

**FROM CULTURAL SYMBOL TO COMMERCIAL CONTRACT:  
A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE QUASI-LEGAL FRAMEWORK  
AND COMMERCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE TAEKWONDO DAN-GUP SYSTEM**

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One of the world's most representative and standardized ranking systems in martial arts is that of Taekwondo Dan-Gup. Traditionally, it has been considered as one of the pedagogical tools to assess skills, and at the same time, as one of the ways to pass on cultural and philosophical values. Nevertheless, in contemporary society, its function goes far beyond the dojang, or training hall, embedding it into a complex global economic and regulatory landscape.

The widespread nature of this system is quite intentional rather than an accident, resulting from efforts to establish a hegemonic model regarding martial arts governance and commerce.

While there is considerable literature on the cultural aspects of Taekwondo, less attention has been given to the role it plays in organizing economic relationships and developing forms of internal governance.

The Dan-Gup system is more than a method for indicating technical competence; it dictates rights to teach, rights to open schools, and the right to participate in a global economy.

This oversight represents a critical gap in understanding how a cultural practice maintains coherence and authority while undergoing intense commercialization. It exists within a particular political economy where rank and certification represent capital, and the rules and fee structures serve as a powerful mechanism that shapes the existence of millions of practitioners worldwide [1].

This makes a scholarly look at how these systems adapt and respond to such constant commercial pressure increasingly necessary. Studies that focus on either entirely historical or entirely educational perspectives are no longer sufficient to explain the nature of modern global Taekwondo.

There is also a recognized gap in the current body of research that applies financial and legal discourse analysis to the martial arts ranking system, focusing on it not as a tradition but as a modern system of governance and commerce with considerable real-world consequence.

The objective of this research, then, is to investigate the Taekwondo Dan-Gup system as a quasi-legal framework and a commercial model by examining its modern financial and legal discourses that form its identity today, exceeding traditional connotations of culture.

Materials and methods. The main method that this study applies is discourse analysis, which involves the critical analysis of academic literature, official regulations from a governing body like World Taekwondo (WT), and the commercial practices of Taekwondo schools.

This is focused on identifying and interpreting the language and logic that frame the Dan-Gup system as both a legally binding internal structure and as a financial instrument.

Results and their discussion. The analysis uncovers two interrelated discourses. First, the Dan-Gup system is a quasi-legal system. International federations serve as quasi-legislative entities that establish standardized curricula, testing procedures, and codes of ethics.

This system is policed through disciplinary committees and codes of conduct, having the power to suspend or expel its members, thus controlling professional careers.

The Dan certificate itself acts as a license, establishing a contractual relationship between the individual, the dojang, and the federation. Secondly, the process of creating an 'official' history, smoothing over controversial origins, was integral in creating a unified, marketable identity necessary for this centralized legal authority to be globally accepted [2]. This establishes a clear hierarchy that emulates a state-like institution.

A financial discourse has been created around the system. The Dan rank is a kind of intangible asset that has measurable market value, which is reflected in the structured, tiered fees charged for testing, certification, and school affiliation. These costs are higher for higher-ranked individuals, indeed exponentially so.

The structure applies to every aspect of practice, from mandatory branded uniforms to high-cost international seminars required for promotion. The marketing language frames this spending not as a cost but as an 'investment' in personal and professional development, aligning the traditional value of self-improvement with modern consumer logic. Globalization and corporate sponsorship have accelerated these dynamics, turning Taekwondo into both a spectacle sport and a marketable lifestyle brand for which practitioners are also consumers [3].

This dual framework creates a strong system of control and value creation. The legalistic discourse ensures global uniformity and legitimacy, while the financial discourse provides the engine for commercial success. The transformation is profound: to the relationship between master and student, there is added a contract between service provider and client; to the pursuit of enlightenment, there is added the accumulation of accredited capital.

**Conclusion.** The Taekwondo Dan-Gup system represents a shining example of the adaptation of a cultural tradition within modern global capitalism. The system has developed a strong internal governance quasi-legal framework and a sophisticated financial discourse of commercialization, which secures its proliferation across the world. Indeed, as this analysis demonstrates, no longer merely a measure of a martial artist's skill, the Dan-Gup system represents a multilayered social contract that weaves together rights, value, and forces that drive a multibillion-dollar industry. In this model of symbiotic cultural authenticity and corporate logic, other traditional practices bear an important template as they seek to navigate pressures resulting from the modern global market. Ultimately, the Dan-Gup system represents the discourse of persistent negotiation between the martial 'Way' and the realities of a capitalist economy.

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## CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF SPORT AND PROMOTION OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

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At the rapid pace of modern life, a sedentary lifestyle leads to an increasing prevalence of cardiovascular disease, obesity and other health problems. According to the world health organization, physical inactivity has become the fourth leading cause of death risk in the world [1]. In this context, the formation of individual sports culture and healthy lifestyle becomes the most important way to improve the level of health of the population. Volleyball as a team sport combining strength, speed and coordination not only effectively improves physical fitness, but also through its unique sports and cultural component contributes to the development of useful habits related to a healthy lifestyle [2].

The purpose of the work is aimed at studying how systematic physical training in volleyball contributes to the formation of a personal sports culture and, in turn, the formation of