

# FACTORS THAT DRIVE FEMALE BLACK BELTERS TO RETAIN COMPETITIVENESS, INPUTS FOR ENHANCING TEACHING PRACTICES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

*This mixed method study made use of the explanatory sequential design. It aimed at determining the factors that drive female black beltlers to remain competitive to derive inputs for enhancing teaching Physical Education (PE) practices. Respondents for the quantitative phase consisted of 73 female taekwondo athletes, while eight (8) female black beltlers in the region were selected as participants in the qualitative phase (face-to-face interview). Data showed that the majority of the respondents belong to the oldest age group of 21 years old and above; 37 have been playing for nine years and above who already achieved their first Dan (degree). Out of the 73 female Taekwondo-athletes, 46 have already joined national competitions of which 35 gained national awards. The athletes' experiences reveal that most of them train twice a week (even during their monthly period) and joined three to four competitions per year. Scholarship privilege was enjoyed by the athletes and expressed accord to respective coaches as well as to the technical officials and even to their opponents. Meanwhile, interview data revealed that participants were exempted from attending their PE classes as varsity members but experienced difficulties in balancing the time for academics and training. Overall analysis of the data showed that the driving or motivating factors for the athletes to achieve success consist of the privileges they enjoy such as scholarship, exemption from PE classes, travel opportunities, strengthening self-defense, and the encouragement from taekwondo coaches, parents, and teammates. However, PE was not found to be among the contributing factors in the athletes' success. The study also recommends enhancing the instructional practices in PE and the PE curriculum by covering as many sports as possible including Taekwondo to cater to the varying interests of students and ultimately to strengthen the role of PE in contributing to the students' holistic development.*

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**Keywords:** taekwondo, female black beltler, physical education, mixed method, explanatory sequential

## INTRODUCTION

*“No man has the right to be an amateur in the matter of physical training. It is a shame for a man to grow old without seeing the beauty and strength of which his body is capable.”*

-Socrates

Ever since the time of the Greeks, physical development has been a core of a well-developed society. Man is born not just to feed his mind but also to develop his body for him to be a fully-functional citizen of a country.

Physical activities that aim to promote wellness vary from one place to another. While others consider exercising as enough, others engaged in more challenging sports such as boxing, fencing, and martial arts.

According to Allenger, Cowburn and Foster (2006), children and adults engage in varied physical activities throughout their lives. It can be for any of the following reasons: weight management, stress management, socialization, slow down the process of aging as well as better health (Cho, Kwon & Jeon, 2010), better performance in academics and extra-curricular activities (So, 2012) and enjoyment and lifelong benefits (Lee, Lee, Lee & Kim, 2016). Because of these benefits almost every nation includes in its annual budget a program for the promotion of physical activities.

In Finland, both active and inactive players are encouraged to join sports clubs. These are the clubs that the government initiated to provide a venue for sports fanatics to meet, discuss, and reunite with their teammates. These clubs allow them to share their expertise in the field of sports. Studies showed that due to these sports clubs, health promotion became more prevalent. Coaches were motivated to mentor budding athletes whereas former student-athletes were inspired to remain active in their craft (Van Hoya, 2014).

There are many ways countries promote health and wellness through physical activities. Some countries create their own sports programs, others establish their national teams or the most common is by integrating physical activities to specific subjects or by creating a separate subject of Physical Education (PE) in all grade levels such as in the Philippines.

PE may be taught in traditional or modern ways. Traditional style of teaching PE motivates students to join class activities by inserting games (Tao-Keuing, Tsand & Kup-sze, 2017). Meanwhile, modern PE teaching is focused on serving the interest of the students (Tao-Keuing & Choi, 2017). Effective PE activities are described to be fun, rewarding, easy, and suited to the interest of the students. Moreover, as they promote enjoyment and participation, they encourage the development of motor skills.

Kim (2012) emphasized that increased performance in PE can be equated to improved brain functioning. Active students are more likely to have improved cognitive functioning than those who are not. This is because they can concentrate on their studies more due to the discipline they gained in PE.

Nowadays, PE is no longer just focused on teaching basic to complicated exercises. New curricula just like in the Philippines show that students are now given the opportunity to practice dance, individual and group games as well as martial arts such as arnis and taekwondo.

Wuest and Bucher (2009) said that early civilization used Physical Education to hunt food in the forest and search for water. People needed to learn how to use spears, bows, and arrows to hunt food for their survival. They also used their knowledge in hunting to defend their families and self from aggressors through boxing, wrestling, swimming, archery, throwing a javelin, and others. In some countries like China, the Philippines, Japan, Greece, Rome, and Korea, they created varied types of self-defense to protect their country and people.

Among the Westerners, the Greeks studied lion-hunting, boxing, wrestling, and swimming. Meanwhile, the Spartans used their strong physique to create an army of warriors to keep their land and people free. Rome and England, on the other hand, taught their young boys how to become a knight. A young boy or squire has several responsibilities relative to his training as a future knight. First, he must keep the knight's weapons in good condition, take care of his horse, and help place the armor in the knight's body. Second, he must also continue to become physically fit and engaged in physical activities like hunting, scaling, climbing, swordsmanship, horsemanship, shooting with bows and arrows, boxing, running, fencing, jumping, and swimming.

As for the Orientals, some countries which made a significant contribution to the world of martial arts include the following: China created different styles of Kung Fu imitating the movement of certain animals and insects, Philippines created Kali or Arnis to arm them with weapons for protection and to become physically fit and Japan has their karate-do. In Korea, a group of male warriors called "hwarangdos" were trained to use weapons such as swords, spears, and bows to defend their country and land from aggressors. These people trained in hand-to-hand combat to develop a style of self-defense which they used to protect their people and country. Thus, the Hwarangs were considered as the symbol of bravery and peace in Korea.

According to Pusa, Sinikka, and Maenpaa (2017), martial art is a combination of knowledge, social interaction, and a study of tradition and language. It transforms a person to become good by inculcating in him the teachings of different religions, arts, cultures, histories, foods, and superstitious beliefs of the people who pioneered the said martial arts.

Martial arts can either be advantageous or disadvantageous to a person (Vertonghen & Treeboom, 2010).

Generally, the goal of a person who engages in martial arts is to increase physical, mental, and spiritual wellness as well as knowledge of self-defense. Hackney (2013) explained that persons engaged in martial arts can develop their character, discipline, virtue, patience, self-confidence, etiquette, modesty, and perseverance. In addition to this, it can also make a person calm and wise. If not used properly, however, martial arts can make a person aggressive, violent, and have the feeling of superiority over others. This is the reason why martial arts teachers are important. They pave the way to the teaching of discipline and modesty to the students.

Wang (2012) mentioned the importance of teaching morality to students of martial arts. Martial arts students must be taught how to become broad-minded, to increase tolerance, to have good conduct, to enhance moral and legal awareness, and to boost psychological health and behavior. To be broad-minded means to learn when and when not to defend oneself from aggressive or violent individuals. A true martial artist does not brag to others about his knowledge of the craft. This can be reflected in his actions, words, and in the way, he responds to emergency life and death situations.

One notable martial arts performed in many competitions nowadays and currently included as one of the topics to be taught in Physical Education in the Philippines is taekwondo.

The origin of taekwondo can be attributed to two tales. Some studies showed that it is of Japanese origin primarily the karate-do. It is said that during the early times, some Koreans accidentally migrated to Japan due to the washing away of their boats by a storm. These Koreans embraced Japanese culture, arts, food, way of life, and even martial arts (Moeing, 2014). Another study also explained that the Japanese invasion in Korea gave the Koreans the privilege to learn karate-do as a form of martial arts which they later named taekwondo.

The term taekwondo was derived from three Korean words namely *tae* meaning foot, *kwon* meaning fist, and *do* meaning art or way. Literally, taekwondo means *the way of the foot and the fist*. History shows that the use of the term only started in 1955 even though its roots date back as early as 2300 years ago in Korea. History reveals that taekwondo emerged as a martial arts in Korea under the leadership of its legendary founder, Tangun. Similar to other nations, communal life in Old Korea gradually transformed into tribal communities, then to tribal leagues, and finally into a formal state. Although no written history of the fighting system of this time remains, it is known that the people of this time were hunters and had some means of protection as well as livelihood.

Rajan (2015) expressed that taekwondo or any kind of modified martial art, modern sport, and exercise is useful to its practitioners. Martial arts of any kind have beneficial purposes like lowering blood pressure, reducing heart failure, and improving the developmental skills of school-aged children with or without special needs. Also, persons

engaged in these activities have improved motor, memory, and social skills. They also have higher self-esteem as compared to non-athletes.

For female adolescents, Junhyong, Dattilo and Jinmoo (2011) claimed that low-frequency taekwondo training can increase their health-related fitness and skill-related physical fitness. It can also change the body composition and body fat mass of the practitioners. This is because taekwondo training for adolescents promotes changes in muscular and skeletal muscles and developing physique. Because of constant training in kicking, punching, and jumping, body fats decrease (Yoon and So, 2013), thus, turning body fats into glucose that will be used by the body to become food.

Hollander (2010) and Yoon and So (2013) also stated that self-defense is the primary reason why martial arts is becoming more popular with women. Many of them have realized the need to learn some strategies on how they can defend themselves from evil perpetrators. From their training, it is expected that they apply the techniques they learned to actual situations (Hollander, 2009).

Also, participation in martial arts and any other sports provide a higher chance for women to acquire administrative positions than their counterparts. This is because of their experiences in training and discipline in being able to manage their time in their sports endeavors, personal and professional obligations (Taylor, Siegele, Smith & Hardin, 2018).

Lastly, participation in martial arts and any other sports creates unity among nations (Lois, 2011). Unity in sports can promote friendship among countries that have conflict concerning their political and religious beliefs as well as national interest. In the Olympic games held every four years, the current motto "Hendatris Citius, Altius, Fortius" which is Latin for "faster, higher and stronger" is proof of this. Athletes around the world including their respective national leaders gather to promote unity among nations by holding friendly sports competitions. Sportsmanship and camaraderie develop between players of varied sports setting an example to the entire world that no race nor color of skin can separate one nation from the other so long as humanity's excellence is hailed as a means to unify all people of the world.

Meanwhile, even if learning martial arts is highly beneficial to people, there are a lot of challenges that people need to face to savor its sweet fruits.

The first issue that anyone who wished to learn martial arts need to address is gender-stereotyping. Many societies despite the advancement of technology and civilization remain close-minded in allowing women to learn martial arts. In Columbia, for example, due to the perception that girls are delicate, they are not allowed even just to play sports. This uncertain position in society hinders women not just to be physically fit but also to enjoy the benefits of sports and martial arts.

According to Jakubowska, Channon and Matthews (2016), females who engage in martial arts are more confident in protecting themselves and can boost their self-esteem and self-responsibility. They can reject the common impression that females are a weaker gender. Also, Clark (2012) discussed that the active participation of girls in sports in secondary schools helps them to carry out their tasks in school and at home efficiently. They are also able to identify their interaction with other people well.

One of the reasons why many women are discriminated against in the field of sports is because some female athletes tend to overpower some male athletes just like in the extreme sport of ski-jumping. Also, women can jump farther and higher than their male counterparts. In a society where men are hailed as superior to women, such triumphs of women is a direct insult to the egos of males thriving in such fields.

Another challenge is the possibility of acquiring injuries. Sports injuries are problems that happen in the body or parts of the body of a person who engages either in light or strenuous physical activities like contact sport which is one of the leading sources of sports injuries among athletes (Zemper, 2010).

While attack and counter-attack techniques can lead to winning (Menescardi, Lopez, Jose, Falco & Hernandez-Mendo, 2015), the kicks may lead to the injuries of the opponent. Kazime, Chudolinsi, Turgeon, Simon and Coombe (2009) stated that most of the injuries suffered by taekwondo athletes come from head kicks. Many taekwondo athletes gear to kick in the head because they incur higher scores as opposed to hitting the other parts of the body of their opponent. However, this does not mean that black beltters do not incur foot and thigh injuries.

Zemper (2010) stressed that sports injuries have an impact on the athletes and their families. Because of this, sports scientists continuously keep on studying ways to prevent, control, and treat sports injuries in martial arts. One of these is that some of the rules governing martial arts games have already changed because of this need for more stringent rules to avoid life-threatening and changing injuries.

A rest of ten minutes can increase the number of kicks that a player can perform. This also helps a player to think and validate if they have delivered explosive kicks in practice or competitions. Another technique is the use of the Personal Scoring System (PSS). Using the PSS, the common injuries in playing taekwondo are lessened. Taekwondo athletes try to execute more than one kick in the body, head, or combination of both with lesser impact to avoid injuries.

Effective time management is another challenge that martial arts players need to face. Melendez (2006) stated that one of the causes of poor academic performance of college students can be attributed to the type of sports they play and the hours of training and playing they needed to spend to master the skills needed for that sport. Student-athletes often mismanage their time between academics and sports (Jordan, 2017). Some student-athletes

also needed to travel from one town to another to train and study at the same time. If not properly handled by the student, it can lead to the dropping of some courses.

Similar results were also yielded in the study of Schultz (2017). In his study, high school athletes were found to have a smaller chance of performing better in their academics whether it be in in-session or off-session. Some athletes failed in English and Mathematics while training for sports competitions or in-between game seasons.

The problem in balancing academics and passion for sports needed to be addressed for student-athletes to continuously enjoy the sports they love. This is because schools impose a grade that athletes should maintain, if not, they would be suspended from attending training or removed from the team so that they can focus on their studies- an incident which is emotionally dissatisfying to student-athletes.

To solve this problem, there are two ways that schools and universities employ. The first is by indulging their coaches to mentor the players not just in sports but also in academics and the second is by decreasing the number of units per semester that a student-athlete may take.

According to Younes, Ciccomascolo and Shim (2013), motivational words coming from coaches can inspire athletes. Their experiences before as athletes can motivate budding professional athletes to manage their time well in academics and sports for them to perform excellently in both worlds. In addition to this, they can create flexible plans by which student-athletes could be trained to manage their time well so that they could perform better in their academics while managing to train for competitions in a less stressful situation. Lastly, coaches may impose policies such as the removal of scholarships which can be a punishment for any student-athlete who fails to obey any policy concerning training and maintaining a good academic performance. Lee (2017) posits that effective time management of student-athletes can lead to at least seven (7) hours of sleep for a tired athlete which is generally beneficial to their health, studies, and sports.

On the other hand, schools and universities can be flexible in the education of their student-athletes. Some schools exempt these athletes from their PE classes or offer specific considerations so that they can catch up with their missed activities. Smith (2011) suggested that college athletes must have a lifetime voucher or chits for education which they can avail of at any time. He also believes that student-athletes should be given the necessary flexible schedule with their education but with a certain number of years by which they can finish their chosen courses such as 4-5 years. A diploma is still deemed more valuable and lasts a lifetime than the medals won in sports competitions. Anyway, these student-athletes may advance to professional leagues where they can still pursue their passion for sports.

Republic Act No. 10588 series of 2012 institutionalizes the conduct of Palarong Pambansa every year in the country. This law was enacted to promote Physical Education and sports programs to every school in the country. The program encourages students to

participate in different sports programs, leagues, amateur sports, and training for international competitions to foster self-discipline, teamwork, alertness, and value for health. It also aimed to elevate the physical, intellectual, and social wellbeing of the youth. One of the sports that was encouraged to be delved in by the youth based on this law is taekwondo which is found in Article VI Section 16.

It is because of this law that this study was born. At present, taekwondo is one of the sports being studied by Grade 7 students in their Physical Education classes such that it is described as one of the sports events in the Olympics. The Department of Education together with the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) and Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) is one in the advocacy to encourage the youth to venture into this sport and benefit from it.

This study primarily aimed to describe the factors that drove female taekwondo beltlers to achieve competence that is to derive inputs for improving teaching Physical Education. Specifically, it sought to (1) present the profile of the respondents in terms of age, years of playing experience, belt in taekwondo, highest competition participated in, the number of training per week, number of competitions participated in, and sports injuries; (2) describe their physical and emotional experiences, injury management, contribution of PE in their development and pursuit of excellence and; (3) identify their significant experiences and practices in training and competition and their reasons for aspiring for a taekwondo black belt.

The results of this study hoped to benefit the following:

**Department of Education:** To enrich the taekwondo program especially to encourage the females to delve into martial arts and use it as a means of self-defense.

**Curriculum Developers:** To create effective and interesting lessons for future students especially in martial arts and other sports.

**Coaches:** To provide background information about female taekwondo black beltlers' experiences in training, competitions, and academics that may serve as their guiding points in handling female athletes.

**Physical Education Teachers:** To provide a reminder on the significance of developing the fitness level of students as the main factor in entering the field of sports.

**Future Researchers:** To conduct future studies regarding other aspects of taekwondo as a form of martial arts and as a sports activity.



## METHOD

To determine the factors that drove female black beltlers to remain competitive and to derive inputs for enhancing the teaching of Physical Education (PE), this study employed the mixed-method research design particularly explanatory sequential design.

Taghizadeh, (2015) highlighted that in a mixed-method research design, it combines qualitative and quantitative research methods. The objective of it is to explore reality from two different perspectives. It aims to produce a holistic explanation of a research topic by using philosophical premises, generating questions, data collection, and issues.

Ivankova, Creswell and Stick (2006) explained that a mixed-method sequential design implies the collection of quantitative and qualitative data with one study. The two (2) data were collected and integrated to come up with the result. This provides a methodological overview of addressing the issue of the study.

### The Quantitative Phase

In conducting this phase, the following steps were undertaken. The initial step was to develop the research question and from this, the appropriate quantitative approach was chosen (Farshad, Jasem & Mohammad, 2013; Dover & Amar, 2014; Mencias, Noon & Hoch, 2012). When the appropriate research design was chosen, the instrument was created following the intended answers from the created research questions.

The instrument used is a questionnaire designed through a Likert-scale model. Said instrument was adopted from Farshad et al. (2013). Farshad's instrument combined Dover's & Arman, (2014) *Measuring Athletes' Sport Orientation in Iranian Martial Artist Community* and Mencias's et al. (2012) *Development and Validation of the Athlete Fear Avoidance Questionnaire*. It comprised of 48 questions divided into two parts.

The first part of the questionnaire inquired about the athletes' profile which includes their age, number of years of playing experience, belt in Taekwondo, highest competition participated, highest award won, number of times a player needed to be trained, number of competitions joined in a year, and common sports injuries experienced during training and competitions.

Part 2 sought information about the physical and emotional experiences of female black beltlers. Respondents were made to rate every item in the questionnaire from 1-5. The verbal descriptions used to interpret the numerical ratings were 1-Not at All, 2- To a Slight Degree/Extent, 3- To a Moderate Degree/Extent, 4- To a Great Degree/ Extent, and 5-To a Full Degree/ Extent.

Such instrument was content-validated by experts specifically Maria Anne Bernadeth Samson. As soon as the instrument was approved for data gathering, the selection of participants followed. Quantitative participants were composed of seventy-three (73) female Taekwondo black beltlers who came from the six provinces in Region III. Once the consent of the participants was taken, the data gathering part commenced.

Permission was sought from the Chairman of the Regional Management Committee (RMC) in Taekwondo as well as the Dojang (gym) or training ground as well as the different Taekwondo instructors in the province in conducting this study. Meanwhile, respondents were assured that the results would be used for the study only.

Data obtained from the 73 participants were analyzed using descriptive statistics. These include frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Obtained results and analysis become the basis in facilitating the process in step 2.

### **The Qualitative Phase**

The second stage of the explanatory sequential design is the qualitative phase. Ary (2005) holistically described qualitative research as the method of researching where the researcher designs the study before actual data gathering. This is because as opposed to quantitative research, data sought to be gathered are not merely numbers but words, pictures, observations, beliefs, experiences, and perceptions.

In this study, the qualitative phase served to explore the experiences and learnings of experienced taekwondo athletes to derive vital inputs in the development of a quality taekwondo program or training as well as enhancement of Physical Education classes.

The following were the procedures followed in the qualitative phase:

This phase began with the statement of the qualitative research questions. These questions served as a guide in identifying the necessary approach and data to be collected which could aid in explaining the quantitative data gathered. Once the target data were identified, the creation of the instrument followed.

An interview guide was created to facilitate the structured interview designed by the researcher. The instrument was used to describe the significant experiences of the respondents particularly their training and competitions as well as their reasons for aspiring a Taekwondo black belt. Four questions were developed to collect these pieces of information. This interview guide was validated by the chairman of the Regional Management Committee (RMC) in Taekwondo.

After the validation of the instrument, the next step was to select the respondents. The researcher interviewed eight (8) female black belt holders during the Philippine Taekwondo League (PTL) in Pampanga. Two participants came from Bulacan and Pampanga, whereas there was one participant from each of the rest of the provinces in Region III. The researcher randomly selected the respondents from each province.

**Table 1**  
**Respondents for quantitative research**

| Province     | No. of Female Respondent |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Bataan       | 7                        |
| Bulacan      | 16                       |
| Nueva Ecija  | 12                       |
| Pampanga     | 23                       |
| Tarlac       | 5                        |
| Zambales     | 10                       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>73</b>                |

Interviews were accomplished in between competitions/events at the time that the respondents were at the height of their enthusiasm/emotion and competitiveness. An audio recorder was used to record the interviews.

Appropriate protocols were followed before and during the conduct of the interviews. This was to safeguard the quality of the obtained information as well as the identities of the selected respondents. Meanwhile, the data gathered were analyzed using thematic analysis.

### **Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings**

The last step is a crucial stage in the explanatory sequential design. This is the phase where qualitative data are associated with quantitative data to enrich the result of the study.

Combining the results of the quantitative and qualitative results can enhance and improve the understanding of the measures that can be used to derive inputs for enhancing the teaching of PE and the coaching of Taekwondo.

In this step, quantitative and qualitative results were summarized. The results of the two were interpreted and interrelated to explain the extent to which qualitative results provided support and enhancement to the quantitative data.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Respondents' Profile**

Table 2 presents the profile of the seventy-three (73) Taekwondo female athletes in terms of age, years of playing experience, belt in Taekwondo, highest competition participated in, the number of training/s per week, sports injuries, and playing status.

Data showed that the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of twenty-one (21) years old and above with a percentage of 43.8. Most of these respondents already finished college based on the age bracket.

It can also be observed that 23 female black-belters who are ranging from 17-20 years old are the second most number of respondents (31.5%) in terms of age. They can be classified as college students.

Eighteen (18) or 24.7% of the total number of respondents belong to the age group of 13-16 years old.

Based on the results, 50.72% of the female black belters had nine (9) years and above playing experience, while it can be noted that a very low percentage of 2.7% or only two (2) respondents had 1-3 years of playing experience.

In the level of belts that the respondents have acquired, it can be seen from the table that there are five (5) or 6.8% of the respondents who already reached the 3rd Dan level.

The majority of the athlete-respondents (56.2%) join 3-6 competitions in a year while eighteen (18) or 24.7% of them participate in 9-10 competitions annually. An equal number of the remaining respondents also join 1-2 and 7-8 competitions in a year.

When asked about the highest level of competition participated in, the majority of the Taekwondo athletes (63%) have already participated in the national level. It is also worth noting that a very good number of respondents (23.35%) have already participated in international meets. Few of them (13.7%) were able to compete only in the provincial competitions.

Almost all the respondents (97.3%) gained an award from regional to international taekwondo meets while there were only two (2) or 2.7% who only have earned an award at the provincial level.

The data also showed that a majority of the female black belters (86.3%) undergo 2-5 sessions of training per week.

During training and competitions, taekwondo athletes experience common injuries like muscle pain (82.2%), bruises (68.5%), abrasion (26%), fracture (12.3%) and the least injury experienced was dislocation (6.8%).

Out of the seventy-three (73) respondents, fifty-three (53) or 72.6% are still active players in Taekwondo by the time this study was in progress.

**Table 2**  
**Profile of the respondents**

| Variables   | Frequency<br>n = 73 | Percent |
|---|---------------------|---------|
| <b>Age (in years)</b>   |                     |         |
| 13 – 16   | 18                  | 24.7    |
| 17 – 20   | 23                  | 31.5    |
| 21 and above  | 32                  | 43.8    |
| <b>Years of Playing Experience</b>  |                     |         |
| 1 – 3   | 2                   | 2.7     |
| 4 – 5   | 10                  | 13.7    |
| 6 - 8   | 24                  | 32.9    |
| 9 and above   | 37                  | 50.7    |
| <b>Belt in Taekwondo</b>  |                     |         |
| 1st Dan   | 37                  | 50.7    |
| 2nd Dan   | 31                  | 42.5    |
| 3rd Dan   | 5                   | 6.8     |
| <b>Highest Competition Participated</b>                                   |                     |         |
| Provincial  | 1                   | 1.4     |
| Regional  | 9                   | 12.3    |
| National  | 46                  | 63.0    |
| International   | 17                  | 23.3    |
| <b>Highest Award</b>  |                     |         |
| Provincial  | 2                   | 2.7     |
| Regional  | 20                  | 27.4    |
| National  | 35                  | 47.9    |
| International   | 16                  | 21.9    |
| <b>Training per week</b>  |                     |         |
| Once a week   | 4                   | 5.5     |
| Twice a week  | 27                  | 37.0    |
| Four times a week   | 26                  | 35.6    |
| Five times a week   | 10                  | 13.7    |
| Six times a week  | 6                   | 8.2     |
| <b>Number of Competition Attended in a Year</b>                           |                     |         |
| 1-2   | 7                   | 9.6     |
| 3-4   | 27                  | 37.0    |
| 5-6   | 14                  | 19.2    |
| 7-8   | 7                   | 9.6     |
| 9-10  | 18                  | 24.7    |
| <b>Common Sports Injuries Experienced during Training and Competition</b> |                     |         |
| <b>Competition</b>  |                     |         |
| Abrasion  | 19                  | 26.0    |
| Bruises   | 50                  | 68.5    |
| Dislocation   | 5                   | 6.8     |
| Fracture  | 9                   | 12.3    |
| Muscle pain   | 60                  | 82.2    |
| Others  | 4                   | 5.5     |
| <b>Playing Status</b>   |                     |         |
| Active  | 53                  | 72.6    |
| Inactive  | 20                  | 27.4    |

## The Respondents' Physical and Emotional Experiences

Table 3 shows the physical and emotional experiences of female Taekwondo black belt holders as indicated by the means and standard deviations.

In the physical aspect, the statement *Do I attend a training even if I have a menstrual period?* prove to be the most agreed statement (mean = 4.05, SD = 1.77), and *Do I ever eat in excess secretly?* is the least agreed statement (mean = 2.04, SD = 1.184). This means that having menstrual period was not a hindrance for them to attend combative training. Computed standard deviation ranging from 1.177-1.536 on a 5-point Likert scale indicates heterogeneity in the responses.

**Table 3**  
*Description of physical and emotional experiences*

| Item   | Mean | SD    | Verbal Interpretation |
|--|------|-------|-----------------------|
| <b>Physical Aspect</b>   |      |       |                       |
| 1. Do I limit my food before the weight in?  | 3.70 | 1.401 | To a great degree     |
| 2. Do I lose weight to meet the requirement in my weight category?   | 3.12 | 1.536 | To a moderate degree  |
| 3. Do I ever eat in excess secretly?   | 2.04 | 1.184 | To a slight degree    |
| 4. Do I worry about my weight?   | 2.95 | 1.517 | To a moderate degree  |
| 5. Do I attend a training even if I have menstrual period  | 4.05 | 1.177 | To a great degree     |
| 6. Is my performance in the competition affected whenever I have my monthly period?                              | 2.77 | 1.328 | To a moderate degree  |
| Grand Mean   | 3.11 | 0.156 |                       |
| <b>Emotional Aspect</b>  |      |       |                       |
| 1. Do I feel nervous before the game?  | 3.26 | 1.093 | To a moderate degree  |
| 2. Do I apply angry feelings to be more aggressive in a game?  | 2.27 | 1.058 | To a slight degree    |
| 3. Did I feel happy when I passed the black belt promotional test?   | 4.63 | .936  | All the time          |
| 4. Did I feel proud when I broke the wooden board using my hand and foot techniques in the black belt promotion? | 4.56 | .928  | All the time          |
| 5. Do I feel disappointed whenever I lose?   | 3.26 | 1.143 | To a moderate degree  |
| 6. Do I feel angry whenever my opponent kicks me in the head and scores 3 or 4 points?                           | 2.67 | 1.131 | To a moderate degree  |
| 7. Do I feel afraid when my opponent is a member of the National team?   | 2.74 | 1.155 | To a moderate degree  |
| 8. Do I feel ashamed when I lose to a lower belt?  | 3.29 | 1.207 | To a moderate degree  |
| 9. Do I feel bad when my coach is angry with me because I lose in my match or game?                              | 3.34 | 1.397 | To a moderate degree  |
| Grand Mean   | 3.33 | 0.142 |                       |

In the emotional aspect, the statement *Did I feel happy when I passed the black belt promotional test?* is the most agreed statement (mean = 4.63, SD = 0.936) while *Do I apply angry feelings to be more aggressive in a game?* is the least agreed statement (mean = 2.27, SD = 1.058) among female black belter Taekwondo athletes. Computed standard deviations range from 0.928-1.397 on a 5-point Likert scale indicate heterogeneity.

### The Respondents' Injury Management

The injury management of the female black beltters is described in Table 4. The statement *Do I apply first aid to myself?* is the most agreed statement (mean = 3.63, SD = 1.149) followed by *Do I incur injury/ies caused by physical activities in training and/or competition?* (mean = 3.12, SD = 1.149) whereas, the statement *Am I not comfortable playing until my injury is 100% gone?* is the least agreed statement (mean = 2.84, SD = 1.143). Computed standard deviation ranges from 1.143-1.386 on a 5-point Likert scale indicates heterogeneity in each response.

**Table 4**  
**Description of injury management**

| Item   | Mean | SD    | Rank |
|--|------|-------|------|
| <b>Injury Management</b>   |      |       |      |
| 1. When injury is incurred, Do I feel afraid that my injury will get worse?            | 3.07 | 1.240 | 3    |
| 2. Do I incur injury/ies caused by physical activities in training and/or competition? | 3.12 | 1.154 | 2    |
| 3. Do I apply first aid to myself?   | 3.63 | 1.149 | 1    |
| 4. Am I not comfortable playing until my injury is 100% gone?                          | 2.84 | 1.143 | 5    |
| Continuation of Table 5  |      |       |      |
| 5. Do I expect to get injured while in training and competition?                       | 2.90 | 1.386 | 4    |

### The Contribution of Physical Education in their Development

The description of Physical Education is presented in Table 5. The most agreed statement is *Did I enjoy athletic scholarships because of my Taekwondo skills?* with a mean rating of 4.32 (SD=1.177) followed by *Did I learn Taekwondo from a sports clinic outside school?* with a mean rating of 4.19 (SD = 1.430). The least agreed statement is *Did my PE teacher motivate me to join Taekwondo competitions?* with a mean rating of 1.48 (SD = 1.029).

**Table 5**  
**Description of physical education**

| Item  | Mean | SD    | Rank |
|---|------|-------|------|
| <b>Physical Education</b>   |      |       |      |
| 1. Did I learn most of my motor skills in Physical Education (PE) class?  | 2.97 | 1.384 | 3    |
| 2. Did I learn Taekwondo in my PE class?  | 1.53 | 1.029 | 10   |
| 3. Did my PE teacher motivated me to join Taekwondo competition?  | 1.48 | 1.029 | 11   |
| 4. Did I learn Taekwondo from a sports clinic outside school?   | 4.19 | 1.430 | 2    |
| 5. Did I enjoy athletic scholarship because of my Taekwondo skills?   | 4.32 | 1.177 | 1    |
| 6. Did I think of quitting from Taekwondo because of the hardship in training and competition but decided to stay because of the athletic scholarship?  | 2.64 | 1.636 | 5    |
| 7. Did I think of quitting from Taekwondo because of the difficulties I encountered in training and competition but decided to stay because of the consistent encouragement from my coach/es?                 | 2.55 | 1.642 | 6    |
| 8. Did think of quitting from Taekwondo because of the difficulties I encountered in training and competition but decided to stay because of the consistent encouragement from my PE teacher/s.               | 1.74 | 1.202 | 9    |
| 9. Did I think of quitting from Taekwondo because of the difficulties I encountered in training and competition but decided to stay because of the consistent encouragement from my parent/s                  | 2.38 | 1.430 | 7    |
| 10. Did I think of quitting from Taekwondo because of the difficulties I encountered in training and competition but decided to stay because of the consistent encouragement from my friend/s and co-player/s | 2.67 | 1.519 | 4    |
| 11. Did I think of quitting from Taekwondo because of the difficulties I encountered in training and competition but decided to stay because of the consistent encouragement from my relative/s               | 2.07 | 1.240 | 8    |

### The Respondents' Pursuit of Excellence

Table 6 shows the participants' pursuit of excellence. The most agreed statement among female black belter Taekwondo athletes was *Do I respect coaches, technical officials, and my opponents?* with a mean rating of 4.92 (SD= 0.277) followed by the statement *Do I play fairly?* (mean = 4.75, SD = 0.465) whereas, the least agreed statement is, *Do I hold that to test my athletic performance* with a mean rating of 3.93 (SD = 1.305). Computed standard deviation ranges from 0.277-1.305 on a 5-point Likert scale indicates heterogeneity in their responses.



**Table 6**  
**Description of pursuit of excellence**

| Item  | Mean | SD    | Rank |
|---|------|-------|------|
| <b>Pursuit of Excellence</b>  |      |       |      |
| 1. Do I set goal for myself when I compete?                                     | 4.37 | .993  | 8    |
| 2. Is winning important for me?   | 4.44 | 1.000 | 6    |
| 3. Do I want to be the best every time I compete?                               | 4.40 | .954  | 7    |
| 4. Do I try my hardest to win?  | 4.58 | .665  | 3    |
| 5. Do I hold that to test my athletic performance is to compete against others? | 3.93 | 1.305 | 9    |
| 6. Do I play fairly?  | 4.75 | .465  | 2    |
| 7. Do I respect coaches, technical officials and my opponents?                  | 4.92 | .277  | 1    |
| 8. Do I respect the result of the match even if it does not favor my side?      | 4.51 | .899  | 5    |
| 9. Am I more comfortable when I try to achieve my personal goal?                | 4.53 | .801  | 4    |

The Majority of the respondents already finished college; they are also considered experienced in the field since most of them have nine years of playing experience. These participants also insinuated the various contests they joined. Many of them reached the national level. In addition to these, results show that in a year, majority of the respondents join 3-4 competitions.

Training was vital to the success of the participants for many of them train either twice or four times a week. Having a menstrual period was not considered as an obstacle even having menstrual pain or bruise during training or competition.

To address their injuries, they apply first aid to themselves. At present, majority of the respondents are still active players.

### Qualitative Findings

Most of the participants were in the age category of twenty-one (21) and above and can be considered to be at the college level. As a varsity player, they are excused from attending their PE classes when training season starts. The respondents decided to learn taekwondo because they want to have knowledge of self-defense.

### **The physical and emotional experiences, injury management, physical education, and pursuit of excellence**

According to the participants, balancing studies and attending training and competitions was the most challenging for student-athletes. The respondents needed to go to school even if they were physically tired after the training.

### **The significant experiences and practices in training and competition**

**Developed belief in oneself.** Respondents gained more self-confidence after joining and attending various training and competitions.

**Established discipline to maintain good standing.** Because of the shifting schedule of student-athletes they had a hard time balancing their training, studies, and competitions. Respondents dropped some of their subjects because of the pressure in their studies and the scheduled training or competitions where they needed to train more or to compete further.

### **Reasons for aspiring a Taekwondo black belt**

**For self-defense and physical fitness.** Three (3) out of eight (8) respondents stated that they participated in Taekwondo to become physically fit and to learn self-defense. It would be a tool for the females to use in the outside world and their daily lives.

**Scholastic endeavor.** Four (4) out of eight (8) participants revealed that they joined the team to acquire a scholarship from their desired educational institution to help lessen their family's expenses.

**Support system.** Four (4) out of eight (8) said that they got their motivation to play Taekwondo from their coaches, families, and friends. They also enjoy playing Taekwondo because of the respect they get from other players.

**For travel and leisure.** The participants said that they enjoy one of the perks of being able to play taekwondo which is to travel for free.

## **DISCUSSION**

The majority of the respondents already finished their bachelor's degree and have nine (9) years of playing experience. Most of them are first-degree black-belters and have participated in national competitions. They usually join 3-4 competitions in a year and to prepare for these various matches, they train consistently either twice to four times a week. They expressed that due to this vigorous training, they often experience muscle pains such

that they have to apply first aid to themselves. Majority of them are still active players at present.

Some respondents decided to join the taekwondo team to develop their knowledge in self-defense and to achieve physical fitness. In doing physical activities such as taekwondo, one's cardiovascular fitness is increased. All forms of training in Taekwondo from basic forms or poomsae, techniques, kyorugi drill, and free kyorugi are suitable for cardiovascular conditioning for all ages. Poomsae or Katas is a series of movements or actions used to exercise the body and to apply new techniques in fighting, while Kyorugi drill or sparring drill is used to apply techniques in kicking and punching with an opponent. Indeed, as Junhyong, Dattilo & Jinmoo, (2011) noted, taekwondo can help a person develop his health for he will gain techniques in defending himself from perpetrators.

Another reason why the respondents decided to join taekwondo teams is due to the opportunity to travel and meet other people from different parts of the country or abroad through the different Taekwondo competitions. Wachs (2005) pointed that sport is an all-in-one package for athletes whether it be in terms of health, ticket overseas, a pathway to a blessed life, and ground for education leaders and government officials in creating a healthy future for the new generations. Athletes can benefit from the physical training of the body to become healthy and in the same manner, meet new people while competing. They travel locally or internationally just to represent their team or country in the regional, national, or even international competitions and in different sports discipline. This is the reason why some athletes stay for a longer period in playing and competing in sports.

Another reason why the respondents indulged in taekwondo is due to the support they obtain from their parents, teammates, and coaches. Life as a varsity player is seriously complicated with various demands. To maintain good grades and still be able to train and participate in various competitions, athletes needed to learn to manage their time and weigh their priorities. Without the encouragement of these people, athletes' susceptibility to giving up can easily happen. As many successful athletes are, more than the financial support, it is the emotional and mental support that strengthens the athletes to pursue their craft.

Coach behavior can also help shape the student-athletes due to their interaction with them (MacDonald, Cote and Daekin, 2010). The experiences of the coach can become a springboard to motivate students to achieve more in their sports career (Nicholls, Morley & Parry, 2016). This can build mental toughness for the student-athletes in facing problems both in school and at home. Having a pep talk between the coaches and student-athletes can inspire students to do their very best. Also, formal coaching helps coaches to understand and help the student-athletes to receive thorough training programs which are reported to have positive results in the personal and social skills of the athletes. It is also for the better if the coach is trained in the field. Formal coaching means that the person has undergone training and study of the sports discipline to be equipped with the essential skills needed for effective coaching.

Also, one aspect that motivated the athletes to pursue their passion is for them to obtain scholarship grants. Sports gave them the chance to acquire a bachelor's degree.

Tadesse (2016) explicated that there are more benefits than problems in practicing Taekwondo like social benefits, moral benefits, self-defense, avoiding substances like alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and taking illegal drugs. The discipline of every Taekwondojin to practice and to learn new techniques help these students to overcome all obstacles in their paths.

Hong (2017) stressed that Taekwondo as an Olympic and full-contact sport is a venue for inner peace of mind and soul. This is because the practitioner is well-trained and possesses clarity of mind. A knowledge of this sport can also give opportunity to earn money by simply teaching self-defense to females and children. This can also prevent violence and sexual harassment of women and children.

One advantage in knowing this sport that the respondents noted is that they were able to develop their self-confidence. Due to the achievement they gained from winning and the support they obtained from their peers, coaches, and families, their belief in themselves boosted.

Another benefit of practicing taekwondo that the respondents shared is they were able to establish discipline in themselves for them to manage effectively their studies and training. Balancing studies and training and competitions was the most difficult experience for the student-athletes. The respondents needed to go to school even if they were physically tired of their training. In addition to this, they set aside their menstrual period just so they can attend their training, (Cosh & Tully, 2015) stated that participation in elite-sports and education can give some stressful situations to student-athletes like coping with class schedule, fatigue, financial situation, peer pressure, and inflexibility of the coach to communicate with players and others. Stressful scenarios sometimes result in educational failures. Such problems are common to the athletes but were never a hindrance to their goal of refining their skills in taekwondo. In the end, passing the black-belt promotional test was more elating than the hardships.

Indeed, a balance in sports and studies, as well as support from coaches, parents, and teammates, must be given attention so as not to compromise any important factor in achieving their goal of becoming excellent players. Aside from this, there are a lot of privileges that a Taekwondo player may acquire/receive such as athletic scholarships and going to places while participating in several sports meets like Central Luzon Athletic Association (CLRAA), Palarong Pambansa, Batang Pinoy, Milo Little Olympic, National State College University Athletic Association (SCUAA), and National Private School Athletic Association (PRISAA).

Lastly, they earned some knowledge of first-aid because they needed to address their injuries during training and competitions. This is because at times there are no available experts who could provide aid to them when injuries happen.

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are proposed:

Most of the respondents have rich experiences in terms of training and competition. They are also achievers in the leveling of degree in Taekwondo and likewise experienced in managing injuries. It is suggested that Taekwondo practitioners remain active either in sharing their expertise in seminar-workshops, training, and refereeing to further promote the sports activity as well as to maintain their zest for the sport.

The respondents were privileged with athletic scholarships and the gift of self-defense. Schools and universities are advised to continue producing athletic scholarships to deserving athletes for them to be more motivated in honing their craft and bringing honor to the school.

A very big percentage of the respondents admitted that PE classes are not a contributing factor to their success. With this, it is recommended that Taekwondo should be given the same importance as the other sports in PE classes for the following reasons: there is a minimal need for equipment and teaching area, the skills being taught can be used for a lifetime, strength and fitness level can be met along with self-defense skills and it is one of the best ways in recruiting potential athletes for sports competitions to represent the school.

PE Teachers are also encouraged to attend training and seminar-workshops for taekwondo in National Instructor Course, Referee, and Poomsae Course to prepare them in teaching the said sports to their students.

In addition, PE teachers are advised to train and study new sports aside from the usual sports or activities they teach in their area of expertise. This will help the Department of Education (DepEd) in achieving different learning outcomes and to have the knowledge, understanding, skills, competence, and confidence to participate actively in PE classes. This in turn will result in an active lifestyle and an improved fitness level in the future.

Also, it is hoped that varsities are not to be excused in their PE classes because in joining PE activities, they are mentally and physically-trained as an athlete. They can utilize this in preparing for their competitions.

In addition, sports clinics for taekwondo may be held in the cluster or provincial level as a culminating activity for P.E. classes. Such may be sponsored by the Department of Education. This can help taekwondo-athletes to develop their skills in competition, particularly mental alertness. It can be an update to the new trends and skills for the application of Taekwondo as a means of self-defense and Physical and Health fitness.

Lastly, support from parents, relatives, schoolmates, and teammates is also important to boost the self-confidence of female Taekwondo athletes in their training and competitions.

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