

Research Paper

Superstitious Behaviour between Male and Female All India Inter University Judo Players

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was designed to measure superstitious behavior among Judo players. The method of the study is descriptive analyses, one Hundred and Seventy Five (N=175) All India Inter University Judo players with the age group of 18 to 25 years were selected through purposive sampling technique. They were further divided into two groups: Group-A (N=82) male judo players and Group- B (N=93) female judo players. To collect data then the standardized scale constructed by Bleak and Frederick has administered on the subject. Independent T-Test was applied to find out the differences between male and female All India Inter University Judo players. The level of significance was set at 0.05. Significant differences were observed in the sub-parameters clothing and appearance ($t = 2.25, p = 0.02$), fetish ($t = 4.24, p = 0.00$), game and competition ($t = 2.00, p = 0.04$), and in the overall superstition score ($t = 3.20, p = 0.00$), with male players scoring higher than females. No significant differences were found in preparation, team ritual, prayer, and coach sub-parameters ($p > 0.05$). These findings indicate that while both genders display superstitious tendencies, male judo players tend to exhibit higher levels of superstition in specific domains related to performance rituals and personal items.

Keywords: Superstitious behaviour, Judo players, All india interuniversity, Male and Female.

The child can express himself most directly, simply, and meaningfully through the game. Through games, a child can improve his physical, cognitive, sensory, and social abilities (Ataman, 2004). The game is an event which affects all the positive development of the child (psycho-motor, emotional, social, cognitive and language) that perform their imagination, refers the child to creativity and also gives the child the joy and excitement (Bayazit, 2006). "Judo" is one sport that has improved children's motor, cognitive, and sensitive development. Judo, a fighting and mentality system with Central Asian origins, retains the distinctive elements of desert civilization. Bowdlerized from brute and weapon,

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this sport is a martial technique based on functional intelligence, quick reflexes, and the ability to mentally and physically reflect all of the body's force toward the goal (Brousse and Matsumoto, 1999)

Originating from the ancient Japanese martial art of jujitsu, which means "gentle way of life," judo is a type of martial art that is named after the Japanese word for "gentle way." In 1882, Dr. Jigoro Kano, the dean of the University of Education in Tokyo, incorporated what he believed to be the best jujitsu techniques into what is today called judo. All of its methods, but especially throws, emphasize movement, balance, and leverage. The most evident feature for a judo spectator is perhaps the variety of powerful throwing techniques. Gaining proficiency in grappling techniques, including as various control holds, arm and joint locks, pins, and choking methods, is also essential (Kumar and Nallella, 2022).

Irrational beliefs that affect the emotional states of those who hold them are called superstitions. These are taught behaviors or attitudes about things or circumstances that guide the bearer toward a desired outcome (Hollander, 1971). Most irrational beliefs have been linked to human helplessness in the face of insurmountable challenges (Mailer and Lundeen, 1934). Some superstition offers as a miracle, revelation, magic, or what we call supernatural. The psychologist Lysann Damisch of the University of Cologne claims that, despite its misrepresentation of reality, superstitious thought, or "magical thinking," has advantages that logic and science can't always provide a sense of control and a sense of meaning. A common topic in sports psychology is athletic superstition, which emphasizes how athletes frequently engage in symbolic rituals and ritualistic behaviours that they believe affect their competitive results. Such behaviours continue despite the lack of empirical evidence linking these rituals to improved performance, especially in high-stakes situations where athletes are under more psychological pressure. These superstitious behaviours could include avoiding certain behaviours that are thought to invite bad luck, wearing a certain article of clothing that is thought to bring success, or adhering to strict pre-competition rituals. The urge to assert control over naturally unpredictable athletic conditions is frequently the fundamental motive behind these rituals. The formation of superstitious behaviour can be explained by learned helplessness, as proposed by Seligman (1975), in which people try to regain a sense of agency in circumstances that are marked by random or uncontrollable events. By presenting superstitions in sports as coping strategies rather than irrational behaviours, this theoretical explanation highlights the psychological underpinnings of these practices.

Schippers and Van Lange (2006) research lends more credence to the notion that rituals have a psychological purpose by assisting athletes in coping with stress and uncertainty, which in turn fosters emotional control and self-assurance. In this situation, superstitions are essential components of an athlete's mental training plan rather than just peculiarities of behavior. Athletes commonly use superstitions to increase their chances of success in high-pressure situations with significant stakes, such intercollegiate athletics. Even if this behaviour might not make sense, they have a big effect on an athlete's mental health, which affects their concentration, self-esteem, and performance as a whole. Examining these behaviours from the standpoint of sports psychology aids in comprehending the mental elements that can influence an athlete's success or failure. University-level competitive sports cover a wide range of sports, from highly individualized competitions like track and field to team-oriented games like football. These platforms provide student-athletes with a distinguished platform to showcase their physical prowess and mental readiness within the framework of national inter-university competitions. Athletes may experience psychological

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stress as a result of the intense competition and expectations placed on them, leading many to turn to superstitious practices as a coping mechanism. Athletes frequently face uncontrollable or outside-of-their-control factors in high-pressure scenarios, especially in individual sports like judo. These factors could include an opponent's strategy, refereeing calls, or unanticipated bodily accidents. Athletes may adopt superstitious behaviours or rituals to regain a sense of stability or control as a result of these uncontrollable factors. Such behaviours, which serve as coping mechanisms that reduce anxiety and foster a sense of readiness, arise as cognitive reactions to uncertainty, claim Risen et al. (2007).

This could mean that judo fighters perform certain repetitive acts before bouts, such as dressing a certain way, entering the mat in a certain order, or mentally practicing results in a particular pattern. Although these behaviours don't directly affect performance in any way that can be measured by science, they have meaning for the athletes and can help them feel more confident or composed. Therefore, superstitions in this sense are more than just illogical habits; they have a psychological function in the competitive realm. Because of long-standing traditions and ideals related to sport and performance, judo practitioners from particular regions could, for example, include culturally specific rituals into their pre-competition practices.

A well-known psychological phenomenon, superstitious behaviour is especially noticeable in the context of sports. Athletes from a variety of sports usually follow certain customs or use symbolic objects that they feel will improve their performance or ward off failure. Even though there is no scientific evidence to support such behaviours, athletes frequently see them as having a practical use that gives them a sense of control in stressful or uncertain situations (Bleak and Frederick, 1998). These customs may include donning a "lucky" outfit, adhering to a set warm-up, or refraining from certain behaviours thought to bring bad luck. Athletes may be particularly prone to forming superstitious habits in combat sports like judo, where results can depend on split-second decisions, psychological preparedness, and physical timing. Because judo battles are so intense and demand both mental and physical focus, players may adopt behavioural patterns that help them mentally prepare for competition. According to Burke (2006), these superstitions are frequently used as coping strategies to deal with self-doubt, performance anxiety, and the inherent unpredictability of sports.

Superstitious behaviour becomes a psychological tactic that, while not based in logic or scientific reasoning, can serve a potent emotional and mental function in competitive sports like judo, where matches are determined by both situational and skill criteria. One can learn more about how psychological beliefs influence athletic performance by examining these behaviours in judo players, particularly in the setting of intercollegiate contests. Therefore, the present study was designed to analysis the superstitious behaviour between male and female All India Inter University judo players.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

For the present study, One Hundred and Seventy Five (N=175) All India Inter University Judo players with the age group of 18 to 25 years were selected through purposive sampling technique. They were further divided into two groups: Group-A (N=82) male judo players and Group- B (N=93) female judo players. To collect the requisite data, the standardized questionnaire constructed by Bleak and Frederick (1998) has administered on the All-India Interuniversity male and female players, who were participating in all India interuniversity tournament held at Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar. The data thus collected from All

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India. Interuniversity male and female players from selected universities have been analyzed by independent t-test. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

RESULTS

Table: 1 T- Test Analysis between Male and Female Judo Players on the Sub- Parameter Clothing, Appearance and Fetish

Variable		Male	Female
CLOTHING AND APPEARANCE	Sample size	82	93
	Arithmetic mean	33.17	30.60
	Standard deviation	8.49	6.53
	Standard error of the mean	0.938	0.677
	Test statistic t	2.25	
	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	173	
	P-value	.02*	
FETISH	Sample size	82	93
	Arithmetic mean	16.21	13.08
	Standard deviation	5.27	4.48
	Standard error of the mean	0.5831	0.4654
	Test statistic t	4.24	
	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	173	
	P-value	0.00*	

The analysis revealed that male judo players scored significantly higher than female players on both the “clothing and appearance” and “fetish” superstition variables. For clothing and appearance, males had a mean score of 33.17 compared to 30.60 for females, and the difference was statistically significant ($t=2.25$, $p=0.02$), indicating that males tend to exhibit stronger superstitious behaviors related to attire and personal appearance. In the case of fetish-related superstition, males recorded a mean score of 16.21, while females scored 13.08, with the difference being highly significant ($t=4.24$, $p=0.00$), suggesting a notably greater inclination among males toward such beliefs.

Table: 2 T- Test Analysis between Male and Female Judo Players on the Sub- Parameter Preparation, Game and Competition

Variable		Male	Female
PREPARATION	Sample size	82	93
	Arithmetic mean	19.43	18.32
	Standard deviation	4.78	4.56
	Standard error of the mean	0.5289	0.4738
	Test statistic t	1.577	
	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	173	
	P-value	0.11	
GAME AND COMPETITION	Sample size	82	93
	Arithmetic mean	12.26	11.19
	Standard deviation	3.52	3.55
	Standard error of the mean	0.388	0.368
	Test statistic t	2.006	
	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	173	
	P-value	0.04*	

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The results showed that for the “preparation” superstition variable, male judo players had a mean score of 19.43, while females had a mean of 18.32. Although males scored slightly higher, the difference was not statistically significant ($t=1.577$, $p=0.11$), indicating that both groups demonstrated relatively similar levels of superstition related to preparation activities. In contrast, for the “game and competition” superstition variable, males scored 12.26 compared to 11.19 for females, with the difference reaching statistical significance ($t=2.006$, $p =0.04$). This suggests that male judo players exhibit a significantly greater tendency toward superstitious beliefs and practices during games and competitions than their female counterparts.

Table:3 T- Test Analysis between Male and Female Judo Players on The Sub- Parameter Team Ritual and Prayer

Variable		Male	Female
TEAM RITUAL	Sample size	82	93
	Arithmetic mean	11.78	11.38
	Standard deviation	3.62	3.11
	Standard error of the mean	0.400	0.322
	Test statistic t	0.77	
	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	173	
	P-value	0.44	
PRAYER	Sample size	82	93
	Arithmetic mean	10.30	10.27
	Standard deviation	2.94	3.63
	Standard error of the mean	0.325	0.376
	Test statistic t	0.05	
	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	173	
	P-value	0.96	

The findings indicate that for the “team ritual” superstition variable, male judo players had a mean score of 11.78, while females had a mean score of 11.38. Although males scored slightly higher, the difference was not statistically significant ($t = 0.77$, $p = 0.44$), suggesting that both groups engaged in team ritual superstitions to a similar extent. Similarly, in the “prayer” superstition variable, males averaged 10.30 and females 10.27, with an almost negligible difference between the two groups ($t = 0.05$, $p = 0.96$). These results clearly indicate that there is no significant gender difference in superstition levels related to team rituals or prayer among the judo players studied.

Table:4 T- Test Analysis Between Male and Female Judo Players on the Sub- Parameter Coach and Parameter Superstitious Behaviour

Variable		Male	Female
COACH	Sample size	82	93
	Arithmetic mean	9.56	9.05
	Standard deviation	2.97	2.94
	Standard error of the mean	0.3284	0.3052
	Test statistic t	1.13	
	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	173	
	P-value	0.25	
	Sample size	82	93

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Variable		Male	Female
SUPERSTITIOUS BEHAVIOUR	Arithmetic mean	112.74	103.92
	Standard deviation	20.15	16.27
	Standard error of the mean	2.22	1.68
	Test statistic t	3.20	
	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	173	
	P-value	0.00*	

The results show that for the “coach” superstition variable, male judo players had a mean score of 9.56 compared to 9.05 for females. Although the male mean was slightly higher, the difference was not statistically significant ($t = 1.13$, $p = 0.25$), indicating that both groups displayed similar levels of coach-related superstitious beliefs. In contrast, the overall “superstitious behaviour” score was notably higher for males ($M = 112.74$) than for females ($M = 103.92$), and this difference was statistically significant ($t = 3.20$, $p = 0.00$), suggesting that male judo players exhibit a significantly greater overall tendency toward superstitious behaviours compared to their female counterparts.

Figure: 1 Graphical representation of Mean Scores of Male and Female Judo Players on the Sub- Parameter Clothing and Appearance, Fetish, Preparation, and Game and Competition

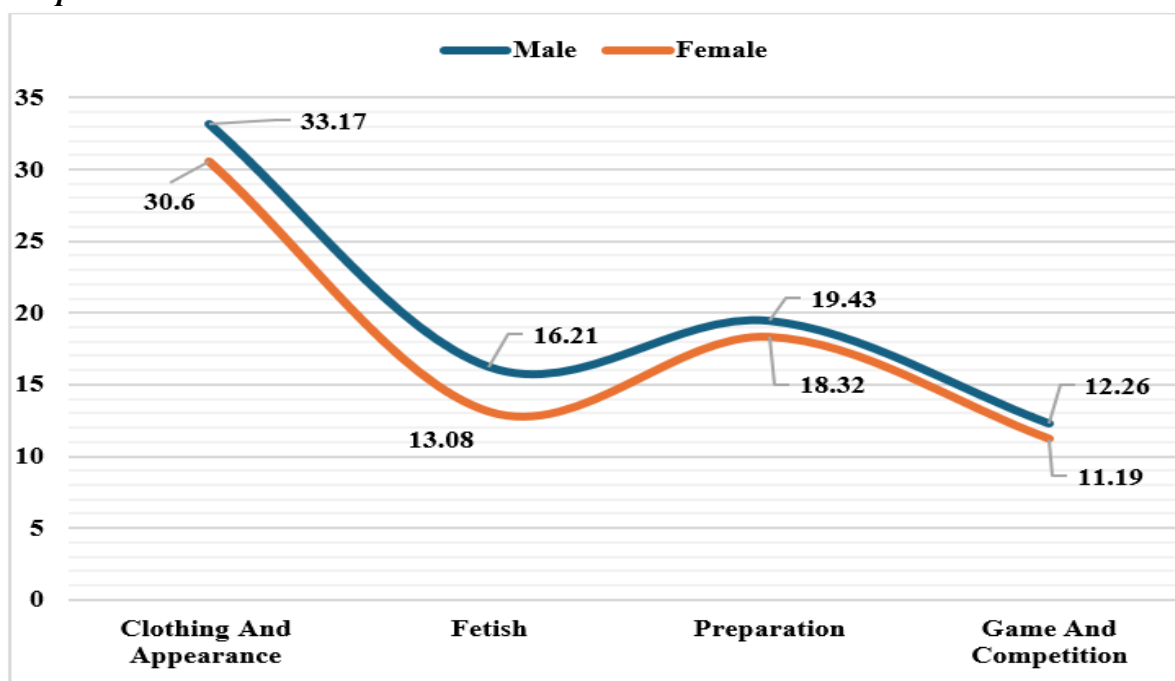
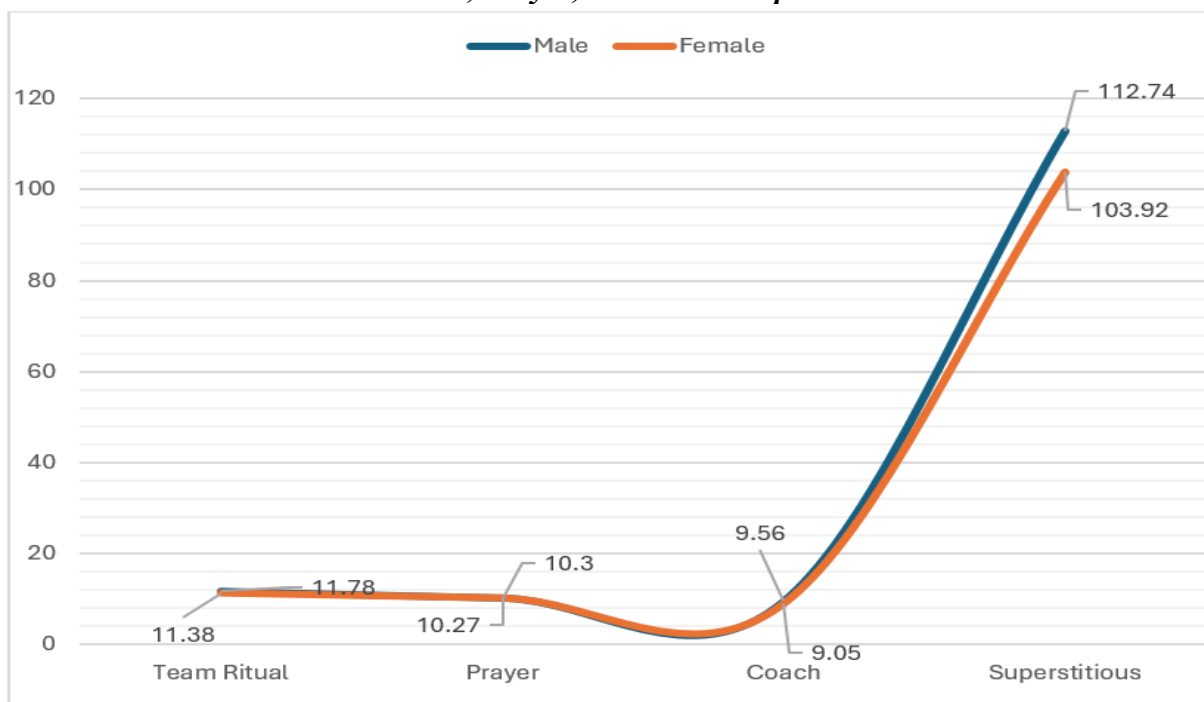


Figure: 2 Graphical Representations of Mean Scores of Male and Female Judo Players on the Sub- Parameter Team Ritual, Prayer, Coach and Superstitious



DISCUSSION

It has been observed that significant differences found between male and female judo players on the sub parameter Clothing and Appearance. While calculating the mean value, it is noticed that male players are significantly better than female players on the sub parameter Clothing and Appearance. This could reflect deeper psychological or cultural influences where male athletes may place more emphasis on certain routines or specific attire as a means to boost confidence or ensure good performance. These behaviours might include wearing a particular outfit, using specific gear, or maintaining a certain look believed to bring luck or consistency in performance. The difference also suggests that gender may influence the way athletes internalize and act upon superstitions related to their external appearance in sports settings. Understanding these tendencies can offer valuable insights for coaches and sports psychologists aiming to support athletes' mental preparation and address any behaviour that may impact performance or well-being. This finding is supported by Buhrmann and Zaugg (1983), who found that male athletes are more likely to engage in ritualistic behaviours related to attire and appearance compared to female athletes, often as a way to cope with performance-related stress.

Significant difference found between male and female judo players on the sub parameter Fetish. While calculating the mean value between the groups, it indicated that male judo players were better than the female judo players on the sub parameter Fetish. Although male players appeared to engage more in fetish-related superstitious behaviours than female players, Fetish-related behaviours, such as carrying lucky objects, wearing specific items during competitions, or relying on symbolic gear, are common among athletes seeking psychological comfort or consistency. The result of this study implies that male judo players exhibit more comparable levels of such behaviours. Supporting this, Ptacek (2016) found that NCAA athletes that fetish-related behaviours were not only prevalent but also the most effective and consistent predictors of athletes' confidence levels.

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No significant difference was found between male and female judo players on the sub parameter Preparation. While calculating the mean value between the groups, it is found that male and female judo players were almost same on the sub parameter Preparation. This indicates that both male and female athletes engage in similar levels of preparatory superstitious behaviours, such as pre-match routines, mental rituals, or specific warm-up sequences. These results imply that preparation-related superstitions are commonly practiced across genders and are likely shaped more by individual habits, coaching influences, or sport-specific routines rather than by gender differences. Such behaviours are often used to create a sense of control and focus before competition, and the similarity in scores reinforces the idea that preparation rituals are a universal aspect of athletic performance rather than a gendered trait. Mukherjee and Shaikh (2022) examined superstitious ritual behaviour's among university-level athletes and found no significant difference between male and female athletes in their engagement in such behaviours'.

Significant difference was found between male and female judo players on the sub parameter Game and Competition. While calculating the mean value between the groups; it is found that male judo players have showed better on the sub parameter Game and Competition. This suggests that both male and female judo players engage similarly in game- and competition-related superstitious behaviours such as following specific routines before matches, relying on lucky actions during competition, or mentally preparing in consistent ways to reduce anxiety and maintain focus. The lack of significant gender differences implies that these behaviours are universally adopted coping strategies, rather than being influenced strongly by gender. Supporting this, Khokhar and Rani (2020) found no significant differences in superstitious behaviour between individual and team athletes concerning the game and competition sub-parameter, suggesting that such behaviour's are prevalent across various types of sports and not influenced by the nature of the sport.

No significant difference was found between male and female judo players on the sub-parameter Team Ritual. The mean values for both groups were similar, indicating that male and female judo players engage comparably in team-based superstitious rituals such as group chants, coordinated gestures, or collective routines before a match. These behaviours are often shaped more by team culture than by gender. The current findings support the idea that such rituals function as shared strategies to build unity, reduce anxiety, and foster team cohesion, regardless of gender. Supporting this, Gaur (2022) found that no significant differences between male and female athletes in their engagement with superstitious behaviours related to clothing, appearance, and fetish, suggesting that such practices serve as common coping mechanisms across genders in sports contexts.

No significant difference was found between male and female judo players on the sub parameter Prayer. While calculating the mean value between the groups, it is observed that male and female judo players were same on the sub parameter Prayer. The mean scores of both groups were nearly identical, and the high p-value indicates that any slight difference was purely due to chance. This suggests that both male and female athletes are equally likely to exhibit superstitious behaviours related to their coach, such as following certain advice, cues, or interactions for perceived luck or performance consistency. These behaviours are likely influenced more by individual experiences with coaching styles rather than gender. The lack of a significant difference emphasizes that the psychological connection athlete's form with their coaches in terms of rituals or belief systems is a universal aspect of athlete-coach dynamics. Bal et al. (2014) concluded that no significant differences in superstitious

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behaviours among male athletes across different sports types, suggesting such behaviours are common regardless of sport or gender.

No significant difference was found between male and female judo players on the sub parameter Coach. While calculating the mean value between the groups, it is noticed that male and female judo players were same on the sub parameter Coach. Both groups reported similar levels of belief or behaviours related to their coach (such as relying on a coach's words, gestures, or presence for good luck or performance consistency). This suggests that athletes of both genders may equally associate their performance or confidence with their coach, highlighting the universal psychological role that coaches play in the competitive mind-sets of players. Veillette and Searight (2021) reported no significant gender difference in superstitious behaviours among college athletes, including behaviours related to external influences such as coaches.

Significant difference was found between male and female judo players on the parameter of Superstitious Behaviour. The mean values calculated for both groups indicate that male judo players exhibit higher levels of superstitious practices compared to female judo players in their approach to sport. This suggests that male athletes may rely more heavily on superstitious rituals as psychological strategies to manage competition-related stress or enhance confidence during performance. Brevers (2015) found that male athletes tend to engage more frequently in superstitious behaviours than female athletes, particularly in high-pressure competitive situations, highlighting the role of superstitions as coping mechanisms to boost confidence and reduce anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that male judo players generally exhibit higher levels of superstitious behaviour than female players, particularly in the domains of clothing and appearance, fetish objects, and game or competition-related practices. These differences indicate that male athletes place greater emphasis on certain ritualistic and symbolic actions linked to performance. However, in other areas such as preparation routines, team rituals, prayer, and the influence of coaches, both genders show comparable levels of superstition, suggesting that some superstitious practices are universally shared among athletes regardless of gender. Overall, the findings highlight that while superstition is a common aspect of judo players' psychological approach to competition, its intensity and focus areas vary between males and females.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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