



# The impact of coaching communication styles and training programs on novice tennis player satisfaction: A case study from Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The satisfaction of beginner tennis players is often influenced by coaches' communication styles and the structure of training programs.

**Objectives:** This study analyzed the effects of coaching communication style and training program design on player satisfaction at Club First Tennis.

**Methods:** A quantitative, descriptive-associative approach was used with 50 beginner players in regular training sessions. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire covering coach communication style, training program design, and player satisfaction. Statistical analyses included validity and reliability tests, normality checks, and Spearman's rank correlation due to non-parametric data.

**Results:** Results showed strong, significant relationships between coaching communication and player satisfaction ( $r = 0.615$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), as well as between training programs and satisfaction ( $r = 0.620$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These findings indicate that supportive and adaptive communication and well-structured training enhance athlete satisfaction and engagement.

**Conclusions:** The study highlights the importance of integrating effective communication and program planning in coaching beginner athletes. Future studies are encouraged to explore additional influencing factors such as intrinsic motivation or external support, and to involve larger sample sizes for broader generalizability.

**Keywords:** athlete satisfaction, beginner players, coaching communication style, structured training, tennis training.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sports are organized and systematic physical exercises that improve physical fitness and involve repetitive body movements. Not only is exercise known for its powerful benefits for physical health, but it is also increasingly recognized for its mental health and antidepressant benefits (Ross et al., 2023).

One of the most popular sports worldwide is tennis. Tennis is a highly effective fitness activity that can provide health-related physical and mental benefits, ranging from improved cardiovascular, metabolic, and bone health to increased agility, coordination, and stress and anxiety management (Groppel & Nicholas, 2009). Tennis players often start playing in childhood and can continue into late adulthood (Bylak & Hutchinson, 1998).

Tennis is a complex sport that demands specific physical abilities such as strength, speed, endurance, and skill (Fernandez-Fernandez, Ulbricht, & Ferrauti, 2012). Played using a racket and a rubber ball, tennis can be conducted in singles or doubles format on a standardized court measuring 23.77 meters in length and 8.23 meters in width for singles, or 10.97 meters for doubles. The sport includes a variety of technical strokes such as forehand and backhand, which are performed using different grips, including the continental, eastern, and western grips—each suited to specific stroke types (Dong et al., 2024).

The development of tennis in Indonesia is evident from the increasing number of tennis clubs across urban, suburban, and rural areas. These clubs serve elite athletes and the general public, offering access to structured training. One such club is the First Tennis Club, founded in 2022 in the post-pandemic era. The club aims to accommodate teenagers and adults who want to engage in tennis, providing instruction from certified coaches who are former athletes.

However, while the First Tennis Club has competent coaches, each coach exhibits a different communication style when delivering instructions. The relationship between coach and athlete is often defined as task-oriented and collaborative, aiming to achieve mutual goals through meaningful social interaction (Davis et al., 2019). This relationship extends beyond physical training to encompass mental and emotional development and is heavily influenced by communication. As Xiao et al. (2022) highlight, an athlete's competitive ability is closely linked to their physical fitness, which is shaped by the coach's alignment with their goals, primarily communicated through interaction.

Effective communication between the coach and the athlete is fundamental to optimizing performance. Achieving peak performance in tennis requires mastery of technical, physical, mental, and tactical dimensions (Berhimpong et al., 2023). This highlights the multidimensional nature of tennis performance (Kolman et al., 2019), further emphasizing the importance of communication in the coach-athlete dynamic.

Communication style encompasses verbal and non-verbal cues, including empathy, tone, clarity, and gesture. A balanced communication style facilitates understanding, improves motivation, and strengthens coach-player rapport. According to Purwanti & Cholifah (2019), communication style is essential for conveying emotion, instruction, and influence, ultimately affecting players' responsiveness and satisfaction. Conversely, poor communication may inhibit learning and diminish satisfaction.

In addition to communication, the structure of the training program also plays a key role in enhancing player satisfaction. Well-designed programs that align with the

player's skill level help build confidence, maintain motivation, and promote technical improvement. Conversely, mismatched training plans may result in player discomfort or stagnation.

Referring to this background, the study identifies several core problems: differences in coaching communication styles, the appropriateness of training programs, and how the interaction of both affects the satisfaction of novice players. This study focuses on novice players enrolled at the First Tennis Club in 2025.

Previous studies support the importance of examining these variables. [Fatah & Farida \(2023\)](#) found that interpersonal communication significantly influences athlete performance. Similarly, [Shubhi \(2022\)](#) emphasized the role of verbal and non-verbal communication between coaches and athletes. [Evenetus et al. \(2019\)](#) highlighted that training program design—especially variations and intensity control—has a crucial effect on athlete outcomes. Meanwhile, [Kurnia \(2019\)](#) pointed out the foundational components of effective health exercise programs. However, while these studies examined communication or training separately, few have investigated their combined influence on player satisfaction, especially in beginner-level tennis.

This research fills that gap by examining two independent variables—coaching communication style and training programs—and their effect on the dependent variable: satisfaction among beginner tennis players. This approach offers novelty in integrating both variables, which have not previously been tested in Indonesia's tennis coaching context.

Accordingly, the study aims to: (1) analyze the effect of coaching communication style on novice player satisfaction, (2) evaluate the influence of training programs on satisfaction, and (3) compare the relative effectiveness of both variables. The findings will help determine the most suitable strategy to enhance training outcomes at First Tennis Club.

Ultimately, this study contributes to developing coaching strategies that support skill acquisition and motivation in beginner athletes. It also provides practical recommendations for coaches and club managers by offering evidence-based insights on effective communication and program design. The researcher expects that the study "The Impact of Coaching Communication Styles and Training Programs on Novice Tennis Player Satisfaction: A Case Study from Indonesia" will contribute to sports coaching and athlete development.

## METHODS

### Study Design and Participants

This study applies an associative descriptive approach with a quantitative method, which aims to describe the characteristics of communication styles and training programs used and determine whether there is a significant relationship between the two variables being studied and the satisfaction of beginner tennis players. The population of this study consists of all beginner tennis players who actively participated in the Club First Tennis training program in 2025. Purposive sampling was used, considering the following criteria: (1) beginner tennis players who have attended regular training sessions at Club First Tennis for at least three months, and (2) willing to complete a questionnaire. Based on club data, 50 players met these criteria, so all of them were included as respondents. Respondents provided information previously discussed by the researcher to measure their perceptions of

the students' communication style, the training program they participated in, and their commitment to the program during their membership at Club First Tennis.

### **Ethical approval statement**

The supervising lecturer, representatives from Semarang State University, and all respondents have approved this study. Thus, the experiments detailed in this paper were conducted by the ethical standards outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, and participants provided their signed consent. According to the ethical standards of the Declaration of Helsinki, participants signed consent forms.

### **Research Instruments**

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire (closed questionnaire) consisting of several statements regarding the communication style of coaches, training programs, and the level of satisfaction of beginner tennis players at Club First Tennis. The questionnaire was designed based on theoretical indicators from the literature (Hargie, 2019; Huang et al., 2025; Huang & Kim, 2023) and tested for validity and reliability before being distributed. The type of scale used in this questionnaire is a dichotomous scale with 'Yes' and 'No' answer options. A dichotomous scale is a two-point scale that presents opposite options (Aliero & Miswar, 2023). The selection of this scale model aims to maintain simplicity and ease of understanding for respondents from the beginner player group and allow faster completion without reducing the accuracy of variable measurement.

The questionnaire consists of three sections:

1. Coach communication style: 10 questions, including empathy, clarity of instructions, positive interaction, and feedback.
2. Training program: 10 questions, including training structure, suitability to ability, variation, and technical/physical balance.
3. Satisfaction level: 10 items, including satisfaction with training and perceived achievement of training objectives.

The researcher conducted the data collection process directly by distributing the questionnaire to respondents who met the established sample criteria, namely beginner players who had participated in training for at least three months. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher explained the purpose and objectives of the study and assured respondents of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. This was done to obtain honest and objective data.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, instrument validity and reliability tests, normality tests, and non-parametric correlation analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the distribution and central tendencies of the three key variables: coach communication style, training program, and player satisfaction. Instrument validity was assessed using Pearson's correlation, with all items showing r-values greater than 0.279 ( $N = 50$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ), indicating acceptable validity. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded coefficients of 0.714 for communication style, 0.743 for training program, and 0.723 for player satisfaction, demonstrating adequate internal consistency. Normality of the data was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method to determine the appropriate statistical test for correlation analysis. Based on the distribution patterns, parametric or non-parametric correlation techniques were applied to examine relationships among variables.

## RESULTS

The Spearman correlation test shows a strong relationship between the coach's communication style and the level of player satisfaction (0.615), in line with the findings that clear instructions, positive feedback, and a supportive approach from the coach at Club First Tennis contribute to an effective and enjoyable training atmosphere, increasing enthusiasm for learning. Likewise, the varied, focused, and relevant training program at Club First Tennis strongly correlates with player satisfaction (0.620), confirming the hypothesis that the adaptive program design effectively increases interest and comfort. The comparison of the two factors confirms that although both are individually strongly correlated, the combination of an effective communication style and a structured training program is the primary key in maximizing the satisfaction and motivation of novice players, because both complement each other to create a fun and productive coaching process.

All questionnaire items used to measure coach communication style, training program, and player satisfaction demonstrated satisfactory construct validity. The item-total correlation coefficients for all three instruments exceeded the critical value of 0.279 ( $N = 50$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ), indicating that each item was significantly correlated with its respective total score. Thus, all items were considered valid and suitable for further analysis.

The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Table 1) method was conducted to assess data distribution symmetry (Supono et al., 2022). Based on the results, the communication style ( $p = 0.004$ ) and training program ( $p = 0.045$ ) variables were not normally distributed ( $p < 0.05$ ), while the facilities and input variables were normally distributed ( $p = 0.105 > 0.05$ ). Given the non-normality of two variables, subsequent analysis employed the non-parametric Spearman test to examine relationships among variables.

**Table 1.** Data Normality Test Results

Group	P	Sig.	Description
Coach Communication Style	0.004	0.05	Not normally distributed
Training Program	0.045	0.05	Not normally distributed
Facilities and Input	0.105	0.05	Normal

The next nonparametric test is Spearman's Rank Correlation. The Spearman rank correlation is a nonparametric analog of Pearson's correlation, which is used to determine the linear correlation between the ranks of two variables (Salman & Aleem, 2024). This application measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, specifically, for those measured on an ordinal or interval/ratio scale that are not normally distributed. The analysis results are as follows in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Non-parametric Test (Spearman) Result

Group	Spearman (rho)	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Interpretation
Coach Communication Style	0.615	0.001	Strong, significant correlation
Training Program	0.620	0.001	Strong, significant correlation

The findings of this study are based on the Non-Parametric Test (Spearman), showing that the coach's communication style significantly impacts the satisfaction

of novice players. The coaches at Club First Tennis can deliver clear instructions, provide positive feedback, and demonstrate a supportive approach, collectively contributing to creating a more effective and enjoyable training atmosphere. This positive interpersonal relationship has increased the players' enthusiasm for learning. This is supported by the results of the Spearman correlation test of 0.615, which indicates a strong relationship between the coach's communication style and the level of player satisfaction. Thus, this study verifies that the coach's implementation of a supportive and clear communication style is very relevant in increasing the satisfaction of novice players. Data analysis also shows that the training program implemented at Club First Tennis contributes to increasing novice players' satisfaction. The training program is designed in a varied, focused, and relevant way, tailored to the specific needs of novice athletes. This adaptive program design has been proven effective in increasing the interest and comfort of players during the training process. This is reflected in the Spearman correlation value of 0.620, which indicates a significant and strong relationship between the quality of the training program and the level of player satisfaction. Therefore, this study confirms that a structured and relevant training program is crucial to achieving novice player satisfaction.

The comparison between the two factors shows that the combination of the coach's communication style and the training program significantly influences the satisfaction of novice players. Although both factors strongly correlate with player satisfaction (0.615 for communication and 0.620 for the training program), the overall findings underline that both complement each other in creating a fun and productive coaching process. When the coach can deliver the program with effective communication and appropriate training materials, the satisfaction and motivation of novice players will increase optimally. This implies that to maximize player satisfaction, it is important not only to focus on one aspect but instead to integrate the strengths of the coach's communication with the design of an effective training program.

## DISCUSSION

One of the primary goals of a tennis coach is to foster player satisfaction and engagement, especially among beginners. This study examined how two critical coaching components—communication style and training program design—relate to the satisfaction levels of novice tennis players. The findings revealed significant and strong positive correlations between coaching communication style ( $\rho = 0.615$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and training program ( $\rho = 0.620$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) with player satisfaction. These results suggest that as communication becomes more effective and training programs become more structured, athletes tend to experience higher satisfaction levels.

Theoretically, these results reinforce that communication is a core element in shaping athlete outcomes. Supportive communication was particularly influential, encouraging constructive feedback and clear instructions. This finding aligns with [Karafil and Ulas \(2023\)](#), who emphasized that ineffective coach-athlete communication can hinder performance and disrupt team cohesion. Clear, empathetic, and two-way communication helps athletes feel valued and understood, contributing to positive emotional training experiences.

Structured and well-designed training programs also emerged as a significant factor influencing satisfaction. Athletes are more likely to stay motivated and

committed when training sessions are planned with appropriate intensity, progression, variation, and purpose. [Zhu et al. \(2024\)](#), through the lens of the 3+1Cs model (Closeness, Commitment, Complementarity, and Co-orientation), emphasized the importance of coach behaviors and knowledge in shaping athletes' development, not only in skill but also in psychological engagement and social bonding.

About instructional methods, [Fetisova \(2021\)](#) noted that diagnostic ability—such as identifying and addressing technical errors holistically—improves the quality of instructional communication. Coaches with strong diagnostic skills can explain corrections clearly and meaningfully, increasing athletes' understanding and satisfaction. However, practical implementation often falls short. For example, Junior Development and Club Professional coaches in Australia reportedly relied heavily on direct teaching styles, such as Practice Style-B and Command Style-A, despite claiming to apply more varied strategies ([Mosston & Ashworth, 2008](#)). This mismatch between perceived and actual teaching behavior highlights a gap in coaching education and reflective practice.

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that coaches should adopt more interactive, empathetic, and constructive communication approaches. As [Davis et al. \(2022\)](#) noted, high-quality athlete-coach relationships are built on continuous, effective communication. Furthermore, training programs should be tailored to meet individual player needs by considering factors such as training load, skill level, learning preferences, and developmental goals. These strategies enhance athlete satisfaction and foster long-term commitment to sport participation.

Although this study focused primarily on interpersonal and programmatic variables, contextual factors such as facilities and equipment availability also contribute to the overall athlete experience. While their direct impact on satisfaction was not the focus, supportive environments can still facilitate better engagement. As highlighted by [Magnusen et al. \(2023\)](#), quality training infrastructure, even if secondary, supports athletes' psychological and physical readiness.

### **Limitations of the study**

Despite the valuable insights generated, this study has several limitations. The sample size was relatively small ( $N = 50$ ), which may restrict the generalizability of findings. In addition, only three variables were examined, leaving out other potentially influential factors such as athletes' intrinsic motivation or external support systems like family encouragement. Future research should consider these aspects and aim to use larger, more diverse samples to obtain more representative and comprehensive results.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study highlights that both the coach's communication style and the structure of the training program play a crucial role in enhancing the satisfaction of novice tennis players. Coaches who communicate clearly, provide encouragement, and demonstrate a supportive approach contribute to a more engaging and enjoyable training experience. Likewise, training programs that are well-planned, varied, and aligned with the players' abilities positively impact their comfort and motivation.

The interaction between effective communication and appropriate training design creates a productive learning environment. When coaches deliver training content with empathy and structure, player satisfaction tends to increase.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that coaches at Club First Tennis continue to strengthen athlete-centered communication practices. Additionally, club management should conduct regular evaluations to ensure training programs remain responsive, structured, and tailored to players' development needs.

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## DATA AVAILABILITY

All data supporting the findings of this study are included in the article and its supplementary materials. Additional datasets are available from the corresponding author upon a reasonable request.

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This research did not receive external funding.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author states that this study was carried out independently, with full integrity, and without any conflicts of interest involving any organization, institution, or individual. There were no financial, professional, or personal affiliations that could have influenced the design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation of the research.

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