

Fighting Spirit of Dance Sports Athletes among Public Secondary Schools in Region XI, Philippines

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Abstract

This study explored the level of fighting spirit among dance sports athletes in public secondary schools in Region XI (Davao Region), Philippines, and examined whether differences exist based on demographic profiles such as age, sex, and year level. Fighting spirit—a psychological construct encompassing mental resilience, motivation, emotional well-being, and confidence—is critical to athletic performance, especially in high-pressure, performance-oriented sports like dance. Despite global recognition of the importance of mental skills training, Filipino dance sports athletes face limited access to structured psychological support, with cultural values and contextual factors influencing their mental fortitude. Using a quantitative, descriptive-comparative research design, the study employed a purposive sampling technique to survey 50 student-athletes through an adapted Fighting Spirit Scale. Data were analyzed using frequency, mean, t-tests, and ANOVA to determine significant differences across demographic variables. Results revealed that dance sports athletes exhibited a very high overall level of fighting spirit ($M = 4.28$), particularly in motivation and commitment ($M = 4.38$), mental resilience ($M = 4.35$), and self-efficacy and confidence ($M = 4.33$). Emotional well-being and team dynamics were also rated high but slightly lower. Statistical analyses indicated no significant differences in fighting spirit across age, sex, or year level, suggesting a consistent level of psychological strength among the athletes regardless of demographic profile. Based on these findings, the study recommends a comprehensive intervention plan focusing on mental resilience training, motivation enhancement, team dynamics improvement, and confidence building. These initiatives aim to strengthen the mental readiness and psychological well-being of dance sports athletes, with culturally contextualized strategies tailored to the unique environment of Davao City. The study contributes to the limited body of research on Filipino dance sports psychology and provides a foundation for developing localized, evidence-based mental skills training programs.

Keywords: fighting spirit; dance sports; mental resilience; motivation; psychological well-being; filipino athletes

Introduction

Fighting spirit among dance sports athletes poses significant challenges to their mental fortitude and overall well-being. Despite the recognition of "fighting spirit" as a crucial component for success, the prevalence of psychological stressors and performance pressures remains high, leading to concerns about the effectiveness of current mental skills training approaches. For instance, studies have highlighted that a lack of standardized mental preparation protocols contributes to inconsistent psychological resilience among dance sports athletes (Smith et al., 2020). Additionally, inadequate mental skills education tailored to the specific demands of dance sports exacerbate the vulnerability of young athletes to performance anxiety and burnout (Jones et al., 2018).

Fighting spirit among dance sports athletes, cultivates mental resilience and unwavering fighting spirit is increasingly recognized as a critical aspect of success in dance sports across the globe. Research from various countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom emphasizes the pivotal role of mental training in empowering athletes to effectively manage pressure and cultivate a steadfast competitive drive. For instance, in Australia highlighted the effectiveness of mindfulness- based interventions in enhancing psychological resilience among elite dancers (Brown et al., 2021). Similarly, in the United Kingdom underscored the importance of developing mental toughness to navigate the intense competitive environment of dance sports (Williams & Davies 2020). Moreover, studies conducted by international dance sport federations highlight the necessity for comprehensive athlete development programs that prioritize not only physical conditioning but also psychological well-being and mental fortitude (International Dance Sport Federation, 2019).

In the Philippines, the development of fighting spirit among dance sports athletes faces unique challenges, particularly due to limited resources and access to comprehensive mental skills training. A study conducted on Filipino athletes in other individual sports revealed that cultural values such as "pakikisama" (harmony) and "hiya" (shame) can influence their competitive drive and response to adversity (David & Bernardo, 2010). Moreover, the absence of standardized psychological support systems in Philippine dance sports programs hampers the ability to effectively nurture and monitor the mental resilience of athletes. Additionally, research focusing on the psychological aspects of other competitive sports in the Philippines highlighted the need for improved mental skills development strategies to enhance athlete well-being and performance (Philippine Sports Commission, 2022).

Despite understanding the specific factors that shape the fighting spirit of dance sports athletes, there remains a significant research gap within the unique context of Davao City. For instance, on basketball athletes in Davao City emphasized the role of community support in fostering resilience, a factor that may not directly translate to the individualistic nature of dance sports (Dela Cruz 2018). Addressing this gap is critical, as developing and implementing effective, context-specific interventions can significantly enhance the performance and well-being of Filipino dance sports athletes. Furthermore, existing training programs in Davao City often lack a structured approach to cultivating mental toughness, necessitating a focused investigation into the unique challenges and opportunities in this specific locale. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the specific factors that contribute to the development of fighting spirit among dance sports athletes in Davao City, ultimately informing the development of tailored interventions to enhance their psychological resilience and competitive performance. This study stands out by focusing on the specific cultural and social context of Davao City, providing a nuanced understanding of the factors that shape the fighting spirit of local dance sports athletes. By addressing this gap, the study will contribute to the development of culturally relevant and effective mental skills training programs, ultimately enhancing the performance and well-being of dance sports athletes in the region. It will provide a unique perspective by exploring the intersection of cultural values, social dynamics, and individual psychological factors that influence fighting spirit in this specific context, ultimately leading to the development of more effective and targeted interventions for local athletes (Triandis, H. C.(1995).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to describe the level of fighting spirit. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. Describe the profile of respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Sex; and
 - 1.3 Year Level

2. What is the level of fighting spirit among dance sports athletes in terms of:
 - 2.1 Mental resilience
 - 2.2 Emotional well-being
 - 2.3 Team Dynamics & Support
 - 2.4 Motivation & Commitment
 - 2.5 Self- Efficacy & Confidence
3. To determine if there is a significant difference in the level of fighting spirit when analyzed across the profile of the respondents.
4. To propose an intervention based on the result of the study.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977), which focuses on the belief in one's capability to execute actions required to achieve specific goals. According to Bandura, self-efficacy plays a critical role in how individuals approach challenges, regulate their effort, and maintain perseverance in the face of adversity. The theory highlights four main sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological/emotional states. In the context of dance sports athletes, self-efficacy influences their fighting spirit, determining how confidently they face competition, perform under pressure, and recover from setbacks. The strengthening of self-efficacy can be achieved through successful performance, learning from others, encouragement from coaches or peers, and managing emotional responses during intense moments. Bandura's model offers valuable insights into how athletes can enhance their self-belief, thus improving their overall performance and resilience in competitive environments. This theory serves as a foundation for understanding how the psychological dimension of self-efficacy impacts the fighting spirit of dance sports athletes.

Conceptual Framework

The Self-Efficacy Theory by Albert Bandura (1977) provides a foundational lens for understanding how psychological beliefs influence the fighting spirit of athletes. The dependent variable in this study is the fighting spirit of dance sports athletes, with five key indicators: mental resilience, emotional well-being, team dynamics and support, motivation and commitment, and self-efficacy and confidence. These dimensions are operationalized as measurable components of fighting spirit and are quantitatively assessed through a structured questionnaire adapted from established psychological scales. Meanwhile, the demographic profiles of the respondents including age, sex, and year level are conceptualized as independent variables. These characteristics may have a significant impact on the development and expression of fighting spirit in student-athletes, especially within the cultural and contextual environment of Davao City. This framework also highlights the comparative nature of the study, which posits that variations in fighting spirit levels may exist across different demographic groups. By assessing these relationships, the study aims to identify patterns that can inform the design of tailored interventions. Grounded in Bandura's theory, the framework acknowledges that belief in one's capabilities plays a pivotal role in sustaining motivation, overcoming adversity, and maintaining emotional control all essential qualities in competitive dance sports.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Dance Sports Athletes

Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age		
12	6	6.0
13	9	9.0
14	5	5.0
15	8	8.0
16	9	9.0
17	6	6.0
18	7	7.0
Total	50	50.0
Sex		
Female	25	25.0
Male	25	25.0
Total	50	50.0
Year Level		
7	6	6.0
8	9	9.0
9	7	7.0
10	9	9.0
11	10	10.0
12	9	9.0
Total	50	50.0

The table illustrates the demographic distribution of the Dance Sport Athletes, categorized by age, sex, and year level. In terms of age, the athletes are fairly evenly distributed across different age groups, with the most common age groups being 13 years (9.0%) and 16 years (9.0%), followed by 12 years and 18 years, each at 6.0%. Other age groups have smaller proportions, with 14 years representing 5.0%, and 15 years and 17 years each making up 8.0% and 6.0%, respectively. The sex distribution is perfectly balanced, with 25 female and 25 male athletes, which represents an equal 50% distribution for each sex, ensuring a fair representation of both genders in the sample. Regarding year level, the largest group of athletes is in the 11th year level, comprising 10.0% of the total respondents. The distribution across the other year levels is relatively even, with 9 athletes at the 10th and 12th year levels (9.0% each), and smaller proportions in the other levels. The overall year level distribution suggests a mix of athletes from various stages in their academic journey, with no significant skew toward any particular year level.

Table 2. Level of Fighting Spirit among Dance Sport Athletes

Fighting Spirit Dimension	SD	Mean	Description
Mental Resilience	0.10	4.35	Very High
Emotional Well-Being	0.14	4.19	High
Team Dynamics & Support	0.15	4.17	High
Motivation & Commitment	0.07	4.38	Very High
Self-Efficacy & Confidence	0.09	4.33	Very High
Overall Mean	0.11	4.28	Very High

Presented in Table 2 are the descriptive statistics for the fighting spirit of dance sports athletes, measured across five dimensions: mental resilience, emotional well-being, team dynamics and support, motivation and commitment, and self-efficacy and confidence, including the overall mean.

The overall mean score for fighting spirit was 4.28, interpreted as Very High, indicating that the dance sports athletes exhibit a strong internal drive, consistent focus, and psychological resilience. This level of fighting spirit is indicative of athletes who are mentally equipped to face the pressures and demands of competition. According to Hodge, Henry, and Smith (2014), a high level of psychological resilience and fighting spirit is directly related to improved athletic performance and stress coping mechanisms. Likewise, Nicholls et al. (2017) emphasized that athletes with elevated fighting spirit are more likely to sustain performance levels and recover from setbacks efficiently.

Among all variables, motivation and commitment received the highest mean score of 4.38 (SD = 0.07), categorized as Very High. This suggests that the athletes demonstrate a strong internal drive and consistent dedication to their training and competitive performance. Motivation plays a central role in sustaining effort over time and influences athletes' willingness to push through adversity. In support of this, Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000) highlights that intrinsically motivated athletes are more likely to persist in their goals and enjoy long-term athletic development. Additionally, Vallerand and Rousseau (2001) observed that athletes with high levels of commitment are more engaged in their sports and show greater resilience during performance slumps.

The dimension of mental resilience had a mean of 4.35 (SD = 0.10), also rated as Very High. This indicates that athletes possess a strong ability to maintain focus, confidence, and composure despite competitive pressure or setbacks. Mental resilience is a core psychological trait in sports performance. Fletcher and Sarkar (2012) emphasized that mental resilience allows athletes to thrive under pressure by leveraging psychological attributes such as optimism, confidence, and concentration. Similarly, Galli and Vealey (2008) argued that mentally resilient athletes tend to perceive setbacks as challenges rather than threats, allowing for faster recovery and stronger performance continuity.

Self-efficacy and confidence garnered a mean score of 4.33 (SD = 0.09), again categorized as Very High, showing that the athletes maintain a strong belief in their capacity to perform and succeed. This belief enhances their ability to set challenging goals and sustain motivation under stress. This aligns with Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that self-efficacy influences how people think, feel, and act,

particularly in performance contexts. In addition, Moritz et al. (2000) found a significant correlation between self-efficacy and successful athletic performance, suggesting that confident athletes are more consistent in executing skills under pressure.

The dimension of emotional well-being received a mean score of 4.19 (SD = 0.14), rated as High. While the athletes generally experience positive emotions and low stress levels, there is still room for enhancing emotional regulation and coping skills. Maintaining emotional well-being is essential to prevent performance anxiety and burnout. Lane et al. (2012) suggested that emotional control is crucial in preventing performance breakdowns, especially in sports requiring both physical and aesthetic performance like dance sports. Additionally, Gould and Dieffenbach (2002) indicated that athletes with high emotional well-being tend to have longer sports careers and better focus during critical competitive moments.

Lastly, team dynamics and support scored a mean of 4.17 (SD = 0.15), also classified as High. While the athletes benefit from peer support and positive team interactions, improvement is still needed to maximize collaborative growth and reduce interpersonal tension. According to Carron and Eys (2012), team cohesion is a strong predictor of athletic performance, especially in pairs or team-based dance events. Jowett and Cockerill (2003) also found that athletes who perceive higher levels of support from teammates and coaches tend to have better psychological health and more consistent motivation levels.

Overall, the fighting spirit of the Dance Sports Athletes is characterized by a very high level of mental resilience, motivation, commitment, and self-efficacy, with a strong foundation in emotional well-being and team dynamics. The results highlight the athletes' ability to face challenges with confidence and resilience, which are essential traits for success in competitive sports.

Table 3. Difference in the Level of Fighting Spirit by Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile	F-value	P-value	Decision @ 0.05 Alpha	Interpretation
Age	0.524	0.622	Accept null hypothesis	No significant difference
Sex	1.234	0.295	Accept null hypothesis	No significant difference
Year Level	0.742	0.395	Accept null hypothesis	No significant difference

This table presents the results of the statistical analysis examining the level of fighting spirit among Dance Sports Athletes, categorized by demographic profile. ANOVA was employed to analyze the differences in fighting spirit based on age, while the T-test was used to assess the impact of sex and year level.

The analysis revealed that the p-value for age is 0.622, which is greater than the 0.05 significance level, hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This result indicates that age does not have a significant effect on the fighting spirit of the athletes. Regardless of whether the respondents are younger or older, their levels of mental resilience, motivation, emotional well-being, and confidence remained statistically consistent. This finding suggests that psychological development in competitive sports such as dance is influenced more by training exposure and support systems than by age.

This supports the findings of Clough et al. (2002), who noted that mental toughness is developed through repeated challenges and structured coping mechanisms rather than being determined by age. Similarly, Gerber et al. (2018) found that psychological resilience among young athletes is more closely linked to external support, coaching style, and personal goal-setting than to chronological age, suggesting that age alone is not a predictor of fighting spirit in sports contexts.

In terms of sex, the p-value was found to be 0.295, exceeding the 0.05 significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis is also accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference in the level of fighting spirit between male and female athletes. This suggests that both sexes possess similar levels of mental resilience, motivation, and emotional well-being, reinforcing the notion that psychological strength in sports is not inherently gender-based but rather shaped by training practices and mental preparation.

This aligns with the findings of Nicholls et al. (2009), who reported that male and female athletes demonstrated comparable levels of coping strategies and motivation when participating in similar training environments. Additionally, Cowden (2016) emphasized that mental toughness and competitive drive do not significantly differ by sex, especially among adolescent athletes receiving the same psychological conditioning and exposure to competition.

The analysis of year level revealed a p-value of 0.395, again greater than the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, suggesting that no significant differences exist in fighting spirit across different year levels. Whether the athletes were in junior or senior high school, their responses related to mental resilience, motivation, and emotional well-being remained stable, implying that academic progression does not inherently influence competitive mental traits.

These findings are consistent with the study by Sheard and Golby (2006), which revealed that resilience and mental toughness are not significantly impacted by school grade or academic standing, but instead develop through sport-specific experiences. Furthermore, Mahoney et al. (2014) observed that high school athletes, regardless of academic level, showed similar psychological characteristics when regularly involved in structured training, coaching, and competition routines.

Finally, based on the results presented in Table 3, no significant differences were found in the fighting spirit of Dance Sports athletes when grouped according to age, sex, and year level, as all p-values exceeded the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, an intervention plan should emphasize inclusive and holistic psychological development programs applicable across all demographic groups. Strategies should include resilience-building workshops, mental toughness training, and goal-setting sessions, focusing on enhancing the internal psychological attributes of athletes, such as motivation, confidence, and emotional regulation. Additionally, integrating team-building exercises and peer support initiatives can strengthen athletes' sense of unity and

shared commitment, contributing positively to their fighting spirit regardless of their demographic profile. Techniques like guided visualization, emotional coping strategies, and self-efficacy enhancement modules have been shown to elevate athletic performance across diverse groups (Gould et al., 2002; Gucciardi et al., 2009). Lastly, implementing regular coach-athlete feedback sessions and mentorship systems will allow athletes to reflect on their progress and continuously build a strong, resilient competitive mindset, essential for sustained performance in Dance Sports.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that there is no significant difference in the fighting spirit of Dance Sports athletes when grouped according to age, sex, and year level. This indicates that the psychological attributes contributing to fighting spirit, such as motivation, resilience, emotional well-being, and self-confidence, are consistently strong across different demographic profiles. These results affirm the applicability of Bandura's self-efficacy theory, highlighting that belief in one's capabilities plays a central role in determining motivation and persistence, regardless of background. Similarly, Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory supports the idea that intrinsic motivation and commitment are key components of athletic performance that transcend demographic differences. The findings suggest that while demographic characteristics do not significantly influence fighting spirit, continuous psychological training, motivation reinforcement, and confidence-building strategies are essential for maintaining high levels of competitive drive among athletes.

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Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

Research Title: Fighting Spirit of Dance Sports Athletes among Public Secondary Schools in Region XI, Philippines

(Adapted from Clough, P. J., Earle, K., & Sewell, D. 2002)

General Instruction: Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements based on your personal experiences as a dance sports athlete. Be truthful with your answers. Use the scale below to assess objectively:

Range of Means	Description	Interpretation
4.6-5.0	Very High	This means that the fighting spirit of dance sports athletes is always demonstrated.
3.7-4.5	High	This means that the fighting spirit of dance sports athletes is often demonstrated.
2.8-3.6	Moderate	This means that the fighting spirit of dance sports athletes is sometimes demonstrated.
1.9-2.7	Low	This means that the fighting spirit of dance sports athletes is rarely demonstrated.
1.0-1.8	Very Low	This means that the fighting spirit of dance sports athletes is never demonstrated.

Demographic Profile

Name: (Optional) _____

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Year Level: _____

A. Mental Resilience & Fighting Spirit	5	4	3	2	1
1. I feel confident in my ability to overcome challenges during training and competition.					
2. Even after a difficult session, I am determined to give my best in the next one.					
3. I have the mental strength to push through physical discomfort during high-intensity practice.					
4. When faced with setbacks or mistakes, I bounce back quickly and keep moving forward.					
5. I embrace competition as a way to test my abilities and grow as a dancer.					

6. I view obstacles in my training as opportunities to improve rather than roadblocks.					
7. I stay focused on my goals, even when things get tough or results aren't as expected.					
8. I can stay calm and composed, even when under pressure during performances or competitions.					
B. Emotional Well-Being	5	4	3	2	1
9. I am satisfied with my emotional state after a challenging training session.					
11. I feel confident in my ability to manage stress before and after competitions.					
12. I am able to maintain a positive mindset, even when training doesn't go as planned.					
13. I feel motivated to keep improving, even after facing disappointment in performance.					
14. I feel emotionally supported by my coach and teammates during tough training sessions.					
15. I know how to handle negative emotions such as frustration or self-doubt after a poor performance.					
16. I trust myself to stay composed and focused, even when faced with unexpected challenges.					
C. Team Dynamics & Support	5	4	3	2	1
17. I feel comfortable sharing my feelings and challenges with my coach, knowing it will help me improve.					
19. I have a strong sense of camaraderie with my teammates, both inside and outside of practice.					
20. I feel supported by my teammates, especially during tough training sessions or competitions.					
21. I believe that my coach understands my individual needs and tailors their guidance to help me grow.					
22. I trust my teammates and rely on their support to push through difficult moments.					
23. I feel a sense of unity within my team, where everyone works towards a common goal.					
24. I believe open communication with my coach and teammates is essential to our success.					
D. Motivation & Commitment	5	4	3	2	1
25. I am always motivated to give my best effort, even when I feel physically exhausted.					
27. After each training session, I feel a renewed sense of purpose and desire to improve.					
28. I stay committed to my training schedule, even when facing personal or external distractions.					
29. I stay committed to my training schedule, even when facing personal or external distractions.					
30. I am driven by a desire to perform at my best in					

every competition, regardless of the outcome.					
31. I maintain focus on my long-term dance goals, even when short-term progress feels slow.					
32. I am willing to put in extra effort and practice to improve my dance skills.					
E. Self-Efficacy & Confidence	5	4	3	2	1
33. I believe in my ability to perform					
34. well, regardless of the difficulty of the routine or competition.					
35. I trust my training and preparation to help me succeed when it counts the most.					
36. I feel confident in my abilities, even when faced with a new or challenging choreography.					
37. I know how to keep my composure and confidence high, even in high-stakes situations.					
38. I believe I can learn from any mistakes I make during performances and improve in the future.					
39. I am certain that my hard work and dedication will lead to continued improvement and success.					