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# Perceived Leadership Development as a Result of Martial Arts Training

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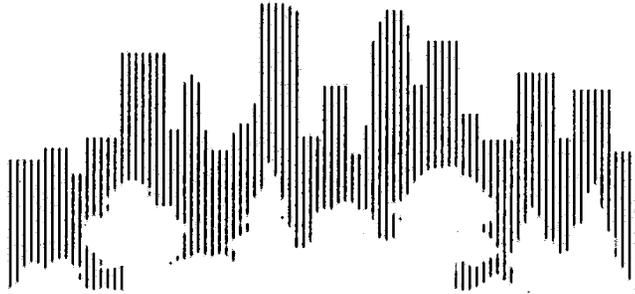
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**C • O • L • L • E • G • E**

# **MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP**

**Connie L. Bouley**

**Perceived Leadership Development as a Result of  
Martial Arts Training**

**2008**

PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS A RESULT OF MARTIAL ARTS  
TRAINING

CONNIE L BOULEY

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Leadership

AUGSBURG COLLEGE  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

2008

MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP  
AUGSBURG COLLEGE  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Master's Non-thesis Project of

CONNIE L BOULEY

has been approved by the Review Committee for the Non-thesis Project requirement for the  
Master of Arts in Leadership degree

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## ABSTRACT

PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS A RESULT OF MARTIAL ARTS  
TRAINING

CONNIE L BOULEY

JUNE, 2008

- Thesis
- Leadership Application Project
- Non-Thesis (ML597) Project

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of martial arts training on the individual's leadership in the workplace. Martial arts training develops leadership skills and traits that include self-control, focus, attaining goals, and respect of self and others. The research was conducted using a survey tool to explore if perceived leadership traits were learned within a martial arts training school and transferred to the workplace. The survey was completed by adult students of the National Karate Schools in Minnesota. The statements referred to non-physical skills learned in martial arts and if those skills were evident in the workplace. Martial arts' training does impact leadership skills and traits according to the results of the survey.

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# PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS A RESULT OF MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING

## Introduction

Most people would agree that today's employers and employees are faced with intense competition. There are too many people seeking too few job opportunities. Hiring candidates are looking for an advantage. While the candidates are looking for the advantage, potential employers are looking for a way to choose the best candidate for the position. The research related to the topic of martial arts and leadership indicates that martial arts training is a relevant factor to consider for making this decision. The factor being used refers to abilities or knowledge that is attributed to desired skill sets viewed as necessary by potential employers. Trained martial artists have the advantage and, in turn, their employer has the advantage.

The number of potential employees that have the desired skill set required by potential employers is limited. There is an abundance of job openings and also an abundance of unemployed workers. Unfortunately, many of the unemployed workers do not have the desired skills. Martial arts training can be used as a factor in determining skill set and potential for developing desired skills.

The term *martial arts training* is very broad in understanding. For the purpose of this research, martial arts training specifically relates to training in the practice of karate with origins traced back to Korea. The literature review section includes other types of martial arts training. Most of this research uses Tae Kwon Do as the martial arts of choice. Tae Kwon Do is nearly identical in the tenets of the training when compared to karate. The tenets of training include respect for self and others, and using skills learned for self-defense and not for hurting others.

*Leadership* is defined as any individual in the workplace that takes the initiative to influence or be responsible for others' performance. Leadership is not just for those that are so-called supervisors or managers, but for anyone that has the initiative to take charge and execute a plan that enhances the effectiveness of a team.

This paper will assist the reader in determining if trained martial artists have the skills required to be an effective leader in the workplace. This paper attempts to answer three questions:

1. Why do people participate in the martial arts?
2. What skills do martial artists learn through karate training?
3. What skills transfer to the workplace?

In this paper, I review the theories and research related to martial arts training and leadership development, examine what goals are similar, and report the results of a survey conducted with adult students of the National Karate Schools of Minnesota. This research is intended to clarify the relationship between karate training and leadership development.

## Review of Relevant Literature and Research

This literature review summarizes research on the traits associated with those trained in the martial arts. Then, it examines the leadership theories or models that identify similar traits to be characteristic of effective leadership.

### *Martial Arts Training*

Morris (1996) developed a model labeled “Martial Artist Defensive Theory” (MADT) that contains several principles of martial arts training including security, health, self-esteem, self-control, integrity, humility, respect, assertiveness, knowledge, flexibility, inspiration and harmony. Morris contends that the “primary goal traditional to martial arts and represented by MADT model is to stop a threat early, while it is far away” (p. 5). The principles assist in the threat being averted so there is no escalation. By studying martial arts, the practitioner enhances the principles listed above, not just self-defense. The principles are part of the tradition of martial arts. The trained martial artist is taught the importance of self-control, humility, respect, integrity as well as all of the others. Martial arts training develops not only the body but also the mind. Morris focuses on having a secure environment. This environment is directly influenced by the leader or perceived leader. In martial arts training the practitioner learns how to block punches and kicks. In addition to knowing how to block, the student learns how to avoid being in a position of defending for one’s own safety and security.

Monahan (2007) compared martial arts to Friedrich Nietzsche’s “practice of self-overcoming” (p. 39). Monahan uses the concept of self-overcoming from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to discuss the similarity of martial arts and other “athletic endeavors” (p. 39). To grasp a better understanding of self-overcoming, Monahan states that:

Self-overcoming, then, is not something that one accomplishes. It is not an end state to be achieved.... The moment one gives up on this process or decides one has finished is the moment, for Nietzsche, when one ceases to be fully human in the most important sense – one has at this point abandoned the change and movement of becoming for the complacency, decadence, and ossification of being. (p. 41)

In martial arts, a student of any rank is not finished with training. The research has demonstrated that martial artists continue to strive for more to increase self-esteem and self-confidence. The martial artist is never finished training or pushing themselves for greater skill. This is demonstrated through the belt ranking system.

Kirkpatrick and Locke (2000) identify a similar characteristic that they call *drive*. The authors define drive as “achievement, motivation, ambition, energy, tenacity and initiative.” (p. 35). Drive is a trait that is developed through martial arts training as well as through other means, such as education or work experience. The authors continue by stating that there are “six traits on which leaders differ from nonleaders include drive, the desire to lead, honesty/integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business” (p. 35). They go on to describe leaders as, “tirelessly persistent” (p. 36), “ambitious, energetic, tenacious, and proactive” (p. 36) and “self-confidence” (p. 37). These words are positive when discussed within the perspective of leader’s theories. These same words can be used to describe trained martial artists.

McGee (2005) conducted a research study on leadership within the martial arts. The study measured the personality traits of “locus of control (LOC), need for cognition (NFC), goals and motivation (GM), and anxiety (ANX)” (p. 2) by having the participants complete a questionnaire. The study was conducted in cooperation with seven martial arts schools in Illinois

practicing various forms of karate. The forms of karate being practiced include Dentokan, Shotokan and Tae Kwon Do. The traits (LOC, NFC, GM, ANX) were assessed based on the skill level of the martial arts practitioner (student, instructor and assistant instructor). The study concluded that successful students of the martial arts have “learn[ed] from criticism, confidence is the byproduct, which in turn reduces anxieties” (p. 17). A statement made by the researcher summarizes why some students are successful in the martial arts and others are not. The phrase is “the cowardly never begin, and the weak die off” (p. 17). Successful martial artists are not afraid to work hard, learn from criticism, achieve goals and are not afraid to fail and try again. McGee further researched the difference between students and instructors. The differences between students and instructors, as indicated by the study, include locus of control, goals and motivation, and anxiety. The instructors ranked more positively on the each of these traits than the students.

King and Williams (1997) conducted a study addressing the issue of “goal orientation, success and ability, beliefs, and performance in novice martial arts students.” The researchers studied 68 community college students enrolled in a semester-long martial arts class. The study focused on the ego orientation and the mastery orientation of the martial arts. The study concluded that the students that participate because of wanting to attain a goal of mastering (mastery orientation) the martial arts skills will accomplish any task in addition to performing well. Students with ego orientation study the martial arts for the contest participation. The ego oriented student studies martial arts for “demonstrating superior ability and defeating others” (p. 398). This study demonstrates the commitment involved in martial arts training. With mastery orientation success was possible because the students enjoyed the class experience. The goal is set out in front of the student and the student reaches goals along the path to success. Students

with ego orientation had diminished interest when they were not successful in contests within the group.

Bell and Chang (2002) “analyze[d] the effects of Taekwondo training on personality” (p. 1). Bell and Chang reviewed several prior studies to summarize the effects. The article was of particular interest because it discusses a variety of personality traits including “enhanced self-esteem, self-concept, reduced aggressiveness, decreased anxiety, increase in personal independence” (p. 1), in addition to leadership. The researchers concluded that “The results indicated that the length of Taekwondo participation was associated with lower scores on Anxiety and with higher scores on Independence.” (p. 3). The association of these two by-products of martial arts training suggests “improved mental health” (p. 3).

Layton (1988) conducted a study comparing black belts to non-blacks in Shotokan karate. The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire was administered to 110 non black belt male students and 32 black belt male students. The personality questionnaire focused on “Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N), and Psychoticism (P).” (p. 67). The researcher concluded that the personality traits measured among the black belts had “no significant relationship between level of Dan [levels of black belt] grades and any of the three personality measures.” (p. 67). The researcher did conclude that there are significant variances among the non black belts and black belts. However, “the greater the Extraversion [among the non black belts], the greater the inclination for subjects to shift their attention to ventures new and so probably accounts, in part, for the tremendous dropout rate in Shotokan karate kyu [non black belt rank] grades” (p. 67). The study concluded that individuals that attain the rank of black belt are “calm and controlled individuals, being able to respond to situations in a relatively unworried and less emotional manner” (p. 218). The research does indicate that desirable traits are acquired by individuals

that participate in martial arts training. The individuals' proficiency in learning the desirable traits does vary according to level of training and/or length of training.

Hiner (2000) studied the psychological aspects of martial arts training. Hiner used research from Kroll and Crenshaw (1970) to substantiate his assertion that martial artists are more conscientious and self-sufficient than other sport practitioners. Hiner also used research conducted by Duthie et al. (1978) and Konzack and Boudreau (1984) to demonstrate that higher belt ranks demonstrate stronger positive personality traits such as self sufficiency, social desirability and emotional stability. Hiner used this background research to study "ego defense mechanisms" and found that "the older and higher belt ranked participants have developed more mature ego defense mechanisms." (p. 76). The ego defense mechanism is demonstrated in the actions and/or words used by the participant. As a student progresses in training, he/she is more able to express appropriate actions/words with regards to self-evaluation of skills learned/acquired. The study also examined aggression among karate practitioners. The study revealed that aggression was lower among the advanced participants, which can lead to better self-control.

Kurian and Caterino (1993) studied personality characteristics as it relates to Taekwondo training by administering the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaires. The researchers specifically focused on "the 16 PF second-order factors of Anxiety and Independence and on the derived score of Leadership." (p. 363). The researchers concluded that the longer an individual studied Taekwondo the "less anxious, more independent, and higher on potential for leadership [they were]" (1993, p. 364). They also concluded that "the length of Taekwondo participation is associated with lower scores on Anxiety and with higher scores on Independence." (p. 365).

Rothpearl (1980) conducted a study on personality traits in 152 martial artists by using the IPAT Anxiety Scale Questionnaire and the Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory. At first glance the reader may take the traits of anxiety and hostility as a strong negative. Rothpearl's study determined that martial artists are trained to handle their hostility and aggression in a variety of ways. Some martial artists prefer weapons while others will not use weapons to demonstrate hostility. The martial artists are trained to recognize the hostility, and to focus or re-route it in such a way that further conflict is avoided. The skill of avoiding conflict with aggression and hostility is a benefit to the trained martial artist. Martial art students are exposed to a variety of outlets for their aggression and, in turn, learn to use these outlets in situations outside of the martial arts classroom. The skill level of the student influences the outlet used with regards to hostile feelings and/or behavior. The study discovered that "(a) intermediate groups have a greater propensity for argumentative and assaultive expression than do either the beginning or advanced and (b) intermediate groups have a greater variety of methods of hostile expression than do either beginners or advanced groups" (p. 399-400). This conclusion indicates that the desired traits are not in the intermediate group but rather in the beginner or advanced.

Richman and Rehberg (1986) studied the development of self-esteem through the martial arts of 60 karate students by administering a "self-report questionnaire, the Karate Tournament Survey (KTS)." (p. 235). The survey was focusing on self-esteem and if it predicted which competitors would win a trophy versus those that competed but did not place. The researchers concluded that individuals at "an advanced level of training were more independent and self-confident than those with less training." (p. 237). However, the study also concluded that improvement in self-esteem only required a few months of training. The study also pointed out those individuals with higher self-esteem won more tournaments than those with a lower self-

esteem. The study concluded that “self-perceptions may be predictive of a martial artist’s success at tournaments.” (p. 238). The self-perception is directly related to self-esteem and in turn the higher the self-esteem the more predictive the individual for winning a trophy. “The trophy winners also rated themselves higher than the nonwinners on forms and the importance of karate in their lives” (p. 238).

These studies all focus on personality traits. Morris discussed principles of martial arts training and the principles are related to personality traits. The traits or qualities of a trained martial artist include self-control, which Morris lists this as a principle. Self-control progresses the longer an individual is training. Taken together, these studies indicate that martial arts training is associated with such qualities as a higher locus of control, goal orientation, and self-esteem, and lower anxiety and aggressiveness. It is also clear that higher levels of training, mastery rather than ego orientation, extroversion, lower neuroticism and less psychoticism have a positive impact on the effect of martial arts training. Martial arts’ training has a positive impact on character and skill development.

#### *Related Leadership Theories*

Several leadership theories discuss qualities similar to those that result from martial arts training. Morris refers to Stephen Covey’s (1989) work of the seven habits. The seven habits are classified in to three groups. Group one is labeled “Private Victory”. Private victory includes: “Be Proactive”, “Begin with the End in Mind” and “Put First Things First.” Group two is labeled “Public Victory”. Public victory includes: “Think Win/Win,” “Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood” and “Synergize.” The third group is “Renewal”. “Renewal” has one habit – the habit of “Sharpen the Saw.” According to Covey, an individual needs to first master the three habits of the private victory before going on the rest. After the individual has trained

themselves in the first three habits, he/she can go on to the next group of habits. The second group of habits involves learning interdependence. After all six habits have been attained; the individual then can take on habit seven. The final habit – Sharpening the Saw – encompasses all six habits. Sharpening the saw requires the individual to continually practice the habits, striving for continuous improvement. This habit requires the individual to continually improve themselves through learning and renewal with regards to health, mind and spirit.

Greenleaf (1998) wrote several essays regarding servant leadership. A simple definition of servant leadership is “the servant as leader” (p. xi). This theory relates to martial arts through the individuals actions within a situation or organization. In martial arts training a leader, generally the instructor will teach or lead a group. This person is the leader because they are “more self-assured, and more resourceful than most” (p. 114). This individual also has the ability or understanding of when it is appropriate to be the follower. The trained martial artist has learned by following and in turn has led others. A popular theme in training is “to help each other up the ladder.” Greenleaf sums up leadership in these words:

An essential element in this educational process...is our ability to teach our children that true leadership ultimately depends on the legitimacy of one’s appointment, election, or promotion to a position of authority and on one’s subsequent ability to validate or confirm this role by the quality of one’s performance, called “the authority of service.”  
(p. 281)

In this quote replace “children” with “martial arts students” or “co-workers” or “committee members”.

Goleman (1995) discusses impulse control. Goleman continues stating that “[t]here is perhaps no psychological skill more fundamental than resisting impulse. It is the root of all

emotional self-control” (p. 81). Self-control is a trait directly related to martial arts. Persons that display the skill of emotional self-control also have the skill to control impulse. For the trained martial artist this means they are able to control impulse. This will transfer to the workplace and will be demonstrated by an employee that does not have emotional outburst or react to an event before thinking through the potential consequences.

Clifton and Anderson (2001) studied several strengths that leaders have developed throughout their lifetime. The authors continue by listing “four key factors that will determine your achievements in academics, career, and beyond” (p. 145). The four key factors are:

1. Your beliefs about your strengths to achieve
2. How well you know, understand, and value your strengths
3. The extent to which you develop and apply your strengths
4. Your motivations, desires, and goal-setting practices (p. 145).

These factors apply to all strengths and are up to the individual to determine the level of achievement. An example of a strength that is appropriate for the martial artist as well as the leader is command. Command is defined as “You are not frightened by confrontation; rather, you know that confrontation is the first step toward resolution.” (p.38). The trained martial artists does not get frightened by confrontation, but rather knows how to react so the situation is resolved quickly and without injury to the victim. In a position of leadership, the leader cannot be afraid of confrontation. Confrontation is necessary in order to work towards a resolution.

Goleman (2002) discusses personal and social competencies in *Primal Leadership*. Personal competencies include self-awareness and self-management. Social competencies include social awareness and relationship management. Personal competencies are not designed just for the leader in the workplace but can also be applied to a trained martial artist. Self-

management includes “Self-confidence”, “Emotional self-control”, “Adaptability, Achievement” (p. 39) to list a few. In the realm of social competencies the leader or martial artist has the skill of “Conflict management”, “Empathy”, “Service”, “Teamwork and collaboration” (p. 39) to list a few.

All of the leadership theories discussed above, have several ideas that are in agreement. The leader is aware of others needs, provides direction and is aware of his or her own abilities. The leader is not afraid of confrontation but rather embraces it as a chance to grow. The same ideas can be applied to a trained martial artist. The trained martial artist continues to grow in his or her training. During the training, the individual is or becomes aware of the skills being learned, is taught how to embrace confrontation rather than avoiding or being a victim.

### Research Purpose and Questions

This research study examines people involved in the martial arts, the skills they have developed, and the degree to which they transfer the skills to the workplace. Prior research demonstrates that martial artists have learned respect, focus and how to lead. These traits are among several that are essential for an effective leader (Clifton & Anderson, 2004), including achiever, adaptability, competition and maximize.

The specific research questions that guided this study are:

1. Why do people participate in the martial arts?
2. What skills to martial artists learn through karate training?
3. What skills transfer to the workplace?

The results of this study will provide an insight to activities outside of work have an affect on performance at work. Martial arts' training requires active participation and gaining an understanding of how individuals' actions affect others as well as the individual.

This study is limited because of the small population of respondents participating. The results do provide an intriguing result and need for a larger scale study.

### Research Design

This quantitative study employs an online survey to collect demographic information and self assessments of leadership characteristics learned through martial arts participation and applied in the workplace. The survey was designed with the assistance of a pilot group of martial arts students at the National Karate School in Long Lake. The group was made up of a business owner, school director, financial professionals and mid-management employees. The group read the research proposal approved by the Institutional Review Board at Augsburg College. The group then brainstormed several statements that would assess martial arts skills as well as desired workplace skills. I then edited the statements to select a smaller representative sample of the whole. The group reviewed the final statement list and came to agreement that the survey adequately represented the groups' ideas as well as the intention of the study. This section summarizes the sample, measurement, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods.

#### *Sample*

The sample was 20 adults, active Minnesota National Karate Schools' students, who volunteered to participate in the study. School Directors gave the students the opportunity to sign-up in class for participation in the survey. They were instructed that participation was completely voluntary and they could leave the study at any time. The 20 participating subjects consisted of seven under the rank of black belt and thirteen that had attained the rank of black belt of varying degrees. Of the 20 respondents, 11 were male and 9 were female. See Appendix B for a complete summary of the demographics of the participants.

#### *Measurement*

The survey included basic demographic questions followed by several statements regarding leadership and martial arts training. The responses to these statements were on a

Likert-type scale (where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree).

Appendix A contains a summary listing of the survey statements and the demographic questions.

The statements were designed to assess what they learned or observed within the martial arts training. The respondents were also asked if the same skills were practiced within the workplace. Specific skills assessed include focus, self-esteem, self-control and goal attainment. These skills were chosen for the study because of the perceived strong desirability of employers to hire people with these skills.

#### *Data Collection Procedures*

The participants responded to the survey via the internet website [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). All potential students were sent an email invitation inviting them respond to the survey and including a link to the website address specifically designated for the survey. The respondents were given a timeframe for participation. After the deadline was met, the survey access was disconnected. The results were then downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet on my personal laptop computer.

#### *Data Analysis*

The data were first split into two sets: one for workplace skills and one for martial arts skills. The two sets of data were then analyzed using median, interquartile range and percentage of agree/strongly agree responses. These descriptive statistics are the most appropriate way to analyze ordinal data for a small sample like this. The median reflects the most typical response of participants and the interquartile range indicates the degree of variability from the median. The interquartile range uses quartile 3, the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile point, and quartile 1, the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile point. The result is the range for the middle 50% of the cases in the distribution. The interquartile range formula is used when data are highly skewed.

The percentage of respondents selecting agree and strongly agree for each statement was also calculated to determine how many participants agreed with the statements. The higher the percentage, the more respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

### Research Findings

The complete survey results are contained in Appendix B. This section summarizes the results, based on the three research questions.

The first research question is “Why do people participate in the martial arts?” Table 2 reports the median, interquartile range and percentages for each item related to this question.

Below are the reasons, arranged from highest to lowest level of agreement:

Table 1: Why People Participate in Martial Arts

Self-defense	100%
Physical fitness	95%
Improved flexibility or weight control	85%
Focus/concentration	80%
Social interaction with others	70%
Competitive	60%
Sense of community	60%

The most common answers to the question “Why do people participate in the martial arts?” include: self-defense, physical fitness, improved flexibility or weight control, focus/concentration, and social interaction with others. A majority also said that competition and sense of community were important reasons for participating.

The second research question is “What skills do martial artists learn through karate training?” Table 2 reports the median, interquartile range and percentages for each item related to this question. Below are the skills developed in karate, arranged from highest to lowest level of agreement:

Table 2: Skills Martial Artists Learn

Character development	95%
Improved self-image	95%
Respect of self and others.	85%
Ability to assert my opinion.	85%
Improved self-confidence	85%
Improved self-esteem	80%
Self-esteem	80%
Self-control.	75%

At least three-fourths of participants indicated that these eight characteristics were developed through martial arts training. Thus, character development, self-image, respect, assertiveness, self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-control all seem to be developed through martial arts training.

The third research question is “What skills transfer to the workplace?” Table 3 reports the median, interquartile range and percentages for each item related to this question. Below are the skills transferred to the workplace, arranged from highest to lowest level of agreement:

Table 3: Skills That Transfer to the Workplace

My feeling or sense of character development has transferred to my workplace.	95%
Since being trained in martial arts I maintain self-control in pressure situations at work.	80%
I mentor someone in the workplace.	75%
Martial arts training has helped me with the ability to stand up for my	75%

opinion respectfully.

Martial arts training has helped me with my ability to be a team leader.	70%
Martial arts training has influenced my ability to attain goals in the workplace.	70%
Individuals that attain their goals in martial arts are an indication that they will be a good leader in the workplace.	65%
This feeling or sense of community does transfer to my workplace.	65%
A good martial artist makes a good leader.	55%
At my workplace I draw on the skill of focus learned during martial arts training.	55%
My manager would agree that my training in martial arts has influenced my leadership skills in the workplace.	50%
I am able to focus/concentrate for longer periods of time at work since my participation in martial arts.	50%
Martial arts training has provided an environment of mentoring that has translated in to the workplace.	50%
A good leader makes a good martial artist.	20%

At least half of the respondents have transferred martial arts skills to the workplace. Nearly every respondent confirmed that their individual sense of character development has transferred from the martial arts training school to the workplace. A statistic that is interesting is that only 20% agreed with the statement “a good leader makes a good martial artist”, whereas 55% agreed

that “a good martial artist makes a good leader”. This clearly shows that not every leader can be a martial artist while a martial artist has the potential to be a good leader.

## Discussion of Results

In this section, I discuss the implications of the transfer of leadership qualities from karate to the workplace. I also discuss the limitations of this study and suggest further research.

### *Implications of the Transfer of Leadership Qualities from Karate to the Workplace*

Based on the self-reports of karate participants the following qualities are developed through karate and transferred to the workplace: character development, self control, self-esteem, respectful assertiveness, team leadership and mentoring, goal attainment, sense of community, and focus. Employers that are interviewing or hiring persons into leadership positions should highly consider individuals trained in the martial arts.

Character development is an important component of both leadership development and karate training. Covey's model of leadership includes character development at the core of the individual. The character development starts within the individual through the principles of personal vision, personal leadership and personal management. An individual's character development then becomes public through interpersonal leadership, empathic communication and creative cooperation. In Buckingham and Clifton's research, an individual's strengths make up the character of the person. Character development is how the individual develops his or her strengths. Self control is included in most of the leadership models. Most notably, Goleman includes it in his conceptualization of self management. Self control is developed in karate through practicing a variety of kicks and blocks with partners or through the practice of sparring. Self-control is taught in martial arts as a necessary skill. All martial artists have learned skills of how to disarm a bad guy including causing severe injury. In class, these skills are practiced without causing severe injury. This is where control comes in to the martial arts training. Students must use partners when practicing. If a student lacks control when practicing skills,

they will have a difficult time finding someone to be their partner. I myself have received low kicks and also a concussion. These were a result of my partner lacking self-control. In tournaments there is a rule, head contact is allowed but the head cannot be knocked off its axis. In other words, if the head snaps in any direction, the kick or punch lacked control. In a street fight, anything goes. The student must know the difference and have the self-control to know how to react to the situation. This self-control is also necessary in the workplace. In the workplace, we usually don't have to worry about physical harm but rather verbal harm. We all know of someone that has lacked all control in a heated moment and has said something that they later regretted. Martial artists are trained to have self-control so that reactions are controlled. This self-control is demonstrated by thinking before speaking, not raising the volume of the voice, or attacking the individual physically or verbally.

Self-esteem is foundational for both leadership and karate training. Self-esteem is closely related to self-confidence. Goleman (2002) defines self-confidence as "a sound sense of one's self-worth and capabilities" (p. 39). Clifton and Anderson (2001) define the strength of "self-assurance" as being "similar to self-confidence" (p. 69). Self-assurance includes "confidence not only in your abilities but in your judgment" (p. 69). A reason people participate in martial arts training is to improve self-esteem and/or self-confidence. I have personally witnessed students with little or no self-esteem grow and increase their self-esteem to the point of achieving the rank of black belt.

Respectful assertiveness is similar to Covey's (1989) notion of public victory, which includes think win-win, seek first to understand, then to be understood and synergize. In karate, the goal is to defend one's self and not to be the one attacking. Karate is for self-defense not offense. The trained martial artist desires to have the situation end with both parties happy with

the outcome or win-win. Another goal of karate is to learn to understand the other individual. This may include asking oneself “why does he/she feel this way?” The trained martial artist is taught to use words instead of fists. It is also an important part of Goleman’s (1995) conceptualization of social competence. Karate develops this trait through practicing a karate “face”. A karate “face” is one of determination and possibly even a little scary. The facial expression being used tells the other individual that they better not attack because I am ready to defend myself. The same is true for the karate student that is in a situation where he/she needs to quickly determine if he/she is in danger. National Karate Schools train students in character development because they don’t just focus on the physical skill but also on respect for self and each other. When an individual respects themselves, they in turn will respect others. This respect will be translated in to the workplace and be perceived as a character or leadership trait. In the workplace the employer desires an employee that is able to “grow” with the company. This often includes character development and the ability to take on more responsibility.

This survey indicates that achievement in martial arts does transfer to achievement in the workplace. One of the side effects of martial arts training is character development. As a student achieves higher ranks the individual is taught that they have to use these skills responsibly. An individual that boasts and becomes arrogant with regards to their skill will not achieve higher ranks or may not be respected by other martial artists.

Team leadership is also an important component in both leadership models and karate training. In Goleman’s model team leadership is defined as “teamwork and collaboration: Cooperation and team building” (p. 39). A successful leader has the skills to build a team which requires cooperation. Martial arts require the same skills. The student needs a leader to teach. If the student(s) don’t have a teacher, the skills cannot be learned effectively. Clifton and

Anderson define the strength “includer” as “you want to include people and make them feel part of the group” (p. 57). Martial arts are available to anyone and everyone that has a desire to learn the skills. To be able to be successful with the martial arts schools, the school director and/or instructors must have the strength of “includer”, otherwise individuals that don’t feel they are part of the group will stop training. Karate develops team leadership skills through team tournaments, leadership training programs and assisting with teaching.

Goal attainment is an important component of both leadership and karate training. In Buckingham and Clifton (2001), it is captured in the strengths of Achiever. Achiever is described as “a constant need for achievement” (p. 83). An individual “must achieve something tangible in order to feel good” (p. 83). In karate, this strength is developed through promotions of belt rank or helping another student learn a skill. Martial arts’ training involves attaining goals in select intervals. Everyone starts at the same position of white belt and earn higher ranking belts as training progresses and skills are proven to be learned and maintained. Most everyone finds satisfaction in achieving goals in whatever they do. In the workplace employers generally have a training plan or progression plan with select goals to be achieved. The trained martial artist is used to achieving goals; it is not difficult to transfer this to the workplace.

Sense of community is central to both leadership and karate training. Buckingham and Clifton (2001) also emphasize the importance of community through strengths such as inclusiveness and woo. An individual that has the strength of inclusiveness has a sense that everyone belongs to the group. The individual will do whatever it takes to make sure everyone is included in the process, game, event or group. The individual that has the strength of woo, makes friends with everyone. In a community, the members of the community want to feel included and be friends with all members. In karate, the community is the training school or

team. As a trained martial artist the individual has been encouraged by others in the community as well as has developed friendships with fellow students and even the instructors. The community feels like family.

Finally, focus is a core element of both leadership and karate training. One of Buckingham and Clifton's (2001) strengths is actually labeled Focus, and Covey's (1989) conceptualization of the private victory – be proactive, put first things first and begin with the end in mind - is also about focus. Buckingham and Clifton describe “focus” as an individual that “need[s] a clear destination.” (p. 99). The individual sets goals that “serve as your compass, helping you determine priorities and make the necessary corrections to get back on course.” (p. 99). The trained martial artist is able to focus and concentrate. In martial arts' training the individual learns focus. The farther along in the ranks, the more focused the individual. The skill of focus is demonstrated publicly at tournaments. In a large room full of hundreds or even thousands of people, the trained martial artist stays focused during their form or sparring competition. If the individual loses focus, he or she may drop their weapon, get hit or have to stop because they don't remember what comes next. In a real world situation of a fight, if the trained martial artist doesn't stay focused while defending him or herself, the attacker will win or at least will have the advantage.

This survey indicates that achievement in martial arts does transfer to achievement in the workplace. The qualities that transfer also appear in the major leadership models summarized in the literature review. Martial arts training in general, and karate training specifically, offer one way to develop some of the skills necessary to effectively lead others. Employers can safely consider training in the martial arts to be a positive indicator of a person's potential ability to lead in the workplace

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

This study and the research results are limited. The limitations include sample size, self-reports and the questionnaire.

The sample size is too small to generalize to the total population of martial arts students. Future research should be expanded to include all disciplines of martial arts training, for example, Korean traditional, Japanese traditional, and United States developed martial arts. The research should also include martial arts practitioners from across a larger demographic such as, all of Minnesota, the Midwest or the entire country.

While self-reports are the easiest way to collect this type of data, they are vulnerable on the issue of validity since participants are likely to respond in socially desirable ways. One alternative would be to have others such as a karate instructor and workplace manager assess the characteristics. This might give more valid information about their current characteristics. However, individuals are probably in the best position to assess how their competencies have changed over time and what contributed to the changes.

The survey was designed as an original work without using any proven or standardized forms or questions. It also did not capture the same skills for both what karate taught and what transferred to the workplace, making those comparisons difficult. Future research should focus

on a more complete testing of a specific model. For example, Goleman's model of emotional intelligence could provide the basis of an effective questionnaire. The questionnaire could track the personal as well as social competencies. The questionnaire could further breakdown the competencies in to specific domains such as emotional self-awareness, achievement, developing others and, teamwork and collaboration.

Future research could also compare martial artists and non-martial artists in the study. It could also compare the results of other forms of skill development such as other athletic training or leadership training to that of martial arts training. This would allow us to understand the relative significance of the impact of martial arts training.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

Demographics

Sex  
Age  
Years of Employment (since age 18)  
Employment position status  
Belt Level  
Years of Martial Arts training

Survey Statements

I participate in martial arts to be competitive.  
I participate in martial arts for physical fitness.  
I participate in martial arts to learn focus/concentration.  
I participate in martial arts to learn self-defense.  
I participate in martial arts for improved flexibility or weight control.  
I participate in martial arts for social interaction with others.  
I participate in martial arts for a sense of community.  
Martial arts training has influenced my ability to attain goals in the workplace.  
My manager would agree that my training in martial arts has influenced my leadership skills in the workplace.  
This feeling or sense of community does transfer to my workplace.  
Martial arts training influences my character development.  
My feeling or sense of character development has transferred to my workplace.  
I am able to focus/concentrate for longer periods of time at work since my participation in martial arts.  
I mentor someone in the workplace.  
Since being trained in martial arts, I maintain self-control in pressure situations at work.  
A good leader makes a good martial artist.  
A good martial artist makes a good leader.  
Individuals that attain their goals in martial arts are an indication that they will be a good leader in the workplace.  
I have noticed an increase in my self-esteem since starting martial arts training.  
At my workplace, I draw on the skill of focus learned during martial arts training.  
Martial arts training has helped me with self-control.  
The instructor/director has taught me respect of self and others.  
Martial arts training has helped me with my ability to be a team leader.  
Martial arts training has helped me with the ability to stand up for my opinion respectfully.  
Martial arts training has helped me to develop an ability to assert my opinion.  
Martial arts training has provided an environment of mentoring that has translated in to the workplace.

Participating in martial arts has helped me in attaining my personal goals in the workplace.

My self-esteem has improved since my participation in martial arts.

My self-confidence has improved since my participation in martial arts.

I have an improved self-image after receiving a promotion in martial arts.

## Appendix B: Survey Results

Table 1 – Summary of Survey Results

Demographic	Demographic Description	n	%
Sex	Male	11	55
	Female	9	45
Age	18 – 22 Years	4	20
	23 – 27 Years	1	5
	28 – 32 Years	0	0
	33 – 37 Years	3	15
	38 – 42 Years	2	10
	43 – 47 Years	5	25
	48 – 52 Years	3	15
	53 Years and Older	2	10
Years of Employment	0 – 5 Years	4	20
	5 – 10 Years	1	5
	10 – 15 Years	1	5
	15 – 20 Years	3	15
	20+ Years	11	55
Employment Position Status	Entrepreneur	2	10
	Executive Management: CEO, COO, CFO	2	10
	Middle Management: Director, Department Head	3	15
	Management: Supervisor, Lead	6	30
	Team Member	3	15
	Other (please specify)	4	20
Belt Level	Beginner: White, Orange, Gold	0	0
	Intermediate: Green, Purple, Blue	3	15
	Advanced: Red, Brown	4	20
	Black Belt	13	65
Years of Martial Arts training	0 – 1 Year	1	5
	1 – 2 Years	4	20
	2 – 3 Years	1	5
	3 – 4 Years	1	5
	4 Years or More	13	65

Table 2: Median, Interquartile Range, and Percentages for  
 “Why Do People Participate In Martial Arts Training?”

Survey Item	Median	Interquartile Range	% Agree or Strongly Agree
I participate in martial arts to be competitive	4	1.25	60
I participate in martial arts for physical fitness	5	.25	95
I participate in martial arts to learn focus/concentration	4	1.00	80
I participate in martial arts to learn self-defense	4	1.00	100
I participate in martial arts for improved flexibility or weight control	5	1.00	85
I participate in martial arts for social interaction with others	4	1.00	70
I participate in martial arts for a sense of community	4	1.00	60

Values Assigned to Responses (for Median calculation): 1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Table 3: Median, Interquartile Range, and Percentages for  
 “What Skills Do Martial Artists Learn Through Karate Training?”

Survey Item	Median	Interquartile Range	% Agree or Strongly Agree
Martial arts training influences my character development.	4	1.00	95
I have noticed an increase in my self-esteem since starting martial arts training.	4	.25	80
Martial arts training has helped me with self-control.	4	.25	75
The instructor/director has taught me respect of self and others.	4	1.00	85
Martial arts training has helped me to develop an ability to assert my opinion.	4	1.00	85
My self-esteem has improved since my participation in martial arts.	4	1.00	80
My self-confidence has improved since my participation in martial arts.	4	1.00	85
I have an improved self-image after receiving a promotion in martial arts.	4	1.00	95

Values Assigned to Responses (for Median calculation):

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Table 4: Median, Interquartile Range, and Percentages for Workplace Skills

Survey Item	Median	Interquartile Range	% Agree or Strongly Agree
Martial arts training has influenced my ability to attain goals in the workplace.	4	1.00	70
My manager would agree that my training in martial arts has influenced my leadership skills in the workplace.	4	1.00	50
This feeling or sense of community does transfer to my workplace.	4	1.00	65
My feeling or sense of character development has transferred to my workplace.	4	1.00	95
I am able to focus/concentrate for longer periods of time at work since my participation in martial arts.	4	1.00	50
I mentor someone in the workplace.	4	0.50	75
Since being trained in martial arts I maintain self-control in pressure situations at work.	4	0.00	80
A good leader makes a good martial artist.	3	0.00	20
A good martial artist makes a good leader.	4	2.00	55
Individuals that attain their goals in martial arts are an indication that they will be a good leader in the workplace.	4	1.00	65
At my workplace I draw on the skill of focus learned during martial arts training.	4	1.00	55
Martial arts training has helped me with my ability to be a team leader.	4	1.00	70
Martial arts training has helped me with the ability to stand up for my opinion respectfully.	4	1.00	75
Martial arts training has provided an environment of mentoring that has translated in to the workplace.	4	1.00	50

Participating in martial arts has helped me in attaining my personal goals in the workplace.	4	1.00	65
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