

OPINIONS ABOUT THE VALUES OF SPORT AMONG THE PEOPLE TRAINING GIVEN COMBAT SPORTS

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- combat sports,
- martial arts,
- sport.

Abstract

The aim of the presented paper was to obtain knowledge on the opinions of people training MMA, about the value of sport, not only the sport functioning in their awareness, but also the one they practise in their free time. In the research, an anonymous questionnaire prepared by the authors was applied.

The purposeful targeted selection was applied in the research. The material subjected to the analysis related to people training MMA in Gracie Barra club and Spartakus clubs in Rzeszów. The study was conducted in October 2015. A total of 42 men were qualified for the study. The research used a diagnostic survey method employing the survey technique. In the survey an anonymous questionnaire prepared by the authors was used.

The most important motive for practising sport mentioned by the surveyed women was physical activity in order to gain shapely figure whereas for the surveyed men these were mainly improvement of efficiency and physical fitness. The dominant values of sport for men were in turn: striving to be better, defeating one's own weaknesses and rivalry, whereas for women these were in turn: defeating one's own weaknesses, striving to be better and escape from stress. The analysis of the collected results of the research showed that there were no statistically existing correlations.

INTRODUCTION

The origins of Mixed Martial Arts in Poland, likewise in the world, are connected with Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ). First records from the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) fell into Karol Matuszczak's (instructor of Aikido from Poznań) hands in 1996. The material aroused his interest very much, therefore he got in touch with a journalist Steven Neklia (environmental survey, 2015) – the specialist in martial arts. These were the beginnings of martial arts in Poland. The first BJJ school was opened in Poland. This school is now called "Strefa Walki Poznań" (Combat Zone Poznan). Soon, the people, who are today regarded as pioneers of BJJ and MMA in Poland, Mirosław Okniński (the founder of Okninski Team, Top Team), Mariusz and Maciej Linke (coaches in Linke Gold Team),

Piotr Bagiński and Robert Siedziako (coaches in Berserkers Team Szczecin), Marcin Dudek (founder of Grappling Kraków), started to work for the school in Poznań. In the year 2000 other schools specializing in BJJ and MMA were opened in Poland. Mirosław Okniński, who in the same year fought in a spectacular combat with Michał Luto shown on TV, had a great influence on development of MMA in Poland. Moreover, Okniński confronted his fighters with the ones who had previously trained judo, kickboxing or boxing. The first fight took place on the 10th October 2002 during 'Body Show' sports fair. Grzegorz Jakubowski from Gdynia and Temistokles Teresiewicz from Łódź met in a specially prepared cage. The fight lasted for 45 minutes after which a referee declared a draw.

The issue of MMA is a dynamically developing phenomenon nowadays and KSW (Martial Arts Confrontation) Federation, based in Warsaw, is an organization which has an enormous influence on the development of MMA in Poland. At present, MMA are one of the most popular and most willingly trained sports and classes with elements of martial arts and combat sports, in widely understood physical activity, are very popular nowadays [Kruszewski 2008]. Martial arts and combat sports are extremely cross-cutting and versatile form of man's physical activity. Sport, as a manifestation of physical activity has a significant influence on behaviour and lifestyles of individuals as far as treating sport as social phenomenon is concerned. Sport is a "(...) process consisting of organization of man's physical activity, both spontaneous and institutionalized, individual and team activities, whose aim is to satisfy the physiological need to move, play, but also to check oneself, understand the possibilities of one's own body, compare one's own achievements with the ones of others, at the same time taking into consideration definite norms and rules established for the fight and sports rivalry, striving for not only sports, financial and individual success, but also social one (political, national, patriotic) [Nowocień 2001]. The above mentioned definition takes into account current socio-economic conditions of the political system in Poland, and all types of sport i.e., among others, highly qualified and commonly called 'sport for everyone'. Sport, as a manifestation of man's physical activity, in a rich array of contemporary educational offers, is accepted by young people and, most importantly, is vital to the life and development of modern man.

An individual, raised in the spirit of sport, finds a lot of values in it, which are transferred into his / her social, family and professional lives, and help to build his / her own system of values simultaneously.

Everyday existence of man consists in solving numerous problems connected with making choices, which in turn are determined by the system of values characteristic for

a given community. The system of values serves the development and maturation of personality. It also helps in the process of integration and is a combination of quality and size connected with the activity of an individual. Forming of man's definite behaviours is first of all the effect of the process of valuing, i.e. transmitting by him the positive or negative sign to objects, events or actions. The definite values (objects), positive or negative ones, whose an individual aims at, will appear in one's consciousness as a result [Popielski 1994]. The system of values is a hierarchically ordered set of general values with corresponding detailed values, as well as related values, to which these general values are instrumental. [Koralewicz-Zębik 1974]. Therefore speaking of the hierarchy of the values of sport in the presented work we have in mind their differentiation, which creates a system of superiority and inferiority. In practice, such understanding of the hierarchy of values allows us to measure the importance of certain values of sport and to establish their correlation with other values. Analysing the values and their hierarchy is most done by diagnosing relatively easily observable needs, goals and aspirations of the surveyed individuals. Through goals and aspirations we can come to the hidden system of values, that is what a person considers particularly important to himself / herself or to other people [Mariański 1990] .

Knowing the hierarchy of values of sport allows us to determine the state of consciousness of the surveyed competitors, to get to know their needs and to analyze their attitudes. Being aware of the values felt and recognized by the respondents is therefore an essential and fundamental component of rational planning of educational work, evaluation of its course, and balancing effects [Szymański 2000].

The notion 'opinion' functions both in colloquial and scientific language. It is in opinions and behaviour of an individual towards a given object, thing, person or phenomenon where attitudes appear. Opinions are verbal expressions of the social attitude [Olechnicki, Załęcki 1997].

The issue of opinions is closely related to the phenomenon of beliefs. The concept of beliefs is a widely used one, it is ambiguous and therefore difficult to define unequivocally. The beliefs are: "... more or less fixed opinions about any object (...) opinions on life or socially important matters ... related to the attitudes (...) important components of personality" [Pieter 1963]. Beliefs are the manifestation of a real attitude of people practicing combat sports to sports related phenomena. So, in the beliefs there is knowledge of a given object or phenomenon and the emotional relation to it. Sports beliefs are, therefore, the result of learning about reality and specific education enriched with one's own life experience.

The aim of the presented paper was to obtain knowledge on the opinions of people training MMA, about the value of sport, not only the sport functioning in their awareness, but also the one they practise in their free time.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was of a qualitative character. The purposeful targeted selection was applied. The material subjected to the analysis and presented in this study related to persons attending mixed martial arts trainings, known in the world of contemporary combat sports under the name of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). The research was conducted in Rzeszów in April 2015 in two clubs offering mixed martial arts trainings. Only the people both attending trainings and participating in amateur MMA competitions were taken into consideration. 42 people participated in the research, among whom 7,2% were women (3 persons) and 92,8% were men (39 persons). The average age of the study population was 21, individually ranging from 17 to 35. The research participants came mostly from Podkarpackie Voivodeship. The largest number of the surveyed came from the rural areas (45,7%) and medium-sized cities from 50 to 100 thousand inhabitants (30,4%). 9,3% of the surveyed came from cities of over 100 thousand inhabitants and small towns (up to 50 thousand inhabitants) - 14,6%. None of the research participants had trained any sports discipline professionally in any club earlier. The majority of the surveyed had attended MMA trainings for 2 to 3 years (68,3%), whereas 31,7% - for over 3 years.

The research was conducted with the use of the diagnostic survey method and questionnaire technique. In the study, an anonymous questionnaire was applied. It was entitled 'Sport – physical activity' and prepared exclusively for the presented study at Faculty of Physical Education, University of Rzeszów.

The analysis of the collected results of the study was carried out with the use of SPSS v.11.5 for Windows statistical software. All statistical calculations were done ignoring unanswered questions. The significance level was accepted at $\alpha = 0,05$. While presenting the results, the value 'p' was used, which is the highest ($p \leq \alpha$) significance level at which one can reject the tested hypothesis on the basis of empirical data. In order to verify the hypotheses and to explore the connection between particular variables, a chi-squared test was used.

Results

The essential element to get to know the opinions of amateurs training martial arts about the values of sport was to learn about their level of interest in sport. Interest in sport, as far as people training martial arts described are concerned, is obvious. Definitely, the largest percentage of the surveyed (97,3%) showed great interest in sport, whereas the smallest percentage (2,7%) - little interest. The results of the research allowed to determine the understanding of the notion 'sport'. Having the total liberty to speak their minds, the surveyed did not give a particular definition of this notion, but they defined it by listing its functions, advantages or the meaning of sport in their lives. The surveyed understood sport mainly as physical activity (89,3%) and physical effort needed to improve efficiency and technique in a given sports discipline (10,7%). The analysis of the collected results of the study did not show significant correlations between the answers of the surveyed concerning understanding of the notion 'sport' and gender ($p = 0,4$) and the place of their residence ($p = 0,3$).

In order to gain broader knowledge relating the frequency of participation in sport, the surveyed were asked about the frequency of doing sports during a week, taking into consideration sports practised in their free time beyond MMA trainings. It was observed that 92,3% of the surveyed (63,2% women and 73,5% men) devote about three hours a week to practise sport, whereas 7,7% (36,8% women and 26,5% men) about six hours a week.

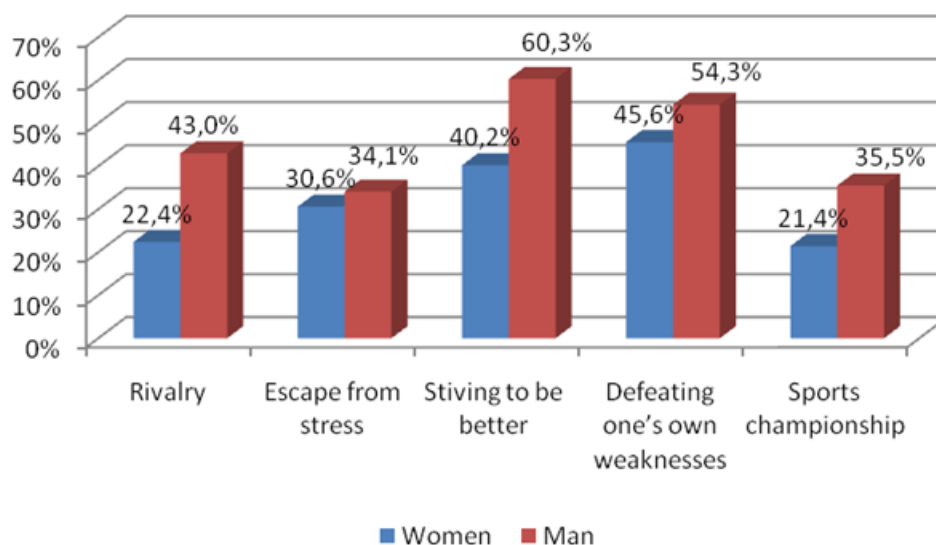
The most widespread forms of passive interest in sport of the surveyed group were in turn: discussions on sport subjects (90,1%) and watching sports programmes on TV (86,3%). Buying sports magazines was the least popular form of passive interest in sport (15,7%).

The frequency of practising sports is conditioned by motivation mainly, and also its driving force. Motivation is connected with the knowledge of the values of sport and with the needs of an individual, one's belief in achievement of their own aims through physical activity. In the study presented, the motivation of the surveyed to practise combat sports was analysed.

The surveyed group was given total freedom while answering the question concerning their motivation to practise sport. As a result of ranking, the hierarchy of motives for practising a given sports discipline could be established. The most important motives mentioned by the surveyed were: improvement of efficiency and physical fitness (67,2%), the possibility of self-realization (52,1%) and shapely figure (43,8%). The results of the study showed that the motives for practising sports significantly differentiated between genders ($p = 0,02$). The women, unlike men, listed the following motives for practising sports: shapely

figure (73,4%), well-being (29,7%), improvement of efficiency and physical fitness (27,5%) and pleasure derived from sport (19,4%). The men, on the other hand, created the following hierarchy of motives: improvement of efficiency and physical fitness (69,5%), pleasure derived from sport and striving to be better (35,7% each), good posture (21,2%). The analysis of the collected results of the research showed that there were no significant correlations between the motives for undertaking combat sports and martial arts by the surveyed and the place of their residence ($p = 0,8$).

The analysis of the collected results of the study allowed to obtain the knowledge on the main aspect of the undertaken issue concerning the values of sport in the opinion of people training mixed martial arts. The ready list of possible values of sport to choose from was proposed to the surveyed. The values, among others, were: joy of taking physical exercise, way to stay healthy, defeating one's own weaknesses, shapely figure, contact with people, striving to be better, possibility of self-realisation, escape form stress, lifestyle, relaxing with the family, beauty of movement, sports championship, contact with nature, cheering, analyzing sports results, rivalry, threat to health and the school of life. The values of sport in the opinions of the surveyed were presented Graph 1.



Graph 1. The values of sport in the opinion of the surveyed

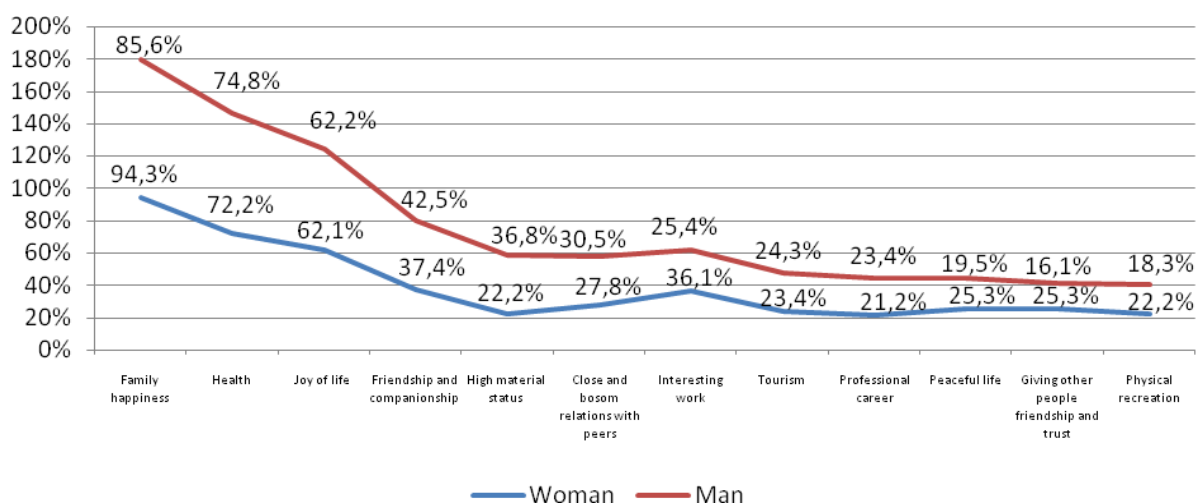
Source: authors own research

As it can be observed, for women the most important value of sport was defeating one's own weaknesses (45,6%), whereas for men it was striving to be better (60,3%). Although the analysis of the collected results showed that there were no significant correlations between opinions of women and men about the values of sport ($p = 0,09$), certain

differences could be seen. The remaining values of sport for women were as follows: striving to be better (40,2%), escape from stress (30,6%), rivalry (22,4%) and sports championship (21,4%). For men, however, the values of sport were as follows: defeating one's own weaknesses (54,3%), rivalry (43,0%), sports championship (35,5%) and escape from stress (34,1%).

The majority of the surveyed (96,3%) preferred very physically active (37,6%) and rather physically active (58,7%) way of spending their free time. 36,1% of women and 37,8% of men saw themselves as very active, whereas 63,9% of women and 62,2% of said they were rather active. The positive thing is that none of the surveyed admitted passive way of spending their free time beyond MMA trainings. The analysis of the collected results did not show significant correlations between the opinions of the surveyed and the place of their residence ($p = 0,7$).

In order to enrich knowledge on the way people training MMA understand the values of sport, it was decided to conduct the analysis aiming at establishing the hierarchy of values of the surveyed, indicating the place sport has in their lives. The surveyed were given a ready list of possible values, among which could be found such values as: sport, family happiness, joy of life, friendship and companionship, tourism, interesting work, high material status, physical recreation, professional career, close and bosom relations with peers, peaceful life and giving other people friendship and trust. The surveyed were asked to put the above mentioned values in order from the most to the least important ones. As a result, the hierarchy of values was created, as can be seen in Graph 2.



Graph 2. The hierarchy of chosen values in the opinion of the surveyed

Source: authors own research

As it can be observed, people undertaking mixed martial arts trainings value family happiness the most (94,30% of women and 85,6% of men). It is followed by: health (72,2% and 74,8%), joy of life (62,1% and 62,2%), friendship and companionship (37,4% and 42,5%). Interestingly and surprisingly, sport was not chosen in the hierarchy of values at all. This can be explained by the fact that people training MMA do not see this value as important in their lives. The analysis of the collected results of the study did not show significant diversification of the opinions of the surveyed on the chosen values ($p = 0,06$), however, some differences as far as gender is concerned could be found.

Graph 2 shows that the hierarchy of values for women was as follows: family happiness (94,3%), health (72,2%), joy of life (61,1%), friendship and companionship (37,4%), interesting work (36,1%), close and bosom relations with peers (27,8%), giving other people friendship and trust (25,3%), peaceful life (25,0%), tourism (23,4%), high material status and physical recreation (22,2% each), professional career (21,2%).

The hierarchy of values for men were as follows: family happiness (85,6%), health (74,8%), joy of life (62,2%), friendship and companionship (42,5%), high material status (36,8%), close and bosom relations with peers (30,5%), interesting work (25,5%), tourism and professional career (24,3% each), peaceful life (19,5%), physical recreation (18,3%), giving other people friendship and trust (16,1%).

Discussion

Sport becomes of particular importance as far as people practising combat sports are concerned, because it not only demonstrates the preferences for certain disciplines and affects competitors' physical fitness, but it also serves as a medium of educational and moral values. The contemporary sport, apart from educational values, is directed "... towards a fierce, ruthless competition, often involving violence and brutality, for medal hunt and record mania. Brutalization is one of several maladies of contemporary sport and it is often accompanied by "hooliganism of sports fans". It is caused by extreme commercialization, when both sports event and competitors become goods for sale. Brutalization is connected with dehumanization and depersonalization of sport, which is already a thing adapted to the preferences of the audience and which loses the subject of sports activities - the person himself. It is an effect, or rather an element of, the brutalization of culture. In the mass culture only brutal spectacle is selling itself well" [Cynarski 2003].

An interesting study on the opinions of people training karate shotokan about the values of this sports discipline was conducted in 2011 in Opole. There were altogether 50

participants - 10 women and 40 men, aged 19-24, all of them practising karate [Kuśnierz 2011]. The results of the survey showed that the main values of the modern karate for the surveyed were spiritual growth and development of their own internal abilities (50%), then practising self-defence and fighting (30%) and the opportunity for self-improvement (20%). The results also showed that due to many years of training what people practising the modern karate value the most are in turn: self-respect and respect towards others (45%), health (33%), self-discipline, diligence and good organisation of work in everyday life (22%).

An interesting research concerning hierarchy of values and self-evaluation of people practising martial arts and combat sports was conducted by Kostorz, Gniezińska and Nawrocka [Kostorz, Gniezińska, Nawrocka 2017]. The research was made in 2015 and 2016 on a group of 80 people from Silesian Province. The results of the research showed that people training martial arts and combat sports value moral values and the importance of physical fitness and strength more than people not training at all do. They also have higher self-esteem. For people not training anything the most important values are the hedonistic ones which allow to satisfy sensual pleasures.

Analyzing the motives of undertaking karate trainings it could be observed that for 40% of people training karate the main motive was getting to know the rules of self-defence whereas for 33% it was to imitate great masters. The differences in the choice of motives of training martial arts and combat sports in Podkarpackie Province were obtained according to the type of martial art or combat sport [Witkowski, Cynarski, Błazejewski 2013]. The research was conducted in 2012 on the group of 227 people training aikido, judo and non-contact karate. The same motives and aspirations concern both women and men training judo. The biggest differences in the choice of motives can be observed between people training aikido and non-contact karate and people training judo and other sports.

The motive of learning the skills to fight was dominant in the group of people training karate kyokushin (100%) over the motive of fascination with martial arts among the people training aikido (100%) [Litwiniuk, Cynarski 2001].

The competitors' opinions on sport, as well as their interest in sport and its values presented in this paper, are competitors' individual beliefs therefore can be treated as credible. The competitors' beliefs concerning sport are considered collective opinions about desirable or rejected phenomena based on their knowledge. On the basis of beliefs concerning sport, as a relatively permanent component of personality, the behavior of the respondents and their attitudes can be assessed.

The presented results of the analysis are only a narrow part of multi-threaded and multi-faceted research on widely-understood values of sport.

Conclusions

1. Definitely, the largest percentage of the surveyed showed great interest in sport, whereas the smallest percentage - little interest.
2. The notion of sport was mainly understood as physical activity and physical effort needed to improve efficiency and technique in a given sports discipline.
3. Women and men have different motivation for practising sport. For women, the main reason for attending sports classes are: shapely figure, well-being, improvement of efficiency and physical fitness and pleasure derived from sport, whereas for men these are: improvement of efficiency and physical fitness, pleasure derived from sport and striving to be better, good posture.
4. For women, according to the answers given, the main value of sport was defeating one's own weaknesses whereas for men it was striving to be better
5. For the majority of the surveyed the most important values were family happiness, health and joy of life in turn.

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ORAL REPORTS

Interview with the first BJJ black belt holder in Poland – Mariusz Linke (2015)