

Martial arts bibliotherapy – the possibility of compensating the negative effects of the continuous education for aggression by electronic media and the aggressive interpersonal relationship of children and adults

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- A Study Design
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- C Statistical Analysis
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Abstract

Bibliotherapy is a form of psychological support and is used in psychotherapy. The term *bibliotherapy* has appeared for the first time in Atlantic Month journal in 1916 and was defined in Oxford English Dictionary in 1920. Special usefulness of the *bibliotherapy* was verified by the military libraries in a field hospitals during the First World War. Wounded soldiers about traumatic experiences from the battlefield nurses and volunteers were reading a book about the entertainment character. The result of these tragic experiences is defined phenomenon of the *combat stress reaction* (CSR).

The aim of this paper is based on general principles of *bibliotherapy* assumptions and criteria for the creation in future models of *martial arts bibliotherapy* (MAB) as a method of support for people susceptible of learning aggressive behaviour (preventive aspect) and for people with diagnosed aggressiveness (therapy aspect).

The aim of the mentioned clinical effects of the *bibliotherapy* is to realize the possibility of compensating the negative effects of continuous education to aggression by electronic media and aggressive interpersonal relationships of children and adults, if only in the near future qualified experts (with social acceptance and support) will competently use the MAB.

Key words: aggressiveness · agonology · combat sports · Declarations HMA against MMA · mental disorders · violence

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Praxiology – science about good work. *A Treatise on Good Work*, a fundamental lecture of praxiology by T. Kotarbinski (the first edition in 1955) has been translated into majority of the so-called congress languages (English, German, Russian) and as well: Czech, Japanese, and Serbo-Croatian.

Counterproductive – from praxiological perspective certain action can be: productive – non-productive – counterproductive – neutral. The action is **counterproductive** when a doer achieved the opposite of intended goal [80, p. 220].

INTRODUCTION

Bibliotherapy is a form of psychological support and is used in psychotherapy. The term *bibliotherapy* has appeared for the first time in *Atlantic Month* journal in 1916 and was defined in *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1920. In 1923, American Library Association (ALA) published the first in the world instruction about selection of book collections for patients [1]. From 1966 ALA has accepted, that bibliotherapy is a usage of selected reading materials as a therapeutic support in medicine and psychiatry, and also guidance in solving personal issues through dedicated reading [2]. Bibliotherapy is a form of mental support and has application in psychotherapy.

Special usefulness of the *bibliotherapy* was verified by the military libraries in a field hospitals during the First World War. Wounded soldiers about traumatic experiences from the battlefield nurses and volunteers were reading a book about the entertainment character. The result of these tragic experiences is defined phenomenon of the *combat stress reaction* (CSR) [3, 4].

Degradation of interpersonal relationships in the modern world triggers numerous negative stimuli. Therefore, one must often cope with insecurity, appreciate oneself in a competition, defend against pessimism, sadness and sense of hopelessness. The tradition of verbal messages (the canon of *bibliotherapy*) is superseded with civilisation of image and sound. In such situation, effective use of reading to solve personal problems (on a micro scale) becomes more difficult, which indisputably contributes to enhance social health (on medium and macro scale) – protection against negative emotions, sadness, regret, fear, anger and learning new role models.

Interdisciplinary nature of bibliotherapy (culture-therapy) and its broad connections with medicine, psychiatry, pedagogy, mass culture, etc. paradoxically may become the one of most effective means of *catharsis* for a person intoxicated by electronic media with virtual and real destructive fights, neo-gladiator games and aggressive competition present [5-11] – unfortunately – in many sports [12-16] and in interpersonal relations of the youth [17-23] and adults [24-27].

On the other hand, mass education (related to the majority of world's countries) does not transfer knowledge and do not shape skills to effectively counteracts these actions highly negative and destructive for human personality. Global society does not create rational mechanisms to compensate for the effects of

universal education for violence and aggression. On the contrary, the false concept of *catharsis* is reinforced by watching and experiencing scenes of violence and aggressiveness – such recommendation turned out to be **counterproductive** [6, 7, 28].

In Poland, in September 2015 major electoral campaign to the Parliament (it ends on 25 October) was fought and was highly publicised. The *1st World Congress on Health and Martial Arts in Interdisciplinary Approach* (17–19 September 2015, Czestochowa, Poland) under the patronage of Lech Wałęsa, the Nobel Peace Prize winner was nearly missed. It is not surprising that *Czestochowa Declarations of 2015: HMA against MMA* is currently known almost only by participants of the congress [29].

The aim of this paper is based on general principles of *bibliotherapy* assumptions and criteria for the creation in future models of *martial arts bibliotherapy* (MAB) as a method of support for people susceptible of learning aggressive behaviour (preventive aspect) and for people with diagnosed aggressiveness (therapy aspect).

The aim of the mentioned clinical effects of the *bibliotherapy* is to realize the possibility of compensating the negative effects of continuous education to aggression by electronic media and aggressive interpersonal relationships of children and adults, if only in the near future qualified experts (with social acceptance and support) will competently use the MAB.

The objectives of bibliotherapy

The objectives of *bibliotherapy* are mostly connected with RJ Rubin's division [30] for three categories: institutional, clinical and developmental. The main objective of institutional *bibliotherapy* is an application of didactic literature and an assurance of appropriate recreation. The objective of *clinical bibliotherapy* is a treatment of disorders and developmental *bibliotherapy* is focused on correction of an attitude, compensation and self-fulfilment.

Recipient – theory – practice

There are at least six target groups for *bibliotherapy*: ill persons, impaired persons, antisocial persons, students of various types of schools, parents and teachers, adults above 60 years old [1].

Theory and practice of *bibliotherapy* include following spheres of human: mental, intellectual, social and emotional. Because of its wide influence on human, it could be helpful in modification of his behaviour.

These are important aspects connected with quality of life, fulfilment of needs (including personal and loved ones safety in view of escalation of violence and aggression), personal identity and creative attitude. Methodology of *bibliotherapy* is based on literary, psychological and increasing influence of praxeological principles. In the area of interest primal specific means of influence on reader such as text, plot and characters remain unchanged.

Elaborated methodology of *bibliotherapy* can be a foundation of general principles of counteraction in this difficult situation, where main means of acquiring knowledge of this phenomena are description of struggle of characters in belles-lettres, didactic and scientific literature. Some people may find interest in exploration of knowledge about struggle in literary descriptions about foiling an alien invasion, and others – in studying scientific papers from the field of *agonology* (science of struggle [31]).

In the case of any *martial arts* identified with all dimensions of health [32-34] and not oriented only to motor perfectionism, knowledge of the struggle can be one of the main objectives of major mental training. Dialogue of Arjuna with Krisna (who impersonated a carter) in *Bhagawadgita* [35] is a typical example of mental preparation of a person to fight.

The most general principle of any type of *bibliotherapy* (institutional, clinical, educational) is a need of reading (or listening e.g. by persons with visual impairment) at least once text or its fragments or a set of texts with/without illustrations appropriately selected by the bibliotherapist (a competent educator). Entities – actual or fictional – which are parties in a fight always determine the selection of text, story and characters in the case of bibliotherapy based on *agonology* or in a narrow sense of martial arts.

Because every combat sport is also a martial art (but not vice versa [36]), descriptions of judo, taekwondo, fencing, wrestling fights, etc. will always involve two fighting athletes. In the case of martial arts descriptions which without exception may be classified as defence arts [11, 36, 37], a person defending oneself against aggression stimulated by a group of offenders may become the main hero.

The second principle is the need to evaluate the effects even by applying the simplest methods and tools (e.g. by means of expert judgement).

The phenomenon most often recommended in

scientific and didactic articles about *bibliotherapy* should be subject to evaluation [1, 38]:

- identification level with literary characters and a description with fictional events;
- the effects of emotional silencing or desired activation due to experiences while exploring recommended text;
- the effect of *catharsis* or its lack;
- the effect of insights “in oneself” connected primarily with major personal problems of a person subject to therapy;
- change of attitudes and social behaviour of a therapy participant.

Furthermore, modern evaluation requires an estimation of the basic indicators to effectively program and plan further therapy or create bibliotherapeutic models for persons with similar baseline characters: number of repetitions of the text in relation to a particular therapeutic effect, the time to read the text or collection of texts, the degree of difficulty of the text and satisfaction from reading, etc. In addition, the effects of *bibliotherapy* can be measured by the results of randomised studies, which use i.e. psychological and pedagogical tests of personality and life quality.

The fight can be used multilaterally if we treat it as a competition in an educational sense (and not destructive one). It may be used to develop a person in a social and cultural manner, help overcome fear and complexes that unconsciously create to aggressive attitudes [39]. The work of authors awarded with the Nobel Prize for Literature, which rewards the universal and timeless, plays an important role in this reflection. Their books translated into many languages are known on the entire world as the Nobel Prize for Literature has remained the greatest prize for literature work for nearly one hundred years.

The model of bibliotherapeutic management – the proposal made by Irena Borecka [1] – may be used in shaping broadly understood positive attitudes by means of carefully selected texts and professional support of bibliotherapist of this new specialty of martial arts in broader context of *agonology*.

Clinical effects

Results of clinical studies from 1997 to 2015 has given us evidences of high effectiveness of *bibliotherapy* in various kinds of mental disorders [40-56] (Table 1). Fear and aggressiveness are positively correlated with each other [57]. However, interpretations of the relationship “frustration – aggression”, “fear – aggression”

Table 1. Results of bibliotherapy in various kinds of mental disorders (selected clinical studies from 1998-2015)

Authors	Mental disorder	Applied form of bibliotherapy	Result
Fritzler B et al. 1997 [40]	obsessive-compulsive disorder	Working with book "When once is not enough" (Steketee & White, 1990 [54])	One-third of the clients met criteria for clinically significant improvement indicating that some individuals suffering with OCD can be helped with a brief intervention
Cuijpers P. 1998 [41]	unipolar depression	A review of 20 interventions with book "Coping with depression"	The results of a meta-analysis indicate that this course is an effective therapy for unipolar depression, with effect sizes that are comparable to those of other treatment modalities for depression
Febbraro G, et 1999 [42]	panic disorder	Reading a book "Coping With Panic (Clum, 1990)" with fulfilment of questionnaires	efficacy of bibliotherapy and self-monitoring interventions when utilized absent from contact with a professional is inconclusive
Wright J et al. 2000 [43]	panic attacks, panic cognitions, anticipatory anxiety, avoidance, and depression	relapse prevention (RP) program delivered via bibliotherapy in the treatment of individuals with panic attacks	"clinically significant change" in status on both panic-free status and level of avoidance
Lovel K et al. 2004 [44] West Hampshire NHS Trust. Participants: Seven consecutive clients referred to a CBT department whose main presenting difficulty was OCD, met inclusion criteria and agreed and consented to participate in the study. Main outcome measures: The main outcome measure was the Yale Brown Obsessive Compulsive Checklist (YBOCS)	obsessive-compulsive disorder	Self-help manual created by author of paper composed of 9 sections.	Results indicated good clinical outcome and nurses can deliver effective support to patients using a self-help manual with obsessive-compulsive disorder
Carlbring P et al. 2005 [45]	panic disorder	The treatment was manualized into self-help book and divided into 10 modules. Each module consisted of approximately 25 pages,.	Internet-administered self-help plus minimal therapist contact via e-mail can be equally effective as traditional individual cognitive behaviour therapy
Naylor E et al. 2010 [46]	depression	<i>Feeling Good</i> (Burns DD, 1999 [55])	behavioural prescription for <i>Feeling Good</i> may be as effective as standard care, which commonly involves an antidepressant prescription.
Högdahl L et al. 2013 [47]	bulimia nervosa (BN) and similar eating disorders (EDs),	cognitive behavioural therapy based on guided self-help (CBT-GSH) via the Internet	results showed that both groups attained significant improvements in core- as well as related ED symptoms in both instruments.
Songprakun W et al. 2013 [48]	depression	Self-help manual for dealing with one's own depression with book <i>Good Mood Guide: A self-help manual for depression</i>	The findings provide preliminary evidence supporting the use of bibliotherapy for individuals with depression
Rohde P et al. 2014 [49]	self-assessed depressive symptoms	<i>Feeling Good</i> (Burns, 1980 [56]),	Condition differences in major depression onset were nonsignificant but suggested support for CB interventions
Sharma V et al. 2014 [50]	stress, anxiety	effectiveness of a self-directed Stress Management and Resiliency Training (SMART) program delivered using only written material	A statistically significant improvement in perceived stress, resilience, mindfulness, anxiety, and quality of life was observed
Wootton B et al. 2014 [51]	obsessive-compulsive disorder	Original The OCD Course online course	These results indicate that self-guided internet-administered cognitive-behavioural therapy may be an acceptable and effective treatment for some individuals with obsessive-compulsive symptoms
Lewis K et al. 2015 [52]	children's nighttimes fears	The treatment protocol involved parents reading Uncle Lightfoot, Flip that Switch: Overcoming Fear of the Dark, Academic Version	clinically significant change in anxiety severity. In addition, decreases in child-reported nighttime fears were observed
Rus-Makovec M et al. 2015 [53]	alcohol addiction	comprised two texts without reference to alcohol dependence ('Der Panther', Siddhartha), two displaying a critical attitude to alcoholism, by describing its negative aspects (John Barleycorn, L'Assommoir) positive approach to alcoholism (The Pickwick Papers, 'In Taberna Quando Sumus')	Even short passages from literary works, appropriately and expertly differentiated, served to trigger or reinforce mentalisation-based reflective processes in addiction psychotherapy

are preferred in scientific publications [57, 58], which is believed to inform that frustration or fear often underlies aggression (aggressive act: verbal, physical or the combination of both).

We are, however, of the opinion that aggressiveness is a human trait which determines that a person reveals it in certain circumstances or the exacerbation of this trait is so high that a person searches for an opportunity to do aggressive act or acts. There is talk of “discharging aggression” and not about lack of ability to cope with one’s aggressiveness. This results in many misunderstandings of semantic nature but also creates cognitive and behavioural barriers.

Finally, the directive therapeutic goal of bibliotherapy is to reduce aggressiveness. The preventive aim is to achieve such degree of patient’s (customer’s) self-control, so that he/she will be able to willingly abstain from any violence and aggression.

Perspectives and conclusions

Interdisciplinary of *bibliotherapy* (culture therapy) and its broad connections with medicine, psychiatry, pedagogy, mass culture etc., paradoxically could be one of the most effective means of *catharsis* for a men stunned by electronic media that shows virtual and real destructive fights, neo-gladiators games and aggressive competition in many sports. Meanwhile mass (global) education did not provide knowledge and there is lack of development of skills necessary to opposing effectively those highly destructive actions for human personality [59].

This situation may however be changed. When during final tournament of the Olympic Games in Tokyo (1964), a Dutchman Anton Geesing defeated Japanese champion Akio Kaminag, the world finally believed that judo is available for all in a sport sense. This is obvious. This is a feature of human nature, like the cognitive and behavioural possibilities. Therefore, judo is today one of the most popular combat sports, also among women.

However, judo as an education system and health related training basically has not been implemented only in Japan – along with kendo and sumo as *Budo* project [60]. Although invented by prominent Japanese – professor Jigoro Kano [61, 62] – judo is a motor and intellectual activity, available to every human being. As in the physical dimension, judo consists in the interplay of two people (during formal exercises *kata* and during *randori* – training and tournament fights), thus without mutual respect of ethical

norms, such ways of getting to know each other and the following partners and competitors would be impossible to realize. Exploring own corporeality and the one of somebody other as well as the nature is the highest value not only in judo. This principle may be extended to every martial art, where dignity and respect for the other person will be respected above all [11, 36, 63].

Here, we enter into the field of chivalry irrespective of culture and historical period [63-66]. Unfortunately, media (virtual) and actual model of contemporary warrior is the greatest obstacle, i.e. everyday shocking the viewer with bloody neo-gladiator fights [11]. This is the obstacle most difficult to overcome.

This is the gap to be filled by rational *martial arts bibliotherapy*. Competent promoters of humanistic dimension of all *martial arts* are necessary – both theoreticians and practitioners.

In Poland, such ideal master is professor Stanisław Tokarski. A graduate of oriental studies and philosophy. He won the first gold medal for Poland in the Academic Championship in Judo (Delft, The Netherlands, 1964) and at the same time continuously spread knowledge about philosophical and movement phenomenon of *martial arts* [67-69]. The booklet for the youth entitled “Power of Ernie” written by professor Tokarski [70] and published in 1990 is an example of adaptation of intellectual and ethical message of Jigoro Kano in the fields of *martial arts* about other ways of motor actions – mainly kicks. Such is a Korean taekwondo – the Olympic sport.

However, the author of first significant work in Poland which brought closer the philosophy of *budo* (it was not easy due to communist censorship, and therefore the title of the publication was narrowed down to the concept of “karate”) published in 1978 by Jan Harasymowicz [39]. Since today, work is frequently cited in scientific publications not only by experts in the science of martial arts. The author draws attention to certain similarities with the concept of *budo* with praxeology of Tadeusz Kotarbiński.

In terms of promoting modern vision of martial arts as attractive, broadly understood methods to strengthen all dimensions of health, Poland is a leader, at least on European level. Unique science about struggle – **agonology** – was established by four Polish scientists [31]. The general theory of struggle (*agonology*) was established by Kotarbiński (1938 [71]). Konieczny developed a cybernetic theory

of struggle (1970 [72]). Rudniański created the theory of a non-armed struggle (1989 [73]). Kalina theory of defensive struggle (1991 [74]) and theory of combat sports (2000 [36]). This is an extensive place of *bibliotherapy* for most demanding users – intellectuals, heads of social life concerned about real threat to the quality of life, mental and social health due to escalation of hate speech, arrogance, violence and interpersonal aggression, and also escalation of violence in media. Furthermore, Leon Krzemieniecki has applied the theory of struggle into the interdisciplinary phenomena analyses of struggle, that are described in the *belles-lettres* [75, 76].

In Poland, unwavering popularity of *martial arts* is expressed in numerous scientific and popular science

publications, analysing this phenomenon from various perspectives: historical, sociological, psychological, cultural, religious, etc. Wojciech Cynarski is such example of a promoter of *martial arts* from broadly understood humanist perspective [77].

Polish scientists, partially in cooperation with foreign experts in the science of martial arts, create another original possibility of getting to know the phenomenon of education by friendly fight attractive for people regardless of age – *fun forms of martial arts* [78-80].

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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