



An Overview of Competitive Anxiety and Self-Confidence of Senior Taekwondo Athletes During the Training Phase

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ABSTRACT

Competitive anxiety is one of the most common psychological factors experienced by athletes and has the potential to influence self-confidence during training and competition. In taekwondo, particularly in the Kyorugi category, excessive anxiety may interfere with concentration, decision-making, and technical execution, ultimately affecting athletic performance. Conversely, high self-confidence can help athletes cope with pressure, maintain focus, and perform optimally. Therefore, understanding the relationship between competitive anxiety and self-confidence during the training phase is essential for effective athlete development. This study aimed to examine the relationship between competitive anxiety and self-confidence and to identify their influence on the performance readiness of senior Taekwondo Kyorugi athletes during the training phase. The study employed a descriptive quantitative approach with a correlational design. Participants consisted of 21 senior Taekwondo Kyorugi athletes aged 19–22 years who were actively involved in training and had competitive experience. Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire comprising a 13-item self-confidence scale and the Competitive State Anxiety Test (CSAT) to assess competitive anxiety. Data collection was conducted in a single session and analyzed using correlation analysis with SPSS version 29. The findings revealed a very strong and statistically significant negative relationship between competitive anxiety and self-confidence among senior taekwondo athletes. Athletes with lower anxiety levels tended to demonstrate higher self-confidence, whereas athletes experiencing higher anxiety showed reduced confidence levels. These results indicate that both variables are closely related and play an important role in influencing athletes' psychological readiness and performance potential. In conclusion, managing competitive anxiety and enhancing self-confidence are essential components of athlete preparation during the training phase. Coaches should integrate psychological training strategies into regular training programs to support optimal athletic performance.

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- A. Conception and design of the study;
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INTRODUCTION

Competitive sport is a multidimensional activity that requires athletes to possess not only superior physical and technical abilities but also strong psychological readiness to achieve optimal performance. In modern sports science, psychological factors are increasingly recognized as crucial determinants of athletic success because they influence motivation, concentration, emotional regulation, decision-making, and performance consistency (Weinberg & Gould, 2019; Kharisma et al., 2025). Taekwondo, as a combat sport characterized by high-intensity physical demands and rapid tactical decision-making, requires athletes to maintain psychological stability throughout both training and competition phases (Bridge et al., 2020).

Athletic achievement is essentially the cumulative outcome of various supporting factors, including physical conditioning, technical skills, tactical understanding, physiological readiness, and psychological preparedness (Novian, 2020). Among these factors, psychological readiness is often considered one of the most influential contributors because mental states directly affect how athletes perform under pressure (Darisman et al., 2020). Psychological conditions such as anxiety, tension, fear of failure, and self-doubt may negatively influence athletes' performance even when physical preparation has been conducted adequately (Komarudin et al., 2021).

One of the most important psychological constructs in sports psychology is competitive anxiety. Competitive anxiety refers to an athlete's emotional response characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness, tension, and apprehension regarding performance outcomes (Martens et al., 1990; Muflih, 2024). Excessive anxiety may impair concentration, disrupt motor coordination, reduce confidence, and negatively influence decision-making processes during sports participation (Ford et al., 2017). In combat sports such as taekwondo, where milliseconds often determine victory or defeat, psychological disturbances can significantly reduce competitive effectiveness (Slimani et al., 2018).

Another psychological factor closely related to athletic performance is self-confidence. Self-confidence reflects an individual's belief in their ability to successfully execute required skills and achieve desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Putra et al., 2021). Within the sporting context, sport confidence refers to an athlete's belief in their capacity to overcome challenges, recover from mistakes, maintain focus, and perform effectively under pressure (Meirisa et al., 2020). Athletes with high confidence generally demonstrate greater resilience, persistence, emotional control, and performance consistency than athletes with lower confidence levels (Bayani et al., 2024).

Although senior taekwondo athletes generally possess substantial competition experience, they continue to face considerable psychological demands throughout the training phase. During this period, athletes are expected to improve performance, maintain achievement standards, adapt to increasingly complex training loads, and prepare for upcoming competitions (Vauziah et al., 2026). Such demands often create psychological pressure that may contribute to elevated anxiety levels and fluctuations in self-confidence. Consequently, understanding athletes' psychological conditions during

the training phase becomes essential for optimizing both training adaptation and future competitive performance.

Recent developments in sports psychology research have increasingly focused on understanding the interaction between competitive anxiety and self-confidence among athletes. Theoretical frameworks such as Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997), Multidimensional Anxiety Theory (Martens et al., 1990), and the Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF) model suggest that anxiety and confidence are closely interconnected psychological constructs influencing sports performance (Hanin, 2017).

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that competitive anxiety negatively affects athletic performance. Research involving elite athletes found that elevated cognitive anxiety was associated with reduced concentration, impaired tactical execution, and lower performance outcomes (Craft et al., 2016; Rice et al., 2019). Similarly, studies among combat sport athletes reported that anxiety could disrupt reaction time, technical accuracy, and decision-making processes during matches (Slimani et al., 2018; López-Gullón et al., 2020).

Conversely, self-confidence has been identified as one of the strongest psychological predictors of successful athletic performance. Athletes with higher confidence levels demonstrate greater emotional control, improved coping strategies, and stronger motivation to overcome challenges (Hays et al., 2015; Machado et al., 2019). Research among martial arts athletes revealed that confidence contributes significantly to performance stability and psychological resilience during high-pressure situations (Krane & Williams, 2021).

Several studies have specifically investigated the relationship between anxiety and self-confidence. Sofyan et al. (2024) reported a significant association between self-confidence and competitive anxiety among Indonesian athletes. Nurudin (2025) found that higher self-efficacy levels were associated with lower levels of competitive anxiety. Likewise, Patris et al. (2025), utilizing Multidimensional Anxiety Theory, demonstrated that cognitive anxiety negatively correlated with athletes' self-confidence. Recent international evidence further supports these findings, indicating that self-confidence functions as a protective factor capable of buffering the negative effects of anxiety on performance outcomes (González et al., 2024).

Within taekwondo specifically, previous investigations have primarily focused on competition-related psychological factors. Studies conducted among elite taekwondo athletes reported that anxiety management and confidence enhancement significantly contributed to competition success, tactical execution, and performance consistency (Kim et al., 2020; Han et al., 2022). These findings reinforce the importance of psychological preparation alongside physical and technical training.

Despite the growing body of literature examining anxiety and self-confidence in sports, several important limitations remain. First, most previous studies have concentrated on athletes' psychological conditions immediately before or during competition (Rice et al., 2019; González et al., 2024). Consequently, less attention has been given to psychological dynamics occurring during the training phase, which serves

as a critical period for performance development and competition preparation. Second, although numerous studies have investigated anxiety and confidence across various sports, relatively few have focused specifically on senior taekwondo athletes. Combat sports possess unique psychological characteristics because athletes must manage physical confrontation, tactical uncertainty, and high-performance expectations simultaneously (Slimani et al., 2018). Therefore, findings from team sports or non-combat disciplines may not be fully applicable to taekwondo athletes. Third, previous research has predominantly emphasized causal relationships between psychological variables and competition performance outcomes. Limited evidence exists regarding the descriptive profile of competitive anxiety and self-confidence during the training process itself. Understanding these psychological characteristics before competition may provide valuable information for coaches in designing mental training interventions and monitoring athlete readiness. Finally, studies conducted within the Indonesian taekwondo context remain relatively scarce, particularly those involving senior athletes with substantial competitive experience. This creates an important opportunity to enrich national sports psychology literature while providing practical insights relevant to athlete development programs.

Based on the identified research gaps, this study aims to provide an overview of competitive anxiety and self-confidence among senior taekwondo athletes during the training phase. Specifically, the study seeks to describe the levels of competitive anxiety and self-confidence experienced by athletes and to examine the relationship between these psychological variables during the preparation period preceding competition. The novelty of this research lies in three main aspects. First, unlike previous studies that primarily focus on competition settings, this study investigates psychological conditions during the training phase, an area that remains underexplored in sports psychology literature. Second, the study specifically targets senior taekwondo athletes, a population that possesses unique psychological characteristics due to extensive competitive experience and performance expectations. Third, the findings are expected to contribute empirical evidence within the Indonesian sports context, thereby enriching the literature on psychological readiness in combat sports.

The results of this study are anticipated to contribute theoretically to the advancement of sports psychology knowledge concerning anxiety-confidence dynamics among combat sport athletes. Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for coaches, sport psychologists, and training program developers in designing psychological interventions aimed at optimizing athlete preparedness and performance. In conclusion, understanding competitive anxiety and self-confidence during the training phase is essential because psychological readiness begins long before athletes enter competition. By examining these psychological constructs among senior taekwondo athletes, this study seeks to provide evidence-based insights that support more comprehensive athlete development and contribute to enhanced performance outcomes in future competitions.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach with a correlational research design to examine the relationship between competitive anxiety and self-confidence among senior taekwondo athletes during the training phase. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to objectively measure psychological variables and statistically analyze the relationship between them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, descriptive-correlational research is widely used in sport psychology to identify patterns and associations among psychological constructs without manipulating variables or providing experimental interventions (Thomas et al., 2022). The present study aimed to provide empirical evidence regarding the psychological profiles of athletes during the preparation phase preceding competition, particularly concerning competitive anxiety and self-confidence.

The research was conducted at the Taekwondo Student Activity Unit (UKM Taekwondo UPI). The participants consisted of 21 senior taekwondo athletes aged between 19 and 22 years. The participants were selected using a total sampling technique because the entire population met the predetermined inclusion criteria. To ensure the relevance of the data collected, only athletes who were actively involved in regular training programs and had participated in at least one official competition within the previous year were included in the study. Previous research has suggested that athletes with competitive experience tend to develop distinct psychological responses during training and competition preparation, making them suitable subjects for investigations concerning anxiety and confidence (Nicholls et al., 2019; González et al., 2024).

Data collection was conducted during the athletes' regular training phase. This period was intentionally selected because psychological readiness begins to develop long before athletes enter competitive situations. Research in sport psychology indicates that training environments often generate psychological demands related to performance expectations, training loads, evaluation processes, and future competition goals, which may influence both anxiety and confidence levels (Didymus & Fletcher, 2017; Rice et al., 2019). Therefore, examining athletes during the training phase provides valuable insights into their psychological preparation processes.

The instruments used in this study consisted of two standardized closed-ended questionnaires. Self-confidence was measured using a 13-item Athlete Self-Confidence Questionnaire adapted from Nursaba et al. (2024). This instrument evaluates athletes' beliefs regarding their ability to perform successfully, overcome obstacles, maintain focus, and demonstrate competence during sport participation. Self-confidence is recognized as a crucial psychological factor associated with motivation, persistence, emotional regulation, and performance consistency in athletes (Machado et al., 2019; Bayani et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, competitive anxiety was measured using the Competitive State Anxiety Test (CSAT) adapted by Putra (2022). The CSAT instrument assesses athletes' emotional responses related to worry, tension, nervousness, and concerns about performance

outcomes. Competitive anxiety is considered one of the most influential psychological variables affecting athletic performance because excessive anxiety can impair concentration, decision-making, and technical execution (Ford et al., 2017; Slimani et al., 2018). The adaptation of both instruments has previously demonstrated acceptable levels of validity and reliability for use in Indonesian sports contexts (Putra, 2022; Nursaba et al., 2024).

Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the objectives of the study and provided consent to participate voluntarily. Both questionnaires were administered simultaneously during a single data collection session. Respondents were instructed to answer all items honestly based on their current psychological condition during the training phase. The use of self-report questionnaires is common in sport psychology research because it allows athletes to directly express their perceptions and emotional experiences (Hanton et al., 2015).

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, were calculated to describe participants' characteristics and psychological profiles. Subsequently, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test was employed to determine the relationship between competitive anxiety and self-confidence. Correlation analysis is considered an appropriate statistical technique for examining the strength and direction of relationships between continuous psychological variables (Field, 2018). The level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$. The findings were interpreted to provide a comprehensive overview of how competitive anxiety and self-confidence interact among senior taekwondo athletes during the training phase and how these psychological factors may influence athlete readiness and future performance outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Data analysis in this study was carried out using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science).

Table 1.
Descriptive test

| Variabel | N | Minimum | Maximum | Sum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------|----|---------|---------|-----|-------|----------------|
| Competitive Anxiety | 21 | 16 | 26 | 440 | 20.95 | 2.711 |
| Self Cofindence | 21 | 29 | 37 | 690 | 32.86 | 2.104 |

Based on Table 1 of the descriptive test, it can be seen that the number of samples for both variables (Competitive Anxiety and Self-Confidence) was 21 athletes. In the competitive anxiety variable, the minimum value was 16, and the maximum value was 26, with a total score of 440, an average value (mean) of 20.95, and a standard deviation of 2.711, indicating that the data variation was in the moderate category. Meanwhile, the self-confidence variable had a minimum value of 29 and a maximum value of 37, with a total score of 690, an average (mean) of 32.86, and a standard deviation of 2.104,

indicating a relatively more homogeneous data distribution. Thus, it can be concluded that the level of self-confidence of athletes tends to be higher than the level of competitive anxiety they have. Furthermore, the normality test can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2.
Normality Test

| Variabel | Shapiro-Wilk | | Sig. |
|---------------------|--------------|----|------|
| | Statistic | df | |
| Competitive Anxiety | .978 | 21 | .894 |
| Self Cofindence | .978 | 21 | .887 |

Based on Table 2, the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test shows a significant value (Sig.) for the competitive anxiety variable of 0.894 and a significant value (Sig.) for the self-confidence variable of 0.887. Since both significant values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data for both variables are normally distributed. Therefore, this research data meets the requirements for further statistical analysis.

Table 3.
Homogeneity Test

| Variabel | | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|----------|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------|--------|------|
| | | Based on Mean | 1.828 | 1 | 40 |
| | Based on Median | 1.892 | 1 | 40 | .177 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 1.892 | 1 | 39.076 | .177 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 1.819 | 1 | 40 | .185 |

Based on Table 3, the Levene test for homogeneity yielded a significance value for all approaches, with a mean of 0.184 (df1 = 1, df2 = 40). In the Based on Median approach, the same significance value was obtained, namely 0.177, while in Based on Median with adjusted df, the significance value was 0.177 with df2 = 39.076. Next, the based-on-trimmed-mean approach also showed a significance value of 0.18. Because all significance values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the variance between groups is homogeneous, so the data meet the requirements for further statistical analysis.

Table 4.
Hypothesis Testing

| | | Competitive Anxiety | Self Confidence |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Competitive Anxiety | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.983** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 21 | 21 |
| Self Cofindence | Pearson Correlation | -.983** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 21 | 21 |

Based on Table 4 of the hypothesis test, the Pearson correlation value between competitive anxiety and self-confidence was -0.983 with a significance value (sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000 in a sample of 20 people. These results indicate a very strong and negative relationship between the two variables, meaning that the higher the level of competitive anxiety an athlete has, the lower their level of self-confidence, and vice versa. Furthermore, because the significance value is less than 0.05, the relationship is declared statistically significant.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate a very strong and significant negative relationship between competitive anxiety and self-confidence in senior taekwondo athletes during the training phase. Based on statistical data analysis, a Pearson correlation value was obtained, indicating a very strong relationship. This value indicates that the two variables are related to the athletes' experiences, with their self-confidence levels decreasing drastically. This finding illustrates that the psychological state of athletes is closely and inseparably linked.

This research confirms that psychological aspects play a crucial role in supporting athlete performance. Mental state is affected not only during competitions but also during training. Senior athletes continue to face pressure from training targets (Rice et al., 2016). Furthermore, self-expectations and the environment contribute to this pressure. This leads to anxiety even when not in a live competition situation. Therefore, the training phase is a crucial context for understanding the psychological dynamics of athletes.

Theoretically, the results of this study align with Multidimensional Anxiety Theory, which explains that anxiety, particularly cognitive anxiety, has a negative relationship with self-confidence (Miller, 2004). Cognitive anxiety typically manifests as negative thoughts, excessive worry, and doubts about one's own abilities (Rohmansyah, 2017). In training situations, athletes can experience overthinking about their own performance. This can disrupt concentration and reduce the effectiveness of the training program (Hadian et al., 2024). As a result, training performance is suboptimal, and training goals are difficult to achieve (Anggriawan, 2015).

On the other hand, self-confidence has been shown in this study to be an important factor in reducing the negative impact of anxiety experienced by athletes (Aqobah et al., 2022; Arridh1 et al., 2021). Athletes with high levels of self-confidence or self-efficacy tend to be better able to overcome obstacles, doubts, and focus, and remain motivated despite making mistakes during training sessions (Amara et al., 2025). Conversely, when athletes experience a lack of self-confidence, excessive worry about achieving results arises, so their maximum potential cannot be realized (Martitin et al., 2025). This condition can hinder the development of abilities and reduce opportunities for achieving peak performance.

Therefore, coaches and related parties need to pay more attention to the mental aspect of athlete development (Jatmika, 2017). Training programs should not only focus on physical and technical aspects but also include psychological skills training (Martua et al., 2024). Interventions such as anxiety management training, increasing self-confidence, and social support can be effective strategies (Komarudin et al., 2024). By balancing physical, technical, and mental readiness, athletes will be more optimally prepared to face various situations (Juhanis et al., 2025). Ultimately, this is expected to improve athletes' overall performance both in training and in competitions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and data analysis, it can be concluded that there is a very strong and significant negative relationship between competitive anxiety and self-

confidence in senior Taekwondo athletes during the training phase. This is evidenced by the negative relationship between these two variables, indicating that athletes' mental stability during the training phase is highly dependent on their ability to suppress anxiety and increase self-confidence. Nevertheless, the strong relationship between these two variables emphasizes the need for coaches and trainers to pay more attention to managing anxiety and increasing athletes' self-confidence to maintain optimal performance from the training phase through to competition. Generally, the conclusion should explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward. In suggestion, please describe the author's recommendations for further studies regarding the author's research implication. Generally, the conclusion should explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward. In suggestion, please describe the author's recommendations for further studies regarding the author's research implication.

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