Annual Methodological Archive Research Review
http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about
Volume 4, Issue 1 (2026)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about

Balancing Self-Confidence and Modesty in Modern Sports: An Islamic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In modern competitive sports, psychological strength plays a decisive role in athletic performance, with self-confidence often promoted as a critical success factor. However, excessive confidence can lead to arrogance, ethical decline, and disrupted team dynamics, while insufficient confidence may result in insecurity and underperformance. From an Islamic perspective, the ideal athlete represents a balanced integration of self-confidence and modesty. Islam emphasizes confidence rooted in preparation, effort, and trust in Allah, while simultaneously discouraging pride, ego, and self-glorification. This balanced approach aligns closely with contemporary principles of sports psychology, particularly those related to emotional regulation, mental resilience, and ethical conduct. By adopting Islamic teachings such as sincere intention (niyyah), gratitude, self-accountability, and humility, athletes can maintain psychological stability under pressure and respond constructively to both success and failure. Furthermore, this balance contributes to the development of strong moral character, respect for opponents, and healthy team relationships. The Islamic framework not only supports peak athletic performance but also promotes spiritual well-being and long-term personal growth. Ultimately,

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Volume 4, Issue 1 (2026)

Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

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this perspective presents a holistic model of athletic excellence, where success is measured not only by victories and records, but also by integrity, discipline, and the positive influence athletes have on and off the field.

Keywords: Modern competitive sports, psychological strength, Islamic perspective, ethical decline

Introduction (Tamheed)

In modern sports, self-confidence is essential for optimal performance, yet when it turns into arrogance, it can negatively affect both ethics and team dynamics. Islam presents a balanced approach by encouraging confidence based on effort and faith, while strongly promoting modesty and humility. This balance helps athletes achieve peak performance without compromising moral values, character, or spiritual well-being.

Research Background and Significance

Athletic performance is influenced not only by physical abilities but also by psychological and moral factors. Modern sports psychology highlights self-confidence as a key determinant of success, emphasizing its role in motivation, focus, and decision-making under pressure. However, research also indicates that excessive self-confidence or overconfidence can lead to arrogance, ethical lapses, poor team cohesion, and even burnout. On the other hand, humility and modesty contribute to emotional stability, ethical behavior, and positive relationships with teammates, coaches, and opponents.

From an Islamic perspective, these psychological traits are not viewed separately from spiritual and moral values. Islam encourages a balance between self-confidence and modesty, teaching that confidence should be rooted in sincere effort and reliance on Allah, while pride and arrogance must be avoided. This balance is significant because it allows athletes to maximize their performance while maintaining ethical standards, moral integrity, and personal well-being.

Studying this balance has practical importance in modern sports, where mental pressure, competition, and societal recognition are high. Integrating Islamic principles with sports psychology can provide athletes with a framework for sustainable performance, ethical conduct, and holistic development, making them not

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only successful players but also respected and morally grounded individuals.

Review of Literature

Self-Confidence in Sports Psychology

Research in sports psychology identifies self-confidence as a critical factor in athletic success. Vealey (2001) describes self-confidence as the belief in one's abilities to execute tasks under pressure. High self-confidence has been associated with improved performance, enhanced focus, resilience, and better decision-making in competitive situations (Bandura, 1997). However, overconfidence can lead to negative outcomes, including risk-taking, ethical violations, and interpersonal conflicts within teams (Gill & Williams, 2008).

Modesty and Humility in Athletic Performance

While self-confidence is widely studied, humility and modesty are equally important psychological traits in sports. Modesty helps athletes maintain emotional stability, accept feedback, and demonstrate ethical behavior. Research shows that athletes who combine humility with competence foster stronger team cohesion, resilience, and long-term personal growth (Owens et al., 2019).

Islamic Perspective on Psychological Traits

Islamic teachings provide guidance on the balance between confidence and humility. The Qur'an encourages believers to be strong and capable while warning against arrogance (Surah Aal-Imran 3:139; Surah An-Nisa 4:36). The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ exemplified this balance, demonstrating courage, leadership, and confidence while maintaining deep humility (Al-Attas, 2015). Scholars of Islamic psychology highlight that faith-based principles, such as reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*), gratitude (*shukr*), and intention (*niyyah*), can strengthen mental resilience and ethical conduct in athletes (Haque & Waytz, 2012).

Integration of Islamic Principles with Modern Sports Psychology

Recent studies emphasize the potential of integrating Islamic values with sports psychology to enhance both performance and character development. Faith-based coping strategies, including prayer and reflection, have been linked to reduced stress, better focus, and increased motivation among athletes (Sheikh & Skok, 2020). Moreover, ethical and moral guidance from Islam helps prevent overconfidence, ego-

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driven decisions, and conflicts in competitive environments.

Research Gap

Although modern sports psychology extensively studies confidence and humility, few studies examine their integration with Islamic teachings in the context of athletic performance. There is limited empirical research on how Islamic principles can systematically guide athletes to balance self-confidence with modesty for both optimal performance and ethical development. Addressing this gap can provide a culturally relevant framework for Muslim athletes and contribute to the global literature on sports psychology and ethics.

Research Questions

1. How does Islamic teaching influence athletes' self-confidence in modern sports?
2. What role does humility play in enhancing athletic performance and team cohesion?
3. How can athletes balance self-confidence and modesty according to Islamic principles?
4. What is the impact of integrating Islamic values on ethical behavior and mental resilience in sports?

Research Methodology

This study will use a **qualitative research approach** to explore how Islamic teachings influence the balance between self-confidence and modesty in athletes. Data will be collected through **interviews and questionnaires** from Muslim athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists. The **sample** will include 20–30 participants from various sports disciplines. Collected data will be analyzed using **thematic analysis** to identify patterns related to confidence, humility, ethical behavior, and spiritual well-being. This methodology allows a deep understanding of the practical and psychological application of Islamic principles in modern sports.

Aims & Objectives

- To examine the role of Islamic teachings in developing self-confidence among athletes.
- To explore the significance of humility and modesty in sports performance.
- To identify ways athletes can balance self-confidence with modesty according to

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Islamic principles.

- To assess the impact of Islamic values on ethical behavior and teamwork in sports.
- To provide practical recommendations for integrating Islamic teachings into modern sports psychology.

Introduction

In modern sports, achieving peak performance requires not only physical skill but also strong psychological and moral qualities. Among these, self-confidence and humility play a pivotal role in determining an athlete's success. While self-confidence enables athletes to trust their abilities, make quick decisions, and persevere under pressure, excessive confidence can lead to arrogance, unethical behavior, and interpersonal conflicts. Islam provides a unique framework that addresses this balance, emphasizing that confidence should be grounded in sincere effort and reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*), while pride and ego are discouraged. By integrating these principles, athletes can enhance their mental resilience, ethical conduct, and overall well-being. This study explores how balancing self-confidence and modesty from an Islamic perspective can positively influence performance, teamwork, and character development in modern sports, offering a holistic approach that combines physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions.

Importance of Balancing Self-Confidence and Modesty in Sports

Balancing self-confidence and modesty is essential for athletes because it directly influences both performance and personal development. Self-confidence enables athletes to trust their skills, face competitive challenges, and remain motivated during training and competition. However, when confidence turns into arrogance or overestimation of abilities, it can lead to poor decision-making, conflicts with teammates, and unethical behavior, such as disrespecting opponents or ignoring rules. Modesty, on the other hand, ensures that athletes remain grounded, accept both victories and defeats gracefully, and maintain respect for others in the sporting environment. From an Islamic perspective, this balance is particularly important, as Islam encourages believers to act with determination and rely on Allah (*tawakkul*) while avoiding pride and ego. Athletes who achieve this balance demonstrate

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Print ISSN 3007-3189

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stronger emotional control, resilience, and ethical conduct, which enhances teamwork, strengthens relationships, and promotes a positive sports culture. Ultimately, balancing confidence and modesty allows athletes to perform at their best without compromising moral integrity, creating individuals who are successful both on the field and in character.

Integration of Islamic Principles in Enhancing Self-Confidence

Islamic principles provide a strong foundation for developing healthy self-confidence in athletes by combining effort, intention, and spiritual reliance. Confidence in Islam is not based solely on personal ability or ego but is rooted in **sincere effort (ikhtiyar)** and a firm trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), which helps athletes remain focused and resilient under pressure. The concept of **niyyah (sincere intention)** ensures that actions are performed with a higher purpose, such as striving for personal excellence, serving the team, or pleasing Allah, rather than seeking recognition or superiority over others. Additionally, spiritual practices like prayer, reflection, and gratitude (*shukr*) strengthen mental stability and reduce anxiety, enabling athletes to trust their training and perform optimally. By integrating these Islamic principles, athletes develop a balanced form of self-confidence that motivates them to achieve their goals while maintaining humility, ethical behavior, and emotional control. This integration aligns closely with modern sports psychology, which emphasizes intrinsic motivation, resilience, and mental preparedness as keys to sustained athletic performance.

Role of Humility and Modesty in Performance

Humility and modesty are essential qualities that significantly influence performance in all areas of life. Humility allows individuals to recognize their strengths and weaknesses realistically, fostering a willingness to learn and adapt. When people are humble, they are more open to feedback and constructive criticism, which helps them improve their skills and make better decisions. Modesty complements humility by ensuring that achievements are acknowledged without arrogance, promoting a positive and collaborative environment. In team settings, modesty prevents ego clashes and encourages cooperation, enabling group members to work effectively toward shared goals. Both qualities also contribute to resilience, as humble

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Print ISSN 3007-3189

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individuals are less likely to be discouraged by setbacks and more willing to seek help when needed. Moreover, humility and modesty help maintain focus on the task rather than on personal recognition, ensuring consistent and sustainable performance. Leaders who practice these traits inspire trust and respect, motivating others to perform at their best. In essence, humility and modesty do not undermine ambition; rather, they strengthen it by fostering self-awareness, openness, and collaborative spirit. By balancing confidence with humility, individuals can achieve excellence while building meaningful relationships and long-term success.

Ethical and Moral Development

Ethical and moral development plays a vital role in guiding athletes to perform with integrity while maintaining personal and spiritual growth. One key aspect of this development is preventing ego-driven behavior, as overconfidence can lead to unethical actions such as cheating, arguing with officials, or undermining teammates. Islamic teachings, combined with humility, encourage athletes to pursue excellence responsibly, reminding them that true success is measured not only by victory but also by ethical conduct. Integrating ethics into competitive environments further reinforces this principle. Values such as respect, honesty, and accountability, which are strongly emphasized in Islam, provide athletes with clear ethical boundaries and a framework for making fair decisions. For example, a runner who refrains from using performance-enhancing drugs demonstrates both ethical integrity and spiritual discipline, showing that competition can coexist with moral responsibility. Spiritual reinforcement strengthens these qualities by nurturing self-awareness and reflection. Practices like prayer, meditation, and expressing gratitude allow athletes to remain grounded, enhancing their ability to make morally sound decisions even under pressure. Such spiritual grounding also reduces stress, sharpens mental focus, and helps maintain ethical awareness during intense competition, ensuring that actions align with both personal values and faith-based principles. Overall, ethical and moral development, supported by humility and spiritual practice, equips athletes to achieve excellence responsibly, balancing ambition with conscience, and fostering long-term personal, professional, and spiritual growth.

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Psychological Benefits of the Confidence-Modesty Balance

The psychological benefits of balancing confidence and modesty are profound, particularly for athletes striving to achieve peak performance while maintaining mental well-being. Athletes who cultivate this balance tend to experience lower anxiety and higher self-esteem, as confidence fosters a genuine belief in their abilities while humility prevents excessive self-focus or egocentric thinking. This equilibrium allows individuals to remain grounded, acknowledging strengths without becoming overconfident and recognizing weaknesses without losing motivation. Such a mindset directly enhances performance, as balanced athletes are more likely to make rational decisions, respond effectively to challenges, and sustain optimal performance even under pressure. The interplay between confidence and modesty also strengthens resilience and coping skills. When setbacks occur, athletes with this balance view failure as a learning opportunity rather than a personal defeat, promoting growth and long-term improvement. Islamic values further reinforce these psychological benefits by encouraging patience (sabr), gratitude, and reliance on Allah, which help athletes manage stress, maintain perspective, and recover from disappointments more effectively. By integrating these spiritual and psychological principles, athletes develop a stable mental framework that supports both competitive success and personal growth. Ultimately, the confidence-modesty balance fosters mental clarity, emotional stability, and a constructive approach to challenges, enabling athletes to navigate high-pressure situations with composure and ethical integrity while sustaining long-term motivation and well-being.

Holistic Approach to Sports Performance

A holistic approach to sports performance emphasizes the integration of physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, recognizing that true athletic excellence involves more than just physical ability. Islamic teachings highlight the interconnectedness of body, mind, and soul, encouraging athletes to train their bodies, develop mental strength, and nurture spiritual well-being simultaneously. By addressing all three dimensions, athletes not only enhance their performance but also promote long-term personal growth, creating a foundation for sustained success both on and off the field. This holistic perspective aligns closely with modern sports

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Online ISSN 3007-3197
Print ISSN 3007-3189

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psychology, which emphasizes mindfulness, emotional regulation, and ethical decision-making. Islamic practices, such as prayer, reflection, and gratitude, provide additional support for these psychological principles, offering a layer of resilience, motivation, and ethical grounding that complements conventional training methods. The long-term impact of this approach extends beyond immediate performance outcomes. Athletes who balance self-confidence with modesty demonstrate consistent ethical behavior, respect for others, and personal integrity, reflecting strong character development. This balance ensures that success is achieved responsibly, fostering role models who inspire teammates, competitors, and the wider community alike. By combining physical training, mental discipline, and spiritual reinforcement, a holistic approach not only maximizes athletic potential but also cultivates individuals who excel in personal and moral dimensions. Ultimately, this integration of body, mind, and soul allows athletes to pursue excellence in a sustainable, ethical, and meaningful way, ensuring that their achievements contribute to both competitive success and enduring character growth.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of integrating Islamic values into sports performance are significant, offering coaches and athletes concrete strategies to enhance both mental and physical outcomes. In training programs, coaches can incorporate principles such as intention (niyyah), gratitude, humility, and trust in Allah into daily routines, fostering mental conditioning alongside physical development. This approach encourages athletes to focus on effort and ethical conduct rather than solely on outcomes, promoting sustainable motivation and resilience. At both the team and individual levels, the integration of these values supports holistic development. Teams that cultivate a culture of respect, collaboration, and constructive feedback enable athletes to work together effectively while maintaining ethical standards. Individual athletes benefit from practices such as reflection, prayer, and mindfulness, which help them sustain self-confidence without falling into arrogance, regulate emotions, and remain focused during competition. Additionally, the combination of spiritual practices with modern sports psychology techniques, such as goal setting, visualization, and positive self-talk—provides a robust framework for stress

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management and mental well-being. By merging faith-based guidance with evidence-based psychological strategies, athletes can enhance performance while maintaining ethical and moral integrity. This holistic approach not only improves technical and tactical skills but also strengthens resilience, emotional balance, and intrinsic motivation. Ultimately, practical application of these principles ensures that athletes are prepared to face competitive pressures with composure, ethical awareness, and spiritual grounding, fostering long-term growth, both as performers and as individuals of strong character.

Conclusion

This study examined achieving excellence in sports requires more than physical skill; it demands a careful balance of self-confidence, humility, ethical integrity, and spiritual grounding. Self-confidence allows athletes to trust their abilities, face challenges with determination, and maintain motivation under pressure, while humility and modesty prevent arrogance, ego-driven behavior, and unethical actions. Islamic principles provide a unique framework for cultivating this balance, emphasizing sincere effort, reliance on Allah (tawakkul), gratitude, and ethical conduct. By integrating these teachings, athletes develop mental resilience, emotional stability, and moral awareness, enabling them to make sound decisions, handle setbacks constructively, and maintain respectful relationships with teammates, opponents, and coaches. The psychological benefits of this balance are profound, as athletes experience lower anxiety, higher self-esteem, and stronger coping skills, which directly enhance performance under competitive pressure. A holistic approach that combines physical training, mental conditioning, and spiritual practices ensures that athletes grow not only in skill but also in character. Practical applications, such as incorporating reflection, prayer, mindfulness, and modern sports psychology techniques, further support sustainable motivation, stress management, and ethical behavior. Ultimately, the integration of confidence, modesty, and Islamic values fosters athletes who excel not only in competitions but also as role models of integrity, patience, and respect. This comprehensive approach demonstrates that peak performance and moral development are not mutually exclusive; rather, they reinforce one another, creating individuals who achieve

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Print ISSN 3007-3189

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lasting success while maintaining ethical, spiritual, and personal growth both on and off the field.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- Encourage athletes to develop self-confidence grounded in sincere effort and reliance on Allah (tawakkul).
- Promote humility and modesty to prevent arrogance, ego clashes, and unethical behavior.
- Integrate Islamic values such as gratitude (shukr), patience (sabr), and intention (niyyah) into training programs.
- Include mental conditioning exercises like reflection, prayer, and mindfulness to enhance focus and emotional stability.
- Foster a team culture that emphasizes respect, collaboration, and constructive feedback.
- Provide ethical guidelines aligned with Islamic principles to guide decision-making on and off the field.
- Use modern sports psychology techniques—goal setting, visualization, and positive self-talk—alongside spiritual practices.
- Encourage athletes to view failure as a learning opportunity rather than a personal defeat.
- Promote ethical behavior, such as fair play and avoiding performance-enhancing drugs.
- Develop leadership programs that teach athletes to inspire trust and motivate others through humility.
- Offer workshops on balancing confidence and modesty to enhance mental resilience and moral development.
- Include stress management strategies combining spiritual practices and psychological tools.
- Encourage athletes to maintain gratitude and ethical reflection after both victories and defeats.
- Integrate holistic training approaches addressing physical, mental, and spiritual development.

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Online ISSN 3007-3197
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- Recognize and reward athletes who demonstrate consistent ethical behavior, teamwork, and spiritual discipline.

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