

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK MODEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON PERFORMANCE FOR TAEKWONDO STUDENT ATHLETES

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#### ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence (EI) significantly influences psychological factors in athletic performance, particularly in fighting sports such as Taekwondo. In addition to physical and technical skills, an athlete's ability to regulate emotions, handle stress, and sustain focus profoundly impacts competition results. This study presents a conceptual emotional intelligence model specifically designed for Taekwondo student-athletes, incorporating emotional awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The approach analyses the interaction of emotional intelligence components from the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso, Trait EI, and Bar-On (EQ-i) models with athlete experience to influence performance. Experience serves as a crucial mediator, improving emotional regulation and strategic adaptation via prolonged engagement in competition. The study examines the psychological challenges of Taekwondo and proposes that systematic emotional intelligence training can enhance mental resilience and performance. The suggested model enhances sports psychology by providing a practical basis for future interventions designed to mitigate anxiety, cultivate interpersonal skills, and optimise athlete development.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Taekwondo, Athlete Performance, Sports Psychology, Psychological Resilience

## 1. Introduction

Sports psychology is one of the numerous essential components of an individual's daily existence. Our daily behaviour has a lot to do with how well or how poorly we do in the different things we do every day. So, people can have a wide range of mental health problems, some of which can make it very hard for them to do normal things. People have

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these problems because of things in their minds, like stress, anxiety, sadness, lack of drive, loneliness, helplessness, and phobias (Beharu, 2018). Psychology is an important part of many parts of life, including how well you do in sports. Athletes' success depends on more than just their physical skills. It also depends on how they think and feel. There are a lot of psychological factors that can affect how well or poorly an athlete does, including their motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, mental preparedness, focus, goal setting, creativity, and psychological resilience (Hayrettin, 2022). People from over 200 countries practise taekwondo, which is an Olympic sport and a world-famous martial art (International Olympic Committee, 2021). In addition to teaching self-defence skills, Taekwondo focusses on building morals and mental toughness. Learning taekwondo can help with things like social skills, character development, manners, and adjusting to school life (Kim et al., 2021). Sport training has many benefits for your body and mind, but it has also been used for a long time to build mental toughness and moral character in its practitioners (Kwak, et al., 2017). It is important for Taekwondo practitioners to have good behaviour and attitudes while they are teaching (Lim, 2009). Training in taekwondo can help with things like social skills, character, manners, and adjusting to school life (Kim, et al., 2021).

An individual's emotional intelligence (EI) is the set of skills and knowledge they possess to recognise, understand, control, and effectively affect other people's feelings. Taekwondo players need to have a lot of emotional intelligence to deal with the stress of training, competition, and personal growth (Rubio et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence, on the other hand, looks at how emotions affect behaviour and mental health looks at overall mental health (Popovych et al., 2022). Instead of mental health issues like sadness or anxiety, emotional intelligence

(EI) focusses on an athlete's ability to control their emotions, build resilience, and focus for long periods of time (Marheni et al., 2024; Popovych et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence includes being able to understand and use emotional knowledge to make better choices and do better work. For Taekwondo practitioners, this means being able to stay calm under pressure, deal with problems well, and change their strategy during a fight (Rodriguez-Romo et al., 2021). According to early talks with experts, athletes with higher emotional intelligence are better at dealing with nerves before a game, reading their opponent's emotions, and changing their plans accordingly (Aouani et al., 2022). A strategic edge can come from being able to tell when an enemy is frustrated or overconfident. As a result, the study stresses the importance of adding these skills to the EI model so that Taekwondo players can improve their performance by becoming more emotionally aware and controlling their emotions.

Li et al. (2023) say that cultural differences in how people express and control their emotions suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach to EI might not be able to handle the complex issues of athlete success. Between 50 and 90% of sports success is psychological. This means that mental preparation is an important part of training, and sports psychologists are often there to help. Athletes with high EI are better able to control their emotions and stay consistent under pressure. Studies have shown that a six-week EI training program can greatly reduce worry and anxiety. Studies by Zhang et al. (2021) and Zhao et al. (2023) add to the evidence that controlling your emotions, being resilient, and being optimistic all have a good effect on your Taekwondo performance. Social skills, talking to coaches and teammates, and understanding your opponents all help you do better in competition and make the training setting more positive (Liu et al., 2021). Experience also acts as a critical

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mediator, allowing seasoned athletes to leverage EI for stress management, decision-making, and interpersonal interactions (Marheni et al., 2024; Popovych et al., 2022). Because of China's unique culture, Taekwondo players need a customised EI framework in order to reach their full potential. Coaches, trainers, and psychologists can help athletes reach their full potential and do their best in competitive Taekwondo by combining focused EI training with a caring setting (Hu & Wang, 2021; Li et al., 2021).

This research aims to find out how emotional intelligence (EI) affects Taekwondo athletes' success in sports. The ultimate goal is to create a model for improving EI skills to lead to better performance. The study's specific goals are to find out how ability, personality traits, and emotional and social skills affect the performance of Taekwondo student-athletes in China, to look into how experience affects the relationship between EI factors and performance, and to create an EI-based model to improve athletic performance. According to these goals, the study aims to find answers to important questions about how EI affects performance, how experience plays a part, and how to make a good model for improving EI in Taekwondo players. However, objectives of this study is:

- i. To identify the impact emotional Intelligence (EI) based on ability, personal traits and emotional & social competencies that contribute to performance of Taekwondo student athlete in China.
- ii. To examine the mediating effect of experience on relationship between element of Emotional Intelligence

(EI) that contribute to performance of Taekwondo student athlete.

- iii. To develop a model of Emotional Intelligence on enhance Performance for Taekwondo student Athletes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Martial Art in China

It is deeply rooted in Chinese culture and tradition that martial arts have a long and honourable past. From past times to the present, Chinese martial arts have made a big difference in the country's physical, mental, and spiritual growth. An analysis of the literature that looks at the intellectual bases, training methods, and historical and cultural significance of Chinese martial arts. Chinese martial arts come from fighting styles and ways to protect yourself that are thousands of years old. Early Chinese war stories like "The Art of War" by Sun Tzu and "Book of Changes" by Lao Tzu help us understand how Chinese wars started (Muller-Junior, I. L., & Capraro, A. M., 2022). During the Tang and Song dynasties, famous people like Bodhidharma and Zhang Sanfeng made important contributions to the growth of martial arts. This led to the creation of many systems and styles (Meng, L., & Teng, C. 2022). One thing that makes Chinese martial arts unique is that they are based on strong spiritual ideas. Ideas from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism had a big impact on the moral and social rules of martial arts. Confucius taught a lot about loyalty, respect, and doing what is right. Martial arts ethics and rules of behaviour show what he meant (Li & Qiu, 2018). The taoist philosophy has had a big effect on both Tai Chi and Baguazhang. The taoist philosophy is based on unity, balance, and building up inner energy (Worrell, M and others, 2020). China teaches martial arts through a range

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of activities that improve fitness, forms (kata), sparring, and teaching how to use weapons. Normal ways of training aim to improve strength, flexibility, speed, and balance (Mustafa, H., 2021). As part of training to boost inner strength and spiritual growth, people do Qi Gong exercises that involve controlling their breath and building up their energy (Mendo, B., et al., 2022). Training usually takes place in schools or academies, with wise leaders passing on their knowledge through a system of lineages.

## 2.2 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has been articulated and characterised in numerous manners, with Oh and Cho (2023) delineating it as the capacity to identify, comprehend, and employ emotions to facilitate reasoning and decision-making. The Emotional Intelligence Appraisal (EIA) (Bradberry & Greaves, 2017) serves as a self-assessment instrument designed to evaluate emotional competencies across various domains, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Research underscores its profound influence on well-being and interpersonal connections, associating elevated emotional intelligence with reduced levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2018), alongside enhanced life satisfaction and happiness (Kafetsios & Loumakou, 2019). Furthermore, it improves communication, empathy, and conflict resolution, thereby promoting constructive social interactions (Zhu, Li, & Chen, 2021). In professional environments, the significance of emotional intelligence is acknowledged as a vital component of effective leadership and career advancement. Research suggests that individuals possessing elevated emotional intelligence demonstrate robust leadership qualities, intrinsic motivation, and the capacity to inspire others, which in turn enhances team performance and organisational results (Sy, Côté, &

Saavedra, 2018). Furthermore, there exists a positive correlation with job performance, satisfaction, and career progression (Lam & O'Higgins, 2019). A range of approaches, such as virtual reality therapy (Hedman-Lagerlöf, 2020), emotional intelligence training programs, and mindfulness-based interventions (Heeren et al., 2019), have been investigated to elevate emotional intelligence through the enhancement of self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills.

### 2.2.1 The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Model (MSCEIT)

The MSCEIT model, conceived by Mayer et al. (2012), emphasises emotional intelligence as a construct grounded in ability. The framework comprises four distinct branches: the perception of emotions, the facilitation of thought, the comprehension of emotions, and the regulation of emotions. This model highlights the evaluation of individuals' abilities in perceiving, utilising, comprehending, and managing emotions with efficacy (Li et al., 2021). A prior investigation explored the correlation between emotional intelligence, assessed through the MSCEIT framework, and social behaviour (Megías-Robles et al., 2019). The researchers discovered that individuals exhibiting elevated emotional intelligence scores displayed enhanced interpersonal skills, encompassing improved social perception, emotional regulation, and empathy. The research offered compelling insights into the significance of emotional intelligence in comprehending and forecasting social behaviour. Furthermore, an additional study revealed that individuals exhibiting elevated emotional intelligence were more adept at navigating the demands of emotional labour, resulting in diminished emotional exhaustion and enhanced job satisfaction (Wen et al., 2019). The findings underscored the significance of emotional intelligence in navigating the

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emotional challenges inherent in diverse professions. In earlier investigations, scholars explored the connection between emotional intelligence and psychological resilience (Ajilchi et al., 2019), which pertains to a person's capacity to manage and recover from challenges. The results indicated a positive correlation between emotional intelligence, evaluated through

the MSCEIT model, and elevated levels of psychological resilience (Callea et al., 2019). Those possessing elevated emotional intelligence exhibited superior emotional regulation and coping strategies, allowing for more effective adaptation to adverse life circumstances (Delhom et al., 2020).

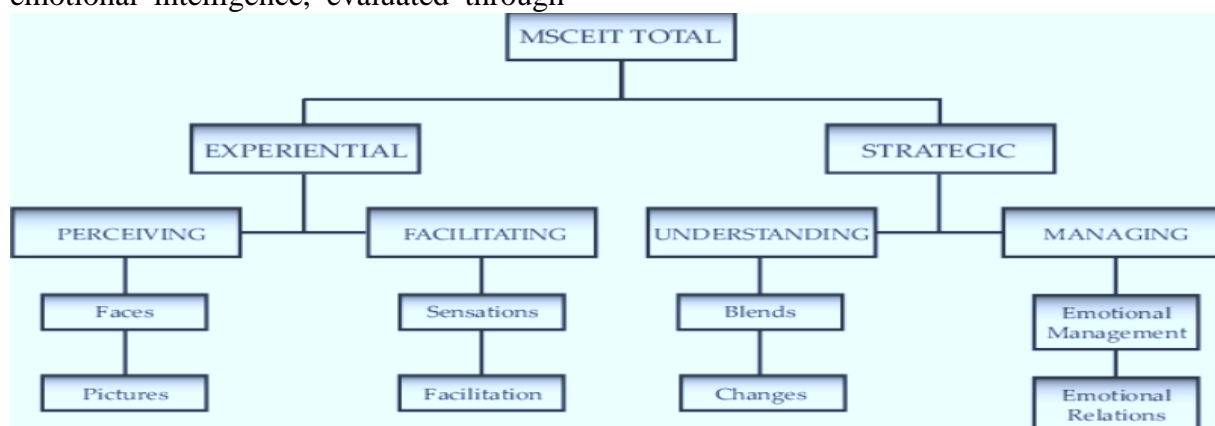


Figure 1: The MSCEIT Model

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## .2.2 The Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) Model

The TEI approach looks at emotional intelligence as a group of personality traits or ways of being. Authors: Konstantinos V. Petrides and Adrian Furnham This model shows how different people are in emotional traits like well-being, self-control, and emotionality. It seems that these traits have a big effect on how people feel, how they connect with others, and their overall mental health (Alba-Juez & Pérez-González, 2019). Researchers have already looked at the link between the TEI model of trait emotional intelligence and the perceived well-being of teens and young adults. Researchers found that people with higher trait emotional

intelligence scores had more life happiness, positive affect, and less negative affect (Kong et al., 2019; Morón, & Biolik-Morón, 2021). The studies showed how important emotional traits are for improving health and emotional functioning in young adults. Once upon a time, researchers looked into the connection between trait emotional intelligence (TEI) and school manners and academic performance. People who had higher trait emotional intelligence did better in school, getting better grades and scores on standardised tests (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2020). Also, students who had higher trait emotional intelligence did better in school. They were more motivated, engaged in class, and had better social skills (Trigueros et al., 2020).



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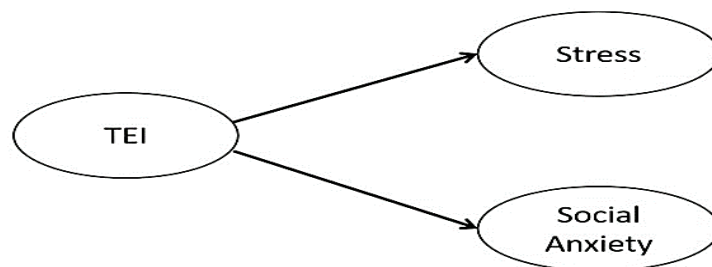


Figure 2: TEI Model

## 2.2.3 The Bar-On Model of Emotional Intelligence (EQ-i)

The EQ-i models, which were created by Reuven Bar-On, see emotional intelligence as a group of emotional and social skills that work together. It has five key parts: how you see yourself, how you express yourself, how you interact with others, how you make decisions, and how you deal with stress. This model stresses the importance of building emotional skills and knowledge to improve both personal and social functioning (Wittmer & Hopkins, 2022). As a result of a study that looked at the link between emotional intelligence (EQ-i) and performance in Taekwondo athletes, those with higher EQ-i scores did better in competitions, with higher scores in technical skills and strategic decision-making (Acebes-Sánchez et al., 2021). Another study found that athletes with higher emotional intelligence scores used more healthy ways to deal with stress, like fixing problems and getting help from others (Yamaguchi et al., 2022). Lower emotional intelligence, on the other hand,

was linked to using unhealthy ways of dealing, like avoiding problems and blaming oneself (Sanchez-Ruiz et al., 2021). These studies focused on how emotional intelligence affects how players deal with stress and cope with problems. According to Tatsi et al. (2022), previous research looked at the link between emotional intelligence (EQ-i) and mental health in Taekwondo players. Researchers found that athletes with higher emotional intelligence scores had better mental health generally, including higher self-esteem, life satisfaction, and positive affect (O'Neill, 2021). These studies showed that emotional intelligence has a good effect on the mental health and functioning of athletes. A study using the Bar-On Model of Emotional Intelligence (EQ-i) in Taekwondo looked at how emotional intelligence affected different parts of athletes' performance, how they deal with stress, and their overall mental health (Kiziloğlu, & Şahin, 2022). The EQ-i model gives us useful information about emotional skills and how they can help improve Taekwondo athletes' success and their mental health.

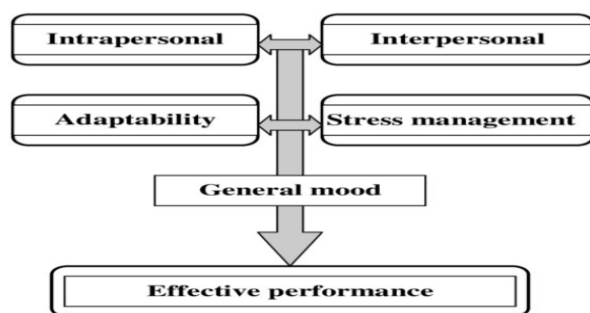


Figure 3: EQ-I Model

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework focuses on comprehending the intricate interaction between emotional intelligence (EI), individual characteristics, emotional and social skills, experience, and performance results among Taekwondo athletes in China. The concept suggests that emotional intelligence, which includes skills like perceiving, expressing, and regulating

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emotions, as well as personal attributes such as resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy, plays a fundamental role in affecting the performance of athletes in Taekwondo. The study investigated the impact of athletes' emotional intelligence abilities and personal traits on their adaptive behaviour, coping strategies, and overall performance excellence in the competitive context of Taekwondo, based on recent research conducted by Wang et al. (2022) and Zhao et al. (2023). In addition, the conceptual framework includes the function of experience in influencing the connection between emotional intelligence and performance results in Taekwondo athletes. Experience, which includes characteristics like extensive training, exposure to competitive conditions, and historical performance results, is believed

to influence the effect of emotional intelligence on athlete performance. The investigation was exploring the impact of accumulated experience on athletes' emotional responses, coping mechanisms, and adaptation techniques in Taekwondo, ultimately altering their performance trajectories. This study builds upon the findings of Chen et al. (2023) and Zhou et al. (2022). The conceptual framework aims to provide a detailed understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among Taekwondo athletes in China. It focuses on the role of experience in mediating this relationship. The framework offers valuable insights for athlete development programmed, coaching interventions, and strategies to optimize performance in the sport

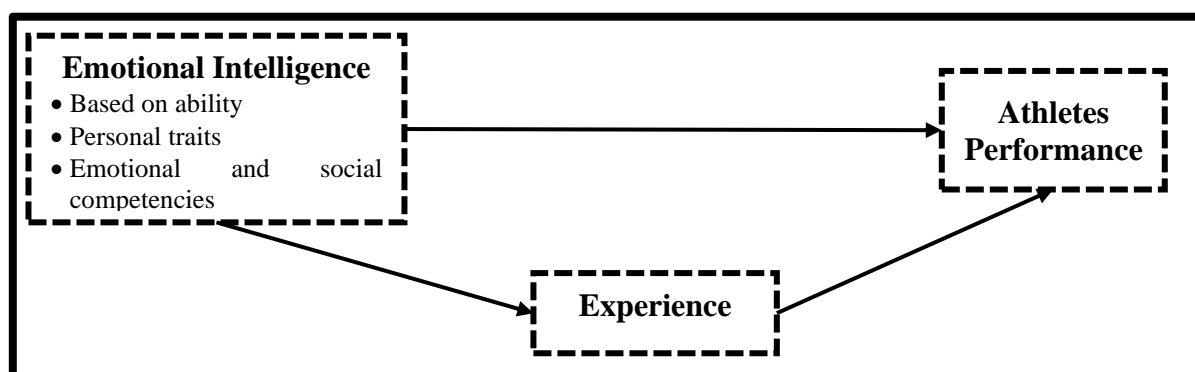


Figure 4: Conceptual framework of the study (Mayer et al., 2024; Odukoya & Olowookere, 2020)

**Table 1: Overview of the domains, components, and items that remain, along with the corresponding justifications**

Domains	Components	Justifications
<b>Emotional Intelligence (EI)</b>	Emotional intelligence Based Ability (EBIA)	According to Mayer et al. (2012), emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions, which is crucial for athletes in high-pressure situations.
		Mayer et al. (2008) highlights that managing and regulating emotions is essential for improving focus and resilience, leading to better performance in sports.
		According to Petrides et al. (2007), perceiving and understanding others' emotions fosters teamwork and social cohesion, which are crucial in Taekwondo.

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<b>Emotional Intelligence (EI)</b>	Emotional intelligence Based Traits (EBIT)	According to Vaughan et al. (2021), self-awareness enhances an athlete's ability to manage stress and pressure effectively.
		Athletes who can adjust their emotional responses based on the competition environment tend to perform better under pressure (Vaughan et al., 2021).
		Emotional intelligence helps athletes leverage their emotions for motivation, resilience, and tactical decision-making, leading to enhanced performance (Vaughan et al., 2021).
<b>Emotional Intelligence (EI)</b>	Emotional intelligence based on emotional and social competencies (EBES)	Emotional intelligence enhances self-regulation, motivation, and resilience, which are essential for Taekwondo athletes to maintain peak performance under competitive pressure (Goleman, 2020).
		Developing emotional and social competencies strengthens athletes' ability to build positive relationships with coaches and teammates, fostering a supportive training environment (Goleman, 2020).
		Training programs integrating emotional intelligence components have been shown to improve decision-making, focus, and stress management in sports (Mayer et al., 2024).
<b>Athletes Experience</b>	Athletes Experience (AE)	The ability to manage emotions enhances focus and reduces performance anxiety, leading to better execution of techniques during competitions (Liu & Jiang, 2019).
		Empathy towards competitors helps in anticipating their moves and reactions, which is critical for adapting strategies and gaining a tactical advantage in matches (Liu & Jiang, 2019).
		Awareness of emotions enables athletes to regulate stress and maintain composure under pressure, resulting in more calculated decision-making (Cheng et al., 2022).
<b>Athletes Performance</b>	Athletes Sports Performance (ASP)	According to Goleman (2020), performance consistency in sports is strongly linked to emotional intelligence, as it helps athletes regulate emotions, stay focused, and maintain composure under pressure.
		Mayer et al. (2012) who emphasize that self-awareness and emotional regulation improve competitive edge and decision-making.
		Research by Mayer et al. (2024) suggests that emotional intelligence enhances cognitive and physiological readiness, which directly improves sports performance by optimizing emotional control.

### 3. Research Methodology

A suggested methodology entails utilizing a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to investigate the impact of

emotional intelligence (EI) on the performance of Taekwondo student-athletes, with experience serving as a mediating variable. The proposed sample may consist of roughly 250 to 300



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Taekwondo student-athletes from several sports universities and martial arts training centers throughout China. A stratified random selection method is suitable to guarantee representation across essential strata, including gender and experience level (novice, intermediate, and elite athletes). Validated psychometric instruments should be utilized to assess the constructs inside the framework. Emotional intelligence can be evaluated by the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) for ability-based emotional intelligence or the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) for personality trait-based emotional intelligence. Athlete performance may be assessed by a synthesis of self-reported performance questionnaires, coach evaluations, and documentation of recent competitive accomplishments. The mediating component, experience, can be quantified using indicators such as years of training, competition participation frequency, and previous performance records.

The data collection process will entail the dissemination of structured questionnaires, either in physical or digital format, with informed consent acquired from all participants. Ethical approval will be obtained from the appropriate institutional review boards. Subsequent to data collection, statistical analysis may be performed utilizing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to investigate the interrelationships among the constructs and evaluate both direct and indirect impacts. The mediating influence of experience can be assessed by bootstrapping approaches. The measurement model's reliability and validity will be verified using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). This empirical approach not only establishes a solid foundation for hypothesis testing but also facilitates the creation of focused interventions aimed at improving athlete performance via emotional intelligence

training. Translating the conceptual model into an empirical format enables researchers and practitioners to extract actionable insights that guide coaching strategies, athlete development programs, and sports psychology interventions specifically designed for the cultural and competitive contexts of Taekwondo athletes in China.

## 4. Discussion

The results of this study highlight the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in determining Taekwondo student-athlete performance, therefore reflecting the general agreement in sports psychology that mental preparedness is just as important as physical conditioning. Using well-known EI models including MSCEIT, Trait Emotional Intelligence, and Bar-On's EQ-i, this study shows how important emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills become under the rigorous psychological pressures of competitive Taekwondo. Consistent with other research, our conceptual model proposes that athletes' capacity to control anxiety, modify plans in real time, and remain calm under duress highly corresponds with their emotional intelligence (Acebes-Sánchez et al., 2021). Especially, the mediating effect of competitive experience suggests that athletes who face constant pressures might hone their emotional skills, hence improving resilience and accuracy of decision-making. This insight is consistent with claims that E-based training is a continuous process changing personal settings and accompanying athletes' experiences (Bae & Roh, 2021).

Moreover, cultural elements, especially within China's unique martial arts legacy, might influence the expression and view of emotion, therefore supporting the idea that EI development techniques ought to be context sensitive (Estrada et al., 2022). Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist

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ideas included into China's martial systems complicate the control and expression of emotions (Gatsis et al., 2021). Therefore, EI-based treatments for Taekwondo student-athletes should not just borrow from broad Western techniques but also fit local conventions that direct emotional expression (Gatsis et al., 2021; Goleman, 2020). Coach and sports psychologist help athletes develop self-awareness, self-control, and social cohesiveness inside their particular cultural context by encouraging a sophisticated knowledge of how culture interacts with emotional intelligence (Kim & Jang, 2020). These revelations eventually help to reinforce the theory that EI is a flexible set of skills and qualities. Student-athletes stand to earn a competitive edge from organised training comprising focused exercises in emotional sensing, empathy-building, and stress management (Li et al., 2021). This is consistent with data showing that EI-oriented programs support ongoing mental health, improved motivation, and closer relationships with coaches and peers, so supporting performance increases across time (Li & Qiu, 2018).

To implement the suggested conceptual framework, coaches and sports psychologists may integrate organised emotional intelligence (EI) training modules into standard training regimens. These modules may encompass exercises aimed at self-awareness, emotional management, empathy enhancement, and social communication skills. Reflective journaling can assist athletes in recognising emotional triggers during training and performance, enhancing emotional awareness. Scenario-based exercises or role-playing can replicate high-pressure circumstances, enabling athletes to refine emotional regulation and strategic decision-making inside a controlled environment. Moreover, group conversations or facilitated counselling sessions can foster interpersonal skills and empathy, hence improving team cohesion. Sports psychologists may conduct regular

emotional intelligence evaluations to monitor development and customise interventions according to specific athlete profiles. Systematically integrating these strategies into coaching programs ensures the development of emotional competencies alongside physical and tactical skills, hence boosting performance consistency and mental resilience among Taekwondo student-athletes.

These results suggest a larger influence on Taekwondo education and coaching approaches, therefore transcending the individual athletes. From reflective journals on emotional triggers to scenario-based drills imitating high-stress matches, coaches who include E-learning modules can help their students develop emotional regulation and empathy (Liu & Jiang, 2019). Through improved intrapersonal and interpersonal EI skills, student-athletes may reduce fatigue, better manage performance anxiety, and maintain constant mental engagement during demanding training cycles. Practically, the conceptual framework of the study offers a road map for creating treatments that methodically improve emotional abilities. This method not only complements Goleman's focus on acquiring self-awareness and self-management but also fits very nicely in the Chinese cultural setting, where martial arts instruction is grounded in respect, harmony, and group well-being.

## 5. Conclusion

Finally, this study emphasizes how important emotional intelligence is in determining Taekwondo athletes' performance and shows how skills including emotional awareness, self-control, and social competency mix with experience to improve competition results. This study suggests a framework that not only stresses skill-based and trait-oriented dimensions of emotional intelligence but also accentuates the mediating influence of

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continuous training and competitive exposure by including established models like the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso, Trait EI, and the Bar-On EQ-i. Results imply that well-organized EI treatments can help athletes stay focused, manage stress, build resilience, and modify techniques in high-stress situations—all of which support both technical proficiency and mental health. In the end, this combined approach encourages researchers, sports psychologists, and coaches to create focused developmental programs that use the synergy between emotional intelligence and performance, therefore enabling more sustainable athlete growth and achievement in Taekwondo and beyond.

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