

Mental Health, Competitive Anxiety, and Self-Confidence in Pencak Silat Athletes: A Comprehensive Review Based on Psychological Aspects in Competition Preparation

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the relationship between mental health, competitive anxiety, and self-confidence in pencak silat athletes facing national and international competitions. This study is a combination of a systematic literature review approach and narrative descriptive analysis of a number of studies from journals and data reviewed from seven scientific articles discussing psychological factors of pencak silat, including stress, depression, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy. The results of the study indicate that pencak silat is not only a physical activity but also contains strong spiritual and mental content. Athletes with good mental health and high self-confidence show lower levels of competitive anxiety and more stable performance in matches. These findings emphasize the importance of psychological interventions in athlete training programs. This study suggests a continuous mental training approach to improve the psychological readiness of pencak silat athletes.

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A. Conception and design of the study;
B. Acquisition of data;
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INTRODUCTION

Pencak silat is a traditional martial art that requires not only physical readiness but also high mental readiness. Pencak silat athletes must be able to control their emotions amidst the pressure of intense matches. As a body-contact sport, pencak silat often faces athletes in high-stress situations, both due to internal pressure and external expectations from coaches, teams, and spectators (Purnomo et al., 2020). Mental health is an important component that affects performance, as found in a study by Alisti et al. (2025), which showed that there is a significant relationship between mental health and self-confidence in pencak silat athletes, especially in male athletes.

The phenomenon of pre-competitive anxiety has long been studied in sports psychology. Recent research by Yusuf et al. (2025) shows that individual athletes have higher levels of anxiety than team athletes, while athletes with high self-efficacy are better able to control their anxiety. In addition, research by Doewes et al. (2023) also shows that competitive pressure before the 2022 Sea Games has a direct impact on the level of stress felt by athletes, which then affects performance and medals won.

This situation becomes more complex when the aggressiveness of the audience also triggers anxiety (Purnomo et al., 2020). Psychological intervention has not been fully integrated into the training of pencak silat athletes, even though psychological skills training (PST) has been shown to increase concentration, motivation, and mental readiness (Dimiyati et al., 2020). Therefore, there needs to be a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the role of these psychological variables in supporting the achievements of pencak silat athletes.

Literature review

Several studies have shown that competitive stress and anxiety are major challenges for martial arts athletes, including pencak silat. Hartono et al. (2023) in their study of PPLP Gorontalo athletes found that although there was no significant difference in stress and anxiety levels between karate and pencak silat athletes, there was a significant difference in depression levels. This indicates that psychological aspects have their own complexity depending on the type of...

Research by Wahyuni et al. (2024) added that in the elite athlete training program for the SEA Games, the input and training process aspects were still not optimal, including a continuous psychological approach. Meanwhile, a study by Octavianingrum and Savira (2022) confirmed the relationship between self-confidence and emotional regulation skills, which directly affect the mental calmness of athletes during the competition.

Dimiyati et al. (2020) stated that motivation, anxiety control, and mental readiness are important psychological skills that significantly contribute to the success of Indonesian pencak silat athletes at the 18th Asian Games. In that context, a systematic approach such as that carried out by Nugroho et al. (2024) through the PRISMA method concluded that pencak silat can be a tool for comprehensive physical, mental and spiritual development for athletes.

METHODS

This study uses a systematic literature review method to examine the relationship between mental health, competitive anxiety, and self-confidence in the context of pencak silat athlete competition preparation. The literature used was obtained from various reputable international journals and SINTA-indexed national journals, focusing on publications between 2019 and 2025. The data search procedure follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach as

applied by Nugroho et al. (2024), which filters 450 articles into 30 relevant articles through the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

Inclusion criteria included studies that explicitly evaluated pencak silat athletes with interventions or evaluations of mental health, pre-competition anxiety, and self-confidence. Instruments in these studies included the CSAI-2 scale for competitive anxiety, the Psychological Skills Inventory for Sports (PSIS) for mental skills, and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) for self-confidence and self-esteem. This study also considered gender differences in the influence of these variables as highlighted by Alisti et al. (2025), who revealed a strong correlation between mental health and self-confidence in male athletes ($r = -0.919$, $p < 0.001$).

The analysis in this study integrates a thematic approach to findings from various studies, covering key psychological dimensions such as emotion regulation (Octavianingrum & Savira, 2022), stress perception (Sanader et al., 2021), audience influence on anxiety (Purnomo et al., 2018), and the relationship between self-confidence and self-efficacy on athlete performance (Yusuf et al., 2025). By combining empirical data and critical reviews of relevant findings, this approach allows mapping of relationships between concepts within the psychological framework of pencak silat athletes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the literature review show that the three main variables in this study—mental health, competitive anxiety, and self-confidence—have a significant relationship and influence each other in the context of the preparation of pencak silat athlete competitions. A study conducted by Yusuf et al. (2025) found that self-efficacy was negatively correlated with competitive anxiety in individual athletes ($r = -0.771$, $p < 0.01$), while in team athletes, the correlation remained negative although weaker ($r = -0.532$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that the higher the athlete's self-confidence and self-efficacy, the lower the level of competitive anxiety they experience.

Findings from Alisti et al. (2025) confirmed that mental health has a very strong negative correlation with self-confidence in male athletes ($r = -0.919$, $p < 0.001$) and female ($r = -0.797$, $p = 0.001$). This implies that mental disorders such as anxiety and depression have a major impact on reducing athletes' self-confidence. In fact, pre-competition anxiety in female athletes has a weak correlation with self-confidence ($r = -0.091$, $p > 0.05$), indicating the presence of other mediating variables that play a role in the relationship.

Research by Hartono et al. (2023) involving PPLP Gorontalo pencak silat athletes also showed high levels of stress and anxiety ahead of the PON qualifying round. This shows that external pressure from coaches and demands for results are the main triggers for mental disorders in athletes. In addition, research by Purnomo et al. (2018)

showed that the proximity of the audience to the match arena significantly increased athlete anxiety during the match, especially in the face-to-face match category.

Furthermore, findings from Nugroho et al. (2024) emphasize that Pencak Silat as a comprehensive training system contributes to the formation of mental resilience, courage, discipline, and strategic thinking skills. These aspects support athlete performance both physically and mentally, and are an important foundation in building stable self-confidence ahead of competition.

Discussion

The results of research from various sources show that the relationship between mental health, competitive anxiety, and self-confidence has a very strong and significant relationship in determining the performance of pencak silat athletes, especially in the preparation phase of the competition. Athletes who have good mental conditions tend to be better able to face the pressure of the match, have stable emotional calm, and show more consistent performance. Findings from Alisti et al. (2025) clearly show that athletes with high levels of mental health have better levels of self-confidence, with a strong negative correlation to competitive anxiety, especially in male athletes ($r = -0.919$). This indicates that emotional and mental stability play a major role in the formation of adaptive and positive self-confidence.

In addition, findings from Yusuf et al. (2025) showed differences between individual and team categories in pencak silat. Individual athletes tend to have higher levels of competitive anxiety than team athletes, which is associated with a greater burden of responsibility and personal expectations. The significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and anxiety in individual athletes ($r = -0.771$) strengthens the hypothesis that psychological support and specific training in stress management are needed in this category. Meanwhile, the role of self-esteem as a buffer against stress is also confirmed by research conducted on SEA Games 2022 pencak silat athletes, where athletes with high self-esteem showed more optimal performance and won more gold medals (Sanader et al., 2021).

External factors also contribute significantly to competitive anxiety. Purnomo et al. (2018) noted that the presence of aggressive audiences around the match arena can increase athlete anxiety, even becoming the main distraction during the match. This finding emphasizes the importance of psychological interventions that focus not only on the internal aspects of athletes, but also on the management of the external environment of the competition. In addition, research by Hartono et al. (2023) shows that pressure from coaches and a strict coaching system contribute to high levels of stress and anxiety in athletes, especially ahead of important competitions such as PON. This situation illustrates the importance of balancing performance demands and psychological protection for athletes.

On the other hand, the philosophical approach in pencak silat that emphasizes spiritual values and self-control is also an important factor in strengthening the mental aspects and self-confidence of athletes. Nugroho et al. (2024) emphasized that Pencak

Silat is not just a physical sport, but also a means of developing character, morality, and mental resilience. In other words, pencak silat has the potential as a pedagogical and therapeutic approach in coaching elite athletes, which balances physical, mental, and spiritual aspects comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this literature review, it can be concluded that the relationship between mental health, competitive anxiety, and self-confidence are crucial factors that influence each other and determine the success of pencak silat athletes' performance in facing competitions. Athletes who have a stable mental condition and high levels of self-confidence tend to show lower competitive anxiety, which has direct implications for improving performance. Findings from Alisti et al. (2025) and Yusuf et al. (2025) show a significant negative correlation between these variables, which is the basis that the psychological approach in athlete training cannot be ignored.

Interventions in the form of psychological skills training, self-efficacy training, and spiritual value-based approaches in pencak silat have proven effective in improving the mental quality and self-confidence of athletes. In addition, external influences such as audiences, pressure from coaches, and expectations of the surrounding environment also need to be anticipated through a systems-based sports psychology approach, as suggested by Purnomo et al. (2018) and Hartono et al. (2023). In this context, coaches, sports psychologists, and athlete development institutions need to work in an integrative manner to create a training environment that supports the comprehensive psychological development of athletes.

Overall, pencak silat is not only a place for physical development and fighting techniques, but also an arena for character building and mental toughness. By making the psychological aspect an integral part of athlete development, it is hoped that the achievements of Indonesian pencak silat at the national and international levels can continue to increase, accompanied by maintained mental well-being.

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