



## Values accepted by older seniors karate fighters

### Authors' Contribution:

A - Study Design  
B - Data Collection  
C - Statistical Analysis  
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### Abstract

**Introduction:** One group of the practicing Far East martial arts is older seniors karate fighters over 35 years of age. The values they present differ from those of the entrants to the art. The goal of the paper is to obtain knowledge on the values presented by older seniors karate fighters. **Method:** The study was conducted on 10 males between 35 – 59 years of age with 23 – 30 years of karate training experience. All of them hold black belts (1-6 Dan). The study was carried out based on a diagnostic survey with an open-ended questionnaire. **Results:** The subjects of the study accept values connected with positive traits of character (34 positive answers) and positive personal interactions (33 positive answers). Further, there are philosophical (mentioned 7 times), fitness (5 positive answers), health, and sport aspects (3 times) of karate. The less acceptable values refer to the aesthetic aspects of karate and to the cultural ones, as well as to the employment opportunities for employment. **Discussion:** The older seniors karate fighters prefer the positive characteristics such as relaxation of mind, courage, consciousness, will power, composure and consistence in action. Almost equally, they accept positive personal interactions, especially integrity, truthfulness. Here, the participants noted negative interactions in their environment. As an art, karate contains aesthetic aspects and also provides opportunity for learning about the culture of the Far East. Karate may also be a way of making a living. According to the older seniors karate fighters, karate is their way of life, part of their personality and the values carried by karate are present in many aspects of their lives.

**Keywords:** karate, older seniors fighter, values

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## INTRODUCTION

Martial arts are very popular all over the world and so they are in Poland. Thus, they have become a subject of scientific studies [1,2,3]. One of the areas of interest is the values carried by martial arts in our country [3,4]. Kalina and Jagiełło, refer to the values in martial arts and claim that the values generated by practicing the martial arts are development of physiological features, building social relationships among teenagers, and developing adaptive of the health system[5]. Jankowiak indicates that aikido training helps to develop personality, shapes positive values and character traits important for humans [6]. Bakowski argues that love and deep respect for others are reflected in ju-jitsu [7]. Wilkomirski, writes that judo training develops integrity, solidarity, and endurance in children and in teenagers. The Judo Etiquette and its strict rules facilitate educational aspects of this sport [8]. Those studies indicate the importance of the educational aspects of martial arts; they also stress the significant role of the instructors who pass the values on young martial arts adepts. Unlike children and teenagers, adults who practice karate, apart from all the values mentioned above, value also effort put into training, various involvement in their community issues, and participation in older seniors karate fighters' competitions. The older seniors karate fighters notice negative situations in their community and discuss them openly. For The Polish Karate Federation to operate normally, I would like the karate fighters to be one big group of respectful individuals following the Do Karate Etiquette [9]. Karate is practiced by people of few to 60 years of age. In the karate community in Poland, older seniors karate fighters are called Dinosaurs; they are martial artists of 35 years of age or over, and they are members of the Polish Karate Federation [10]. They take part in the karate competitions regularly organized for this group of fighters; the first Polish Championship for "Dinosaur" Older Seniors Karate Fighters took place in Brzeg Dolny on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1994. The older seniors karate fighters show involvement in other areas of the community activities.

The research was conducted twelve years after the Brzeg Dolny competition. The obtained results helped to determine the demographical and sociological features of the participants, as well as their attitude toward the values associated with karate. The aim of that work was to obtain the knowledge about the values accepted by older seniors karate fighters.

We attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What values are associated with karate ?
2. What values are important to older seniors karate fighters and how much ?

The answers to these questions help to find out what values are cherished by older seniors karate fighters and to prioritize them according to the importance. The answers may be helpful in the process of creating programs fitting the expectations of the older seniors karate adepts.

## METHOD

The research group consisted of 10 males aged 35 - 59 ( average 46,7) with 23 - 30 years of practicing karate (average 24,4 years). Each participant was a black belt holder (1 - 6 Dan). The interviewees lived in the cities and held at least secondary education diplomas. Most of them were employed in karate clubs; some served in the police, and some worked in education facilities or private companies. Among them there were karate instructors, referees, organizers of karate competitions and training camps, as well as other organizational activities. The interviewees were chosen according to the following criteria: competed in senior karate fighters' championships, aged 35 and over, participated at least three times in competitions for older seniors karate fighters, were involved in organizational work in the karate community.

The studied group consisted of 25% of all older seniors karate fighters who are member of The Polish Karate Federation. The research was conducted based on the diagnostic survey with open-ended questionnaire method.

## RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in Table 1 and in Figure 1.

Table 1. Results of the open-ended questionnaire

Group of values	Values named by participants	Group of values	Values named by participants		
<b>Positive personality traits</b>	Relaxed mind	4	Integrity	8	
	Courage	3	Truthfulness	4	
	Meticulousness	3	Positive interactions with others	2	
	Strength of character	2	Loyalty	2	
	Self-control	2	Forbearance	1	
	Regularity	2	Sacrifice for others	1	
	Fighting spirit	1	Friendly attitude towards others	1	
	Self-development when seeking perfection	1	Helping others	1	
	Determination in self-development	1	Teacher's example	1	
	Overcoming own weaknesses	1	Able to teach	1	
	Dealing with stress	1	Way of passing knowledge	1	
	Mental health	1	Farsighted karate policy	1	
	I feel I great	1	Relations with people	1	
	It is my passion	1	Relations with colleagues	1	
	I do what I love	1	Relations with friends	1	
	Dutifulness	1	Satisfaction with students' progress	1	
	Sense of responsibility	1	I would like to thank my first teachers, for opportunity to develop under their supervision	1	
	Punctuality	1	I want the Polish Karate Federation to function normally	1	
	Solidarity	1	I would like shotokan to be in one association	1	
	Reliability	1	I would like karate fighter to be one group of respectful people following the Do Karate Etiquette	1	
Character	1	I meet new people	1		
Discipline	1	<b>Total numer of indications:</b>	<b>33</b>		
Consistency in action	1	<b>Sport aspects</b>	Competition	1	
Persistence	1		Sport discipline	1	
			I go to sporting competitions	1	
<b>Total numer of indications:</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>Total numer of indications:</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Philosophical aspects</b>	Way of self-realization	1	<b>Fitness</b>	Perfect karate technique	1
	Purpose of life	1		Fitness	1
	My path of life	1		Physical shape	1
	Path of life	1		Coordination	1
	Application of Do Karate Etiquette in everyday life	1		Strength	1
	I am the same as my karate	1	<b>Total numer of indications:</b>	<b>5</b>	
	Way of life	1	<b>Health aspects</b>	I am healthy, I can still train	1
<b>Total numer of indications:</b>	<b>7</b>		Rest	1	
<b>Aesthetic aspects</b>	Art	1		Health	1
	Martial art	1	<b>Total numer of indications:</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>Total numer of indications:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Finances</b>	Some money	1	
<b>Cultural aspects</b>	I learn about the culture of the Far East especially Japan	1	<b>Total numer of indications:</b>	<b>1</b>	

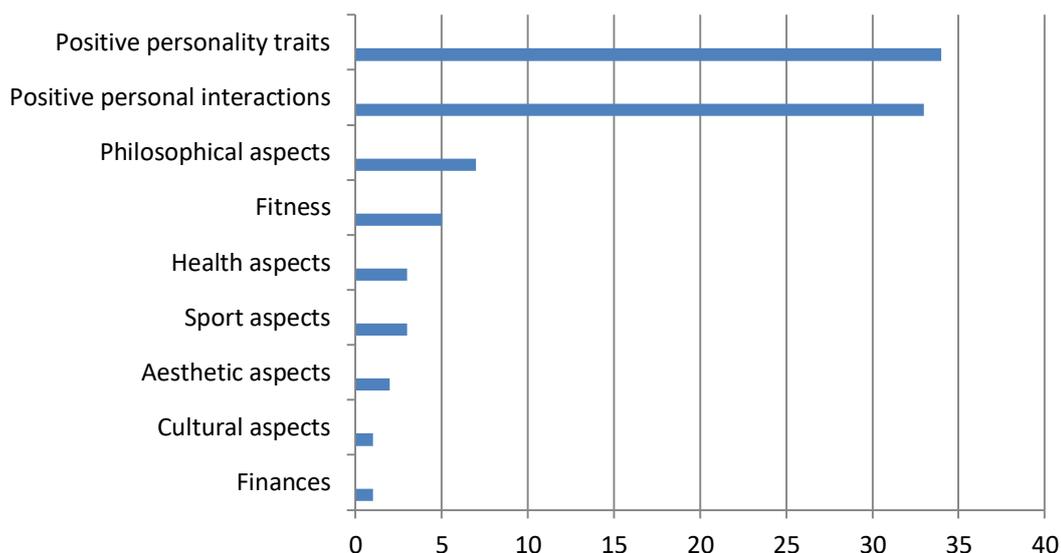


Figure 1. Number of times the groups of values were indicated by the older seniors karate fighters.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the surveyed older seniors karate fighters prefer values related to personality traits: relaxed mind, courage, meticulousness, strength of character, self-control and consistency in action, persistence. Further, they indicated: fighting spirit, self-development while seeking perfection, determination in self-development, overcoming own weaknesses, dealing with stress, mental health, great wellbeing, emotional connection with karate (it is their passion, they do what they love), dutifulness, responsibility, punctuality, solidarity, reliability, character, discipline, consistency in action, persistence. Our findings are in agreement with other research [11]. Kalina and Jagiełło claim that martial arts generate positive values relating to mental traits [5]. The Okinawan master Oyata states that the positive traits of character are essential factors in the basic karate training as no martial art can be practiced without mental discipline [11]. The surveyed individuals equally prefer positive personal interactions, especially: integrity, truthfulness, positive relations with other people, loyalty and later, endurance, sacrifice for others, friendly attitude towards others, helping others, teaching (teacher's example, teaching skills, way of passing knowledge), relations with people, colleagues and friends, meeting new people, satisfaction with students' progress, respect for the first trainers.

The participants noticed negative situations in the karate movement and expressed their wishes for The Polish Karate Federation to function normally and for shotokan to be in one association; they also wished that karate fighters become one group of respectful people who follow the Do Karate Etiquette. Sterkowicz confirms the adoption of the values by the surveyed individuals by stating that one of the most essential values adopted by karate fighters are proper relations with other people [12]. Harasymowicz emphasizes the need for cooperation with others [13]. Karate carries also philosophical values. According to the surveyed individuals, these are: way of self-realization, purpose of life, path of life, following Do Karate Etiquette in everyday life. Nakamura claims that karate is also philosophy, ethics, harmony between body and mind, spiritual discipline [14]. Habersetzer confirms that by saying that real karate fighters are most of all seekers of the path (Do) [15]. Of the aspects of physical fitness, the surveyed individuals state that karate provides such values as perfect karate technique, fitness, physical shape, coordination, strength which are the ones that lie at the base of martial art training; it is confirmed by others [16]. The surveyed participants merely indicate health advantages of karate. However, there are researchers who emphasize the health promoting

aspects of karate [17,18]. The participants of this study seem to think that karate is also a sport discipline, competition gives opportunity for travelling to tournaments.

The older seniors karate fighters also show the aesthetic aspects of karate and refer to it as art. In their opinion, practicing karate allows to learn about the culture of the Far East. They also note that karate brings opportunity to earn money.

To summarize, the surveyed older seniors karate fighters have evolved in relation to this martial art. As the time passed, the trainings allowed them to learn more about karate and conclude that it affects the adepts on many levels. Karate is not only a form of physical activity but also conveys values of positive personal interactions. It also facilitates development of positive personal traits and gradually becoming a part of a karate fighters' personality as well as their path of life (Do). The values of karate are the educational examples to follow even in culturally different areas, which has been confirmed.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The values adopted by older seniors karate fighters refer mainly to the positive features of characters and positive personal interactions and secondly to philosophy. Further, they the values referring to fitness, health and sporting aspects, aesthetic as well as cultural and financial values.
2. The older seniors karate fighters are aware of the negative situations in the karate community in Poland. They claim that karate fighters, regardless of their opinions in mutual relations, should follow the rules stated in the Do Karate Etiquette which promote mutual respect.
3. Based on the values adopted by older seniors karate fighters, it is right to assume that a karate training determines creation of positive personal features, facilitates creation and preserving positive personal interactions in the community. Karate influences keeping in good health and shape, it prepares for sport competitions, facilitates learning about the Far East culture and provides opportunity to earn money.
4. The values adopted by older seniors karate fighters are the model for acting in everyday life, they are way of life and part of their personality
5. Karate is seen as carrier of values universally accepted in many cultures.

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