



Ethnopsychology Gusjigang and Autogenic Training in Performance of IPSI Kudus Martial Art

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Abstract

Competitive anxiety is a major problem that hinders the transformation of physical training results into competition performance, especially in arts categories that require precision of movement, appreciation, and consistency of power. Unlike sports psychology approaches that tend to be universal and Western-based, this study offers conceptual innovation through the synchronization of value-based emotional regulation (top-down) and physiological control through autogenic relaxation (bottom-up). This study aims to analyze the integration of Gusjigang local wisdom values (good character, smart recitation, and skilled trading) with the Autogenic Training technique as an ethnopsychology-based mental training model in improving the performance of IPSI Kudus martial artists. The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an ethnopsychological perspective. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with five martial artists in the single, double, and team categories, then analyzed inductively through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing with source triangulation to maintain data validity. The results showed that the integration of Gusjigang and Autogenic Training was effective in reducing somatic anxiety symptoms, improving focus and body awareness, and maintaining stability of expression and movement accuracy. The value of "Bagus" serves as spiritual-based emotional regulation that builds inner peace, 'Ngaji' strengthens cognitive control and muscle memory fluency, while "Dagang" shapes strategic efficiency and energy management during the performance of martial arts moves. These findings confirm that culturally-based mental training models are not only contextually relevant but also contribute to the development of sports psychology literature rooted in local wisdom. Practically, this model can serve as a reference for IPSI coaches in designing adaptive, contextual, and sustainable mental strengthening programs.

How to Cite

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INTRODUCTION

Martial Art in the art category is a manifestation of beauty and technique that requires perfect synchronization between the physical and the mental aspects. Unlike the competition category that relies on physical contact, the art category demands precision of movement, richness of expression, and the steadiness of rhythm that must be displayed consistently over a certain period of time (Ediyono & Widodo, 2019). Physical components such as coordination, balance, and flexibility are the main foundations in executing single and team moves. In official competitions, the performance of an art silat is not only judged by the accuracy of movement, but also by steadiness (power) and appreciation which is greatly influenced by psychological conditions (focus and calmness). Physical performance such as speed and power in elite level athletes is highly on emotional stability (Subekti et al., 2021). Unstable mental conditions are often the main determinant of athletes' failure to transform the results of physical training into competition performance. However, the facts on the ground show that many talented athletes experience a significant performance declines due to competitive anxiety, which often manifests in the form of shaking, loss of concentration, and the inability to express the character of their movement well, thereby hindering the achievement of maximum performance in the arena (Jaya Kusuma & Fadlan Arya, 2025).

The main problem that often arises is the inability of athletes to transform the results of physical training into competition due to unstable mental conditions. The phenomenon of competitive anxiety often triggers a significant decline in performance, such as loss of concentration and the inability to express the character of the move to the maximum (Rhamadian & Jumrotul'Aqobah, 2022). Uncontrolled anxiety creates cognitive barriers that interfere with athletes' muscle memory when performing single, double, or team moves. So far, interventions in the field of sports psychology in Indonesia still use a Western approach and focus more on technical and physiological aspects. However, an athlete's mental state is greatly influenced by the cultural and social background, which is often referred to as ethnopsychology. The ethnopsychological approach shows that a person's psychological well-being is greatly influenced by the cultural values he or she adheres to (Fadillah et al., 2025). For silat fighters in Kudus, their cultural identity is very closely

related to the philosophy of Gusjigang (Good Morals, Smart recitation, Skilled in Trading). These values contain principles such as discipline, spiritual calmness, and strong independence (Ihsan, 2017). The integration of local wisdom of Gusjigang has proven to be a good source for instilling strong character values in shaping individual behavior in Kudus (Rahmawati & Pelu, 2021). The "Bagus" value teaches inner peace (inner peace), "Ngaji" emphasizes cognitive acuity in understanding details, and "Dagang" forms hard work, discipline, fighting power, and calculated accuracy. If integrated, these values can become a "psychological shield" that is more relevant to local athletes than a general psychological approach (Darmawan et al., 2023). However, the use of this philosophy as an instrument to strengthen the mentality of martial art athletes has not been studied in depth.

To complete this philosophical basis, a practical psychological approach is needed that is able to regulate the body's automatic reaction when experiencing stress, one of which is Autogenic Training. This method works through self-suggestion to create relaxation that can significantly lower the level of anxiety during competition in athletes (Rachmaningdiah & Jannah, 2016). The application of autogenic training has also been shown to be effective in helping athletes regulate their emotions, so that they remain able to focus on critical moments (Jannah & Kusuma Dewi, 2021). Theoretically, when a silat fighter is able to combine the peace of mind taught by Gusjigang with the physiological control of autogenic exercises, then the peak performance condition will be easier to achieve. The combination of the power of local cultural values (Gusjigang) and modern relaxation techniques (Autogenic Training) is expected to result in a more natural and effective method of mental strengthening for local silat fighters (Ryba et al., 2024).

Athletes' psychological conditions, particularly competitive anxiety, have long been identified as a determining factor in sports performance. Meta-analysis shows that competitive anxiety has a complex relationship with athlete performance and can have negative impacts if not managed adaptively (Rice et al., 2016). Cutting-edge research in sports psychology also confirms that the stress of competition not only affects cognitive aspects, but also triggers physiological responses that impact motor control and movement consistency of athletes. As the study of sports psychology develops, mindfulness-based mental training approaches

and emotion regulation are becoming widely used to help athletes manage stress and improve functional performance (Sullivan et al., 2019). However, most of these approaches are still universal and lack consideration of the cultural context of athletes. In fact, cultural identity has an important role in shaping the way individuals interpret pressure, manage emotions, and perform in a competitive environment (Schinke et al., 2018).

In the context of traditional sports such as martial art, culturally sensitive approaches to psychology are becoming increasingly relevant. The cross-cultural psychological perspective emphasizes that local values can serve as cognitive and affective frameworks that support emotional regulation as well as the strengthening of athlete identity. Therefore, the integration of Gusjigang's local wisdom with modern psychological techniques such as Autogenic Training is seen as a potential contextual approach in supporting the performance of martial art players (Hooker et al., 2020).

In the context of sports psychology, previous research such as that conducted by Subekti et al. (2021) showed that emotional stability plays a crucial role in athlete performance, but their approach is still common and does not take into account the local cultural context. Meanwhile, ethnopsychological studies in Indonesia, as studied by Darmawan et al. (2023), emphasize the importance of cultural values in forming psychological resilience, but have not been specifically applied to traditional sports such as martial art. The gap in this research lies in the lack of integration between the local wisdom of Kudus (Gusjigang) with modern relaxation techniques such as Autogenic Training, which can provide a holistic solution to overcome competitive anxiety in martial artists. The contribution of this research is to provide an original ethnopsychological model, which not only improves the performance of athletes but also enriches the literature on sports psychology in Indonesia with a cultural perspective. Practically, these findings can be implemented by IPSI Kudus coaches to develop a more contextual mental training program, thereby contributing to the development of young athletes and the preservation of local culture (Taruna et al., 2025).

Although much research has been done on athlete mentality, studies that integrate specific local wisdom such as Gusjigang into modern relaxation techniques are still very limited. Most of the research on local wisdom in Kudus is still limited to the domain of character

education in schools or the economic behavior of the community. The novelty of this research lies in an ethnopsychological approach that tries to synergize the cultural identity of the Kudus community with modern psychological techniques to improve the performance of martial art athletes. Therefore, this study aims to describe in depth how the application of Gusjigang values and Autogenic Training can affect the psychological and physical performance of martial art players at IPSI Kudus. The results of this study are expected to become a new model of culture-based mental training for pencak silat coaches at the regional level.

In contrast to previous sports psychology research which generally uses a Western-based universal approach, this study offers an ethnopsychological mental training model through the integration of the values of local wisdom Gusjigang (Good Morals, Smart Recitation, and Skilled Trading) with Autogenic Training techniques in the context of martial art in the art category. Until now, studies on competitive anxiety in martial art athletes have focused on technical, physiological, or general psychological interventions, without systematically linking them to the cultural identity of the athlete (Astuti et al., 2025). Therefore, this study presents conceptual novelty in the form of synchronization of emotional regulation based on cultural values (top-down) and physiological control through autogenic relaxation (bottom-up) as a contextual approach in improving the performance of martial art fighters. Theoretically, these findings enrich the literature on sports psychology based on local culture, while practically providing an applicative reference for martial art coaches in designing contextual and sustainable mental strengthening programs.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design within an ethnopsychological paradigm. The qualitative method was selected to explore in depth how local cultural values and psychological techniques are interpreted and internalized by martial artists in the context of competition performance.

The research was conducted at the IPSI Kudus training center, Kudus Regency, Central Java, in January 2026 during the pre-competition preparation phase. Data collection was carried out over a one-week period. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) martial artists com-

peting in the arts category (single, double, and team), (2) aged 15–25 years, (3) having at least two years of competition experience, and (4) having been exposed to Gusjigang values and Autogenic Training in their mental training process. In this study, there are five participants determined based on the principle of data saturation.

In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary research instrument. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews lasting approximately 45–60 minutes per participant. The interview guidelines were developed based on sports psychology and ethnopsychology frameworks, covering experiences of competitive anxiety, emotional regulation strategies, body awareness, and the internalization of cultural values in performance contexts. Field notes were also used to enrich contextual understanding.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Participants were given the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations. Data were analyzed inductively through data reduction, coding, thematic categorization, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on identifying patterns of integration between Gusjigang values as culturally grounded cognitive regulation (top-down) and Autogenic Training as physiological relaxation regulation (bottom-up) in supporting martial arts performance stability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in January 2026 at the IPSI Kudus training center in Central Java. Data collection took place over approximately one week, with each informant interviewed for between 45 and 60 minutes. The informants in this study were five martial artists in the arts category (single, double, and teams) who met the criteria for purposive sampling and had reached data saturation. Based on the results of in-depth interviews, the research findings show that the integration of Gusjigang and Autogenic Training values forms a pattern of emotional regulation that directly affects the stability of martial artists' performance. The following description explains the dimensions of the research findings systematically.

Ethical-Spiritual Dimension: The Value of “Bagus” as Emotional Regulation

The findings show that the value of “Bagus” (Bagus Akhlak) is interpreted as a moral and spiritual foundation that builds inner peace

before and during competition. This value helps athletes reduce excessive orientation towards results and shift their focus to the quality of their performance. One informant stated

“I use the principle of ‘Bagus’ as a guide to sincerity. Leave the results to God; the important thing is to perform to the best of my ability without unsportingly defeating my opponent.” (Subject 1)

Psychologically, these findings show that the value of “Bagus” functions as a cognitive-based (top-down) emotion regulation mechanism, in which athletes reconstruct the meaning of competition as a process of proving character, not a threat. This is in line with the perspective of culture-based sports psychology, which emphasizes the importance of cultural identity in shaping emotional stability (Schinke et al., 2018). Integration with Autogenic Training reinforces this effect through relaxation of the parasympathetic nervous system, thereby minimizing somatic symptoms such as heart palpitations and muscle tension.

Cognitive-Analytical Dimension: The Value of “Ngaji” and Body Awareness

The informants interpreted the value of “Ngaji” as a process of reflection and careful observation of one's condition. In the context of mental training, this value is combined with the body scanning technique in Autogenic Training.

The informant said *“When doing autogenic training, I feel more sensitive. It's like ‘ngaji’ myself, knowing which muscles are still tense, then I whisper in my heart to relax so that my hands don't shake when holding a machete.”* (Subject 5)

This finding shows that the value of “Ngaji” strengthens cognitive control and body awareness. Neuromuscularly, consistent relaxation helps maintain muscle memory so that movements can be executed with precision and power stability (Subekti et al., 2021). Thus, this integration forms a synchronization between cognitive control and physiological regulation (bottom-up).

Pragmatic-Strategic Dimension: The Value of “Dagang” and Energy Efficiency

The value of “Dagang” is interpreted as the principle of efficiency and strategic calculation. Athletes realize that emotional tension causes energy waste.

As expressed by the informant *“Dagang means you have to make a profit. So I think that if I'm nervous, it's a waste of energy. I save my energy for the final burst (power).”* (Subject 4)

This value encourages athletes to control the intensity of their emotions so that they do

not interfere with their stamina and performance consistency. Theoretically, this strategy shows how cultural identity functions as a cognitive framework in performative decision-making (Darmawan et al., 2023).

Tabel 1. Matrix of Martial Artist Performance Transformation through Gusjigang and Autogenic Training

Gusjigang Value	Psychological Function	Autogenic Componen	Performance Impact
Bagus	Emotional stability	Relaxation of tension	Calmness & expressi stability
Ngaji	Cognitive control	Body aware-ness	Movement precision
Dagang	Strategic regulation	Energy regulation	Power efficiency

Supportive Ecosystem and Sustainability

The findings also show that the effectiveness of this integration is influenced by external factors, namely the role of coaches and family support. Informants emphasized that the internalization of Gusjigang values must be accompanied by the example set by coaches so that it does not stop at the symbolic level. This shows that the ethnopsychological approach is not only individualistic but also contextual and systemic.

Overall, this study shows that the integration of Gusjigang and Autogenic Training forms a two-way emotional regulation model, namely (1) Culturally-based regulation (top-down) (2) Physiological regulation through relaxation (bottom-up). This model not only reduces competitive anxiety but also maintains power stability, movement expression, and performance consistency in the arts category. This approach enriches the study of sports psychology based on local culture and provides a contextual alternative to Western-based universal approaches.

These findings strengthen previous studies on emotional stability in athletes (Subekti et al., 2021) and extend cultural praxis perspectives in sport psychology (Ryba et al., 2024). However, unlike universal psychological approaches, this study demonstrates that culturally embedded mental training provides contextual relevance that aligns with athletes' identity structures. This confirms the importance of integrating ethnopsychology into sport performance enhancement models.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of

the values of local wisdom of Gusjigang (Good Morals, Smart Ngaji, and Skilled Trading) with the Autogenic Training technique contributes positively to the performance of IPSI Kudus art silat players, especially in the psychological aspects related to the management of competitive anxiety. The "Bagus" value plays a role in shaping the inner calm and emotional stability of athletes, the "Ngaji" value strengthens focus, body awareness, and smooth muscle memory, while the "Dagang" value supports the efficiency of strategy and energy management during the performance of moves. The synergy between the ethnopsychology approach based on cultural values (top-down) and physiological regulation through Autogenic Training (bottom-up) has been proven to be able to reduce competitive anxiety and maintain the consistency of power and movement expression in the art category. Thus, this culture-based mental training model is relevant as a contextual approach in the development of the performance of art silat fighters and has the potential to enrich the study of sports psychology based on local wisdom.

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