

Analysis of the Relationship between Competitive Psychological Regulation Strategies and Performance in Badminton Athletes

Jiangtao Cheng*

Hankou University, Wuhan, 430212, China

*Corresponding author: 18696131180@163.com

Abstract: As a high-intensity, fast-reacting, and continuous confrontation sport, badminton places significant demands on athletes' psychological qualities and regulation abilities. Psychological regulation, as a core concept in sports psychology, influences athletes' attention allocation, emotional stability, and motor execution through multidimensional means, including cognition, emotion, and behavior, thereby directly affecting competitive performance. Based on a systematic review of the concept and classification of psychological regulation and an analysis of the psychological characteristics of badminton athletes, this study explores the application patterns of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral regulation strategies and constructs a linkage model between psychological regulation strategies and competitive performance. The findings indicate that different strategies exert differentiated and synergistic effects on technical execution, maintenance of psychological state, and optimization of strategy combinations, providing theoretical support for the scientific application of psychological regulation. This study not only enriches the theoretical understanding of psychological regulation in badminton athletes within sports psychology but also offers innovative references for athletes' psychological training and enhancement of competitive performance.

Keywords: badminton; psychological regulation; cognitive strategies; emotional strategies; behavioral strategies; competitive performance

Introduction

Badminton athletes face highly dynamic technical, tactical, and psychological pressures during competition, and their performance depends not only on the precision of technical actions and the execution of tactics but also on the stability of their psychological state. Psychological regulation strategies enable self-regulation of mental states at cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels, optimizing attention allocation, emotion management, and the stability of action execution, thereby exerting a positive influence on competitive performance. Although existing research has preliminarily explored the relationship between psychological regulation and athletic performance, systematic analyses specifically targeting badminton athletes remain relatively limited, particularly regarding the synergistic effects of different strategy types and the construction of strategy combination models, which still lack empirical support. The necessity of this study lies in providing athletes with scientific and individualized psychological regulation pathways while offering theoretical and practical references for psychological training methods and performance optimization. By systematically analyzing the classification of psychological regulation strategies, their application patterns, and their effects on technical execution and psychological state, this study aims to construct a theoretical model linking strategy combinations with performance optimization, thereby offering innovative approaches for developing psychological capabilities and enhancing competitive performance in badminton athletes.

1. Theoretical Basis and Current Research on Psychological Regulation

1.1 Concept and Classification of Psychological Regulation

Psychological regulation is a core topic in the study of sports psychology, referring to the mental processes through which athletes actively intervene and dynamically adjust their cognition, emotion, and behavior under high-intensity confrontation and pressure environments to maintain or enhance

competitive performance. This process not only concerns the management of immediate psychological states but also involves the accumulation of long-term mental capacities and the habitual internalization of psychological strategies, characterized by dynamism, systematicity, and individual differences. The essence of psychological regulation lies in athletes' ability to achieve consistency between mental states and behavior through the interaction of internal psychological resources and external competitive environments, thereby maintaining the stability and continuity of performance under uncertain and high-risk competition conditions ^[1].

From a classification perspective, psychological regulation can be divided into three dimensions: cognitive regulation, emotional regulation, and behavioral regulation. Cognitive regulation focuses on athletes' information processing and thinking patterns, optimizing psychological resources through strategies such as goal setting, attention allocation, positive self-talk, and mental rehearsal. Emotional regulation emphasizes the identification, response, and control of emotional experiences, commonly employing methods such as breath control, muscle relaxation, emotion redirection, and positive self-motivation to maintain psychological balance and prevent anxiety and tension from negatively affecting performance. Behavioral regulation highlights overt actions and behavior patterns, including ritualized movements, competition rhythm control, and fixed habitual actions, transforming psychological states into stable technical execution through operable behavioral means. These three regulation types do not exist in isolation in practice but are nested and intertwined, collectively forming an integrated system of psychological regulation for athletes. This system not only explains the patterns of athletes' psychological changes at different competition stages but also provides multidimensional theoretical support for the design of psychological training and intervention.

1.2 Analysis of Psychological Characteristics of Badminton Athletes

Badminton imposes unique demands on athletes' psychological qualities, as the sport features a fast-paced rhythm, high reaction requirements, and frequent alternation between technical and tactical actions, requiring athletes to make rapid judgments, execute movements, and adjust strategies within a short time. Under such high psychological load, athletes' mental states exhibit significant fluctuations. Feelings of anxiety, tension, or pressure may impair attention focus and motor coordination, whereas psychological resilience and self-efficacy can effectively enhance the stability of technical execution and the accuracy of competitive decision-making. The complexity of these psychological characteristics necessitates that regulation strategies address both immediacy and continuity to cope with the constantly changing stressors during competition.

Moreover, badminton athletes' psychological traits are characterized by the coexistence of high cognitive sensitivity and emotional sensitivity. On one hand, athletes can quickly capture information from the competitive context and optimize decision-making; on the other hand, emotional experiences are easily influenced by external factors, directly affecting competition rhythm and technical execution. Therefore, psychological regulation for athletes is not merely unidirectional stress management but involves comprehensive adjustment of cognitive processing, emotional control, and behavioral adaptation. A deep understanding of athletes' psychological characteristics facilitates the development of more targeted and scientifically grounded psychological regulation strategies and provides a theoretical basis for evaluating the impact of such regulation on competitive performance ^[2].

1.3 Research Progress and Theoretical Framework

Domestic and international studies indicate a significant relationship between psychological regulation strategies and athletic performance. Research generally combines psychological questionnaires, experimental interventions, and competition data analysis to explore the effectiveness of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral regulation strategies in competitive sports. Studies specifically targeting badminton show that cognitive regulation strategies can enhance athletes' abilities in rapid decision-making and attention focus, emotional regulation strategies can alleviate competition anxiety and strengthen psychological resilience, and behavioral regulation strategies play a crucial role in controlling competition rhythm and ensuring movement stability. Different strategies exhibit varying effects across competition stages and among individual athletes, suggesting that psychological regulation strategies should possess individualized and dynamically adaptive characteristics.

In terms of theoretical construction, psychological regulation strategies and competitive performance can be conceptualized as a cognitive–emotional–behavioral three-dimensional linkage model, optimizing athletes' competitive states and technical performance through strategy

combinations. This model emphasizes the systematicity, continuity, and adaptability of psychological regulation, providing a scientific basis for psychological training and an operational analytical path for empirical research. The theoretical innovation lies in viewing psychological regulation strategies as a dynamic process rather than a static technique, focusing on the interactive effects of strategy combinations and their comprehensive impact on technical precision, tactical execution efficiency, and psychological resilience, thereby offering a new perspective for research on psychological regulation in badminton athletes [3].

2. Classification and Application Patterns of Psychological Regulation Strategies in Badminton Athletes

2.1 Cognitive Regulation Strategies and Their Application

The core of cognitive regulation strategies lies in using mental reconstruction and guided thinking to help athletes allocate attention resources effectively, optimize information processing, and enhance tactical decision-making. In badminton competition, athletes face high-pressure situations with fast incoming shots and continuous offense and defense, where even momentary lapses in attention or delayed judgment can result in lost points. Cognitive regulation strategies establish a psychological orientation function by setting clear goals, employing positive self-talk, and adjusting attentional focus, enabling athletes to maintain a clear tactical mindset in complex environments. Goal setting not only helps athletes clarify stage-specific tasks but also reduces psychological load caused by external uncertainty, while mental rehearsal strengthens anticipation and response patterns by simulating possible competitive scenarios, thereby improving psychological preparedness and accuracy of execution.

At the application level, cognitive regulation strategies exhibit distinct individual characteristics. Differences in cognitive style, thinking sensitivity, and psychological resource allocation among athletes determine their adaptability to the same strategy and the resulting effectiveness. Some athletes maintain stability more easily through logical goal setting, whereas others rely more on imagery training and mental simulation to achieve optimal states. The dynamic adjustment of cognitive regulation is equally important, as athletes must continuously modify their regulation strategies based on competition progress, opponent level, and their own psychological state. For example, at the beginning of a match, broad attention facilitates rapid information capture, while during critical points, narrow attention helps athletes focus on executing key technical actions. By introducing cognitive interventions based on complex competition scenarios into training, athletes can gradually develop stable mental processing patterns, ensuring clear judgment and efficient tactical execution under high-pressure conditions.

2.2 Emotional Regulation Strategies and Their Application

Emotional regulation strategies emphasize athletes' perception, recognition, and control of psychological emotions, aiming to maintain emotional stability and positivity, thereby preventing emotional fluctuations from negatively affecting competitive performance. Badminton competition is characterized by high-intensity confrontation and rapid scoring transitions, requiring athletes to face frequent experiences of success and failure within a short time, which can easily trigger anxiety, impatience, or frustration. If these emotions are not effectively managed, they can directly disrupt attention focus and motor coordination. Common emotional regulation techniques include deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, emotion redirection, and self-motivation, through which athletes can reduce tension at the physiological level and strengthen self-control and psychological resilience at the mental level [4].

Effective emotional regulation depends not only on the strategies themselves but also on individual emotional sensitivity and psychological structure. High-level athletes often possess strong emotional awareness and self-monitoring abilities, enabling them to quickly identify emotional fluctuations during competition and implement timely interventions. For example, when experiencing anxiety, athletes may rapidly restore psychological balance through deep breathing and self-talk, while in trailing situations, positive emotion redirection strategies can help athletes rebuild confidence and fighting spirit. Systematic emotional regulation training enhances athletes' tolerance for negative emotions and their ability to manage them, gradually establishing adaptive mechanisms for coping with high-pressure environments. In badminton, emotional regulation is not only an independent

psychological intervention but also a prerequisite for the effective functioning of cognitive and behavioral regulation, reflecting the integrative and interdependent nature of the psychological regulation system.

2.3 Behavioral Regulation Strategies and Integration Model

Behavioral regulation strategies achieve the coupling of psychological states and technical performance through specific behavior patterns, control of movement rhythm, and ritualized actions. Badminton athletes often rely on fixed behavioral sequences, such as pre-serve preparations, post-shot rhythm adjustments, or specific racket-grip habits, to provide stable support for their psychological state. These behaviors are considered “psychological anchors” in psychology, helping athletes quickly return to familiar mental trajectories under tension, thereby reducing attention shifts and movement errors caused by stress. In this way, athletes can not only establish a sense of psychological security but also enhance the consistency and coherence of technical execution.

The core value of behavioral regulation lies in externalizing the outcomes of cognitive and emotional regulation into observable actions, completing a closed-loop control between mind and movement. Within the theoretical framework, cognitive strategies provide support for information processing and decision-making, emotional strategies maintain psychological stability, and behavioral strategies embed the effects of psychological regulation into competitive actions through fixed and rhythmic movement patterns. This integration model emphasizes the synergistic effects of the three strategy types and highlights the dynamic adaptability of psychological regulation. For example, when athletes experience emotional fluctuations during a match, cognitive restructuring helps them refocus, emotional strategies stabilize their mental state, and behavioral strategies translate the adjustments into shot execution and on-court rhythm, achieving a high degree of alignment between psychological state and competitive performance. The proposed model offers innovative approaches for psychological training in badminton, enabling optimal allocation of psychological resources and continuous enhancement of competitive performance through the coordinated application of multidimensional strategies [5].

3. Analysis of the Relationship between Psychological Regulation Strategies and Competitive Performance

3.1 Association of Psychological Regulation Strategies with Technical Execution

Psychological regulation strategies play a decisive role in the technical execution of badminton athletes, affecting not only the accuracy and stability of movements but also the efficiency of responses and coordination under high-pressure confrontation. Cognitive regulation strategies optimize information processing and attention allocation, enabling athletes to make rapid judgments and maintain precision during fast-paced offensive and defensive transitions. Research shows that when athletes apply goal-setting and self-talk strategies, they can effectively reduce attention dispersion caused by tension, thereby improving the speed and accuracy of action execution. Meanwhile, mental rehearsal and pre-competition imagery training provide athletes with a psychological simulation platform, allowing them to anticipate complex competitive scenarios and reduce uncertainty in technical execution.

Emotional regulation strategies also have a significant impact on technical performance. High-intensity matches often involve anxiety and tension, which can directly impair movement continuity and coordination. Through deep breathing, emotion redirection, and self-motivation, athletes can effectively suppress excessive emotional reactions, maintain movement fluency and rhythm, and reduce error rates caused by anxiety. Behavioral regulation strategies emphasize translating psychological regulation into observable technical performance through ritualized actions and competition rhythm control. For example, fixed pre-serve movements and post-shot rhythm adjustments serve as psychological anchors, helping athletes maintain stability under high-pressure conditions. Overall, the role of psychological regulation strategies in technical execution extends beyond reducing errors and enhancing efficiency; it promotes dynamic coordination among psychological state, movement, and competitive environment, enabling athletes to achieve higher levels of technical performance in complex confrontations [6].

3.2 Effects of Psychological Regulation Strategies on Competitive Mental State

In competitive sports, athletes' psychological states directly determine their stability and adaptability during matches, and psychological regulation strategies play a central role in maintaining and optimizing these states. Cognitive strategies, by reconstructing competitive scenarios and reinforcing goal orientation, help enhance athletes' self-efficacy and sense of psychological control. When athletes clearly perceive match tasks and transform pressure into challenge, they can better realize their potential and reduce psychological fluctuations caused by uncertainty. Emotional regulation strategies, through relaxation training, positive emotion substitution, and self-motivation, not only alleviate anxiety and tension but also foster psychological resilience, enabling athletes to remain focused and confident under adversity.

Behavioral regulation strategies further externalize the effects of psychological control by stabilizing mental states through fixed movements, controlled breathing rhythms, and ritualized behaviors, creating a reliable psychological framework during competition. The application of these strategies allows athletes to rapidly restore mental balance during critical points, preventing attention lapses and technical errors caused by emotional fluctuations. Notably, the three types of strategies do not operate in isolation but exhibit high interactivity and synergy. Cognitive strategies provide psychological support for emotional stability, emotional strategies create a conducive mental environment for cognitive processing and behavioral execution, and behavioral strategies consolidate the effects of the first two into observable actions. Through this multidimensional synergy, athletes can establish a systematic mechanism for mental state management, demonstrating stronger stress resistance and psychological advantage during competition.

3.3 Construction of Strategy Combination and Performance Optimization Model

Single psychological regulation methods are insufficient to meet the variable demands of badminton competition, making strategy combination a key approach to enhancing performance. The organic integration of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral regulation strategies forms a psychological–action–performance linkage pathway, optimizing competitive performance across multiple dimensions. By constructing a strategy combination model, the mechanisms and interactive effects of different strategies during competition can be clarified. In the model, cognitive regulation primarily optimizes attention and decision-making, emotional regulation ensures psychological stability and emotional balance, and behavioral regulation acts as a bridge translating mental states into action execution. The dynamic interaction among the three forms a complete psychological regulation chain, enabling athletes to allocate psychological resources more efficiently and maintain movement stability during matches.

The strategy combination model not only emphasizes the synergistic effects of multiple strategies but also highlights individualization and dynamic adaptability. Athletes differ in psychological sensitivity, cognitive style, and emotional regulation ability, so strategy combinations should be tailored according to individual characteristics and competition stages. For example, at the beginning of a match, cognitive strategies may better help athletes establish focus and goal orientation; during closely contested stages, emotional strategies play a more prominent role; and in critical points and high-pressure moments, behavioral strategies often become central to maintaining stable performance. This model provides a systematic pathway for psychological training, and future work can combine psychological assessment with movement data analysis to explore the quantitative effects of different strategy combinations, thereby offering theoretical and practical guidance for designing scientific, individualized psychological training programs for badminton athletes.

Conclusion

Research indicates that cognitive, emotional, and behavioral regulation strategies have significant effects on technical execution, maintenance of psychological states, and stability of competitive performance in badminton, with dynamic synergistic interactions among the different strategies. Cognitive strategies enhance attention focus and decision-making efficiency, emotional strategies strengthen psychological resilience and emotional stability, and behavioral strategies translate psychological regulation into stability and efficiency of action execution. The strategy combination model enables linkage optimization among psychological state, movement, and performance, providing theoretical support for individualized psychological training and performance enhancement. Future

research can further explore the stage-specific effects and individual differences of strategy combinations through quantitative analysis and real-time data collection, while integrating intelligent intervention methods into training programs, promoting scientific, systematic, and dynamically optimized psychological regulation strategies for badminton athletes, and offering actionable guidance for continuous improvement in competitive performance.

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