



## Personal development and athletic success: exploring the link and predictors of performance among basketball players

*Desarrollo personal y éxito atlético: exploración del vínculo y los predictores del rendimiento entre jugadores de baloncesto*

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Personal development goes beyond physical training and technical skills. However, the impact of life skills on athletic performance remains underexplored, indicating a need to examine how personal development contribute to athlete's success.

**Objective:** This study examined the relationship between personal development, specifically life skills, and performance and the key predictors of performance among varsity basketball players at Mindanao State University (MSU), Philippines.

**Methodology:** A quantitative correlational design was employed, involving 48 varsity players. Performance data were collected through notational analysis, while personal development was assessed using a standardized life skills questionnaire covering teamwork, goal-setting, social skills, problem-solving, emotional skills, leadership, time management, and communication. Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses were applied.

**Results:** The findings revealed that the players exhibited moderate personal development overall and majority have fair performance. A statistically significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.967$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was identified between personal development and performance, with teamwork, emotional skills, leadership, and time management emerging as significant predictors of performance.

**Discussion:** This highlights the importance of integrating structured life skills training into sports programs to foster well-rounded players. Such training not only enhances performance but also equips players with transferable skills for life beyond sports.

**Conclusions:** Current sports environments lack full optimization of life skills, physical and technical skills, thereby calls a need for intervention. Future research should explore similar relationships across diverse sports and cultural contexts to generalize and expand these findings.

### Keywords

Basketball; performance; personal development; training program.

### Resumen

**Introducción:** El desarrollo personal va más allá del entrenamiento físico y técnico. Sin embargo, el impacto de las habilidades para la vida en el rendimiento deportivo sigue siendo poco explorado, destacando la necesidad de examinar su contribución al éxito del atleta.

**Objetivo:** Este estudio analizó la relación entre el desarrollo personal, específicamente las habilidades para la vida, y el desempeño, así como los principales predictores del rendimiento entre jugadores universitarios de baloncesto de la Universidad Estatal de Mindanao (MSU), Filipinas.

**Metodología:** Se utilizó un diseño correlacional cuantitativo con 48 jugadores. Se recopiló información sobre rendimiento mediante análisis notacional, mientras que el desarrollo personal se evaluó con un cuestionario sobre habilidades para la vida: trabajo en equipo, establecimiento de objetivos, habilidades sociales, resolución de problemas, habilidades emocionales, liderazgo, gestión del tiempo y comunicación. Se aplicaron análisis de correlación de Pearson y regresión múltiple.

**Resultados:** Los jugadores presentaron un desarrollo personal moderado y, en su mayoría, un desempeño regular. Se halló una correlación positiva significativa ( $r = 0.967$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) entre desarrollo personal y desempeño, con trabajo en equipo, habilidades emocionales, liderazgo y gestión del tiempo como predictores clave.

**Discusión:** Se resalta la importancia de incluir el entrenamiento en habilidades para la vida en los programas deportivos para desarrollar atletas completos con competencias transferibles.

**Conclusión:** Los entornos deportivos actuales no optimizan totalmente las habilidades para la vida, físicas y técnicas, por lo que se requieren intervenciones. Se recomienda investigar estas relaciones en distintos deportes y contextos culturales.

### Palabras clave

Baloncesto; actuación; desarrollo personal; programa de entrenamiento.



## Introduction

In recent years, the role of personal development in sports has gained recognition as a key factor in enhancing athletic performance and overall well-being. Beyond physical training and technical skills, personal development fosters essential life skills such as teamwork, emotional skills, problem-solving, and effective communication, which athletes can apply both on and off the field (Bae et al., 2024; Patel, 2023). These skills not only help athletes manage the pressures of competition but also equip them with tools to navigate broader life challenges, such as decision-making, goal-setting, and resilience in the face of adversity (Hambali et al., 2023; Suardika et al., 2021). For instance, an athlete with strong emotional intelligence may excel in maintaining focus during high-stakes games (Petrovska et al., 2023). In addition, effective communication serves as a key tool in resolving conflicts that may arise in athletic situations (Purnomo et al., 2024).

Despite growing recognition of the importance of personal development, its direct impact on athletic performance remains underexplored, particularly in sports that demand both psychological resilience and physical endurance. Research suggests that structured sports environments can foster both personal development and athletic success (Jørgensen et al., 2024), with athletes demonstrating enhanced stress management, motivation (Antonio, 2023), and resilience (Bates et al., 2021; Lyu et al., 2022). However, gaps persist in understanding the direct impact of specific life skills such as goal-setting, social skills, and communication on performance outcomes (Adan, 2021; Bedir et al., 2023), directly influence performance outcomes. Furthermore, many sports environments fail to address personal development needs adequately, with coaches and stakeholders often lacking the knowledge to integrate life skills training effectively into sports (Gledhill & Harwood, 2017).

This gap is evident in basketball, where teamwork, resilience, and mental focus are as critical as physical prowess (Zhang et al., 2023). In the Philippines, basketball is not only a popular sport but also a platform for youth development, particularly in regions like Mindanao (Allaci, 2024). However, challenges such as game pressure, miscommunication, and performance anxiety hinder the players' ability to perform effectively (Medina et al., 2024). Addressing these issues through training programs that incorporate personal development could significantly enhance players' performance and well-being (Juhrocin et al., 2023). For example, integrating stress management and goal-setting into basketball training could address common challenges such as performance anxiety and lack of focus during competition.

Despite its potential significance, much of the existing research prioritizes technical and physical skills over the broader scope of personal development in sports (Gandrapu & Rakesh, 2024). While some studies have explored psychological resilience (Rintaugu et al., 2022) and mental toughness (Bicalho et al., 2020), few have examined the interplay of life skills and their contribution to athletic success, particularly in the context of basketball. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between personal development and sports performance, focusing on life skills as predictors of success. Specifically, it seeks to determine whether goal setting improves performance during competition or whether effective communication among teammates leads to better game result. These questions are crucial for achieving a holistic understanding of what drives athletic excellence.

Using a correlational research design, this study investigates how personal development influences the performance of varsity basketball players at Mindanao State University campuses and the specific dimensions of personal development that significantly predict sports performance. By identifying key predictors, this research seeks to fill a critical gap in sports, offering practical insights for coaches, trainers, physical education teachers, and policymakers. The findings could inform the reevaluation of existing training programs, emphasizing the integration of life skills into sports curricula to promote not only athletic success but also resilience and adaptability. Ultimately, this study highlights the need for a more inclusive approach to teaching sports in school and training, one that values personal development as much as physical and technical excellence.

## Method

According to Putra & Sulaiman (2017), correlational research is a type of non-experimental study used to determine the relationships between two or more variables and explore their implications for cause



and effect without manipulating any variables. Thus, the study employed a correlational research design to investigate the relationship among the two key variables: personal development and sports performance of varsity basketball players Creswell & Clark (2018), highlights that this approach is particularly effective because it allows for the simultaneous measurement of multiple variables, facilitating the exploration of their interconnections. Specifically, the researcher utilized predictive correlational design to identify which aspect of personal development predicts sports performance. Devi et al. (2022) mentioned that predictive correlational design is used when the purpose is to examine the relationship between variables without manipulation and determine which specific variable significantly influence the other variable. The design was chosen to identify and quantify the strength and direction of associations between these variables. Additionally, the study incorporated a descriptive component to assess the levels of performance and personal development within the sample population. By combining correlational and descriptive methodologies, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how personal development influence performance.

### ***Participants***

The study was conducted across five campuses within the Mindanao State University (MSU) system in Mindanao, Philippines: MSU-Main, MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT), MSU-Maigo, and MSU-Sulu. Participants were male college students who were active members of their respective campus varsity basketball teams during the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. A total sampling technique was utilized to include all eligible participants from the responding campuses, ensuring comprehensive representation and minimizing sampling bias. This approach allowed the study to collect of all accessible college varsity basketball players, although it acknowledged the potential for selection bias due to non-response from certain campuses. To mitigate this, a consistent invitation and follow-up process was implemented to maximize campus participation. The final sample consisted of 48 basketball players with age ranging from 18 to 25 years old of which 15 are from MSU-Marawi City, 11 from MSU-Sulu, 11 from MSU-IIT, and 11 from MSU-Maigo, all voluntarily participating.

### ***Procedure***

The data collection followed a systematic process, starting with distributing the standardized questionnaire of Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS) to participants during scheduled team trainings, allowing sufficient time for completion. Participants provided responses regarding their personal development across the eight life skills indicators. Concurrently, participants' sports performance was assessed during scheduled basketball games. All games were conducted under regular FIBA rules and officiated by certified referees to maintain consistency in competition stakes and conditions. The researcher collected performance data using FIBA scoresheets and video recorded the game. A calibration session was conducted to ensure inter-rater reliability, ensuring that all observers applied the notational analysis method consistently. Upon completion of the questionnaires and performance assessments, the data were compiled for analysis. The researcher ensured that all data collection activities adhered to ethical standards, maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

### ***Instrument***

Moreover, the study utilized a combination of standardized questionnaire and a self-made score sheet patterned after the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) standards to measure the constructs of interest. The standardized questionnaire LSSS developed by Cronin & Allen (2016) was employed to assess personal development. This questionnaire focused on eight life skills indicators: teamwork, goal-setting, social skills, problem-solving, emotional skills, leadership, time management, and communication. Participants rated the extent to which their sports experience contributed to the development of these skills using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very much). To ensure content validity, three expert validators reviewed the questionnaire using a structured rating tool, retaining items with a weighted mean of 2.6–3.0 as per (Calmorin & Piedad, 2009). Feedback from the validators was incorporated to refine ambiguous or unclear items. A pilot test was conducted on 30 basketball players from outside the selected campuses ensured the reliability and feasibility of the questionnaire, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.970 as calculated using IBM SPSS 26 which indicates a very high reliability. Moreover, the players' sports performance was evaluated during actual basketball games using the FIBA

scoresheets and analyzed through notational analysis, a widely accepted method for assessing basketball performance (Nicolina et al., 2017). Individual performance effectiveness was calculated using the formula proposed by Heuzé et al. (2006):  $\text{Performance} = (4 \times \text{successful 3-points shot} + 3 \times \text{successful 2-points shot} + 2 \times \text{successful free throws}) - (\text{number of 3-points shot attempted} + \text{number of 2-points shot attempted} + \text{number of free throw sots attempted}) + (\text{number of offensive rebound} + \text{number of defensive rebound} + \text{number of steals per game}) - \text{number of turnovers per game}$ . A higher total score means a higher performance level. To ensure objectivity and standardization, the data collection was conducted by trained observers who underwent a calibration session to establish inter-rater reliability.

## Data analysis

Descriptive Statistics, specifically, frequency and percentage distributions were used to summarize players' performance levels, while mean and standard deviation were calculated for personal development scores. Meanwhile, normality test particularly Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to assess the distribution of the data. To test the correlation, Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to determine the relationship between personal development and sports performance. Lastly, multiple regression analysis was used to identify the collective influence of personal development on sports performance and determine the relative strength of each predictor.

## Results

Based on the data gathered, the study revealed several findings about the relationship of performance and personal development of the basketball players. The results are as follows:

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Sports Performance of the Players

Performance Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	2	4.2%
Very Good	16	33.3%
Good	9	18.8%
Fair	17	35.4%
Poor	4	8.3%
Total	48	100%

As shown in Table 1, it indicates that majority of the players with 35.4% have fair performance. Meanwhile, there are 33.3% players who are very good. Furthermore, there are 18.8% of the players who are categorized as good in terms of their performance. Moreover, 8.3% of the players are poor in their performance, while, only 4.2% are excellent.

Table 2. Level of Sports Performance of the Players

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
Sports Performance	48	7.00	25.00	12.6667	4.66920	Fair

Legend: 7 - 10 = Poor 11 - 14 = Fair 15 - 18 = Good 19 - 22 = Very Good 23 - 25 = Excellent

Table 3. Level of Personal Development of the Players

Indicator	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)	Description
Teamwork	2.84	0.870	Some
Goal Setting	2.93	0.763	Some
Social Skills	2.89	0.699	Some
Problem Solving	3.09	0.730	Some
Emotional Skills	2.93	0.817	Some
Leadership	3.03	0.834	Some
Time Management	2.91	0.840	Some
Communication	2.94	0.866	Some
Overall	2.95	0.679	Some

Legend: 1.00 - 1.79 = Not at All 1.80 - 2.59 = A Little 2.60 - 3.39 = Some 3.40 - 4.19 = A Lot 4.20 - 5.00 = Very Much

Table 2 presents the mean distribution of the players which is verbally described as fair. The mean of 12.6667 with an SD of 4.666920 indicated that the overall sports performance of the players based on the descriptive equivalent provided in the table, this mean score corresponds to a performance level



categorized as fair. Overall, while there are a few high-performing athletes, the team averages a fair level of performance, suggesting that many basketball varsity players in MSU campuses may need additional support or training to raise their level of play.

Table 3 shows the level of personal development of the basketball players. As reflected, the total mean of 2.95 shows that the basketball players have some personal development. Moreover, all the indicators such as teamwork with a mean of 2.84, goal setting with a mean of 2.93, social skills with a mean of 2.89, problem solving with a mean of 3.09, emotional skills with a mean 2.93, leadership with a mean of 3.03, time management with a mean of 2.91, and communication with a mean of 2.94 revealed that the basketball players have some personal impact of sport which is manifested moderately.

Table 4. Test of Normality Kolmogorov-Smirnov

Information	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	df	Sig	Statistic
Performance	48	.096	.117
Personal Development	48	.200	.089

This study utilized the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine the normality of the data. Thus, if the sig.  $\leq 0.05$  then the data is not normally distributed. If the sig value.  $> 0.05$  then the data is normally distributed. In the table above, it shows that performance data is normally distributed with Sig value of .096  $> 0.05$ . Meanwhile, the personal development data is normally distributed with Sig value of .200  $> 0.05$ . This means that subsequent analysis can be carried out.

Table 5. Correlation between Personal Development and Performance

Variables	Personal Development		
	r	P-value	Interpretation
Performance	.967	.000	Significant

\*Significant relationship,  $p < .05$ .

Note: (Kwak, 2023).

Table 5 shows the relationship between personal development and performance of basketball players in Mindanao, Philippines. Based on the result, the correlation coefficient is 0.976 with the p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. This statistically significant correlation indicates a strong positive relationship between personal development and athletic performance

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis between Personal Development and Performance

Predictors	Unstandardized Beta	B	t	p	Decision
Constant	-6.537		-7.322	.000	
Teamwork	1.003	.187	2.287	.028	Reject $H_0$
Goal Setting	.680	.111	1.410	.167	Accept $H_0$
Social Skills	.601	.090	1.186	.243	Accept $H_0$
Problem Solving	.507	.079	1.217	.231	Accept $H_0$
Emotional Skills	.913	.160	2.118	.041	Reject $H_0$
Leadership	1.139	.204	2.282	.028	Reject $H_0$
Time Management	.886	.159	2.204	.034	Reject $H_0$
Communication	.798	.148	1.968	.056	Accept $H_0$

$R = .969$ ,  $R^2 = .938$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .926$ ,  $F = 74.256$ ,  $p = .000$

\*Significant relationship,  $p < .05$ .

Note: (Kwak, 2023).

Table 6 reveals the influence of personal development particularly life skills on sports performance and the relative strength of each predictor, with teamwork that has a p-value of .028, emotional skills with a p-value of .041, leadership with a p-value of .028, and time management with a p-value of .034 which are less than 0.05 level of significance emerging as significant predictors. However, goal setting, social skills, problem solving, and communication were not significant predictors. Overall, the study highlights the importance of prioritizing key life skills in training programs to improve athletic outcomes.



## Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between personal development and sports performance, focusing specifically on life skills among basketball players in MSU campuses. The findings revealed a significant correlation between personal development and sport performance, underscoring the idea that athletes who cultivate strong life skills tend to perform better on the court. This aligns with existing literature, which views sports not only as a domain for physical prowess but also as a transformative avenue for holistic development (Anira et al., 2021; Gandrapu & Rakesh, 2024). Previous studies also support these findings, indicating that personal development is a key determinant of success in sport (Fabbriatore et al., 2023) and that enhancing life skills through sport is integral to overall performance success (Banwell & Kerr, 2016). Therefore, the systematic integration of life skills into sports programs is essential, as it helps develop competencies such as decision-making, teamwork, and leadership, which are critical for long-term success (Juhrocin et al., 2023).

Moreover, the study found that attributes like teamwork, emotional skills, leadership, and time management are significant predictors of performance. These attributes reflect the essential roles they play in high-pressure sports environments. For instance, teamwork is a predictor of cohesion and overall performance, as highlighted by McEwan (2020), and integrates with research by Lopez-Gajardo et al. (2023), who argue that teamwork training not only enhances immediate performance but also fosters long-term cohesion among team members. Furthermore, athletes who possess strong psychological profiles, including mental resilience and effective coping strategies, tend to perform better under competitive pressure. This enables athletes to emotionally manage stress more effectively, which is crucial in competition (Abenza-Cano et al., 2021; Olmedilla et al., 2019). Additionally, the study emphasizes that athletes who are able to manage their emotions are more likely to experience positive outcomes in competitive settings (Zoghalmi et al., 2023). Leadership qualities were also identified as influencing an athlete's ability to motivate peers, creating a dynamic that enhances performance, with Fransen et al. (2017) showing that strong leadership is directly related to team effectiveness. Moreover, effective time management was found to positively affect performance, not only by helping athletes prioritize tasks but also by contributing to the development of self-discipline and cognitive skills that are critical for sports success (Duz & Aslan, 2020; Nguri, 2024).

Interestingly, indicators such as goal setting, problem-solving, social skills, and communication were not statistically significant predictors in the regression analysis. While these attributes are generally valuable, their contributions may be context-dependent or overshadowed by more critical factors in basketball game. This nuance highlights the need to tailor developmental programs to integrate life skills systematically, so that athletes can develop and maximize the essential skills such as emotional regulation, goal setting, and time management (Juhrocin et al., 2023). The importance of life skills such as goal setting, problem-solving, social skills, and communication cannot be overstated, as they have been shown to lead to positive outcomes in various life domains (Nguri, 2024). These findings suggest that although these attributes may not directly predict performance, they still play a crucial role in broader personal development, helping athletes navigate the demands of both life and sport.

Additionally, the study revealed only moderate levels of personal development across the assessed indicators. This suggests that current sports environments may inadequately nurture the full spectrum of life skills. These findings echo previous studies that highlight gaps in life skills integration within sports training, often attributed to a lack of structured programs and insufficient knowledge among stakeholders (Gledhill & Harwood, 2017; Jørgensen et al., 2024). Also, the findings showed that majority of players have only fair performance. This indicates that many basketball players may need additional support or training to raise their level of play. This result is supported by the study of Santos (2017) who found out that many basketball players lack the necessary physical and technical skills to play the sport and suggested that intervention activities during training should be implemented. Likewise, Medina et al. (2024) revealed that negative performance outcomes were the result of the challenges encountered by the athletes during tournament like game pressure and ineffective team communication and highlights the need for intervention in training to address the problems identified.

Therefore, it is imperative to rethink and reimagine sports training frameworks to systematically incorporate life skills while improving the physical and technical skills. One effective approach could be the



integration of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework, which involves deliberate and structured interventions aimed at promoting personal and social life skills through sport rather than solely focusing on performance (Mossman et al., 2021). By designing sports programs to explicitly cultivate life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and time management, athletes' personal development can be enhanced alongside their physical competencies (Malete et al., 2022; Sobarna & Hamidi, 2023). For example, coaches can utilize briefing sessions to inspire athletes and emphasize the importance of communication in promoting teamwork (Macquet & Stanton, 2021), while administering time-constrained tasks enhance decision-making skills, as certain sports require athletes to make quick decisions and execute movements in rapid succession (Cotterill & Discombe, 2016). Although, time cannot be altered, individuals can optimize it through prioritization, scheduling, and delegation, leading to the improvement of time management skills of athletes (Ator & Ortizo, 2024).

Moreover, integrating life skills development into educational curricula can complement these efforts. Modules on emotional skills, goal-setting, and communication, when integrated into school-based physical education programs, ensure that these competencies are developed alongside athletic training. Coaches and physical education teachers play a crucial role in bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical application. As Camiré (2015) suggests, coaches should not only focus on physical and technical skills but also adopt pedagogical strategies that foster holistic growth, such as encouraging reflective practices and creating supportive environments. This is further supported by Devaney et al. (2017), who argue that performance and personal development can coexist if the sport environment promotes not just technical skills but also the competencies needed for athletes to develop both as performers and individuals.

Furthermore, embedding mentorship opportunities within sports programs can help athletes contextualize their learning experiences. Senior players can act as mentors to reinforce leadership qualities and provide relatable role models for younger athletes (Côté & Hancock, 2014). Bruner et al. (2021) have emphasized that structured sports programs significantly enhance personal development by fostering life skills such as leadership and time management. These findings suggest that while basketball programs may promote physical skills, they may not be fully optimized to nurture the full range of life skills. A more intentional focus on life skills development could help address these gaps, ensuring that athletes are not only excelling in sports but are also prepared for life beyond the court.

Finally, the findings from this study reiterate the dual role of sports as both a performance enhancer and a vehicle for personal growth. The implications of this study extend to policy and program design, urging stakeholders to prioritize life skills education as an integral component of sports training. In summary, the systematic integration of life skills into sports and educational programs has immense potential to transform athletes into well-rounded individuals, enhancing their life readiness and competitive edge.

This study has several limitations. The sample was limited to basketball players in Mindanao, Philippines, which may affect generalizability to other regions or sports. Self-reported measures of life skills may introduce bias, as athletes may overestimate their abilities. Additionally, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality between personal development and sports performance. Longitudinal studies are needed for a deeper understanding of life skills' long-term impact. Finally, moderate levels of personal development suggest that current sports environments may not fully optimize life skills training, highlighting the need for more structured integration in future research and practice.

## Conclusions

This study investigates the relationship between personal development and sports performance, focusing on life skills' role in enhancing athletic success among basketball players. The findings highlight the strong correlation across all indicators of personal development to the sports performance and that attributes like teamwork, emotional skills, leadership, and time management significantly predict sports performance, aligning with prior research on the importance of life skills in sport. However, life skills such as goal setting, problem-solving, social skills, and communication did not show significant predictive value for basketball performance, suggesting that their impact may be context-dependent. Additionally, the moderate levels of personal development observed suggest that current sports environ-

ments may not fully optimize life skills training. In addition, the fair performance of the athletes indicates a need for additional support or training to raise their level of play. Also, coaches and educators should prioritize life skills training alongside physical and technical development, fostering well-rounded athletes. Policymakers and educational institutions are encouraged to integrate life skills into school-based physical education programs to support holistic athlete development from a young age. For future researchers, these limitations point to the need for longitudinal studies or experimental designs to validate and better understand the long-term influence of life skills on athletic performance specifically in basketball. Ultimately, the study highlights the need for further research into life skills interventions and their long-term effects on sports performance.

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