



**DEVELOPMENT OF VOLITIONAL QUALITIES IN
YOUNG KURASH WRESTLERS THROUGH
SYSTEMATIZED PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION**

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ABSTRACT

Relevance. Kurash, a traditional Uzbek form of wrestling, requires the ability to make rapid tactical decisions, maintain emotional stability, and sustain goal-oriented effort during direct physical confrontation. However, the development of volitional qualities is rarely addressed as a distinct, measurable objective in the training of young athletes. Objective. To develop an evidence-based model for the cultivation and assessment of volitional qualities in young Kurash wrestlers. Methods. The study employed a targeted narrative review of research on Kurash, adolescent wrestling, goal-setting, and psychological preparation, alongside an analysis of the specific demands of athletic performance and pedagogical modeling. Results. Four interrelated components were identified: purposeful persistence, decisiveness, emotional self-control, and the flexible capacity to overcome challenges. Based on these, an eight-week, coach-led training model was developed. A structured matrix comprising exercises, observable behavioral indicators, and monitoring procedures is proposed. Conclusion. Integrating brief psychological exercises into technical-tactical training offers a practical approach that warrants experimental validation. The efficacy of this model for Kurash remains to be established through a prospective controlled study; this methodological paper does not claim any experimental outcomes.



Introduction. Performance in Kurash-a traditional Uzbek form of wrestling-depends on technical, physical, tactical, and psychological preparedness. Engaging in a standing contest, managing grips, and the need to react instantaneously to shifts in an opponent's balance place high demands on the voluntary regulation of one's own behavior. For young athletes, qualities such as persistence, decisiveness, self-control, and the ability to constructively overcome setbacks are particularly significant [4, 7, 11].

Volitional qualities are defined as the capacity to sustain goal-oriented effort, make timely decisions, and regulate behavior when faced with obstacles [2, 3, 5]. Persistence manifests in the continuation of technically sound actions; decisiveness in the timely selection of a technique; self-control in the ability to refocus following an emotional impact; and flexibility in the adjustment of tactics after an error. While these characteristics are related to psychological resilience, they are not identical to it [1, 3, 6].

Research on the training of Kurash wrestlers highlights the importance of emotional-volitional components [1, 8, 9]. A systematic review of psychological interventions in combat sports suggests that such approaches hold promise, though it also notes a scarcity of high-quality, controlled studies [12]. While data from adolescent wrestling [10, 13] and goal-setting theory [5, 6, 14] provide a basis for developing training procedures, one cannot automatically assume that their effectiveness will translate directly to Kurash.

The objective of this study is to develop a pedagogical model for the cultivation and assessment of volitional qualities in young Kurash wrestlers through the integration of psychological tasks into their training regimen. The scientific and methodological novelty of this work lies in linking four specific volitional qualities to observable actions performed during standing combat.

Materials and methods. A targeted narrative review of the literature and pedagogical modeling were employed. The study examined works concerning psychological preparation in Kurash, psychological skills in combat sports, adolescent wrestling, and goal setting [1-6]. Key psychological components were identified, the training contexts in which they manifest were determined, and an eight-week program was developed. This work does not constitute a systematic review, nor does it include newly collected experimental data.

The model is primarily designed for wrestlers aged 12-16 who have already mastered basic standing throws. It incorporates two 15-20 minute sessions per week within the framework of regular training. Weeks 1-2 focus on process-oriented goals and sustained technical effort; weeks 3-4 on respiratory self-regulation and the restoration of attention; weeks 5-6 on selecting actions in dynamic, changing situations; and weeks 7-8 on tactical adjustment during controlled sparring. The level of complexity is adjusted based on the participants' age, athletic experience, and safety considerations.



An assessment is proposed for three stages: before, during (mid-program), and after the program. Two independent observers evaluate four behavioral indicators using a five-point scale (where 1 represents rare occurrence and 5 represents consistent manifestation). The criteria include: persisting with technically sound attempts, selecting actions in a timely manner, regaining concentration, and modifying tactics following feedback. The use of video recording and an assessment of inter-rater reliability are recommended. This scale is intended as a research tool and has not yet been validated.

Any future implementation of this program requires informed consent from both parents and the adolescent participants. Furthermore, it must adhere to ethical standards, ensuring the exclusion of punitive measures, excessive physical strain, or the use of dangerous methods to induce psychological pressure.

Results. The theoretical analysis resulted in an eight-week model that links psychological components with the specific demands of Kurash (Table 1). This model integrates psychological preparation into technical and tactical training and establishes observable criteria for success, rather than presenting an empirically derived progression of performance metrics.

Table 1. Eight-Week Model for Developing Volitional Qualities in Young Kurash Wrestlers

Stage Weeks /	Volitional Quality	Kurash-Specific Training Task	Observable Indicator
Foundation / 1-2	Perseverance	Setting process-oriented goals; repeated practice of safe entries into throwing techniques and transitions between grips.	Maintains technically correct actions following unsuccessful attempts.
Self-Regulation / 3-4	Self-control	Breathing techniques and verbal cues; refocusing attention following simulated referee intervention.	Regains concentration without displaying impulsive reactions.
Decision-Making / 5-6	Decisiveness	Selecting a permitted technique in response to changes in the opponent's grip and balance.	Initiates a tactically appropriate technique in a timely manner.
Skill Transfer / 7-8	Ability to Overcome Difficulties	Short practice bouts, error analysis, and adjustment of tactical goals.	Adjusts actions based on feedback.

The logical progression involves transitioning from sustained attention to emotional control, the timely selection of actions, and the constructive revision of tactics. In this context, persistence is not equated with the stubborn repetition of an ineffective or unsafe technique. The



primary outcomes of the planned pilot study will be assessments across four behavioral domains, with secondary outcomes including measures of anxiety, self-efficacy, and the quality of technical execution. Quantitative effects and statistical significance have not yet been determined.

Discussion. The proposed model operationalizes general principles of psychological preparation specifically for the national wrestling style, Kurash. Research on goal-setting indicates that focusing on the execution process allows athletes to direct their attention toward controllable aspects of their performance [5, 6]. Therefore, a coach should evaluate not only the outcome of a specific exchange but also the quality of the grip, the timing of a throw, and the sequence of actions.

Self-control is viewed as a learned skill: techniques such as brief breathing exercises, verbal cues, and refocusing after an error are first practiced in controlled, simple settings, and subsequently applied during situational sparring. While these methods align with established approaches to developing psychological skills, existing research does not confirm that they are equally effective across all combat sports or age groups [12].

A study involving adolescent wrestlers demonstrated positive shifts in psychological resilience and anxiety levels [4]. However, the sample group and the program used in that study differ from the model proposed here. Consequently, while these findings provide external support for the potential of this approach, they do not constitute proof of the efficacy of this specific eight-week program for Kurash wrestlers.

The quality of execution depends on feedback from the coach; discussions should focus on controllable decisions and technical actions, while avoiding evaluations of the athlete's personality. Following an unsuccessful attempt, it is advisable to have the wrestler identify the cause of the error and select a corrective action. It should be noted that persistence does not mean continuing to work despite pain, injury, or excessive fatigue.

To ensure the reproducibility of the methodology, it is advisable to standardize the content of each psychological module. At the beginning of a session, the coach defines a specific behavioral goal and the conditions for its execution. The athlete then practices the corresponding technical scenario, receives brief feedback, and repeats the task, incorporating that feedback. For instance, when fostering decisiveness, the objective is not to execute a throw as quickly as possible, but rather to select a permitted technique the moment a suitable opportunity arises. When training for persistence, the focus is on maintaining technical precision following several unsuccessful attempts; when developing flexibility, the focus is on the ability to abandon an ineffective approach in favor of an alternative one. Structuring sessions in this way helps to avoid conflating volitional regulation with the simple intensity of the training load.

When interpreting future results, it is important to account for age-related and individual differences. Athletes of the same chronological age may differ significantly in terms of motor



proficiency, competitive experience, and stress response. Therefore, it is appropriate to evaluate progress in relation to an athlete's baseline technical skill level and the duration of their training in Kurash. To verify the ecological validity of these assessments, it is useful to combine standardized training tasks with observations made during practice bouts. Furthermore, the transfer of performance indicators from training to official competition must be examined separately, as the motivational significance and the level of emotional tension differ between these two contexts.

The primary limitation is the lack of empirical testing and validation for the proposed scale. Future work should include a pilot study, an assessment of inter-rater reliability, the inclusion of a comparison group with an equivalent amount of training time, and a delayed evaluation of how these skills transfer to competitive performance. Ideally, those evaluating the video recordings should remain blinded to the participants' group assignments. Decisiveness should be determined by tactical appropriateness, rather than solely by the speed of one's reaction. Results from other forms of combat cannot be assumed to be reproducible in Kurash without further verification.

Conclusion. An eight-week model has been developed to foster persistence, determination, self-control, and the flexible overcoming of challenges in young Kurash wrestlers. Its distinctive feature is the integration of process-oriented goal setting, self-regulation, situational decision-making, and reflection with observable actions during standing combat. The model serves as a scientific-methodological proposal; any conclusions regarding its effectiveness can only be drawn following a controlled pedagogical study.

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