



Self – Confidence and Mental Alertness Among Karate Black Belt Athletes and Non-Karatekas.

KEYWORDS

Self-Confidence; Mental Alertness; Karate black belt athletes.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the self-confidence and mental alertness in karate black belt athletes, and other Non-Athletic general population between the age group of 18 to 45. A sample of Male 24, and female 6 karate black belt athletes were selected from different training centre's (dojos) of martial arts, and 30 others from different organizations in Trivandrum, Ernakulum, Palakkad, Kannur, and Kasaragod districts of Kerala. Their Educational qualification was also reckoned with regard to the tools administered and was between 12th Std. to Degree/PG level. They were administered a phenomenological questionnaire with regard to self confidence constructed and standardized by M. Basavanna, and Scott Company Mental Alertness Test, by Scott, W.D and Clothier, R.C. New York A.W. Shaw Company. Results Show that the Self-Confidence and Mental Alertness in Karate black belt athletes were higher than non-athletic non-karate people and also the differences are significant

'Karate is a Martial Art. To date it is the most effective form of hand-to-hand combat devised by man; it is a form of physical education with **mental discipline**, a fast growing internationally competitive sport, and, to a few masters of karate, it is a concept of a way of life. Moreover, Karate can provide the opportunity for physical and mental harmony within which is a concept of life which can be the basis of one's attitude to other people, to the world and to life in general. The health and self-confidence of martial arts learners improve gradually, which helps them to increase energy level, mental alertness, concentration, self-confidence and a sense of well-being. A true student of karate is one who will practice almost daily throughout his lifetime and never find the necessity to use his knowledge in anger against another. The ultimate aim of the art of karate lies not in victory or defeat but in perfection of the character of the participants. Karate technique has been concisely described as the practice of concentration of strength at the proper time and place. (Steve Arneil & Brian Dowler, Better Karate, Kaye & Ward Ltd., UK.) . Always, more vital to karate than techniques or strength is the spiritual element that lets one move and act with complete freedom. In striving to enter the proper frame of mind Zen meditation is of great importance. Through meditation we can overcome emotional thinking and give freer rein to our innate abilities than ever before. The Zen state of selflessness is the same condition of disregard for selfish thoughts and concern for personal welfare that the artist experiences in the heart of creation. By practicing karate one strives to take care of the body, perfect speed, strength, balance and timing. (Masutatsu Oyama, 1973). Karate –do is an empty- handed art of self-defense in which the arms and legs are systematically trained controlled by a demonstration of strength like that of using actual weapons. (.M.Nakayama, Best Karate.) The average student achieves **Black belt** in five years. However, black belt is not an end in itself because it too, contains stages known as Dan grades. (David Mitchell, 1989)

and an attribute of the perceived self. Like self-esteem, self-confidence is another self-construct. In general terms, self-confidence refers to an individual's perceived ability to act effectively in a situation to overcome obstacles and to get things go all right. [Basavanna.M, 1971]. In a factor analysis study of self-concept data, Smith (1962) identified six dimensions of self, the first of them being self-confidence. This factor had high projections on elements such as "confident, valuable, stable, satisfied, smart, active, and popular etc. It is the perception of qualities such as these in him that constitute an individual's self-confidence.

Apart from other ways an inventory method of assessing self-confidence has been employed earlier, in instances like Heston's Personality Inventory; Bernreuter's Personality Inventory; and Lecky's (1945) Individuality record. However, those inventories were omnibus type of tests tapping several other areas of personality in addition to self-confidence. In the present study it was desirable from the point of view of self-theory to have items answered with regard to self-referred statements. According to major self-theorists like Raimy (1948), Rogers (1951), Allport (1961), Combs and Snygg (1959); a self-confident person was defined as one who perceived himself as socially competent, emotionally mature, intellectually adequate, successful, satisfied, decisive, optimistic, independent, self-reliant, self-assured, forward- moving, fairly assertive, having leadership qualities and in general as having positive and constructive self-feeling and evaluation.

Alertness is the state of active attention by high sensory awareness such as being watchful and keen to meet danger or emergency or being quick to perceive and act. It is related to psychology as well as physiology. Mental alertness is a state where the mind is attentive and lively. A person in this state tends to remember everything that has happened and he or she rarely miss a step or event. (www. ask.com)

Self- Confidence as conceived here is a phenomenological construct. It is a characteristic or an aspect of self-concept,

Rationale of the Study

There is only scarce research focused on Martial Arts and psychology. Previous studies showed that there is a significant relationship between Psychological health and Martial Arts and exercises. (Fuller J 1988). The psychotherapeutic aspects of the martial arts were studied. (Weiser, M., Kurtz, I., Weiser, D. 1995). Time taken as determinant of advancement ' in Shotokan Karate Katas.' (Layton C 1999), ' Visuo spatial attention and motor skills in Kungfu athletes (Muinos,M. 2013).

Objective

To compare the Self-Confidence and mental alertness between Karate black belt athletes, and other non-athletic general population, with less inclination towards physical activities.

Hypotheses :-

There is a significant difference in self confidence and mental alertness between Karate black belt athletes and other people with less physical activities.

Method

Sample:

A sample of 24 Men Black belt athletes and 06 Female black belt athletes available were selected purposively from different karate practicing centres in Kerala from the district of Trivandrum, Ernakulam, Kannur, Palakkad, and Kasaragod between the age group of 18-45 Yrs. Another sample of 30 people (18 men and 120 females) were also selected purposively in the same age group, from people from private organizations such as Airlines ground handling staff, sales field, and business field. The education of respondents in the first category were 12th Std; n=17 (56.67%) , Graduate; n= 10 (33.33%) and Post Graduate ; n=3 (10%). The educational level was also purposively selected considering the tools to be administered to the respondents. The non- athletic general population without any martial arts training also matched on demographic variables age, and level of education.

Research Tools.

The Self-Confidence Inventory by M. Basvanna, (1971) was used to measure the Self-Confidence level for both the groups. The inventory consists of 100 statements standardized under a theoretical guideline of major self-theorists like Raimy (1948); Rogers (1951, 1959) ; Allport (1961) ; Combs and snygg (1959); et.al, and each of the statements had to be answered True or False as applicable to the subject by encircling around the appropriate word on the answer sheet. The statements were both positively and negatively oriented, and the positive items answered positively and the negative items answered negatively received a zero score. All positive items answered negatively and negative items positively were given **one negative point** each. A score up to **35** was regarded as **having high self confidence**, whereas, **36-70** and **71-100** were rated as having **Average Self-Confidence and Low Self-Confidence respectively**.

Scott Company Mental Alertness Test by Scott. W.D and Clothier, was used to assess the mental alertness of the subjects. The tool consists of six tests from Test A, to Test F, having contours of assessment in the field of arithmetical accuracy, opposites of words, comparison of similarities, quickness and accuracy of judgment, clearness of perception, degree of comprehension in that order, and the ability to follow instructions. The time limits given for each tests were so short (i.e., 4 minutes for Test A; 1 minute

for Test B; 1.5 minute for Test C ; 2 minutes for Test D ; 2.5 minutes for Test E and 3 minutes for Test F.) that the most alert person cannot make a perfect score, while on the other hand, the test is easy enough to permit the less mentally alert also to make an appreciable score.

Procedure

The individuals without martial arts training were conveniently taken from the normal population from

various private organizations such as airlines ground handling staff, sales field, and business fields in Kerala State in India. The individuals with martial arts training were also accessed at various training halls in Kerala State in India. The purpose of the research paper was revealed to the subjects, and was asked to mark the self confidence inventory as really applicable to them. The questionnaire on Self Confidence was administered to the subject with appropriate instructions and taken back on completion. The Test on Mental Alertness was administered with appropriate instructions and allowing the respondents to engage on a particular test only up to the time allotted for that test. The Indian equivalent visualized, to the American currency references in Test A and Test F were given to understand to the respondents before the start of each test.

In order to test the proposed hypothesis of study, t-test analysis for independent groups for the above two groups were computed to see the significance level of observed differences between the two groups. The table below shows the mean difference between the two groups and their 't' values.

	Martial Arts athletes'		Non-martial arts		mean	t value difference
	Trained	Inactive persons	Trained	Inactive persons		
Self Confidence	22.1	10.48	39.43	12.40	17.33	5.89
Mental Alertness	45.97	13.30	35.15	8.59	10.82	3.80

p= < 0.05 value

Results and Discussion

The table above shows that there is a significant relationship in mean in respect of self confidence and mental alertness between the two groups and is higher for the martial arts trained people. It was hypothesized that the Self Confidence and Mental Alertness will be higher in Karate black belt athletes than the non-athletic and inactive general population. **In respect of Self Confidence a score nearer to zero was to have more confidence.** The probability value (p) associated with the obtained value t = 5.89, df =29 for self confidence, and t=3.80, df= 29, for mental alertness exceeded the cutoff of 2.04 shown on the table of T- Test critical values at the 0.05 level. Therefore, p < .05. t (29) = 5.89, p < .05 & t(29) = 3.80 p < .05. Karl Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was calculated for the scores obtained for the variables Self Confidence and Alertness. The correlation measures the strength of a linear relationship between two variables. The correlation coefficient 'r' is always between -1 and +1. The closer the correlation is to +1/-1, the closer to a perfect linear relationship. The study shows that Self Confidence and Mental Alertness was positively correlated (r = .23) in the case of the experimental group (karate trained). The study also shows that there is only a slight correlation

($r = .08$) between these two variables in the case of the control group (Non-athletic, non-karatekas)

Table 2

		Mean	SD	r
Experimental Group (karate trained)	Self confidence	22.1	10.48	.23
	Mental Alertness	45.97	13.30	
Control Group (non- karate trained)	Self Confidence	39.43	12.40	.08
	Mental Alertness	35.15	8.59	

Conclusion

Comparing the mean difference between Karate black belt athletes and other non-athletic general population in respect of Self Confidence and Mental alertness, it has been concluded that the former have a high level of advantage on these variables over the latter and the variables are positively correlated for the former.

Limitations of the Study and suggestions.

The sample population of martial arts trained people is from the training centers in the State of Kerala in India, from the Style International Okinawan Shorin- Ryu Seibukan Karate (The researcher is a black belt in this style) with its Head Quarters at Okinawa Japan. The sample population of martial arts- learned people included mechanics, tradesmen and professional instructors. Of late the training Centers in Kerala are shrinking due to various reasons like lack of economically viable Infrastructure facilities, excessive Governmental formalities, and negative social evaluation. In Kerala people are also educated in the regional language and so wherever required the research tools were given to understand orally in the regional language. Females who were trained in martial arts were very rare due to some sociological precepts, and therefore a generalization in respect of both the gender was avoided.

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