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MARTIAL ARTS LEADERSHIP CULTURAL AND REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN MOTIVATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION SONJA H. BICKFORD

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ABSTRACT

With the aim of better understanding the motivations for studying martial arts, and finding examples of valued leadership skills and methods in instruction, a comparison of martial artists was conducted via a survey across the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Finland. The framework taken to evaluate 'leadership' within martial arts is the theory of transformational leadership [Bass,1985] that displays certain characteristics, such as espousing ideals, acting as role models, and showing care and concern for followers. They are also noted to inspire their followers by formulating a vision and setting challenging goals, as well as stimulating them intellectually to think about old problems in innovative ways. We propose that transformational leadership theory may provide a framework for instructors. For instructors, understanding what students look for in a club in terms of values and characteristics sought through training and leadership styles is valuable. This work could help instructors understand and develop the traits and characteristics that could be used to construct motivational or instructional methods to best achieve goals in their respective curriculum.

Participation in martial arts and combat sports holds international appeal, and many across the globe practice martial arts. Martial arts is defined in British and American dictionaries and by Cynarski and Skowron [2014] as extensive systems of codified practices and traditions of combat that are practiced for a variety of reasons, including self-defense, competition, physical health and fitness, as well as mental, physical and spiritual development. Thus for the purposes of this paper, martial arts will be used as the term for the collective of codified practices and traditions of combat. In countries such as France, the Netherlands, Canada, Finland, Australia, and Belgium, martial arts are on a list of the ten most practiced sports among children and adolescents [Vertonghen & Theeboom 2010]. Since the late 1990s, in the Nordic region, the increase of female participants in combat sports has been noted [Alsarve & Tjønndal 2019]. This insight informed the selection of countries in this study: the USA and Canada (North America), Australia and New Zealand (Australasia), Finland and the surrounding countries of Estonia, Sweden, Norway (from Northern Europe / Nordic Countries) as well as the United Kingdom. Since the late 1990s, combat sports have become increasingly popular among women in the Nordic region [Alsarve & Tjønndal: 2019].¹

1. CONTEXT

According to Vertonghen & Theeboom's [2010] literature review there has been an increased number of scientific meetings and scientific gatherings with regard to martial arts and a particular style, in addition to an increase in scientific publications regarding martial arts, over recent years. But studies of the social and psychological aspects of martial arts practice date back to the late 1960s and the early 1970s [e.g., Kroll and Carlson 1967; Pyecha 1970]. These early studies often focused on personal characteristics of martial artists, how these characteristics determined preferences for specific types of martial arts and the extent in which they changed as a result of martial arts involvement. Since then, more researchers have become interested in the outcomes of martial arts practice [Vertonghen & Theeboom 2010].

1 Studying fight and combat sports in different regions and cultures involves a suite of factors relating to language, culture, and methodology, etc., which require us to remain cognizant of the cultural and contextual complexity of the training, education, art, and sport [Figueiredo 2009; 2016].

The Role of Martial Arts/Sports in Different Countries

In Nordic countries such as Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland, sports are seen as a voluntary and autonomous practices in relation to national and local authorities [Alsarve 2014; Alsarve & Tjønndal 2019; Halldorsson 2017]. In Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, coaching positions are only paid at the highest level of sport, leaving the majority of coaching positions to be filled by unpaid coaches working voluntarily for local and regional sport clubs [Alsarve & Tjønndal 2019].

As a martial art or sport is a *club* sport, but yet can be seen as *individual*, the sport or activity may provide insight in addressing issues of leadership and communication development. This is due to the fact that martial arts have been seen for many years as ways to develop both the mind and body. A range of research has stated that developing friendships with individuals from different age groups and demographics has aided in personal development, growth, and gaining understanding towards others [Kim *et al* 2014]. Other benefits of martial arts, such as taekwondo, have been categorized as physical, psychological and mental – including gaining cultural awareness and understanding, leading to personal growth and development [Kim *et al* 2014; Jones *et al* 2006; Zeng, Cynarski, Baatz, & Park 2015].

What stimulates people to study and participate in martial arts has been a topic of many research projects [Twemlow, Lerma, Twemlow 1996; Lantz 2002; Kavoura *et al* 2012; Kim *et al* 2009; Cynarski 2012; Jones, Mackay, & Peters 2006; Meyer & Bittman, 2018]. Twemlow *et al* [1996] examined 170 students enrolled in martial arts in Kansas, USA, and assessed motivations. These were categorized as: self-defense, exercise, improving self-confidence, fun, something to do, karate movies, meditation, and aggression outlet. Lantz [2002] also assessed the development of those participating in such activities and stated that self-defense, physical vitality, concentration, respect, friendship and moral/spiritual/life skill development emerged as key motivators. Understanding the reasons – the motivation – why people chose to participate in a martial arts activity is necessary in order to better address the goals with the actual form and content of lessons or classes offered at dojos, dojangs, or other clubs. Meyer and Bittman [2018] found that Japanese and German *karatedō* practitioners were found to display similar motivational drivers; however underlying cultures, regional history, as well as personal experiences influenced some of the differences in motivations to start and continue training. This is important because, from a pragmatic (teaching) perspective (and to echo Twemlow *et al* [1996]), if a dojang does not clearly understand the motivations and needs of its students, both current and future, many may drop out. By the same token, from a more cultural or academic standpoint, it is also interesting to enquire into whether there may be cultural differences in forms of motivation in different national contexts.

Traits of Martial Artists

Richman and Rehberg [1986] showed that the level of performance had a positive impact on personality traits of participants (e.g., higher self-esteem). Najafi [2003] also divided his sample as a function of teaching styles and came to similar conclusions. His findings revealed that practitioners of 'traditional' martial arts emphasize more humility and report more overall levels of hope compared to those involved in 'modern' martial arts. In this study, hope was defined as 'the motivation to accomplish the harsh task' [Najafi 2003: 25]. Of course, it must be remembered that combat sports involve characteristics such as strength, endurance, risk-taking, strategy, toughness, muscularity and competitiveness that, taken together, have been considered by some as core contents of a hegemonic (and dominant) masculinity [Connell 2005; Alsarve & Tjønndal 2019].

The majority of studies that employ a cross-sectional design to examine personality profiles of martial artists divide samples as a function of level of experience in a specific martial art (e.g., belt color or length of martial arts involvement). Studies conducted before the mid 1990s indicated clear similarities in their conclusions, in which length of training was found to have a positive impact on the personality traits of martial artists [Vertonghen & Theeboom 2010]. Characteristics that are rewarded in many sports have been connected to hegemonic masculinity production and have, for example, emphasized strength, speed, toughness, risk-taking and durability [Alsarve 2018]. The question of what characteristics are seen as being of value in leaders and what martial arts practitioners seek to gain by practicing martial arts is the focus of this study along with the question of whether this differs across countries or regions of the globe.

Countries and Cultural Differences

Cultural recreation activities may provide a place and context where cross-cultural awareness and contacts may be learned and created [Kim *et al* 2014]. Kim *et al* [2014] study examples of cultural recreational activities such as dance, martial arts, and relaxation techniques. In this context, cross-cultural contact is defined as 'the interaction, communication, or other social processes among people or entities from two or more different cultures' [Commons, Galaz-Fontes, & Morse 2006: 248]. Past studies have looked at comparisons between martial arts styles and revealed differences between styles indicating that each martial art has its own qualities [Vertonghen & Theeboom 2010]. A more important focus may be on the role played by the instructor, as the style may vary based on the instructor and the type of guidance given [Jones, Mac Kay, Peters 2006; Vertonghen & Theeboom 2010].

The national culture of a country is shaped by values from the country's past to the ongoing social changes of the present day. The cultural values of nations have significant influence in the day-to-day life of people and also in its social, economic, political and business environments [Boopathi 2014]. The impact of national culture on the management, leadership, and organizational behavior of an organization operating in a particular country is unavoidable [Francesco & Gold 1998: 18]. Thus, the study's results are assessed with reference to national culture and norms in order to help gain an understanding of the ways it influences how martial artists lead, act, or expect self and other to behave.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions are used as a rough framework for understanding the national cultural norms in the study's countries and regions. Hofstede originally ranked countries based on four cultural dimensions: individualism/collectivism, masculine/feminine, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance [Hofstede 2003]. Callaghan, Wood, Payan, Singh, & Svensson [2012] defined Hofstede's dimensions and explained the scores for the United States, Canada, and Australia.

On power distance, which is defined as a measure of the unequal distribution of power in society, Australia, Canada and the USA have scores that are extremely close in value. Australia and the United States are extremely close in terms of individualism (versus collectivism) which is a measure of the relationship between an individual and his fellow individuals. They are individualistic countries. On masculinity (versus femininity), a measure of the division of roles between the sexes in society, scores for Australia and the United States are again extremely close, and rather masculine, with Canada displaying less of this quality. The final of Hofstede's dimensions of national culture is uncertainty avoidance, which is defined as a measure of how a society deals with uncertainty and is related to the propensity of a culture to establish laws and formal rules such as codes of ethics. Societies strong on uncertainty avoidance are more likely to establish formal rules to deal with unpredictability. According to Callaghan *et al* [2012] Australia, Canada, and the United States have extremely close scores. The Nordic countries are characterized as more 'feministic', where everyone is to be taken care of with low power distance, meaning leaders and followers are seen as equals [Boopathi 2014]. The Nordic countries prefer to avoid uncertainty and thus more norms, rules, and behaviors are expected. According to Hofstede [2019], Britain is low on power distance, similar to that of the Nordic countries where society believes that inequalities between people should be minimized. In addition, Brits are described as individualistic, but also a masculine society where people are success oriented and driven. The UK scores low on uncertainty avoidance and thus most are assumed to be accepting of uncertainty.

Transformational Leadership

As noted by Kim et al [2014], martial arts may provide a way to seek and improve meaning, purpose, and mission in life, often providing a mind-body unification that can lead to a sense of spirituality. This deeper reflection and self-understanding leads students and members of a dojo to interact with each other in certain ways and share experiences and knowledge, often improving the environment for learning and personal development. This may be seen as leadership development. By having a chief instructor, or master, whom one looks up to and respects provides a deeper experience of the sport. This interaction with a master, according to Cynarski [2012], provides a direct experience that is both physical (movement, exercise), internal to one self (spiritual), as well as intellectual, in that one may realize one's own cognitive needs. It is proposed that this common sharing of experiences and development of a culture within the dojang can lead to lessons in communication, respect, and leadership during lessons ostensibly 'only' about martial arts, lessons that also infiltrate the individual's personal and professional life.

In seeking a model or example of a successful leader, the theory of transformational leadership should be referred to. The theory was developed by Bass [1985] and has attracted considerable attention since then [Bass 1998]. Transformational leaders display certain characteristics, such as espousing ideals, acting as role models, and showing care and concern for each subordinate. Also, they inspire their followers by formulating a vision, setting challenging goals, and stimulating people intellectually to think about old problems in innovative ways. Research has demonstrated that perceived transformational leadership is associated with increased performance in various work settings [Charbonneau, Barling, & Kelloway 2001].

By contrast, servant or steward leadership is different. Servant leadership is more theoretical and anecdotal rather than observable and proven [Russell & Stone 2002]. But there are ten characteristics of servant leaders as given by the CEO of the Greenleaf Center. These are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building a community [Russell & Stone 2002]. A steward leader aims to build a community of people and value others' opinions and goals, regarding the primary purpose of leaders as to serve others [van Dierendonck & Patterson 2015]. Such servant leadership may encourage a more meaningful and optimal human functioning via the creation of a strong sense of community. This sense of community in turn encourages compassionate love which is shown by humility, gratitude, forgiveness, and altruism by both leaders and followers. Van Dierendonck & Patterson [2015] propose that the culture created by a

servant leader could also give rise to desired leadership characteristics such as empowerment, authenticity, stewardship and providing direction [van Dierendonck & Patterson 2015]. Spiritual leadership, in turn, rests on an assumption that leaders can positively impact the wellbeing of followers and others, while also producing positive benefits and results for stakeholders, society, and themselves [Fry 2003]. For organizations, these types of leaders may be valuable in terms of being concerned about the bottom line, for example.

2. AIM, QUESTIONS, METHODS

The aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of the leadership qualities and expectations of those training (or observing the training of their children) in martial arts and whether those differ between countries. The results of the study could be applicable and of interest to instructors as well as students of martial arts – for instructors, in terms of understanding what students value in regards to leadership values and characteristics and to construct methods to best achieve students' goals in their curriculum. For practitioners or students, understanding what they have learned and how that compares to others may be of interest to prioritize the reasons for studying martial (and other examples of leadership) instruction. Thus, the overall aim is to gain an understanding of the motivations and aims of martial artists when it comes to leadership and communication, as well as the idealized leaders' characteristics.

This study answers three related questions:

1. What are the motivations and needs of individuals attending the dojangs?
2. What are the desired and ideal leaders/heroes and the main skillsets sought through training, and does that differ between countries?
3. How have the cultural and practical lessons of self-discipline and leadership, motivation, communication transferred outside the dojang?

In this comparative study of martial arts, students and parents in four regions of the world were surveyed via an online, Qualtrics, survey containing Likert scale questions, as well as ranking questions, and open ended questions regarding their experience and observations. As noted by Alsarve & Tjønndal [2019], there are strengths and value in a study using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The value in

the quantitative data is seeing the numbers which indicate significant differences between the variables while the qualitative data adds to the narrative and the reasoning for the results. Thus, this study implemented both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

A link to an electronic survey consisting of multiple choice, ranking, Likert Scale, and open-ended questions was distributed via email to key contact people in clubs and organizations in the countries of interest as well as online using social media (Facebook and Twitter). The survey was approved by the University of Nebraska-Kearney's Institutional Review Board (IRB# #021518-1). Participants were asked about basic socio-economic status such as gender, income, education level, household size, age, and number of year they had been in martial arts, whether they are, or were going to be or aspired to be instructors, about how long they had practiced martial arts and which ones. In addition, open ended questions asked about leaders, motivations, and reasons for studying martial arts.

The overall sample consisted of a random group of members in martial arts (instructors, students, or parents of students younger than 19). The survey was open for one year from March 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019. There were a total 230 responses to the survey out of which 224 full responses were used in the analysis. The analysis was conducted via r analysis and validated through excel analysis (p-test, average, mean). In cases where no significant difference was found this was still seen as a result as it is an answer to a question posed.

Table 1:
Percentage of respondents from the study's countries and regions.

Countries	Percentage of Total
Australia / New Zealand = Australasia	21%
Canada	6%
Finland / Norway / Estonia = Nordics	5%
United Kingdom	8%
United States	60%

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Participants and Participant Overview

Participants were from eight countries (see table 1). However, for the comparative significance and numbers the following groupings were use: United States, Canada, Australasia (Australia + New Zealand), United Kingdom, and the Nordics (Finland, Norway, and Estonia). Of those responses analyzed, 47% of the survey respondents were female (n=106) and 53% male (n=118).

There was no significant difference in the respondents' ages, their income level, education level, number of family members in martial arts, or employment status as compared to the countries and regions. It was interesting to note that there was a difference in whether respondents were from rural or urban areas per country. Respondents from Canada, United Kingdom, and Australasia reported to be from more urban areas while respondents from the Nordics and the United States reported to be from more rural areas.

The number of years the respondents had been in martial arts did not vary or change by country. On average women tend to stick to one martial art whereas men were more inclined to practice multiple disciplines. This is based on a p-value of 0.001. The percentage of people (both men and women) that practice multiple martial arts does matter (p=0.014). Out of the respondents in the United States 42% of respondents reported to be in multiple martial arts, in Canada this was 46%, Nordics 27%, Australasia 20%, and in the United Kingdom 28% of respondents reported to be practicing multiple martial arts.

Out of all of the respondents, males on average had been in martial arts longer than females. Males on average had practiced martial arts from 11-15 years whereas female respondents averaged 4-8 years. What was interesting was that how many household members practiced or participated in martial arts did not vary by country, however there was a difference overall. Males were more often the sole practitioners of martial arts in their households, however for women it was more themselves and a child or children.

Overall the reasons people joined martial arts included: for self-defense, to improve fitness, increase confidence, discipline, focus, or to train with their own child or children. On average findings state that the most important traits or characteristics emphasized by instructors in their lessons are confidence, physical fitness, and self-awareness, and the least important trait or characteristic was risk taking. Overall the participants noted that they had experienced changes in themselves in their level of confidence, awareness (both of self and environmental), and that they felt more physically fit.

Leadership Characteristics

The way martial artists view role models and leaders varied significantly by gender (p-value 0.014). Overall women stated that role models' leadership behaviors are more important to them overall than for the men. In addition, women felt that it was slightly more important that they or their family members communicate using martial arts communication expectations and/or skills outside of their dojangs (or other martial arts schools).

Based on an analysis of key words from the responses to which characteristics successful leaders should possess, overall the respondents stated that successful leaders should possess confidence, care for others (such as empathy and courtesy), as well as being respectful. Many stated several characteristics, thus after an analysis of all terms entered, the top ten characteristics of successful leaders were: caring for others, confidence, respect, morals and ethics, determination and being able to use that as a driver to motivate, communication and being a role model of behaviors and communication (both verbal and non-verbal), along with patience.

Overall the respondents stated that after training in martial arts they felt that they were more respectful and/or polite outside the dojang, followed by having an increased awareness of both self and environment, and they felt more confident. The question of whether respondents felt strongly about whether they had grown as leaders in martial arts was slightly significant (p-value = 0.07) in that for north Americans (Canadians followed by Americans) this did not matter at all while for the Nordic martial artists this mattered more.

The respondents from the Nordics felt that they had become more self-aware through martial arts training. This was significantly different from North America respondents (both Canada and the United States) (p-value = 0.05). However, there was no significant difference in how respondents felt that they described themselves.

From a leadership perspective an instructor from the United Kingdom who has practiced martial arts for 4-5 years stated: 'As a martial arts instructor I feel that every student is like one of my children. We want them to improve and get the best out of themselves'. This speaks to a transformational leadership style of caring for each individual follower, subordinate, or student.

Communication

In terms of leadership communication, the Nordic country respondents felt that their leaders verbally communicated about their preferred leadership expectations slightly more than the respondents in the other countries or regions. The way of speaking as a martial artist and the way students and instructors communicate was significantly different between the countries (p-value 0.019). The respondents from the Nordic countries felt that they are more encouraged and taught at their respective dojangs to speak in a certain manner as compared to martial artists in North America (both United States and Canada). Using the expected martial arts communication skills outside of the dojang was significantly different between the countries as well, where the respondents from the Nordics felt that they used those skills more than respondents in North America. The UK and Australian countries fell in between in both questions.

Motivational Drivers

Overall all respondents stated that posters and quotes in the dojang are motivational. In some dojangs they may not be present, but overall the respondents from the United Kingdom felt the strongest about this followed by Australasia and the Nordics.

Those practicing a single martial art versus multiple also felt that movie icons and legends were more frequently discussed and followed than those who practice multiple martial arts. This could be because those practicing multiple martial arts are habituated to the discussions or perhaps could discussing and following martial arts icons and legends may only be a phase during the martial arts journey.

Behaviors

Based on the results of five semi-structured questions regarding whether the martial artist/respondent felt that they used their martial artist behaviors outside of their practice: out of 119 full responses it was found that this differed significantly by country (p-value = 0.024). Table 2 shows how countries responded to whether they used martial arts/dojang behavior outside of the dojang. Responses were No = 1, Yes = 2, and Sometimes/Maybe = 3)

Table 2 shows that the martial artists in North America, Australasia, and the United Kingdom all report using more of their martial arts behaviors outside of the dojang than their counterparts in the Nordic countries.

Why martial artists watch movies was significantly different, not between martial art styles, but by country/region ($p = 0.05$). The Nordics tended to watch movies more for the role models, character traits, and life lessons while martial artists in the U.K. watched more for entertainment purposes and for the actors. Martial artists in Australasia watch movies more for skills and choreography as well as the storyline, and the martial artists in the United States watched for the storyline as well as for raising their spirits or for motivational reasons. A martial artist of a single discipline (21+ years in martial arts) stated that ‘a true martial artist should also be creative’.

Single versus Multiple Disciplines

One question was whether answers would differ between those that study taekwondo or other arts, and similarly those that practice a single art versus those that practice multiple arts. By conducting a bivariate analysis regarding the significant difference ($p = 0.0001$) the average time a practitioner of a single art had been training martial arts was 0-10 years, with median on 6-10 years. Those that reported practicing 2 or more different arts on average had been in martial arts for 10+ years, with a median answer of 16-20 years. It was interesting to note that there was also a significant difference between the genders practicing a single versus multiple martial art. On average males tended to report practicing multiple arts while women on average reported to be practicing one type of martial art ($p = 0.0001$). There were no significant differences between single versus multiple martial arts when compared to ethnicity, age, income, education level, employment status, or number of family members in martial arts. However, there was a significant difference in instructors and whether they reported to be practicing single or multiple martial arts ($p = 0.0001$). Out of the martial artists in a single martial art 9% wanted to be an instructor and 3% stated that they will be an instructor, while out of the martial artists in multiple disciplines 6% wanted to be instructors and 7% will be. This could be indicative of the fact that most of those who want to be instructors and report practicing multiple disciplines already are instructors and thus the percentage of those that want or will be instructors is significantly lower.

There was a significant difference between country and whether the martial artist respondent stated that they practiced one or multiple martial arts disciplines ($p = 0.035$). In North America there was almost an equal amount of single and multiple martial art practitioners. 57% of Americans and 54% of Canadian respondents stated that they were

Country	Responses as Percentage
United States	No = 3% Yes = 76% Sometimes = 19%
Canada	No = 0% Yes = 83% Sometimes = 17%
The Nordics (Finland, Estonia, Norway)	No = 43% Yes = 29% Sometimes = 28%
Australasia (Australia, New Zealand)	No = 8% Yes = 54% Sometimes = 38%
United Kingdom	No = 0% Yes = 59% Sometimes = 41%

*Table 2:
Percentage of respondents per country that stated whether they use martial arts behaviors outside of their dojangs.*

practicing a single martial art. A majority, 89%, of the Nordic martial artist respondents were practicing a single martial art, while both Australia and the UK respondents were similar to the Nordic countries, as 79% of Australasians and 72% of British respondents stated that they practiced a single martial art.

There was a slight difference between those that practiced a single martial art and those that practiced multiple martial arts around whether they believed it to be important that their leaders in martial arts show leadership behaviors consistent or reflective of their discipline, e.g., leading by example ($p = 0.07$). Those in multiple martial arts deemed it to be less important than those in single martial arts. This could be due to the fact that the behaviors are already ingrained, or they are expected and thus taken as given. This is perhaps well illustrated by the following comment from a martial artist of 21+ years and practitioner of multiple martial arts: 'For me it's a lifestyle'. Another martial artist of 21+ years of experience in multiple martial arts stated:

Your skills to now [sic] are like a circle, with lines extending from its center, short and long. Learn more, to where those gaps are filled, with yourself as a more complete person, reaching maximum capacity with each skill, or ability, to where your life is more like a smooth Chrystal [sic] ball, transparent and open, irritating no one, and being accepted by the many there are, as you practice the one martial art there is.

There was a marginal difference between single and multiple art practitioners in regard to how self-aware they felt after practicing martial arts ($p = 0.06$). Single martial artist felt that they were slightly more self-aware than those practicing multiple martial arts.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Leadership style

In seeking a leadership style such as transformational leadership or servant leadership – both of which research has shown help inspire followers, and lead to improved performance – we must compare the characteristics and expectations of leaders. Transformational leadership characteristics include having a vision, being able to communicate it, acting as role models and showing care for students or subordinates. Based on the survey results, the respondents ranked the characteristics that successful leaders should possess: confidence, care for others (such as empathy and courtesy), as well as being respectful. Many stated several characteristics; thus, after an analysis of all terms entered, the top ten characteristics were: confidence, respect, morals and ethics, determination and being able to use that as a driver to

motivate, communication and being a role model of behaviors and communication (both verbal and non-verbal), and patience. A servant leader's characteristics, however, include: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building a community. Thus, transformational and servant leadership styles may work as models for successful martial arts leaders. As put by an experienced martial artist (with 21+ years of experience): 'Be good followers as well as leaders. The best leaders are the best servants of the students' need to learn'. It should be noted that a vision or goal may need to be more clearly defined by the leaders and communicated to their students as the students are led during their martial arts journey. However, it is suggested, based on the findings, that the posters and quotes hanging inside the dojang are motivational/inspirational, and it is suggested that these conform to a transformational leader. Moreover, leaders' goals should reflect the leader's vision and aims. In addition, suggested viewing (movies) should be selected based on the reasons martial artists watch movies, all of which varies by country/region.

Overall the respondents stated that after training in martial arts they felt that they were more respectful/polite outside the dojang, followed by an increased awareness of both self and environment, and feeling more confident. For North Americans (Canadians followed by Americans) it did not matter whether they grew as leaders in martial arts, while this mattered more for the Nordic martial artists. As a martial artist from the United States stated 'I would not be who I am today without martial arts. After training for the past 16 years (from age 5 to age 21), I've grown to be a role model & leader in my dojang, and I'm currently the president of two student organizations at my university'.

In looking at communication in martial arts, respondents felt that leaders in the Nordic countries verbally communicated about their preferred leadership expectations slightly more than the respondents in the other countries or regions. The respondents from the Nordic countries felt that they are more encouraged and taught (at their respective dojangs) to speak in a certain manner as compared to martial artists in North America (both United States and Canada). They also felt that they used those skills more than respondents in North America. The UK and Australasian countries fell in between in both questions. National culture and behavior norms and expectations may influence how martial artists feel about how they communicate and act in and outside of the dojang.

Influence of national culture

Based on the response, there is a question around whether those who on average have been practicing martial arts longer and/or have been practicing multiple martial arts become habituated into the martial arts mindset, behaviors, and communication (including non-verbal communication). One martial artist of a single discipline from the United States proposed: 'Martial arts culture and benefits is [*sic*] largely dependent on the community (family style or classroom style) and importance of tournaments (glorifying the fight or glorifying the growth)'.

In regard to region/country, the European-influenced countries such as UK and Australasia/Nordic society: cultural expectations and behaviors may influence the choice to practice a single martial art instead of multiple. In addition, the Nordic culture of equality and respect is part of national culture and thus is arguably more expected than in other countries; thus, the Nordic countries feel that they do not use dojang/martial art specific behaviors outside of their dojang when compared to the other countries.

Limitations

Based on the survey respondents and the way they were recruited through international networks it should be noted that many respondents practiced taekwondo. Whether this shows the popularity of the sport worldwide or simply a result of the recruitment method it is hard to tell.

Recommendations

It would be interesting to better understand how others who come in contact with a martial artist outside of their dojangs (such as co-workers, supervisors, school teachers, customers, etc.) perceive the behaviors and changes in the martial artist as they continue to train.

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