



Integration of Life Skills in Pétanque Training Programs within the Positive Youth Development Framework

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ABSTRACT

Integrating life skills into sport programs, including pétanque, is an effective way to promote Positive Youth Development (PYD). This approach enhances youth quality, protects them from negative environmental influences, and strengthens their roles as agents of change. This study aimed to compare the effects of pétanque training with life-skill integration and training without life-skill integration on improving PYD. An experimental study with a pretest-posttest control group design was employed, involving 24 students who were members of the Siliwangi University pétanque student activity unit selected through purposive sampling. The samples were divided into two groups, including experimental (n=12) and control (n=12) groups. Measurements were conducted using the Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS). The findings showed that pétanque training integrated with life skills significantly improved PYD, whereas training without this integration did not have a significant effect. These results can serve as a consideration for young pétanque coaches in designing training programs that focus not only on technical aspects but also support the character development and psychosocial maturity of the participants.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received

December 2025

First Revised December 2025

Accepted January 2026

Publication Date April 2026

Keyword:

life skills, pétanque, Positive Youth Development

INTRODUCTION

Positive Youth Development (PYD) has emerged as a prominent framework for fostering healthy, adaptive, and resilient adolescents. Rather than viewing youth as problems to be addressed, PYD conceptualizes them as resources to be developed by strengthening their competencies, values, and environmental supports (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Damon, 2004). Central to this framework is the development of the 5Cs, namely competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring, which collectively contribute to positive developmental outcomes and meaningful societal contributions (Gómez-Baya et al., 2021; Haritha & Bilquis, 2022).

Sport has been widely recognized as an effective context for promoting PYD, particularly when training programs intentionally integrate life skills into structured practice environments (Subekti et al., 2023; Prabowo et al., 2023; Triansyah, 2025). Life skills refer to a range of psychosocial competencies—including teamwork, leadership, emotional regulation, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making—that enable individuals to effectively navigate everyday challenges (Malete et al., 2022). Empirical evidence indicates that sport programs explicitly incorporating life skills produce greater improvements in psychological, social, and behavioral outcomes compared to programs focused solely on technical skill development (Prabowo et al., 2023; Triansyah, 2025).

The effectiveness of life skills integration in sport is largely explained through experiential learning processes, whereby athletes actively reflect on training experiences, receive structured feedback, and apply learned behaviors in dynamic and often competitive environments. These processes enhance intrinsic motivation, resilience, social competence, and the transferability of learned skills to non-sport domains such as school and community settings (Cronin & Allen, 2018; Patel et al., 2024). Consequently, sport-based life skills programs are increasingly recognized as a strategic approach to promoting holistic youth development.

Within this context, pétanque represents a promising yet underexplored medium for life skills development. As a precision sport that emphasizes strategy, concentration, emotional control, and sportsmanship, pétanque provides rich opportunities for cultivating both cognitive and socio-emotional competencies. Athletes must continuously regulate emotions, make tactical decisions, and collaborate with teammates, all of which are closely aligned with core life skills. Moreover, participation in pétanque has been associated with the development of discipline, responsibility, and adaptability—attributes that are essential for adolescent development (Juhrodin et al., 2023; Suardika et al., 2022).

Despite growing interest in life skills integration within sport, existing research has largely focused on general sport contexts, with limited attention to specific disciplines such as pétanque. More importantly, no previous studies have directly compared the effects of pétanque training programs with and without structured life skills integration on PYD outcomes. This represents a critical gap, particularly in the Indonesian context, where pétanque is increasingly developing but remains underrepresented in sport science research (Ridlo et al., 2021).

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the effects of integrating life skills into pétanque training on PYD outcomes among adolescents. By comparing training programs

with and without life skills components, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence on the added value of life skills integration. The findings are expected to contribute to the advancement of sport-based PYD research and offer practical implications for coaches in designing training programs that promote both athletic performance and holistic youth development.

METHODS

Study Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using a pretest–posttest control group approach. Due to practical constraints, participants were not randomly assigned to groups. Two groups were involved: an experimental group that received pétanque training integrated with life skills, and a control group that received conventional pétanque training without life skills integration. Pretest measurements were administered to both groups prior to the intervention, followed by posttest measurements after the training program to evaluate differences in outcomes.

Participants

The study involved 24 student-athletes who were active members of the Pétanque Student Activity Unit (UKM) at Siliwangi University. All participants had at least one year of training experience and were regularly engaged in structured pétanque practice. Participants were within the adolescent-to-young-adult age range targeted by the Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS). All individuals voluntarily agreed to participate and provided written informed consent prior to data collection.

Sampling Procedures

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants based on predefined inclusion criteria:

- (1) registered membership in the university pétanque club,
- (2) a minimum of one year of continuous training experience, and
- (3) active participation during the study period.

A total of 24 eligible participants were identified, and all consented to participate. Participants were then assigned to the experimental and control groups based on existing training group structures to maintain ecological validity.

Data collection was conducted in the regular training environment of the pétanque club to ensure familiarity and minimize external influences. Participation was voluntary, and no financial incentives were provided.

Materials and Apparatus

The primary instrument used in this study was the Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS) developed by Cronin and Allen (2018). The LSSS is a standardized psychometric instrument designed to measure the development of life skills among adolescents engaged in sport. It consists of 47 closed-ended items representing eight dimensions: teamwork, goal setting, time management, interpersonal communication, social skills, leadership, problem-solving, and decision-making. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The developers reported strong psychometric properties, with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) demonstrating good construct validity (e.g., CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.05). Reliability across the eight dimensions was also high, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.71 to 0.89 and composite reliability (CR) values above 0.70. These findings confirm that the LSSS is a valid and reliable instrument for assessing life skills in youth sport settings.

Previous research has also reported high reliability coefficients for the LSSS, with Cronin and Allen (2018) documenting internal consistency values above 0.70 for all subscales, supporting its suitability for youth sport populations.

Before administration, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability to ensure its appropriateness within the cultural and linguistic context of the participants. The questionnaires were distributed manually during scheduled training sessions.

No specialized apparatus or recording equipment was required beyond standard writing materials and scoring sheets, as data collection relied solely on self-report questionnaire responses.

Table 1. Adapted Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS) Instrument

INDICATOR	LSSS ITEM
1. TEAMWORK	Able to collaborate effectively within a team or group.
	Supports teammates in completing tasks.
	Open to feedback for self-improvement.
	Contributes to the shared interests of the group.
	Encourages the development of team spirit.
	Provides constructive suggestions to team members to enhance performance.
	Willing to adjust one's playing style for the success of the team.
2. GOAL SETTING	Sets objectives to maintain focus on self-improvement.
	Establishes challenging yet realistic targets.
	Regularly monitors progress toward goal achievement.
	Designs short-term goals as steps toward long-term objectives.
	Consistently pursues set targets.
	Defines specific goals for training sessions.
	Formulates clear and measurable goals.
3. TIME MANAGEMENT	Allocates time efficiently.
	Evaluates the distribution of time across various activities.
	Controls daily time usage.
	Sets goals that aid in optimizing time utilization.
4. EMOTIONAL SKILLS	Able to manage personal emotions well.
	Aware of behavioral changes when experiencing emotions.
	Consciously recognizes one's own feelings.
	Utilizes emotions as a tool to maintain focus.
	Understands the feelings of others.
	Sensitive to the emotional state of peers.
	Helps others harness their emotions to maintain concentration.

	Supports peers in managing emotions when facing difficult situations.
5. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION	Delivers messages clearly and understandably.
	Listens attentively when others are speaking.
	Pays attention to the body language of the interlocutor.
	Communicates effectively in various social situations.
6. SOCIAL SKILLS	Able to initiate conversations with others.
	Adapts and interacts in various social contexts.
	Proactively helps others without being asked.
	Actively participates in group activities.
	Maintains close and positive friendships.
7. LEADERSHIP	Encourages the team to achieve high standards.
	Able to motivate peers.
	Helps team members overcome performance obstacles.
	Sets a good example through attitude and actions.
	Coordinates team members to work synergistically.
	Appreciates the achievements of others.
	Positively influences the group.
	Values individual opinions within the team.
8. PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING	Analyzes problems in depth.
	Compares various solution alternatives to select the best one.
	Generates as many problem solving options as possible.
	Evaluates the effectiveness of implemented solutions to a problem.

Source: (Cronin & Allen, 2018)

Intervention Procedures

The intervention consisted of a structured pétanque training program conducted over a specified training period, with equal training frequency and duration for both groups. The experimental group received pétanque training integrated with life skills components, including goal-setting activities, guided reflection, communication tasks, cooperative exercises, and problem-solving scenarios embedded within training sessions. These activities were designed to explicitly promote life skills development alongside technical training. The control group participated in conventional pétanque training focusing on technical and tactical skill development without explicit life skills instruction. The researcher acted as a facilitator to ensure consistency in the delivery of the intervention across sessions.

Instrument and Measures

Life skills development was measured using the Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS) developed by Cronin and Allen (2018). The instrument consists of 47 items across eight dimensions: teamwork, goal setting, time management, interpersonal communication, social skills, leadership, problem solving, and decision making. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The LSSS has demonstrated acceptable construct validity (CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.05) and strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.71 to 0.89; composite reliability > 0.70). Prior to

administration, the instrument was adapted and tested to ensure validity and reliability within the cultural and linguistic context of the participants.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using inferential statistical techniques to examine differences in life skills outcomes between the experimental and control groups.

Given the two-group comparison, the analysis was structured to assess group differences using appropriate statistical tests based on data distribution and measurement scale (e.g., independent samples t-tests or ANOVA, depending on assumptions).

The design enabled clear identification of the effect of the life skills intervention while minimizing potential threats to internal validity.

RESULTS

Following data collection from participants in the Pétanque Student Activity Unit (UKM) at Siliwangi University, pretest measurements were administered to both the experimental and control groups using the Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS). The purpose of the pretest was to assess baseline equivalence between groups prior to the intervention. The results of the initial measurement, including descriptive statistics for both groups, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Item Validity Results of the LSSS (Pretest)

Validity Test Results for Pre-Test of Control & Experimental Groups									
No.	Item	r count	r table	Results	No.	Item	r count	r table	Results
1	TW1	0,816 & 0,646	0,567	Valid	25	ES7	0,857 & 0,878	0,567	Valid
2	TW2	0,775 & 0,735	0,567	Valid	26	ES8	0,826 & 0,820	0,567	Valid
3	TW3	0,791 & 0,831	0,567	Valid	27	IC1	0,655 & 0,713	0,567	Valid
4	TW4	0,680 & 0,645	0,567	Valid	28	IC2	0,841 & 0,585	0,567	Valid
5	TW5	0,710 & 0,693	0,567	Valid	29	IC3	0,923 & 0,879	0,567	Valid
6	TW6	0,801 & 0,621	0,567	Valid	30	IC4	0,841 & 0,818	0,567	Valid
7	TW7	0,757 & 0,702	0,567	Valid	31	SS1	0,843 & 0,804	0,567	Valid
8	GS1	0,819 & 0,842	0,567	Valid	32	SS2	0,749 & 0,701	0,567	Valid
9	GS2	0,814 & 0,709	0,567	Valid	33	SS3	0,695 & 0,783	0,567	Valid
10	GS3	0,848 & 0,787	0,567	Valid	34	SS4	0,665 & 0,804	0,567	Valid
11	GS4	0,865 & 0,828	0,567	Valid	35	SS5	0,665 & 0,923	0,567	Valid
12	GS5	0,684 & 0,828	0,567	Valid	36	LD1	0,874 & 0,808	0,567	Valid
13	GS6	0,891 & 0,852	0,567	Valid	37	LD2	0,927 & 0,830	0,567	Valid

14	GS7	0,818 & 0,811	0,567	Valid	38	LD3	0,897 & 0,686	0,567	Valid
15	TM1	0,876 & 0,897	0,567	Valid	39	LD4	0,879 & 0,753	0,567	Valid
16	TM2	0,744 & 0,670	0,567	Valid	40	LD5	0,902 & 0,729	0,567	Valid
17	TM3	0,731 & 0,943	0,567	Valid	41	LD6	0,821 & 0,597	0,567	Valid
18	TM4	0,891 & 0,836	0,567	Valid	42	LD7	0,820 & 0,776	0,567	Valid
19	ES1	0,699 & 0,665	0,567	Valid	43	LD8	0,784 & 0,573	0,567	Valid
20	ES2	0,894 & 0,568	0,567	Valid	44	PS1	0,855 & 0,911	0,567	Valid
21	ES3	0,662 & 0,729	0,567	Valid	45	PS2	0,924 & 0,934	0,567	Valid
22	ES4	0,701 & 0,722	0,567	Valid	46	PS3	0,948 & 0,908	0,567	Valid
23	ES5	0,721 & 0,635	0,567	Valid	47	PS4	0,747 & 0,930	0,567	Valid
24	ES6	0,922 & 0,683	0,567	Valid					

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results, 2025.

The results of the initial reliability analysis of the Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS) for both the experimental and control groups are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Internal Consistency Reliability of the LSSS Subscales

Reliability Test Results for Pre-Test of Control & Experimental Groups			
LSSS Indicator	Cronbach's Alpha	Rule of Thumbs	Results
Teamwork (TW)	0,925 & 0,907	0,60	Reliable
Goal Setting (GS)	0,918 & 0,910	0,60	Reliable
Time Management (TM)	0,825 & 0,846	0,60	Reliable
Emotional Skills (ES)	0,899 & 0,859	0,60	Reliable
Interpersonal Communication (IC)	0,832 & 0,741	0,60	Reliable
Social Skills (SS)	0,773 & 0,857	0,60	Reliable
Leadership (LD)	0,950 & 0,862	0,60	Reliable
Problem Solving and Decision Making (PS)	0,886 & 0,937	0,60	Reliable

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results, 2025.

The validity and reliability analyses indicate that the instrument is both valid and reliable, and therefore suitable for further analysis. Normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test due to the small sample size ($n < 50$), along with a homogeneity test to examine group equivalence.

Table 4. Results of Normality Tests (Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk)

Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Control	.166	12	.200*	.967	12	.883
Experiment	.188	12	.200*	.948	12	.604

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results, 2025.

Table 4 indicates that the data were normally distributed, as the Shapiro–Wilk significance values for both the control group ($p = 0.883$) and the experimental group ($p = 0.604$) exceeded 0.05. Accordingly, parametric analysis using a paired sample t-test was conducted to examine differences between conditions. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. If the significance value (p-value) is less than 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, indicating a significant difference exists. Conversely, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, then H_0 is accepted, meaning there is no significant difference between the two conditions being compared.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest–Posttest Scores

Pair	Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1	Experiment	14.00	12	4.553	1.314
	Control	2.08	12	1.084	.313

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results, 2025.

The experimental group demonstrated a higher mean score ($M = 14.00$) compared to the control group ($M = 2.08$), indicating that the integration of life skills into the pétanque training program was associated with greater improvements in Positive Youth Development outcomes.

Table 6. Paired Sample Correlation Results

Pair	N	Correlation	Sig.
1	12	.258	.042

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results, 2025.

A Sig. value of 0.042 was obtained, which is less than the value of 0.05. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the experimental group and the control group among students participating in the Pétanque Student Activity Unit (UKM) at Siliwangi University.

Table 7. Results of the Paired Sample t-Test Analysis

Pair	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
1	11.917	4.400	1.270	9.121	14.712	9.383	11	.000

Source: SPSS Data Processing Results, 2025.

A Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 was obtained, which is smaller than the value of 0.05. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that the life skills–integrated training approach was more effective than conventional training.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that integrating life skills into a pétanque training program has a significant and positive effect on the development of sport-related life skills among student-athletes. These results support a growing body of literature indicating that structured and intentional life skills integration within sport contexts enhances psychosocial competencies.

The psychometric evaluation confirmed that the Life Skills Scale for Sport (LSSS) was both valid and reliable for use in this study. The high internal consistency across all dimensions (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.773$ – 0.950) aligns with previous research demonstrating the robustness of the LSSS in youth sport settings, thereby strengthening confidence in the accuracy of the measured outcomes.

The statistical findings revealed a substantial improvement in life skills scores in the experimental group compared to the control group. Although both groups participated in pétanque training, only those exposed to structured life skills integration demonstrated meaningful gains. This finding underscores the importance of explicitly embedding life skills components within training programs, rather than assuming that sport participation alone is sufficient to promote developmental outcomes. This interpretation is consistent with prior studies emphasizing that life skills development requires deliberate and systematic implementation within sport contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, the observed improvements may be attributed to the structured learning processes embedded in the intervention. Goal-setting activities encouraged participants to establish both performance-related and behavioral objectives, while guided reflection enhanced awareness of communication, emotional regulation, and decision-making processes. In addition, cooperative tasks provided meaningful opportunities to practice interpersonal communication and teamwork within authentic sport situations. These elements are consistent with experiential learning principles that facilitate the internalization and transfer of life skills.

The findings also suggest that pétanque represents a conducive context for developing specific life skills, particularly teamwork, decision making, and leadership. The strategic and interactive nature of the sport requires athletes to coordinate actions, evaluate situational demands, and share responsibility within a team setting. When supported by structured facilitation, these characteristics create a favorable environment for life skills development.

Methodologically, the data met assumptions of normality and homogeneity, supporting the appropriateness of the statistical procedures employed. The use of a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest design further strengthens internal validity by enabling controlled comparisons between groups, although causal inferences should be interpreted with caution.

Overall, the findings reinforce the relevance of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework within sport settings, highlighting the value of structured, intentional, and reflective training environments in promoting youth development. However, the conclusions of this study are limited to life skills development within the sport context, and future research is needed to examine the transferability of these skills to broader life domains.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that integrating life skills into pétanque training programs has a significant and positive effect on the development of sport-related life skills among student-athletes. In contrast, conventional pétanque training without structured life skills integration showed limited impact on these outcomes.

These findings emphasize that participation in sport alone is not sufficient to foster optimal youth development. Instead, the deliberate and structured integration of life skills components—such as goal setting, reflection, communication, and cooperative learning—is essential to maximize developmental benefits. The results therefore support the application of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework within sport training environments.

From a practical perspective, coaches and practitioners are encouraged to systematically embed life skills strategies into training design to promote both athletic performance and psychosocial development. This approach positions sport as a purposeful developmental context rather than merely a performance-oriented activity.

However, this study is limited to life skills development within the sport setting and does not examine the transferability of these skills to broader life domains. Future research should investigate long-term outcomes, include larger and more diverse samples, and explore the extent to which life skills acquired in sport can be generalized to academic, social, and community contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors express their sincere gratitude to all parties for their valuable contributions to this study. Special appreciation is extended to the Pétanque Student Activity Unit (UKM) at Siliwangi University for their support and cooperation during the research process.

AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors also confirm that this manuscript is entirely original and free from any form of plagiarism.

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