

## PSYCHOLOGY

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### Taekwon-do: a chance to develop social skills

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#### Abstract

Background. Social skills contribute to the proper functioning of an individual in the social environment. Not only in the case of people's cooperation, but also when we consider competing. The programmes, supporting the development of the models of human behaviour, are still being searched. That is why, the aim of the research is the knowledge concerning the impact of *taekwon-do* training on the development of different social skills.

Method. The research covered 31 people practising taekwon-do, 17 men and 14 women (age: 18.83±3.49 years old; range: 16-28 years old) in ITF taekwon-do clubs. The measurement was performed with the use of the Personal Competence Scale (of the results ranging between 12 and 48) and with the use of a self-made questionnaire. In the conducted research, for all registered indexes, the median (SR), variance (SS) and standard deviation (SD) were indicated. The correlation between the selected indexes was indicated. The variance analysis ANOVA was conducted. The statistical validity was assumed at the level of  $p < 0.05$ .

Results. The following indexes were registered: the average value of the subjectively assessed increase of self-esteem in the situation of social exposure: women 6.00±2.60 (level 1-10), men 8.94±1.14 (level 1-10); the average degree of satisfaction with social contacts, based on sharing sport interests: men 8.76±0.75 (level 1-10), women 8.64±0.74 (level 1-10); value of the index of the feeling of personal competence at men 36.35±7.04 (level 12-48); women 31.86 ±8.47 (level 12-48).

Conclusion. In the whole group, the increase of self-esteem in the situation of social exposure was revealed- higher in the case of men than women. The level of satisfaction, due to the increase of social contacts based on sharing sport interests at women and men, did not differ. The feeling of personal competence in the researched group is higher in the case of men than women that can be interpreted based on cultural and biological conditions. Taekwon-do competitors indicate the effects that facilitate functioning in the social life, that result from practicing martial arts.

#### Introduction

Social skills contribute to the proper functioning of an individual in the social environment. Not only during the cooperation of people but also during rivalry. Practising sport has a positive impact on the quality of our lives [Leite 2014; Brodani, Ziskova 2015]. *Taekwon-do* (TKD) training provides experiences that shape character [Wasik 2014]. The research shows that, among others, it concerns skills connected with dealing with frustration and emotions connected with anger [Wasik *et al.* 2015]. We know that social skills are influenced by regular and repetitive experiences – it concerns especially the period of childhood and adolescence [Aronson *et al.* 2012]. For an involved adept,

the group practising taekwon-do makes the “social group of reference” (the notion of social psychology), that is identified with and wants to observe its rules. The methods of such a group functioning are specified by a coach/master, based on his authority and formal commands. Belonging to the group contributes to the development of skills and abilities, but also building self-assessment and self-esteem, based on feedback [Twemlow, Lerma 1996]. It was found that the feeling of self-esteem and self-assessment of competences is immediately connected with the time spent at the training of martial arts [Richman, Rehberg 1986]. What is interesting, an increase of self-esteem and competences in self-presentation is not connected with conceitedness and one's own “ego” increase [King, Williams

1997]. A properly conducted taekwon-do group, due to numerous interactions, is characterised of high dynamics, connected with, on one hand, cooperation and, on the other, competitiveness. Cooperation conditions the quality of human relations and facilitates solving problems. Competitiveness creates a higher level of executive possibilities [Wasik, Shan 2014]. Such a connection creates many situations in which a practitioner learns how to build the bounds and present own skills in front of the audience. It facilitates building the feeling of own competences that give a steady basis for social contacts based on respecting own borders.

Besides, self-esteem, connected with owning proper skills when facing challenges, gives trust in one's own efficiency. It builds self-respect, based on mutual respect and the feeling of unity with others, strengthens independence. It gives the possibility of not falling into a conformist social group at any cost or, on the contrary – falling out of it and alienation [Branden 1995].

The difficulties that are revealed at the connecting point of cooperation and rivalry happen to be the sources of tensions and the tendency of withdrawal. In the case of shy people, they are revealed more frequently in particular conditions e.g. emotional agitation, pressure, personal problems, lack of comfort connected with performing activities in the presence of other people [Aronson *et al.* 2012]. Social psychology specifies it to be “social exposure”.

The programmes supporting the development of human behaviour patterns are still being searched. It results from the eagerness to help in increasing the abilities to undertake social challenges with self-esteem and higher responsibility. That is why the aim of the research is the knowledge concerning the impact of taekwon-do training on the development of different social skills.

## Method/material

### Subject

The research covered 31 people practising taekwon-do 17 men and 14 women (age:  $18.83 \pm 3.49$  years old; range: 16-28 years old) in taekwon-do clubs ITF (International Taekwon-do Federation) at the area of the Silesian Voivodeship. Participation in taekwon-do group ITF was basic inclusion criteria, because these people share common interests and spend time on taekwondo training regularly. Research is continuing, and we try to increase the number of people surveyed – with our the hope of increasing homogeneity of the group. Because of age differentiation, correlation analysis (age and social skills) was not used.

### Protocol

The measurement was performed with the use of the Scale of Personal Competence (Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha =$

0.85) of the results span 12-48, and a self-made questionnaire including open and close questions, referring to social contacts. The reliability of Scale of Personal Competence assessed by retest test after two weeks was 0.78 [Juczynski 2009].

The self made questionnaire covered 2 aspects of social contacts: the ability of staying calm and self-esteem in the situation of social exposure (results span 1-10) and satisfaction related to the increase of the number of social contacts, based on sharing common interests (range of the span 1 –10 points). The self-made questionnaire played an additional role. This questionnaire was based on the results of our previous pilot studies (some helpful information about the effects of practising taekwon-do has been obtained). The conducted research allowed to obtain empirical data within the impact of the practicing taekwon-do on the selected social skills [Wasik *et al.* 2015]. In the first stage open questions were answered and some information has been obtained. In next stage answers were analysed. Obtained results become a suggestion for the creation of the closed questions in questionnaire form. The questionnaire is still being developed and we're in the process develop all the components. After gathering more data (among the competitors), the psychometric assessment of the questionnaire will be planned. Just like questionnaire of the Personal Competence Scale is based on the assumptions of health psychology [Juczynski 2009].

### Statistical analysis

In the conducted research for all the registered indexes, the median (SR), variation (SS) and standard deviation (SD) were specified. The correlation between chosen indexes. ANOVA analysis of variation was conducted. The statistical validity was assumed at the level  $p < 0.05$ . All calculations were performed with the use of Statistica 12.00.

## Results

Table 1 contains medium values of the increase of the possibilities of staying calm and maintaining self-esteem in the situation of social exposure, as a result of TDK training (P), satisfaction with an increase in the number of acquaintances, connected with sharing sport interests (Z) and the index of the level of the feeling of competence (K).

## Discussion

The obtained results show that, among the people training taekwon-do, the mean value of the index (K), the feeling of competence is lower in the case of women than men

**Table 1.** Mean values of indexes related to psychological variables connected with social functioning (P,Z,K)

Gender	P			Z			K		
	Average	SD	p	Average	SD	p	Average	SD	p
Men	8.94	1.14	0.00	8.76	0.75	0.65	36.35	7.04	0.00
Women	6.00	2.60		8.64	0.74		31.86	8.47	
Together	7.61	2.41		8.71	0.74		34.32	7.92	

P – self-esteem in the situation of social exposure, Z – satisfaction with an increase of the number of social contacts connected with sharing common interests, K – the level of the feeling of competence.

(table 1). In the research of the randomly selected people that do not practise martial arts, the situation was opposite- men obtained higher values of the index (K) [Juczynski 2000].

This difference results from the impact of the performed sport that is commonly practised by men. Maybe, in the situation of pressure, it would have an impact on the performance of sport techniques. The results of the representative interdisciplinary research concerning the conditions of the dilemma precision – velocity of kicks in taekwon-do [Wasik, Gora 2016]. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that a menstrual period has an influence on the feeling of competence at some women – it can, at some stages, lower the feeling of self-esteem [Brock *et al.* 2016]. The research does not include this factor.

Trust in own competences may be the measure of the feeling of own efficiency. It influences on the level of difficulty of the undertaken tasks and the method of dealing with the barriers that are encountered during their realization [Borecka-Biernat 1997]. There is research that reveals the impact of low self-esteem on worsening the tasks' performance [Jens *et al.* 1999]. The problems connected with psychological, cultural and physical conditions of performing martial arts undergo the constant scientific interpretations [Kalina, Barczynski 2014; Cynarski 2017].

The obtained indexes of satisfaction, resulting from social contacts connected with sharing interests, have not revealed any major differences (table 1). One can assume that both – for women and men, the human relations make a very important part of life. Having positive social contacts plays a protective, adaptive function in the case of difficult life situations [Izaute *et al.* 2008] and increases the quality of life [Aronson *et al.* 2012].

The difference was revealed at the level of the index of possibilities of maintaining calmness in the situation of social exposure (P). The mean was considerably higher at men ( $8.94 \pm 1.14$ ), than women ( $6.00 \pm 2.60$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ). It results from the fact that men, in the light of the research, have a higher feeling of competence. The accessible literature reveals that in the case of women, to a higher degree than in the case of men, the feature that may be specified as vulnerability towards social anxiety that often is intensified in the situations of social exposure, appears [Leary, Kowalski 2001]. Numerous research

shows that anxiety can be soothed by everyday physical activity. Besides eating habits, it makes the key element of behaviour, leading towards keeping health [Tsos *et al.* 2017; Szerla *et al.* 2017].

A man performs a number of tasks in the presence of others. During making a speech, during examination or at sport competition, where the spectators are a part of the performance. Social exposure is inscribed into taekwon-do training. From the social point of view, it makes a valuable form of acting against the problems connected with public demonstration of one's skills.

What is more interesting, the participants of the research claimed that, due to taekwon-do training, the changes in their everyday functioning had taken place. They indicated that they had considerably bigger freedom while experiencing social exposure (90%), their possibilities of spending free time with the people who do not get bored increased (94.5%), they became more effective in dealing with conflict situations (61,3%), faster came back to the balance after difficult situations (67.7%) and obtained the feeling that they may rely on friends (45%).

Based on the conducted research, we may say that taekwon-do training ITF facilitates the development of social contacts due to common interest and positive emotions. The results and considerations presented in this work may serve as the material for comparisons for other researchers and may indicate the way to further research of an interdisciplinary character.

## Conclusion

The conducted analysis indicated that there is a difference regarding the level of the feeling of own competence with respect to sex: at men it was higher than at women. Both women and men in a similar way assess the degree of a beneficial impact on the feeling of possibilities of fulfilling passion among the persons sharing it. The practitioners feel a beneficial effect on taekwon-do practising in many areas of social character: an increase of the number of contacts based on sharing interests and passions, larger freedom during experiencing social exposure, and more effective dealing with conflict situations etc.

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### Taekwon-do: szansa na rozwój umiejętności społecznych

Wstęp. Umiejętności społeczne przyczyniają się do właściwego funkcjonowania jednostki w środowisku społecznym. Nie tylko w trakcie współpracy między ludźmi, ale i podczas rywalizacji między nimi. Stale poszukuje się programów wspomagających rozwój wzorców zachowań między ludzkich. Dlatego celem tych badań jest wiedza na temat wpływu treningu *taekwon-do* na rozwój różnych umiejętności społecznych.

Metoda. Badaniem objęto 31 osób trenujących *taekwon-do* 17 mężczyzn i 14 kobiet (wiek:  $18.83 \pm 3.49$  lat; zakres: 16-28 lat) w klubach *taekwon-do* ITF. Pomiaru dokonano przy pomocy Skali Kompetencji Osobistej (o rozpiętości wyników 12-48) oraz przy zastosowaniu samodzielnie opracowanej ankiety. W przeprowadzanych badaniach dla wszystkich zarejestrowanych wskaźników wyznaczono średnią (SR), wariancję (SS) i odchylenie standardowe (SD). Wyznaczono korelację między wybranymi wskaźnikami. Przeprowadzono analizę wariancji ANOVA. Istotność statystyczną przyjęto na poziomie  $p < 0.05$ . Rezultaty. Zarejestrowano następujące wskaźniki: średnia wartość subiektywnie ocenianego wzrostu pewności siebie w sytuacji ekspozycji społecznej: kobiety  $6.00 \pm 2.60$  (w skali 1-10), mężczyźni  $8.94 \pm 1.14$  (w skali 1-10); średni stopień zadowolenia z kontaktów społecznych opartych na podzieleniu sportowych zainteresowań: mężczyźni  $8.76 \pm 0.75$  (w skali 1-10), kobiety  $8.64 \pm 0.74$  (w skali 1-10); wartość wskaźnika poczucia kompetencji osobistej u mężczyzn:  $36.35 \pm 7.04$  (w skali 12-48); u kobiet  $31.86 \pm 8.47$  (w skali 12-48).

Wyniki i dyskusja. Z uzyskanych rezultatów wynika, że wśród osób trenujących *taekwon-do* średnia wartość wskaźnika (K) poczucia kompetencji jest niższa u kobiet niż u mężczyzn. W badaniach losowo wybranych osób nie zajmujących się sportami walki sytuacja była odwrotna, gdzie to chłopcy uzyskiwali wyższe wartości wskaźnika (K). Różnica ta wynikać może z wpływu uprawianego sportu, którym w większości

zajmują się mężczyźni. Być może, w sytuacji presji lub nacisku będzie to miało wpływ na wykonanie technik sportowych. Warto zwrócić uwagę, że wpływ na poczucie kompetencji u pewnej części kobiet ma cykl menstruacyjny, który w określonych fazach może obniżać poczucie pewności siebie. W tych badaniach nie uwzględniano tego czynnika. Wiara we własne kompetencje może być miarą poczucia własnej skuteczności. Wpływa to stopień trudności podejmowanych zadań i sposób radzenia sobie z barierami napotykanymi podczas ich realizacji. Uzyskane wskaźniki zadowolenia z kontaktów społecznych związanych z dzieleniem wspólnych zainteresowań nie wykazały istotnych różnic. Zarówno dla kobiet jak i mężczyzn relacje międzyludzkie stanowią bardzo istotną część życia. Istnieje zgodność poglądów co do tego, że posiadanie pozytywnych kontaktów społecznych pełni ochronną, przystosowawczą funkcję w przypadku trudnych sytuacji życiowych. Zmiana na lepsze pod tym względem podnosi jakość życia. Różnica ujawniła się natomiast przy wartości wskaźnika możliwości zachowania spokoju w sytuacji ekspozycji społecznej (P). Średnia ta była istotnie wyższa u mężczyzn ( $8.94 \pm 1.14$ ), niż u kobiet ( $6.00 \pm 2.60$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ). Można to interpretować w nawiązaniu do wcześniej wspomnianego pułapu wyjściowego poczucia kompetencji, które w świetle naszych badań okazało się wyższe u mężczyzn. Wzrost wartości zdolności

do zachowania spokoju w sytuacjach ekspozycji społecznej nastąpił u obu płci. Ale podobnie jak w przypadku poczucia kompetencji, u kobiet wskaźnik ten osiągnął niższy poziom. Uzyskane rezultaty korespondują z danymi dotyczącymi różnic pod względem radzenia sobie z ekspozycją społeczną. Zgodnie z danymi istniejącymi w literaturze u kobiet w większym stopniu niż u mężczyzn występuje cecha określana, jako podatność na lęk społeczny, który często potęguje się właśnie w sytuacjach ekspozycji społecznej. Pojęciem bliskim znaczeniowo terminowi lęk społeczny, a przez niektórych autorów utożsamianym z nim, jest nieśmiałość. Szereg zadań człowiek wykonuje w obecności innych osób. W trakcie wygłaszania referatu, podczas egzaminu lub na zawodach sportowych, gdzie zgromadzona widownia wpisana jest w widowisko. Ekspozycja społeczna jest wpisana w trening *taekwon-do*. Ze społecznego punktu widzenia stanowi wartościową formę przeciwdziałania problemom związanym z publicznym demonstrowaniem swoich umiejętności. W oparciu o przeprowadzone badania można stwierdzić, że trenowanie *taekwon-do* sprzyja rozwijaniu kontaktów społecznych opartych o wspólne zainteresowania i pozytywne emocje. Przedstawione w niniejszej pracy wyniki i rozważania mogą stanowić materiał do porównań dla innych badaczy oraz mogą wyznaczać drogę do dalszych poszukiwań o charakterze interdyscyplinarnym.