



Anxiety of Pencak Silat Athletes: A Comparative Study between Sparring and Art Athletes at the Training to Compete Stage of LTAD

Faris Rizqullah¹, Komarudin Komarudin², Mochamad Yamin Saputra³, Gerald Novian^{4*}

^{1,2,3}Study Program of Sport Coaching Education, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia

⁴Study Program of Sport Physical Coaching, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: Gerald Novian, geraldi.novian@upi.edu

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Abstract

Studi purpose. Teenage pencak silat athletes with an age range of 16-18 years have begun to experience anxiety when competing, the high level of anxiety of pencak silat athletes makes athletes not confident in their matches, the phenomenon that often occurs in the field is that sparring athletes often lose focus when facing their opponents and art athletes are difficult to demonstrate to forget movements when performing their movements, therefore it is necessary to examine the level of anxiety between the two categories, this study aims to compare the level of anxiety between sparring and art athletes at the training to compete stage in LTAD.

Materials and methods. This study used a quantitative comparative method with 30 pencak silat athletes divided into sparring and art groups, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using the SCAT (Sport Competition Anxiety Test) questionnaire and analyzed with an independent samples t-test in SPSS version 24.

Results. The results showed that there were significant differences in anxiety between sparring athletes and martial arts athletes. Data analysis shows that the anxiety of sparring category athletes tends to be higher than that of martial arts category athletes.

Conclusions. This study concludes that there are significant differences in anxiety levels between sparring and art pencak silat athletes at the training to compete stage in LTAD, with sparring athletes showing higher anxiety. The main factors causing high anxiety in sparring athletes are the competitive nature of the match and direct physical contact with opponents, as well as the lack of competition experience. In addition, psychological aspects such as lack of mental training and social support also affect athletes' anxiety levels.

Keywords: Pencak Silat Athletes, Anxiety, Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD).



Introduction

Pencak silat is a form of traditional martial arts sport that grew and developed in Indonesia, passed down from generation to generation by ancestors as part of the cultural identity of the Indonesian people (Irawan, 2021). Pencak Silat is one of the fastestgrowing martial arts in Indonesia (Patah et al., 2021). Meanwhile, according to (Saputro & Siswantoyo, 2018) the art of pencak silat is a manifestation of culture that is realized in various forms of movement and rhythm. Pencak silat has two categories, namely sparring and art, in the art category it is divided into three, namely Single, double, and team. Pencak silat athletes are expected to have high emotional reactions when competing (Raynadi et al., 2017). In every competition, Anxiety can have an impact on the way of thinking and the physical condition of martial arts athletes, which in turn often causes a decrease in the quality of performance while in the arena (Nurjanah et al., 2018). Meanwhile, according to (Purnamasari & Novian, 2021) anxiety often arises when athletes doubt or fear in doing something related to performance. Case studies in the field such as athletes lacking focus when competing, in the art category athletes often experience wrong movements or forget movements when competing. So that it will be difficult to win the match.

Trait anxiety refers to the stable tendency to attend to, experience, and report negative emotions such as fears, worries, and anxiety across many situations (Knowles & Olatunji, 2020). According to (Weinberg & Gould, 2023) Anxiety is a negative emotion characterized by feelings of nervousness, anxiety, and fear of things that might happen, and is often accompanied by physical reactions in the form of increased activity or tension in the body. Meanwhile, according to (Amaro & Brandão, 2023) anxiety is a form of bodily response to certain conditions that are perceived as threats. Psychologists consider anxiety to be a combination of states of restlessness, fear and worry which entail a reaction to a situation that the athlete perceives as threatening, although this is actually a natural phenomenon (Spielberger, 2021). Anxiety during a match is a sense of anxiety or worry about the possibility of unwanted things happening during the match. These feelings arise in response to uncertainty and pressure in competitive situations (Remon, 2022). The success of an athlete is influenced by several factors. In general, in the context of training, factors that are considered to influence the success of an athlete are physical, technical, tactical, and psychological abilities (Komarudin et al., 2024). A person's anxiety arises when there is a sense of danger coming from within, or causing conflict within the individual. Anxiety is subjective and cannot be seen in real terms the process of anxiety, especially in competitive match situations (Akbar & Alficandra, 2023). Anxiety is something that is often experienced by pencak silat athletes before facing the competition, in the sparring and art categories, both categories must have anxiety before competing. Players' positive emotions can predict the sense of hope. It also tends to interpret the anxiety intensity as a positive challenge rather than a negative sense of control (Yang et al., 2020).

In this research focuses on martial arts athletes at the age of 16-18 years, in the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model, this age is included in the training to compete stage. The Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model is a framework for optimal training, competition and recovery schedules at each stage of athlete development (Balyi et al., 2013). A successful training program has three main components that are volume, intensity, and frequency (Rahadian et al., 2021). All three components are integral and cannot be separated from one another. Some examples of sports that benefit from quality training programs are pencak silat and karate. Improving athlete performance is influenced by various aspects, including physical condition, technical ability, strategy or tactics, mental readiness, the role of coaches, facilities and infrastructure, athlete status, nutritional intake, and other factors. All of

these elements contribute to each other in supporting the overall performance of athletes. (Bahtra et al., 2023). The coach is an important factor in fostering athletes to be able to achieve achievements. Therefore, the coach must be able to plan the stages of training needed by athletes to the competitions that their athletes will participate in (Turner et al., 2020). In the LTAD Training to compete stage athletes are prepared to face real competition, the purpose of the training to compete stage is to optimize personal physical, technical, tactical, and mental improvements. Therefore, psychological aspects must be finalized at this stage such as anxiety, because anxiety greatly affects performance when competing. Therefore, there must be a study of the anxiety level of martial arts athletes in the sparring category and the art of pencak silat.

Many previous studies have examined the anxiety of martial arts athletes, such as those conducted (Irawan, 2021) examining the anxiety level of martial arts athletes, the study only describes the anxiety level of martial arts athletes in athletes (POPDA) Salatiga City, which shows that the anxiety of POPDA athletes in Salatiga city is mostly (40%) in the high category. The research conducted by (Remon, 2022) examines the anxiety level of athletes in pencak silat PSHT organization, concluding that the anxiety level of athletes before competing has the potential to affect athletes in competing both in moderate anxiety levels and low anxiety levels. the anxiety level of athletes before competing is also influenced by 3 factors that affect athletes before competing these factors are dramatic behavioral changes, dramatic physical and psychological changes, and trait anxiety. Athletes who experience high levels of anxiety, these athletes are athletes who are less experienced in the game and lack insight while on the field.

From some of these research conclusions, it can be seen that anxiety is very influential on athlete performance when competing and it is very important to train how to overcome excessive anxiety. From previous research, there is still a lack of those who examine more deeply the anxiety of pencak silat sports and compare between the category of pencak silat sparring and art, no one has also associated it with the training to compete stage in ltad, because at that stage athletes have begun to face real competition, and have begun to be trained from their psychological aspects, one of which is anxiety. therefore research needs to be done because it has an update, namely examining more deeply the analysis of anxiety levels and comparing pencak silat athletes in the sparring and art categories at the training to compete stage with an age range of 16-18 years. This research has an important contribution for pencak silat coaches, to provide insight into pencak silat anxiety and this research can be used as input or consideration for training athletes from their psychological aspects.

Materials and methods

Study participants

The subjects of this study were selected using purposive sampling technique, which is a sampling technique where the subject is selected intentionally based on certain criteria that are considered relevant by the researcher. The sample used in this study was determined based on the characteristics of the subject, namely pencak silat athletes with an age range of 16-18 years and still actively participating in the competition. The research subjects were taken at SMAN2 Kota Sukabumi totaling 15 athletes in the sparring category and 15 athletes in the art category, with a total of 30 pencak silat athletes.

Study organization

This research is a descriptive quantitative research. This method emphasizes the collection of numerical data that can be analyzed statistically (Fraenkel et al., 2022). In this study, researchers compared two sample groups, namely anxiety levels in sparring athletes and martial arts athletes.

Research instruments

The instrument used in this research is a questionnaire as a data collection tool. Questionnaire is a method of collecting information by distributing a series of questions in writing to respondents. In this study, the questionnaire used was the Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) questionnaire refers to previous study (Anira et al., 2017). This method allows researchers to measure athletes' anxiety levels in a systematic and structured manner. The questionnaire is to measure the level of anxiety in sports competitions, this questionnaire is only given once before or after training. which has been valid with a reliability value of 0,846.

The instrument consisted of 15 questions in the form of a Likert scale of never, sometimes, and often where higher results indicated higher levels of trait anxiety. Questions number 1, 4, 7, 10, and 13 were not scored (questions not related to anxiety) in order to reduce response deviation and athletes did not feel tense when their anxiety was measured. Furthermore, questions number 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 15 (anxiety-related questions).

Statistical analysis

Data analysis used in this study used an independent sample test with SPSS version 24 software. Data analysis was carried out by presenting the percentage of results to describe the comparison of the anxiety level of sparring athletes with martial arts.

Results

The author presents the research data in the form of tables and figures to make it easier to understand, the statistical description can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Statistical Description

Category	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Average	Std. Dev.
Sparring	15	17	29	356	23.73	3.453
Art	15	12	27	276	18.40	4.611

Table 1 presents a statistical description of the two categories studied, namely sparring and art athletes, with 30 respondents 15 sparring athletes and 15 art athletes. The sparring category has a Min. 17 and Max. 29, with a total overall score of 356. The average score obtained is 23.73 with a standard deviation of 3.453. In this study, the sparring category has an average score of 23.73, therefore sparring athletes have a high level of anxiety. Meanwhile, the art variable has a range of values Min. 12 and Max. 27, with a grand total of 276. The average score for this variable is 18.40 with a standard deviation of 4.611. This variable has a medium category value. From the results of data analysis, it shows that the average difference in significant variables has a difference in anxiety levels between sparring and art athletes. Next, normality results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Category	Statistic	df	Sig.
Sparring	.919	15	.183
Art	.907	15	.120

Table 2 presents the results of the normality test for the sparring and art category. This normality test aims to determine whether the data in this study are normally distributed or not. Based on the test results, the significant value (Sig.) for the sparring variable is .183 and for the art sparring variable is .120. In the normality test, if the significant value is above .05, the data is considered normally distributed. Therefore, continue with the independent sample test. Next, hypothesis test results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results with Independent Sample Test

Category	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Sparring dan Art	2.221	.147	3.586	28	.001

Table 3 presents the results of the independent sample test as a hypothesis test results. This test is to compare the means of two independent sample groups. Independent sample t-test is used to see if there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups (in terms of averages). Based on the table, it is known that the Sig. (2-tailed) of $.001 < .05$, it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the average anxiety levels of sparring athletes and arts athletes at the training to compete stage of LTAD. Next, percentage of anxiety levels can be seen in **Figure 1**.

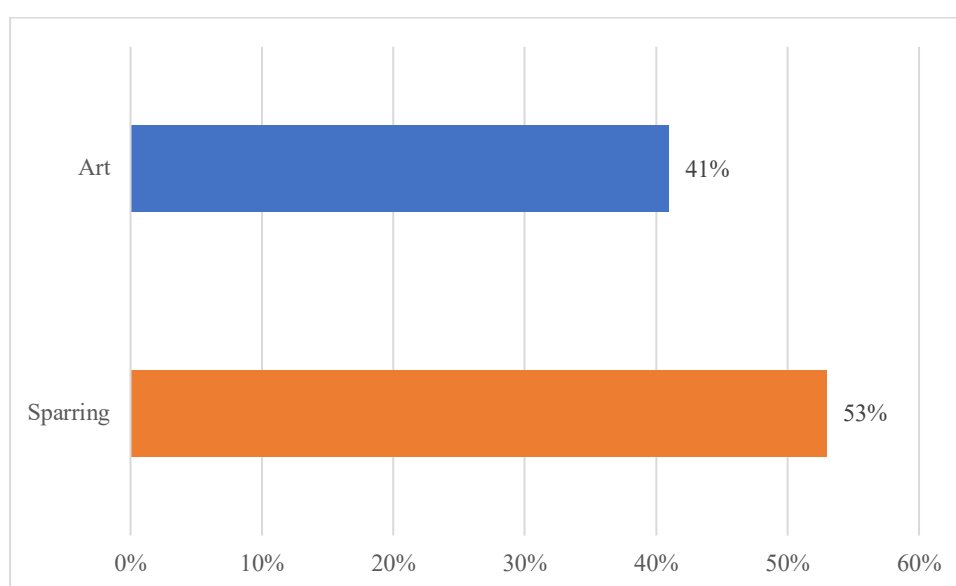


Figure 1. Percentage of anxiety levels between sparring and art pencak silat athletes at the training to compete stage in LTAD

Based on the **Figure 1** shows the percentage comparison of anxiety between sparring and art athletes. It can be seen that art athletes have an anxiety percentage value of 41%, while sparring athletes have a higher percentage value, namely 53%. This shows a significant difference in anxiety levels between sparring and art athletes.

Discussion

In this study examining the comparison of the anxiety levels of sparring athletes and martial arts athletes, the results of the analysis showed a significant difference in anxiety levels between sparring athletes and martial arts athletes. This means that the anxiety level of sparring athletes is higher than art athletes at the training to compete stage in Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD). By using the independent sample test. The results of data analysis indicate a significant difference in anxiety levels between sparring athletes and art athletes. Sparring athletes tend to experience higher levels of anxiety compared to artistic athletes. This is due to the more intense competitive nature of sparring matches, where athletes must face opponents directly and risk losing. Artistic athletes, on the other hand, focus more on aesthetics and technique, which may reduce the psychological stress they experience.

Artistic pencak silat athletes generally experience a moderate level of anxiety, as their main concern is focused on the beauty of movement and accuracy of technique in performance, rather than on direct physical interaction with opponents. Unlike sparring athletes who must prepare mentally and physically to face stressful and uncertain competition situations, art athletes focus more on mastering movement patterns, body flexibility, and precision in every performance. Because they are not involved in direct physical contact, the psychological burden felt by art athletes is relatively lighter. Although they are still required to perform optimally, the pressure that comes from the risk of injury or the dynamics of the fight is not as great as that experienced by sparring athletes. As such, the anxiety levels of artistic athletes are usually lower due to the more structured and predictable nature of the competition. However, in competition, the level of the opponent tends to influence the level of stress and anxiety during competition ([Adi et al., 2023](#)).

Based on Figure 1 displayed above, it shows the percentage of anxiety levels of sparring athletes in the high category while art athletes in the medium category, in addition to comparing the anxiety level of this researcher examines what factors make martial arts athletes experience high levels of anxiety. The factors that affect the anxiety of martial arts athletes can occur due to lack of training from the psychological aspect, and also factors occur in the field because athletes compete in direct physical contact with opponents where athletes do not know what their opponents will do, when competing. High levels of anxiety can arise due to competitive situations, which can ultimately interfere with performance on the field. This often occurs due to a lack of experience and intense competition during matches ([Hijah et al., 2025](#)).

In addition to competition factors, mental health in the psychological aspect is also important because it affects a person's life process ([Novian et al., 2024](#)). Examples of psychological aspects such as lack of mental training and emotional support also contribute to the anxiety level of martial arts athletes. Athletes who are not psychologically prepared tend to experience high anxiety more easily, so training that includes mental aspects needs to be strengthened in the athlete coaching program. Paying attention to the anxiety level of athletes when competing is very important, because excessive anxiety can interfere with the athlete's ability to control his movements. Breathing exercises are performed to balance the heart rate to keep it stable ([Zekha et al., 2023](#)). Therefore, sports psychology is applied to produce athletes who are able to perform at their peak. By applying sports psychology, athletes can increase their self-confidence and improve their focus or concentration ([Kahiji et al., 2024](#)).

Excessive anxiety can interfere with the athlete's ability to control body movement and coordination when competing. Tension due to anxiety can reduce the quality of motor skills that athletes have. In fact, various literature in the field of sports psychology and coaching science states that mental factors can contribute up to 80 percent to the success of an athlete. Psychological conditions and mental readiness are considered to determine the performance and results achieved ([Wijayanti & Hartini, 2021](#)). This has a negative impact on their performance during the game. Therefore, anxiety management is very important to maintain optimal athlete performance. According to ([Taboas et al., 2015](#)), anxiety can be recognized by the presence of excessive fear of certain stimuli, which has an impact on individual behavior and hinders their ability to adjust to the environment. Psychological exercises that can be done include relaxation exercises, deep breathing, and visualization. With these exercises, athletes can manage excessive anxiety when competing ([Musyarofah et al., 2024](#)).

From the results of this study that have been presented, the results of this study prove that the anxiety of athletes in the pencak silat sparring category has a high level of anxiety compared to the art category at the training to compete stage with a percentage of 41% in the art category and 53% in the sparring category. With different causative factors in each category, the main factor of anxiety in the sparring category is direct physical contact with competitive opponents. The art category only pays attention to the aesthetics of movement, therefore the

anxiety level of the art category has a moderate level of anxiety compared to the sparring category.

The practical implications of the findings of this study can be an important reference for coaches in designing training programs from their specific psychological aspects according to the needs of each category. Coaches can use the results of this study to identify factors that increase anxiety and develop anxiety management exercises, such as relaxation exercises or match simulations, so that athletes are more psychologically prepared ahead of competition.

Conclusions

This study concludes that there are significant differences in anxiety levels between sparring and art pencak silat athletes at the training to compete stage in LTAD, with sparring athletes showing higher anxiety. The main factors causing high anxiety in sparring athletes are the competitive nature of the match and direct physical contact with opponents, as well as the lack of competition experience. In addition, psychological aspects such as lack of mental training and social support also affect athletes' anxiety levels. Handling anxiety through psychological training, adequate competition experience and the support of the training environment is essential to help athletes manage pressure. Thus, good anxiety management can improve athletes' performance and support long-term development in LTAD. The limitations in this study are the limitations of location and sample, this research was conducted at school and only used a sample of 30 martial arts athletes who were divided into two groups into 15 athletes in the sparring category and 15 in the art category, suggestions for further research examining intercollegiate martial arts anxiety using more samples.

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Conflict of interest

We declare no conflict of interest in this article.

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Information about the authors:

Faris Rizqullah: farisriz502@gmail.com, Study Program of Sport Coaching Education, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia

Prof. Dr. Komarudin, M.Pd.: komarudin_pko@upi.edu, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3693-4353>, Study Program of Sport Coaching Education, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia

Dr. Mochamad Yamin Saputra, M.Pd.: mochyamins@upi.edu, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5358-0884>, Study Program of Sport Coaching Education, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia

Geraldi Novian, M.Pd.: geraldi.novian@upi.edu, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4499-679X>, Study Program of Sport Physical Coaching, Faculty of Sport and Health Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia

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