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Report from research the perception of martial arts. Case study of Southern Poland

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Background:	Study aim of the research was to evaluate the perception of martial arts by people practicing various martial arts and combat sports in the southern part of Poland with emphasis put on the aspect of educational values. The scientific research problem put forward in this way required numerous questions to be answered and three hypotheses to be verified.
Material/Methods:	Used for verification of the hypotheses was the diagnostic survey. The area covered by the research consists of two Polish southern regions – Rzeszów and region of Podkarpacie as well as Wrocław and Lower Silesia. The material of the research – samples from the society of youngsters practicing Asian martial arts and western combat sports – were chosen at random. After eliminating incomplete or erroneous questionnaires N=156 has been accepted for the statistical elaboration.
Results:	All three hypotheses have been confirmed.
Conclusions:	Firstly, the evaluation of martial arts influenced neither by the kind of practiced combat sport or martial art nor by the length of training. Secondly, the hierarchy of values differentiates motivation for practicing a martial art. Thirdly, the level of knowledge about martial arts differentiates opinions – the evaluation of the influence of training on personality is clearly dependent on it.
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BACKGROUND

The theoretical perspective of the undertaken scientific venture is 'humanist theory of martial arts' [1–3] developed among researchers gathered around the editorial board of the issue "Idô – Ruch dla Kultury/Movement for Culture" (Idôkan Poland Association in Rzeszów) and in the Department of Combat Sports at the Rzeszów University. In particular, its anthropological aspect is being developed, which concerns a practicing man – his choices on the way of martial arts (kind of the *dô* and values) and functioning within the cultural phenomenon of the world movement of 'Martial Arts' [3,4].

Moreover, the general paradigm of holistic studies is connected with pedagogical reflection on the recommendations concerning translating the rich axiology of martial arts into the terms of physical education [5]. Numerous authors indicate the essential difference between the aims of practicing martial arts and combat sports [6,7]; greater values for education and health-oriented recreation and, what follows, also increasing popularity of non-competitive martial arts [8]. The ways of martial arts (Japanese *budô*) serve well the versatile psychophysical and moral education of children and adolescents.

The aim of the research was to evaluate the perception of martial arts by people practicing various martial arts and combat sports in the southern part of Poland with emphasis put on the aspect of educational values. The scientific-research problem put forward in this way required numerous questions to be answered and the following three hypotheses to be verified:

Hypothesis 1. The evaluation of martial arts is not influenced by the kind of practiced martial art or combat sport nor the length of practice.

Hypothesis 2. Motivation for practicing martial arts is connected with the hierarchy of values subscribed to by the respondents.

Hypothesis 3. The knowledge of martial arts has its impact on the evaluation of influence of the training on personality.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The method of research used for verification of the hypotheses was the diagnostic survey. As a research tool a questionnaire prepared by Wojciech J. Cynarski entitled "Perception of martial arts and combat sports by the practicing youth.

Motives and effects of training and values of martial arts versus other values" was used, which comprised 17 questions, personal details and the scale of values by Milton Rokeach [2,9].

The area covered by the research consists of two Polish southern regions – Rzeszów (the capital of the region) and Podkarpacie region as well as Wrocław and Lower Silesia. The material of the research – samples from the society of youngsters practicing Asian martial arts and western combat sports – were chosen at random. 210 questionnaires were handed in. After eliminating incomplete or erroneous questionnaires N=156 has been accepted for the statistical elaboration.

For the sake of verifying hypothesis 1 the correlation between answers to questions 1, 2 and 15 has been checked. Similarly for hypothesis 2 the interdependence between answers to questions 3 and 4 and the choices on the M. Rokeach's scale of values has been verified and for the hypothesis 3 – answers to questions 9 and 17.

RESULTS

Are the type of practiced combat sport or martial art and the length of practicing (hypothesis 1) decisive factors in assessment of martial arts? The evaluation of attractiveness of martial arts depending on the variable of training length presents Table 1. Among 13 answers given to question 15 the 5 most frequently chosen have been statistically analyzed.

$$df=(5-1)*(3-1)=8, p=0.05$$

$$\chi^2\alpha=15.507, \chi^2_{emp}=6.638$$

Empirical analysis of the data allows us to state that the mark for "attractiveness of martial arts" is independent of the number of years spent on training sessions.

$$\chi^2_{emp}=6.638 < \chi^2\alpha=15.507$$

However, as indicated by the respondents, are values of martial arts and combat sports influenced by the type of sport they practice? The most popular varieties have been taken into consideration (Table 2).

$$\chi^2=10.053, df=(5-1)(5-1)=16, p=0.05$$

$$\chi^2\alpha=26.296 > \chi^2=10.053$$

Table 1. Evaluation of attractiveness of martial arts depending on the variable of training length.

Training period	Evaluation of attractiveness of martial arts (question 15)				
	One may always learn something more	Shaping positive features of character	Better knowledge of oneself	Variety of fighting techniques	The way to perfection, aiming at mastery
More than 5 years	15	19	10	11	21
Up to 5 years	26	23	21	25	23
First year	34	33	36	42	34

Number of choices N=373. The data do not sum up to 100% because the respondents could indicate more than one answer/value. Source: own research

Table 2. Evaluation of attractiveness of martial arts depending on practiced discipline.

Type of sport	Evaluation of attractiveness of martial arts (question 15)				
	One may always learn something more	Shaping positive features of character	Better knowledge of oneself	Variety of fighting techniques	The way to perfection, aiming at mastery
Judo	29	25	25	28	29
Kick-boxing	1	1	1	1	1
Boxing	9	12	5	8	5
Fencing	5	8	2	4	4
Jujutsu and karate	29	33	33	44	31

Number of choices N=373. The data do not sum up to 100% because the respondents could indicate more than one answer/value. Source: own research.

Table 3. Motivation for practicing martial arts vs. hierarchy of values.

Values	Motives				
	Good physical training	Improving fitness	An opportunity for new interpersonal contacts	Psychological strengthening	Persistence, orderly manner
Family security	71	64	19	8	35
Wealthy life	20	12	26	19	28
Salvation	17	2	26	39	19
Word peace	6	30	16	13	27
Happiness	8	7	22	16	8
Pleasure	24	11	19	48	13

The data do not sum up to 100% because the respondents could indicate more than one answer/value. Source: own research.

Table 4. Evaluation of the influence on training on personality depending on the variable of knowledge.

Knowledge („level of knowledge“)	Evaluation of the influence of training on personality		
	Improvement of self-control	Lowered level of aggression	Lack of influence
High	85	21	6
Average	7	8	8
Low	1	3	6

Source: own research.

Because of empirical analysis of the data it has been stated that there is no basis for rejecting the hypothesis, i.e., the evaluation of martial arts is not influenced by the type of practiced combat sport or martial art.

Hypothesis 2 concerned the relation between the motivation to practice martial arts and the hierarchy of values the respondents subscribe to. The interdependence of most frequently repeated motives for training and choices of martial arts values presents Table 3.

$$\chi^2\alpha=31.410, df=(5-1)*(6-1)=20, p=0.05$$

$$\chi^2=189.467 > \chi^2\alpha=31.410$$

It may be stated that the hierarchy of values differentiates the motivation of practicing martial arts.

Verification of hypothesis 3 required stating whether there is an interdependence between the evaluation of the influence of training on personality and the state of knowledge of the practitioner about martial arts (on the basis of outstanding representatives of martial arts listed in the questionnaire) (Table 4). Respondents have very often confused martial arts masters with outstanding representatives of combat sports.

$$\chi^2\alpha=9.488, df=(3-1)*(3-1)=4, p=0.05$$

$$\chi^2=42.330 > \chi^2\alpha=9.488$$



It may be stated that the state of knowledge about martial arts differentiates opinions on how training influences personality.

The results of this research are generally in agreement with the results of similar research on martial arts perception conducted in Europe [2,10]. Perception of martial arts by practitioners confirms the fact of noted educational values and significant ethical influence of martial arts that are connected with the hierarchies of values the practitioners subscribe to.

CONCLUSIONS

All three hypotheses have been confirmed. Thus, the evaluation of martial arts influenced neither by the kind of practiced combat sport or martial art nor by the length of training. Secondly, the hierarchy of values differentiates motivation for practicing a martial art. Thirdly, the level of knowledge about martial arts differentiates opinions – the evaluation of the influence of training on personality is clearly dependent on it.

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