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Understanding the Impact of Self-Control on Training Commitment Through Burnout Mediation Among College-Athletes

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Abstract

Study purpose. Self-control is a crucial factor in influencing college athletes' training commitment. In this study, burnout serves as a mediating variable for the influence of self-control on training commitment. Given the importance of training commitment in the training process, appropriate interventions are needed for college athletes to develop self-control and overcome burnout. This study aims to predict the influence of self-control on training commitment with burnout as a mediating variable.

Materials and methods. A quantitative approach was chosen for this study, and questionnaires were completed by 123 college athletess university in Surabaya. Participants filled out a questionnaire containing the Brief Self-control Scale (BSCS), the Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ), and the Athlete Commitment Instrument (ACI). Data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) technique. Based on the results of the mediation test, it was found that p = 0.009, which means that burnout has a mediating effect on the influence of self-control on training commitment.

Results. This means that college athletes with high self-control will have high training commitment with a tendency toward low burnout levels. College athletes with good self-control will maintain training commitment and manage any burnout they experience. The results of this study can contribute to the relevant parties by examining the interventions used to conduct exercises to minimize burnout.

Conclusions. Additionally, these new findings recommend further research to explore the type of intervention appropriate for the intensity and volume of exercise. It is concluded that burnout is able to mediate the influence of self-control on training commitment.

Keywords: Self-Control, Burnout, Training Commitment

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Introduction

Achieving success in sports requires longitudinal and consistent training. During the training process, college athletes will feel the burden and pressure. The training pressure experienced by athletes can be controlled with strong motivation and emotional attachment to training commitment (Merdan, H., & Caglar, 2022). Athlete performance will improve and achievements will be attained when their skill dimensions are met, such as being physically strong and agile, having skillful technique, tactical intelligence, and a resilient mindset (Sansone et al., 2024; Widya Putri et al., 2025). In fulfilling the skill dimension, setting training goals and programs is necessary to increase training commitment (Seung-Hee & Beom-Jun, 2022). Strengthening athletes' commitment to training, according to longitudinal studies (Francisco et al., 2020; Gil et al., 2023), can be achieved by meeting their psychological needs and providing supportive weather to minimize burnout during training. Therefore, an appropriate training program is needed for the athlete's skills to develop (Laurence et al., 2024).

The training development model can be based on Balyi's long-term theory, LTAD (Long-Term Athlete Development), which includes the chronological and psychological age stages of athletes, focusing on physical development, competitive readiness, and skills (Rizqullah et al., 2025; Kilani et al., 2025). Athlete Development (AD) stages range from Fundamental, Learning to Train, Training to Train, Training to Compete, and Training to Win. According to LTAD (Long-Term Athlete Development), athletes aged 18-25 should be in the training to compete stage, designed to improve tactical and technical skills to adapt to the demands of competition, and the training to win stage, which requires athletes to achieve victory while maintaining optimal physical and psychological condition (Feu et al., 2023; Nagy et al., 2024).

The transition period, characterized by emotional tension such as obsessiveness and feelings of discomfort due to pressure, will be experienced by athletes aged 18-26 (Mukrom, Nasution, & Indriani, 2021). Self-control can be an effort to help adaptive athletes, increase persistence and motivation through a pre-planned process (Gakh, Kramchenkova, Kuznetsov, Prytula, & Furman, 2024). Self control has a positive impact on athlete productivity, where self-control patterns will influence self-control in any situation, which can be the beginning of various achievements (Jordalen, G., Lemyre, N., Durand-Bush, N., Ivarsson, 2020). Research described by Chiou et al. (2020) found that low self-control is associated with high burnout. This agrees with Stradomska (2021), who found that self-control is significantly negatively correlated with burnout. However, interestingly, research by (Dišlere, Mārtinsone, & Koļesņikova, 2025; Conesa, Plaza, Arce, & De Francisco, 2020; Alicja Grzelak & Sara Langner, 2024) shows that burnout develops gradually and is determined by psychological factors, environment, level of commitment, and the intensity of the training load.

Self-control skills are an important factor in building training commitment. This is based on Baumeister, Tice, & Vohs (2018) self-control strength model theory, which states that self-control can generally weaken if not reinforced with self-regulation exercises, such as commitment training. Training commitment and motivation have a significant impact on athletes' skills in managing emotions and self-confidence (Verdejo, Yango, & Bautista, 2024). Developing self-control supported by intrinsic or extrinsic motivation and psychological well-being will help athletes cope with pressure and fatigue during training, thereby strengthening their training commitment (Yakushina, Leonov, Pshenichnyuk, Sedogin, & Polikanova, 2024). In line with the sport commitment model by Woodsa, Dunnea, McArdleb, & Gallaghera (2020), an athlete's training commitment can be formed through attachment, intrinsic motivation, and continuous training persistence.

According to Kang & Gong (2024) when student-athletes face excessive training demands, cognitive-affective stress model can lead to decreased self-control, and these pressures can indirectly turn into burnout if not addressed immediately. Research by Francisco,

Cynthia, & Vales-v (2022) revealed that the decline in training commitment among athletes is driven by burnout. This is supported by Madigan, D. J., Olsson, L. F., Hill, A. P., & Curran, (2025), who highlighted that training commitment has decreased over the past two decades due to increased burnout. Therefore, positive interventions, self-control, and full motivation can anticipate burnout and increase training commitment (Sun et al., 2024).

Although various studies have addressed self-control in relation to burnout and burnout in relation to training commitment, there remains a significant gap in research specifically focusing on self-control in relation to training commitment as mediated by burnout. Athletes encounter numerous challenges during training, which must be maintained consistently over an extended period, particularly for athletes who have additional responsibilities to oversee. The pressure of being both an athlete and a college athletes can trigger burnout and potentially weaken training commitment. Therefore, it is important to understand how a college athlete's self-control ability can positively influence training commitment even when the college athlete is experiencing high burnout. This gap demonstrates the need for good self-control and training commitment in college athletes experiencing burnout.

Most prior research has concentrated on the direct relationship between burnout and training commitment, whereas self-control, a crucial mediator in the model, has not been thoroughly investigated. Therefore, the researcher will test three hypotheses as a preliminary answer to the direct influence of self-control on training commitment or the indirect influence of self-control on burnout as a mediator. The research hypothesis formulations are as follows: H1: There is an influence of self-control on training commitment; H2: There is an influence of self-control on burnout; H3: There is an influence of self-control on training commitment through the role of burnout as a mediator.

This research aims to address this gap by examining the mediating role of burnout in the influence of self-control on training commitment, specifically in a population of College athletes-athletes. This study specifically seeks to investigate the relationship between self-control, burnout schemas, and training commitment. Therefore, based on the research objectives, the subjects were selected from one university in Surabaya that has a large number of student athletes who are still actively participating in competitions, ranging from regional to international levels. The conditions at the location are relevant for understanding the extent to which student-athletes can maintain self-control and training commitment amidst the risk of burnout due to competitive and academic demands. The findings of this research are expected to serve as an important reference for the field of training programs in developing interventions that can enhance self-control, strengthen training commitment, and reduce the likelihood of burnout among college athletes.

Materials and methods

Study participants

The target population is student athletes aged 18-26. The age range selection is very suitable for the concept of emerging adulthood, which is when individuals are in a transitional phase toward independence, self-control strengthening, and adjustment to academic and social demands (Wider et al., 2023). Then, student-athlete criteria were chosen because they are at higher risk of burnout due to the dual demands of academics and maintaining athletic performance compared to non-student athletes.

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling technique. This technique was chosen because the study had specific participant criteria, namely student-athletes. With these criteria in place, purposive sampling is considered an appropriate method for determining that participants align with the research focus and can provide relevant data on self-control, burnout, and training commitment. This technique was chosen because the research has specific criteria and considerations based on statement of Sugiyono (2023) such as participants being student

athletes. With these criteria, purposive sampling is considered an appropriate method to ensure that participants align with the research focus and can provide relevant data regarding self-control, fatigue, and training commitment. Data collection was carried out by distributing data through Google Forms for respondents to fill out questionnaires. The final data collection was 123 students who are athletes at a university in Surabaya. Before completing the questionnaire, all participants will receive informed consent to indicate their willingness to fill out the questionnaire. Researchers also guarantee that participant data will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

Study organization

Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. Before completing the questionnaire, participants were asked for their willingness to fill it out and to agree to the informant consent as a form of commitment to their involvement in the research data collection process. Participants are also required to read and adhere to the guidelines. Thereafter, participants will answer the provided questions based on their conditions. Once participants have completed the questions, they will be directed to submit their answers. After the data has been collected from all participants, it will be processed and analyzed.

As the main foundation, a quantitative approach was applied in this study using a cross-sectional design, which is a research approach that collects data at a specific point, and no intervention or manipulation of variables is required. The selection of approach and method is based on the ultimate goal of the research, which is to identify the influence of self-control on training commitment in athletes experiencing burnout. Non-experimental research was chosen as the method because it is limited to description, with the main focus on testing between variables. To measure the variables, the Brief Self-control Scale (BSCS), Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ), and Athlete Commitment Instrument (ACI) were used.

The instrument used in researching self-control is the Brief Self-Control Scale (BSCS). This instrument was developed by Tangney, J.P., Baumeister, & Boone (2004). During its development, the BSCS was considered unidimensional. The BSCS consists of 13 (thirteen) items and has 5 (five) answer choices: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). After conducting validity and reliability tests using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis approach, 9 (nine) items were found to be valid with factor loading values ranging from 0.50 to 0.70 and reliable with a value of 0.780. As an illustration, example items are "I will do things that are bad for me if it's fun" (self discipline aspect); "I say inappropriate things" (impulse control aspect).

Burnout was measured using the Athlete Burnout Questionnaire (ABQ) instrument. This instrument was developed by Raedeke & Smith (2001). In its development, the ABQ has 3 dimensions: reduced sense of accomplishment, emotional, and devaluation. The ABQ consists of 15 (fifteen) items with 5 (five) answer choices: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5). After conducting validity and reliability tests using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis approach, 11 (eleven) items were found to be valid with factor loading values ranging from 0.55 to 0.83 and reliable with a value of 0.870. The question items used were "I achieve many valuable things in my training program" (reduced sense of accomplishment aspect); "I don't care much about my performance in the training program" (devaluation aspect).

Training commitment is measured using the Athlete Commitment Instrument (ACI) developed by Jackson, Gucciardi, Lonsdale, Whipp, & Dimmock (2014). In its development, there are three dimensions: affective commitment, normative commitment, and Continuance Commitment. The ACI consists of 17 (seventeen) items with 5 (five) answer choices: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). After conducting

validity and reliability tests using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis approach, 11 (eleven) items were found to be valid with factor loading values ranging from 0.60 to 0.83 and reliable with a value of 0.874. Examples of items used are "I do not feel emotionally attached to the exercise program I am following" (affective commitment aspect): "I would feel guilty if I left this exercise program" (normative commitment aspect).

Statistical analysis

The data that needs to be prepared for data analysis is the normality test. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is the test that will be applied to check the normality of the data. This type of normality test was chosen to ensure the data is normally distributed before proceeding to the parametric analysis section in quantitative research (Sugiyono, 2023). If the data obtained is normal, then the hypothesis test will be continued. H1 testing: the effect of X on Y and H2: the effect of X on Z are tested using linear regression to determine the significance of the implications. Linear regression analysis is used to measure how independent variables (X) statistically influence dependent variables (Y) in a causal relationship model (Sugiyono, 2023). Meanwhile, to test mediation H3, SEM-PLS is used to determine the presence of the effect of X on Y and Z as mediators. The application used in this study is JASP 0.18.3.0.

Results

Based on the data collected from the participants, 123 college athletess at universities in Surabaya were willing to complete the questionnaire.

Table 1. Respondent Participants

Aspect	Characteristics	Amoun (N-123)	%
Sex	Male	55	44.71
	Female	68	55.28
Age	18	15	12,19
	19	16	13,04
	20	23	18,69
	21	37	30,08
	22	23	18,69
	23	7	5,69
	24	1	0,81
	26	1	0,81
Categories	Full Body Contact (Taekwondo, Karate, Boxing, etc)	44	35.8
	Sports games (Football, E-sport, etc)	51	41.5
	Accuracy Sport (Swimming, Running, etc)	28	22.8

Table 1 shows that the participants were male (44.7%) and female (55.2%) college atheles, aged between 18 years (n=15), 19 years (n=16), 20 years (n=23), 21 years (n=37), 22 years (n=23), 23 years (n=7), 24 years (n=1), and 26 years (n=1). The sports categories they

participated in were full-body contact sports (35.8%), game sports (41.5%), and accuracy sports (22.8%).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	Total SC	Total BO	Total TC
Valid	123	123	123
Missing	0	0	0
Mode	26.000	36.000	38.000
Median	28.000	39.000	32.000
Mean	29.382	40.569	32.545
Std. Dev.	6.036	8.793	4.596
Minimum	19.000	24.000	21.000
Maximum	43.000	60.000	42.000

Table 2 is a table that describes the statistical analysis of the research variables, namely self-control, burnout, and training commitment. Based on the statistical analysis conducted, it can be seen that the average self-control score is 29.382 with a standard deviation of 6.036, a minimum value of 19, and a maximum of 43. This indicates a fairly wide data distribution and that the self-control sample has varying levels. For the burnout variable, the average value is 40.569 with a standard deviation of 8.793, and the minimum value is 24 and the maximum is 60. This point range indicates that athletes experience burnout differently. Finally, the training commitment variable has a mean value of 32.545 and a standard deviation of 4.596. The minimum score for participants' answers is 21 and the maximum is 42. The relatively narrow range indicates that most athletes have a high level of training commitment.

Table 3. Linear regression test of self-control on training commitment

Model		Unstd.	Std. Error	Std.	t	p
H_0	(Intercept)	32.545	0.414		78.541	< .001
H_1	(Intercept)	25.965	1.984		13.088	< .001
	TOTAL SC	0.224	0.066	0.294	3.385	< .001

Table 3 presents the results of the linear regression test to examine whether self-control influences training commitment in college athletes. The P-value indicates a significant relationship between self-control and training commitment, with all indicators having a significance level of <.001.

Table 4. Linear regression test of self-control on burnout

Model		Unstd.	Std. Error	Std.	t	p
H_0	(Intercept)	40.569	0.793		51.171	< .001
H_1	(Intercept)	15.839	3.242		4.886	< .001
	TOTAL SC	0.842	0.108	0.578	7.787	< .001

Table 4 presents the results of the linear regression test to examine the effect of self-control on burnout in college athletes. Based on the P-value, there is a significant relationship between self-control and burnout, and all indicators have a significance level of <.001.

Table 5. Indirect effects

							95% Confidence Interval	
			Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	Lower	Upper
TOTAL SC	→ TOTAL BO	→ TOTAL TC	0.126	0.048	2.626	0.009	0.032	0.219

Table 6. Total effects

					95% Confidence Interval	
	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	Lower	Upper
TOTAL SC → TOTAL TC	0.224	0.066	3.413	< .001	0.095	0.353

Tables 5 and 6 show a significant relationship between self-control and training commitment, with burnout as a mediator. This means that college athletes with high self-control will have high training commitment, even when experiencing burnout.

Discussion

A common impact felt by athletes when training loads are excessive and time commitment is high is a vulnerability to burnout (Hilpisch et al., 2024). Burnout in athletes is not only physical but also mental and emotional and is influenced by individual and environmental factors. This can threaten physical health and career longevity (Dišlere et al., 2025). Managing burnout is crucial and can be achieved through self-control (Astama, Irianto, & Tomoliyus, 2023). The quality of voluntary training, perseverance, resilience, and responsibility can affect how athletes apply self-control and reduce the impact of burnout Gakh (2025), which has a positive effect on training commitment.

The results of this study indicate that self-control plays an important role in influencing the levels of burnout and training commitment in college athletes. This finding is consistent with the Strength Model of Self-Control (Baumeister et al., 2018), which explains that self-control is a psychological resource that can be weakened by overuse but can still be strengthened through practicing self-control. As an illustration, in the instrument developed by Manoley, self-control is represented by the aspects of effort and determination, as well as regulatory resistance ability, which together influence burnout and training. Based on the results obtained, business aspects includenot giving up easily, focusing on long-term goals, being disciplined with training programs, and maintaining positive routines. On the other hand, there is another aspect: the ability to resist momentary temptations, such as not using foul language, being able to refuse negative invitations, avoiding recklessness, and controlling emotions. Both aspects indicate that athletes who are determined and avoid negative behavior have a high level of training commitment.

A consistent training process requires a high level of training commitment from the athlete. Structured and repetitive training programs can build physical endurance while also improving athletes' ability to maintain focus and discipline during training (Aliwi, Kamel, Zaki, & Hussein, 2025). To reach the commitment stage, intervention needs must be adjusted to increase motivation, discipline, and long-term goals and minimize burnout. Precisely designed variations in training intensity can maintain an athlete's commitment to the training program, especially as the training load increases leading up to competition (Qahtan & Muhsin, 2025). In line with Sport Commitment Model (SCM) Woodsa et al. (2020) college athletes will exhibit

training commitment as a result of affective, continuance, and normative attachment to training. College athletes with a high training commitment will practice consistently even when experiencing burnout.

According to experts in the study Pires, Isoard-Gautheur, Madigan, Smith, & Gustafsson (2024), there are five unresolved issues related to burnout: fatigue syndrome, negative consequences, recovery, social environment, and developing effective interventions. Adjusting the approach can begin by meeting and supporting basic psychological needs, self-control, and self-efficacy; providing full attention; and creating a positive environment (Sun et al., 2024; Shannon, Brick, Prentice, & Breslin, 2023; Fan et al., 2023). Supporting this finding, the Cognitive-Affective Stress Model (Kang & Gong, 2024) explains that when training demands exceed strength capacity, self-control decreases and sustained pressure will develop into burnout. This means to reduce burnout and increase training commitment. In line with this, Younus (2025) found that mental training interventions can indirectly help athletes manage training pressure by improving cognitive control and emotional regulation during sports activities.

A more in-depth study on the direct impact of self-control on training commitment indicates that even when college athletes are experiencing burnout, if they have sufficient self-control, they will maintain their training commitment. The negative effects of uncontrolled burnout are college athletes not following their training program, skipping training sessions, and not focusing on their goals, which ultimately impacts training commitment. Therefore, self-control is needed in college athletes.

The findings of this study also indicate that the Athlete Commitment Instrument only slightly measures the influence of self-control. A possible underlying factor is that college athletes must adhere to the predetermined program and schedule to achieve maximum results, even when their physical condition is not optimal. These high demands can trigger the frequent burnout experienced by athletes.

This study has several limitations that are necessary for planning future studies. First, this research was only conducted at a single institution; for future research, it is recommended to conduct it at several institutions. Second, there are many other factors that have the potential to influence training commitment; therefore, it is hoped that future research will conduct longitudinal and mixed-methods studies and consider other factors.

Conclusions

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that burnout acts as a mediator in the influence of self-control on training commitment. The influence of self-control on training commitment with burnout as a mediator can be demonstrated as a finding in this study. The better the self-control a college athlete possesses, the higher their training commitment and the lower their perceived burnout. This means that when a college athlete has good self-control, they can manage burnout and maintain their commitment to training. This necessitates appropriate interventions to ensure that the college athlete's experience of burnout does not interfere with their training commitment.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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