

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SPORTS COMPETITION.

Dr. Saidia Houari^{1*}, Dr. Nahal Hamid²,

¹*Director of the Laboratory of measurement and evaluation in physical active and sports University Center Tissemsilt, Algeria.*

²*President of research unit.*

***Corresponding Author:-**

Abstract

Sports competition represents a complex psychological environment in which athletes' cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral processes interact dynamically with situational demands. This review synthesizes theoretical models and empirical findings on the psychological characteristics that influence performance in competitive sport. Key constructs discussed include competitive anxiety, stress and coping, motivation, self-confidence, attention and concentration, emotional regulation, personality traits, group dynamics, and resilience. The review highlights both facilitative and debilitating aspects of psychological states and emphasizes the importance of psychological skills training in optimizing performance.

Keywords: Sports competition; Sport psychology; Competitive anxiety; Motivation; Self-confidence; Emotional regulation; Psychological skills training; Athlete performance.

1. Introduction

Sports competition is not solely a physical contest but also a profound psychological experience. Athletes must perform under pressure, regulate emotions, and maintain concentration in dynamic environments. Psychological factors significantly influence performance outcomes and athlete development.

2. Theoretical Foundations

Major theoretical frameworks explaining competitive behavior include Multidimensional Anxiety Theory, Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF), Self-Determination Theory, and Achievement Goal Theory. These models explain how anxiety, motivation, and emotional states affect performance.

3. Key Psychological Characteristics

Key characteristics in competitive sport include competitive anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, attention control, emotional regulation, personality traits, and team cohesion. These factors interact to determine performance consistency and resilience.

4. Psychological Skills Training (PST)

Psychological Skills Training programs incorporate goal setting, imagery, self-talk, relaxation techniques, and mindfulness practices to enhance confidence and reduce anxiety in competition.

5. Conclusion

Sports competition is a multidimensional psychological phenomenon shaped by cognitive, emotional, motivational, and social variables. Understanding these characteristics helps optimize athlete performance and supports long-term psychological development.

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