

Social status of karate and personal benefits declared by adults practicing karate

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- ✍ A Study Design
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Background & Study Aim:

Although the mission of sport is associated with health effects, a diversity of disciplines and competition itself, systematic long-term training, cyclical participation in sports competition are the reasons for adaptive differences. Apart from effects observed in three domains of health (somatic, mental, social health), these differences determine an individual survival ability to the greatest extent. The aim is to study the relation between the indicators of social status declared by adults practising karate and benefits related to development of their personality traits.

Material & Methods:

Eighty four karate athletes aged 16-29, from the Lower Silesia in Poland, (49 men, 35 women) participated in the study. Everyone trained in the same club. The author's questionnaire and social interview were applied.

Results:

Karate training (according to persons practising in the same club) had greatest impact on consistency, ambition, willpower, emotional control and psychomotor efficiency. Most people do not use their fighting skills for evil purposes. The majority of them declare that karate training increases self-control but not aggressiveness. Sex of participants is not a factor that significantly differentiates practising karate in terms of training experience and long-term goals (gaining a higher degree, improving fitness and technology). For most women, karate is the first, systematic sporting experience, while in the case of men karate is one of next sports practised. Women are more successful than men during karate championships.

Conclusions:

The synthesis of study results allows us to conclude that emotional development, self-esteem and self-confidence are the greatest benefits of karate, regardless of adepts' sex. In the first place, people identify the effects of long-term karate training, in a utilitarian sense, with self-defence and combat skills, and then with improved fitness and health. Therefore, with certainty as to the ethical and specialist qualifications of a karate instructor, it is justified to recommend this martial art as a complementary method for improving all dimensions of positive health and survival ability.

Key words:

health-related training • martial arts • positive health • survival ability

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Health – *noun* the fact of being well or being free from any illness [43].

Health-related fitness – the components of health-related fitness involve cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition that helps you to stay healthy.

Healthy lifestyle – *noun* activities and diet choices that make a person healthy [43].

Dan (dan'ï) – a term used to denote one's technical level or grade [10].

Kyū – the series of grades that precede *dan* ranks. *Ikkyū* is the grade immediately below *shodan* [10].

EFPA – "extreme form of physical activity are extreme sports, often classified according to the environment in which they are performed (water, land, air), extreme form of physical recreation as well as gainful activity or voluntary service, and all varieties of physical activity that meet at least one classification criterion of the feature associated either with extreme risk of injury or death, or extreme body burden with high level of effort, or extreme coordination difficulty" [33, p. 19].

Motor safety – is consciousness of the person undertaking to solve a motor task or consciousness the subject who has the right to encourage and even enforce from this person that would perform the motor activity, who is able to do it without the risk of the loss of life, injuries or other adverse health effects [44].

INTRODUCTION

Although the mission of sport is being associated with health effects, it is, however, a diversity of disciplines and the competition, systematic long-term training, cyclical participation in sports competition they are the reason for adaptive differences. This differences, apart from effects accumulated in three areas of the health (somatic, mental, social), it determines in an extreme way the survival ability of individuals.

Sport is most often recommended on the following grounds: sport makes comprehensive development possible; sport develops characters, shapes personality, helps earn recognition and develop healthy lifestyle habits; sports competition shapes the will to fight, perseverance, but at the same time teaches respect towards other people, helps acquiring self-confidence, expressing own beliefs and overcoming witnesses; sport makes is possible to show one's abilities and skills.

Whether an athlete reaches the master level (leaving aside indispensable talent) depends mainly on mental attitude, time and effort that can be devoted to achieve this goal [1-3]. Even if the state-of-art criteria of sports training are met [4-7] but appropriate determination of an athlete is lacking, a body cannot become highly trained.

Sport has a large social impact (the Olympic symbols are the most recognizable symbols in the world), but its impact on a unit is of individual nature. Some people consider sport as a sense of life, so they strive for a professional career and when such career has to end they become instructors or coaches. Many athletes who train martial arts live their life in line with budo philosophy [8-10]. Others consider sport as a way to stay healthy and maintain their survival ability throughout the whole life [11-15]. For many, sport remains completely indifferent. They get too much involved neither in practising (sport for all) nor as observers of sport events [16].

The aim is to study the relation between the indicators of social status declared by adults practising karate and benefits related to development of their personality traits.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Participants

Eighty four karate athletes aged 16-29, from the Lower Silesia in Poland, (49 men, 35 women)

participated in the study (in 2016). A group of juniors (44% of studied persons) consisted of karate athletes aged 16-18 (19 men, 18 women), while a group of seniors (56%) consisted of 30 men and 17 women aged 19-29. Their proficiency level ranged from 3 kyu to 3 dan in kyokushin, shōtōkan and other styles recognised by the World Karate Federation (WKF).

Study design

The author's questionnaire and social interview were applied. Questions pertained mostly to: education, socioeconomic status, training experience, impact of karate training on increased willpower, perseverance, discipline, being more consistent in action and stopping to give up as well as controlling emotions and aggressiveness.

Statistical analysis

The analysis was based on a difference between two independent proportions of answers provided. The test of two independent proportions and Pearson's chi-squared test were used to study a difference in proportions between empirical variables (men versus women).

RESULTS

All juniors (women and men) had basic education, seniors had secondary education (77% of men and 59% of women) and other persons had higher education (23% of men and 36% of women). Differences in proportions are not statistically significant.

Women had mostly very high socioeconomic status (57%), including the majority of answers provided by female juniors (67% of 12 women). High status was predominant (53%) among men (Table 1).

Participants have been mostly training for more than 5 years (51% of women and 45% of men). Female juniors (61%) stand out (Table 2). Pearson's chi-squared test produced the following result: 1.157647, $df = 2$, $p = 0.560$. 53.06% of men and 25.71% of women trained another sport before starting to practice karate (Pearson's chi-squared test produced the following result: 6.281982, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0122$). Only male juniors stand out in this respect (57.89%).

Agreement as to a positive impact of training on willpower, perseverance and discipline is

Table 1. Socioeconomic status of karate athletes studied.

Level	Juniors		Seniors		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
male (n = 49)						
average	9	47.37	4	13.33	13	26.53
high	5	26.32	21	70.00	26	53.06
very high	5	26.32	5	16.67	10	20.41
female (n = 35)						
average	1	5.56	3	17.65	4	11.43
high	5	27.78	6	35.29	11	31.43
very high	12	66.67	8	47.06	20	57.14

Table 2. Training experience of karate athletes studied.

Training experience	Juniors		Seniors		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
male (n = 49)						
to year	2	10.53	7	23.33	9	18.37
to 5 years	9	47.37	9	30.00	18	36.73
over 5 years	8	42.11	14	46.67	22	44.90
female (n = 35)						
to year	1	5.56	7	41.18	8	22.86
to 5 years	6	33.33	3	17.65	9	25.71
over 5 years	11	61.11	7	41.18	18	51.43

very high among karate athletes. Only one male senior believed that this phenomenon is rather not related to karate training (Table 3). Karate athletes more frequently declare that training increases their will not to give up (Table 4).

The impact of karate training on controlling emotions by men is more distinct (70% of seniors and 63% of juniors). On the other hand it has negligible impact on modifying aggressiveness (Table 5).

DISCUSSION

The results of our study confirm the majority of previous observations on a relationship between a long-term training of martial arts and combat sports with positive health and personality of persons training it [17-21]. Some karate athletes studied believed that training karate does not result in increasing aggressiveness. This result is of particular importance. Opinions (including in particular of persons who do not train karate or any other martial art and combat sport) are still

divided [22, 23] and pertain also to the issue of violence [24]. The combination of this knowledge by a competent karate instructor is important from two perspectives: professional sports training [4, 25-27] and karate as a method to improve health [12-15, 21-24].

Numerous social factors make also negative phenomena related to martial arts and combat sports more observable. Not only a phenomenon of neogladitorialship [28] but also negative emotions [29] come to the foreground.

Artur Kruszewski, who started in 2000 studies [30] in order to determine which factors stimulate and which one limit development of martial arts and combat sports in Poland, stated that financial issues are very important. Seventy-seven % of the non-training participant declared their willingness to participate in trainings free of charge. As far as persons who cannot train due to financial reasons are concerned, 56% of them declare that they would definitively train otherwise and 33% of them do not exclude such

Table 3. The impact of karate training on increasing a set of the following traits: willpower, perseverance and discipline.

Training experience	Juniors		Seniors		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
male (n = 49)						
to year	2	10.53	7	23.33	9	18.37
to 5 years	9	47.37	9	30.00	18	36.73
over 5 years	8	42.11	14	46.67	22	44.90
female (n = 35)						
to year	1	5.56	7	41.18	8	22.86
to 5 years	6	33.33	3	17.65	9	25.71
over 5 years	11	61.11	7	41.18	18	51.43

Table 4. The impact of karate training on being more consistent in action and increasing the will not to give up.

Variable	Male (n = 49)				Female (n = 35)			
	juniors (n = 19)		seniors (n = 30)		juniors (n = 18)		seniors (n = 17)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
more consistent	8	42.11	12	40	5	27.78	5	29.41
remain unsubdued	11	57.89	14	46.67	13	72.22	10	58.82
without influence	-	-	4	13.33	-	-	2	11.76

Table 5. The impact of karate training on controlling emotions and aggressiveness.

Variable	Male (n = 49)				Female (n = 35)			
	juniors (n = 19)		seniors (n = 30)		juniors (n = 18)		seniors (n = 17)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
countenance	12	63.16	21	70	9	50	8	47.06
the same	4	21.05	6	20	9	50	6	35.29
decrease aggressiveness	3	15.79	3	10	-	-	2	11.76
enhancement aggressiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5.88

a possibility [31, 32]. This is a significant proof that martial arts and combat sports are an attractive form of physical activity for many people.

Martial arts and combat sports may be considered as extreme forms of physical activity. The most recent studies on cognitive and administrative barriers to the implementation of the extreme forms of physical activity (EFPA) in the educational system for students reveal the basic cause – low awareness of knowledge about this phenomenon. Further effort is required to counter the pathologies that emerge in EFPA area (and

thus in martial arts and combat sports) and gain numerous benefits which could be achieved under the direction of a competent teacher [33, 34]. Resistance to stress, reduction of anxiety, ability to cope with difficult situations (including necessary self-defence), increased motor safety and a number of applications in kinesiotherapy are recommendations [35-42] added to a long list of benefits mentioned in this article and declared by persons training karate and other martial arts and combat sports (as an attractive method of health-related training, interchangeably health-related fitness).

CONCLUSIONS

The synthesis of study results allows us to conclude that emotional development, self-esteem and self-confidence are the greatest benefits of karate, regardless of adepts' sex. In the first place, people identify the effects of long-term karate training, in a utilitarian sense, with self-defence

and combat skills, and then with improved fitness and health. Therefore, with certainty as to the ethical and specialist qualifications of a karate instructor, it is justified to recommend this martial art as a complementary method for improving all dimensions of positive health and survival ability.

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