

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPING STRESS RESILIENCE IN WRESTLERS

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### Abstract

In modern competitive sport, psychological preparedness has become one of the key determinants of athletic success. In combat sports such as wrestling, athletes are exposed to intense psychological pressure due to direct confrontation with opponents, high expectations of performance, and the uncertainty of competitive outcomes. Therefore, the development of stress resilience plays a critical role in ensuring stable performance and effective decision-making during competition. The purpose of this study is to analyze the psychological characteristics involved in developing stress resilience among wrestlers and to identify the main psychological mechanisms that contribute to their ability to cope with stress in competitive environments.

The research is based on theoretical and empirical analyses of existing studies in sport psychology, particularly those related to stress management, emotional regulation, psychological resilience, and mental toughness in combat sports. Various research methods were applied, including literature review, psychological analysis, comparative evaluation, and interpretation of empirical findings from previous studies conducted in wrestling and other combat sports disciplines.

The results indicate that stress resilience in wrestlers is influenced by several key psychological factors, including emotional stability, self-confidence, mental toughness, motivation, cognitive control, and coping strategies. Wrestlers with higher levels of psychological resilience demonstrate better adaptability to stressful situations, improved concentration during competition, and enhanced performance outcomes. Additionally, psychological training methods such as mental imagery, relaxation techniques, self-regulation exercises, and cognitive restructuring significantly contribute to improving stress resistance in athletes.

The findings of this research highlight the importance of integrating psychological training into the overall preparation of wrestlers. Developing structured psychological support programs within sports training systems may

significantly enhance athletes' ability to cope with competitive stress and maintain high levels of performance.

### **Keywords**

wrestling, sport psychology, stress resilience, psychological training, emotional regulation, combat sports, mental toughness

### **Introduction**

The rapid development of modern sport has significantly increased the physical and psychological demands placed on athletes. In elite-level competitions, the difference between victory and defeat often depends not only on physical preparedness but also on psychological stability. In this context, the ability to effectively manage stress has become a fundamental factor determining athletic success. This is particularly evident in combat sports, where athletes must simultaneously demonstrate technical skills, tactical thinking, and emotional control under intense psychological pressure.

Wrestling is considered one of the most psychologically demanding sports due to its highly competitive nature and direct physical confrontation between athletes. During matches, wrestlers must make rapid decisions, control their emotions, and maintain concentration while facing unpredictable situations. These conditions often create significant psychological stress that may influence performance outcomes.

Stress in sport can be defined as a psychological and physiological response to situations perceived as challenging or threatening to an athlete's performance goals. Competitive stress may arise from various sources, including expectations from coaches and spectators, fear of failure, uncertainty about outcomes, and the physical demands of competition. If not properly managed, stress may negatively affect cognitive processes, emotional stability, and motor performance.

According to contemporary theories in sport psychology, stress resilience refers to an individual's ability to maintain psychological stability and effective functioning under stressful conditions. Athletes with high levels of resilience are better able to cope with competitive pressure, adapt to unexpected circumstances, and maintain optimal performance levels. In contrast, athletes with low stress tolerance may experience anxiety, loss of concentration, and decreased performance during critical moments of competition.

Researchers have identified several psychological constructs closely related to stress resilience in athletes. These include mental toughness, emotional regulation, self-efficacy, motivation, and coping strategies. Mental toughness, for example, is often described as a psychological advantage that enables athletes to remain

confident, focused, and determined despite challenges or adversity. Similarly, emotional regulation refers to the ability to control and manage emotional responses in stressful situations.

In combat sports such as wrestling, the importance of psychological resilience becomes even more significant due to the unique characteristics of these disciplines. Unlike many team sports, wrestlers must rely entirely on their own abilities during competition. This individual responsibility increases the psychological burden on athletes and requires a higher level of mental preparedness.

Previous research has shown that wrestlers who possess strong psychological resilience demonstrate better competitive performance and greater consistency in their results. These athletes are more capable of maintaining concentration, controlling emotions, and executing tactical decisions under pressure. Moreover, psychological resilience contributes to faster recovery from failures and setbacks, allowing athletes to maintain long-term motivation and engagement in sport.

Another important aspect of stress resilience in wrestling is the ability to cope with pre-competition anxiety. Many athletes experience heightened levels of nervousness before competitions, which may affect their readiness and confidence. Effective coping strategies, such as relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, and mental imagery, can help athletes regulate anxiety and maintain optimal psychological states.

In recent years, sport psychologists have increasingly emphasized the role of structured psychological training programs in enhancing athletes' mental resilience. These programs often include techniques such as visualization, goal setting, positive self-talk, and mindfulness-based interventions. Such approaches aim to strengthen athletes' ability to manage stress and maintain focus during competitions.

Despite the growing interest in psychological preparation in sport, there remains a need for further research focusing specifically on wrestlers. Most existing studies have examined stress resilience in athletes in general or have focused on other combat sports such as boxing, judo, or martial arts. Therefore, investigating the psychological characteristics of stress resilience development in wrestlers may contribute to improving training methodologies and psychological support systems in this sport.

The present study aims to analyze the psychological factors that influence the development of stress resilience in wrestlers and to identify effective psychological strategies that can enhance athletes' ability to cope with competitive stress. Understanding these mechanisms may provide valuable insights for coaches, sport

psychologists, and athletes seeking to optimize performance through improved psychological preparation.

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