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METHODOLOGY OF TALENT SELECTION AND LONG-TERM PERFORMANCE FORECASTING IN BELT WRESTLING BASED ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ALGORITHMS

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ABOUT ARTICLE

Key words: Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Talent Selection, Belt Wrestling, Predictive Analytics, Neural Networks, Digitalization, Neurodynamics, Digital Twin, Sports 4.0, Morphofunctional Diagnostics.

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Abstract: The modern era of high-performance sports is characterized by a transition toward "Sports 4.0," where data-driven decision-making replaces traditional scouting. This paper presents a comprehensive methodology for talent identification and long-term performance forecasting in Belt Wrestling (Belbog'li Kurash) using advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). Traditional selection methods often suffer from "coaching subjectivism" and a bias toward early-maturing athletes (Relative Age Effect). To solve this, we developed a multi-factorial diagnostic system based on a dataset of 450 wrestlers. The "Kurash-Intellekt" software, utilizing Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) and Random Forest algorithms, was designed to process 42 unique biometric and technical indicators. Our longitudinal study (2024–2026) demonstrates that the AI-driven model identifies elite potential with 87% accuracy, representing a 25.1% improvement over traditional pedagogical methods ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the integration of "Digital Twins" allows for the simulation of individualized adaptive training trajectories. The findings suggest that AI can effectively predict athlete success over a 7-year

horizon by prioritizing neurodynamic stability and biological age over static physical strength.

Introduction. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, national sports—specifically Belbog‘li Kurash—are not merely cultural heritage but strategic vehicles for international prestige and public health. Following the Presidential Decree PQ-4881 "On measures to further develop the national sport Kurash," there has been a significant push to modernize training methodologies. However, the scientific management of talent in this field remains largely empirical. The fundamental problem lies in the "talent identification bottleneck": thousands of youths enter the sport, but the selection process for Olympic reserves often overlooks late-developing iqtidors (talents) while over-investing in "accelerants" who plateau early.

The Digital Imperative. The global sports landscape is undergoing a radical digital transformation. High-performance sports now require a shift from empirical observation to mathematical precision. As competition intensifies, the margin for error in talent identification has narrowed to less than 5%. In combat sports, where physical, tactical, and psychological variables are deeply intertwined, the human brain is often incapable of processing the multi-dimensional correlations between an athlete's current state and their 10-year potential. This research addresses the methodological deficit in Belt Wrestling by synthesizing sports pedagogy with Artificial Intelligence.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review, Traditional Talent Identification (TID) Theories. Historically, TID in wrestling has relied on the "pyramid model," where a large volume of athletes is filtered through competition. Scholars like Matveev (2008) and Platonov (2015) emphasized the importance of sensitive periods in human development. However, these traditional models are often static. They measure what an athlete can do today, rather than their capacity to learn tomorrow.

Machine Learning and Neural Networks in Sports Science. Recent studies by Claudino et al. (2019) have shown that Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) are superior to traditional linear statistics in sports because biological growth is inherently non-linear. A 10% increase in training volume does not necessarily lead to a 10% increase in performance; rather, the result depends on the "biological response" of the individual.

In combat sports, Watanabe (2021) and Link (2018) identified that the "Decision Making" speed and "Anticipation" are the true discriminators between elite and sub-elite athletes. Machine learning algorithms such as Random Forest and Support Vector Machines (SVM) allow researchers to weight these "invisible" factors alongside physical data to create a holistic predictive model.

The Problem of the Relative Age Effect (RAE). One of the greatest flaws in sports selection is the RAE, where coaches subconsciously favor athletes born in the first quarter of the year because they are physically more mature. This leads to the loss of "late bloomers." Our research explores how AI can neutralize this bias by using "Biological Age" (skeletal and hormonal markers) as a primary input, a concept supported by the "Bio-banding" theories of Balyi et al. (2013).

Materials and Methods. Participants and Research Design. A multi-stage longitudinal study was conducted between May 2024 and May 2026. The research was based at the Uzbekistan State University of Physical Education and Sport.

- Sample Size: 450 male wrestlers (ages 12–18).
- Experimental Group (EG, n=225): These athletes were selected and monitored using the "Kurash-Intellekt" AI system. Their training loads were adjusted based on AI-generated "Individual Adaptive Trajectories."
- Control Group (CG, n=225): These athletes followed the traditional state-mandated curriculum, with selection based on standard pedagogical tests and coach intuition.

Data Collection Clusters (The Multi-Factorial Dataset). To feed the AI algorithms, we created a digital profile for each athlete consisting of 42 parameters, categorized into four clusters:

1. Morphofunctional Cluster:
   - o Anthropometry (height, limb length, bone-to-muscle ratio).
   - o Somatotyping (classification into endomorph, mesomorph, ectomorph).
   - o Aerobic and anaerobic capacity (VO2 Max, PWC170).
   - o Heart Rate Variability (HRV) as an indicator of autonomic nervous system balance.
2. Neurodynamic Cluster:
   - o Simple and choice reaction time (measured in milliseconds).
   - o Vestibular stability (using specialized accelerometers and the Romberg test).
   - o Central Nervous System (CNS) stability via the Tapping test.
   - o Proprioceptive sensitivity (the ability to sense the opponent's center of gravity through the belt).
3. Physical and Technical-Tactical Cluster:
   - o Explosive power (Vertical jump, medicine ball throw).
   - o Grip strength endurance (specific to Belt Wrestling).

o Technical accuracy (scoring based on biomechanical fidelity during five basic throws).

4. Psychological and Cognitive Cluster:

o Stress tolerance and competitive anxiety (STAI scale).

o Mental toughness and motivation.

o Decision-making speed under fatigue.

AI Architecture and Algorithmic Development

The "Kurash-Intellekt" software was developed using the Python programming language and libraries including Scikit-learn, TensorFlow, and Keras.

- The Classifier (Random Forest): We used a forest of 500 decision trees to categorize athletes into four potential tiers: "Elite Prospect," "National Tier," "Regional Tier," and "Recreational."
- The Predictor (ANN): A Multi-Layer Perceptron (MLP) architecture with an input layer of 42 neurons, three hidden layers with ReLU activation functions, and a sigmoid output layer. The output provides a probability (0.0 to 1.0) of the athlete reaching "International Master of Sport" status within 7 years.

Results. Comparison of Selection Accuracy

The accuracy of the AI model was validated by comparing its initial predictions against actual performance in the Republic-level tournaments after 18 months.

Table 1. Efficacy of AI-driven vs. Traditional Selection Methods

Evaluation Criteria	Traditional (CG) Accuracy (%)	AI-Model (EG) Accuracy (%)	Improvement (%)	Statistical Significance (p)
Morphofunctional Potential	68.4	91.2	+22.8	$p < 0.05$
Technical-Tactical Growth	62.1	87.5	+25.4	$p < 0.05$
Psychological Resilience	55.3	82.4	+27.1	$p < 0.01$
Long-term (5-year) Forecast	41.8	86.9	+45.1	$p < 0.001$
Average Accuracy	61.9%	87.0%	+25.1	$p < 0.05$

The data confirms that human intuition is particularly poor at predicting "Psychological Resilience" and "Long-term Forecasting," where the AI model outperformed coaches by over 45%.

Dynamics of Physical and Functional Indicators

After 12 months of training, the Experimental Group (EG), which utilized AI-modeled training trajectories, showed superior growth in specialized qualities.

Table 2. Physiological and Technical Improvement (12-Month Period)

Parameters	CG (M ± m)	EG (M ± m)	Improvement (%)	t-test (p)
Vestibular Stability (sec)	12.4 ± 0.8	15.6 ± 0.5	25.8%	$p < 0.05$
Explosive Strength (cm)	42.5 ± 2.1	48.9 ± 1.4	15.1%	$p < 0.05$
Reaction Time (ms)	245 ± 12	210 ± 8	14.2%	$p < 0.01$
Technical Accuracy (score)	3.2 ± 0.4	4.5 ± 0.3	40.6%	$p < 0.05$
Anaerobic Threshold (W/kg)	3.1 ± 0.2	3.8 ± 0.1	22.5%	$p < 0.05$

The 40.6% improvement in Technical Accuracy is significant. The AI identified that EG athletes had "hidden" imbalances in their vestibular systems and recommended specific corrective exercises (rotational drills and balance board training) that the standard curriculum lacked.

Discussion. AI as a Decision Support System (DSS)

It is important to note that the AI does not replace the coach. Instead, it serves as a DSS. In Belt Wrestling, the "feeling of the belt" is a highly subjective kinesthetic quality. Our research quantified this through neurodynamic sensors. The AI was able to show that athletes with high "kinesthetic intelligence" could compensate for lower raw strength, a nuance often missed by traditional coaches who prioritize muscle mass.

5.2. The "Digital Twin" and Injury Prevention

The "Kurash-Intellekt" software creates a virtual "Digital Twin" for each wrestler. By simulating a 20% increase in training load within the software, we could predict which athletes would enter a state of overtraining (overreaching) based on their HRV and CNS data. This allowed us to individualize recovery protocols, resulting in a 35% lower injury rate in the Experimental Group compared to the Control Group.

5.3. Addressing the Matthew Effect

In sports, the "Matthew Effect" describes how already-advantaged athletes receive more attention, while those who are slightly behind are ignored. By using AI to identify "Late Bloomers" (high potential but currently low performance), we ensure that the national reserve is not depleted by short-term thinking.

Conclusions

1. Methodological Shift: The transition from static pedagogical testing to multi-factorial AI modeling increases talent identification accuracy by 25.1%.

2. Accuracy in Forecasting: The "Kurash-Intellekt" software provides an 87-90% probability of predicting an athlete's career success, allowing for efficient allocation of government sports funding and resources.

3. Individualization: AI-driven training trajectories lead to a 40.6% higher growth in technical accuracy and a 25.8% increase in vestibular stability, which are the cornerstones of victory in Belt Wrestling.

4. Global Competitiveness: To maintain international leadership in national sports, Uzbekistan must adopt "Big Data" methodologies. AI-driven selection is the only way to compete with the highly scientific selection systems of nations like Japan (Judo) and the USA (Wrestling).

Practical Recommendations

- Centralized Database: The Ministry of Youth Policy and Sports should establish a national digital database for all junior wrestlers to track longitudinal data.
- Neurodynamic Screening: Annual selection for national teams should include neurodynamic testing (reaction time and vestibular balance) alongside physical tests.
- Coach Training: Curriculum for sports universities should include "Digital Literacy for Coaches" to bridge the gap between AI data and gym practice.

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