

## **Athletes' Motivation in Traditional Martial Arts Participation: A Descriptive Study of Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat**

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### **Abstract**

**Background and Aim.** Traditional martial arts, including Pencak Silat, play a role in developing the physical, mental, and character of athletes. In the context of community-based training like Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa, athlete motivation is one factor influencing the sustainability of participation and the quality of training. This study aims to describe athletes' motivation in participating in Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa activities by examining intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

**Method.** This study employed a descriptive quantitative design. Participants were 20 Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat athletes from Rimbo Bujang District, Tebo Regency. Data were collected using a motivational questionnaire covering intrinsic and extrinsic motivational aspects, then analyzed descriptively using percentages to describe the athletes' motivation levels.

**Results.** The results of the study indicate that athlete motivation is in the high category. Most athletes have excellent intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with overall motivation levels predominantly in the highest category. These findings indicate that athlete involvement in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities is supported by strong internal motivation and a conducive coaching environment.

**Conclusion.** This study concludes that Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat athletes have very high levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These results underscore the importance of community-based traditional martial arts development in creating psychological conditions that support sustained athlete participation. The findings of this study can serve as a basis for coaches and trainers in designing more effective and sustainable development strategies.

**Keywords:** *Athlete motivation; Extrinsic Motivation; Intrinsic motivation; Pagar Nusa; Pencak Silat*

### **1. Introduction**

Traditional martial arts play a vital role not only in physical development but also in the psychological, cultural, and moral development of athletes. As a values-based sport, traditional martial arts integrate physical skills, mental discipline, and character development, distinguishing them from modern sports that are solely focused on competition and performance (Sinulingga et al., 2024; Tu et al., 2025). In various social contexts, traditional martial arts serve as a means of character building, strengthening social cohesion, and internalizing inherited cultural values in a sustainable manner (Jiang et al., 2025; Yang & Huang, 2025). Therefore, the practice of traditional martial arts is not only seen as a sporting activity, but also as a development system that shapes individual learning experiences, values, and identities in a sustainable manner.

In the context of traditional martial arts, Pencak Silat exhibits relatively unique developmental characteristics compared to other sports. The training process emphasizes not only mastery of technique and physical strength, but also demands self-control, mental discipline, and understanding of the cultural and spiritual values inherent in each stage of the training (Akbar et al., 2025; Kartomi, 2011). This coaching pattern forms a strong relationship between athletes, coaches, and the community, so that the training experience is not merely perceived as a competitive activity, but rather as a process of forming identity, character, and personal meaning for the athlete (B. Mulyana & Lutan, 2020; M. Mulyana et al., 2024; Sampoerna et al., 2021). These developmental characteristics position Pencak Silat as a holistic physical and cultural education practice, where the training process serves as a strengthening of identity.

Pencak Silat development is managed through various community-based organizations, one of which is Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa. In Rimbo Bujang District, Tebo Regency, Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa is a sporting activity that has a high level of interest among the community. This activity not only serves as a channel for channeling sports interests and energy, but also includes skills development and knowledge development. The achievement development carried out is expected to attract new athletes while strengthening regeneration and achieving sporting achievements in the area. Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa is aimed at the holistic development of athletes, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Muliadi et al., 2023; Rosyid & Izzah, 2022). The training process aims to improve athletes' understanding of pencak silat, shape attitudes and character such as discipline, sportsmanship, and social skills, and develop technical skills and physical abilities that support training and competition performance (Muliadi et al., 2023; Patahala & Kusuma, 2025). As the demands for achievement and competition in the sport of pencak silat increase, athlete development needs to be carried out in a planned, programmed, and tiered manner, paying attention to the integration of physical, technical, tactical, and mental aspects.

One mental aspect that plays a crucial role in supporting athlete performance is motivation. Motivation serves as an internal and external driver that influences athletes' commitment to training, improving skills, and maintaining consistent participation (Cao & Lyu, 2024; Dos Santos, 2022). Athletes with a good level of motivation tend to have better concentration and self-control (Costa et al., 2023), while low motivation can have an impact on the ineffectiveness of the training process and mastery of techniques (Syukur & Soniawan, 2015).

In sports psychology studies, athlete motivation is often explained through the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the concept of achievement motivation (Brunstein & Heckhausen, 2025; Deci et al., 2017; Elliot & Sommet, 2023). SDT views motivation as a continuum that includes intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, where the quality of athlete engagement is influenced by the fulfillment of basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and social connectedness (Ryan & Deci, 2024). Meanwhile, achievement motivation emphasizes an individual's drive to achieve success, improve abilities, and maintain performance in competitive situations (Brunstein & Heckhausen, 2025). Both perspectives are relevant to understanding athlete motivation in traditional

martial arts, because athlete engagement is determined not only by the demands of achievement, but also by personal meaning, values, and the coaching environment that shape the overall training experience.

Although much research has been done on athlete motivation, most of these studies still focus on modern competitive sports or high-achievement contexts, such as elite and professional sports, which emphasize performance and achieving competitive results (Aznar-Ballesta et al., 2022; Emm-Collison et al., 2020; Orbach et al., 2021). In the context of martial arts, Malchrowicz-Moško et al. (2020) examined the motivations for participation in judo practitioners and showed that the enjoyment of practice, self-development, and goal orientation were the main drivers of involvement in the martial art. Kostorz & Sas-Nowosielski (2021) examined motivational regulation in martial arts and combat sports practitioners using a self-determination approach, emphasizing the role of intrinsic motivation in training sustainability. However, these studies were conducted in the general context of martial arts and did not specifically address community-based traditional martial arts and local cultural values. Therefore, there is still a research gap related to the need for descriptive studies that map the motivational conditions of athletes in the context of community-based traditional martial arts development, such as Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa.

This study aims to describe athletes' motivation in participating in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities by examining intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Through a descriptive approach, this study is expected to provide an empirical overview of the motivational state of athletes in the context of traditional martial arts and serve as a basis for practical considerations for coaches and trainers in designing more effective and sustainable development strategies.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### ***Design***

This study uses a descriptive quantitative design that aims to describe the level of motivation of athletes in participating in Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa activities. The descriptive approach was chosen because this study focuses on mapping the condition of athlete motivation as it is, based on the athletes' perceptions and experiences during the training process. This design is considered appropriate for obtaining an empirical picture of athletes' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the context of community-based traditional martial arts training, so that the research results can be used as

a basis for evaluating and developing training programs (Sidel et al., 2018; Siedlecki, 2020).

### **Participants**

Participants in this study were athletes who actively participated in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities in Rimbo Bujang District, Tebo Regency. Twenty athletes were selected as samples for this study using a total sampling technique. This technique was chosen because the population size was relatively limited and all members met the criteria for being research subjects. Participants came from a group of athletes who regularly participated in training activities and were involved in the Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat development program. All participants participated voluntarily, and data collection was conducted within the context of routine training activities during the study period.

### **Instrument**

The research instrument used was a motivation questionnaire designed to measure athletes' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in participating in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities. Intrinsic motivation encompasses indicators such as success, needs, and aspirations, while extrinsic motivation encompasses indicators of engaging activities and a conducive training environment (Bhaduri & Kumar, 2011; Morris et al., 2022). The questionnaire was structured as a closed-ended statement with a graded rating scale, allowing respondents to provide answers based on their perceptions and experiences during the training. Before use, the instrument was adapted to the context of Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat training to ensure it was easily understood by participants.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection was conducted during routine Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat training activities in Rimbo Bujang District, Tebo Regency. Prior to completing the questionnaire, the researcher provided an explanation of the research objectives and instructions regarding the questionnaire procedures to all athletes participating in the questionnaire. The initial instructions and explanations given to the athletes before completing the questionnaire are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Providing direction to Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa athletes before filling out the questionnaire

After explanations and directions were provided, the research questionnaire was distributed directly to all athletes actively participating in training activities during data collection. The athletes then completed the questionnaire independently based on their condition and experiences during the Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities. The process of administering and completing the questionnaire by athletes during training activities is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** The process of filling out the questionnaire by Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa athletes

All completed questionnaires were collected back after completion to ensure completeness and minimize incomplete responses. The collected data were then prepared for analysis in accordance with the research objectives.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using quantitative descriptive analysis. Each respondent's answer was scored according to the scale used, then the total score and average value were calculated for each motivation indicator. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of frequencies, percentages, and categories, which are used to describe the overall level of athlete motivation as well as based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation aspects. This analytical approach is used to provide an empirical picture of the motivational state of athletes participating in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

### **Result**

This section presents the results of data analysis regarding the motivation levels of athletes participating in the Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat event in Rimbo Bujang District. The research results are presented descriptively to provide an overview of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and the overall motivation levels of athletes based on data obtained from the research questionnaire.

**Intrinsic Motivation of Athletes**

This study first analyzes the level of intrinsic motivation of athletes participating in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities. Intrinsic motivation describes an athlete's internal drive related to personal goals, needs, and achievement orientation during the training process. To provide an overview of the level of intrinsic motivation of athletes participating in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities, the results of the data analysis are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Intrinsic Motivation Levels of Athletes

Percentage	Frequency		Criterion
	Absolute	Relative	
81% -100%	18	90%	Excellent
61%-80%	2	10%	Good
41-60%	0	0%	Sufficient
21%-40%	0	0%	Less
0%-20%	0	0%	Less
Total	20	100%	

Based on Table 1, most athletes demonstrated very high levels of intrinsic motivation. Of the 20 athletes involved in the study, 18 (90%) fell within the 81–100% range, while 2 (10%) fell within the 61–80% range. No athletes fell within the medium or low motivation categories. These results indicate that athletes generally possess a strong internal drive to consistently participate in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities.

**Extrinsic Motivation of Athletes**

In addition to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation was analyzed to determine the extent to which external factors supported athlete engagement in training activities. Extrinsic motivation encompassed the training environment and the characteristics of the activities undertaken by the athletes. The results of the analysis of athletes' extrinsic motivation in participating in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Athletes' Extrinsic Motivation Levels

Percentage	Frequency		Criterion
	Absolute	Relative	
81% - 100%	17	85%	Excellent
61%-80%	3	15%	Good
41-60%	0	0%	Sufficient
21%-40%	0	0%	Less
0%-20%	0	0%	Less
Total	20	100%	

Table 2 shows that athletes' extrinsic motivation is in the very high category. Seventeen

athletes (85%) fall within the 81–100% range, while three athletes (15%) fall within the 61–80% range. No athletes were found with moderate or low levels of extrinsic motivation. These findings indicate that external factors, such as the training environment and the attractiveness of the activity, significantly support athletes' participation in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities.

**Athletes' Motivation Based on Combined Intrinsic and Extrinsic Aspects**

To obtain a comprehensive picture of the athletes' motivational state, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation scores were combined. The overall level of athlete motivation, resulting from combining these two aspects, is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Overall Athlete Motivation Level

Percentage	Frequency		Criterion
	Absolute	Relative	
81% -100%	19	95%	Excellent
61%-80%	1	5%	Good
41-60%	0	0%	Sufficient
21%-40%	0	0%	Less
0%-20%	0	0%	Less
Total	20	100%	

Based on Table 3, the overall motivation level of athletes is in the very high category. Nineteen athletes (95%) are in the 81–100% range, while one athlete (5%) is in the 61–80% range. No athletes are in the medium or low motivation category. These results indicate that the combination of internal motivation from athletes and external support from the coaching environment jointly contribute to athletes' engagement and consistency in participating in Pagar Nusa Pencak Silat activities.

**Discussion**

The results of the study indicate that the motivation of Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa athletes is in the very high category, both in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This finding indicates that athletes' involvement in Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa activities is driven not only by external factors, but also by a strong internal drive. The characteristics of traditional martial arts place training as a process of holistic self-development, encompassing physical, mental, and values inherent in the practice. This finding aligns with research reporting that athletes tend to demonstrate strong motivation when their involvement is supported by personal meaning, cultural values, and a conducive training environment (Donachie et al., 2018; Tabet, 2023). Training is also understood as a process of self-development and identity, which contributes to the

high motivation of athletes to participate continuously.

The high intrinsic motivation of athletes in this study reinforces the findings of recent studies showing that intrinsic motivation plays an important role in maintaining training consistency and long-term athlete engagement (Malchrowicz-Moško et al., 2020; Mohamad & Abd Rahman, 2023; Ryan & Deci, 2024). From the perspective of self-determination theory, high intrinsic motivation reflects the fulfillment of an athlete's basic psychological needs, particularly the need for competence and social connectedness (Deci et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2024). Athletes who feel empowered to develop their skills and have positive social relationships in the training environment tend to demonstrate a stronger commitment to their sporting activities.

Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that athletes' extrinsic motivation is also in the very high category. This finding is consistent with recent research confirming that external supports, such as the quality of the training environment, the role of the coach, and the community atmosphere, contribute significantly to strengthening athletes' motivation (Curran et al., 2015; Sheehan et al., 2018). In the context of community-based sport, social support and positive training structures have been reported as important factors in maintaining athlete engagement, particularly in sports that require long-term commitment such as martial arts.

The dominance of the high category in athletes' overall motivation levels indicates a positive interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The achievement motivation perspective states that athlete motivation is formed through a combination of internal drive to achieve goals and external support that reinforces this achievement orientation. Attachment to the school and training community has also been reported to play a role in strengthening the meaning of athletes' participation and maintaining their continued involvement.

The results of this study also support findings showing that a sports coaching approach that balances physical, mental, and social aspects tends to result in more stable and adaptive levels of athlete motivation (Reynders et al., 2019; Sakalidis et al., 2023). Athletes who train in an environment that is not solely focused on competitive outcomes but also emphasizes the process and experience of training tend to exhibit higher levels of satisfaction and motivation. Thus, the findings of this study strengthen empirical evidence that the quality of the coaching environment plays a significant role in

shaping and maintaining athlete motivation in traditional martial arts.

Although the findings of this study indicate a very high level of athlete motivation and are consistent with previous research, this study has several limitations that require attention. The descriptive design, with a relatively limited sample size and focus on a single educational context, means the results cannot be broadly generalized to the context of Pencak Silat or other martial arts. Motivation data was also obtained through a self-report instrument, which is potentially influenced by respondent subjectivity. Nevertheless, the findings of this study have important practical implications for the development of traditional martial arts. The results indicate that a development environment that balances physical, mental, social, and cultural aspects can support the development of high athlete motivation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The results of the study indicate that athlete motivation is in the high category in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This finding indicates that athlete involvement in Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa is supported by strong internal motivation, such as satisfaction from training and self-development, as well as by external factors in the form of a conducive and community-based coaching environment. These results confirm that Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa coaching not only plays a role in developing physical skills, but is also able to create psychological conditions that support the sustainability of athlete participation. Although this study is descriptive and has limitations in sample coverage, these findings provide an empirical basis for the development of traditional martial arts coaching strategies oriented towards strengthening athlete motivation, and open opportunities for further research to examine the relationship between motivation, training consistency, and athlete achievement in more depth.

#### **5. Author Contribution**

AD conceptualized the study, conducted data collection, and prepared the initial manuscript draft. S supervised the research process, provided methodological guidance, and critically reviewed the manuscript. AA contributed to data analysis and interpretation of the results and WS assisted in literature review, data organization, and manuscript revision. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

## 6. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known financial or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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