

Pencak Silat Athlete Anxiety In The Context Of The Level Progression Exam: A Study Of PSHT Members

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ABSTRACT

Pencak silat is a traditional Indonesian martial art that requires not only physical and technical competence but also strong psychological readiness, particularly in evaluative situations such as the Level Promotion Examination (Ujian Kenaikan Tingkat/UKT). Anxiety experienced by athletes before examinations may influence concentration, emotional stability, and performance quality. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the anxiety level of Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT) Sale Branch athletes in facing the 2026 Level Promotion Examination (UKT) and identify the factors contributing to anxiety. This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design. The sample consisted of 30 athletes selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through an 18-item questionnaire using a four-point Likert scale covering cognitive, somatic, and affective dimensions of anxiety. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including mean, percentage, and standard deviation with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics. The results showed that the average anxiety score was 56.27 with a standard deviation of 6.30. Most athletes were categorized in the moderate anxiety level (83.33%), while 13.33% were categorized as high anxiety and 3.33% as low anxiety. Furthermore, factor analysis revealed that affective factors contributed the largest percentage to athlete anxiety (40.87%), followed by somatic factors (31.58%) and cognitive factors (27.55%). In conclusion, the anxiety level of PSHT athletes facing the UKT was generally moderate, with emotional factors serving as the primary contributor to anxiety.

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INTRODUCTION

Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate or PSHT is one of the largest pencak silat organizations in Indonesia that consistently develops athletes through a structured coaching system emphasizing physical, technical, spiritual, and mental development. In the context of sports achievement, pencak silat is not only interpreted as a martial art but also as a competitive sport requiring high psychological readiness (Irawan, 2021). Athletes are expected to demonstrate optimal performance under various forms of

pressure, including training demands, competitive situations, and internal evaluation processes within the organization. One of the important evaluation stages in PSHT is the Level Promotion Exam (Ujian Kenaikan Tingkat/UKT), which functions as a formal assessment of athletes' technical mastery, physical condition, discipline, and mental maturity (M. Zuhdi Mustofa, 2021; Nisa & Pujianto, 2024).

In practice, the UKT is often perceived by athletes as a psychologically demanding moment because the results of the examination determine their progression within the organization and symbolize recognition of competence and identity as martial artists (Ardhi Nur Wahid et al., 2025). Such situations frequently trigger anxiety responses before and during the examination process. Anxiety in sports psychology refers to an unpleasant emotional state characterized by tension, apprehension, nervousness, and physiological arousal resulting from perceived threats or pressures (Syofnawati & Putra, 2023). Athletes experiencing excessive anxiety commonly show symptoms such as decreased concentration, fear of failure, emotional instability, increased muscle tension, sleep disturbances, and reduced confidence (Listiana et al., 2024).

In sports settings, anxiety is generally categorized into cognitive anxiety and somatic anxiety. Cognitive anxiety involves negative thoughts, self-doubt, fear of negative evaluation, and worries regarding failure or performance outcomes (Mahardika & Suripto, 2022). Meanwhile, somatic anxiety is reflected in physiological responses such as accelerated heart rate, trembling, excessive sweating, and muscle stiffness (Khozanah et al., 2025). These two dimensions are highly influential in sports requiring precision, emotional control, concentration, and rapid decision-making, including pencak silat (Fahrurrozi et al., 2023). Athletes with uncontrolled anxiety often experience performance deterioration because psychological pressure interferes with motor coordination and tactical judgment (Setiawan et al., 2024).

The phenomenon of anxiety before UKT deserves serious attention because psychological readiness constitutes a critical determinant of athlete performance and long-term development (Kurniawan et al., 2023). Excessive anxiety may not only reduce technical performance but also negatively affect athletes' motivation, self-efficacy, and confidence during evaluation processes. Within martial arts education, psychological imbalance may hinder athletes from demonstrating their actual competence despite adequate physical preparation (Putri et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding the psychological condition of athletes before UKT becomes essential for coaches, instructors, and organizations in designing effective mental preparation programs.

Several previous studies have demonstrated that anxiety is one of the dominant psychological variables affecting athlete performance across various sports. Research on badminton athletes showed that pre-competition anxiety reached severe levels due to pressure to win, fear of failure, and expectations from coaches and parents (Frada & Suratman, 2025). Similar findings were reported in soccer, volleyball, karate, and taekwondo athletes, where anxiety significantly influenced concentration, confidence, and decision-making abilities (Dongoran et al., 2024; Dewanti et al., 2025). These findings

indicate that psychological pressure is not limited to formal competitions but may also emerge in evaluative environments perceived as highly meaningful by athletes.

In Indonesia, concerns regarding athlete mental health have become increasingly relevant due to the growing demands for achievement in sports development systems. Coaches often prioritize physical and technical preparation while psychological readiness receives less systematic attention (Aqobah et al., 2022). Consequently, many athletes struggle to regulate emotions and anxiety during important performance situations. This condition becomes more critical in martial arts because athletes are required to maintain emotional control, discipline, and composure while simultaneously demonstrating technical excellence. Thus, anxiety management should be integrated into athlete development programs to optimize both performance and psychological well-being.

Recent developments in sports psychology research have increasingly emphasized the importance of psychological factors in athlete performance. Anxiety has become one of the most widely studied constructs because it directly influences emotional stability, concentration, confidence, and motor execution during sports performance (Akbar & Alficandra, 2023). Contemporary theories explain that moderate anxiety may enhance alertness and motivation, whereas excessive anxiety tends to impair cognitive functioning and technical execution (Mahardika & Suropto, 2022). Therefore, understanding athlete anxiety has become an important component in modern sports science and coaching systems.

Studies within combat sports consistently demonstrate that martial arts athletes are particularly vulnerable to anxiety due to the individualistic and high-pressure nature of their performance environment. Research involving karate, taekwondo, judo, and boxing athletes reported that anxiety levels significantly increase before competition and evaluation events because athletes experience fear of failure, social judgment, and performance expectations (Fahrurrozi et al., 2023). Psychological stressors become stronger when athletes perceive that their identity, status, or progression depends on performance outcomes. In martial arts contexts, emotional control and self-regulation are therefore considered essential psychological competencies.

Within pencak silat research, several studies have explored the relationship between anxiety and athletic performance. Previous investigations revealed that high anxiety negatively affects kicking accuracy, reaction time, tactical decisions, and emotional regulation among pencak silat athletes (Nur Mauliana Zekha et al., 2023). Other studies emphasized that athletes with higher self-confidence and coping skills tend to demonstrate better emotional control during stressful situations (Saifurrahman & Nurharsono, 2023). Additionally, social support from coaches, peers, and family members has been shown to reduce psychological pressure and improve athlete resilience.

Sports psychology interventions have also been increasingly developed to reduce anxiety among athletes. Techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, breathing control, mindfulness training, visualization, self-talk strategies, and counseling

programs have demonstrated effectiveness in improving mental readiness and reducing excessive anxiety symptoms (Frada & Suratman, 2025). These interventions are considered important because athlete performance is influenced not only by physical readiness but also by emotional regulation and mental resilience. Consequently, psychological preparation has become an integral component of athlete training systems in many competitive sports environments.

Furthermore, contemporary literature highlights that athlete anxiety is multidimensional and influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include self-confidence, personality traits, previous experiences, and emotional control, while external factors involve competitive pressure, organizational demands, expectations from coaches and parents, and social evaluation (Syofnawati & Putra, 2023). In educational and organizational sports contexts, evaluation systems may also create psychological burdens because athletes perceive them as determinants of competence and recognition. Despite the increasing body of literature on athlete anxiety, most studies remain centered on competitive settings such as tournaments and championships. Limited attention has been given to non-competitive but evaluative situations, including skill certification, selection processes, and organizational examinations. This issue becomes particularly relevant in organizations such as PSHT, where UKT serves not only as a technical assessment but also as a symbolic representation of athlete progression and identity development.

Although numerous studies have examined anxiety among athletes, several important gaps remain unresolved. First, previous research has predominantly focused on competitive anxiety experienced before official matches or tournaments (Nur Mauliana Zekha et al., 2023). Consequently, limited empirical evidence exists regarding anxiety emerging in non-competitive evaluation contexts such as the Level Promotion Exam (UKT). This gap is significant because evaluative situations may produce psychological pressure comparable to formal competitions.

Second, many previous studies have investigated anxiety in mainstream sports such as soccer, badminton, volleyball, and basketball, whereas research specifically focusing on pencak silat athletes remains relatively limited. Existing pencak silat studies often emphasize physical performance, technical skills, or training methods rather than psychological conditions during organizational evaluations. Therefore, the psychological dynamics experienced by PSHT athletes before UKT are still insufficiently explored.

Third, prior investigations frequently examined anxiety as a general construct without comprehensively identifying the specific factors contributing to anxiety emergence. Factors such as fear of failure, social expectations, organizational pressure, self-confidence, and previous UKT experiences require deeper exploration to understand how they influence athlete psychological readiness. Understanding these factors is important for developing evidence-based mental coaching interventions tailored to athletes' actual needs.

Fourth, there remains limited integration between sports psychology theory and the sociocultural context of pencak silat organizations in Indonesia. UKT within PSHT is

not merely a technical examination but also a cultural and organizational process associated with values of discipline, identity, honor, and spiritual maturity. These unique contextual dimensions may create distinct psychological experiences compared to ordinary competitive situations. However, empirical studies examining anxiety within such culturally embedded evaluation systems are still scarce.

Based on these problems and gaps, this study aims to analyze the anxiety levels experienced by pencak silat athletes facing the Level Promotion Exam (UKT) within PSHT and identify the factors contributing to the emergence of anxiety. Specifically, this study explores both cognitive anxiety and somatic anxiety dimensions experienced by athletes before the examination process. Additionally, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how psychological pressure influences athlete readiness in organizational evaluation settings.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on anxiety within the context of UKT, which differs from previous studies predominantly centered on competitive events. This research positions UKT as a psychologically significant evaluation environment capable of generating substantial emotional pressure among athletes. Furthermore, this study contributes to the limited literature concerning sports psychology in pencak silat by integrating organizational, cultural, and psychological perspectives within the PSHT context. Another novelty is the identification of specific anxiety-triggering factors related to organizational expectations, self-confidence, social pressure, and evaluation demands. By examining anxiety in a culturally embedded martial arts environment, this study expands current understanding of athlete psychological experiences beyond conventional competition frameworks. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to sports psychology literature and practically to the development of mental coaching programs emphasizing emotional regulation, confidence building, and psychological preparedness among pencak silat athletes.

In conclusion, anxiety represents an important psychological factor influencing athlete readiness and performance in pencak silat, particularly during the Level Promotion Exam (UKT) within PSHT. Although previous studies have extensively explored competitive anxiety, limited research has investigated anxiety emerging in organizational evaluation contexts that possess strong cultural and psychological significance. Considering that UKT serves as both a technical and symbolic assessment process, understanding athlete anxiety becomes crucial for supporting effective athlete development. Therefore, this study is expected to provide empirical contributions regarding the psychological condition of pencak silat athletes, enrich sports psychology literature, and offer practical recommendations for designing more comprehensive mental preparation programs in martial arts coaching systems.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design to investigate the anxiety levels experienced by pencak silat athletes in facing the Level

Promotion Exam (Ujian Kenaikan Tingkat/UKT). Quantitative research is widely used in sports psychology studies because it allows researchers to objectively measure psychological variables and analyze them statistically (Sugiyono, 2023b). A descriptive design was selected because the study aimed to provide a systematic and factual overview of athletes' anxiety conditions without manipulating the observed variables. Previous studies have shown that descriptive quantitative methods are effective in identifying psychological tendencies among athletes, particularly anxiety, confidence, and emotional readiness before evaluation or competition situations (Akbar & Alficandra, 2023; Syofnawati & Putra, 2023).

The primary variable in this study was athlete anxiety in the context of the Level Promotion Exam (UKT). Anxiety was conceptually divided into three dimensions: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence. Cognitive anxiety refers to negative thoughts, fear of failure, and excessive worry experienced by athletes (Mahardika & Suripto, 2022). Somatic anxiety relates to physiological responses such as muscle tension, rapid heartbeat, and sweating (Khozanah et al., 2025). Meanwhile, self-confidence reflects the athlete's belief in their ability to successfully complete the examination process (Fahurrozi et al., 2023).

This research was conducted at the SH Terate Selo Aji Sejati Padepokan located in Jinanten Village, Sale District, Rembang Regency. The population consisted of all athletes from Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT) Sale Branch, Rembang Regency, who were registered as participants in the 2026 Level Promotion Exam (UKT), totaling 30 athletes. According to Sugiyono (2023b), population refers to a generalization area consisting of subjects or objects possessing specific characteristics determined by the researcher. Because the number of athletes was relatively limited and homogeneous, all population members meeting the research criteria were involved as respondents.

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which respondents are selected based on predetermined criteria relevant to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2023b). The criteria applied included: (1) active PSHT athletes registered as UKT participants in 2026, and (2) athletes willing to complete the research questionnaire voluntarily. Based on these criteria, all 30 athletes were selected as the research sample.

Table 1.
Population and Sample Characteristics

Criteria	Description
Population	PSHT athletes participating in UKT 2026
Location	SH Terate Selo Aji Sejati Padepokan, Rembang Regency
Total Population	30 Athletes
Sampling Technique	Purposive Sampling
Total Sample	30 Athletes

The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire adapted from the Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT), which has been widely utilized in sports psychology research to measure athlete anxiety levels (Martens et al., adapted version). The questionnaire was developed using a four-point Likert scale consisting of strongly

disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The instrument measured three dimensions: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence. Questionnaire-based instruments are considered effective in capturing athletes' psychological perceptions and emotional conditions in sports environments (Dongoran et al., 2024; Dewanti et al., 2025).

Data collection was conducted online through the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire link was distributed to respondents through organizational communication channels to facilitate efficient participation. Online questionnaires are increasingly used in contemporary sports research because they provide flexibility, accessibility, and efficient data management (Putri et al., 2023). Respondents completed the questionnaire independently according to their personal experiences and psychological conditions before the UKT implementation.

Prior to data analysis, instrument validity and reliability tests were conducted. The validity test results involving 30 respondents showed that the calculated *r*-values ranged from 0.404 to 0.790, exceeding the *r*-table value of 0.361. Therefore, all questionnaire items were declared valid and appropriate for data collection purposes.

Table 2.

Validity Test Results

Variables	R Count (Min-Max)	R Table	Information
X	0.404-0.790	0.361	Valid

The reliability test produced a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.998, which exceeded the minimum standard of 0.60, indicating excellent internal consistency and reliability of the instrument (Sugiyono, 2023a).

Table 3.

Reliability Test Results

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Alpha Standard	Information
All Items X	0.998	0.60	Reliable

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques assisted by IBM SPSS Statistics software. The analysis process included calculating respondent scores, mean values, percentages, and standard deviations to describe overall anxiety levels. Furthermore, anxiety scores were categorized into low, medium, and high classifications based on predetermined score intervals. Descriptive statistical analysis is considered suitable for identifying trends and psychological patterns in sports-related research (Setiawan et al., 2024). The final results were presented in tables and percentage distributions to facilitate interpretation and provide a clearer understanding of athlete anxiety conditions in facing the Level Promotion Exam (UKT).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study was conducted to analyze the anxiety level of Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT) Ranting Sale athletes in facing the 2026 Level Promotion Examination (UKT). The research involved 30 respondents who completed an 18-item questionnaire using a four-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, and Strongly Agree = 4. The instrument measured three dimensions of anxiety, namely cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and affective aspects/self-confidence.

The collected data indicate variations in athlete responses regarding psychological readiness before the UKT implementation. The total score obtained from all respondents was 1688, showing that anxiety symptoms were experienced at different intensity levels among athletes. Descriptively, affective indicators contributed the largest proportion to anxiety symptoms, followed by somatic and cognitive dimensions. These findings demonstrate that emotional and self-confidence factors were more dominant compared to negative thoughts and physiological reactions.

Descriptive Statistics of Anxiety Levels

To obtain a clearer understanding of athlete anxiety conditions, descriptive statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The analysis included mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, minimum score, and maximum score.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Data

Statistical Component	Value
Mean	56.27
Median	57.00
Mode	58.00
Standard Deviation	6.30
Skewness	0.10
Kurtosis	0.04
Minimum	43
Maximum	72

Based on Table 4, the mean anxiety score of athletes was 56.27 with a standard deviation of 6.30, indicating that the average anxiety level tended to be moderate with relatively homogeneous score distribution. The median value of 57 and mode of 58 further demonstrate that most respondents were concentrated around the middle score range. The skewness value of 0.10 indicates that the data distribution was slightly positively skewed, although still close to normal distribution. Furthermore, the kurtosis value of 0.04 suggests that the data distribution was relatively normal without extreme score concentration. These results indicate that the research data were sufficiently stable and representative for further interpretation.

Distribution of Anxiety Levels

Athlete anxiety levels were classified into three categories: low, moderate, and high. Categorization was based on score intervals derived from the mean and standard deviation values.

Table 5.

Distribution of Anxiety Levels of PSHT Athletes

Category	Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage
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High	≥ 62.57	4	13.33%
Moderate	49.97 – 62.57	25	83.33%
Low	< 49.97	1	3.33%

Based on Table 5, most athletes were categorized in the moderate anxiety level with 25 respondents (83.33%). Meanwhile, four respondents (13.33%) were categorized as having high anxiety levels, namely respondents S6, S8, S18, and S26. Only one respondent (3.33%), namely S11, was categorized as having low anxiety. These findings indicate that most athletes experienced anxiety at a controllable level before facing the UKT. Moderate anxiety may still function positively by increasing alertness and focus during evaluation situations. However, athletes categorized in the high anxiety group potentially experienced excessive emotional pressure that could interfere with concentration, confidence, and performance quality during the examination process.

Factors Influencing Athlete Anxiety

The study also analyzed the percentage contribution of each anxiety dimension, namely cognitive, somatic, and affective factors.

Table 6.
Percentage of Factors Influencing Anxiety

Indicator	Score	Percentage
Cognitive	465	27.55%
Somatic	533	31.58%
Affective	690	40.87%
Total	1688	100%

Based on Table 6, the affective dimension showed the largest contribution to athlete anxiety with a percentage of 40.87%. This finding indicates that emotional aspects and self-confidence were the dominant factors influencing athlete anxiety before the UKT. Athletes tended to experience emotional pressure related to fear of failure, concerns about evaluation results, and pressure to meet organizational expectations. The somatic factor contributed 31.58%, indicating that physiological symptoms such as increased heart rate, body tension, and nervousness were also experienced by many athletes. Meanwhile, the cognitive factor contributed 27.55%, suggesting that negative thoughts and excessive worries were present but less dominant compared to emotional and physiological reactions.

These results demonstrate that athlete anxiety in the context of the Level Promotion Examination was more strongly influenced by affective-emotional conditions than purely cognitive concerns. Therefore, mental coaching programs focusing on emotional regulation, confidence enhancement, relaxation techniques, and psychological support are necessary to help athletes manage anxiety more effectively before participating in the UKT process.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the anxiety level of Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT) Ranting Sale athletes facing the 2026 Level Promotion Examination (UKT) is generally categorized as moderate, with a percentage reaching 83.33%. Meanwhile,

only 13.33% of respondents were categorized as having high anxiety, and 3.33% were classified in the low category. These findings demonstrate that most athletes experience anxiety within a relatively controllable and adaptive range. In sports psychology, moderate anxiety is often interpreted as a functional emotional response capable of enhancing athlete alertness, focus, and motivation during evaluative situations (Akbar & Alficandra, 2023; Syofnawati & Putra, 2023). This condition suggests that athletes are psychologically challenged by the UKT process but still possess adequate emotional control to maintain performance stability.

The moderate anxiety experienced by most athletes may also indicate that the respondents already possess sufficient experience and mental adaptation in dealing with organizational evaluation systems. Previous studies explain that athletes who frequently participate in training, competitions, and structured evaluations tend to develop better coping strategies toward psychological pressure (Mahardika & Suropto, 2022; Dongoran et al., 2024). In the context of pencak silat, the UKT is not merely a technical examination but also a symbolic process reflecting discipline, identity, and progression within the martial arts organization. Consequently, psychological pressure naturally emerges because athletes perceive the examination as an important moment affecting their recognition and status within the organization (Saifurrahman & Nurharsono, 2023).

The finding that only a small proportion of athletes experienced high anxiety is an important indicator that most participants were mentally prepared to face the examination. Athletes categorized in the high anxiety group may have experienced excessive emotional pressure, fear of failure, or concerns regarding performance evaluation. According to sports anxiety theory, excessive anxiety can negatively affect concentration, emotional stability, and motor coordination, thereby reducing performance quality (Kurniawan et al., 2023; Setiawan et al., 2024). Athletes with high anxiety levels often demonstrate physiological symptoms such as increased heart rate, muscle tension, and sleep disturbances, which may interfere with their readiness during examination performance (Khozanah et al., 2025). Therefore, although the number of athletes in the high category was relatively small, this group still requires special psychological attention from coaches and organizational mentors.

Furthermore, the descriptive statistical analysis showed that the data distribution was relatively normal and homogeneous, as indicated by skewness and kurtosis values approaching zero. This finding demonstrates that the anxiety experienced by respondents did not differ extremely between individuals. In other words, the athletes generally shared similar psychological characteristics when facing the UKT process. Group homogeneity may be influenced by several contextual factors, including similar training experiences, organizational culture, coaching approaches, and shared evaluation systems within PSHT. Previous literature explains that athletes trained within the same environment tend to develop comparable emotional responses because they experience similar psychological demands and social expectations (Aqobah et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2023).

One of the most important findings in this study is that affective factors contributed the largest proportion to athlete anxiety, accounting for 40.87%. This finding indicates that emotional aspects such as fear, nervousness, emotional tension, and lack of self-confidence were the dominant psychological responses experienced by athletes before the UKT. In sports psychology, affective anxiety refers to emotional reactions emerging when athletes perceive an evaluative situation as threatening or highly meaningful (Fahrurrozi et al., 2023). Emotional instability often becomes the first response appearing before cognitive or physiological reactions fully develop.

The dominance of affective factors is highly relevant to the nature of the UKT itself. Within PSHT culture, the Level Promotion Examination is not only viewed as a formal assessment but also as a process involving honor, discipline, and symbolic achievement. Such emotionally charged contexts may intensify feelings of nervousness and fear of disappointing coaches, peers, or the organization (Ardhi Nur Wahid et al., 2025). Similar findings were reported by Frada and Suratman (2025), who found that athletes frequently experience emotional anxiety due to pressure to perform successfully and fear of failure before competitions. Emotional pressure becomes stronger when athletes associate examination outcomes with personal identity and social recognition.

Another possible explanation for the dominance of affective anxiety is related to athlete self-confidence. Self-confidence is considered one of the most influential psychological components in determining emotional stability during performance situations (Nur Mauliana Zekha et al., 2023). Athletes with low confidence are generally more vulnerable to fear, nervousness, and emotional uncertainty when facing evaluative tasks. Conversely, athletes possessing strong self-belief tend to interpret pressure as a challenge rather than a threat. Therefore, emotional management and confidence-building strategies become essential in preparing athletes psychologically before the UKT implementation.

The second-largest contributor to anxiety was the somatic factor, accounting for 31.58%. This finding indicates that anxiety among athletes was also accompanied by physiological responses such as muscle tension, rapid heartbeat, sweating, and body discomfort. Somatic anxiety commonly emerges when the autonomic nervous system reacts to stress and performance pressure (Khozanah et al., 2025). In martial arts sports such as pencak silat, physiological readiness is strongly connected to emotional conditions because psychological tension may directly affect motor coordination, reaction time, and technical execution (Fahrurrozi et al., 2023).

The presence of somatic symptoms among athletes demonstrates that the UKT was perceived as a psychologically demanding event. According to multidimensional anxiety theory, emotional stress activates physiological arousal, which then influences athlete readiness and performance behavior (Akbar & Alficandra, 2023). Moderate physiological activation may positively increase alertness and responsiveness. However, excessive somatic anxiety may disrupt balance, movement control, and concentration during technical demonstrations. Therefore, somatic anxiety management through

relaxation training, breathing exercises, and mental conditioning is necessary to help athletes maintain physical composure during evaluations.

Meanwhile, the cognitive factor contributed the lowest percentage at 27.55%. This result indicates that negative thoughts, excessive worries, and self-doubt were not the primary triggers of anxiety among respondents. Although cognitive anxiety remains present, emotional and physiological reactions appeared to be more dominant in shaping athlete psychological responses. This finding differs slightly from several previous studies reporting cognitive anxiety as the dominant factor affecting athlete performance before competitions (Mahardika & Suropto, 2022; Syofnawati & Putra, 2023). However, the current study suggests that in the context of organizational examinations such as UKT, emotional sensitivity may play a more influential role than purely cognitive concerns.

The relatively lower cognitive contribution may also indicate that athletes already possessed adequate understanding and preparation regarding the examination process. Athletes who are familiar with technical requirements and evaluation procedures tend to experience fewer negative thoughts because uncertainty is reduced (Dongoran et al., 2024). This finding supports the idea that experience and preparation are important protective factors against excessive cognitive anxiety. Nevertheless, cognitive management remains important because persistent negative thoughts may still undermine athlete confidence and emotional stability over time.

These findings collectively emphasize the importance of psychological preparation within martial arts coaching systems. Traditionally, athlete development programs in pencak silat tend to focus heavily on physical and technical training, while emotional readiness and mental conditioning receive less systematic attention (Aqobah et al., 2022). The current findings clearly demonstrate that emotional factors constitute the dominant source of anxiety among athletes. Therefore, psychological interventions focusing on emotional regulation and self-confidence enhancement should become integral parts of training programs.

Several approaches may be implemented to reduce athlete anxiety before UKT. Progressive muscle relaxation, breathing control, visualization techniques, mindfulness training, and positive self-talk have been shown to effectively reduce emotional tension and improve athlete confidence (Frada & Suratman, 2025; Dewanti et al., 2025). Additionally, supportive communication from coaches and organizational mentors is crucial in helping athletes interpret evaluations more positively. Athletes who receive emotional support generally demonstrate greater resilience and lower anxiety levels during stressful situations (Putri et al., 2023).

This study also contributes theoretically to sports psychology literature by demonstrating that anxiety in martial arts athletes is multidimensional and context-dependent. Unlike formal competitions emphasizing victory and ranking, the UKT creates emotional pressure associated with organizational identity, social recognition, and symbolic progression. Consequently, affective responses become more dominant than cognitive concerns. This finding enriches the understanding of athlete anxiety

within non-competitive evaluation settings and highlights the importance of contextual factors in shaping psychological experiences.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that most PSHT athletes experience moderate anxiety when facing the Level Promotion Examination. Although anxiety remains within a manageable range, emotional factors represent the primary contributor influencing athlete psychological readiness. Therefore, developing mental coaching programs emphasizing emotional regulation, confidence strengthening, and psychological adaptation is essential to support athlete performance and well-being during organizational evaluation processes.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the anxiety level of Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT) athletes in facing the 2026 Level Promotion Examination (UKT) was generally categorized as moderate. The descriptive statistical analysis showed a mean score of 56.27 with a standard deviation of 6.30, indicating that the athletes' anxiety levels tended to be relatively stable and homogeneous. The distribution analysis revealed that 25 athletes (83.33%) were classified in the moderate anxiety category, 4 athletes (13.33%) were categorized as having high anxiety, and only 1 athlete (3.33%) was classified in the low category. These findings indicate that most athletes experienced anxiety within a controllable and adaptive range while preparing for the UKT process.

The study also demonstrated that affective factors were the dominant contributor to athlete anxiety, accounting for 40.87% of the total anxiety dimension. This finding confirms that emotional aspects such as nervousness, fear of failure, emotional tension, and lack of self-confidence played a greater role than cognitive or somatic aspects in influencing athletes' psychological conditions. Meanwhile, somatic factors contributed 31.58%, indicating the presence of physiological symptoms such as body tension and increased heart rate, whereas cognitive factors contributed 27.55%, showing that negative thoughts and worries were less dominant compared to emotional responses.

Conceptually, these findings emphasize that anxiety in the context of the Level Promotion Examination is strongly associated with emotional readiness and self-confidence. Empirically, the results suggest that athletes perceive the UKT not only as a technical assessment but also as an emotionally meaningful evaluation process related to personal achievement and organizational recognition. Therefore, coaching strategies focusing on emotional regulation, confidence enhancement, and mental preparedness are essential to improve athlete performance and psychological stability during the examination process. Integrating psychological training into pencak silat coaching programs is expected to help athletes manage anxiety more effectively and achieve optimal performance outcomes.

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