

## INSTILLING RELIGIOUS VALUES IN TAEKWONDO ATHLETES KOGURYO MANAHAN: INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUALITY IN MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF ATHLETES

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores how the instillation of religious values in the taekwondo athlete training program at the Koguryo Manahan Dojang in Surakarta Indonesia impacts the development of a champion mentality. Using a descriptive qualitative approach involving observation, interviews, documentation, and interactive analysis, it was found that religious values are instilled in a structured manner. Spiritual habits during training, coach role models, adjustments to prayer times, post-training reflections, value discussions, and the assignment of social responsibility are some of the techniques used. Research shows that incorporating spiritual values increases intrinsic motivation, emotional stability, moral thinking, and self-control in competitive situations. Therefore, religious training at the Koguryo Manahan Dojang fosters a champion mentality that is strong religiously and achieves. In addition to developing a quantitative instrument to measure mental stress and religiosity, this study suggests the application of a similar model in other sporting environments.

**Keywords:** religiosity, Taekwondo, champion mentality, athlete development, Koguryo Manahan

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sports not only improve stamina and athletic ability, but also serve as a strategic tool for building character and instilling moral values. In such a situation, athlete development must incorporate mental and spiritual aspects in addition to technical and physical aspects. Instilling religious values as part of comprehensive mental development is an increasingly popular approach in today's sports world. According to Hakiman and Mustofa (2022), physical and spiritual education is crucial for everyone, both teachers and coaches.

Taekwondo, one of the most popular martial arts in Indonesia, embodies noble philosophies such as compassion, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and a never-give-up spirit. This philosophy aligns with religious principles taught by various religions. However, to develop moral and high-achieving athletes, these values must be systematically internalized during training, coaching, and competition.

The Koguryo Manahan Taekwondo Dojang is a martial arts club that prioritizes the mental and spiritual development of athletes. This club strives to produce athletes with high mental resilience, sportsmanship, and daily religious behavior by combining physical training, spiritual guidance, and strengthening religious values. This effort is crucial given the moral

dilemmas facing the younger generation in an increasingly complex technological era, including in the world of sports.

There has been little academic research specifically examining how religious principles are incorporated into martial arts training and how this impacts athletes' mental resilience. Therefore, further research on the process of instilling religious values in Koguryo Manahan Taekwondo is crucial, as it represents an innovation in athlete development that is both physical and mental.

Achievement in taekwondo depends not only on physical and technical abilities but also on mental strength. Athletes with a champion mentality possess the ability to stay focused, confident, resilient under pressure, and able to bounce back from failure. Therefore, producing high-achieving athletes requires mental development as a strategic component.

Strengthening religious principles or religiosity is one approach that is beginning to gain attention in athlete mental development. Beliefs, religious practices, spiritual experiences, knowledge of religious teachings, and the moral implications of these values in daily life are all aspects of religiosity (Glock & Stark, 1965). Athletes can use these values as an internal strength that helps them manage their emotions, remain consistent, and face the pressures of competition with composure and resolve.

According to Lippona (2004), sport is more than just a physical activity aimed at achieving a specific goal. It is also a useful tool for building a strong personality. An athlete's success in competitive sports depends on their mental strength and technical ability. A champion's mentality is the key factor that distinguishes high-achieving athletes from average athletes. A champion's mentality is the psychological strength that enables athletes to withstand pressure, manage emotions, stay focused, and bounce back from failure (Clough et al., 2002; Gucciardi et al., 2015).

A champion's mentality is not developed instantly. It is the result of comprehensive training, involving the development of emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual abilities. Various strategies have been developed in recent years to increase athletes' mental resilience; one of these is building personality through religious principles. In this regard, religiosity is not only defined as the formal practice of religion; it also encompasses aspects such as faith, spiritual experiences, ethical behavior, and moral awareness in one's life, including in sports (Saroglou, 2011; Pargament, 2007).

According to Glock and Stark (1965), religiosity has five dimensions: ideological (belief), ritual (religious practice), experiential (spiritual experience), intellectual (understanding of teachings), and consequential (influence on behavior). If these five dimensions are systematically applied in an athlete's life, they can become resilient, disciplined, humble, and possess a clear purpose in life.

It is believed that the application of religious values can balance achievement with the strengthening of moral values. Several studies have shown that religiosity is positively correlated with various indicators of mental resilience, such as gratitude, self-control, stress management, and a spirit of perseverance (Abdullah et al., 2023; Mullachelasari et al., 2025; Pargament, 2007). Religiosity gives meaning to every step of the practice and Competition in

athletics is also a stronger source of intrinsic motivation than external incentives such as medals or awards. According to Yusof and Shah (2017), religiosity also fosters sportsmanship, a strong competitive ethic, and respect for opponents.

As the world's largest Muslim country, religious methods in athlete development are still underappreciated in the formal training system. According to Hasan (2019), many coaches and sports institutions focus solely on developing athletes' physical and technical skills without considering the spiritual aspects of developing athletes' personalities. Because Indonesians are a religious society, and religious values are central to their daily lives, it is crucial to study how religious values can be applied in athlete training, particularly in the martial art of Taekwondo, which has been a moral and spiritual philosophy from its inception.

Taekwondo upholds values such as respect (politeness), integrity (honesty), perseverance (perseverance), self-control (self-control), and indomit (modesty). To develop religious athletes with a champion mentality, these values can be utilized because they align closely with religious teachings. Training or work environments are strategic places to instill these values through an integrated physical and spiritual approach (Kukkiwon, 2022; Abdullah et al., 2023).

This case study focuses on the Dojang Taekwondo Koguryo Manahan Surakarta martial arts club, which incorporates religious values into its training process. This dojang not only produces physically strong athletes but also morally and spiritually strong individuals through activities such as group prayer, moral discourse, and religious practices. Hakiman (2018) found that people practice taekwondo not only to improve martial arts techniques but also to actualize important values such as mental health and character development. To understand how religiosity influences the mental resilience and character of champion athletes, these practices are interesting to explore further.

This article is crucial for gaining a better understanding of the relationship between a champion mentality and religiosity. It is hoped that this article will provide a theoretical basis for the advancement of sports science and sports psychology, as well as practical benefits for the design of training programs that focus on achievement and building religious, resilient, and high-integrity characters.

## 2.0 RESEARCH METHODS

The process of instilling religious values in the mental development of Taekwondo athletes at the Koguryo Manahan Dojang was conducted using descriptive qualitative research. Observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation were used to collect data. Coaches, athletes, and parents were the subjects of this study. Triangulation of sources, methods, and theories was conducted to ensure data validity. Data analysis was conducted using Miles Huberman's interactive analysis model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data were analyzed periodically throughout the process to identify patterns, meaning, and correlations between the results.

## 3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religious values are incorporated into daily training at the Koguryo Manahan Taekwondo Dojang as part of the athlete development process. According to Glock and Stark, the five

dimensions of religiosity consist of ideology, ritual practice, experience, knowledge, and consequences, and these dimensions are viewed from various perspectives. Each dimension works together to develop mentally resilient athletes with character and religious convictions.

The way coaches open training sessions by encouraging spiritual aspirations demonstrates this ideological dimension. For example, coaches often remind that training is a duty to safeguard the body entrusted to them by God, not simply to pursue victory. In an interview, one athlete stated that he learned that strength comes from sincerity and self-confidence, not just physical strength. This fosters a strong self-confidence that is not easily shaken by pressure because it is based on spiritual conviction rather than ego.

Through the ideological dimension (belief), athletes are formed with a strong religious foundation. Training is seen as a form of trust and worship, not just a physical routine. Coaches continually emphasize that the body and strength belong to God and must be cared for with sincerity. Athletes possess a faith that helps them avoid frustration when they lose, as they understand that defeat is part of destiny and they must give their all. Because they are less easily swayed by external pressure, religious athletes demonstrate greater mental resilience.

Terms of ritual practices, each training session appears to begin and end with a communal prayer, in accordance with each athlete's religious affiliation. Training times are also adjusted to avoid interfering with religious obligations such as congregational Maghrib or Isha prayers. To avoid interfering with athletes fasting during Ramadan, training intensity must be adjusted. This practice instills spiritual discipline and a conscious need to balance spiritual obligations with physical training. Some athletes report that praying before a match calms them and improves their focus.

Terms of ritual practice, worship habits such as praying together before and after training, and adjusting training schedules to prayer or fasting times, demonstrate the importance of regularity, discipline, and respect for sacred time. This teaches athletes to carefully manage their emotions and energy. Athletes, for example, can remain focused and calm during training while fasting because they are accustomed to managing their physical and mental state. Furthermore, prayer serves as a self-regulation tool, which some athletes report helps them calm down before a match, increase their confidence, and reduce anxiety.

Ahead of belt exams or training sessions, a spiritual dimension emerges through moments of reflection. Coaches provide athletes with opportunities for personal reflection and self-reflection. This activity strengthens self-awareness and gratitude for their physical abilities. One athlete said that reflecting after training helped him reduce anger when losing a match and made him feel better when he won.

Spiritual experiences driven by the experiential dimension provide athletes with opportunities to reflect on and internalize the values inherent in training. Athletes are encouraged to spend time reflecting individually or in groups after intense training sessions or belt exams. This reflection increases self-awareness, a crucial component in developing a champion mentality. Athletes become more aware of the purpose of their training, more appreciative of each process, and closer to the values they champion. Because they have learned to manage their emotions calmly and introspectively, this experience makes them better equipped to deal with emotional stress.

Coaches and athletes discuss religious principles and martial ethics, enhancing their religious knowledge. For example, ethics and integrity, the core principles of Taekwondo, are explained by linking them to religious moral teachings. Athletes understand movements not only from a technical perspective but also from a philosophical and moral perspective. This helps them understand the meaning of victory and defeat and encourages them to make moral decisions during competition.

The rational aspect of a champion mentality is strongly influenced by the knowledge dimension, or intellectual knowledge. When coaches connect Taekwondo philosophy with religious teachings, athletes are able to practice not only mechanical training techniques but also gain an understanding of the moral and ethical principles underlying the sport. To make decisions on the field, athletes have a clear basis for thinking about things like honesty, fairness, and mutual respect. This knowledge enhances their moral wisdom and helps them think clearly in a stressful competitive environment.

Athletes' behavior during training demonstrates consequential aspects. They are taught to be fair during sparring, avoid provoking junior athletes, and assist teammates struggling with technique. When athletes exhibit unsportsmanlike behavior or are overly emotional, coaches often reprimand them directly. Gradually, this fosters a strong and empathetic social character. Athletes learn to control their emotions, especially when they face provocation during competition.

The consequential dimension, all instilled values are tested in social interactions between athletes. Emotional maturity is demonstrated by athletes helping teammates, controlling their emotions during sparring, and maintaining a sportsmanlike attitude whether they win or lose. In these situations, a champion's mentality is not just about strength and courage; it also involves social sensitivity, self-control, and empathy. Athletes are accustomed to developing self-control in daily training, enabling them to act wisely when faced with a tough opponent or a tense competition situation.

Overall, implementing these five dimensions of religiosity helps improve athletes' mental resilience. The knowledge dimension encourages moral thinking, the experience dimension enhances inner awareness, the ideology dimension provides spiritual stability, the ritual dimension instills discipline and composure, and the consequential dimension regulates emotions and social responsibility. Because of this, training at the Koguryo Manahan Taekwondo Dojang focuses not only on achieving athletic achievement but also on developing a strong champion mental and religious character.

Based on the findings of the examination and interviews, it can be concluded that the application of religious values in these five dimensions has a significant impact on the development of mental toughness, or mental resilience. Religious values foster courage, sincerity, and steadfastness in facing challenges; athletes demonstrate increased focus, intrinsic motivation, resilience to stress, and emotional stability.

Therefore, the religiosity development program at the Koguryo Manahan Dojang has created a training environment that not only enhances performance but also produces athletes with a champion mentality, meaning physical strength, logical reasoning, and spiritual strength.

Character development aims to educate taekwondo interns in self-development, thereby creating mentally and spiritually competent martial artists (Hakiman, 2022).

The Koguryo Manahan Dojang uses an integrative, contextual, and applied approach to instill religious values in Taekwondo athletes. Coaches and dojang administrators consciously create a coaching plan that focuses on strengthening character and religious principles in addition to mastering martial arts techniques. This method develops gradually, naturally, and becomes ingrained in daily training.

First, religious principles are instilled through spiritual practices, such as communal prayer at the beginning and end of training sessions. This prayer not only serves as a religious symbol but also fosters good intentions, gratitude, and an awareness of humanity's insignificance before God. In practice, coaches repeatedly lead prayers and remind athletes to always include God in all their endeavors, including training and playing.

Second, coaches teach directly. In addition to verbal instruction, values such as patience, honesty, humility, and discipline are practiced daily. Athletes report that coaches' calm, even-tempered, and fair judgment serve as a source of inspiration and moral learning. This role model creates a positive spiritual atmosphere in the training area.

Third, aligning training programs with religious activities instills religious values. For example, athletes can train at a moderate intensity during Ramadan so they can perform their religious duties without feeling guilty or pressured. This demonstrates that achievement cannot be achieved at the expense of religious values and instills respect for religious time.

Fourth, spiritual reflection and self-reflection are used in the form of contemplation after a promotion exam or after training. Athletes are given time to consider the purpose of their training, reflect on the reasons behind it, and consider their attitude toward opponents and teammates. The focus of this time is to increase their self-awareness and spiritual closeness, so they can manage emotions and stress more wisely.

Fifth, coaches provide moral guidance through value discussions. This is usually done in a relaxed manner, discussing the basic principles of Taekwondo, such as compassion, truthfulness, perseverance, independence, and unwavering spirit, all of which are related to religious teachings. Athletes discuss how these values relate to honesty, justice, responsibility, and righteous intentions in their respective religions.

Sixth, coaches combine religious education with social responsibility. Senior athletes are responsible for assisting juniors, maintaining discipline, and assisting in training. This responsibility is instilled through the practice of values such as trustworthiness, mutual assistance, and sincerity, not merely as a technical task. Spiritual values are integrated into martial arts activities through a transformative and contextual approach to religious education. As a result, athletes not only develop physical and technical endurance but also mental and spiritual resilience. They also develop personalities grounded in religious values and morality.

The application of religious values at the Koguryo Manahan Dojang through an ideological and ritual approach has shown significant improvements in athletes' mental toughness. Coaches inform athletes that training is not just a sport, but also a religious duty and worship. This aligns

with a psychoreligious approach relevant to Muslim athletes, according to Anirotul & Husna (2024), where the concept of sabr (patience) and awareness of human limitations provide mental strength and focus in competitive situations.

The practice of prayer before and after training serves as a method of religious self-regulation that helps reduce anxiety and maintain emotional balance. It also increases intrinsic motivation, not only at the technical level but also at the level of clear intention (intention orientation). According to Schnitker et al. (2020), religiosity enhances patience and purpose in life through meaning-making. Therefore, a consistently instilled spiritual structure provides a strong mental foundation for athletes when facing the pressure of competition.

It has been proven that the affective, cognitive, and social aspects of a champion's mentality are strengthened by instilling values through experiential, intellectual, and consequential dimensions. According to Clough et al. (2002), post-workout reflection practices, also known as self-awareness training, improve athletes' ability to manage their emotions, increase their humility, and develop adaptive coping strategies. All of these are important characteristics of mental strength.

Spiritual habits, such as group prayer at the beginning and end of training, and the moral example demonstrated by coaches at the Koguryo Manahan Dojang, are part of a psychological coaching strategy that helps athletes increase their independence and mental strength. According to Guntoro & Putra (2022), religious self-control through prayer is known to reduce anxiety and increase athletes' focus before competition. This aligns with the success of self-supportive coaching, which enables athletes to internalize the principles and culture of training and reduce coercive control (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Jones, 2006).

When coaches demonstrate patience, honesty, and discipline during daily interactions, they create a training environment that supports the overall mental growth of champions, focusing not only on final results but also on moral and emotional solidity. In sports psychology, experiential learning and transformational leadership approaches are linked to the application of techniques such as reflection (muhasabah), value discussions, and the assignment of social responsibility.

According to Clough et al. (2002), post-training reflection provides athletes with the opportunity to increase self-awareness and manage emotions, two key components of mental fortitude. A coaching leadership model that emphasizes social responsibility enhances psychological ownership and athlete engagement. Findings by Zhang & Fan (2024) indicate that authentic and transformational leadership styles have a significant impact on the psychological well-being and engagement of athletes. Therefore, the integrative method of Dojang Koguryo Manahan helps develop the physical and mental discipline of champions.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Instilling religious values into the athlete training process at the Koguryo Manahan Taekwondo Dojang significantly contributes to the development of a champion mentality, encompassing spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and social aspects. Through an approach that addresses the five dimensions of religiosity, according to Glock and Stark: ideology, ritual practice, experience, knowledge, and related spiritual values, religiosity is not only taught theoretically but also

practically internalized in daily activities. It has been proven that prayer, reflection, coaching by coaches, and value discussions enhance mental resilience, emotional control, and willpower in athletes. Therefore, the development of religiosity at this taekwondo club creates a training environment that fosters a deep spiritual identity and character, in addition to enhancing performance.

This article has limitations. First, because the descriptive qualitative design used only covered one study location at the Koguryo Manahan Dojang, the results cannot be generalized to other dojangs. By using a spiritual sports development approach, coaches and sports trainers can instill religious values in mental training programs. This model can be used by educational and sports institutions of the Ministry of Youth and Sports or the Ministry of Religion to build sports-based character education, especially in the martial arts branch.

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