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Hapkido: Korean martial art

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Abstract

Background & Study Aim. *Hapkido* is Korean martial art. A conditioning and development of coordination motor abilities are valuable for citizens in the contemporary society. The aim of our short communication is related to effects of *hapkido* training on motivation and some aspects of coordination motor abilities in participants. We would like present *hapkido* as a physical activity which can be trained as an alternative syllabus in physical education at preliminary school.

Material and Methods: Some original research findings about incentives in study 1 [1] and effects of *hapkido* training on our pupils in study 2 [2] were synthesized. The syllabus of *hapkido* for students of preliminary school is shortly characterized [3].

Results: Study 1. Health in the hierarchy of incentives of persons who train *hapkido* [1]

The purpose of this study was to determine the motivation of persons practicing *hapkido* as well as the importance for them to maintain health and to improve their age and gender related physical fitness. The survey was conducted among 60 persons, including 21 girls and women as well as 39 boys and men. Due to a wide range variability of the subjects' ages, they were divided into three categories: the younger – to 13 years ($n = 33$); adolescent – between 13 -18 years ($n = 17$); and older one – above 18 years of age ($n = 10$).

The questionnaire of motivation that was used [4] consisted of 27 questions concerning nine motives, why those children, youngsters and adults engaged in physical activities. The tested normality of distribution was taken into account during the statistical study as well as the mean values and measures of variation were computed and compared for every motivational factor in those age groups. The following conclusions were drawn: 1) Attainment of fitness and good health were the strongest incentive regardless of the age and gender of the people who trained *hapkido*, 2) The gender of the persons practicing *hapkido* did not bear on the hierarchy and intensity of motives, 3) The motivation of the people who practiced *hapkido* depended essentially on age. The factors related to extrinsic success, intrinsic success and ambition for power and domination were higher in the youngest group.

Study 2. Effectiveness of exercises used during Hapkido recreational and sport camp [2]

We have assumed that the training methods applied at the two-week *hapkido* camp for boys should cause beneficial changes regarding body adaptation to effort as well as coordination and motor skills. The participants of the sports and recreation *hapkido* camp have taken part in the physical activity programme which included: hiking, general physical exercises as well as agility and acrobatic techniques, games and recreation activities both on land and water, self-defence exercises in pairs (techniques required for the yellow, green, blue and black belt according to European Hapkido Alliance), formal *hapkido* techniques performed individually and in groups.

Body height in the examined group ($n = 25$) was very different (ranging from 137 to 190.5cm, the average height was 160.3cm), which was connected with the boys' ages (9-16, the average age was 13). Therefore, the campers were divided into two age groups i.e. 9-12 year-olds and 13-16 year-olds (there were only two 16-year-old boys). Every day during the morning training, which lasted for about 30 min., *bong hyung* stick forms were mostly performed.

During the camp (on the second and the thirteenth day) we carried out the examination that included: measuring of body weight (electronic scale) and height (anthropometer), Ruffier-Dikson (RD) test, which involves performing 30 knee bendings in 45 s (heart rate was measured before, just after the effort and after 1 min. break (Polar, Finland) and computer tests evaluating coordination skills [5]. After the results had been standardized, the individual profiles were worked out. A t-Student test for paired variables was then applied to evaluate the statistical significance of differences ($p < 0.05$) between the results of the measurements at the beginning and at the end of the camp.

The results at the beginning of the camp showed that seven students had poor physical efficiency, sixteen – average and two – good. There were no substantial statistical changes neither in the body weight nor in the RD rate of adopting to effort. In some cases, however, increase

and in some cases decrease in body weight and the above mentioned RD rate was noticed. These results are likely to be connected with the different levels of commitment to trainings at the camp. Comparison of the average results of the computer tests evaluating different aspects of coordination, which were carried out at the beginning and at the end of the camp, showed that there were significant betterment in orientation in space as well as in the ability to divide attention. The performed exercises had actually the biggest influence on the increase of the students' ability to divide attention ($t = -10.985$; $p < 0.001$). However, we have not noticed any significant changes in simple reaction time, complex reaction time or sense of direction ($p < 0.05$). The hypothesis about the increase of body adaptation to endurance effort has not been completely proved (because of too short time). In conclusion, what has been acknowledged is that attending a well-organized *hapkido* camp for boys in their growth period brought beneficial changes in coordination and motor skills.

Hapkido martial art as an alternative for conventional physical and health education, and sport in schools

In our country, alternative forms of physical education in schools are gaining more attention, which is proved by the author's program of physical education teaching based on hapkido martial art approved by the Ministry of Education and Sport [3]. The results of another investigation constitute additional argument for health professionals, who should be aware that there are certain alternative methods to traditional exercise which can increase physical fitness and health of the middle-aged population [6].

In the final remark we would like to state, that a construct *Hap* – coordination, *Ki* – internal energy and *Do* – moral way is a good prophylactic mean for people who present sedentary style of life. The knowledge summarized here can be useful during *Health by Martial Arts Gala Congress Gala* under the **World Congress on Health and Martial Arts in Interdisciplinary Approach** in which our Hapkido Demonstration Team gave show of their unique skills (please see Figs.1-10, Piotr Feczko with permission, and Figs. 11-13 from archives of European Hapkido Alliance).

Key words: education • health • motivation • motor abilities • self-defence

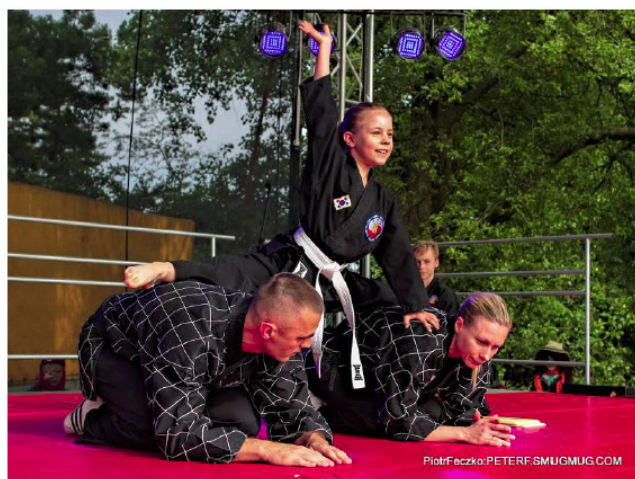


Fig.1. Family training for fun



Fig.2. Instructors in action using bamboo sword



Fig.3. Instructors using Fan as a weapon in self-defense

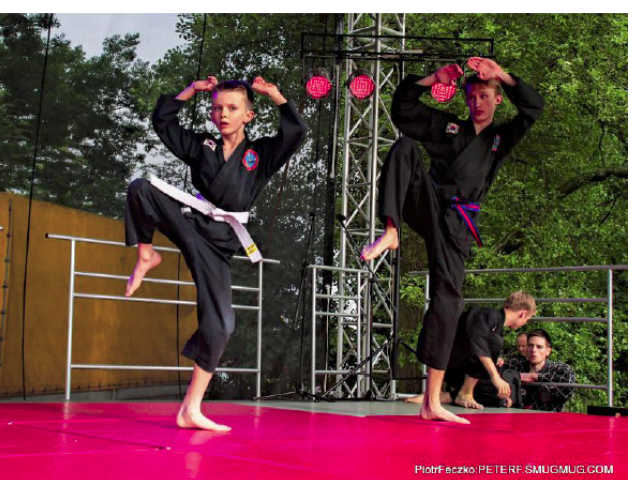


Fig.5. Fragment of formal exercise beneficial for balance mastering



Fig.6. Just before breakfall



Fig.7. Formal exercise in pair using wooden swords



Fig.8. Self-defence



Fig. 9. Soft landing after *hapkido* throw execution



Fig.10. Self defense



Fig.11. Hapkido group with flags in background



Fig. 12. Sam Plumb in action



Fig.13. Hapkido black belts / instructors during International Seminar

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