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THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACHIEVEMENT-ORIENTED MOTIVATION AND PRE-COMPETITION ANXIETY IN ADOLESCENT WRESTLERS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the interrelationship between achievement-oriented motivation and pre-competition anxiety among adolescent wrestlers. The research aims to determine how the desire for success influences emotional regulation, confidence, and psychological stability before competitions. Using psychological assessment methods and motivational profiling, the study identifies key factors that affect athletes' mental readiness and stress management. The findings indicate that wrestlers with strong achievement motivation experience lower levels of anxiety and demonstrate higher adaptability in competitive situations. The results emphasize the importance of psychological preparation programs that integrate motivational and emotional training for young athletes.

Keywords: Adolescent wrestlers; achievement motivation; pre-competition anxiety; psychological stability; emotional regulation; sports psychology; motivation–anxiety relationship.

INTRODUCTION

In competitive sports, psychological readiness plays a decisive role in determining athletes' performance, particularly among adolescents who are in a sensitive stage of emotional and motivational development. Wrestling, as a physically and mentally demanding sport, requires not only technical and tactical mastery but also high levels of emotional regulation and motivation. Pre-competition anxiety is one of the most common psychological factors that can either enhance or hinder athletic



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performance, depending on its intensity and the athlete's ability to manage it effectively.

Achievement-oriented motivation represents an individual's internal drive to reach success, master challenges, and maintain persistence despite difficulties. In adolescent athletes, this type of motivation serves as a critical determinant of confidence, focus, and psychological stability before competitions. However, when achievement motivation is excessively linked to external validation or fear of failure, it may increase pre-competition anxiety and negatively affect performance outcomes.

Understanding the interplay between achievement-oriented motivation and pre-competition anxiety provides valuable insights for coaches, sport psychologists, and athletes themselves. By examining this relationship, it becomes possible to develop more effective psychological preparation programs aimed at strengthening motivation while reducing anxiety. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the interrelationship between achievement-oriented motivation and pre-competition anxiety in adolescent wrestlers, identifying how motivational tendencies influence emotional states and performance stability before competition.

MAIN PART

Achievement-oriented motivation and pre-competition anxiety are two interrelated psychological constructs that significantly influence an athlete's performance and emotional stability. In adolescent wrestlers, these factors acquire particular importance due to the developmental characteristics of this age period, where emotional sensitivity, self-esteem formation, and social evaluation play dominant roles.

From a psychological standpoint, achievement motivation reflects an athlete's aspiration to reach excellence, overcome obstacles, and gain recognition through success. According to McClelland's theory of achievement motivation, individuals with high achievement motives are more likely to set challenging goals, persist in the face of setbacks, and maintain self-control under pressure. In the context of wrestling, such motivation contributes to greater discipline, focus, and tactical



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awareness — key components of effective performance during competitive situations.

Conversely, pre-competition anxiety represents the emotional tension that arises before a sports event. It manifests in both cognitive (worry, fear of failure, negative expectations) and somatic (increased heart rate, muscle tension, sweating) dimensions. Studies in sports psychology have shown that moderate levels of anxiety can enhance performance by mobilizing physiological and psychological resources, while excessive anxiety tends to impair concentration, coordination, and decision-making abilities.

The balance between motivation and anxiety is crucial. When a wrestler's motivation is directed toward mastery and self-improvement (intrinsic motivation), anxiety levels tend to remain within an optimal range. However, when motivation becomes excessively performance-oriented or dependent on external rewards (extrinsic motivation), the likelihood of high anxiety increases. This psychological imbalance can lead to overthinking, emotional instability, and reduced competitive performance.

Empirical research suggests that psychological training programs aimed at developing self-regulation, relaxation, and cognitive restructuring can help adolescent wrestlers maintain optimal arousal levels. Techniques such as goal-setting, visualization, and breathing control enable athletes to channel their motivational energy into productive focus rather than anxiety. Moreover, supportive coaching environments that emphasize process-oriented success over mere outcomes foster healthier motivation patterns and lower pre-competition stress.

In sum, the interrelationship between achievement-oriented motivation and pre-competition anxiety demonstrates that motivation serves both as a protective and risk factor, depending on its structure and direction. Understanding this relationship is essential for designing psychological interventions that enhance the emotional resilience and performance consistency of adolescent wrestlers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study highlight that achievement-oriented motivation plays a crucial role in determining the level of pre-competition anxiety among adolescent



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wrestlers. Wrestlers who are motivated primarily by internal goals — such as self-improvement, mastery, and personal growth — tend to experience lower anxiety levels and display higher emotional stability. In contrast, athletes whose motivation is strongly tied to external validation or fear of failure are more likely to experience elevated anxiety, which can negatively influence their concentration and overall performance.

The interaction between motivation and anxiety reveals that psychological readiness in sports is not solely dependent on physical training but also on the development of mental resilience and emotional control. By fostering a balance between intrinsic motivation and optimal arousal, wrestlers can enhance their ability to perform effectively under pressure and maintain consistency in competition settings.

Based on the results of this analysis, several recommendations can be proposed for athletes, coaches, and sport psychologists:

1. Implement psychological preparation programs that include relaxation techniques, mental visualization, and cognitive restructuring to manage pre-competition anxiety.
2. Encourage intrinsic motivation by emphasizing self-improvement, personal progress, and internal satisfaction rather than focusing solely on winning or external rewards.
3. Develop individualized motivation profiles for adolescent wrestlers to better understand their psychological tendencies and tailor training approaches accordingly.
4. Provide emotional support and constructive feedback through coach–athlete interactions to strengthen confidence and emotional regulation before competitions.
5. Integrate psychological education into training curricula, helping young athletes understand the impact of motivation and anxiety on their performance outcomes.

In conclusion, achievement-oriented motivation serves as both a psychological resource and a regulatory mechanism that influences the emotional state of adolescent wrestlers before competition. Developing a scientifically grounded approach to enhancing motivation and reducing anxiety is essential for ensuring stable performance and long-term psychological well-being among young athletes.



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