

Analysis Of The Mental Tension Of Athletes During The Competition And Methods Of Overcoming It (On The Example Of Kurash Athletes)

Irmatov Shavkat Anvarovich¹, Rakhimov Sheramat Mirzarakhimovich²

¹Teacher of the Kokand State Pedagogical Institute.

²Teacher of the Kokand State Pedagogical Institute.

Abstract. The anxiety of an athlete in the process of participating in competitions and in the process of competitions is the main obstacle to achieving sports results. This study aimed to compare the state of anxiety before and during the competition of different levels and gender categories of kurash athletes. A total of 450 kurash athletes (international level - 225, national level - 225, males - 238, females - 212) voluntarily participated in this need to optimize the psychological training that kurash athletes of the national category received before competitions, and to organize the training of females based of an individualized approach, in particular, with the implementation of psychological training.

Keywords: mental tension, analysis, competition, international competition, study of the situation.

1. Introduction

Many psychologists have argued that the state of psychological anxiety and fear in an athlete, who competes negatively affects the results. For this reason, in the field of sports psychology, when an athlete goes into the competition, the study of the problem of optimizing the psychological state during ongoing competitions has not lost its scientific significance and relevance. It is important to note that this problem has received a low level of investigation, as noted in recent scientific studies of modern sports anxiety (competitive anxiety), but that the state of panic in competition (arousal) positively and directly affects the achievement of high-level results. Kurash is an ancient sport in which developed in the territory of Uzbekistan. Scientific studies show that so initial type of sport, kurash was spread 3,5-5 thousand years ago. The pictures about the kurash fights depicted in ancient stone paintings. The kurash was the main part of the social life in historical Uzbek people. Unfortunately, during the Russian invasion (after 1850 till 1991), development of kurash was banned. In 1998, after Uzbekistan gained independence the International Kurash Association (IKA) was established and kurash was officially recognized as a sport. In

kurash fights two athletes try to throw each other using the gripping special uniform “yaktak”. It is prohibited fighting when the athletes’ knee touches to ground (gilam). Also, kicking, beating, suffocation is strictly prohibited. Kurash is a very intensive type of sport and in the process of competitive activity, kurash athletes perform intense and diverse technical and tactical actions. However, the features and, theoretical and methodological foundations of this sport, in particular the psychological, technical and tactical foundations of competitive activity, have not been sufficiently scientifically studied.

Currently, there are more than 130 National Kurash Federations (NKF) around the world. Kurash was included in the program of the Asian Games in the year 2018 in Jakarta, Indonesia. According to several authors, the ongoing development of kurash and its inclusion in the Olympic Games program is directly related to research work, and in this regard, there is not enough research work. In particular, kurash athletes continue to compete, yet issues regarding the scientific study of the psychological states related to the competitive process have not yet been identified.

It is known from the results of modern sports practice and experience that athletes at different levels and in different categories showed differences in anxiety before and during the competition. Researchers also have identified some contributing psychological circumstances in both team and individual sports, in particular, a specific differentiation in motivation. In this regard, the results of the study conducted by Males and Kerr confirm that in the event of an approaching competition in the desired sport, the state of anxiety that engulfed the participants before the competition was sharply higher. In another research paper, it was noted that competition took place, and it was determined that the level of anxiety scores during the competition further increased the likelihood that the athlete would have a stroke. It is important to note that in the most recent studies, the psychological states related to the competitive process, including motivation and behavior, have certain impacts on the competitive position of an athlete, such as obtaining significant achievements.

An analysis of the literature has shown that kurash competitions have taken place, yet an adequate scientific study of the problem of scientific research of the state of anxiety during competition has not been conducted. For this reason, this study aims to compare the state of anxiety before and during the competition of different levels (National and International) and gender (male and female) category kurash athletes.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

As described in table 1, total 450 kurash athletes took part in this research work, including highly qualified kurash athletes (high/international level, n=225), and kurash athletes at national level (university/national level, n=225). The ratio of participants by sexes was 238 males and 212 females.

Table 1. Total number of participants in the study by sport level and gender (n=450)

By Athletic Level	
International Level Athletes	225
National Level Athletes	225
By Gender Categories	
Male Athletes	238
Female Athletes	212

2.2. Procedure

Data collection from the participants in the study and verification of participants were conducted in 4 major competitions in the territory of Uzbekistan (1. Jizzakh city, the Championship of Uzbekistan, 2. Bukhara city, the Championship of Uzbekistan, 3. Chirchik city, the Cup of Uzbekistan, 4. Universiade, Competitions between university students).

The inclusion criteria were as follows: the participants were 16-25 years old, had more than 4 years of training experience, and were male and female kurash athletes.

The exclusion criteria were as follows: refusal to participate in the study and any acute or chronic condition that would limit the ability of the athletes to participate in the study.

2.3. Ethical Considerations

The local ethical committee of the Samarkand State University (Protocol number N4323-10, 02.11.2018) approved the research procedures. No interferences were made regarding the nutritional or hydration status of participants. Before the experiment, participants attended a briefing meeting and signed an informed consent document to ensure that they understood the testing procedures and the risks and benefits associated with the study. The local ethics and research

committee, following the WMA’s Declaration of Helsinki, previously approved this research.

2.4. Assessment

The instrument used for the research was the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2) which consisted of 27 items. The CSAI-2 included both the cognitive and somatic aspects. The CSAI-2 test was tested twice to examine the levels of anxiety before and during competition. The data were analyzed by SPSS for Windows and expressed as the mean and standard deviation. To test the research hypotheses, the t-tests were used, and P values were set at $p < 0.05$ for all measures.

3. Results

3.1. Gender Differences

As shown in Table 2, the competition took place, and the state of anxiety during the competition was

Table 2. Competitive anxiety level of kurash athletes by sex category

Level of competitive anxiety	Category	Before competition			During competition		
		Mean	t-test	p value	Mean	t-test	p value
	Female	46.6532	6.506*	0.001	45.4821	5.839	0.000*
	Male	45.5783			42.6268		

Note: *Significance at $p < 0.05$

3.2. Athletic Level

Kurash athletes at the international and national levels took part in these competitions, and the state of arousal and anxiety before and during the competition is described in Table 3. The obtained results confirmed that kurash athletes at the international level arrived at the competition and that the levels of state anxiety before the competition were at a lower level than those of kurash athletes in the national category. In particular, at the hosted competitions with kurash athletes at the international level, the anxiety score

was lower for male kurash athletes than for female kurash athletes. In particular, before competitions, the anxiety scores, were on average 45.5783 for male kurash athletes and 46.6532 for female kurash athletes. The level of anxiety experienced by the participants before the competitions with different sexes was higher in the male than female kurash athletes, and there was a significant difference between the results ($t\text{-test}=6.506, p < 0.05$). It was also found that the anxiety scores during the competition were significantly lower in male kurash athletes than in females athletes. In particular, the state of anxiety scores during competition were 42.6268 for male and 45.4821 for female kurash athletes. Comparably, even during the competition, males were distinguished by a lower level of ventilation compared to female kurash athletes ($t\text{-test}=5.5839, p < 0.05$).

was 39.3590, whereas it was 44.0218 for kurash athletes in the national category. There was a significant difference between the results ($F=14.110, p < 0.05$). Throughout the study, it was also confirmed that the level of anxiety during the competitive process was also higher for athletes at the national level than for those in the top-level category. Based on the the results of the study, the level of arousal and anxiety during the competitive process among international kurash athletes (38.6400) was lower than that of national kurash athletes (43.8439). A significant difference was found between the results ($F=7.899, p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Competitive anxiety level of kurash athletes based on the athletic level

Athletes’ Level	Before competition			During competition		
	Mean	F-value	p-value	Mean	F-value	p-value
International	39.3590	14.110	0.001*	38.6400	7.899	0.001*

National	44.0218		43.8439	
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Note: * Significance at $p < 0.05$

4. Discussion

The results obtained in this study confirmed that female kurash athletes who participated in competitions, and their level of anxiety during the competition were higher than those of male participants. Our observations and the results of the experiment fully confirmed the results of many scientists and researchers. The research studies showed that, unlike the sport and the qualification of an athlete, the state of anxiety in female athletes and competitors who participated in the competition was at a higher level than in males. It is important to note that the results of a recent study conducted by scientists showed that there was no difference between the levels of arousal and anxiety experienced by female and male athletes participating in competitions. Correia and Rosado noted that the level of anxiety experienced by the participants in the competition was directly related to the type of sports, the level of anxiety experienced by the participants of the competition in individual sports was higher than in team sports.

It was noticed that many scientists who studied the competition had noted that the level of anxiety during the competition was directly related to biological factors. Overall, the results showed that women who competed had higher levels of anxiety than male athletes. In addition, other researchers have claimed that the reason why anxiety levels increased during the competition was directly related to social outbursts. In our opinion, this issue is multifactorial, and there is a need for in-depth scientific research and studies. To date, not enough research has been done on kurash, and the scientific basis behind this sport has not yet been studied. In our opinion, this issue is multifactorial, and there is a need for in-depth scientific research and studies.

The results of our study confirmed that athletes at the international level who took part in competitions and that the level of anxiety during the competition was low, in contrast, the level of anxiety was high for kurash athletes in the national category. These results obtained in the course of this study are fully confirmed by the results of the

research work of many other scientists. In other words, a high level of skill is characterized not only by technical and tactical or physical training but also by mental stability, which was demonstrated during the competition. According to Bompa, in the preparation of an athlete, holistic training is important, which leads to the main achievement of victory in the competition. Additionally, when preparing an athlete for competitions, the importance of comprehensive training should be taken into account. Also, it is interesting to indicate that the anxiety level might be connected with different contests and athletes' personal characteristics. Because, in kurash there are some contests till final fights and this factor might be directly connected with anxiety level of athletes. It is important to note that there were found significant differences between the time durations of first (1-4 rounds) and second part (semifinal-final) of contests in another combat sports. This aspect of the contests in combat sports like kurash could be case to assume that during the different struggle rounds the anxiety level is fluctuated.

5. Conclusions

There are also certain limitations in this research study. In particular, the study did not evaluate the psychological state of kurash athletes after the competition. Additionally, kurash athletes arrived at competitions, and psychological states were assessed throughout the competitive process, although its connection with hormonal fluctuation was not investigated.

The results of this study confirmed that when competing at the national level, the resulting state of anxiety was higher than that of international-class kurash athletes. This indicates the need to optimize the psychological training of kurash athletes in the national category who took part in competitions. The arousal and anxiety in the competition can become a serious obstacle for kurash athletes in the national category. In addition, a similar findings were obtained again throughout the study, in the female kurash athletes who also took part in competitions as they experienced a higher state of anxiety during the

competition. These results indicate the need to organize training directly with females based on an individualized approach, in particular, while conducting psychological training.

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