

Evolved to Modern Martial Art: How Taekwondo Successfully Captures Diverse Groups Across Age and Culture

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Abstract

In July 2023, it was estimated that there are about 15,000 Taekwondo gyms in the United States and around 2.94 million people who are training in the Korean martial arts, taking root across the world; as of November 2023, this number skyrocketed to 200 million people. Taekwondo is also one of the few martial arts that is an official Olympic sport. But how did these various countries and people around the world, even the Olympics, come to adopt Korea's traditional martial art, Taekwondo? This study is intended to assess the evolution of Taekwondo as I find that this modern martial art has successfully captured the attention of people from different age groups and regions around the world. By leveraging the global influence of Korean culture, social media, the traditional values of modern performance, an involvement of new aesthetics, and being the only martial art in the Olympics, I observe that Taekwondo has successfully become a universal practice that represents achievement, discipline, and pride, producing an overall positive impact on its practitioners. By developing the Clear Progression System, Taekwondo continues to develop a Structured Competitive Format that anyone can learn. In order to verify my hypothesis, I will utilize a research method that collects, organizes, and analyzes data that refers to existing records and past studies on Taekwondo.

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I. Introduction

Originating from Korea, Taekwondo has become the most practiced martial art in the United States and across the world to transcend cultural and generational lines. However, it begs the question of how Taekwondo has been able to achieve worldwide recognition and its current

popularity; therefore, I identify various factors that contribute to Taekwondo's global acclaim. By examining how the Korean traditional martial art has been able to capture the attention of people from all age groups and cultures, I observe methods in which Taekwondo has been able to maintain its strong influence.

(Thesis Statement: By leveraging the global influence of Korean culture, social media, the traditional values of modern performance, an involvement of new aesthetics, and being the only martial art in the Olympics, I observe that Taekwondo has successfully become a universal practice that represents achievement, discipline, and pride, having an overall positive impact on its practitioners. By developing the Clear Progression System, Taekwondo continues to develop a Structured Competitive Format that anyone can learn.)

II. Reaching New Audiences: Taekwondo's Global Influence Through Social Media

A. Connection to K-Culture

Taekwondo has benefitted from the global success of Korean media, like K-pop (e.g. BTS) and K-dramas, creating a positive perception of Korean culture in other countries. Such an integration of Korean culture has enhanced Taekwondo's relevance; therefore, it has piqued the interest of younger generations.

In their article, "Kim Chi, K-Pop, and Taekwondo: The Nationalization of South Korean Martial Arts," John Forrest and Badger Forrest-Blincoe found that Taekwondo in Korea has evolved throughout time. [1] They argue that the Korean martial art has had a unique development that parallels foreigners attending K-Pop concerts and eating kimchi; Taekwondo has accumulated export value as a symbol for national identity and individuality. [1] In another article, "Exploring Movement Culture's Perception Based on Semantic Network Analysis: Focusing on K-pop Dance and Taekwondo Performance," Jin-Ho Shin and Hye-Ryeon Kim investigate Taekwondo through a focus on semantic network analysis; they confirm that the idea of "movement," "Korea," and "good" are apparent in the recognition of Taekwondo as a performance. [2] In an additional study conducted by Jong-beom Park and Sung-gul Hong, they explore how K-sports are a driving force and impact the globalization process; [3] Taekwondo is described as a cultural endeavor within the broader scheme of globalization and, through a

historical lens, they find that Taekwondo has an influence on international sports and established itself as a major axis of private diplomacy. [3]

B. Modern Performance Elements

Taekwondo demonstrations often include dynamic choreography, graphic art, and music; such performances are typically inspired by visuals that are found in science fiction and action movies, with some examples including explosive kicks, intricate forms, and dramatic effects.

For people who are unfamiliar with Taekwondo, the martial art's demonstrations are a useful marketing tactic. In Dong-Hyun Yoo's research in his paper, "A Study Defining the Necessities of Taekwondo Demonstration by the Perceptions of Taekwondo Majored Undergraduates Through Comparing Before & After Participation in the United States' Internship Program," they find that overseas participants with Taekwondo experience were eligible for the U.S. internship program. They claim that in order to become an instructor at a famous Taekwondo gym in America, an instructor must be able to perform various demonstrations; [4] an instructor must also help market Taekwondo through demonstrations as they are essential for entering the global market. [4] In "Taekwondo Demonstration Culture as a New Hallyu Content: Exploring Success Factors for Globalization, Kyung-Sang Kwon and Heon-Su Gwon state that Taekwondo's globalization, in addition to its adoption as an official Olympic sport, is more attributed to the Korean martial art's spirit rather than its technology; [5] Taekwondo is practiced all around world as a lifestyle sport that has strong values. [5] Kwon and Gwon also find that Taekwondo demonstrations are gradually becoming more public-friendly due to its common values within society. [5] Performances that include explosive kicks and have dramatic effects are in line with the historical development of Korea's Taekwondo demonstration team; in a study on the demonstration team by Kwon Jang, he observes how such performances begin with the Korean army's Taekwondo demonstration team, the Taekwondo Goodwill ambassadors, and the Kukkiwon Taekwondo demonstration team; [6] these teams play a decisive role in the globalization of Taekwondo, spreading the core concepts of the martial art around the world. [6]

In Heock-Kyu Choi's paper, "Analysis and Activation Plan of Taekwondo Performance Culture According to Taekwondo Promotion Policy," they comprehend the impact of the martial art's performance policy on its performance culture by analyzing the current state of

Taekwondo's performance culture and presenting a plan to revitalize it through strengthening performances and its content while also strengthening professional organization and human resource activities. [7]

C. Use of Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms, like Youtube and Instagram, have provided an entryway into Taekwondo. Viral videos of people's performances provide entertainment for its viewers while also highlighting the martial art's core principles. The Five Tenets of Taekwondo (courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit) ensure that performances are grounded in strong values that stem from Korean tradition.

As individuals engage with Taekwondo as a cultural tradition, it enables a mutual understanding and open communication between instructors and practitioners that makes the Korean martial art easily accessible. According to the article, "Philosophical Society Communication and Taekwondo," Hae-Duk Kim engages with the knowledge that proprietary claims of Taekwondo's Communication involve an event of propositional truth, normative legitimacy, or subjective truth and can become a symbolic pattern through speech (sports media). [8] In another study, "The Effect of Taekwondo Leaders' Social Media Marketing on Leader Image and Recommendation Intention, conducted by Young-Jin Choi and Dae-Geun Kim, they observed that the social media marketing of Taekwondo instructors had a positive influence on the leaders' image in terms of accessibility, interactivity, reliability, playfulness, and information provision. [9] People who participate in the Taekwondo championship also actively use social media. Carmen Sarah Einsle and Georgie Escalera Izquierdo also find that social networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter, are often motivational since they are a source of social interaction and are shown to have a positive impact on participants. [10] Hong Junki's "Study on the Public Relation Strategy of Taekwondowon Through Social Media" analyzes Facebook as the key social media for the Taekwondo Promotion Foundation. [11] Based on interviews they conducted on the key personnel's perceptions, Junki describes how Taekwondowon can pull in more participants through promotional strategy; [11] they argue that there is validity in improving the public image of Taekwondowon and suggest the need for operational changes that

take social media, publicity, skilled personnel, and an enhancement of national prestige through revitalizing Taekwondowon's tourism into account. [11]

D. Impact on Audience Engagement

In terms of attracting new participants to Taekwondo, its modern aesthetic and spectacular performances often help bring in young audiences.

Due to its popularity, there have been studies on the psychosocial impact of Taekwondo on its practitioners. In the article, "The Psychosocial Effects of Taekwondo Training: A Meta-Analysis" by Yu-Jin Kim, Seung-Hui Baek, Jong-Beom Park, Sang-Hwan Choi, Jae-Don Lee and Sang-Seok Nam, they find that training in Taekwondo has an effect on the social skills, etiquette, personality, and school life of its participants through a systemic evaluation; [12] the results showed that the martial art has a positive impact. There is an increase in "overseas Taekwondo practitioners' awareness of the effects of Taekwondo training and [an additional] interest in Korean culture," showing that people all over the world are interacting with Korean culture (Kim et al.)

There are many methods that are used to introduce Taekwondo to new audiences, like through the International Taekwondo Event and the development of the "poomsae" (Taekwondo Freestyle Poomsae Competition). In the paper, "Relationship among the Motivation of Foreign Participants in International Taekwondo Event Image, and Participation Satisfaction" by Dae-Seob An, Kwang-Sun Moon, Min-Yeong Kang and Chun-Ho Yang, they confirm that the cultural experience and socialization of Taekwondo, has a positive effect on the martial art's dynamic and emotional image. [14] The article, "Poomsae Players' Perception and Improvement of Taekwondo Freestyle Poomsae Competition," delves into the barriers of scoring technology by claiming that they should be lowered; Its authors, Kwangyoung Park and Jaehwan Jeong, also advocate for the cultivation of a freestyle poomsae stadium culture, like including acrobatic and gymnastics and not just traditional movements, believing that it would increase the participation rate and encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to take part. [15]

I make various observations about social media's effect on Taekwondo's popularity. It rides the wave of K-culture, while integrating K-sports, to become a symbol of the Korean national identity. Taekwondo's demonstration teams have also helped introduce modern

performing arts into the traditional martial arts that then strengthen its content, professional organizations, and human resources to revitalize Taekwondo's popularity ("Analysis and Activation plan"); this is further recognized in its involvement as an officially recognized sport in the 2000 Olympics, granting people all around the world the opportunity to engage with Taekwondo for the first time. The Korean martial art over time has been more flexible in its application, now including poomsae and other performances. Social media has become especially useful in promoting Taekwondo to people of differing backgrounds and has gained a positive public perception (Shin and Kim). Taekwondo has had a positive effect on its participants through its technical aspects but also its education on Korean tradition.

III. Accessibility and Achievement: Taekwondo's Structured Curriculum

A. Clear Progression System

In Taekwondo, the ranking system provides incremental milestones that build upon one another. For example, one can elevate from a white belt to a black belt and so forth to demonstrate a recognition of an individual's gradual improvement.

The Korean martial art uses a systematic arrangement and progression that centers around Korea's Kukkiwon that responds to the globalization of Taekwondo, due to its status as an official Olympic sport, and the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) system; as a result, standard training courses have been developed, promotional and pum/dan evaluation standards have been established, and Taekwondo's competition rules have been improved.

In the article, "Governance in World Taekwondo Federation (WTF): Evaluation of Governance System of WTF Before and After 2004," Hichem Ayoun confirms that before 2004, WTF played a large role in the global spread of Taekwondo and its recognition as an Olympic sport, illustrating how WTF helped improve Taekwondo post-2004. [16] However, in the article, "Development of Standard Taekwondo Curriculum and Problems to be Overcome" by Cheon-Taik Son, they explain that Taekwondo should be taught through a theoretical process that allows for each Taekwondo instructor to offer a different curriculum that is organized by composition principles and permit the flexibility to evaluate the goals of Taekwondo through an integrated approach. [17] In another study, "An Analysis of the Basis for the Evaluation of Taekwondo Promotion Testing for Dan Poom Levels from the Judge's Point of View," Hyung-

Jun Noh and Young-Rim Lee state that review practitioners should be able to evaluate the criteria for promotional tests and present the essential skills in order to advance to the next level. [18] By using artificial intelligence (AI), Ji Yong Lee has conducted research on the evaluation standards of Taekwondo; they confirm that the Taekwondo poomsae evaluation tool has been modeled after the Taekwondo poomsae movement recognition algorithm. Lee's study finds that AI is capable of providing an objective judgement on Taekwondo poomsae evaluation websites. [19] In regards to the "Taekwondo Standard Curriculum" that was created by Kukkiwon and the Korea Taekwondo Association in 2019, it categorized the subjects for non-poom/dan holders and poom/dan holders into required and elective subjects. [20] Another article, "A Study on Taekwondo Curriculum in the United States" by Seongkon Choi, observes that a more promotional approach to the standard curriculum should be integrated by requiring students to complete a certain number of training hours. [20]

B. Inclusivity Across Age Groups

Many Taekwondo programs are tailored to children, teens, and adults that emphasize physical fitness, mental discipline, and personal growth. Such programs are accessible through dojangs (training centers) that can be found in urban and suburban areas.

Mijae Gil studied the level of training satisfaction at dojangs. [21] They conclude that there is correlation between satisfaction and a continuation of training that implements a Taekwondo training program; the satisfaction of training had a positive result on the continuation of training. [21] The body strength and leadership required of Taekwondo also had a positive effect on each lower grade factor, regarding the continuation of training; in addition, a practitioner's personality in relation to the will of recommendation and conveying, had a positive effect. [21]

Studies show that Taekwondo benefits people of all backgrounds. In the article, "A Study on Youth TAEKWONDO Revitalization Plan" by Sangsoo Park, they find that there is an increase in the younger generations' participation in Taekwondo. [22] San-Jin Kim's book, *The Influence of Taekwondo Training on Elementary Students' Sociality, Personality and Life Attitude*, discusses how Taekwondo instructors should involve educational practices that improve their students' social skills, personality, and attitude towards life. [23] Jae-Hyeong Jeong, in

“Research on Relationship between Leadership and Community Spirit through Taekwondo Training of Elementary School Students,” observes how positive character can be fostered through the proper education and cultivation of leadership qualities in Taekwondo gyms. [24] In “The Structural Relationships of High School Taekwondo Athletes' Sports Participation Motivation, Achievement Goal Orientation and Achievement Behavior,” Young-Jin Lim argues that by increasing skill development and an emphasis on goals that are oriented to the task and ego, it can foster a sense of accomplishment and an increase in enjoyment, socialization, health, and physical fitness for specifically high schoolers who participate in Taekwondo. [25] For Kimberly Petrovic’s essay, “The Benefits of Taekwondo Training for Undergraduate Students: A Phenomenological Study,” she finds that college students are able to overcome their stress through Taekwondo training, improving their mental, spiritual, and physical well-being. [26] According to Young Wook Kim, Taekwondo can impact the “mental health, leisure satisfaction, and self-respect” of the elderly as well, providing them stability. [27] In regards to women, Valerie Ann Cholett, in her study of how Taekwondo impacts women, observes that women develop an embodied identity that translates into a new perception of the world, a greater embodied learning due to reflection and physical activity, and a sense of empowerment in her gender. [28]

C. Connection to the Five Tenets

The Five Tenets of Taekwondo:

- Courtesy: Practitioners respect their instructors, peers, and the martial art itself
- Integrity: Individuals are committed to improving their skills at every level
- Perseverance: Students are encouraged to overcome challenges
- Self-Control: Taekwondo teaches focus, discipline, and emotional regulation
- Indomitable Spirit: One is instilled with courage and resilience as they improve

In the paper, “Transition of Taekwondo Education Discourse for Culturalism,” Dong-Sik Kim and Yong-Kyu Chang detect a transition in the type of education Taekwondo provides, shifting from a training-centered, physical, education to an education of character.[29] In an era of cultural power, it becomes a source of soft power; [29] Taekwondo’s cultural value stems from its soft power, preserving its individual culture in a multicultural world. [29] Byung-Kwan Ryoo in his article, “Application of Taekwondo Spirit as a Means of Mental Education,” mentions that Taekwondo’s promotional test should assess mindset, as well as skills, and provide

a mental education. [30] For Seok Wang Jang, he summarizes, in his research on the Taekwondo spirit, that it is a martial art that is meant to train both the mind and body [31]; he believes that it is a sport that applies the skills, tradition, and creativity of Korea. [31] Jang also states Taekwondo provides a hobby to improve one's lifestyle as long as one continues to apply what the Taekwondo spirit represents. [31] A further study on the internationalization of the Taekwondo Spirit, conducted by Only Jeon and Nan-Hee Jeon, evaluates how the spirit of Taekwondo influences its practitioners. [32] Based on the VIA classification system, they find that the Taekwondo spirit helps monitor and evaluate training, character development, and self-awareness. [32] Overall, they argue that the prominent Korean spirit, incorporated into Taekwondo, highlights the uniqueness of their martial arts that many people are attracted to. [32]

D. Comparison to Other Martial Arts:

Unlike other martial arts, Taekwondo celebrates early achievements for its practitioners, granting new students a sense of pride and motivation.

In Taekyung Yang's research, "Cultural Anthropological Study for the Identity of Taekwondo: Comparative common factors between Asian martial arts and Taekwondo," he confirms that some facets of Taekwondo are based on Korean philosophise of poomsae, like taegeuk, palgwae, sunbae, tebek, hansu, and sipjangsaeng, and others take on a more modern form, like Olympic style competition, acrobatic movement, and demonstration kicks. [33] Taekwondo is a culmination of Asian philosophy, becoming a pursuit of truth through body and mind training. [33] In another article, "A Comparative Study on Martial Arts Unit System in 3 East Asian Countries," Yao Lingzi and Jung-Wook Yoon state that the development of the unit system is Korea's Taekwondo and Japan's Karate is almost complete and plays a role in their acceptance in the Olympics. [34] In contrast, the unit system of China's Wushu has been implemented for a short period of time and was still in development [34]; therefore, it still required improvement. [34] Karate and Wushu take on more forms than Taekwondo, with Wushu specifically involving more complicated techniques than both Karate and Taekwondo. [34] However, the Taekwondo "Dan" certificate, awarded by Kukkiwon, has been universally recognized by the international community. [34] In her paper, "Exploring the Development Path of Chinese Martial Arts Through the Experience of Internationalization of Taekwondo in

Korea,” Kang Ya-feng believes that China’s martial arts needs to establish a dedicated organization, like what happened with Taekwondo, that promotes content about martial arts and establishes a standard education system with professional instructors. [35]

By analyzing the curriculum and accessibility of Taekwondo, I come to various conclusions. Considering its history, Taekwondo has been established through a systemic governance that centers around its origins in Kukkiwon and has been further developed by the WTF in accordance with the Olympics; However, the art of Taekwondo has continued to evolve (Ayouun). The educational curriculum and promotion regulations of the Korean martial art have also progressed with the assistance of systematic research (Noh et al.); such systematic Taekwondo programs help practitioners research high levels of training satisfaction and an increase in their physical strength, leadership, and personality development (Gil); the Taekwondo spirit contributes to further emphasizes these benefits and helps bring attention to Taekwondo as apart of Korean culture (Kim et al.). In addition, Taekwondo training provides a variety of positive effects across all age groups and genders. Additionally, Taekwondo became a mental education and through the incorporation of Asian philosophy, it has progressed into pursuit of truth through the exercise of mind and body (Yang). In comparison to other East Asian martial arts, Taekwondo offers a unique practice and history.

IV. Pride and Global Recognition: Taekwondo as the Only Olympic Martial Art

A. Historical Significance

Taekwondo debuted as a demonstration sport in 1988 at the Seoul Olympics and became an official Olympic sport in 2000 at the Sydney Olympics. As a result, Taekwondo became a way of promoting and representing Korean culture.

In Dimitar Avramov’s study, “Investigation into the Origin and Evolution of Modern Taekwondo,” he notes that Taekwondo has roots in the ancient kingdoms that resided on the Korean peninsula; however, more recent research disprove Avramov with there being no evidence that prove there a connection between Taekwondo and the ancient martial arts of Korea. [36] Therefore, Taekwondo takes on a unique form, as its own sport, in the Olympics. [36] According to Jang-Ho Shin’s research, “The Study of Taekwondo’s Modernization,” he

states that ever since the founding of Kukkiwon in 1972, Taekwondo has evolved in its rules, regulations, language, global influence, and belt distribution. [37] In a study on the cultural anthropology of Taekwondo, Hak-Duk Kim examines the transformation of essential human physical activity into sports through the Western civilization theory and that modern sports are a product of civilization [38]; therefore, Kim thinks that Taekwondo shares similarities with modern sports due to its role in developing Korean civilization. Taekwondo's meaning continues to shift based on the sporting characteristics that modern society produces, suggesting that the martial art can be a lifestyle sport. [38] In a different article, "Identification of Orientalism in Globalizing Taekwondo – Focused on the Taekwondo Discourses in Black Belt," JeHoon Sung details the innate orientalism that was apart of Taekwondo becoming a sport, its adoption in the Olympics, and its globalization. [39] Taekwondo was converted into a Western-style sport that centered around sparring matches and endured numerous processes of professionalization, secularization, bureaucratization, and rationalization [39]; it adopted the elements of Western sports and reached its height of popularity when it became an Olympic sport. [39] In his article, Jiang Yangwei describes Taekwondo becoming an Olympic sport and mentions how its recognition began to alter the Korean martial art; it altered Taekwondo's sports system, content, and format, assimilating into culture of the Olympics. It was originally perceived as a demonstration sport but later became an official Olympic sport. Young Won Lee performed a study on Taekwondo's achievements in the Olympics and delved into how it went from an international sport, to a global sport. [41] The martial art represented Korea and concrete measures were taken to ensure its survival in the Tokyo Olympics where Korea was able to advance to the Olympic games for the sixth time in a row, playing a big role in the promotion of Taekwondo. [41]

B. Structured Competitive Format:

Taekwondo prioritizes skill, precision, and strategy in its rules and scoring system, combining both traditional techniques with the modern standards for competitions.

In Moo-Hyun Lee's article, "Transitional Process of Taekwondo Match as Olympic Official Event," they argue that the scoring of Taekwondo matches at the Sydney Olympics was not objective, making it difficult for spectators to comprehend what was happening and resulted in a lack of interest. [42] Eventually, the WTF revised the competition rules in 2001 that resulted in a different scoring system and competition operation. [42] In the paper, "Phenomenological Discussion on Changes in Taekwondo Competition," Ji-Hyuk Kim explores how aspects of Taekwondo have changed through qualitative research methods. [43] Kim discusses how various revisions have been made to Taekwondo's rules in order to mediate the more problematic aspects of competitions in order to attract more Taekwondo enthusiasts. [43] In the article, "Analysis of the Taekwondo Competition Results Based on the Players Who Gained First Point" by Wan-Soo Kim and Dae-Seung Yang, they confirm that these revision had a positive impact on viewers' interests and led to an increase in Taekwondo's appeal. [44]. In addition, in TaeHoom Kim's essay on the Taekwondo revision, he concludes that revisions to Taekwondo competitions alleviated the obstacles that stood in the way of Taekwondo's development [45]; as the sport continues to change, competitions will gradually become more challenging and exciting for viewers. [45]

C. Impact on Global Popularity:

Taekwondo's recognition as an Olympic sport helped attract new athletes and spectators, all across the world, even inspiring young athletes to pursue Taekwondo. However, the Korean martial art affects more than the international sports scene, but broader society as well.

In Yong-Woo Lee and Won-Mi Lee's article, "Topography and Flow of Taekwondo Research in the Sociology of Sports," they examine Taekwondo as a research trend in the sociology of sports and find that 151 out of 411 research papers on Taekwondo were centered around social change and systems, socialization, subculture, politics, economy, and organizational management, confirming that research related to Taekwondo is present within the field of sociology. [46] In addition, Kimmo Rauhala specifically studies Taekwondo's economic impact and describes how it is visible within the sports and business sphere, with an estimated 40 million people practicing Taekwondo in 2006. [47] Considering the many organizations dedicated to Taekwondo all around the world, its popularity is visible in the economy. [47]

Taekwondo continues to influence countries all over the world, like the United States, Europe, and Africa. In a study that focuses on Finland, Minna Taskinen investigates whether Taekwondo can foster an interest in Korean culture [48]; By interviewing people of varying belt levels at a Taekwondo class in southern Finland, she finds that they respect Korea as the creators of Taekwondo. [48] In another study on the international success of Taekwondo, Eun-Su Lee uses the SPLISS model as a framework for her research in conducting a sport-specific analysis of Taekwondo's evolution. [49] Lee aimed to uncover the main components that contributed to Taekwondo's global popularity. [49] She finds that stems from being able to tailor a sport to fit certain social and cultural contexts, like well-defined roles, sustained financial support, expanding a limited talent pool, and an experienced coaching staff. [49] In the article "Exploring Motivations of Taekwondo Athletes/Students in New York City" by Howard Z. Zeng, Wojciech. J. Cynarski, Shannon Baatz and Shawn J. Park, they found that the most important motivations for athletes and students participating in Taekwondo are "enjoyment," an improved "self-esteem," a fulfillment of "physical needs," the "develop[ment of] skills," "prestige," and "friendship" [50]. In another study, "Taekwondo is the Impact on Developing Countries," Jeong Hwan Choi examines the historical evolution of Taekwondo as a form of cultural diplomacy that started in the 1980s, when Taekwondo started to gain popularity overseas. [51] Choi focuses on the economic, social, and cultural impact of Taekwondo on developing nations and finds that it improved people's material and social status through the construction of Taekwondo gyms. [51] Additionally, Taekwondo has made an impact on Africa. Michael Emru Tadesse notes that Taekwondo training improved the younger generations in Africa's quality of life. [52] The article, "Taekwondo Training Improves Mood and Sociability in Children from Multicultural Families in South Korea: A Randomized Controlled Pilot Study" by Hee-Tae Roh, Su-Youn Cho and Wi-Young So, it observes that when people in multicultural families participate in routine Taekwondo training, it can improve one's physical fitness and their emotion and social development. [35]

D. Symbol of Korean National Pride:

Taekwondo's recognition as an Olympic sport represents Korea's achievements and contributions to a broader culture. In her study, "A Study on the Background and Elements of Taekwondo as a Korean Cultural Symbol," Yuri Shin delves into Taekwondo as a cultural

identity with its popularity, identity, relevance, and universality as a bare-handed martial art. [54] Kyung-Sang Kwon, Heon-Su Gwon and Goo-Myeung Kwon's paper on "Nationalism Manifested in Taekwondo Demonstration Culture" further talks about Taekwondo in relation to national identity. Demonstration culture has been utilized for national initiatives in the past and that is seen in how Taekwondo is recognized in relation to the Korean national identity. [55] From a more ethical perspective, Jae-Chul Seo writes in "About Cosmopolitan Turn: Critical Review of the Studies of 'Taekwondo & Globalization'" that the globalization of Taekwondo needs to be reexamined and it would benefit from an awareness of different cultures on a worldwide scale, like understanding how various identities interact with one another in cosmopolitan areas. [56] Through pilot projects, Taekwondo then becomes perceived as a cultural symbol of Korea.

In the article, "The Globalization of Taekwondo Recognized by Overseas Taekwondo Leaders," Nan-Hee Jeon and Ok-Hyun Kim use empirical statements from people who run Taekwondo gyms; they find that Taekwondo has the ability to strengthen the capabilities of foreign leaders through the systematic and unified rules of the Taekwondo education system that often involves developing job-oriented educational content, curriculum, and teaching methods. [57] Its globalization was further achieved through a pursuit of disseminating the martial art, establishing an international network of Taekwondo-based organizations to help create an infrastructure of Taekwondo instructors and demonstration teams overseas. [57] In another article, "Overseas Taekwondo practitioners' awareness of the effects of Taekwondo training and interest in Korean culture" by Sang-Seok Nam, Mi-Yeon Lee, Ji-Hyun Park, Jeong-Woo Kim, Na-Hye Kim, Jong-Beom Park and Sung-Gul Hong, they come to the conclusion that Taekwondo has helped spread Korean culture throughout the world. [58] Chung-Ryul Kim additionally mentions in his paper, "The Effect of the Awareness of Taekwondo Culture on Korea's National Image and Brand Attitude," that there is a positive correlation between Taekwondo and Korea's national image. [59]

By analyzing the global response to Taekwondo, I have come to various conclusions. Taekwondo's globalization benefited from the WTF that was created on May 28, 1973, also leading to various revisions of Taekwondo's systems and forms. Eventually, Taekwondo would even become an official Olympic (Yangwei). Therefore, Taekwondo has a certain level of flexibility as it is seen to accommodate what is popular in the sports of modern and Western

society, and continues to evolve (“A study on,” Kim). The Korean martial art also has a noticeable impact on the economy that is seen through its international influence (Rauhala) and impact in developing countries (Taskinen). Within the context of multicultural families, Taekwondo appears to help balance physical wellbeing with emotional and social development (Roh and Su-Youn). It has become a symbol of Korean culture around the world, directly related to the Korean identity (“A Study on,” Shin).

V. Conclusion

A. Restate the Thesis:

By leveraging the global influence of Korean culture, social media, the traditional values of modern performance, an involvement of new aesthetics, and being the only martial art in the Olympics, I observe that Taekwondo has successfully become a universal practice that represents achievement, discipline, and pride, having an overall positive impact on its practitioners. By developing the Clear Progression System, Taekwondo continues to develop a Structured Competitive Format that anyone can learn.

B. Highlight Key Points:

Reached new audiences through K-culture and social media, integrating traditional principles with modern aesthetics.

Based on past studies, Taekwondo’s popularization can be attributed to the sport’s demonstration groups in their combining of modern performance culture with Korean traditional sports that then strengthens professional organizations and participation. Taekwondo is the foundation for other Korean sports and Korean culture as a whole, representing the Korean national identity that will later get acknowledged in the 2000 Sydney Olympics and, with the help of social media, further spread Taekwondo around the world; this would the expand Taekwondo to include methods of sparring, poomse, and performance. It was found that Taekwondo also has a positive effect on its participants, providing a spiritual and physical education to people of all backgrounds.

Provided accessible and inclusive training that fosters achievement and personal growth.

Taekwondo is centered around Kukkiwon as its place of origin in Korea. However, it has continued to evolve with the assistance of the WTF, helping develop Olympic competition rules and standardize the sport. With increasingly more people of all ages and genders engaging in Taekwondo, it has shown to improve physical strength, leadership skills, and personality development. It becomes a martial art that revolves around finding truth through an exploration of the mind and body, inspired by Asian philosophy, and is unique in comparison to other East Asian martial arts.

Achieved global recognition as the Olympic martial art, boosting interest and pride.

Modern Taekwondo has little relationship to ancient martial arts, making it its own unique sport. However, the shape of Taekwondo is always evolving with modern society, ensuring that it is accessible to everyone. Beyond the individual, Taekwondo has shown to influence other facets of society, like economically and culturally, both in the United States and in developing countries, like Africa; it has helped spread Korean culture worldwide and become recognized as a key part of Korea's national identity around the globe.

C. Final Reflection:

Taekwondo continues to develop and change as time progresses, but it will always symbolize Korean tradition, innovation, and unity. Yet follow-up studies are necessary in order to further identify the values of Taekwondo that will both preserve its historic values and reach new audiences, begging the question of how Taekwondo will continue to inspire future generations. As a recognized martial art that centers around Korean culture, I hope that Taekwondo will continue to have a positive impact on people around the world.

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