

PERSONALITY TRAITS OF BLACK BELT KARATE INSTRUCTORS

FRANK KODMAN
Murray State University

Forty-five male, advanced black belt karate instructors were administered the CPI and their responses compared with high achieving and low achieving college students. The responses of the three groups were subjected to a univariate analysis of variance in which the 18 subscales of the CPI served as dependent variables. Matching was on age, sex and educational level. Karate instructors were more alike than different from college students. No unusual or bizarre features were noted in either of the three group profiles studied.

Karate, the martial art that develops strength, coordination, and agility, also fosters the development of courage, courtesy, integrity, humility, and self-control (Funakoshi, 1973). What of the instructor who teaches these admirable qualities to the student? Is he violent, gentle, normal, or abnormal? What are the personality traits of the experienced karate instructor who has earned an advanced black belt rank? This investigation began as an attempt to delineate some of the traits of a sample of experienced karate instructors since there is a large gap in the scientific information in this area. In some respects, this study was a provocative effort to analyze an unusual group of individuals that might lead to further research. The author felt that the personal qualities of karate achievers could bear scientific scrutiny.

DESIGN

SAMPLE

A sample of 45 male, advanced, black belt karate instructors was administered the California Personality Inventory by the author. They were required to hold the rank of second degree black belt or above and to have at least two years' experience teaching karate. The median age of the sample was 26.0 years with a standard deviation of 7.3. Unless he was a good reader, the questions were read to each subject to rule out any misunderstanding of the questions and to equate any language differences of the respondents. The average years of teaching experience was 7.4. Two comparison groups of non-karate, male college students were used. One sample of college students consisted of high-achievers (Dean's list, GPA of 3.3 or higher on a four-point scale) and a second sample of college students composed of those on probationary academic status. Each comparison group was matched with the karate group using a paired-matching technique in which an individual instructor in the karate group was matched with a college student on such variables as age, sex, and education. An attempt was also made to match the subjects on ethnic and racial factors as well as socioeconomic status. Age and education of the groups were both matched within 1.8 years on the basis of median values.

TEST MATERIAL

The California Personality Inventory, a normative personality test consisting of 480 true-false items, measures 18 traits. The subscales are clustered into four groupings. These are (1) measures of poise, ascendancy, and self-assurance, (2) measures of socialization, maturity, and responsibility, (3) measures of achievement potential and intellectual efficiency, and (4) measures of intellectual and interest modes. The rationale behind the CPI was to develop a test which would measure favorable and positive aspects of personality rather than pathological traits as is the case with another widely used personality test, the MMPI. The CPI describes normal traits rather than clinical ones and therefore seemed more ideal for this study. The CPI is also coming into popular use with adults as well as senior high school students.

RESULTS

The CPI scores for the three groups - karate instructors, high-achieving college students, and low-achieving college students - were subjected to a univariate analysis of variance in which the 18 sub-scales of the CPI served as dependent variables. The statistical analysis revealed a significant main effect between the three groups ($F = 4.40/ p < 0.01$ level for 2 and 132 *df*). Significant univariate analysis F-ratios were indicated between the two groups (karate instructors compared with high-achieving college students) for five of the subscales, namely, Sociability, Responsibility, Socialization, Achievement via Independence, and Intellectual Efficiency. In each instance, the college students scored significantly better. Univariate F-ratios for the comparison of the karate instructors with low-achieving college students showed a significant main effect and seven significantly different subscales. These were Sociability, Social Presence, Sense of Well-being, Self-control, Tolerance, Good Impression and Flexibility. Simple effects analyses using the Duncan

TABLE 1: CPI SUBSCALES THAT DISCRIMINATED BETWEEN KARATE INSTRUCTORS AND HIGH-ACHIEVING COLLEGE STUDENTS
 $n = 45$ Ss/group

	<i>High Achieving Freshmen</i>		<i>Karate Instructors</i>		<i>t-value</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Sociability	23.65	6.18	21.00	6.43	2.01	0.05
Responsibility	30.77	4.69	26.00	5.63	2.68	0.01
Socialization	38.19	5.66	33.00	6.40	4.72	0.001
Achievement via Independence	21.13	4.02	18.00	4.01	4.22	0.01
Intellectual Efficiency	39.23	4.83	37.00	5.81	3.01	0.01

TABLE 2: CPI SUBSCALES THAT DISCRIMINATED BETWEEN KARATE INSTRUCTORS AND LOW-ACHIEVING COLLEGE STUDENTS
 $n = 45$ Ss/group

	<i>Low Achieving Freshmen</i>		<i>Karate Instructors</i>		<i>t-value</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Sociability	23.40	5.20	21.00	6.43	2.32	0.05
Social Presence	36.95	5.68	34.00	6.03	3.08	0.01
Sense of Well-being	33.15	6.73	-35.00	5.82	1.99	0.05
Self-control	21.95	8.02	26.00	7.41	3.76	0.01
Tolerance	17.97	5.91	20.00	4.93	2.11	0.05
Good Impression	12.05	5.32	15.00	5.33	2.56	0.05
Flexibility	11.11	4.33	9.00	3.74	2.00	0.05

with a 0.05 level of confidence indicated that the seven scales discriminated reliably between the groups. The karate instructors scored more favorably on Sense of Well-being, Self-control, Tolerance, and Flexibility (Ferguson, 1971).

On three of the traits listed in Table 2, the low-achieving college students scored higher than the karate instructors. These were Sociability, Social Presence, and Flexibility. The karate instructors scored higher on Sense of Well-being, Self-control, Tolerance, and Good Impression. There was no statistical difference on the other normative traits.

A great deal of interest has been generated regarding the personality traits of the experienced karate instructor. Karate as a sport deserves the attention of the researcher to dispel some of the mystique that surrounds the martial arts. Karate, unlike most sports, attempts to foster certain personality traits or behaviour patterns in a direct manner. The dojo or dojang precepts and meditation are prime examples. Karate skills, improperly taught or taught by an instructor who lacks emotional stability or taught to an emotionally disturbed karateka could have disastrous results. The current investigation dispels some of the skepticism that usually surrounds the traits of the karate instructor. There was no evidence of bizarre traits or severe pathology in either of the three groups. Karate instructors differed in certain respects from college students but not in any unfavourable or disadvantageous manner. They tended to be poorer on more traits than high-achieving college students comparable in age and education but performed better than low-achieving college students on a number of other traits. The karate instructors' personality traits tended to be between that of the high- and low-achieving college students used in this study. Note also that 24 of the 36 subscales were statistically insignificant; that is, they showed no differences. As a first step, this study pointed up the normative features of the karate instructor within the limitations of the research design.

SUMMARY

This investigation was concerned with a comparison of the personality traits of 45 experienced black belt instructors and two samples of high- and low-achieving college students. The three samples were matched on sex, age, and educational level. An attempt was also made to match the groups on racial and ethnic backgrounds as well as the socioeconomic variables. The personality traits were measured by the California Personality Inventory (CPI). Univariate and simple effects analyses of variance were computed to determine the statistical differences between the groups and subscales. Karate instructors were more alike than different from college students. No bizarre or unusual features were noted in either of the three person-profiles studied. This investigation suggested the need for inquiry into the personality characteristics of a rapidly growing American and European sport that came to us from India and the Far East.

REFERENCES

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FRANK KODMAN, PH.D.,
 Department of Psychology,
 Murray State University,
 Murray, KY 42071,
 U.S.A.

Reprints of this paper are available from Dr Kodman.