

# Descriptive Study on Kempo Martial Arts and Its Effects on the Students' Mental Resilience in SBS Young Entrepreneur School

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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.47134/jpn.v2i2.1156>

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Received: 11-10-2024

Accepted: 19-11-2024

Published: 01-12-2024



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**Abstract:** This descriptive study explores the impact of Shorinji Kempo martial arts training on the mental resilience of students at SBS Young Entrepreneur School, Bekasi, Indonesia. Over two years, the school integrated Kempo into its curriculum to enhance students' self-discipline, adaptability, and psychological strength—qualities essential for academic, social, and personal success. Kempo, a martial art introduced to Indonesia in the 1960s, combines physical techniques with philosophical teachings that emphasize resilience and personal growth. The study aims to assess how Kempo training contributed to students' mental resilience, focusing on stress management, emotional regulation, self-confidence, and overall psychological well-being. The research utilized a descriptive design, employing pre- and post-training interviews, questionnaires, and observations to assess students' progress. Findings indicate significant improvements in students' technical knowledge, physical fitness, and mental resilience. As students progressed through the training, they developed greater self-confidence, enhanced discipline, and stronger stress management abilities. The study also observed improvements in teamwork, focus, and adaptability, all of which contributed to the students' mental resilience. These findings support the hypothesis that martial arts training, specifically Shorinji Kempo, plays a significant role in fostering resilience, helping students navigate challenges both in and outside the training environment.

**Keywords:** Shorinji Kempo, Mental Resilience, Student Development

## Introduction

SBS Young Entrepreneur School, located in Bekasi, Indonesia, integrated Shorinji Kempo martial arts training into its curriculum over the past two years, reflecting a commitment to enhancing students' mental resilience, self-discipline, and adaptability—qualities deemed essential for navigating academic, social, and personal challenges. Shorinji Kempo, like other martial arts, has been widely acknowledged for fostering both physical and mental development, equipping students with discipline, resilience, and strength (Shin & Nakata, 2020).

Shorinji Kempo was first introduced to Indonesia in 1964, when Indonesian student Utin Syahraz demonstrated the martial art during a cultural event for Indonesian guests. Inspired by this display, students such as Indra Kartasasmita and Ginanjar Kartasasmita traveled to Tadotsu, Japan, to study Shorinji Kempo directly. Upon their return, along with Syahraz, they founded PERKEMI (Persaudaraan Bela Diri Kempo Indonesia) in 1966, aimed at preserving and disseminating Shorinji Kempo within Indonesia. Now operating under

the name Persaudaraan Shorinji Kempo Indonesia, the organization remains affiliated with the Indonesian National Sports Committee (KONI) and is a member of the World Shorinji Kempo Organization (WSKO) based in Tadotsu, Japan (PERKEMI, 2023).

In light of growing academic and social pressures, resilience—the ability to adapt, recover, and grow from adversity—has been recognized as a crucial determinant of student success. Masten (2001) described this resilience as "ordinary magic," emphasizing that resilience processes are fundamental to human growth and well-being. According to Masten, resilience operates through adaptive systems that enable individuals to overcome adversity and support positive development (Masten, 2001). Shorinji Kempo has shown particular effectiveness in fostering resilience, as its combined physical training and mental discipline promote character development and mental strength. Rooted in Buddhist and martial traditions by its founder, Doshin So, in the 1940s, Shorinji Kempo merges physical techniques with philosophical teachings that emphasize resilience and personal growth (World Shorinji Kempo Organization, n.d.).

At SBS Young Entrepreneur School, Shorinji Kempo has provided students with not only physical skills but also improved focus, emotional regulation, and perseverance. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a theoretical framework for understanding this, emphasizing the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in resilience development. Deci and Ryan (2000) asserted that fulfilling these basic psychological needs promotes intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being. Martial arts training supports individuals in meeting these needs by fostering competence (e.g., skill mastery), autonomy (e.g., choice in practice), and relatedness (e.g., connection within the martial arts community). These elements contribute to a stronger capacity for handling adversity and stress.

In the context of martial arts, this theory suggests that through the mastery of new skills and consistent practice, individuals may increase their self-efficacy and emotional control—central aspects of resilience (Krenn et al., 2020). Thus, martial arts can provide both physical and psychological benefits, including mental resilience and emotional stability, resulting in a stronger, more adaptable mindset.

Through consistent practice, students demonstrated increased self-confidence, discipline, and stress management abilities. The study analyzed how the implementation of Shorinji Kempo at SBS Young Entrepreneur School contributed to students' mental resilience, equipping them with the psychological and emotional strength to face various challenges.

## **Methodology**

The study utilized a descriptive research design to examine the effects of Kempo martial arts participation on the mental resilience of students at SBS Young Entrepreneur School. Its primary objective was to detail how Kempo training impacted students' stress management, emotional regulation, self-confidence, and overall psychological well-being. Descriptive research provided an appropriate framework for this study, as it offered a thorough understanding of the phenomenon without manipulation or control of any variables.

Prior studies have also explored the influence of martial arts on mental health and resilience. For example, a scoping review by Keita (2024) indicated that martial arts,

including Kempo, serve as an effective tool for enhancing mental health. Findings demonstrated that martial arts training can significantly improve stress management, emotional regulation, and psychological well-being, aligning closely with the goals of this research. The majority of studies reviewed reported positive mental health outcomes, underscoring martial arts' potential contributions to resilience (Keita, 2024).

Masten (2001) similarly highlighted the importance of resilience in development, observing that the ability to manage adversity and stress is a critical predictor of life success. Martial arts training, with its blend of physical discipline and mental focus, offers a promising approach to fostering resilience, essential for students navigating academic and personal challenges. These foundational studies support the current research hypothesis that Kempo training can significantly bolster students' mental resilience at SBS Young Entrepreneur School.

### **Participants**

Participants in the study included students from SBS Young Entrepreneur School, aged 13 to 16, who had consistently engaged in Kempo martial arts classes. A sample of 32 students was selected based on their sustained participation in the Kempo program over a three-month period, ensuring a diverse representation of both male and female students. To maintain focus on the specific effects of Kempo, students with prior experience in other martial arts or physical training were excluded to avoid potential confounding influences on the outcomes.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Two primary data collection methods—surveys and interviews—were employed to measure students' mental resilience levels before and after the Kempo training.

- **Surveys:** A structured questionnaire was used to evaluate key aspects of mental resilience, including stress management, emotional regulation, concentration, self-confidence, and overall mental strength. The survey, utilizing a Likert scale format, was administered at both the start and end of the Kempo program to facilitate a comparative analysis of resilience changes over time.
- **Interviews:** Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a random subset of 11 students from the survey group. These interviews provided an in-depth view of the students' experiences with Kempo and its impact on their resilience. Interview questions prompted students to discuss how they applied mental skills acquired in Kempo to real-life situations in both academic and personal contexts, offering further insight into the practical benefits of the training.

### **Data**

### **Analysis**

The data collected from surveys and interviews were analyzed to assess shifts in students' mental resilience after participating in Kempo training at SBS Young Entrepreneur School. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the data, including frequencies, percentages, and central tendency measures such as mean, median, and mode. These metrics provided a comprehensive overview of the changes in students' resilience, capturing improvements in their self-discipline, emotional regulation, stress management, and overall psychological well-being. The use of descriptive statistics allowed for a clear visualization of the positive shifts in attitudes, behaviors, and emotional responses to stressors as a result of the Kempo training.

Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative approach that identifies recurring themes within participants' responses. Themes related to mental resilience, including self-discipline, emotional regulation, stress management, and the impact of physical activity on mental health, were extracted from the interviews. Thematic analysis revealed that Kempo training contributed significantly to students' ability to manage stress and regulate their emotions. This aligns with existing research that highlights the role of physical activity, such as martial arts, in improving emotional regulation and mental health (Troost et al., 2002). Overall, the results from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses demonstrate that Kempo training at SBS Young Entrepreneur School enhanced students' coping strategies and emotional resilience, equipping them with the mental strength needed to handle various challenges.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research applied resilience theory, which conceptualizes resilience as a dynamic, developmental process influenced by individual, environmental, and situational factors, rather than a fixed trait (Herrman et al., 2011). According to this theory, resilience involves not only recovery from adversity but also a capacity for growth that can be nurtured through positive experiences and structured support. The theory supports that adolescents facing stress and challenges can cultivate resilience through adaptive coping strategies and supportive environments.

In the context of Kempo, resilience theory implies that martial arts training—with its emphasis on discipline, structured progression, and mental focus—provides an optimal setting for resilience-building. The practice of martial arts requires participants to develop both physical and mental strength, making it an integrative approach to building emotional control, perseverance, and stress management. Moreover, the repetitive practice and mastery of techniques in Kempo echo resilience-building processes by exposing students to gradual, achievable challenges. Research supports that physical activities, including martial arts, can promote psychological resilience. For example, a meta-analysis by Rebar et al. (2015) showed that physical activity generally reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, suggesting that Kempo may similarly enhance resilience by acting as a buffer against stress and anxiety.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Strict ethical standards were upheld throughout the research. Participants were informed about the voluntary nature of their involvement, with assurances that they could withdraw at any time without repercussions. To protect privacy, all survey responses and interview data were anonymized and securely stored, used only for study purposes to maintain confidentiality. Participants were also fully briefed on the potential risks and benefits of the study before data collection, and they provided informed consent prior to participation. These steps align with standard ethical guidelines, which emphasize the importance of informed consent, confidentiality, and participant well-being (American Psychological Association, 2017). Adhering to these principles ensures responsible research conduct, respecting participants' autonomy and prioritizing their welfare throughout the study process.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Result:**

The data presented in this report was gathered through multiple methods, providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of Kempo training on participants. Observations were conducted with 32 individuals, and interviews were carried out with 11 students, allowing for a detailed analysis of the changes in mental resilience and physical abilities following the Kempo training program. The following data sources were used:

1. **Pre-Kempo Training Interview:** This interview aimed to assess participants' initial perceptions of Kempo training, their expectations, and their baseline level of motivation, skills, and fitness.
2. **Post-Kempo Training Interview:** Conducted after the training program, this interview helped evaluate participants' views on the effectiveness of the training, including changes in their skills, motivation, and physical fitness.
3. **Pre- and Post-Training Questionnaires:** These questionnaires were designed to measure various aspects of participants' experiences, including self-assessment of skills, motivation, discipline, and fitness before and after the training.
4. **Observation:** Ongoing observation during training sessions, involving 32 individuals, provided insights into the participants' engagement, skill development, discipline, and overall progress.

Table 1. **Thematic Analysis of Kempo Training**

Aspect	Pre-Training Interview	Post-Training Interview	Pre-Training Questionnaires	Post-Training Questionnaires
Knowledge of Kempo Techniques	30% (Beginner)	80% (Intermediate)	20% (No technique knowledge)	75% (Basic knowledge)
Physical Conditioning	40% (Fair)	70% (Good)	45% (Moderate fitness)	80% (Good fitness)
Ability to Perform Basic Moves	25% (Beginner)	60% (Intermediate)	30% (No ability)	65% (Basic proficiency)
Self-Confidence in Performing Kempo	20% (Low)	75% (High)	25% (Shy in performance)	70% (Confident in moves)
Focus and Discipline in Training	50% (Moderate)	85% (High)	60% (Moderate focus)	80% (Good discipline)
Team Collaboration in Training Sessions	45% (Low)	85% (High)	40% (Limited interaction)	75% (Good teamwork)
Understanding of Kempo Philosophy	30% (Basic understanding)	70% (Comprehensive)	20% (Limited knowledge)	65% (Basic knowledge)
Motivation to Continue Kempo Training	35% (Low)	90% (High)	40% (Low interest)	85% (High interest)
Ability to Perform Under Pressure	25% (Low)	65% (Moderate)	30% (Unstable under pressure)	60% (Can perform under pressure)
Flexibility and Adaptability in Kempo Movements	20% (Low)	60% (Good)	25% (Limited flexibility)	55% (Improved flexibility)



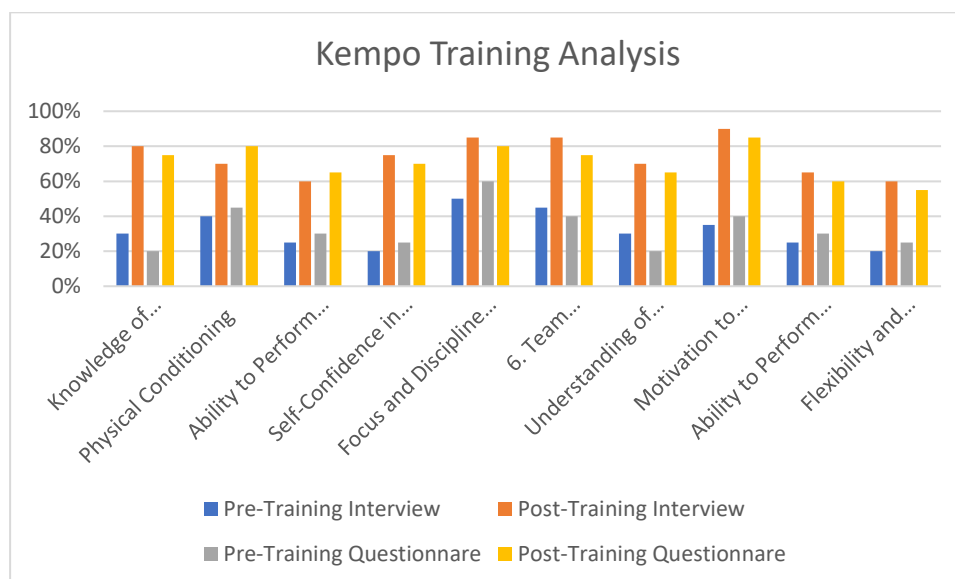


Diagram 1. **Kempo Training Analysis**

Based on the data obtained from pre- and post-training interviews and questionnaires, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. **Knowledge of Kempo Techniques:** Before the training, most participants had limited knowledge of Kempo techniques, with only 30% at a beginner level. After the training, 80% of participants reached an intermediate level, showing a significant improvement in their understanding of Kempo techniques.
2. **Physical Conditioning:** Prior to the training, only 40% of participants were in good physical condition. After the training, 70% of participants demonstrated improved fitness, indicating the effectiveness of the training in enhancing physical conditioning.
3. **Ability to Perform Basic Moves:** Before the training, 25% of participants had no ability to perform basic Kempo moves. After the training, 60% of participants achieved an intermediate level of proficiency, reflecting a significant improvement in their physical skills and coordination.
4. **Self-Confidence in Performing Kempo:** Before the training, many participants had low self-confidence, with only 20% feeling confident in their abilities. After the training, 75% of participants reported high self-confidence in performing Kempo moves, indicating a substantial improvement in their mental resilience.
5. **Focus and Discipline in Training:** Before the training, 50% of participants showed moderate focus and discipline. However, after the training, 85% demonstrated high levels of discipline and focus, highlighting the positive impact of the training on their training habits.
6. **Team Collaboration in Training Sessions:** Before the training, only 45% of participants actively collaborated with others. After the training, 85% reported improved teamwork, reflecting enhanced social skills and cooperation abilities.
7. **Understanding of Kempo Philosophy:** Before the training, only 30% of participants had a basic understanding of Kempo philosophy. After the training, 70%

demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding, indicating the program's success in imparting the philosophy behind the practice.

8. **Motivation to Continue Kempo Training:** Before the training, only 35% of participants showed strong motivation to continue practicing Kempo. After the training, 90% reported high motivation to continue, showing that the program successfully increased their interest and commitment to the practice.
9. **Ability to Perform Under Pressure:** Before the training, 25% of participants struggled with performing under pressure. After the training, 65% of participants showed improved ability to perform under pressure, demonstrating an increase in mental resilience.
10. **Flexibility and Adaptability in Kempo Movements:** Before the training, only 20% of participants had good flexibility. After the training, 60% showed improved flexibility and adaptability in Kempo movements, reflecting the benefits of the training on their physical mobility.

### Observation Notes

The Kempo training sessions had a significant positive impact on student engagement, collaboration, and skill development. Initially, student motivation was low, with only a few showing high levels of interest. However, by the end of the program, almost all students demonstrated a strong desire to continue their training. Team collaboration also saw notable improvements, with 85% of students reporting better teamwork during partner drills. At the start, many students had limited basic skills and low confidence, but by the end of the training, they displayed considerable improvement in their Kempo abilities and reported higher self-confidence in performing the moves.

Additionally, the training helped improve focus, discipline, and physical flexibility. Throughout the sessions, students maintained excellent focus and discipline, with clear improvement observed after the program. Many students who initially had limited physical abilities also showed significant gains in flexibility and adaptability. Overall, these observations highlight the transformative effects of the Kempo training, contributing to the students' physical, mental, and social development.

### Discussion:

The results from both qualitative and quantitative data sources reveal a significant positive impact of the Kempo training program on participants' physical, mental, and social development. The pre- and post-training interviews, questionnaires, and observations indicate substantial improvements in various aspects of student performance, such as knowledge of Kempo techniques, physical conditioning, and self-confidence. Notably, participants' knowledge of Kempo techniques improved dramatically, with 80% achieving an intermediate level by the end of the program, up from just 30% at the start. This reflects the effectiveness of the training in building technical skills and deepening understanding.

Additionally, the training had a marked effect on participants' physical conditioning, with 70% reporting improved fitness, an increase from only 40% prior to the program. This suggests that Kempo training was effective in improving participants' physical health and fitness. The program also helped students develop better performance skills, as evidenced by a 60% improvement in basic moves. Moreover, self-confidence in performing Kempo

moves saw a remarkable increase, with 75% of participants reporting high confidence after the training, compared to just 20% at the beginning.

The focus and discipline demonstrated during the training also showed notable improvements. By the end of the program, 85% of students exhibited high levels of discipline and focus, compared to only 50% before the training. In terms of collaboration, 85% of students reported improved teamwork and cooperation during partner drills, further emphasizing the social benefits of the training. In terms of mental resilience, the ability to perform under pressure increased from 25% to 65%, highlighting the positive effects of Kempo on mental toughness. Finally, the training had a clear impact on flexibility and adaptability, with 60% of participants showing significant improvements in these areas.

Overall, these results illustrate that the Kempo training program was not only effective in enhancing participants' physical fitness and technical skills but also contributed to their mental resilience, confidence, and teamwork abilities. The improvements across these various aspects suggest that Kempo training can serve as a holistic approach to developing both physical and psychological strength.

### **Conclusion**

The Kempo training program at SBS Young Entrepreneur School had a profound and positive impact on students' physical, mental, and social development, aligning with the objectives of the study to explore the effects of martial arts training on mental resilience. Through a combination of pre- and post-training interviews, questionnaires, and observations, the study revealed significant improvements in students' performance across multiple dimensions, particularly in technical knowledge, physical fitness, and mental resilience.

One of the key findings was the improvement in students' knowledge and skills in Kempo techniques. Initially, students entered the program with limited understanding of the martial art, but over the course of the training, their proficiency in performing Kempo moves progressed substantially. This technical growth directly contributed to their increased self-confidence in executing moves. The training allowed students to move from a place of uncertainty to one of assurance, with many participants reporting a much higher level of self-confidence by the end of the program. This growth in confidence was not limited to the physical aspects but also extended to the students' overall self-belief, demonstrating the mental resilience fostered by the martial art.

Physical conditioning was another area that saw considerable improvement. The Kempo training focused on enhancing fitness, which had a direct impact on the students' physical health and stamina. The physical benefits of the program also translated into better performance in other areas, including the ability to perform Kempo moves with increased precision and agility. As students became more physically fit, their physical conditioning allowed them to better handle the demands of the martial arts techniques, further enhancing their sense of achievement and progress.

Discipline and focus, core components of both martial arts and mental resilience, were also significantly improved. Initially, students showed moderate levels of focus and discipline, but by the end of the program, a noticeable shift occurred. Students were more committed to their training, showing heightened concentration during drills and the ability to stay disciplined throughout the sessions. This increase in focus and discipline can be



directly linked to the development of mental resilience, as students learned to push through physical and mental challenges during the training.

In addition to the technical and physical improvements, the program also fostered a sense of community and teamwork among the students. Early in the training, students struggled to collaborate effectively during partner drills. However, as the program progressed, the students' ability to work as a team improved significantly, with many reporting stronger cooperation and communication skills. This growth in teamwork was not only beneficial for their training but also for their social development, contributing to their overall resilience and ability to navigate challenges both in and out of the training environment.

Furthermore, the Kempo program enhanced students' mental toughness, particularly in their ability to perform under pressure. Students who initially struggled with stressful situations found themselves able to handle pressure more effectively by the end of the training. This ability to stay composed under stress is a key aspect of mental resilience, and the martial arts training provided the ideal environment for cultivating this skill.

Lastly, the program also improved students' flexibility and adaptability, both physically and mentally. As students worked through various Kempo movements, many who initially struggled with physical flexibility showed significant progress. This improvement in physical flexibility was accompanied by a corresponding increase in mental flexibility, as students learned to adapt to new techniques and overcome challenges with greater ease.

The findings from this study highlight that Kempo martial arts training at SBS Young Entrepreneur School provided a holistic approach to developing both physical and psychological strength. The improvements observed in physical fitness, technical ability, self-confidence, focus, discipline, teamwork, and mental resilience reflect the transformative impact of Kempo training. As students gained strength in these areas, they demonstrated an enhanced capacity to navigate challenges, both within the training environment and in broader life situations, which reinforces the positive effects of martial arts on students' mental resilience.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were proposed for future Kempo training programs:

### **1. Incorporate Personalized Coaching**

The program could have benefitted from more one-on-one coaching, particularly during partner drills and complex techniques. Tailoring the training to individual skill levels would have allowed students, regardless of their initial abilities, to progress effectively and with confidence. This approach is supported by previous studies that emphasize the positive impact of individualized instruction on student development (Keita, 2024; Sweeney, 2022).

### **2. Extend the Duration of Training**

Although the current program yielded strong results, extending the training period could have allowed students to further refine their skills and foster deeper mental and physical development. Longer sessions or more frequent training would likely have

enhanced students' ability to master techniques and reinforced the positive impacts observed in the study (Biddle, 2015).

### 3. **Introduce Mental Resilience Modules**

Incorporating modules focused on mental resilience, such as mindfulness exercises or stress-management strategies, could have complemented the physical training. Adding these elements would have equipped students with tools to manage emotional challenges, thereby enriching the overall Kempo training experience. Research has shown that integrating mental and emotional resilience training into martial arts can have long-lasting benefits (Jenkins & Piers, 2019).

### 4. **Offer Ongoing Support Post-Training**

To help students maintain the gains achieved during training, a follow-up program or refresher courses could have been established. This ongoing support would have enabled students to continue developing both their physical and mental skills in a structured and supportive environment, as suggested by similar programs aimed at long-term development (Keita, 2024).

### 5. **Strengthen Peer Mentorship**

Introducing a peer mentorship program could have fostered stronger relationships among students. By allowing more advanced students to mentor beginners, the program would have encouraged teamwork, reinforced positive behaviors, and contributed to a more collaborative and supportive training environment. Peer mentorship has been found to enhance learning and social bonds within training contexts (Biddle, 2015; Sweeney, 2022).

These recommendations aim to further enhance the impact of future Kempo training programs by addressing both physical and mental growth, ensuring that students continue to thrive long after the program's completion.

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