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Dr. Doaa Fawzi Mohammed

Faculty of Physical Education
and Sports Sciences / University
of Kufa, Iraq

Salam Sabah Obayes

Faculty of Physical Education
and Sports Sciences / University
of Kufa, Iraq

Ashwaq Auda Kadhim

Faculty of Physical Education
and Sports Sciences / University
of Kufa, Iraq

Learning motivation and its relationship to the level of technical performance of some kinetic skills in fencing for students

Doaa Fawzi Mohammed, Salam Sabah Obayes and Ashwaq Auda Kadhim

Abstract

This research aims to examine the technical proficiency of certain fundamental kinematic skills in fencing (normal advance, forward jump, and stabbing) and determine the degree of learning motivation among fencing students. Given the nature of the issue and the goals of the study, the researchers adopted a descriptive strategy that made use of survey data and correlational correlations. This approach aims to describe the phenomenon, as it exists in reality and analyze the relationship between two or more variables without interfering with controlling or changing the variables. The research community consisted of sixty-two third-year students enrolled in the University of Kufa's College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences for the 2024-2025 academic year. Thirty pupils were chosen at random from this population, representing (48.38%) of the original population, and (6) students for the exploratory experiment, representing (9.67%) of the population under study. Among the researcher's most significant findings is that: Following the results' presentation, analysis, and discussion, the researchers came to the following conclusions: The study's findings demonstrated that fencing students had a high degree of learning desire, indicating their psychological and motivational readiness to participate in training and develop their kinetic and technical skills. Among the most crucial suggestions made by the researchers is that: Enhancing students' learning motivation by designing motivational training programs that rely on continuous encouragement and positive rewards to enhance intrinsic motivation.

Keywords: Learning motivation, technical performance, kinetic skills, fencing

Introduction

The method of instruction used in physical education is a complex one, involving a range of physical, psychological, social, and cognitive factors. Its success is not limited to skill or physical attributes alone, but also depends to a large extent on motivation, which represents the driving force of human behavior. Motivation to learn is one of the most prominent psychological variables that determines the amount of effort a student will exert to achieve their educational and athletic goals. It stimulates and directs behavior and ensures its continuity until the desired goals are achieved.

Fencing is an individual sport that requires a high level of concentration, precision, predictability, and rapid reaction, in addition to mastery of a range of kinetic and technical skills, such as direct stabbing, blocking, and advance and retreat steps. These skills cannot develop or reach their optimal level without sufficient motivation to learn and train. Students with low motivation often lack continuity and perseverance in performance, which negatively impacts their technical level. With the advancements in sports science, the need to investigate the psychological variables affecting athletic performance in general, and fencing in particular, has emerged. This is due to its artistic nature, requiring a direct interaction between physical and skill abilities and psychological motivation.

Therefore, the significance of this study is revealed by looking at the connection between learning motivation and the technical performance level of certain kinetic skills in fencing among students. This research contributes to revealing the extent to which psychological factors influence the acquisition and development of athletic skills. This allows coaches and

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Doaa Fawzi Mohammed

Faculty of Physical Education
and Sports Sciences / University
of Kufa, Iraq

instructors to develop more effective training and educational strategies and add new knowledge to previous studies that addressed similar topics but in different games or contexts. This makes the current research a contribution to expanding the scientific knowledge base, highlighting the role of motivation as an influential factor in the kinetic learning process, and emphasizing the integration of psychological and physical factors in developing athletic performance.

Research Problem

Motivation to learn is one of the most crucial psychological elements influencing how well the training and education process goes. It drives students to exert effort, persevere, and persist in the face of difficulties until they achieve their desired goals. In fencing one of the most important individual sports—a high level of motivation is required, given its requirement for quick response, precise performance, and the ability to predict attack and defense, as well as the need to master basic technical kinetic skills such as direct stabbing, blocking, and advance and retreat steps.

Through the researchers' field observations and experience, and their review of previous studies, it became clear that there is a clear disparity among students in The technical proficiency of these abilities, which may be linked to their level of motivation to learn. However, this relationship has not been addressed in sufficient research among physical education students, particularly in the field of fencing.

Therefore, there was a need to study this problem, which can be summed up in the question that follows:

What kind of connection exists between students' ambition to learn and their technical proficiency in certain kinetic fencing skills?

Research objective

This research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the level of learning motivation among fencing students.
- To measure the level of technical performance of some basic kinetic skills in fencing (normal advance, forward jump, and stabbing).
- To identify the relationship between learning motivation and the level of technical performance of these skills (normal advance, forward jump, and stabbing).

Research theories

There is a statistically significant correlation between students' technical proficiency of certain kinetic fencing skills and their motivation to learn.

Terminology

Learning Motivation: It is the internal state that drives, directs, and supports the learner's behavior to continue the educational activity, thus achieving the desired learning objectives. (Morsi. 2002) ^[12]

Domains of research:

- Human field: University of Kufa College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences third-year students for the 2024-2025 school year.
- Time period: 21/01/2025-15/4/2025
- The University of Kufa's College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences' Fencing Hall is a spatial field.

Fieldwork techniques and research methodology

Methods of Research

Given the nature of the issue and the goals of the study, the researchers adopted a descriptive strategy that made use of

survey data and correlational correlations. This approach aims to describe the phenomenon as it exists in reality and analyze the relationship between two or more variables without interfering with controlling or changing the variables.

Community and sample research

The research community consisted of sixty-two third-year students enrolled in the University of Kufa's College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences for the 2024-2025 academic year. Six students were chosen at random for the exploratory experiment, representing 9.67% of the research population, and thirty students, representing 48.38% of the original population, were chosen from this group as a sample. The research population and sample details are displayed in Table (1).

Table 1: The samples utilized in the study

Research Sample	Number	Percentage
Research Community	62	100%
Research Sample	30	48,38%
Exploratory Sample	6	9,67%

Methods, Tools, and Devices Used in the Research

The researchers used the following methods, tools, and devices

1. Research Methods: These include

- Questionnaire (see Appendix 3).
- Fencing Skill Performance Evaluation Form (see Appendix 4).
- Data Collection and Transcription Form.
- Observation.
- Arabic and foreign sources and references.
- The Internet.

2. Instruments and Equipment Used in the Study:

- Foil.
- Electronic timer.
- Personal mobile device (Acer laptop calculator).
- Video and photo camera (Sony)
- Office supplies (papers, pens).

Field Research Procedures

Defining Research Variables and Tests

After searching and investigating the literature, sources, scientific references, and previous studies related to the concept of "learning motivation," the scale (Abu Asaad. 2011) ^[1] was adopted, consisting of (14) items. Skill performance (normal advance, forward jump, stabbing) was evaluated according to a standardized form in fencing and adopted in previous studies (Sahib. 2019) ^[15]. This was achieved by photographing the skill and presenting it to three experts. A score of (1-10) was assigned, as the skill was performed in front of the teacher.

Exploratory Experiment for the Study Scale

An exploratory experiment was carried out by the researchers for the study scales on a sample of (6) students. The scales were distributed in person to the sample members with the assistance of the support team on March 12, 2025. The purpose was to determine the usefulness of the response alternatives, the challenges the researchers faced, the respondents' comprehension of the claims and the clarity of the scale instructions, and the estimated amount of time needed to finish the scale. From this experiment, the

researchers found that all the statements were understandable and the response instructions were clear.

The Learning Motivation Scale's description and scoring methodology

Table 2: The study scale statements' response possibilities and scoring key

No.	Paragraphs	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Paragraph	1	2	3	4	5

Scientific foundations of the scale

First: Scale validity: The researchers employed two validity categories to confirm the scales' accuracy

Apparent validity: The learning motivation scale, which consists of 14 statements, was shown to a panel of experts and arbitrators with backgrounds in sports psychology and kinetic learning in order to verify the research instrument's apparent validity. There are now seven specialists. The survey was examined for:

- Clarity of the linguistic formulation of the items.
- The extent to which the items fit the dimension to which they belong.
- The extent to which the items represent the theoretical concept of each scale.

The experts expressed their approval of the items, with some minor comments made to modify the wording of some items without affecting the conceptual content.

Thus, it can be said that the scale's degree of face validity, qualifying it for use in the targeted academic setting.

Content Validity: In addition to face validity, content validity was confirmed by showing the scale to a group of scholarly specialists specializing in kinetic learning and sports psychology. The items were reviewed for:

- The extent to which they represent the components of learning motivation relevant to academic work in a university environment.
- The appropriateness of the number of items and their linguistic and behavioral formulation.

The experts agreed that the scale adequately covers the dimensions of the targeted concepts. The final version was approved after incorporating the proposed amendments (if any), enhancing the content validity of both scales.

Second: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Stability: Using SPSS, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was computed to guarantee the scale's reliability. The following were the outcomes:

1. Learning Motivation

Table 3: Shows the stability of the learning motivation scale.

Scale	Paragraphs	Cronbach's alpha	Type Sig
Total Scale	14	0.85	Sig

These values indicate meaning there is a high degree of internal consistency, with all values exceeding the minimum acceptable level (0.70), reflecting the consistency of the items and their ability to reliably measure the concept.

Learning motivation is scored according to a five-point (Likert) response scale. The learning motivation scale consists of (14) statements, noting that the response options for each item of the scale are (5), as shown in the table below.

Third: Objectivity: The test is unaffected by changes in the judges, and the test produces the same results regardless of who is evaluating the test. This eliminates subjective judgment, as the greater the objectivity in the assessment, the less subjectivity. This refers to the extent to which the judge or examiner is free from subjective factors such as bias. This is achieved by determining the degree of agreement between the judges or examiners, as the judge is independent. In the field of sports, the instructions for applying the test must be clearly defined, in terms of its procedures, administration, and recording of results. Researchers believe that the presence of clear instructions, a model for answering questions, clarity of phrases, and their lack of ambiguity, as they are not open to interpretation in both scales, and multiple answer alternatives, all contribute to the objectivity of the answers to the scale's statements.

Main Experiment

On March 23, 2025, the researchers and the support staff administered the scale to a research sample of thirty students at the University of Kufa's College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences in person after fulfilling all research standards and procedures. After that, technical performance evaluations for fencing kinetic skills were carried out. Each member of the research sample was given a score once the replies were analyzed and the data was gathered in a unique format.

Research Methods Employed in Statistics

The statistical package (SPSS) was utilized by the researchers to examine the findings.

- Percentage.
- The arithmetic mean.
- The typical deviation.
- Pearson's simple correlation coefficient.
- Cronbach's alpha equation.

Results and Discussion

The results are presented, examined, and discussed in this chapter reached by the researchers in light of the previously established objectives. To facilitate the procedures, these procedures were presented in the form of tables and then interpreted. The following results emerged:

Presentation and Discussion of the Study Scale

Identifying the Level of Learning Motivation among Fencing Students

The researchers examined the scale's results by calculating the arithmetic means, standard deviations, hypothetical mean, and t-value, as indicated in Table (4), in order to ascertain the degree of learning motivation among fencing students at the University of Kufa's College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences.

Table 4: The values of the learning motivation scale's arithmetic means, hypothetical means, standard deviations, and t-value

Variables	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Hypothetical mean	T value	Level Sig	Type Sig
Learning Motivation	68,49	7,20	60	6,46	0.001	Sig

Significant differences were shown by the fact that the learning motivation scale's one-sample t-test significance rate was less than the error rate (0.05), as shown in Table (4). We observe that the arithmetic mean was greater than the hypothetical mean when comparing the two, suggesting that the sample had a high level of drive.

Discussion of the learning motivation scale

The results of the statistical analysis showed that the average learning motivation of fencing students was 68.49, with a standard deviation of 7.20. The result of the one-sample t-test was statistically significant at the <0.001 level ($T = 6.46$). These results indicate that students possess a high level of learning motivation, reflecting their willingness to commit to training and persevere in mastering the kinetic skills required in fencing.

Researchers attribute these results to several factors, including students' intrinsic motivation. (Ryan & Deci, 2000) ^[14] indicate that intrinsic motivation is the primary force that drives individuals to commit to learning and persevere in acquiring skills, especially in individual sports such as fencing. Additionally, a stimulating and organized training environment increases students' desire to actively participate and enhances their motivation to learn.

These results are consistent with previous studies that have confirmed that motivation is the primary driving factor for improving physical and technical performance in individual sports (Al-Sheikh, 2018; Morsi, 2002) ^[12, 7]. High motivation drives students to exert greater effort during training and motivates them to continuously learn, which positively

impacts the level of skills acquired.

The results of this study also support (Al-Khalidi *et al*, 2020) ^[4] findings regarding the relationship between motivation to learn and athletic achievement. They found that students with higher motivation demonstrated greater commitment, a faster response to training, and achieved better levels of technical performance compared to students with lower motivation. Intrinsic motivation is considered the most important component of learning motivation in individual sports such as fencing, as it enhances students' sense of ability and competence, encouraging them to face challenges and improve performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000) ^[14]. In this context, the high level of learning motivation among the research sample can be explained by the students' personal interest in the game and their desire to develop their individual skills to achieve optimal performance.

In conclusion: These factors combined contribute to a high level of learning motivation among students, which positively impacts their readiness to acquire kinetic skills in fencing.

Technical Performance Level of Basic Kinetic Skills

To determine the technical performance level of basic kinetic skills among fencing students at the College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences at the University of Kufa, researchers present the results by identifying the arithmetic means, standard deviations, and t-values, as shown in Table (5).

The arithmetic means, standard deviations, and t-values for the technical performance level of fundamental kinetic skills are displayed in Table (5).

Table 5: Shows that the best performance was in the stabbing skill, while the lowest was in the forward jump skill.

Factors	arithmetic average	Typical deviation	T-value	Sig Level	Type-Sig
Normal Advance	13,76	1,86	4,58	0.001	Sig
Forward jump	13,02	1,98	3,55	0.001	Sig
Stabbing	14,96	1,81	9,14	0.001	Sig

Discussion of the technical performance level of basic kinetic skills

The results of the statistical analysis of students' basic kinetic skills showed that the stabbing skill recorded the highest average performance (14.96) compared to the normal advance (13.76) and the forward jump (13.02), with low standard deviations indicating limited variation among students in performance.

The researchers credit a number of important aspects for these findings: The efficiency of structured education and training programs. (Al-Ali *et al.*, 2017) ^[3] showed that organizing educational and training sessions systematically and repeatedly contributes to improving Students' technical execution of fundamental kinematic skills in individual sports. The difference in the requirements of each skill: According to (Saleh, 2018) ^[16], some skills, such as the stabbing, rely primarily on accuracy, timing, and precise technical techniques, while skills such as the forward jump require greater strength and speed, making them more difficult for novice students to control.

Level of kinetic control and balance: (Al-Abdullah *et al.*, 2020) ^[2] study indicates that the ability to have good kinetic control and balance directly affects technical performance,

which explains why students excel in fine kinetic skills such as jabbing compared to other skills.

These results reflect that students are capable of performing basic skills well, with a clear advantage in skills that require precision and concentration, such as jabbing. These results are consistent with previous studies that have confirmed that technical performance in individual sports is influenced by a player's ability to control fine kinetic movements, balance, and proper timing (Muhammad, 2019; Hussein *et al.*, 2021) ^[3, 9] also indicated that systematic and continuous training in basic kinetic skills leads to improved technical performance among physical education students, especially in games that require speed and rapid response, such as fencing.

The variation in performance levels between different skills is attributed to the nature of each skill. Jabbing relies primarily on precision, timing, and precise technical techniques, while the skill of leaping forward requires greater speed and strength, making it more difficult for novice students to control (Al-Najjar, 2020) ^[5].

In conclusion, these factors combined explain the differences in performance levels between different skills and emphasize the importance of continuous, focused training on basic skills to improve technical performance in fencing.

An examination of the connection between learning motivation and skill technical performance:**Table 6:** An examination of the connection between learning motivation and skill technical performance is presented.

Variables	Pearson's correlation value	Sig Level	Type-Sig
Learning Motivation and Normal Advance	0,421	0,020	Sig
Learning Motivation and Forward jump	0,387	0,035	Sig
Learning Motivation and stabbing	0,445	0,015	Sig

The results of the statistical analysis indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between learning motivation and the technical performance level of kinetic skills among fencing students. This means that more motivated students perform better in basic kinetic skills, such as the normal advance, forward jump, and stabbing.

Researchers attribute this positive relationship to several factors: 1- Intrinsic motivation and achievement orientation: According to (Al-Rashed *et al.*, 2019) ^[6], intrinsic motivation and a personal interest in achieving good performance enhance students' ability to practice skills better and lead to higher technical performance.

Commitment to systematic training: (Mehdi & Kadhim 2020) ^[11] indicates that highly motivated students are more committed to intensive and frequent training, which further improves their level of fine kinetic skills.

The interaction between physical ability and motivation: (Kadhim Ashwaq Auda, Sadiq A. Mehdi. 2022) ^[8] explain that high motivation helps students better utilize their physical and technical abilities, which positively impacts their technical performance.

These results are consistent with previous studies that have confirmed that motivation acts as a key motivating factor for improving technical performance in individual sports. High levels of motivation increase attention and commitment to training and enhance the effectiveness of skill learning (Al-Rashed *et al.*, 2019; Mehdi & Kadhim 2019) ^[6, 10].

In conclusion: High learning motivation enhances technical performance of kinetic skills and emphasizes the importance of self-motivation strategies for students in individual sports such as fencing.

Conclusions and Recommendations**Conclusions**

- The study results showed that the level of learning motivation among fencing students was high, indicating their psychological and motivational readiness to participate in training and develop their kinetic and technical skills.
- It was found that students' performance in basic kinetic skills was good to high, with a clear advantage in the stabbing skill, while the forward jump skill performed the least, reflecting the influence of the nature of each skill on the level of technical performance.
- There is a statistically significant positive relationship between learning motivation and kinetic skill performance, as students with higher motivation demonstrate better performance in all basic skills, with a stronger relationship for fine skills such as stabbing.
- The research results support the hypothesis that motivation acts as a primary motivating factor for improving technical performance, by increasing students' commitment to training, focus, and perseverance in acquiring kinetic and technical skills.
- It was found that some skills that rely on precision and fine technical techniques achieve better performance

compared to skills that rely on strength and speed, reflecting the importance of designing integrated training programs that take into account the nature of each skill.

- The importance of psychological aspects in athletic performance, as the results confirm that technical performance in kinetic skills does not depend solely on physical abilities, but is also greatly influenced by students' psychological motivation and level of intrinsic motivation.

Recommendations

- Enhancing students' learning motivation by designing motivational training programs that rely on continuous encouragement and positive rewards to enhance intrinsic motivation.
- Develop integrated educational programs, taking into account the diverse nature of kinetic skills when designing training programs, with a focus on fine kinetic skills such as jabbing and kinetic control techniques.
- Focus on students' psychological aspects by providing psychological counseling sessions and encouraging self-motivation to enhance commitment and dedication to training.
- Regularly monitor technical performance and conduct periodic assessments of students' skills to identify strengths and weaknesses, and adjust training programs to suit each student's needs.
- Encourage interactive learning and positive competition by organizing internal activities and competitions among students to foster a competitive spirit and motivate artistic performance.
- Focus on precise and complex skills and allocate more training time to skills that require high precision and coordination, such as stabbing, to ensure they are acquired with high efficiency.

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Appendix (1)

Names of the support team

No.	Name	Scientific title	Affiliations
1	Haider Naji Habash Al-Shawi	Prof. Dr.	Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences for Girls / University of Kufa
2	Mahmoud Nasser Radhi	Assist. Prof. Dr.	College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences / University of Kufa
3	Ashwaq Awda	Assist. Lec.	College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences / University of Kufa
4	Muhammad Sahib	Assist. Lec	College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences / University of Kufa

Appendix (2)

Shows the names of the experts in kinetic learning science and sports psychology.

1	Name	Scientific title	Specialization	Affiliations
1	Haider Naji Habash	Prof. Dr.	Sports Psychology	University of Kufa / College of Education for Girls
2	Fadel Kurdi Shalaka	Prof. Dr.	Sports Psychology	University of Kufa / College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences
3	Mohsen Mohammed Hassan	Prof. Dr.	Sports Psychology	University of Kufa / College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences
4	Khaled Shaker	Prof. Dr.	Kinetic Learning	University of Kufa / College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences
5	Ali Mahdi	Prof. Dr.	Kinetic Learning	University of Kufa / College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences
6	Mohammed Yasser	Prof. Dr.	Kinetic Learning	University of Kufa / College of Education for Girls

Appendix (3)

Exhibits the Learning Motivation Paragraphs

Republic of Iraq

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Kufa / College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences

Dear Student

Greetings...

We present to you this questionnaire (Learning Motivation and Its Relationship to the Level of Technical Performance of Some Kinetic Skills in Fencing for Students). We hope you will read its paragraphs carefully and answer each statement with the sincerity and honesty we know in you. We hope that

this study will yield results that serve the scientific research process, thanks to your objective answers. Please note the following important points:

1. The answers will be used for purely academic purposes only. There is no need to mention your name or sign the questionnaire.
2. Please base your answer on the actual reality and not on what you deem appropriate and correct.
3. Please answer by placing a check mark (✓) in front of one option for each question that you believe reflects reality or is closest to it, leaving no statement unanswered. We thank you in advance for your blessed efforts and kind cooperation with us. May God grant us success.

No.	Paragraphs	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I make sure to attend classes regularly, no matter the circumstances.					
2	I feel motivated when I learn something new.					
3	I study because I love knowledge, not just for grades.					
4	I strive to achieve the best academic performance possible.					
5	I set aside regular time to study outside of class.					

6	I feel satisfied when I complete my assignments on my own.					
7	I face learning challenges with determination and don't give up easily.					
8	I set clear goals for my university studies.					
9	I strive to apply what I learn in my daily life.					
10	I actively participate in class discussions.					
11	I review course material before class.					
12	I benefit from the feedback provided by professors.					
13	I feel that university education is important for achieving my life goals.					
14	I am self-motivated to continue learning throughout my life.					

Appendix (4)**Fencing Skill Performance Evaluation Form****Laboratory Name**

Skill	Smoothness and consistency of performance			Performance timing		Preparatory Section				Main Section			Final section			Total of ten degree
	degree			degree		degree				degree			degree			
	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	
Normal Advance																
Forward jump																
Stabbing																