

Martial arts in the opinions of students at the Faculty of Physical Education

Authors' Contribution:

- A** Study Design
- B** Data Collection
- C** Statistical Analysis
- D** Manuscript Preparation
- E** Funds Collection

Władysław Jagiełło^{ABCDE}, Marcin Dornowski^{ABCDE}

Academy of Physical Education and Sport in Gdańsk, Gdańsk, Poland

Source of support: Departmental sources

Received: 16 March 2011; **Accepted:** 8 April 2011; **Published online:** 19 April 2011

Abstract

Background and Study Aim:

The importance of martial arts in physical development of children and youth is confirmed by extensive scientific research. The main advantages of martial arts are not however, limited only to the biological sphere. They are highly assessed primarily for mental values, the pedagogical ones as well as the utilitarian ones. Hence the main cognitive aspect of the study was to find out opinions of future physical education (PE) teachers on the issue of significance of martial arts in widely understood PE of children and youth.

Material/Methods:

225 students of the first year at the PE Faculty at the Academy of Physical Education and Sport (AWFiS) in Gdańsk, Poland were involved in the study. Among the studied subjects 75% practise or have practised sport at the competitive level. The subjects realised a full-time programme of studies. A diagnostic survey with the application of the authors' own questionnaire was the basic study tool. The questionnaire was anonymous and consisted of the so-called certificate and two parts. The first part of the questionnaire regarded the significance of martial arts in PE of children and youth. The second part regarded the assessment of the organisation and conduct of classes.

Results:

Students at AWFiS highly assess educational values of martial arts. A vast majority of the respondents (95%) think that elements of martial arts should be applied in the process of PE of children and youth. Fun forms of fight and shaping exercises with a partner proved especially attractive in the respondents' opinions. The respondents also indicate the high meritorious level of the classes (98%). They regard particularly highly the punctuality or starting and ending the class, teachers' objectivity and the clarity of realised aims.

Conclusions:

Therefore, one may suppose that, knowing the usual values of martial arts, prospective, well-educated teachers will actively include them in the syllabus of a PE class. Yet, until these sports are in the basic curriculum at Academies of Physical Education, such a claim with only remain a hypothesis.

Key words:

combat sports • students • physical education • physical culture

Author's address:

Władysław Jagiełło, Academy of Physical Education and Sport in Gdańsk, Kazimierza Górskiego 1 Str., 80-336 Gdańsk, Poland, e-mail: wjagiello1@wp.pl

BACKGROUND

The importance of martial arts in physical development of children and youth is confirmed by extensive scientific research [1–5]. The main advantages of martial arts are not, however, limited only to the biological sphere. They are highly assessed primarily for mental values [6–10], the pedagogical ones [11–14] as well as the utilitarian ones [15–21]. Therefore, martial arts enable not only the perfection of motor skills and adaptation

mechanisms but also overcoming one's own weaknesses, fears and aptitude for aggression.

Prof. Ewaryst Jaskólski [11, p.3], an eminent pedagogue and expert on martial arts wrote about this aspect of the significance of such sports for PE. "(...) At present, when youth's time is constrained by numerous extra-curricular duties, one needs to consider such forms of physical culture which would be optimal in their physical development and in shaping skills indispensable in

daily life. Such forms comprise judo... Martial arts exercises allow noticing that the fear of failure paralyses human ability to act correctly and intelligently, that excessive aggression and over-confidence make it impossible to recognise that the lack of proper physical predispositions, knowledge and endurance leads to failure. Training and martial arts exercises shape an attitude of a watchful observer and an ability to act in accordance with the laws of nature (...)" In his opinion, especially judo creates a unique opportunity to appropriately shape young people's personalities towards a socially acceptable model.

Thus, with full responsibility, we can accept a hypothesis that martial arts (the model of competition adopted in them) most comprehensively enable a complementary influence on the biological, mental and ethical aspect of human personality.

The publication of the theory of martial arts in 2002 [22] created a new quality of perspectives insofar as the use of martial arts in widely understood PE by prospective PE teachers. It became meritoriously fully justified to introduce lectures on martial arts in Academies of Physical Education, which realise a syllabus of practical classes in this subject. At the Academy of Physical Education and Sport in Gdansk, Poland lectures on the theory and methodology of martial arts have been offered since 2007.

Hence the main cognitive aspect of the study was to find out opinions of future PE teachers on the issue of significance of martial arts in widely understood PE of children and youth. A complementary aim of the study was to find out information on the meritorious and organisational level of subjects realised within the framework of martial arts.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Students (n=225) of the first year at the Physical Education Faculty at the AWFis (112 male students and 113 female students) were involved in the study. Among the studied subjects 75% practise or have practised sport at the competitive level (73% of female students and 77% of males). The subjects realised a full-time programme of studies. As obligatory subjects in martial arts, in the first semester students took the basics of judo (15 credit hours), and in the second semester – jiu-jitsu with elements of self-defence (15 credit hours), and they also participated in lectures on the theory and methodology of martial arts (15 credit hours).

A diagnostic survey with the application of the authors' own questionnaire was the basic study tool. The

questionnaire was anonymous and consisted of the so-called certificate and two parts. The certificate informed about the subject's sex and their participation in competitive sport. The first part of the questionnaire regarded the significance of martial arts in PE of children and youth (four questions). The second part regarded the assessment of the organisation and conduct of classes (four questions). Both parts of the questionnaire contained three categorical cafeteria-style questions each and one rating question with a range of grades from 1 to 5 points for each answer option.

The survey was conducted in 2009–2010 after the students had successfully completed the course.

RESULTS

The significance of martial arts in PE of children and youth

Most subjects (88%) indicate a very strong or strong importance of martial arts in PE of children and youth (89% of male students and 88% of female students) while only 12% say it is of little significance or insignificant (14% of female students and 12% of male students) – Figure 1.

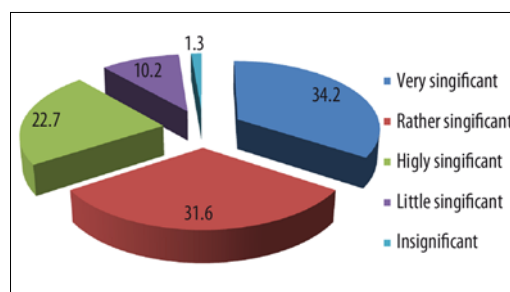


Figure 1. The significance of martial arts in PE of children and youth, proportion [%] of answers.

In the surveyed group, 95% think that elements of martial arts should be applied in PE lessons (6% of male students and 94% of female students) – Figure 2.

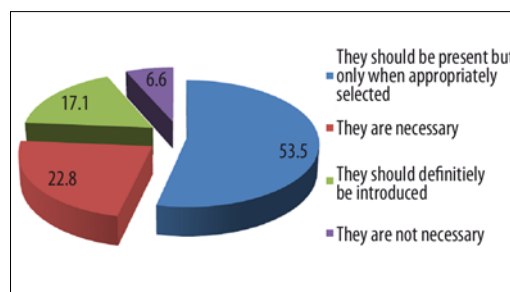


Figure 2. The application of elements of martial arts in PE lessons, proportion [%] of answers.

In the opinions of 37% of the surveyed ones (41% of male students and 34% of female students) teachers

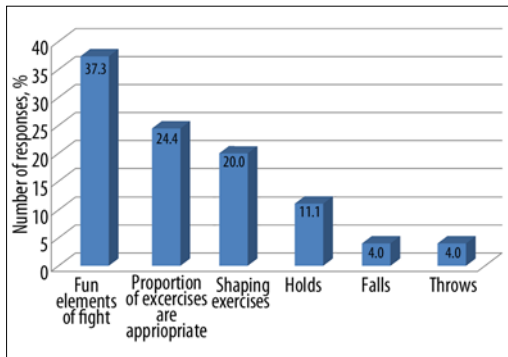


Figure 3. Exercises which teachers should devote more time to, proportion [%] of answers.

should devote more time to fun elements of fight (Figure 3). 24% of the respondents (25% of male students and 24% of female students) think, however, that the proportions of exercises are appropriate. As few as 4% of the surveyed, pay attention to falls and throws.

From among practical subjects taught at the AWFIS with regard to educational and utilitarian values, the respondents assessed sports games the highest (82% of the maximal possible score) as well as martial arts (79% of the maximal possible score) – Figure 4. The lowest scores were given to athletics and gymnastics (65% and 70% of the maximal possible score respectively). In the case of these two disciplines female students valued their assets slightly higher than male students (by 2 and 0.3% respectively).

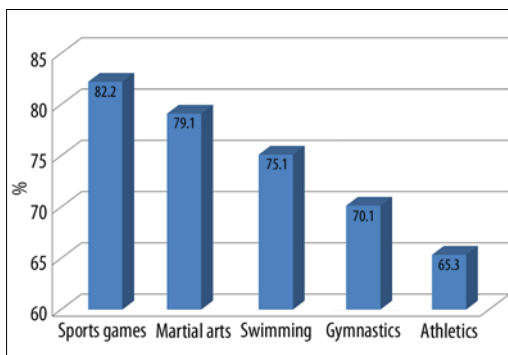


Figure 4. Educational and utilitarian assets of various sport disciplines, proportion [%] of maximal possible score.

Organisation and conduct of classes

One can conclude from the carried out survey that a vast majority of the respondents is content with the level of conducted classes (Figure 5). However, men assess this level slightly higher than women (99% and 97% respectively).

In students' opinions punctuality of the beginning and ending of the class was valued the highest (90%) as well as the use of time during the class (78%) of

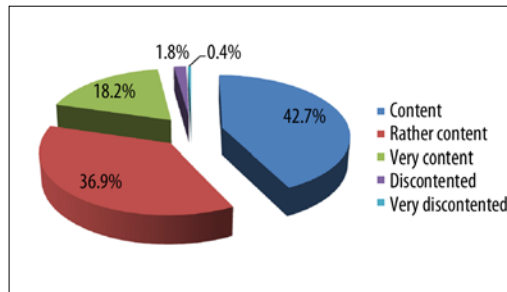


Figure 5. Students' opinions on the level of conducted classes, proportion [%] of answers.

the maximal possible score for a given question (1125 points) – Figure 6.

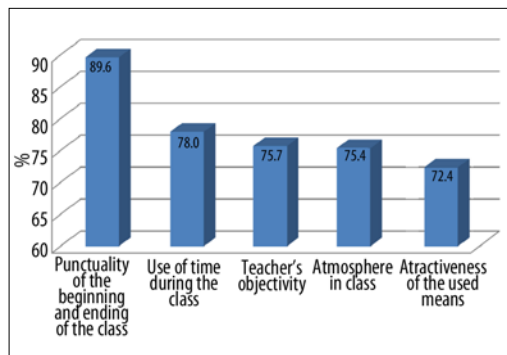


Figure 6. Assessment of organisation and conduct of the class, proportion [%] of the maximal possible score.

A vast majority of the respondents claim that the criteria of assessment used in class were fair 87% (90% of male students and 81% of female students) and clearly defined 88% (90% of female students and 86% of male students). Most respondents (89%) also confirm that the teacher clearly defined the aim of the classes. In this regard there was no gender differentiation between the answers.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained in the study unequivocally indicate high awareness among PE students at AWFIS as to the significance of martial arts in PE of children and youth. Only 1.3% of the surveyed declare that martial arts are useless in this context. One can therefore judge with a high degree of probability that such deep awareness stems from lectures in the theory and methodology of martial arts introduced in 1997, in which an important part is played by the presentation of study results in this field. Students understand that the means which are at the disposal of martial arts (not just judo) are very attractive not only due to their nature (close combat and connected with its sense of one's body) but mostly because of their complementary influence on the exercising persons' bodies.

In this context, Jaskólski's studies [12, p.18] are vital, when he writes: "...All actions taken in judo, aiming at

creating every now and again new forms of intentional movement, created individually by means of the learnt principles, aims and mastered earlier utilitarian motor acts, are an experiment engaging not only the motor apparatus but, first and foremost, its central nervous system. The combination of ethics, discipline and manifold movements with thorough knowledge of the principles and aims of their course results in enabling the means are at the disposal of judo to optimally influence all spheres of an athlete's development".

Yet students draw attention to the fact that during classes' teachers should give more time to fun forms of fight. The most seldom students consider falls and throws. There may be many reasons for such answers. Firstly, the acuteness of impact of these means on an exercising person's body (especially of throws) can cause a certain discomfort. Secondly, high emotional involvement during fun forms of fight determines its unusual attractiveness among the practising – especially at early stages of training [23]. This is precisely this form of classes that the world's best judokas indicate as the most effective at the early stage of training [24]. The awareness of the importance of these elements in PE of children and youth is not negligible. Contemporary, research points to such forms of activity are especially essential in the physical and mental development of children and youth [11,12,25,26].

Students' opinions on educational and utilitarian assets of practical subjects realised in the course of the studies provides interesting information. Martial arts have been highly ranked here giving way only slightly to team sports games. A low ranking of athletics and gymnastics was quite surprising. In the system of PE these subjects constitute a base and are obligatory classes in syllabuses of Polish Academies of Physical Education. This opinion corresponds with study results of Kruszewski [27]. Among students of Polish higher schools who train martial arts 71% believe that they should be included into the education system in schools of all types, 18% that definitely and only 11% that they are unnecessary. Students who do not train martial declared respectively: 57%, 27%, 16%.

Students ranked the level and organisation of the conducted classes very highly, yet the punctuality of the beginning and ending the classes is the highest. In the case of

martial arts such results are quite understandable as they are connected with their mental aspect, which is the main criterion of identification and identity of martial arts.

In this regard Kalina [22, pp. 27–28] writes in his ground-breaking work: "(...) in the process of comprehensive development of a human being the special value of martial arts is defined by basing the praxis on the philosophical foundations of the chivalric ethos. Cultivating the chivalric ethos and rituals until today in all martial arts, regardless of their cultural position is manifested by the binding etiquette of the gym, outfit etc."

Also the teacher's ethical and moral authority plays an important role in this process, one which cannot be underestimated. A substantial majority of the surveyed students highly esteemed the assets of the teacher conducting the class – the clarity of assessment criteria and their objectivity.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Students of AWFIS highly assess educational values of martial arts. From among practical subjects realised in the course of the studies only team sports games have been evaluated slightly better (statistically insignificant differences).
2. A vast majority of the respondents (95%) think that elements of martial arts should be applied in the process of PE of children and youth. Fun forms of fight and shaping exercises with a partner proved especially attractive in the respondents' opinions.
3. The respondents also indicate the high meritorious level of the classes (98%). They regard particularly highly the punctuality or starting and ending the class, teachers' objectivity and the clarity of realised aims.
4. Therefore, one may suppose that, knowing the usual values of martial arts, prospective, well-educated teachers will actively include them in the syllabus of a PE lesson. Yet, until these sports are in the basic curriculum at Academies of Physical Education, such a claim with only remain a hypothesis.

REFERENCES:

1. Drygas W, Jagier A, Maślankiewicz A: Kryteria oceny wydolności fizycznej 15–18-letniej młodzieży uprawiającej sport wyczynowy. *Sport Wyczynowy*, 1979, 8: 17–25 [in Polish]
2. Sterkowicz S, Żarów R: Charakterystyka budowy somatycznej karateków. *Wychowanie Fizyczne i Sport*, 1988, 4: 69–77 [in Polish]
3. Jaskólski E, Herzog J: Charakterystyka porównawcza wybranych cech morfologicznych i motorycznych młodzieży austriackiej i polskiej w wieku 9–11 lat. *Kwartalnik Naukowy AWF we Wrocławiu*, 1995, 3–4: 29–35 [in Polish]
4. Jaskólski E, Wołkow L, Jagiełło W: Biologiczne i pedagogiczne podstawy systemu szkolenia sportowego. *Biblioteka Trenera*. Warszawa 2005 [in Polish]
5. Jagiełło W, Kalina R. M: Properties of motor development in young judokas. *Journal of Human Kinetics*, 2007, 17: 113–20

6. Supiński J: Agresja w sporcie, jej determinanty i następstwa społeczno-wychowawcze. Rozprawa doktorska. AWF Wrocław. Biblioteka Główna, 1991 [in Polish]
7. Trulson ME: Martial arts training: a novel „cure” for juvenile delinquency. *Human Relations*, 1986, 39: 27–35
8. Kalina A: Przeciwdziałanie agresji. Wykorzystywanie sportu do zmniejszania agresywności. PTHP. Warszawa, 1991 [in Polish]
9. Kalina RM: Zabawy ruchowe jako narzędzie diagnozowania agresywności. *Kultura Fizyczna* 1996, 3–4: 19–24 [in Polish]
10. Kalina RM, Kałużny R, Supiński J, Turosz MA: Correlations between behaviors in sport fight and non-sport confrontations. *Wychowanie Fizyczne i Sport* Vol. XLII, Proceeding of 3rd International Scientific Congress on Modern Olympic Sport. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa, 1999, 146–147
11. Jaskólski E: Judo jako środek działania w realizacji celów wychowania fizycznego. AWF Wrocław, 1987 [in Polish]
12. Jaskólski E: Pedagogiczne aspekty rozwoju fizycznego dziecka. AWF we Wrocławiu, 1996 [in Polish]
13. Dąbrowska A, Dąbrowski A, Majcher P: Socjalizacyjne funkcje i edukacyjne wartości judo. *Sport Wyczynowy*, 1996, 3: 24–32 [in Polish]
14. Sasaki T: The meaning and role of budo (the martial arts) in school education in Japan. *Archives of Budo*, 2006, 2: 11–14
15. Jaskólski E: Indywidualne przygotowanie człowieka do optymalnego wykonywania zadań w sytuacjach ekstremalnych. W: R. M. Kalina (red): *Sprawnościowe i moralne aspekty walki wręcz w wojsku*. WSOIW. Wrocław 1994, 61–70 [in Polish]
16. Kalina RM: Sporty walki i trening samoobrony w edukacji obronnej młodzieży. PTNKE Warszawa, 1997 [in Polish]
17. Kalina A, Kalina RM, Klukowski K: Ćwiczenia unikania zderzeń i bezpiecznego upadku dla potrzeb rehabilitacji. *Wychowanie Fizyczne i Zdrowotne* 1998, 1: 20–26 [in Polish]
18. Kalina RM, Jagiello W (red.): *Wychowawcze i utylitarne aspekty sportów walki*. Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego Józefa Piłsudskiego. Warszawa, 2000 [in Polish]
19. Lu C: Eastern martial arts and violence prevention: Reversing a stereotype. *Arch Budo*, 2008; 4: 32–36
20. Shishida F: Counter techniques against Judo: the process of forming Aikido in 1930s. *Arch Budo*, 2008; 4: 4–8
21. Shishida F: Judo's techniques performed from a distance: The origin of Jigoro Kano's concept and its actualization by Kenji Tomiki. 2010; 6(4): 165–71
22. Kalina RM: *Teoria sportów walki*. Biblioteka Trenera, COS. Warszawa 2000 [in Polish]
23. Jagiello W: *Szkolenie początkowe w judo*. Trening. RCMSzKFis. Warszawa, 1995, 2(26): 174–82 [in Polish]
24. Jagiello W: *Wieloletni trening judoków*. Biblioteka Trenera. Centralny Ośrodek Sportu, Warszawa, 2000 [in Polish]
25. Głaz A, Kuźmicki S: Gry i zabawy w treningu judo i zapasów. *Kultura fizyczna* 1981, 2: 32–29 [in Polish]
26. Kalina RM, Jagiello W: *Zabawowe formy walki w wychowaniu fizycznym i treningu sportowym*. Zeszyty Naukowo-Metodyczne. Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego Józefa Piłsudskiego. Warszawa, 2000 [in Polish]
27. Kruszewski A: *Czynniki inspirujące i ograniczające uprawianie sportów i sztuk walki w Polsce*. Praca doktorska. AWF Warszawa, 2002 [in Polish]

