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Psychological Research on Karate (Martial) Artists

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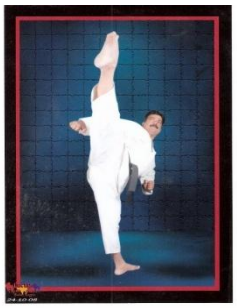


ABSTRACT

*In this article, we problematize **Sports Psychology** research on Karate(**Martial Artists)** and offer some suggestions for advancing our knowledge in this area of research and practice. First, we review the previous research in the field. Then we introduce "cultural praxis" as a theoretical framework that will guide our analysis. Finally, we engage sociological studies of female fighters in conjunction with the adopted theoretical lens to outline the limitations of sport psychological research with regards to the experiences of women. It seems that the majority of the studies have used the male athlete as the norm, while research on the female athlete remains limited and focused on "differences". Focusing persistently on gender differences, without drawing at all on gender theory reflects a gender bias, which seems to be engrained in sport psychology studies. Recent sociological studies have shed some light on the experiences of female martial artists, but have paid scant attention to the constantly changing locale in which female athletes operate. Here, we suggest "cultural praxis" as an intervention to gain insights into the behaviors, values, and emotions of the other sex athletes.*

Sports psychology is the study of how psychology influences sports, athletic performance, exercise and physical activity. Some sports psychologists work with professional athletes and coaches to improve performance and increase motivation. Other professionals utilize exercise and sports to enhance people's lives and well-being throughout the entire lifespan. Sports psychology is a relatively young discipline within psychology. In 1920, Carl Diem founded the world's first sports psychology laboratory at the Deutsche Sporthochschule in Berlin, Germany. In 1925, two more sports psychology labs were established – one by A.Z. Puni at the Institute of Physical Culture in Leningrad and the other by Coleman Griffith at the University of Illinois.

Key words: Combat Sports, Karate (Martial Arts), Cultural praxis, Female athletes, Gender

Feminist researchers have argued that women's Martial Arts, similar to women's participation in other traditionally male sports, have not been taken seriously (Halbert, 1997), and have largely been hidden from history (Hargreaves, 1997). Although women have

partaken in martial arts far longer than most people would ever suspect and female participation in combat sports has increased recently (Hargreaves, 1997; Macro, Viveiros, & Cipriano, 2009), research on this subject remains a relatively new field.

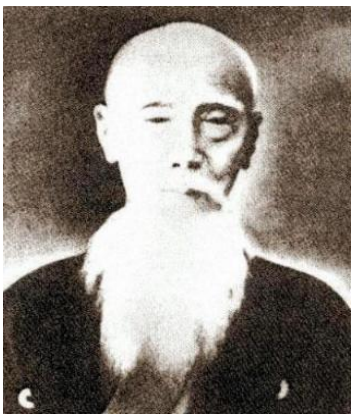
While sport psychology research on **Martial Arts** has been reviewed in the past (see Fuller's review, 1988; Martin, 2006, for a literature review on the psychological benefits of martial arts training; and Vertonghen & Theeboom, 2010, for a review on the psychological outcomes for youth of martial arts training), this paper is an attempt at an updated review of the existing research in the field, and an examination of the literature from the gender and cultural studies viewpoint. In this review, we use the terms combat sports and martial arts interchangeably to refer to all combat systems. Furthermore, this paper aims at advancing the arguments for a contextualised approach in sport psychology made by critical scholars of sport (e.g., Krane & Baird, 2005; Ryba & Wright, 2005; Stambulova & Alfermann, 2009; Thorpe, 2009). Following these aims, first we review the extant sport psychology research on martial artists. Then we introduce "cultural praxis" as a theoretical framework that will guide our analysis. Finally, we draw on sociological studies of female fighters in conjunction with the adopted theoretical lens to offer a critical gender analysis.

Karate (Martial Art)

Martial arts can be generally defined as any structured system of fighting. Systems of martial arts have been around for thousands of years. While there is no exact time known, the earliest martial art is believed to have begun 3000 years ago in China. The difficulty in determining when and where martial arts began, is due to the sparse historical records available in Asia. Though originally there were only a few systems, over time a large number of martial arts styles was practiced. Some of the ones taught today include T'ai Chi, Kung Fu, Karate, Judo, and Taekwondo. Even within these styles of martial arts there are many variants and within these systems there are many variants. Some are based on the unique characteristics of the founder of the style, others are focused on a particular fighting method (Urban, 1993). Often these styles are difficult for children because they are either too militant, require too much fighting contact, are not presented in a way that kids can understand (low level of teaching training for instructors), or the curriculum is not structured for kids. Our study will focus on the American Taekwondo Association (ATA), the largest centrally administered (single style) martial arts association in the world. (Lee, 1993) This style has programs for children in over 900 of schools across the United States and the world. Although the roots of Taekwondo can be traced back to 300 B.C., The actual word "Taekwondo" was not adopted until the year 1955. Because of the Japanese occupation of Korea, the martial arts in Korea were only taught in secret. After Korean liberation from Japan, a war general, Hong Hi Choi began a movement to unify the styles of training into one body. The words used at that time reflected the Japanese and Chinese influence on the martial arts so he presented the name

"Taekwondo" at a conference on April 11, 1955. It became recognized then as the national art of Korea. Taekwondo is made up of three words: "Tae" which means to kick or jump, "Kwon" which means the fist or the hand, and "Do" which means the way or path as a way of life. Altogether this can be translated as the "way of the hand and foot" (Lee, 1993a). One Taekwondo program from the ATA is called Karate for Kids. This program is designed for kids 7 years of age and up. The features of this Taekwondo program are based on the concept that each student is different and has different needs. The building blocks for this are based on 12 themes that are integrated into classes such as goal setting, self-control, courtesy, integrity, friendship, confidence, self-awareness, self-esteem, perseverance, self improvement, respect, and dedication back to 300 B.C., The actual word "Taekwondo" was not adopted until the year 1955. Because of the Japanese occupation of Korea, the martial arts in Korea were only taught in secret. After Korean liberation from Japan, a war general, Hong Hi Choi began a movement to unify the styles of training into one body. The words used at that time reflected the Japanese and Chinese influence on the martial arts so he presented the name "Taekwondo" at a conference on April 11, 1955. It became recognized then as the national art of Korea. Taekwondo is made up of three words: "Tae" which means to kick or jump, "Kwon" which means the fist or the hand, and "Do" which means the way or path as a way of life. Altogether this can be translated as the "way of the hand and foot" (Lee, 1993a). One Taekwondo program from the ATA is called Karate for Kids. This program is designed for kids 7 years of age and up. The features of this Taekwondo program are based on the concept that each student is different and has different needs. The building blocks for this are based on 12 themes that are integrated into classes such as goal setting, self-control, courtesy, integrity, friendship, confidence, self-awareness, self-esteem, perseverance, self improvement, respect, and dedication. A review of martial arts literature will focus on current martial arts research in related areas. The literature surrounding martial arts comes from a variety of sources. Some is academic research, some is historical, and some are from individuals with years of martial arts training, but little academic or scientific background. While all of these sources are valid and useful, we will primarily examine scholarly research.

History of Karate



In its current form, karate is less than 200 years old however it has roots that date back-thousands-of-years.

The art originated on the island of Okinawa and in its early form was heavily influenced by ancient Chinese martial arts, collectively known as kung fu.

The Beginnings of Karate History on Okinawa

The history of Okinawan Karate can be traced back to the late 17th century when a ban on weapons was imposed by the samurai rulers of Japan.

The exact evolution of karate history is lost due to the lack of information being written down which is unsurprising when taking into account the strict rules against subjects of the island learning martial arts.

This meant that all training by early masters such as Kanga Tode Sakugawa (pictured) and Sokon 'Bushi' Matsumura, had to be done in secret and as weapons could not be carried on the island, self-defence tended to revolve around empty handed techniques.

The earliest surviving written evidence of karate in Okinawa was a mention of the word Tode (the Okinawan name for the art) in the late 1700s. It was in reference to a visitor to the island from China named Kushanku who taught a form of Kung Fu and may have introduced the first version of the Shotokan kata kanku dai. Tode style blended with the martial arts already being cultivated on the island which was known as Te, meaning 'hand'.

Te was popular in three cities in particular, Shuri, Naha and Tamarai. Each city had its own way of doing the martial arts and modern day styles reflect this; Shotokan and Shito-ryu are mostly influenced by the style from the city of Shuri, that is Shuri-te, and to a lesser extent Tamarai-te. Goju-ryu on the other hand is more influenced by Naha-te.

Karate History and its Development into a World Martial Art

At the turn of the 20th century, Anko Itosu gained permission to end the shroud of secrecy for those who wanted to learn martial arts and began teaching Te in Okinawan schools. This led to further expansion by one of Itosu's students, Sensei Gichin Funakoshi, who introduced the art to Japan in 1922.

Funakoshi made many modifications to the art to make it more accessible to the Japanese including changing the name and karate as we know it today was born. Towards the end of his life, Funakoshi was instrumental in forming the Japanese Karate Association (JKA) which set about making karate a world martial art by sending out its best instructors to teach it all over the globe.

Today, karate is practiced by millions of people right across the world and although the lines are often blurred between karate history facts and exaggerations or legends, the contribution made by the old Okinawan masters and those that followed them should not be forgotten.

The word KARATE or the EMPTYHAND derived from the Japanese character 'Kara" meaning empty and "te" meaning hand. It took it's origin from the yet existing South Indian Art of Kalaripayat. This art was conveyed by the Indian prince Bodhidharma, from the south of India across the Himalayas to China There he established the famous Shaolin Temples,

Where he taught his students method to built endurance and physical strength required to carry out the rigid discipline that was part of **Buddhism** . KARATE in Okinawa (Japan) where **it** actually became a way of life then in art. The farmers and inhabitants of Okinawa were competed to use KARATE as a method of survival spite of all advantages this form of art could not spring in to prominence and was in danger of slow death. Keeping this mind, the World Karate Federation (WKF) was formed by the great masters of KARATE around the world to regulate and co-ordinate the growth of KARATE as an art. In order to generate an interest towards. Karate is a martial art of Okinawan origin. Okinawa is an island in Japan. Karate is a synthesis of indigenous Okinawan fighting methods and southern Chinese martial arts.Karate is primarily a striking art, featuring punching, kicking, knee/elbow strikes and open hand techniques; however, grappling, joint manipulations, locks, restraints, throws, and vital point striking are inherent in the finer points of the art.Karate is characterized by the use of the hips and stances to generate striking power, by the distinctive use of breathing to focus power, and by the practice of prearranged forms. The prearranged forms are called kata. A person who practices karate is sometimes referred to as a karate-ka.

In Japanese, karate-ka means "karate practitioner".Karate is also called karate-dō.Hence, KARATE — the form of self defence, has acquired an importance place in the daily lives of million and millions of people in India, Due to advance technology and modern infrastructure the concepts of self defence through KARATE has eroded to a large extant today,

KARATE training benefits an individual by instilling a discipline and mature way of 1ife. Moreover, in our mechanized world, physical fitness placed an important part, which can be achieved through rigorous training session.

The police forces of various states and paramilitary forces are being trained in KARATE. I am also giving KARATE training to police and paramilitary Force. Similarly almost all the schools and colleges have introduced KARATE as a part of their sports curriculum. Marital art training and to promote and popularize the art, the concept of SPORTS KARATE was introduce by WKF.

Karate-do :- Karate was originally called 'Te', meaning hand. Later, the name karate was adopted, which means empty hand or Chinese hand. The word karate is formed by two characters, the first one is 'Kara' (empty) and the other is 'Te' (Hand), **Do** (way). Karate-do means is empty hand way.

Kihon :- are basic techniques; punching; kicking and blocking, together with more advanced techniques such as sweeps and throws.

KIHON PERFORMANCE

KIHON PERFORMANCE

Kata :- are set sequences of karate techniques, lasting between one and three minutes depending on the kata. There are more than twenty different kata, initially you will learn one new kata for each grading. As one might expect, the kata increase in difficulty and complexity as you progress through the grades. A kata can be thouhght of as stylized combat, and an interesting area of study is the application of a section of kata to actual fighting with an opponent. Kata (型:かた) means literally "shape" or "model." Kata is a formalized sequence of movements which represent various offensive and defensive postures. These postures are based on idealized combat applications. The applications when applied in a

demonstration with real opponents is referred to as a Bunkai. The Bunkai shows how every stance and movement is used. Bunkai is a useful tool to understand a kata. To attain a formal rank the karateka must demonstrate competent performance of specific required kata for that level. The Japanese terminology for grades or ranks is commonly used. Requirements for examinations vary among schools.

KATA PERFORMANCE BY JAPAN TEAM

KATA PERFORMANCE

Kumite :- is fighting, usually sparing with one or more opponents. There are different forms of kumite, starting from basic pre-arranged five-step sparing, through basic one-step sparing and semi-free one-step sparing, to free sparing.

Kumite Performance by Women fighters

Kumite Performance by KIDS fighters

Sparring in Karate is called kumite (組手:くみて). It literally means "meeting of hands." Kumite is practiced both as a sport and as self-defense training.

Levels of physical contact during sparring vary considerably. Full contact karate has several variants. Knockdown karate (such as Kyokushin) uses full power techniques to bring an opponent to the ground. In kickboxing variants (for example K-1), the preferred win is by knockout. Sparring in armour, *bogu kumite*, allows full power techniques with some safety. Sport kumite in many international competition under the World Karate Federation is free or structured with light contact or semi contact and points are awarded by a referee.

In structured kumite (*yakusoku*, prearranged), two participants perform a choreographed series of techniques with one striking while the other blocks. The form ends with one devastating technique (*hito tsuki*).

In free sparring (Jiyu Kumite), the two participants have a free choice of scoring techniques. The allowed techniques and contact level are primarily determined by sport or style organization policy, but might be modified according to the age, rank and sex of the participants. Depending upon style, take-downs, sweeps and in some rare cases even time-limited grappling on the ground are also allowed.

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Free sparring is performed in a marked or closed area. The bout runs for a fixed time (2 to 3 minutes.) The time can run continuously (*iri kume*) or be stopped for referee judgment. In light contact or semi contact kumite, points are awarded based on the criteria: good form, sporting attitude, vigorous application, awareness/*zanshin*, good timing and correct distance. In full contact karate kumite, points are based on the results of the impact, rather than the formal appearance of the scoring technique.

The World Karate Federation (WKF) is the largest sport karate organization and is recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as being responsible for karate competition in the Olympic Games.[29] The WKF has developed common rules governing all styles. The national WKF organizations coordinate with their respective National Olympic Committees.

WKF karate competition has two disciplines: sparring (*kumite*) and forms (*kata*). Competitors may enter either as individuals or as part of a team. Evaluation for kata and kobudō is performed by a panel of judges, whereas sparring is judged by a head referee, usually with assistant referees at the side of the sparring area. Sparring matches are typically divided by weight, age, gender, and experience.[30]

WKF only allows membership through one national organization/federation per country to which clubs may join. The World Union of Karate-do Federations (WUKF)[31] offers different styles and federations a world body they may join, without having to compromise their style or size. The WUKF accepts more than one federation or association per country.

Belt in Karate(Martial Art)

Hayashi-ha karate today

A long term student, Mitsuya Seinosuke, Hanshi 8th, today promotes the Hayashi-Ha-Karate-dō and Kobudō in his organization called Mitsuya-Kai International. A large number of dojo are affiliated with this organization in various countries such as Germany, Italy, Finland, Hungary, Venezuela, Switzerland, Belgium, Greece, Ivory Coast, Botswana and others. Hanshi Mitsuya currently resides in Palermo, Sicily. In USA (Seattle Washington & Hawaii) Hayashi-Ha-Karate-dō is run by Akio Minakami at his Minakami Karate Dojos.

Soke Mitsuya Seinosuke

Seinosuke MITSUYA (三ツ矢誓之助) was born on 4th of October in Osaka, Japan. At the age of 14, he began the study of martial arts (Karate and Kobudo) under the guidance of Master Teruo HAYASHI (1924 - 2004).

He graduated from the “Kansai Gaikokugo Daigaku” University of Osaka. During his university education, he collaborated with Master Teruo HAYASHI (1924 - 2004) as his assistant in his central dojo, teaching karate and kobudo.

It is a great achievement in Japan to become a captain of the Martial Arts club of a University; Hanshi MITSUYA became not only the captain of his university club but he was also managing and coordinating several other university clubs in Osaka. The 70's were very difficult years in Japan but Hanshi MITSUYA already then showed his talent and dedication as a great leader and martial artist.

He received many special lessons from Soke HAYASHI (1924 - 2004) to perfect his skills and to be prepared to diffuse the original Hayashi-ha Karate-dō and Kobu-dō all around the world. He was top student of Soke HAYASHI and he became the first official representative of Japan Karate-do “Hayashi-ha Shito-ryu Kai” and Kobudo "Kenshinryu" organizations outside Japan. His unique task made him the principal exponent of these styles, presenting them all around the world. This role was instrumental for the great success and expansion of this school of traditional Japanese Martial Arts which was almost unknown in those days.

In the early 70’s Hanshi MITSUYA relocated to Seattle, USA, demostrating traditional Japanese Karate-Dō and Kobu-Dō in many events and teaching the dojos in the States of Oregon and Washington.

In 1973, he moved to Europe where he has made himself and the original Hayashi-ha style (Karate-Dō & Kobu-Dō) known in Sweden, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, England, Switzerland, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Belgium, in South America in Venezuela and in Africa in the Ivory Coast and Botswana.

Grand Master MITSUYA holds the rank of 8th Dan and title of Hanshi given by Soke HAYASHI Teruo (1924 - 2004). He holds one of the highest ranks of Japan Karate-Dō “Hayashi-ha Shito-ryu” & Kobu-Dō “Kenshinryu” styles.

Hanshi MITSUYA has demonstrated his very high quality, refined and effective techniques around the world through seminars, meetings and presentations for almost 40 years. Today Hanshi MITSUYA continues his work, with ever renewed spirit, through the MITSUYA-KAI International organization to dedicate himself to teaching and diffusing the original Hayashi-ha style all around the world.

Chief-Master Mitsuya-Kai International

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In Japan, to become a captain of the Martial Arts club of the University is a great achievement; Mitsuya became the captain of his university club, and he managed and coordinated several other university clubs in Osaka area too.

The last 60's and earliest 70's were very difficult years in Japanese society, but Seinosuke MITSUYA showed already his talent and dedication as a great leader and martial artist. He received many special lessons from Master HAYASHI to perfect his skills and to be prepared to diffuse the original Hayashi-ha Karate-do and Kobu-do all around the world.

Mitsuya became the best direct student of master Hayashi's all life. He always supported master Hayashi specially on international area,

becaming the first official representative Instructor of Japan Karate-do "Hayashi-ha Shito-ryu Kai" (Founded 1971) and Kobudo "Kenshinryu" organizations outside Japan and his unique task made him the principal exponent of these styles presenting them all around the world. This role was instrumental for the great success and expansion of traditional Japanese Martial Arts School, that in early times was still unknown.

In the early 1972, Seinosuke MITSUYA moved to Seattle, USA, demostrating traditional Japanese Karate-Do and Kobu-Do in many events and teaching at 5 dojos in the States of Washington and Oregon (PortLand). In 1973, he moved to Europe, where, he showed himself and tought in Sweden, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, Finland, Greece, Hungary and Belgium.

And then, in Venezuela, in the Ivory Coast, Botswana and India-Kerala.

Master MITSUYA held the rank of 8th Dan and title of Hanshi given by Souke HAYASHI Teruo, he became highest rank and top student of Souke HAYASHI's organization (Japan Karate-Do "Hayashi-ha Shito-ryu" & Kobu-Do "Kenshinryu" style).

Hanshi MITSUYA has demonstrated his very high quality, refined and effective techniques in many occasions around the world by seminar, meetings and presentations for over 40 years. Today Souke MITSUYA is continuing his work, with ever renewed spirit, through the MITSUYA-KAI International organization and his style devoting himself in the teaching and diffusion all around the world.

Different Forms of Karate (Martial Arts) in India

Martial arts is a part of India's ancient culture and a traditional games. Originally a traditional form of martial art that started in South India, and now it has different names and different forms in the culture of the regions in India. Khusti The Indian Wrestling is also a part of Indian Martial arts found throughout the India. Indian martial arts has an important influence in the development of modern Asian martial arts. Nowadays a sense of self-defense and for fitness lots of people are opting for martial arts. As in other respects of Indian culture, Indian martial arts can be roughly divided into northern and southern styles.

Kalarippayattu is a famous Indian martial art from land of attraction Kerala and one of the oldest fighting systems in existence. It is practiced in most of the part of south India. A kalari is the school or training hall where martial arts are taught. It includes strikes, kicks and some weapon based practiced, Foot work patterns is most important key in Kalarippayattu. It is the best Indian martial art that has been used in many movies to make it popular, like Ashoka and The myth

Kalarippayattu

Silambam

Silambamis a weapon-based Indian martial art from Tamil Nadu. Every states has it own style of martial arts. A wide variety of weapons are used in silamban, some of which are not found anywhere else in the world. Silambam art also used animal movements of snake, tiger, eagle forms and footwork patterns is play a key role here as well. Another part of Silambam is Kuttu varisai, it is the unarmed kind of martial art.

Gatka

Gatkais weapon-based Indian martial art basically created by the Sikhs of Punjab.There are many weapons used in Gatka like, Stick, Talwar, kirpan and kataar. The attacking and defense methods are based upon the positions of the hands feet and nature of weapons used. It is also displayed during the different celebrations or at fairs in Punjab.

Musti Yuddha

It is unarmed martial art from the oldest city of India "Varanasi". Technique used in this martial arts are punches, kicks, knees and elbow strikes. This style is a complete art of physical, mental and spiritual development. This art is very rarely visible but was very popular in middle age.

Thang Ta

Thang Ta is popular term for the ancient Manipuri Martial Art also known as HUYEN LALLONG. Manipuri martial arts with swords and spears, is a strong yet gracefully sophisticated art.

Lathi

Lathi is an ancient armed martial art of India. It also refers one of the world's oldest weapons used in martial arts. Lathi or stick martial arts practiced in Punjab and Bengal region of India. Lathi still remains a popular sport in Indian villages.

Mardani Khel

Mardani Khel is an armed method of martial art created by the Maratha. This traditional martial art of Maharashtra is practiced in kolhapur.

Pari-Khanda

Pari-khandaa style of sword and shield fighting from Bihar. This art is created by the rajputs. Pari-khanda steps and techniques are also used in Chau dance.

Kathi Samu

Kathi Samu is very old Indian martial art originated in Andhra Pradesh and was used by mastered of the royal armies of Andhra Pradesh. The martial art is also known as Sword Fight or Daal Fariya.

Methods

We searched for relevant articles in the PsycInfo and SPORTDiscus with full text databases, using the key words of **Martial Arts, Combat Sports, Karate, Judo, Jiu jitsu, Boxing, Wrestling, Taekwondo**, gender, and psychology that appear either in the title, abstract or among identified key words. For reasons of accessibility, we limited our review to English language research articles published in international journals. We excluded nonscientific articles and research irrelevant to our topic, such as testing of athletes' physical fitness. Psychological research that used non-competitive forms of Martial Arts (e.g., **Tai Chi, Aikido**) was also excluded, as our focus is on athletes and not on recreational participants. However, we included studies that had a mixed sample of competitive and non-competitive

martial artists. Sociological studies that emerged in our database search were included to critique the existing sport psychology research. There were 38 psychological and sociological, refereed journal articles, published between 1980 and 2010, that met the established criteria. Adopting a "presentist" viewpoint, which entails the reflection of past research through the lens of present-day knowledge (Kontos, 2010), our analysis of the identified studies was guided by the following questions: What research questions do sport psychologists tend to investigate while studying female vs. male martial artists? What theories inform their research on gender? How are gender differences explained? What are the implications of the extant psychological research for how female and male athletes are constituted?

Research on alternative methods for improving children's self-concept is common. One often promoted method is through martial arts training, but there has been minimal study using a controlled experimental design. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the Karate for Kids martial arts program in improving self-concept and physical fitness.

Children in today's society are exposed to an increasing number of stresses and expectations. While research on improving student education is common, there may not be enough emphasis on some non-academic aspects of the children's development, such as the related constructs of self-concept and self-esteem. Research has shown these characteristics to be important to childhood development and academic performance (Burke, Ellison & Hunt, 1985). Therefore both teachers and counselors may benefit from referral options for child clients with poor self-concept. In recent years martial arts has been suggested as a method to help people improve in these areas (Prince, 1996). While there has been some research regarding martial arts and self-concept, there is little controlled experimental data regarding children specifically. This study will attempt to measure particular benefits of martial arts training, specifically self-concept and physical fitness.

Reviewing extant Sport Psychology research

Sport psychology studies on competitive martial artists In this section, we offer a brief summary of reviewed psychological research on men and women in combat sports. Based on the nature of the sample, we grouped the papers into two categories: 1) studies on competitive martial artists and 2) studies with mixed samples of competitive and non-competitive martial artists. In this overview, we maintain language used by the authors of the reviewed articles. The earliest published Sport Psychology Research on competitive athletes, generated by our database search, is a paper by d'Arripe- Longueville, Fournier and Dubois (1998) examining coaches' and athletes' perceptions concerning their effective interactions. In-depth interviews of male coaches and female athletes of the French judo national team revealed that the coaches used an authoritarian interaction style. Coaches perceived strategies such as provoking athletes verbally, displaying indifference, entering into direct conflict, and showing preferences as effective, and believed that pushing athletes to their limits makes them mentally tougher. In their interactions with the coaches, female athletes (who could not question the coaches' authority) implemented strategies of showing diplomacy, achieving exceptional performance, soliciting coaches directly, diversifying information sources, and bypassing.

Conventional rules

Examining the psychological impact of a one-week period of deprivation from training at brown and black belt levels in Shotokan karate, Szabo and Parkin (2001) found that advanced athletes experienced a severe mood disturbance during the one week of abstinence from training, irrespective of the individual's sex. Szabo and Parkin speculated that this 'surprising' finding might be due to the fact that the female athletes performed martial arts at an advanced level, and therefore developed particular traits or characteristics fostered by values and training practices at black belt level in martial arts. Research of Hanin and colleagues stemmed from the Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF) model and focused on the emotions of highly-skilled karateka (Robazza, Bortoli, & Hanin, 2004; Ruiz & Hanin, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). Robazza and colleagues (2004) investigated the effectiveness of individual-oriented predictions of performance in Italian athletes. Specifically, the authors examined the practical utility of the in/out-of-zone notion as applied to the idiosyncratic intensity and content of emotions, bodily symptoms, and task-specific qualities in predicting performance assessed by individualised emotional profiles. Results showed that the emotions and bodily responses of the athletes differed between successful and average performances. Ruiz and Hanin (2004a, 2004b, 2004c) extended the research on performance and athletes' subjective emotional experiences. Investigating the utility of integrating metaphor self-generation method and individualized emotion profiling in the description of performance states in elite Spanish karateka, Ruiz and Hanin (2004a) concluded that the content of metaphors that the athletes used to describe their emotional states was different prior to, during, and after performances as well as across best and worst competition. High action readiness was manifested in best performance situations, while low action readiness was reflected in worst performance situations. A follow-up further revealed that the original metaphors were retained, indicating that athletes' perception of performance situation remains stable over time. Athletes experienced anger more frequently after worst performances, although anger symptoms were present in both best and worst performances. The words that the athletes used to describe their anger states, as well as the intensity of anger in best and worst performances, varied considerably for each individual, indicating the highly idiosyncratic nature of anger descriptors and intensity, and the need for individualized measures and interventions (Ruiz & Hanin, 2004b). Ruiz and Hanin (2004c) further found that ka- rate athletes' optimal states were characterized by both pleasant and unpleasant emotions, and were perceived as temporary and dynamic. This finding, according to the authors, indicates the need for self-regulation to maintain these states. Findings also revealed that athletes did use different strategies to produce these states, such as relaxation techniques and visualization. Several scholars have focused on achievement goal orientations and motivational processes of martial art athletes. Gernigon, d'Arripe- Longueville, Delignières, and Ninot (2004) explored how states of involvement toward mastery, performance approach, and performanceavoidance goals were interrelated and activated during a practice of judo combat. In other words, authors explored whether athletes can experience more than one state (task and ego involvement) at a given moment. A judo training session was video recorded and the study was based on the combat between two male, national level judo athletes. The judokas were asked to watch the video and indicate their moment-to-moment levels of involvement toward each goal. Goal involvement states were subject to fast variations that could result in frequent changes in the dominant goal focus. The authors

further concluded that states of mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance involvement can be interrelated in all kinds of patterns.

Mrockowska (2004) investigated gender differences in motivation and success expectance in a group of fencers that was divided into four subgroups (women with high vs. low success expectance, men with high vs. low success expectance). Self-ratings revealed that men with lower success anticipation rate internal motives (such as friendship and enjoyment) significantly higher than men with high success expectance, who are strongly motivated by external motives (such as winning and social appreciation). No significant differences were found between the two subgroups of women; however, there was a tendency for women with strong self-confidence in their abilities to be prompt to follow internal motives. More recently Mrockowska (2007) investigated whether women with dissimilar patterns of "masculinity" function differently when placed in rivalry situations. Particularly, the author studied professional female fencers and judokas, with regard to their cognitive-motivational structures of personality (motivation to achieve, sense of internal versus external control, and self-evaluation of own predispositions and chances of success in sport) after dividing them into two groups of high and low expression of "masculine" pattern. Questionnaires revealed that the athletes with a strongly developed "maleness" perceived their future success with greater probability and rated their psychophysical features, efforts and capabilities in sport higher than did their poorly "masculine" counterparts. Furthermore, the female athletes with the weakly developed "masculine" pattern expressed a fearful motivation of achievements, which translates into perceiving threats rather than factors favoring arrival at the desired goal. The author concluded that "in a rivalry situation a woman without mental readiness to use the 'masculine' pattern fears much worse than her counterpart presenting with a pronounced willingness to enjoy the man-like repertoire of behaviors" (Mrockowska, 2007, p. 283).

In another study, Mrockowska's (2009) comparison of the perceptions of competence and aspirations between female and male fencers revealed that "women's perceptions of the high chance of sporting success was a much rarer phenomenon than in the case of men" (Mrockowska, 2009, p. 232). More than half of the female athletes estimated their chances of sporting success as average, while more than half of the male athletes estimated their probability of success as high. Moreover, women with high self-assessment of the chances of success were characterized by a strong task motivational orientation and high self-assessment of their own sporting abilities. In contrast, women with low self-assessment of chances of success were characterized by a strong ego motivational orientation and low self-assessment of their sporting predispositions. A number of research papers focused on the effect of certain colours in contest outcomes. Hill and Barton (2005) analysed outcomes from the 2004 Olympic Games of the men divisions in boxing, taekwondo, Greco-Roman wrestling, and freestyle wrestling and found that wearing a red outfit was associated with a higher winning probability compared to wearing a blue outfit. Hill and Barton offered an explanation based on evolutionary psychology, arguing that red colour is a signal of male dominance in many animal species. Rowe, Harris and Roberts (2005) proposed that this effect is not unique for red coloration. After analyzing outcomes of men's judo contests in the 2004 Olympic Games, they found a significant winning bias for athletes wearing a blue outfit relative to those wearing a white outfit. They proposed that colour of the outfit might affect opponent's visibility which is crucial for performance. However, Dijkstra and Preenen (2008) argued that there exists no winning bias for blue in judo and that findings by Rowe et al. were perplexing. After re-analysing the outcomes of the 2004 men's Olympic Games, as well as additional

contest outcomes of 71 major judo tournaments, authors concluded that athletes wearing blue are no more likely to win than those wearing white.

Sport psychology studies with mixed samples it seems that sport psychology research on mixed samples of competitive and non-competitive martial artists started much earlier than research focused exclusively on competitive athletes (see Table 2). As Gill and Kamph off (2010) explain, this might be due to the strong emphasis on applied sport psychology during the 1990s that narrowed down the research focus to performance outcomes and elite sport. The earliest published sport psychology research generated by our database search is a paper by Rothpearl (1980), examining personality traits of martial artists. Self-reports revealed that intermediate athletes showed a greater variety of hostile modes of expression than both beginner and advanced athletes. In general, the effects of martial arts training on aggressiveness have gathered great research attention. It seems that longterm martial arts training can reduce aggressiveness (Daniels & Thornton 1990, 1992; Lamarre & Nosanchuk, 1999; Nosanchuk, 1981; Skelton, Glynn, & Berta, 1991), especially when training includes elements from the traditional approaches to martial arts, such as kata (Nosanchuk & MacNeil, 1989). Specifically, Nosanchuk (1981) and later Lamarre and Nosanchuk (1999) focused on the effects of Asian martial arts training on aggressiveness, revealing a decrease in aggressiveness over the years of practice, which was independent of the participants' sex (Lamarre & Nosanchuk, 1999). Comparing self-reported data from male martial artists and athletes of other sports, Daniels and Thornton (1990, 1992) suggested that participation in the martial arts is associated, over time, with decreased feelings of assault and verbal hostility.

With regard to gender, some interesting results were found by Bjorkqvist and Varhama (2001), who investigated whether karatekas have more negative attitudes toward violent conflict resolution than wrestlers and boxers, noncontact athletes, and controls practicing no sports. The findings showed that male karateka held relatively negative attitudes toward violent conflict resolution, whereas the opposite was noted for female karateka. The attitude scores of female karateka were higher than those of other female groups, suggesting that they may be more prone to accept violent conflict resolution compared to other female participants. Authors assumed that women may associate karate with a right to defend themselves physically against assault, while men tend to associate karate with nonviolent defense. Some additional question-marks remain regarding the psychological effects of martial arts training on children and youth. While research by Skelton et al. (1991) showed that high level of taekwondo training was associated with less aggressiveness, Endresen and Olweus (2005) found contradictory results, questioning the positive effects of martial arts training. Endresen and Olweus (2005) examined the relationship between participation in power or fight sports (boxing, wrestling, weight lifting, oriental martial arts) and violent and antisocial behaviour in young boys. Participation in these sports actually increased violent and antisocial behaviour. Early work by Miller, Wagner, and Edwards (1982) focused on fearfulness. It would seem that this study did not contextualize martial arts as competitive sports. Investigating the psychological effects of practicing martial arts as a form of self-defense, Miller et.al (1982) studied whether women enrolled in beginner and advanced judo-jujitsu classes in a mid-west American city were more fearful than women enrolled in fitness or crafts classes. The authors reasoned that "as women increasingly enter domains previously perceived as male dominated, it seems likely that at least some are doing so as a reaction to threat, and the coping methods subsequently utilized take an added significance" (Miller et al., 1982, p. 341). In their survey, women in the beginner's judo-jujitsu group perceived the

world as more threatening than women in the advanced judo-jujitsu group, fitness group or crafts group. As it was only the beginner judo-jujitsu participants who exhibited significant fearfulness and bodily concern, the researchers suggested that the advanced group was more successful in managing perceived environmental threat due to their sporting achievements.

Miller and colleagues concluded that results obtained, support the contention that "certain characteristics are peculiar to women who seek out a particular physical activity" (p. 342), thus implicating fearfulness and bodily concerns to be "peculiar" to women who enroll in martial arts. Another topic that gathered research attention was visual search activity in martial arts. Ripoll, Kerlirzin, Stein, and Reine (1995) analyzed information processing, decision making, and visual search activity in French boxing. Six experts, six intermediate, and six novice athletes whose gender was not indicated were asked to solve different boxing situations, in which a boxer, considered as an opponent, was video-recorded and the image projected into a screen. The participants had to respond to the attacks of the opponent by manipulating a joystick. The visual search activity of the athletes was recorded and analyzed, and results indicated that experts adopted a more efficient search pattern while they also focused on different display areas than novices. Continuing the research on visual search, Williams and Elliott (1999) examined the effects of cognitive anxiety on anticipation and visual search behavior, as well as the differences in anticipation and visual search strategy between expert and novice karatekas. Results indicated that there were no differences between groups in number of fixations, mean fixation duration, or total number of fixation locations per trial. However, increased search activity was more pronounced in novices, with fixations moving from central to peripheral body locations. Columbus and Rice (1998) attempted to shed some light on the dimensions by which American martial artists describe martial arts participation as a meaningful endeavour. Authors argued that even though Asian martial arts grow in popularity in North America, little is known about everyday experiences of the American practitioners that might in- fluence participation, which might differ a lot from the traditional Asian values attributed to martial arts. Phenomenological analysis of written narratives of karate, taekwondo, and tai chi practitioners revealed four contexts in which martial arts were considered as worthwhile activities for participants: criminal victimization, growth and discovery, life transition, and task performance. In each of the four contexts, martial arts participation was experienced as valuable when it helped an individual's adaptation to everyday life circumstances. Moreover, each of these contexts revealed distinct and meaningful relations between participants' body/ self, others, feelings, situation outcome, and martial arts practice. Thus, authors suggested that benefits of martial arts training may transfer to everyday life situations. Gernigon and Le Bars (2000) investigated whether achievement goal orientations (task and ego) of children and adult practitioners of judo and aikido might be affected by the type of martial art that is practiced (competitive: judo vs. non-competitive: aikido), the level of experience (beginner vs. experienced), and the gender of the athlete. Children practicing aikido proved to be generally more task-oriented than children practicing judo. Furthermore, in the children's group, experienced aikidokas were less ego-oriented than beginner aikidokas and experienced judokas, whereas experienced judokas were more ego-oriented than beginner judokas.

Regarding the adult group, experienced aikidokas were both less task- and ego-oriented than beginner aikidokas and experienced judokas. Regarding gender, no effects for task- and ego-orientations reached significance. According to the authors, this finding was in contrast to the hypotheses and to previous literature addressing gender differences in goal orientations.

Gernigon and Le Bars hypothesized that the nature of the investigated activities could have levelled gender differences: Aikido and judo are both fighting sports and could be considered as re- flecting masculine values. Therefore, these activities could have fostered masculine goal orientations (i.e., low task and high ego orientations) or could have been more attractive for persons with such characteristics, thus resulting in more homogeneity in males and females' goal orientations. (p. 175) Ko, Kim, and Valacich (2010) examined motivation factors that influence an individual's participation in martial arts in order to provide leaders of the industry with meaningful managerial implications. These martial arts participants appeared to be highly motivated by growth-related motivation (e.g., value, development and actualization). Motivation of martial arts practitioners varied across types of martial arts disciplines, competition orientation, and past experiences. Rowold (2006) explored students' perceptions of coaches' leadership behaviours in a martial arts setting. The author aimed to test whether coaches' behaviours can be described by a broad range of transformational, transactional, and non-leadership behaviours, as well as to provide information about both the range and effectiveness of distinct leadership styles of sport coaches. Participants in this study were German karatekas. Results supported a nine-factor structure of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. In addition, the hypothesis that transformational leadership scales accounted for unique variance in coaches' leadership effectiveness beyond that of transactional and leadership scales was confirmed. In sum, sport psychology research on competitive martial artists, studied alone or together with non-competitive martial artists, has generally focused on emotions, achievement goal orientations and other motivational issues, and coaches' relationships with their athletes. Much of the psychological knowledge base in martial arts was developed by inference from positivistic research with white male athletes.

Among the 29 sport psychology studies that we reviewed above, only eight contributed to the body of literature on female athletes or examined gender as a factor in their research. Certain psychological issues, such as the effects of uniform colour on performance and visual search activity have been studied based only on male participants. Furthermore, some studies conducted with female athletes did not draw at all on gender theory. For example, d'Arripe-Longuevill et al.'s (1998) present the strategies that female athletes use in order to interact successfully with their male coaches without engaging any gender critique of institutionalised power. Moreover, some of the papers did not even indicate gender of the participants, naturalising the male fighters as normative and worthy subjects to study. "Cultural praxis" as a discursive framework In this section we introduce "cultural praxis" (Ryba & Wright, 2005) as a theoretical framework to guide our analysis of the reviewed empirical literature. Cultural praxis is premised on a feminist assertion that sport is a field where men continue to have ideological dominance and power, while women are constrained by dominant ideologies and gender stereotypes (Gill, 2001; Hargreaves, 2000; Messner, 1988; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Sisjord, 1997). The cultural praxis framework, by virtue of drawing on a feminist postructuralist perspective (Butler, 1997; Rail, 2002; Weedon, 1987, 1999), provides us with the understandings how gendered power relations are (re)produced and contested within the disciplinary

Research practices of sport psychology.

Problematizing the way mainstream sport psychology trails its research and practice, Ryba and Wright (2005) proposed cultural praxis as an approach to sport psychology that deals with issues of marginalization and representation. Considerable attention in Ryba and

Wright's work is given to the articulation of sport psychology with cultural studies in an effort to open up the psychological study of sport to cultural modes of analyses of psyche and behavior. Within a dominant sport psychological discourse, addressing diversity tends to take the form of an "add-on" approach, where the other subjects are included in research studies merely to be tested against the normative white, male, heterosexual and often North American subjects (Ryba & Wright, 2010). Postcolonial scholars (Said, 1978; Smith, 1999; Spivak, 1988) have argued that the West constructs the Other as different and exotic through a variety of cultural re-presentations—representations that "speak for" the homogenized Other without offering an understanding of the Other. Informed by the feminist poststructuralist and postcolonial perspectives, cultural praxis problematizes the term "athlete" as never fixed due to the subject's fragmented and multiple identifications with various (gendered, ethnicized and racialized) discourses. To grasp psychic realities of the female fighter, therefore, would require transgressing the binary logic of "either/or" and untangling the multiplicity of cultural meanings inscribed on the athlete's embodied psyche, which are predicated on "the logic of neither, nor, and both" (Helstein, 2005, p. 4). It is important to note that within the cultural praxis framework, the focus is not merely on textual subjectivity but on materiality of psychic experiences as "revealed through the subjectival first person" (Ingham, Blissmer, & Davidson, 1999, p. 239). In this sense, the praxis component works in tandem with analytical components of theory and research to understand and reassert the emotional and (un)conscious psychic events of the subject as they acquire meaning within available discourses. Indeed, female martial artists cannot be understood as a homogeneous group. Having been socialized into combat sporting systems in various cultures as well as being subjects of multiple discourses such as class, race, gender, sexuality, religion, and age, female athletes have different motives and goals for participation in martial arts. In addition, different styles of martial arts require different skills and knowledge, and are embedded in different philosophies with their own sets of values. Furthermore, each training club attempts to form a community with its unique culture. This communal glocal culture is shaped by the globalised culture of the sport in juxtaposition with the local culture of the region and is, moreover, understood in a unique way by the club members. As cultural praxis advocates situating psychological research and/or applied work in the glocal matrix of a sporting culture without losing sight of lived experiences of the "athlete," there is no need to ignore or subjugate complexity of difference by bringing it to the common denominator of an "average" subject. Instead, attempts are made to understand psychic subjectivity, how psychological processes of the subject are enacted by the context, and what practices can be implemented to engender progressive change in female martial arts. Ryba, Schinke, and Tenenbaum (2010) argue that in the age of global mobility, it is increasingly important for sport psychologists working with transnational athletes to recognize that psyche is cultural and politi- cal, and not only a matter of neurological processes and cognition of the individual subject. Naturally, as we argue, psyche has an emotional side to it. At the moment, there is a scarcity of research that examines how psychological constructs acquire meaning and are manifested in various sports across cultures. It also would seem essential to understand the complex dynamics between global and local martial arts cultures and how female subjectivity is articulated in and through everyday cultural practices of these communities. While there are many theoretical perspectives on how to address these questions, we believe that "cultural praxis" offers a discursive space to account for difference, hybridity, disorder and multiplicity in sporting communities (on community of

articulation, see Helstein, 2005), and for a more nuanced and critical examination of the culturally constituted psychological functions of female martial arts athletes. **Critiquing the status quo** In this section, we analyse the reviewed sport psychology research through the adopted theoretical lens, in order to offer a gender critique. Furthermore, we substantiate our points drawing on sociological studies of female fighters that emerged in our search (see Table 3). Feminist scholars have argued that in the male dominated world of sports, most often men are studied, and not women (Gill & Kamphoff, 2010; Krane, 1994; Ryba & Wright, 2005, 2010). This seems to be the case with research on martial arts as well. Moreover, it seems that different topics are researched when men are studied vs. when women are studied. In this paper we examined what research questions mainstream sport psychologists tend to investigate when studying female martial artists, and what questions they ask when studying their male equivalents. It appeared that research on men has focused on various psychological issues that usually deal with performance and competition, or with the psychological effects of martial arts training, while research on women has focused on "differences" and "similarities" by comparing female martial artists with their male equivalents or with women outside the martial art world. For example: Are female martial artists more fearless than other women? What are their attitudes toward violent conflict resolution compared to their male equivalents or to non-athlete women? What are their motives and their expectations of success compared to male martial artists? Overall, and similar to other sports, the male martial artist appear to be the norm which the sport psychological knowledge is based on, while the female martial artist is examined later on, as being "similar" or "different" to the norm. Thus, many psychological issues have been studied based only on male participants. In addition, while rich research exists on the psychological impacts of martial arts training on boys (Endresen & Olweus, 2005, as well as Reynes & Lorant, 2002a, 2002b, 2004 that were not included in our review because of the non-competitive nature of their samples, but are worth mentioning here), almost nothing exists for girls (see Vertonghen and Theeboom, 2010, for a review of studies on youth).

Investigating what theories inform gender research on martial arts, it appeared that mainstream sport psychology has focused persistently on gender differences, without drawing at all on gender theory. Drawing mainly upon quantitative methods, most of the researchers were very surprised when they found no gender differences in their investigations (Gernigon & Le Bars, 2000; Lamarre & Nosanchuk, 1999; Szabo & Parkin, 2001). Trying to explain this lack of gender differences, they came to the conclusion that elite martial artists develop "masculine" traits. Only two studies found gender differences. Mrockowska (2009) suggested that women's perceptions of high chance in sporting success is a much rarer phenomenon than in the case of men, while Bjorkqvist and Varhama (2001) suggested that women held relatively more positive attitudes toward violent conflict resolution. The differentiation of topics and research questions when it comes to the study of women vs. men reflect a gender bias which seems to be engrained in sport psychology studies. This gender bias, in conjunction with a lack of gender/social theory underpinnings of the analyses of gender differences or similarities, is very problematic and has negative implications on how female athletes are constituted. Moreover, by comparing female competitive martial artists with female non-athletes or with male martial artists, many of the sport psychology studies cited above reinforce the stereotypes which suggest that female martial art athletes are somehow different from the so-called "normal" women, such as claims that certain characteristics are particular to women who seek out physical activities as martial arts (Miller et al., 1982), that

elite martial artists develop "masculine" traits (Gerningon & Le Bars, 2000; Mrockowska, 2007; Szabo & Parkin, 2001), or that female martial artists may be more prone to accept violent conflict resolutions in contrast to other women (Bjorkqvist & Varhama, 2001).

Additionally, some studies reinforce the gender stereotypes that female martial art athletes are somehow "weaker" than their male counterparts, or that women's perceptions of high chance in sporting success is a much rarer phenomenon than in the case of men (Mrockowska, 2009). Approaches of this kind carry various limitations and fail to give insights into women's experiences, instead presenting female martial artists as a homogenous group with similar personality characteristics and motives and reinforcing the social constitution of female martial artists as essentially different from male athletes or from female non-athletes. Several feminist scholars have pointed out the harmful effects of gender stereotyping on the psyche of the female martial artist (see for example, Halbert, 1997; Sisjord & Kristiansen, 2008). In contrast, regarding the constitution of the male martial artist, sport psychological scholarship seems to use 'him' as the norm, thereby preserving the male power and dominance in the domain of martial arts. For example, d'Arripe-Longuevill and colleagues (1998) overemphasize the "success" of the authoritative and patriarchal system of elite sports: We discovered a system that, while most sport psychologists would consider it unhealthy and require change, has been remarkably successful. Conventional literature holds that such tough coaching styles could lead to negative outcomes for athletes' personal development and, consequently, performance, specifically with the youngest athletes. The present study suggests that highly successful athletes have coping strategies and do not seem to be affected by coaches' often unpleasant decisions and behaviors. (p. 330) In contrast to the sport psychology studies that attempted to compare female martial artists with other groups, other scholars have followed a different approach (see Table 3). Drawing on qualitative methods these studies have shed some light on the experiences of the female athlete. In concluding this section, it is important to acknowledge the contribution of trailblazing psychological research to the study of male and female martial artists, which, to our delight, is internationally represented. Similar to a large percentage of works pertaining to sport psychology, however, the reviewed studies focus on male athletes and normalize the findings as universal. Moreover, the reviewed psychological studies are complacent in identifying statistically significant differences among various segments of the population (e.g., men vs. women; athletes vs. non-athletes) without systematic contextualisation of the findings in the particular socio-historical, political, and cultural matrices of sports. In so doing, in the few studies that examined sex, the problematic framing of psychological findings reinforces rigid gender stereotypes of martial arts athletes, hence obscuring nuanced aspects of female embodiment and psyche from scientific insight and further research. In contrast, the sociological studies revealed complex social structures manifested in gender inequalities, clearly linked to how female martial artists experience one of men's 'last' cultural spaces. Despite this, a myriad of cultural meanings defining femininity and sexuality (among others), inextricably intertwined with female martial arts athletes' experiences of the self, remain uncharted.

Concluding remarks

In a recent anthology entitled "The Cultural Turn in Sport Psychology", Ryba and Wright (2010) posed the following question for reflection: are female athletes essentially different from male athletes, or are they socially constituted as different, and hence exhibit different

behavioral and emotional responses? Indeed, as Gill and Kamphoff (2010) concluded, it is "how people think males and females differ [that] is more important than how they actually differ" (p. 64).

The findings of our review illustrate that there is a need for further research focused on contextualized understanding of the experience of women martial artists, since few psychological studies have been conducted, and those few have neglected to examine the female athlete thoroughly. In addition, our review revealed that the use of "gender" in mainstream sport psychology scholarship has not changed over the time, even though scholars from cultural or/and feminist backgrounds have called persistently for a revision and expansion of the sport psychological knowledge base. While there are many ways to do psychological research on gender, in this article we have suggested "cultural praxis" as a suitable discursive framework for gaining insights into the experiences of women martial artists. Sport psychology as cultural praxis is capable of providing multilevel understandings of female subjectivity because it considers the broader cultural, social, and historical contexts in which female athletes live and construct their behaviors in sport. We contend that within the cultural praxis framework that locates psychological research in the glo-cal matrix of a sporting culture, additional insights into articulated psychic realities of female fighters may be attained. In conclusion, we aim to encourage scholars in the field of sport psychology to embrace gender and culture as integral components in their research. Re-formulating psychological questions through the lens of culturally constituted psyche is not merely a theoretical exercise. Psychological research that neglects psychic realities of human beings, predicated on the sociocultural context, is prone to misleading interpretations and explanations of scientific results. The risk of feeding misrepresentations into popular consciousness becomes higher at a time when most academics have added a task of translating research findings for public consumption to their job descriptions. Thus, without a critical analysis of social norms and cultural meanings underpinning psychological processes and behavioral manifestations of female martial artists, there is a danger of perpetuating gender myths and even triggering moral hysteria. As researchers, we are responsible for exposing the ways in which gender oppression manifests itself in everyday practices to instigate the progressive social change in martial arts cultures.

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Prof.Shihan with WKF Referee Council Chairman Shihan Con Kassis and AIKF Secretary Shihan Bharat Sharma

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MITSUYA-KAI Players, won Sr.Men Black Belt Kata Gold Medal and two Bronze Medal in

AIKF NATIONAL KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP,on 8th ,9th & 10th November,2012,at Thyagaraja Stadium,New Delhi

Nilesh Pandhram **Emmanuel Philip** **Pankaj Khandagale**

Gold Medal **Bronze Medal** **Bronze Medal**

Prof. Shihan Zakir S.Khan,President,Karate-do Association of Nagpur District with his District Body Team