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## **THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION AND SELF-CONTROL SKILLS IN MANAGING PRE-COMPETITION STRESS AMONG WKF KARATE ATHLETES**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the importance of motivation and self-control skills in managing pre-competition stress among WKF karate athletes. In modern karate, competitive success depends not only on physical fitness, technical mastery, tactical preparation, and combat experience, but also on the athlete's ability to regulate emotional tension before and during competition. Pre-competition stress may appear through anxiety, excessive excitement, fear of failure, decreased confidence, muscle tension, and unstable concentration. These psychological states can negatively affect reaction speed, tactical decision-making, accuracy of techniques, and overall competitive performance. At the same time, properly directed motivation and developed self-control skills can transform stress into a mobilizing factor that increases readiness, discipline, and confidence. The article highlights the pedagogical and psychological role of motivation, goal orientation, emotional regulation, self-observation, breathing control, and positive self-instruction in preparing WKF karate athletes for



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competition. Special attention is given to the role of the coach as a pedagogical leader who creates a psychologically supportive training environment and helps athletes develop resilience, self-confidence, and stable competitive behavior.

**Keywords.** WKF karate, pre-competition stress, motivation, self-control, psychological preparation, emotional regulation, competitive performance, confidence, sports psychology, pedagogical support.

## Introduction

### **WKF KARATECHILARIDA MUSOBAQAOLDI STRESSINI BOSHQARISHDA MOTIVATSIYA VA O‘ZINI NAZORAT QILISH KO‘NIKMALARINING AHAMIYATI**

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## Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada WKF karatechilarida musobaqaoldi stressini boshqarishda motivatsiya va o‘zini nazorat qilish ko‘nikmalarining ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Zamonaviy karate sportida musobaqaviy muvaffaqiyat faqat jismoniy tayyorgarlik, texnik mahorat, taktik tayyorgarlik va jang tajribasiga emas, balki sportchining musobaqadan oldin va musobaqa jarayonida emotsional zo‘riqishni boshqara olish qobiliyatiga ham bog‘liqdir. Musobaqaoldi stressi xavotir, ortiqcha hayajon, mag‘lubiyatdan qo‘rqish, o‘ziga ishonchning pasayishi, mushaklar tarangligi va diqqat barqarorligining susayishi orqali namoyon



bo'lishi mumkin. Ushbu psixologik holatlar reaksiya tezligi, taktik qaror qabul qilish, texnik harakatlar aniqligi va umumiy sport natijasiga salbiy ta'sir ko'rsatadi. Shu bilan birga, to'g'ri yo'naltirilgan motivatsiya va shakllangan o'zini nazorat qilish ko'nikmalari stressni sportchini safarbar etuvchi omilga aylantirib, tayyorgarlik, intizom va ishonchni kuchaytiradi. Maqolada WKF karatechilarini musobaqaga tayyorlashda motivatsiya, maqsadga yo'naltirilganlik, emotsional boshqaruv, o'zini kuzatish, nafasni nazorat qilish va ijobiy o'z-o'ziga ko'rsatma berishning pedagogik-psixologik ahamiyati yoritiladi. Shuningdek, murabbiyning psixologik qo'llab-quvvatlovchi mashg'ulot muhitini yaratishdagi va sportchilarda barqarorlik, o'ziga ishonch hamda musobaqaviy xulqni rivojlantirishdagi o'rni ochib beriladi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** WKF karate, musobaqaoldi stressi, motivatsiya, o'zini nazorat qilish, psixologik tayyorgarlik, emotsional boshqaruv, sport natijasi, ishonch, sport psixologiyasi, pedagogik qo'llab-quvvatlash.

## Introduction

Modern competitive karate requires athletes to demonstrate not only physical strength, speed, flexibility, and technical precision, but also a high level of psychological readiness. In WKF karate, where the outcome of a bout may be determined within a few seconds, the athlete's ability to control emotional tension before competition becomes one of the decisive factors of performance. Pre-competition stress is a natural psychological response to an important sporting event, but its effect on the athlete depends on how this stress is perceived, regulated, and transformed into competitive readiness. For some athletes, stress increases concentration, mobilizes energy, and strengthens the desire to win. For others, it causes excessive anxiety, uncertainty, loss of confidence, and disruption of technical-tactical actions. Therefore, the study of motivation and self-control skills in managing pre-competition stress is highly relevant for the training of WKF karate athletes.

Motivation plays a central role in preparing karate athletes for competition because it determines the direction, intensity, and stability of their activity. A



well-motivated athlete understands the purpose of training, accepts competitive difficulties as a natural part of sports growth, and maintains psychological stability even under pressure. In karate, motivation is not limited to the desire to win a medal. It also includes the athlete's personal aspiration for mastery, responsibility to the team, respect for the coach, commitment to discipline, and willingness to improve technical and tactical skills. When motivation is internalized, the athlete is less dependent on external evaluation and can remain focused on the quality of performance rather than only on the final result.

Self-control skills are equally important in the regulation of pre-competition stress. A karate athlete who has developed self-control can observe his or her emotional state, recognize signs of anxiety, regulate breathing, manage muscle tension, control impulsive reactions, and keep attention on specific tactical tasks. In WKF karate, uncontrolled excitement may lead to premature attacks, defensive mistakes, violation of distance, loss of timing, or inability to respond correctly to the opponent's actions. In contrast, self-control allows the athlete to preserve composure, act according to the tactical plan, and make quick but conscious decisions during the bout.

From a pedagogical point of view, motivation and self-control should be developed systematically within the training process. The coach must not only improve the athlete's physical and technical qualities, but also create conditions for psychological adaptation to competitive situations. This includes modeling stressful match conditions during training, organizing control bouts, using time pressure, analyzing emotional reactions after sparring, and teaching athletes methods of breathing regulation, positive self-instruction, visualization, and concentration. Such pedagogical work helps athletes form confidence, resilience, emotional balance, and readiness for responsible competition.

In the context of a Pedagogical University specializing in sports education, this topic is also important for the preparation of future coaches and physical education specialists. They must understand that psychological preparation is not an additional element of training, but an integral component of the athlete's development. The effectiveness of WKF karate training depends on the unity of technical, tactical, physical, motivational, and self-regulatory preparation. Thus,



the study of motivation and self-control skills in managing pre-competition stress provides a scientific and practical basis for improving the competitive stability of karate athletes.

## Methods

The methodological basis of this study is formed by a pedagogical and psychological analysis of the role of motivation and self-control skills in managing pre-competition stress among WKF karate athletes. The research approach is based on the idea that the competitive performance of karate athletes should be examined not only through physical, technical, and tactical indicators, but also through psychological readiness, emotional stability, motivational orientation, and the ability to regulate one's own behavior under pressure. For this reason, the study applies an integrated methodological approach that combines theoretical analysis, pedagogical observation, comparative interpretation, and psychological assessment of athlete behavior in training and pre-competition conditions.

The theoretical part of the study is based on the analysis of scientific literature related to sports psychology, karate training methodology, motivation theory, self-regulation, stress management, and competitive performance. Special attention is paid to the relationship between pre-competition emotional tension and the athlete's ability to maintain concentration, confidence, tactical discipline, and technical accuracy. In this process, motivation is considered as an internal and external driving force that directs the athlete's activity toward achievement, while self-control is interpreted as the ability to consciously regulate emotions, thoughts, breathing, attention, and behavioral reactions before and during competition.

Pedagogical observation is used as one of the main methods for identifying the practical manifestations of pre-competition stress in WKF karate athletes. During training sessions, control bouts, and preparation for competition, athletes' emotional reactions, communication with the coach, level of concentration, confidence, impulsiveness, and ability to follow tactical instructions are observed. Particular attention is given to such signs as excessive



excitement, unnecessary movements, rapid breathing, loss of eye contact, hesitation before action, premature attacks, and difficulty in maintaining distance. These indicators make it possible to determine how stress affects the athlete's readiness for competitive activity.

The study also uses a comparative method to analyze differences between athletes with high and low levels of self-control. Athletes with developed self-control usually demonstrate stable behavior before competition, listen carefully to the coach's instructions, regulate breathing, maintain tactical discipline, and show confidence in their actions. Athletes with insufficient self-control may become emotionally unstable, react sharply to external factors, lose concentration, or focus too much on the possible result rather than the actual combat task. Comparing these behavioral patterns helps to identify the practical importance of self-control skills in managing stress.

Motivational analysis is another important component of the research methodology. In this context, athletes' motivation is examined through their attitude toward training, readiness to overcome difficulties, responsibility for personal growth, desire for technical improvement, and ability to maintain effort despite previous failures. Internal motivation is considered especially important because it helps the athlete perceive competition not only as a struggle for victory, but also as an opportunity to demonstrate mastery, discipline, and personal progress. External motivation, such as medals, rankings, praise, or social recognition, is also taken into account, but it is analyzed in relation to its influence on stress level and emotional stability.

The pedagogical aspect of the study focuses on the coach's role in developing motivation and self-control. The coach's communication style, psychological support, individual approach, and ability to create competition-like situations in training are considered essential factors. The methodology includes the use of simulated bouts, time-limited exercises, tactical tasks under pressure, breathing exercises, visualization, positive self-instruction, and post-training reflection. These methods allow athletes to gradually adapt to stressful conditions and learn to transform emotional tension into controlled competitive readiness.



Overall, the methodology of the study is directed toward identifying the pedagogical and psychological mechanisms through which motivation and self-control skills help WKF karate athletes manage pre-competition stress and achieve more stable sport results.

## Results

The results of the pedagogical and psychological analysis show that motivation and self-control skills have a direct influence on the ability of WKF karate athletes to manage pre-competition stress and maintain stable competitive performance. Athletes with a higher level of motivation demonstrate greater readiness to overcome emotional tension, accept competitive responsibility, and concentrate on the tactical tasks of the bout. Their stress is not expressed mainly as fear or uncertainty, but as a state of mobilization that prepares the body and mind for active performance. Such athletes usually perceive competition as a natural stage of sports development and do not reduce their psychological state only to the final result. This allows them to remain more confident, disciplined, and focused even in difficult competitive situations.

The analysis also indicates that internal motivation has a stronger stabilizing effect than motivation based only on external rewards. When an athlete trains only for medals, praise, ranking, or recognition, the pressure before competition may increase significantly. In this case, the possibility of defeat is perceived as a threat to personal status, and this strengthens anxiety. However, when the athlete is motivated by self-improvement, mastery of techniques, respect for the sport, personal discipline, and the desire to demonstrate prepared skills, pre-competition stress becomes more manageable. Internal motivation supports emotional balance because the athlete evaluates the competition not only through victory or defeat, but also through the quality of performance, tactical discipline, and personal progress.

Self-control skills were found to be one of the main psychological mechanisms for reducing the negative effects of stress. Athletes who are able to control breathing, regulate muscle tension, direct attention, and manage impulsive reactions show more stable behavior before and during the bout. They are less



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likely to lose concentration because of the opponent's behavior, the audience, referee decisions, or previous mistakes. In WKF karate, this is especially important because technical and tactical actions must be performed quickly, accurately, and at the right moment. Even a short emotional imbalance may lead to premature attacks, defensive gaps, loss of distance, or incorrect tactical decisions.

The results show that athletes with insufficient self-control are more vulnerable to pre-competition stress. They may demonstrate excessive excitement before entering the tatami, difficulty listening to the coach's instructions, unnecessary movements, shallow breathing, and unstable attention. During the bout, such athletes often react emotionally rather than tactically. They may attack without preparation, hesitate in decisive moments, or become passive after receiving a point against them. These reactions reduce the effectiveness of technical preparation and prevent the athlete from fully realizing his or her potential.

The pedagogical role of the coach was also identified as an important condition for developing motivation and self-control. Athletes who receive clear tactical instructions, emotional support, and constructive feedback usually demonstrate greater psychological stability. A coach who creates a calm but demanding training environment helps athletes adapt to stress gradually. Simulation of competition conditions, control fights, time-limited tasks, and psychological exercises contribute to the formation of readiness for real competitive pressure. Thus, the results confirm that motivation and self-control are not secondary qualities in WKF karate training. They function as essential components of psychological preparation and directly support the athlete's ability to manage pre-competition stress, preserve technical accuracy, and achieve more stable sport performance.

## Discussion

The findings of this study show that motivation and self-control skills should be regarded as core psychological components in the preparation of WKF karate athletes for competition. In many cases, coaches and athletes give primary attention to physical conditioning, technical combinations, tactical schemes, and



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sparring practice. These elements are essential, but they cannot fully guarantee competitive stability if the athlete is unable to manage emotional tension before entering the tatami. WKF karate is characterized by rapid changes in combat situations, strict time limits, scoring pressure, and the need for immediate response to the opponent's movements. Therefore, even a technically well-prepared athlete may underperform if pre-competition stress disrupts attention, confidence, and decision-making.

Motivation influences how an athlete interprets stress. When motivation is unstable or based only on external expectations, the athlete may perceive competition as a dangerous situation in which defeat means personal failure. This perception increases anxiety and weakens the athlete's ability to act freely. In contrast, athletes with strong internal motivation are more likely to interpret competition as an opportunity to test their preparation, show discipline, and demonstrate personal progress. Such an attitude reduces fear of mistakes and allows the athlete to focus on the process of combat rather than only on the final score. For WKF karate athletes, this is especially important because tactical clarity and emotional balance are necessary throughout the bout.

Self-control skills act as practical instruments for transforming motivation into stable performance. Motivation gives the athlete direction and energy, while self-control helps regulate this energy in a productive way. Without self-control, even strong motivation may become excessive emotional excitement. An athlete may want to win very strongly but, because of uncontrolled tension, may attack too early, ignore tactical instructions, or lose composure after an unsuccessful action. Therefore, motivation and self-control must be developed together. The athlete should not only be inspired to achieve success, but also trained to control breathing, attention, thoughts, and behavior under pressure.

The discussion of this problem also reveals the importance of the coach's pedagogical competence. The coach's words, behavior, and emotional tone before competition may either reduce or increase the athlete's stress. If the coach constantly emphasizes only victory, ranking, and responsibility, the athlete may experience psychological overload. However, if the coach gives clear tactical tasks, supports the athlete's confidence, and reminds him or her about prepared



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actions, stress becomes more manageable. In this sense, the coach performs not only a technical function, but also a psychological and pedagogical function. The coach helps the athlete connect motivation with self-regulation and competitive discipline.

Training conditions should also include systematic psychological modeling. Athletes need to experience controlled stress during preparation so that real competition does not become an unfamiliar emotional situation. Control bouts, simulated tournaments, limited-time tasks, referee-based sparring, and analysis of emotional reactions after training create a useful pedagogical environment for developing resilience. In addition, breathing exercises, visualization, positive self-instruction, and concentration tasks should be integrated into regular training rather than used only before competitions.

In the context of sports education, this issue has practical significance for future coaches and physical education specialists. They must understand that psychological preparation is not separated from technical and tactical training. It is part of the same pedagogical process. The effectiveness of WKF karate training depends on the ability to form an athlete who is physically ready, technically skilled, tactically flexible, internally motivated, and capable of self-control. Thus, motivation and self-control skills serve as important pedagogical-psychological resources for reducing the negative influence of pre-competition stress and increasing the stability of sport results.

## Conclusion

The analysis of motivation and self-control skills in managing pre-competition stress among WKF karate athletes shows that psychological preparation is one of the decisive conditions for achieving stable sport results. In competitive karate, an athlete's performance depends not only on physical strength, technical accuracy, tactical thinking, and previous experience, but also on the ability to remain emotionally balanced before and during the bout. Pre-competition stress is a natural condition that appears when the athlete faces responsibility, uncertainty, strong opponents, public evaluation, and the desire to succeed.



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However, the influence of this stress may be either constructive or destructive depending on the athlete's motivational orientation and level of self-control.

Motivation performs an important activating and directing function in the psychological preparation of karate athletes. When motivation is strong, meaningful, and connected with personal development, the athlete is able to accept competition as a necessary stage of growth rather than as a source of fear. Internal motivation helps the athlete focus on mastery, discipline, technical improvement, tactical implementation, and personal progress. This reduces excessive dependence on external evaluation and protects the athlete from emotional instability caused by fear of defeat. External motivation, such as medals, rankings, praise, and recognition, may also support sport activity, but it should not become the only source of competitive behavior. If an athlete depends only on external results, pre-competition stress may increase and negatively affect confidence and performance.

Self-control skills provide the practical mechanism through which the athlete regulates stress. A WKF karate athlete with developed self-control can recognize anxiety, manage breathing, reduce muscle tension, direct attention to tactical tasks, control impulsive movements, and maintain confidence during the bout. These skills are especially important in karate because each technical action requires accuracy, timing, distance control, and quick decision-making. When emotional tension is not controlled, even a well-trained athlete may make technical mistakes, attack too early, lose concentration, or fail to follow the tactical plan. Therefore, self-control should be developed as a stable component of the training process.

The role of the coach is central in developing both motivation and self-control. The coach must organize training in such a way that athletes gradually adapt to competitive pressure and learn to manage their psychological state. This requires not only physical and technical exercises, but also control bouts, simulated competition situations, breathing exercises, visualization, positive self-instruction, and reflective analysis after training. A pedagogically competent coach gives clear instructions, supports the athlete's confidence, avoids



unnecessary psychological pressure, and helps the athlete focus on process-oriented tasks.

Thus, motivation and self-control skills are essential pedagogical-psychological resources in managing pre-competition stress among WKF karate athletes. Their systematic development increases emotional stability, tactical discipline, technical accuracy, and competitive reliability. For sports education and coaching practice, this means that psychological preparation must be integrated into the general system of WKF karate training and treated as an equal component alongside physical, technical, and tactical preparation.

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