



The Influence of Tawakul on Sports Motivation: A Correlational Study of Spirituality in Competitive Sports

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History: Received: January 09, 2025 Revised: February 23, 2025 Accepted: February 26, 2025 Available Online: February 28, 2025</p> <p>Keywords: Tawakul, Sports Motivation, Spiritual Trust; Athletic Commitment, Resilience, Spiritual Support, Sports Psychology</p> <p>Corresponding Author: Muhammad Waleed Mir Email: mirwaleed13@gmail.com</p>	<p><i>This study explores the relationship between “Tawakul” a deep, trusting reliance on the “Divine” and sports motivation among athletes. Using a correlational design, we surveyed a diverse group of athletes with well-established measures of both Tawakul and sports motivation. Our analysis reveals that athletes with higher levels of Tawakul tend to show greater motivation and commitment in their sports activities. These findings suggest that a strong sense of spiritual trust may boost an athlete’s inner drive and resilience. The results have practical implications for coaches and sports psychologists, highlighting the potential benefits of integrating spiritual support into training programs. This research contributes to a growing body of literature that connects spiritual beliefs with enhanced performance in competitive sports.</i></p>



Introduction

Athletic excellence depends not only on physical skills and rigorous training but also on the psychological factors that fuel perseverance and passion (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Among these factors, sports motivation—the drive to engage in and excel at sports—plays a pivotal role in sustaining performance under pressure (Vallerand, 2007). In recent years, the integration of spiritual dimensions into sports psychology has gained attention, with concepts such as Tawakul emerging as potential enhancers of motivation (Rahman, 2010). Tawakul, defined as a deep, unwavering trust in the Divine, reflects a spiritual mindset that encourages athletes to combine effort with acceptance of outcomes, as illustrated in religious teachings (Quran 11:115; Muhsin Khan, 1984). Grounded in self-determination theory, which emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000), this research investigates whether

higher levels of Tawakul correlate with increased sports motivation among athletes (Khan et al., 2012). By examining this relationship, our study aims to provide fresh insights into how spiritual trust can bolster resilience and drive, offering practical implications for coaching strategies and holistic athlete development (Ali & Mustafa, 2015).

Self-Determination Theory posits that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—plays a central role in fostering sports motivation. Their framework is fundamental for understanding how athletes become driven to participate and perform in sports (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Vallerand's research demonstrates that sports motivation is strongly linked to enhanced performance, persistence, and overall well-being among athletes. His model emphasizes the role of self-determined behavior in motivating athletes to achieve excellence in competitive environments (Vallerand, 2007).

Miller and Thoresen highlight the significant impact of spirituality on stress management and psychological resilience. Their findings suggest that spiritual beliefs can contribute to increased sports motivation by providing athletes with mental focus and inner strength (Miller & Thoresen, 2003).

Pargament's work on religious coping illustrates how a deep trust in a higher power helps individuals manage stress and adapt to challenges. This concept supports the idea that Tawakul—a profound reliance on the Divine—can enhance sports motivation by reducing performance anxiety and promoting mental clarity (Pargament, 1997).

Rahman proposes that Tawakul, defined as the balanced approach of combining effort with trust in Divine will, can bolster sports motivation. His theoretical insights indicate that athletes with higher levels of Tawakul are better able to maintain focus and commitment during competitive challenges (Rahman, 2010).

Empirical research by Khan and colleagues has shown that athletes with strong religious commitment tend to exhibit higher sports motivation. Their study suggests that spiritual trust enhances self-regulatory processes, which are essential for sustained motivation and performance in sports (Khan et al., 2012). Khan and Rahman integrated spiritual well-being with self-determination theory and found that athletes reporting higher spiritual satisfaction tend to display greater sports motivation. Their findings underscore the synergistic effect of spirituality and sports motivation, contributing to greater autonomy and persistence (Khan & Rahman, 2013).

Ali and Mustafa provide empirical evidence among Muslim athletes that elevated levels of Tawakul are significantly correlated with increased sports motivation. Their work highlights how spiritual trust can serve as a key predictor of motivation, fostering resilience and a proactive approach in sports (Ali & Mustafa, 2015).

Relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction

Tawakul, defined as a deep, trusting reliance on the Divine, is emerging as a key predictor of sports motivation. Research indicates that athletes who cultivate Tawakul tend to focus on the positive aspects of their performance and embrace challenges with resilience. This spiritual trust allows them to balance effort with acceptance, thereby reducing performance anxiety and fostering a sustained drive to excel in their sport. Such an approach aligns with Quranic teachings, for

example, “And rely upon Allah; and sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs” (Quran 65:3) (Muhsin Khan, 1984).

By integrating Tawakul into their training regimes, athletes can shift their focus from outcome-dependent pressure to a process-oriented mindset that enhances their inner drive. Empirical studies suggest that a strong sense of spiritual trust is associated with increased motivation, improved performance, and overall well-being in sports (Khan et al., 2012). As further emphasized in the Quran, “If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe” (Quran 14:7) (Muhsin Khan, 1984). Thus, by embracing Tawakul, athletes not only nurture their spiritual well-being but also bolster their sports motivation, paving the way for enhanced perseverance and competitive success (Rahman, 2010).

Theoretical framework

Tawakul as a Spiritual Trust Theory

This theory posits that “Tawakul” a deep, unwavering trust in the “Divine” functions as a spiritual resource that enables athletes to manage stress and uncertainty effectively. By cultivating Tawakul, athletes learn to balance strenuous effort with the acceptance of outcomes, which in turn reduces performance anxiety and fosters resilience. This spiritual trust is believed to enhance sports motivation by allowing athletes to focus on the process rather than solely on the results, aligning with Islamic teachings that emphasize reliance on the Divine while actively striving for excellence (Rahman, 2010; Pargament, 1997; Khan & Rahman, 2013).

Self-Determination Theory of Sports Motivation

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), as proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), asserts that sports motivation is maximized when the fundamental psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. Within the sports context, athletes who experience a sense of control over their training (autonomy), feel effective in their performance (competence), and maintain supportive connections with teammates and coaches (relatedness) tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation. Empirical evidence supports the idea that fulfillment of these needs leads to enhanced motivation, improved performance, and greater overall well-being in competitive sports environments (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vallerand, 2007).

Research gap

While extensive research has examined the determinants of sports motivation, the specific influence of “Tawakul” an athlete’s deep trust in the “Divine” remains underexplored. Most studies have focused on Western populations and traditional motivational frameworks, leaving a gap in understanding how cultural and religious factors shape sports motivation. Additionally, current research is largely cross-sectional, and there is a need for longitudinal studies that investigate the enduring impact of Tawakul on athletes' motivation across diverse demographic groups.

Method

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between athletes' levels of Tawakul and their sports motivation.

2. To determine whether athletes with higher levels of Tawakul exhibit greater sports motivation than those with lower levels

Hypotheses

Tawakul is positively associated to the Sports Motivation in Athletes.

1. There is a significant positive correlation between athletes' levels of Tawakul and their sports motivation.
2. Athletes with higher levels of Tawakul will demonstrate significantly greater sports motivation compared to athletes with lower levels.

Instruments

Tawakul Scale

The Tawakul Scale is a 24-item self-report instrument designed to assess the extent to which athletes rely on Divine trust, or Tawakul, in their daily lives. Participants indicate their agreement with each statement on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The total score, which can range from 24 to 168, reflects the overall level of Tawakul, with higher scores indicating a stronger reliance on spiritual trust. This scale was developed based on theoretical insights into spiritual coping and has demonstrated strong reliability and validity (Rahman, 2010; Khan & Rahman, 2013).

Sports Motivation Scale

The Sports Motivation Scale is a 28-item self-report questionnaire designed to evaluate athletes' motivation to participate in sports. Respondents rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” and the summed score, ranging from 28 to 196, represents the overall level of sports motivation. This instrument has been widely used in sports psychology research, demonstrating robust psychometric properties that support its reliability and validity (Vallerand, 2007; Khan et al., 2012).

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Properties of the Sample (N=200)

Sample Data	N	%	
Age	18	16	8%
	19	19	9.5%
	20	32	16%
	21	23	11%
	22	31	15.5%
	23	30	15%
	24	10	5%
	25	17	8.5%
	26	2	1%
	27	5	2.5%
	28	1	.5%
	30	8	4.5%
	31	4	2%

	34	1	.5%
	35	1	.5%
Gender	Male	100	50%
	Female	100	50%
Qualification	BS	145	72.5%
	MS	55	27.5%
Believe in Tawakul	Yes	199	99.5%
	No	1	.5%
	Not Sure	0	0%
Types of Sports	Football	50	25%
	Cricket	59	29.5%
	Badminton	61	30.5%
	Table Tennis	3	1.5%
	Other Sports	27	13.5%

The sample consist of 200 respondents, including both male and female, primarily aged between 18-45 years. Additionally, participants qualification include BS and MS, Types of Sports (Football, Cricket, Badminton, Table Tennis & Other Sports), Believe in Tawakul Yes, NO, NOT SURE are available in the data file.

Table 2: Psychometric Properties Of All Instrument (N=200)

Scales	N	α	M	SD	Range	Skew	Kurtosis
TWKS	24	.84	92.5	9.4	52.0	.171	.049
SMS	28	.90	110	43.7	164.0	-.029	-1.16

Note TWKS = Tawakul scale, SMS = Sports Motivation Scale

Table 2 present the descriptive statistics and alpha reliability coefficients for all values used in this study. The reliability of the scales is well within an acceptable range, with alpha coefficients ranging from .84 to .90. Additionally, normality assumption has been assessed with skewness and kurtosis values falling between -1 to +2, indicating that the data follow a normal distribution.

Table 3: Correlation matrix between Tawakkul scale and Sport Motivation Scale

Variables	1	2
Tawakul	-	.949**
Sports Motivation	.949**	-

Note: TWKS=Tawakkul Scale, SMS= Sports Motivation Scale Questionnaire

The table outlines the Pearson correlation coefficients across two variables. Tawakkul is substantially positively interrelated with Sports Motivation Scale.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients of Independent Variable (Tawakkul) on Dependent Variable (Sports Motivation)

Variables	B	SE	t	p	95% CI
Sport Motivation	-294.8***	9.597	30.700	.000	-313.7 - -275.9
Tawakkul	4.383 ***	.103	42.400	.000	4.179 - 4.586

Note: N=200, ***p <.05: TWKS=Tawakkul Scale, SMS= Sports Motivation Scale Questionnaire

The table presents the results of a regression analysis examining the impact of Tawakkul on Sports Motivation. The positive and significant coefficient (**B = 4.383, p = .000**) suggests that higher Tawakkul is associated with greater Sports Motivation, supporting the hypothesis.

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between Tawakul and sports motivation among athletes. Results showed that the association between Tawakul and sports motivation was both strong and positive, aligning with previous research that underscores the significance of spiritual trust in enhancing athletic performance. Athletes with higher levels of Tawakul tend to display greater sports motivation because they focus on the positive aspects of their training and competition, enabling them to manage performance anxiety and build resilience. Such athletes often experience increased dedication, perseverance, and a proactive approach in their sports activities. The reliability of the instruments used in this study was excellent. Future research could explore this relationship in diverse cultural contexts and examine interventions aimed at cultivating Tawakul as a means to further enhance sports motivation.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study underscores the importance of Tawakul in boosting sports motivation. The results suggest that athletes who cultivate a deep trust in the Divine tend to exhibit higher motivation and commitment in their sports activities. By focusing on the positive aspects of their performance and embracing challenges with resilience, these athletes are better able to manage anxiety and enhance their drive to succeed. These findings support existing research and deepen our understanding of how spiritual trust can enhance athletic performance. Looking ahead, future research could explore these relationships across diverse cultural contexts and examine interventions aimed at cultivating Tawakul to further boost sports motivation.

Limitation

This study might not have fully considered cultural differences that could affect the relationship between Tawakul and sports motivation. Future research should explore how this relationship varies across different cultural settings. Additionally, the sample used in this study may not represent the broader population of athletes, as it may be biased toward specific age groups, locations, or demographics. The reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, where participants might respond in ways they perceive as socially acceptable rather than providing accurate reflections of their true beliefs and behaviors. Consequently, the findings may have limited generalizability. Future studies should employ more diverse samples and consider alternative or complementary data collection methods to enhance the validity and applicability of the results.

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