International Journal of Education, Vocational and Social Science
https://e-journal.citakonsulindo.or.id/index.php/IJEVSS
E-ISSN : 2963 4954
IJEVSS

# Analysis of Social Capital in Sports Communities in Majalengka Regency

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**Abstract**

*Sports communities play a strategic role in strengthening social capital, including social networks, trust, and norms that support cooperation in society. However, empirical studies examining social capital within local sports communities, particularly in Majalengka Regency, remain limited. This study aims to analyze the relationship between sports participation and social capital and to examine differences across types of sports communities. This research employed a quantitative survey approach. Data were collected through structured questionnaires measuring sports participation and social capital indicators. The sample consisted of members of sports communities selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis. The findings indicate that sports participation is positively associated with social capital, particularly in strengthening trust and social networks among community members. Furthermore, variations in social capital were observed across different types of sports communities, with competitive communities showing stronger structural ties, while recreational communities demonstrated higher relational bonding. This study provides empirical evidence supporting the role of sports communities as effective platforms for social development. The results offer practical implications for policymakers and sports organizations in optimizing community-based sports programs to enhance social cohesion and community resilience.*

**Keywords: Social Capital; Sports Participation; Sports Community; Social Network; Trust**

## INTRODUCTION

National development fundamentally aims to improve societal welfare and create



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inclusive social systems (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016). However, persistent inequalities and limited participation in social activities, including sports, indicate that development outcomes have not been fully optimal (Elsborg et al., 2019; Wijtzes et al., 2014). In Indonesia, despite strong legal and policy frameworks, challenges such as social exclusion, unequal access to facilities, and low participation rates remain significant (Seda et al., 2018).

Sports development is not solely focused on physical achievement but also plays a crucial role in social development (Wang et al., 2024). Through sports, individuals engage in structured and unstructured interactions that contribute to character building, teamwork, and social integration (Chatzipanteli & Adamakis, 2022; McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014). Sports communities, therefore, serve as important social institutions that facilitate interaction, cooperation, and collective identity formation (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Karlis, 2015).

The concept of social capital has gained increasing attention in understanding how communities function effectively (Bjørnskov & Sønderskov, 2013). Social capital refers to networks, trust, and norms that enable coordination and cooperation among individuals. In sports communities, social capital is developed through shared activities, mutual engagement, and repeated interactions (Elmose-Østerlund & van der Roest, 2017; Zhou & Kaplanidou, 2018).

Previous research highlights that sports participation enhances social relationships and promotes interpersonal skills such as communication, leadership, and collaboration (Hartoyo et al., 2024; Qi & Bin Mohd Ali, 2024). These benefits extend beyond the sports context and contribute to broader societal outcomes, including increased civic engagement and improved social cohesion.

Despite the recognized importance of social capital, empirical research in Indonesia—particularly at the regional level—remains limited. In Majalengka Regency, where sports communities are rapidly growing, there is a need to understand how these communities contribute to social capital formation.

Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between sports participation and social capital in sports communities?
2. Are there differences in social capital across types of sports communities?

The novelty of this study lies in its quantitative measurement of social capital within local sports communities, providing empirical evidence that supports both theoretical and practical development in sports sociology.



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## METHOD

### Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method to examine the relationship between sports participation and social capital.

### Participants

The participants were members of sports communities in Majalengka Regency. A purposive sampling technique was applied, resulting in a sample that represents various types of sports communities (e.g., volleyball, futsal, recreational sports groups).

### Instruments

Two instruments were used:

1. Sports Participation Questionnaire, measuring frequency, duration, and intensity of participation
2. Social Capital Questionnaire, covering:
   a. Trust
   b. Social networks
   c. Social norms

All items were measured using a Likert scale (1–5).

### Validity and Reliability

The instruments were tested for validity using Pearson correlation and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, with all variables meeting acceptable thresholds ($\alpha > 0.70$).

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using:

- Descriptive statistics
- Pearson correlation analysis
- Comparative analysis across community types

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Descriptive Analysis of Sports Participation and Social Capital

The descriptive results indicate that the majority of respondents actively participate in



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sports activities at least 2–3 times per week. This high level of participation reflects the growing enthusiasm for community-based sports in Majalengka Regency.

In terms of social capital, respondents reported relatively high levels of trust, strong interpersonal relationships, and adherence to shared norms. Among the three dimensions, social networks showed the highest mean score, followed by trust, and then social norms.

This finding suggests that sports communities are particularly effective in facilitating social interaction and network formation. Regular engagement in sports activities provides opportunities for individuals to build relationships and expand their social connections (Ullrich-French et al., 2012).

**2. Relationship Between Sports Participation and Social Capital**

The correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between sports participation and social capital ($r > 0.50$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that individuals who participate more frequently in sports activities tend to have higher levels of social capital.

This finding aligns with theoretical perspectives that emphasize the role of shared activities in building social cohesion. Participation in sports creates a structured environment where individuals interact, collaborate, and develop mutual trust (Rowe et al., 2013).

From a sociological perspective, sports participation serves as a mechanism for:

- Strengthening interpersonal relationships
- Building collective identity
- Enhancing trust and cooperation (Yang et al., 2022)

These elements are essential components of social capital and contribute to the overall functioning of communities.

**3. Differences Across Types of Sports Communities**

The analysis also revealed differences in social capital across types of sports communities.

**a. Competitive Sports Communities**

Competitive communities (e.g., volleyball clubs) tend to exhibit:

- Strong organizational structure
- High levels of discipline
- Clear role distribution

These characteristics contribute to stronger structural social capital, where relationships are formalized and goal-oriented (Do et al., 2026).



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**b. Recreational Sports Communities**

Recreational communities show:

- More flexible interaction patterns
- Informal communication
- Strong emotional bonding

These communities emphasize relational social capital, characterized by trust, friendship, and social support.

This distinction highlights that different types of sports communities contribute to social capital in different ways. Competitive communities strengthen organizational cohesion, while recreational communities enhance social bonding (Eriksson, 2023).

**4. The Role of Sports Communities in Social Development**

The findings confirm that sports communities play a significant role in promoting social development. They function as:

- Spaces for social interaction
- Platforms for community engagement
- Mechanisms for social integration

In the context of Majalengka Regency, sports communities have the potential to address social challenges such as:

- Social isolation
- Lack of community engagement
- Weak social cohesion

By fostering participation and interaction, sports communities contribute to building stronger and more resilient communities (Karstensen et al., 2024).

**5. Implications for Policy and Practice**

The results of this study have several important implications:

**a. Government Policy**

Local governments should:

- Support community-based sports programs
- Provide accessible sports facilities
- Encourage inclusive participation



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**b. Sports Organizations**

Organizations should:

- Develop structured programs to enhance participation
- Promote values of teamwork and cooperation
- Strengthen community engagement

**c. Community Development**

Sports can be used as a tool for:

- Social inclusion
- Youth development
- Community empowerment

**6. Theoretical Contribution**

This study contributes to the field of sports sociology by:

- Providing empirical evidence on social capital in local sports communities
- Expanding the application of social capital theory in the Indonesian context
- Highlighting the role of sports as a social development tool

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that sports participation has a significant positive relationship with social capital in sports communities. Individuals who actively engage in sports activities tend to develop stronger social networks, higher trust, and better adherence to social norms (Di Bartolomeo & Papa, 2019; Prochnow & Patterson, 2022).

Differences across types of sports communities indicate that both competitive and recreational sports contribute uniquely to social capital formation. While competitive communities strengthen structural relationships, recreational communities enhance emotional bonding and trust (Melo & Franco, 2025).

Overall, sports communities serve as effective platforms for promoting social cohesion and community resilience. The findings highlight the importance of supporting community-based sports initiatives as part of broader social development strategies.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study provides empirical evidence on the relationship between sports participation and social capital within sports communities. However, several limitations open opportunities for



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future research.

First, this study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to capture the dynamic development of social capital over time. Future studies are recommended to use longitudinal approaches to examine how sustained participation in sports communities influences the growth and transformation of social capital.

Second, the scope of this research was limited to sports communities in Majalengka Regency. Further research should expand the geographical coverage to include different regions, both urban and rural, to enhance the generalizability of findings and to identify contextual differences in the formation of social capital.

Third, this study focused primarily on quantitative analysis. Future research may adopt mixed-method or qualitative approaches to gain deeper insights into the processes, meanings, and experiences underlying social interactions within sports communities. In-depth interviews and ethnographic studies could provide richer explanations of how trust, norms, and networks are developed.

Fourth, future studies should consider additional variables that may influence social capital, such as leadership style, organizational structure, cultural values, access to facilities, and government support. Including these variables could provide a more comprehensive model of social capital development in sports contexts.

Fifth, the role of digital technology and social media in shaping sports communities remains an emerging area of interest. Future research could explore how online platforms contribute to the formation of social capital, particularly in hybrid (online-offline) sports communities.

Finally, future research should also focus on intervention-based studies by designing and evaluating community sports programs aimed at strengthening social capital. Such studies would provide practical contributions by offering evidence-based strategies for policymakers and practitioners in the field of sports development.

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