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# Competences of combat sports and martial arts educators in light of the holistic fair self-defence model of training

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## Summary

**Study aim:**

Determination of the principal elements and criteria of the optimal, holistic model of defensive education. Verification of the degree of coincidence of the contents and forms of instructing self-defense preferred by the modern combat sports and martial arts educators with the model criteria.

**Material/methods:**

The research included 135 combat sports and martial arts educators representing 19 countries of different continents. Methods: (1) Monographic method and research of chronicles and creating opinion documents; (2) Diagnostic sounding in form of a questionnaire (own elaboration) and interview; (3) Method of creation and use of a model. This model is the essential base of the elaboration of the questionnaire addressed to the combat sports and martial arts educators, and then it was also used to elaborate the basic classification criteria and evaluation of the obtained answers.

**Results:**

The I competence level is fulfilled by 58.51% (n=79) of the educators; the II and III competence levels are fulfilled by 20% (n=27) of the educators; the IV level is fulfilled by 16.29% (n=22) of the educators; the V level is fulfilled by 12.59% (n=17) of the educators; the VI competence level is fulfilled only by 8.15% (n=11) of the educators.

**Conclusions:**

The training carried out in combat sports and martial arts in general doesn't fulfill the requirements of comprehensive man's preparation in the field of fair self-defence and is done without sufficient theoretical, philosophical and methodical knowledge of the bases of arts of counteraction and prevention of aggression. It is possible to assume, that the education of teachers of combat sports and martial arts in a too small degree takes into consideration the human preparation to widely comprehended self-defense, as well as problems of philosophical, ethical and methodical bases of training.

**Key words:**

**Martial arts • Combat sports • self-defence • educators**

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## BACKGROUND

The research of the self-defence training phenomenon in combat sports and martial arts from the point of view of widely comprehended requirements of self-defence and human education is a complex problem. It requires a multilateral, humanistic and holistic perception that includes biological and psychical human needs, as well as modern criteria of the physical, moral, mental and social education.

From the point of view of the biological and psychical human needs the notion of self-defence is related with the defensive and self-preserving behaviours executed in order to protect from every danger threatening human integrity, freedom, health and life [17, 31, 32]. It is possible to understand and to carry out the preparation for self-defence in a wide and holistic perspective for the whole life requirements in the field of health prophylactics, security and desirable development as well as in the form of an activity reduced to teaching and improving the hand to hand combat techniques useful in dangerous situations that appear because of the interspecies human aggression.

In a humanistic perspective of the human full development and the integral model of training - training that includes all the aspects of the personality, that is aimed to generating health, that stimulate the interior development, that teaches cooperation, moral and social responsibility [5, 9, 13, 16, 20, 21, 22, 38, 40, 42] – it is impossible to limit the process of self-defence education exclusively to the formation of pupil's useful competences in the field of hand to hand fight. The fighting skills can be used as means of aggression (criminality) as well as in the necessary defence. The instruction of the combat techniques without taking into consideration the necessity of an integral education may be the reason of the escalation of violence and a phenomenon that borders on social pathology (aggressive behaviour in sport, brutal fights in cages, etc.). In a socially adequate educational model of defensive combat training it is necessary not only to develop the utilitarian competences, but also the axiological-ethical aspect of the pupil's personality in order to prevent the aggression among humans and to combat the undesirable models of behaviour which are based on the use of aggression [8, 13].

The training of a combat sport or martial art that fulfils both, the utilitarian and the axiological-ethical criteria of the defence education was called **training (teaching) of fair self-defence** [8]. This name defines, in a synthetic form, the model of training in accordance with the law, the knight's ethos, the opinion of the most eminent creators of combat sports and

martial arts of budo and with the tradition of the olympic sport. It seems that this name expresses the original moral and theoretical postulates of the most widespread and socially known systems of combat sports and martial arts of budo (judo, karate, aikido, taekwondo etc.). These systems were formulated by their creators who were based on the philosophical elements of zen buddhism, taoism and confucianism [2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 18, 36, 40].

The improvement and optimal execution of fair self-defence training require a systemic relation, a scientific penetration in their philosophical-theoretical, ethical and methodical bases and the establishment of their ideal educative model from a humanistic perspective. It is also necessary to make researches that verify the coincidence of the practical realization of training with the model postulates.

### Purpose of research

- a) Determination of the principal elements and criteria of the optimal, holistic model of defensive education.
- b) Verification of the degree of coincidence of the contents and forms of instructing self-defence preferred by the modern combat sports and martial arts educators with the model criteria.

The realization of the formulated research purposes is related with the determination of the following detailed research questions referred to the fair self-defence training:

1. On what philosophical-ethical, psychological and utilitarian arguments are based the creators of the best known eastern systems of martial arts and the derived from them-combat sports?
2. What indispensable elements of preparation should self-defence training include?
3. Do the teachers of different combat sports and martial arts base their educative practice and training on similar theoretical-methodical principles?
4. Does the training of combat sports and martial arts fulfil the requirements of multilateral preparation in the field of fair self-defence?

### Hypotheses

- The contemporary combat sports and martial arts educators don't take into consideration in a sufficient degree the necessity of preparing the



individual for a fair self-defence. They limit themselves principally to teach and improve the wrestling sport techniques that are specific for a given sport combat modality or martial art.

- The training of self-defence in combat sports and martial arts is often accomplished, all over the world, without the sufficient knowledge of the theoretical-philosophical and ethical basis of the art of counteract the aggression. In combat sports just like in martial arts the contribution and the indications of modern theories and methodical of training are taken into account in an insufficient degree.
- The educators of combat sports and martial arts in an insufficient degree pay attention in their pupil's theoretical-ethical and psychical preparation for self-defence. The educators in the teaching practice of self-defence base themselves in their own experience related with the models of the practiced combat sports or martial arts.

#### Methods of research

1. Monographic method and research of chronicles and creating opinion documents.
2. Diagnostic sounding in form of a questionnaire (own elaboration) and interview.
3. Model creation method and its use. This model is the essential base of the elaboration of the questionnaire addressed to the combat sports and martial arts educators, and then it was also used to elaborate the basic classification criteria and evaluation of the obtained answers.

#### *Criteria of identification of the researched empirical variables*

Based on the structure and the principal components of the elaborated model (Fig. 1.) and also on the basic elements of the systemic perception of sport training accepted in the modern sport theory (Sozański 1993) the author has established the criteria of identification of six competency levels in the field of realization of the training of fair self-defence. These criteria have been used as an evaluation and classification tool for the questionnaire answers. The individuals assigned to the next, higher competency level in the fair self-defence training area fulfill the lower levels' criteria (the criterion of identification is determined by the respondents' declarations).

**I competence level:** educators who teach sport and self-defence techniques at the same time.

**II competence level:** educators who prefer sport combat training completed by teaching self-defence and by simulated fights.

**III competence level:** educators who recommend to keep training self-defence almost for the whole life, or definitely for the whole life.

**IV competence level:** educators who know enough well their sport's or martial art's philosophy and ethic.

**V competence level:** educators who talk with their pupils about the general philosophy of life.

**VI competence level:** educators who systematically teach relaxation during the training.

#### Researched works and research process

With the aim of analyse the point of view of the creators of the best known martial arts systems or their sport modalities, the accessible key works of these creators were selected. [1, 4, 15, 16, 27, 28, 41] and Kimury and Pranina's documental films about Ueshiba from 1993 [19]. Subsequently, a qualitative analysis of the selected work's content was made with the purpose of submit the opinions of the selected authors in a synthetic form.

The next step was to build the generalizations and to represent them into a model form, which was applied as an investigation tool (optimal reference model) during the research and evaluation of the modern combat sports and martial arts educators' opinions. Such procedure was considered the most adequate for a relatively complete explanation of the genetic and teleological-functional phenomenon of the training of self-defence, its potential possibilities and problems.

#### Investigated people

The research included 135 combat sports and martial arts educators representing 19 countries of different continents. Their average age is 40 years. The majority of the educators possess a long sport career and extraordinary or significant personal achievements in sports competitions and in teaching practice (they have trained many competitors that have earned medals in international championships of the highest rank). These educators possess, in general, high degrees in their sport combats or martial arts. Many teachers (43%) have finished - besides instructor courses or trainer studies - different types of higher education and a 64% of the teachers declare that practice also another profession. Some teachers (6)

have a doctor's title in sport science. The investigated educators represent 12 different sports and martial arts. The majority of the teachers work with groups of different ages (80%).

## Research results

### 1. Analysis of the opinions about the theoretical, ethical and methodical bases of the combat sports and martial arts training

#### *General opinions about the sport training*

The socially required model of training should assure the conditions for the development of health and physical abilities, for the formation of the personality and moral, cognitive and pragmatic values. [25, 26, 30]. The theoreticians of physical culture, sport and physical education focus their attention on the need to develop a personality whose actions are directed towards a better future, resistant to the difficulties, capable of creating universal values, a critical personality that is a somatic and intellectual capital [5, 20, 22]. The mentioned criteria constitute - as well as the legal bases of the necessary defence and the ethical and praxeological postulates of the defensive fight [13] - one of the basic systems of reference in the investigation and evaluation of the self-defence training phenomenon.

#### 1.1. Concepts of Jigoro Kano (1860 –1938) judo's creator

Jigoro Kano – the best-known and best educated of all the creators of the modern systems of budo [33, 35, 40] – understood judo as a discipline “of mind and body, whose objectives are the development of the wisdom and an honest life” [35, p. 21]. In his concept judo should serve for the education of man, being at the same time a system of physical education, a system of self-defence, a sport and a form of spiritual training that develops the students' attention, their decision and their self-confidence. Kano proclaimed the need of development of the individual in three strictly related plans: spiritual, technical abilities and corporal (physical). His three-dimensional perspective permitted the permanent improvement according to a process in which the work in different areas of the personality was adapted to the age of the individual. For Kano the ideal was an energetic, autonomous, ethical, reasonable man capable to help the others and to defend, in an efficient and determined way, his own life and dignity. Kano criticized the wars and thought that if it was necessary to develop the combat skills they should be based on the defensive fight and not on the ag-

gression [35]. This principle became the base of the judo kinetic system from which Kano eliminated the techniques of attack that are initiated with a blow or kick to the opponent. The neutralization of the aggressive actions of the opponent by means of the influence in the functional factors of the attack and not by means of physical damages became the basic rule of judo. Kano created a safe sport combat system and a rich in movements self-defence system [16, 29].

#### 1.2. Concepts of Gichin Funakoshi (1868 – 1957) the principal creator of karate

Gichin Funakoshi, who is recognized as the creator of the modern karate [6, 33, 35] considered that the karate “is a defensive art and independently of the circumstances should never be used to offensive purposes” [4, p. 112]. The karate signified for Funakoshi, like the judo for Kano, a training for body and mind, that provides defences against any type of suffering and illness. It signified also the teaching of good manners, preparation for a life without conflicts and the improvement of the capacity of indispensable self-control to understand and to defend the values of the human life. At the same time, the training of karate should prepare the students to face an unexpected danger and to fortify their willpower.

#### 1.3. Concepts of Masutatsu Oyama (1923 – 1994) the kyokushin karate's creator

Masutatsu Oyama, founder of the kyokushin karate and one of the biggest contemporary karatekas affirms, in his work “The Kyokushin Way” [28] that karate is based on the oriental philosophy (Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism Zen), and that this philosophy is the origin of the systems of respiration, meditation, psychic training and moral principles used in karate and that the final purpose of the karate, as a martial art, is to be released from all forms of ties with the life and above all from the fear of death which makes difficult to think and live for good of others and to fight bravely for truth. According to Oyama, the karate is the true zen, the total unity of soul, body and intuition and is the way to reach excellence and harmony with the universe [27, 28]. The karateka ought, in his view, to contrast the justice with the injustice and to fight with bravery for the sake of others and the society. Oyama considered that the base of training and of progresses in karate is the hand to hand sport combat based on the rules but, at the same time, close to the real fight that requires a full psychic concentration and a total unity of body and spirit.



**1.4. Concepts of Morihei Ueshiba (1883 – 1969) aikido’s creator**

Morihei Ueshiba - who is considered the greatest Japanese master of martial arts and a mystic [35] – affirmed that the objective of aikido was to support and to favor all kinds of lives, even the life of the aggressor. In his concept [19, 35, 41] the aikido should be a medicine for morally sick and egocentric people. Therefore Ueshiba [41] excluded the public sports competitions from his system. The true warrior is invincible - according to his opinion- because he fights against nobody. He knows that the true enemy to overcome is his own mind that leads him to the defeat when is self-centered and does not know to act in perfect harmony with the laws of the universe. The training of aikido should facilitate the mind and body synchronization and unification with the movement and the laws of the nature [35, 39, 41]. This idea is manifested in the techniques of aikido, which make possible the neutralization of the aggressor thanks to the application of the laws of the physics, the natural reflexes and the anatomical characteristics of the human body. Ueshiba many times confirmed that a model of self-defence in which the efficacy is on a par with the worry about the health and the life of the aggressor is fully possible.

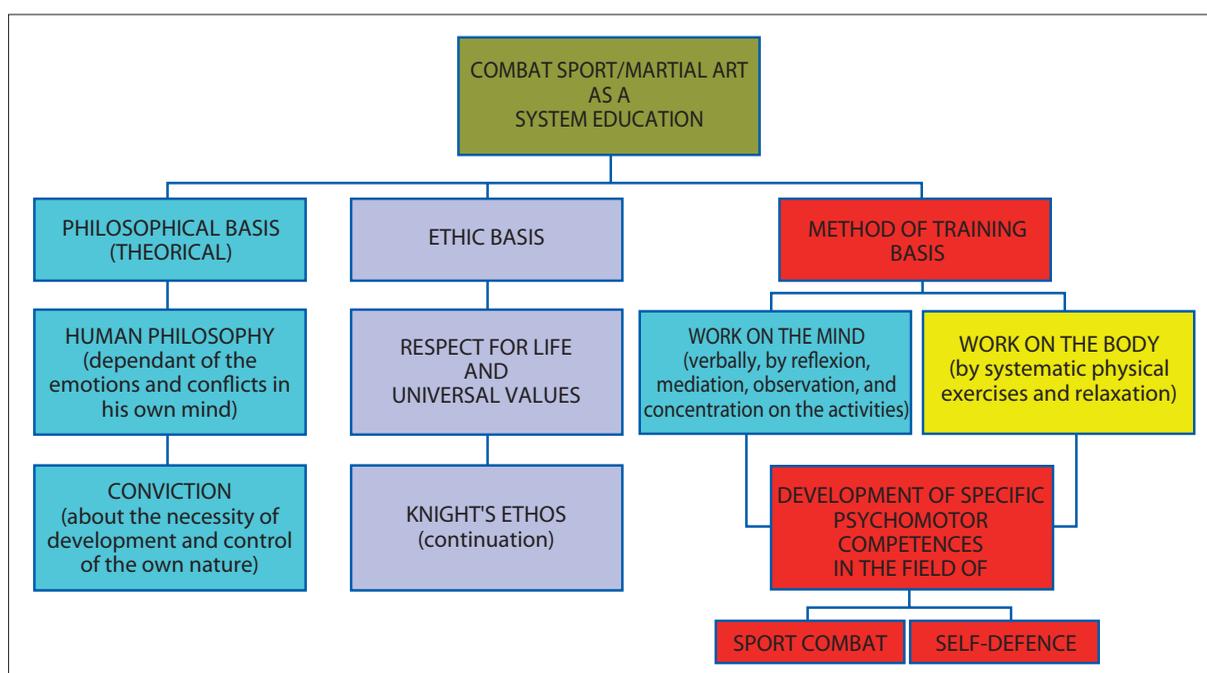
**1.5. Classic postulates of the taekwondo’s training**

The training of this discipline has to lead towards the cultivation of a form of life with high moral standards and to a spiritual equilibrium; thanks to physical ac-

tivity and to the efforts consecrated to balance the mind and the body [18]. Training and a high level of physical condition are indispensable factors for the development of motivation, high moral standards and the individual’s spiritual awakening [18]. The sport combats give opportunities for the full development of technical and physical potential, enable the discovery of the own self, which constitutes the true enemy, and permit the cultivation of the idea of fair play. The development of the spirit of competition must be controlled and subordinated to the upper objective of the training of taekwondo, that is to say to the control of the own mind and body. The goal of taekwondo is to be a “warrior of wisdom” [18, p. 89].

*Summary and generalization of the original conceptions of the most noticeable creators of combat sports and martial arts*

The combat sports and martial arts budo possess all the characteristics and necessary elements that allow us to affirm that they are systems of moral and physical education (fig.1). These systems are supported in an original and inspiring philosophy of man (which accentuates the need of an internal transformation, a permanent mental discipline and a development of self-control), in the universal values of the knight ethos and in the principle of respect for all kinds of lives. The educational systems of budo are distinguished for their methodical bases. Their common characteristic consists in basing the change process of individual’s personality on the training



**Figure 1.** Main elements and criteria that distinguish the Far East combat sports and martial arts as systems of physical and moral education (model that generalizes the concepts of the creators of these systems).

of the psychomotor competences indispensable for an efficient and responsible action against the aggression (fair self-defence). The differences consist principally in the forms and means of development of these psychomotor competences.

**Results of the diagnostic sounding**

Only the 8% of the investigated educators comply (declaratively) with all the criteria of the optimum model of the self-defence teaching. The others comply with these criteria in different degree (fig.2). In spite of the fact that more than the 58% of the teachers affirm that combine the training of sports techniques with the teaching of the self-defence techniques, only the 20% declare that teach self-defence systematically. The rest of them teach self-defence only specific days of the week (26%), occasionally (26%) and during some periods of the year (11%). Around the 15% of the instructors and trainers apply their own self-defence teaching forms, a small amount (3%) declare that in the training they only teach self-defence techniques.

The analysis of the educators' answers to the questionnaire proves the hypothesis that the training of self-defence is often carried out without the sufficient knowledge of its theoretical-philosophical and ethics bases. Some of the educators (10%) openly affirm that in their combat sport or martial art there isn't necessary to have any philosophy. The majority (71%) maintain that the sport which represent is based on

their own philosophy and ethics of life and that they know this philosophy and ethics in a sufficient degree. Nevertheless only the 36% of the teachers maintain conversations with the students about self-defence ethics and the 59% maintain conversations with their pupils about themes of general philosophy and ethics of the life. We may infer, then, that the declared knowledge about the philosophy and the ethics of the combat sport or martial art is, in many cases, fragmentary or that the teacher has it only for his own use. Some of the educators recognize that they don't know the philosophy and ethics of the combat sport or martial art that practice (10%) and 7% affirm that they based themselves on other principles.

**DISCUSSION**

The analysis of the original conceptions of the creators of the systems of budo permits to affirm that these systems agree with the modern holistic conceptions of education that underline the need of linking the axiological components of the education with the development of the abilities obtained during the creative effort and the full psychophysical experience [12, 20, 23, 37, 38, 42].

The teaching of self-defence should always be supported in its legal, theoretical and ethic bases. The human behaviours depend, in great measure, on the experience acquired during the process of education, on the values, on the philosophy and ethics of the life and on the models of behaviour. The necessary defence should be practiced within the framework of a socially desired model of resistance to the physical aggression. Such attitude to the training of self-defence agrees with the newest international tendencies towards the comprehension of the tasks and functions of the physical education and sport, whose mission is related with the construction of a culture of peace supported in the respect for life, in the dialogue, the solidarity and the tolerance and with the fight against the culture of war, of violence and of discrimination [24].

From a social and holistic point of view, the training of the combat sports and martial arts should be directed towards the strengthening of the organism and the education for health, should guarantee the multilateral development of the physical ability and personality of the students with the objective to prepare them for a creative and autonomous life and for an optimum action in difficult situations [13, 14, 20, 34, 42].

The rational training of the sport fight -carried out on the axiological bases of the Olympic values and

COMPE TENCE LEVEL	VI		8% (n=11)	educators who systematically teach relaxation during the training	DECLARATIONS (THE CRITERION OF IDENTIFICATION)
	V		13% (n=17)	educators who talk with their pupils about the general philosophy of life	
	IV		16% (n=22)	educators who know enough well their sport's or martial art's philosophy and ethic	
	III		20% (n=27)	educators who recommend to keep training self-defence almost for all the life, or definitely for the whole life	
	II		20% (n=27)	educators who prefer sport combat training completed by teaching self-defence and by simulated fights	
	I	59% (n= 79)	educators who teach sport and self-defence techniques at the same time		

**Figure 2.** Proportion of investigated educators (n=135) according to the hierarchy of the competence level, in the execution of fair defence training (the individuals assigned to the next, higher competency level in the fair self-defence training area fulfil the lower levels' criteria).



ideals- possesses an enormous educational potential and is an efficient way to prepare pupils for self-defence, creates conditions close to the real hand to hand fights, obliges the organism to carry out a maximum effort, to a complex adaptation to the needs of the defensive fight and permits to verify, in a multilateral form, the knowledge and ethical principles of the pupils [6, 13, 14, 16, 27, 28, 40]. It is also necessary to see the dangers related to the competitive sport: the possibility to lose the autotelic values of the sport and the instrumental use of the competitors.

The analysis of the results of the questionnaire confirms the correction of the basic work hypothesis. Only a small part of the educators investigated carries out (according to their answers) the training of self-defence in an optimum and holistic way. The majority of the teachers develop the personality of their students in a selective way and without educational universality. They concentrate their selves on the development of the technical competences of the students, useful for the sports events or the hand to hand fights and only in a small measure keep in mind the needs of development of the axiological and psychic competences related to the art of the self-defence.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The training carried out in combat sports and martial arts in general doesn't fulfill the requirements of comprehensive man's preparation in the field

of fair self-defence and is done without sufficient theoretical-philosophical and methodical knowledge of the bases of the arts of counteraction and prevention of aggression.

2. It is possible to assume, that in the education of combat sports and martial arts teachers in a too small degree is taken into consideration the human preparation for widely comprehended self-defence, as well as the problems of philosophical, ethical and methodical bases of training.
3. It is necessary to analyse the forms of preparation and training of the combat sports and martial arts teachers, to determine the possibilities to increase their degree of didactic competence and to improve the process of preparation for the difficult self-defence teacher profession.
4. It is necessary to prevent the unwanted evolution of the combat sports and martial arts that leads to the gradual loss of their identity, educational potential and humanistic values.
5. The self-defence training should be based on the methodical, ethical, and theoretical principles elaborated by the creators of the systems of the best-known combat sports and martial arts. The modern knowledge, in the field of theory and methodology of sport, permits to enrich and perfect the training of self-defence without altering their general structure and their educational bases.

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