to resolve conflicts with team members and maintain positive relationships is key to maintaining healthy team dynamics. The difference in characteristics between badminton and football athletes reflects the differences in the structure and demands of their sport. Badminton athletes focus on independence and personal technique, while soccer athletes focus on teamwork and collective strategy. Understanding these differences is important for designing an appropriate and effective training approach for each type of athlete.

## **Discussion**

In discussing the variables of team athletes and individual athletes, it is important to understand how various aspects such as team communication, cooperation, synergy, collective responsibility, team leadership, conflict coping skills, independence, mental resilience, independent decision-making, and creativity and innovation play a role in their performance. A theory that can be applied to link these two types of athletes is the Leadership Contingency Theory developed by Fred Fiedler. This theory emphasizes that the effectiveness of leadership depends on the suitability between the leadership style and the situation at hand.

For team athletes, team communication and cooperation are fundamental elements that affect performance. Team athletes often have to operate in an interdependent structure, where each team member has specific roles and responsibilities. Leadership Contingency Theory reveals that an effective leadership style depends on the team's situation and the structure of their interactions. In this context, transactional leadership, which focuses on roles and responsibilities and a reward system, can be effective in managing teamwork and synergy. With clear communication and well-defined roles, teams can more effectively work together and achieve common goals.

Cooperation and synergy in a team team also require leadership that can adapt the leadership style to the situation. Leadership Contingency Theory explains that in situations where team tasks are highly structured and there is a high level of dependency between members, more directed and structured leadership can be very effective. This leadership can help in clarifying roles and responsibilities and ensuring that all team members understand and perform their duties well. For example, a football team coach who uses a clear and targeted leadership approach can help the team achieve better cooperation and synergy on the field.

In contrast, for individual athletes, a focus on self-development, independence, and creativity plays an important role. Individual athletes often have to be independent in making decisions and managing aspects of their own training and preparation. Leadership Contingency Theory highlights that in a context where individual athletes need to have greater control over their own processes, a more participatory and democratic leadership style, which provides opportunities for individuals to be involved in decisions, can be more effective. Thus, coaches who support autonomy and provide space for athletes to explore new training strategies and methods can assist them in achieving their best performance.

Mental resilience in individual athletes is also an important factor related to leadership style and situations. Athletes who face stress and challenges must have high mental resilience to stay focused and motivated. Leadership Contingency Theory suggests that a supportive and motivating leadership style, especially in stressful situations, can increase an athlete's mental resilience. Coaches who are able to provide emotional support and motivate individual athletes can help them overcome challenges and stay committed to their goals.

When it comes to independent decision-making, individual athletes need to develop the skills to make good decisions without relying on others. Leadership Contingency Theory explains that in situations where individual autonomy and decisions are essential, a leadership style that supports independent decision-making and provides opportunities to practice those



skills can be more effective. By providing space for athletes to manage their own decisions, coaches can assist them in developing critical decision-making skills.

Creativity and innovation in strategy also play an important role for individual athletes. Athletes who strive to find new methods and creative ways in training and competition can gain a competitive advantage. Leadership Contingency Theory emphasizes that in situations that require innovation, leadership that facilitates and supports experimentation and creative thinking is invaluable. Coaches who provide encouragement to experiment with new techniques and strategies can assist athletes in developing innovative approaches and improving their performance.

In the context of the differences between team athletes and individual athletes, this theory suggests that leadership styles should be tailored to the specific needs of each situation. Team athletes need leadership that can manage teamwork and interaction, while individual athletes need leadership that supports independence and self-development. These adjustments are important to ensure that the leadership style supports the unique needs of each type of athlete, whether they operate in a team or individually.

Independence and self-development in individual athletes often involve in-depth training and self-assessment. Leadership Contingency Theory suggests that in situations that require autonomy, leaders should provide support and resources that allow individuals to explore and develop their own skills. Coaches who understand the importance of independence and provide the right support can assist athletes in reaching their full potential.

Creativity and innovation in strategy, both for team athletes and individuals, require different approaches in training and development. Leadership Contingency Theory underscores the importance of adapting leadership styles to situations that require innovation and creativity. By understanding the specific needs and challenges of each type of athlete, coaches can adopt an approach that supports both teamwork and personal development, ultimately contributing to success and high performance.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there are clear and significant psychological differences between athletes in team sports and those in individual sports. Team athletes, such as football players, require strong cooperative abilities, effective communication, and collective motivation to achieve shared goals. Their performance depends on managing team dynamics, maintaining cohesion, resolving conflicts, and demonstrating leadership within a structured social environment. In contrast, individual athletes, such as badminton players, rely more heavily on independence, personal motivation, mental resilience, and autonomous skill development. Their success is influenced by the ability to regulate themselves, innovate in technical execution, and handle competitive pressure without relying on teammates.

Furthermore, the findings highlight specific character differences between badminton and football athletes that reflect the nature of their respective sports. Badminton athletes tend to exhibit a high level of autonomy, focusing on refining personal techniques and managing performance demands individually. Creativity in badminton is expressed through technical precision and individual strategies. On the other hand, football athletes depend on strong teamwork, collective motivation, and continuous interaction within a dynamic team structure. Their creativity and innovation emerge through coordinated team strategies, tactical formations, and synergy among players. Overall, individual sports emphasize independence and personal mastery, whereas team sports prioritize collaboration and shared success.

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