

## The assertiveness of people who practice karate

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### Annotation:

Assertiveness is the ability to express your thoughts, beliefs and opinions without the feeling of internal tension, that is why it is a desired trait of character. One of the examples of sports disciplines in which assertiveness can play a desired role is karate. One of the aims of this paper was to answer the question, whether the act of doing karate influences the level of assertiveness among people who practice it and to compare the results with the level of assertiveness declared by people who do other sports. The method applied in this paper was the diagnostics survey, while the tool was the questionnaire form based on the Rathus Assertiveness Scale.

50 students who practice karate on regular basis and 50 students who do other sports participated in the research. It is undeniable that the level of assertiveness among people who practice karate is higher in comparison to people who do other sports. Karate doers, both men and women obtained better results compared to the second group of sportsmen/women. This regularity can be observed among men, but it is more perceptible among women. As the research presents, people who attend karate trainings at least three times a week are characterized by a higher level of assertiveness in comparison to those who attend the training once a week.

**Шарк-Ецкардт Мирослава, Голєбєвськє Петро, Чєслїцкє Мирослава, Станкєвїч Блазєй. Ассєртївнєсть осїб, щє тренуєтьсє каратє.** Ассєртївнєсть цє умїння вїражатї свої думкї, переконання, поглядї, вїдчуття без вїдчуття внєтрїшнього дїскомфорту, якє властїве тїм бажанням. Прикладом спортївнїої дїсцїплїни, в якїої ассєртївнєсть можє гратї бажану роль, є каратє. Мєтою работї було пробє вїдповїстї на питання, або заняття каратє впливє на пїдвїщення рївня ассєртївнєстї у осїб, щє тренуєтьсє, а також порївняння рївня ассєртївнєстї каратїстїв з особами, щє тренуєтьсє в їнших спортївнїх дїсцїплїнах. У работї вїкорїстанї мєтодї дїагностїчного зондування, в той же час як їнструмент вїкорїстовувавася запїтальнїк анкєтї за шкалою ассєртївнєстї Ратуса. Дослїдженням охоплено 50 студєнтїв-каратїстїв і 50 – з їнших спортївнїх дїсцїплїн. Вїдмїчена закономірнєсть отримання вїщоого рївня у каратїстїв у вїдношеннї до рєштї осїб з їнших спортївнїх дїсцїплїн. Каратїстї, як жїнкї, так і чоловїкї, отрималї добрий рєзултат в порївняннї з групами, щє не тренуєтьсє в каратє. Наголошуетьсє закономірнєсть в групї чоловїкїв, але особлїво вона вїявлена серед жїнок. На основї дослїджень стверджуєтьсє, щє каратїстї при тренуваннї 3 разї в тїждєнь отрималї значно вїщїй рївень ассєртївнєстї порївняно з особами, щє тренуєтьсє 1 раз на тїждєнь.

**Шарк-Ецкардт Мирослава, Голєбєвєвскї Петр, Чєслїцкє Мирослава, Станкєвїч Блазєй. Ассєртївнєсть лиц, тренїруєтьсє каратє.** Ассєртївнєсть єто умєнїє вїражатї свої мїслї, убєждєнїя, взглядї, чувство без ощущєнїя внєтрєнного дїскомфорт, которєє свойствєнно тєм жєланїям. Примером спортївнїої дїсцїплїны, в которїої ассєртївнєсть можєт їгратї жєлатєльную роль, явлєєтьсє каратє. Цєлюю работї було пробє отвєта на вєпрос, или занятїє каратє влїяєт на повїшєнїє уровнєя ассєртївнєстї у тренїруєтьсєя лиц, а также сравнєнїє уровнєя ассєртївнєстї каратїстїв с лицами, тренїруєтьсєя в другїх дїсцїплїнах. В работє їспользованы мєтодї дїагностїческого зондїрования, вмєстє с тєм как їнструмент їспользовалася вєпроснїк анкєтї по шкалє ассєртївнєстї Ратуса. Їсслєдованїєм охвачєно 50 студєнтєв-каратїстїв и 50 – в другїх спортївнїх дїсцїплїнах. Замєчена закономірнєсть получєнїя вїсшєго уровнєя у каратїстїв в отнєшєннї к остальнїм лицам їз другїх спортївнїх дїсцїплїн. Каратїстї, как жєнщїны, так и мужчїны получїлї хорєшїй рєзултат по сравнєнїю с группамї, нє тренїруєтьсєя в каратє. Отмєчєєтьсє закономірнєсть в группє мужчїн, нє особлєнно она обнєружєна средї жєнщїн. На основє їсслєдованїя утвєрждєєтьсє, щє каратїстї при тренїровкє 3 разє в нєдєлю получїлї значїтєльно болєє вїсокий уровєнь ассєртївнєстї в сравнєннї с лицами, тренїруєтьсєя 1 раз в нєдєлю.

### Key words:

karat, student, assertiveness, training.

каратє, студєнт, ассєртївнєсть, тренування.

каратє, студєнт, ассєртївнєсть, тренїровка.

### Introduction

Karate is one of the oldest kinds of marital arts in the world. It derives from China and the word *karate* means ‘an empty hand’. In the opinions of many karate masters over the centuries, karate has not only been a part of marital art, but chiefly a school which formed the character. Nowadays, karate is mainly a sport discipline with an Olympic status. Every year, this discipline attracts dozens of adepts who can notice not only the strength in it, but also a deeply philosophical practice, in which there is no place for aggression, in fact. Although karate belongs contemporary to the most popular sport disciplines, it is still a marital art, which has its own ceremonial. These ceremonials comprise both the forms of behaviour during karate trainings and all the behaviors performed in everyday life [3]. Being a peculiar philosophy, karate appeals to philosophy par excellence, but also to psychology, sociology and psyche, but mainly to spirituality. This assumption gives the karate adepts a feeling of a specific uniqueness. Karate adept should control their emotions, especially at the level of affection or externalization of them. They should not show any sign of anger or anxiety, triumph or pain, contempt or admiration. The only thing an

adept can show is the respect towards their partner, which is expressed through dignity and rigorous adherence to the etiquette. A karate doer is not obliged to assess others – he/she should be a specialist only in austere assessment of himself/herself. Hence the mental and spiritual sphere is such an important aspect in karate. It plays an important role in different marital arts, influencing the mental sphere in a positive way and preserving the balance of the mind. There emerges a very interesting problem, whether karate, thanks to its characteristic ability to control emotions and wide self-control, can influence the assertiveness of people who practice it.

Assertiveness is a term which has gained a great popularity in the last few years. Assertiveness is the ability to express your thoughts, beliefs and opinions without the feeling of internal tension, that is why it is a desired trait of character. Herbert Fensterheim’s theory of assertiveness [1], contains five laws. Firstly, you have the right to do what you want as far as it does not hurt anybody else. Secondly, you have the right to preserve their dignity through assertive behavior even if it hurts someone else, as long as your intentions are not aggressive, but assertive. The third law goes: you have the right to present your requests to another as far as you acknowledge it that the other person has the right to refuse. The fourth law says,

that there are such situations between people, in which the laws are not obvious. However, you have always the right to discuss and clarify this matter with another person. The last law goes, that you have the right to exercise your rights. If you do not use it use, you agree that someone will withdraw them from you. According to Helena Sęk [7] assertiveness is an attitude which gives an individual an opportunity to function in a particular society and to form positive interpersonal relations. It is characterized by precisely formed aspirations, need for self-improvement, high level of self-esteem and consciousness of own positive and negative sides. Assertiveness is comprised by three main aspects – best self interest (the ability to assess what is worth your attention and time); honest behavior, so you say what you really think not hurting other people at the same time; respect for laws – expressing own opinions without hurting others' rights. An assertive man, expresses their thoughts, feelings and aspirations freely. They perform it in an honest and direct way, without paralyzing anxiety, accepts their restrictions regardless of the fact if he or she has achieved success in this situation or not. An assertive person is able to say no, ask for something he/she deserves, is not afraid of assessments, criticism or rejection. Such a person can commit mistakes, however they notice their success and advantages. If they are in the center of someone's attention they can act without any destructive fear. They accept changes in themselves and in other people. They can communicate with others, can materialize their rights and execute them. Assertiveness is an acquired ability which can be shaped. Of course, there are people who seem to say *no* without any psychophysical costs more freely, than others, but everyone can learn it. Sufficient motivation and patience are two very important aspects [2, 4, 5].

So what joins karate and assertiveness? What divides and what differentiates them? The aim of this paper, while considering the results of the research, is:

- to determine the level of assertiveness among people who practice karate;
- to obtain knowledge about the assertiveness level among people who practice other kind of sport.
- to compare the results of people who practice karate with the level of assertiveness declared by people who do other sport disciplines.

#### **Material and method**

For a better cognition of the issue, the method applied in this paper was the diagnostics survey, while the tool was the questionnaire form based on the Rathus Assertiveness Scale [6]. Each question posed to the respondents was presented on a scientific scale. The scale 3, 2, 1, -1, -2, -3 was used to examine the attitudes and reaction to situations, where assertiveness can play an important role. The differentiation gave the researchers an ample opportunity to quantify disparities in the meaning of particular terms among people who practice karate. It facilitated the process of determining the emotional component of attitudes towards different objects, gave an opportunity to assess the intensity of different emotional components of assertiveness and its cognitive structure. Centile norms of the Rathus Assertiveness Scale were

used to the comparison and assessment of the results of the research conducted (2004) (table 2).

Then, statistical inference concerned with the nature of assertiveness among the populations surveyed was performed. 123 people were surveyed in this examination, however, the questionnaires of 100 respondents were qualified in this paper. This number is comprised by 50 people who practice karate and 50 respondents who practice other disciplines. The respondents who are into karate came from the biggest karate clubs in Poland, where the greatest number of adepts train in the senior category: Bushi in Bydgoszcz, Kaisho in Bialystok and Dynamic from Poznan. All the persons who practice both karate and other sport disciplines were students of Physical Education. The group of karate adepts was comprised by 20 men and 30 women. The second group of respondents consist of 20 women and 30 men.

#### **Results**

The results presented on the first and the second bar charts are characteristics of women's assertiveness level in different configurations. Bar chart number one depicts the level of assertiveness considering the division into women who practice karate and women who perform other sport disciplines.

Comparing the results of the level of assertiveness gained among women who practice karate and those who practice other sport disciplines, it can be unambiguously concluded that women who are into karate are characterized by a far more higher level of assertiveness than women who do other sports. The assertiveness declared by women who practice karate is at the level between 40 and 99 centiles, compared to women who do other sports disciplines who achieved results at the level between 5 and 55 centiles on the Rathus Assertiveness Scale.

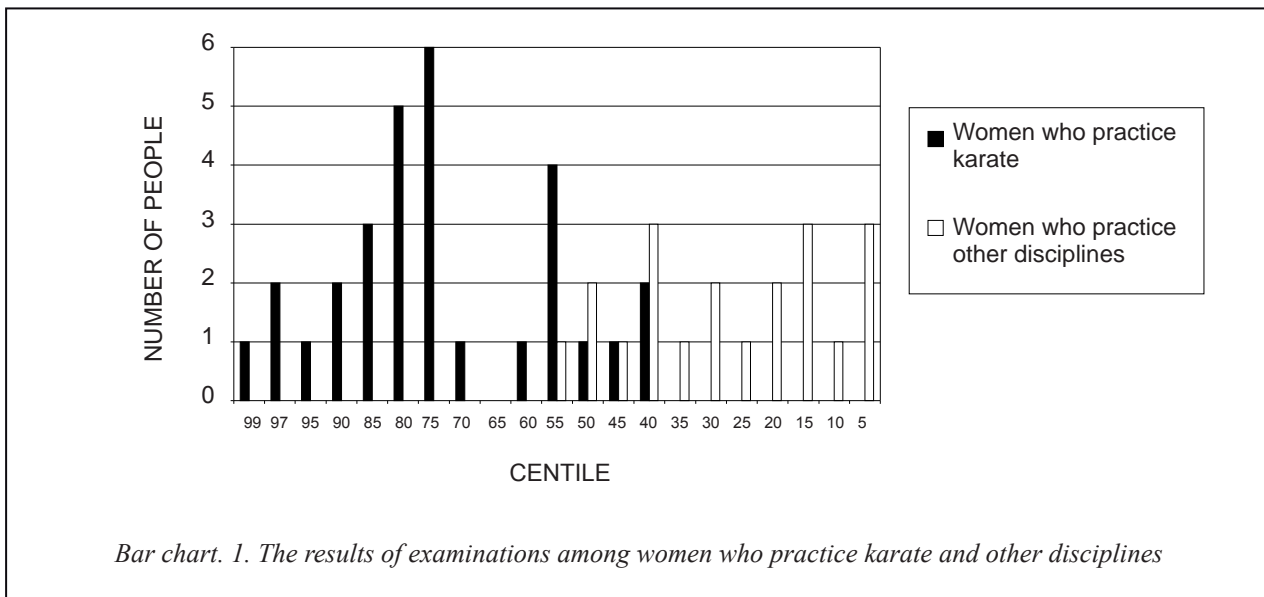
Bar chart number two presents data concerning the level of assertiveness among women who practice karate and women who perform other disciplines divided taking into account the frequency of their trainings: women who train regularly (three and more times a week) and those who do it once a week.

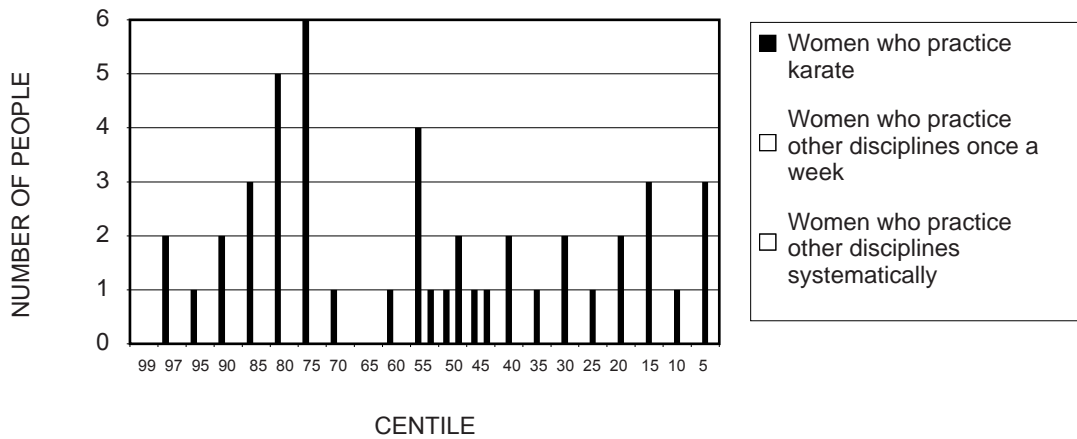
The results presented in the bar chart above, concerning women who practice other sport disciplines than karate, were divided into groups according to the number of trainings every week. It can be concluded that the number of trainings exerts a direct influence on the level of assertiveness obtained by those people. Women who practice regularly, at least three times a week or even more often, are characterized by a much higher level of assertiveness in comparison to women who practice on regular basis, but who restrict themselves to only one training every week. It should be noticed that people who practice different sport disciplines at least three times a week obtained results at the level between 40 and 55 centiles, which is only the lower borderline of the assertiveness level for people who practice karate.

Bar charts number 3 and 4 are devoted to the characteristics of the assertiveness level results obtained by men. Bar chart number 3 contains the results of assertiveness level among men who were subdivided into

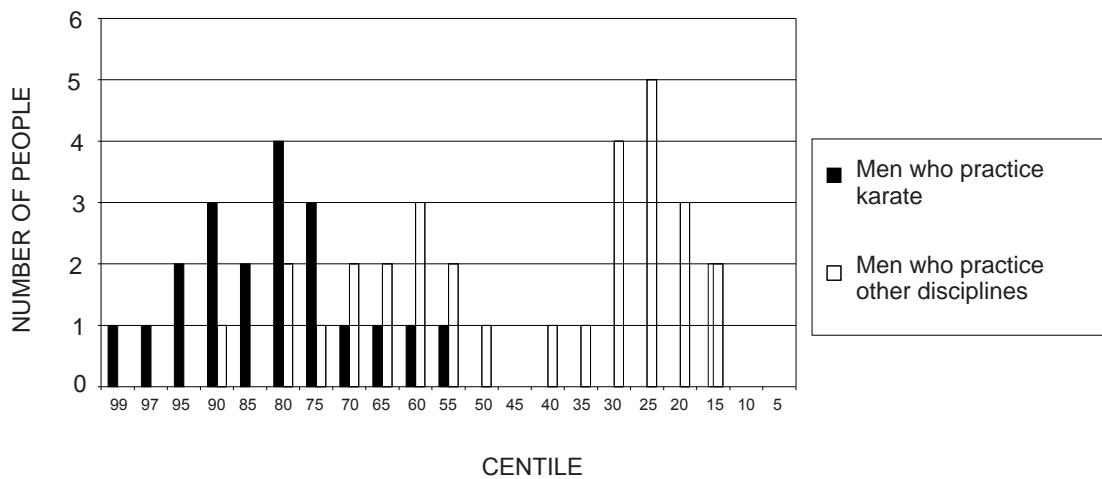
*Centile norms of the Rathus Assertiveness Scale*

Women's results (points)	Centil	Men's results (points)
55	99	65
48	97	54
45	95	49
37	90	40
31	85	33
26	80	30
23	75	26
19	70	24
17	65	19
14	60	17
11	55	15
8	50	11
6	45	8
2	40	6
-1	35	3
-4	30	1
-8	25	-3
-13	20	-7
-17	15	-11
-24	10	-15
-34	5	-24
-39	3	-30
-48	1	-41

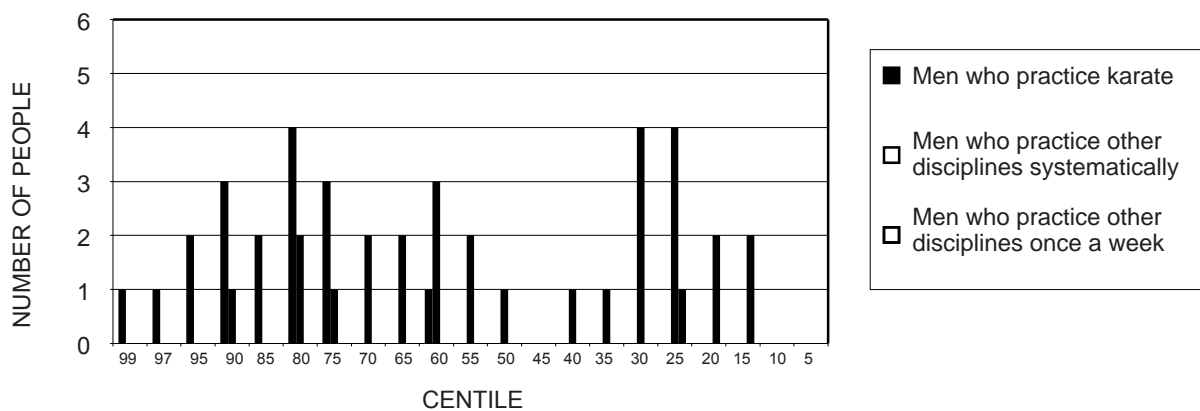




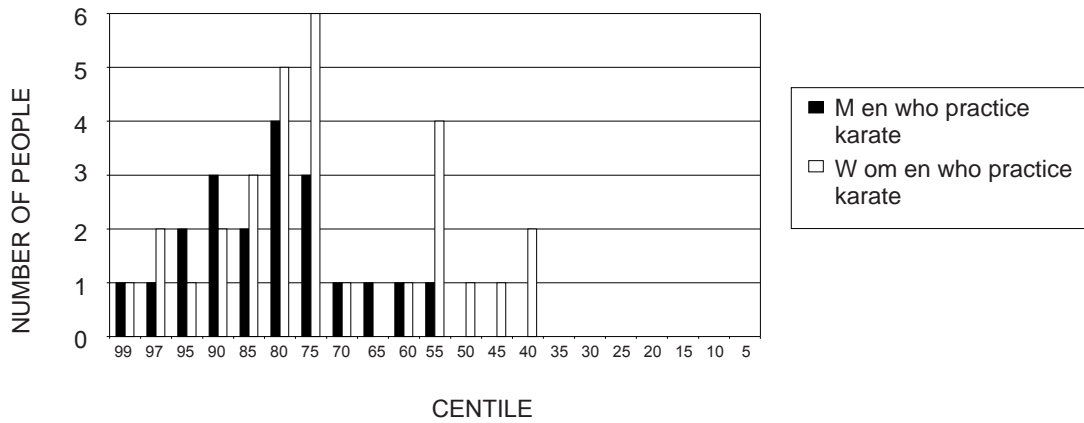
Bar chart 2. The collation of the results of assertiveness level obtained by women who practice karate and women who practice other disciplines three times a week and women who practice other disciplines once a week.



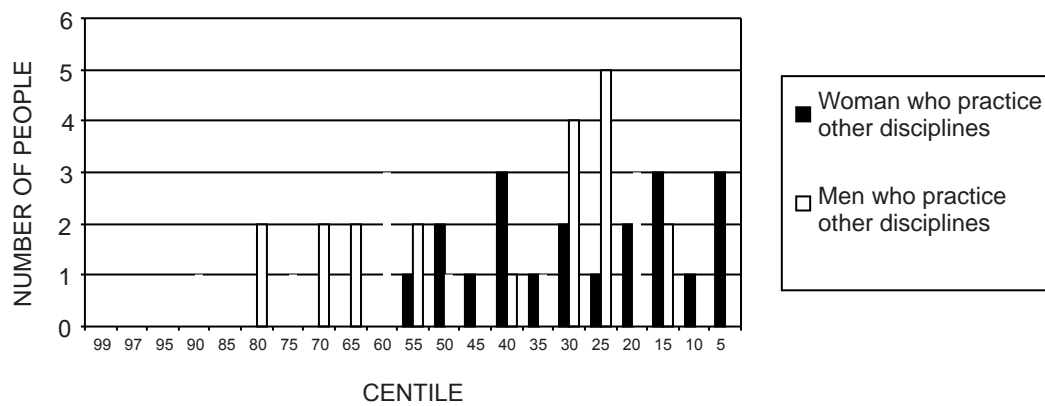
Bar chart 3. The collation of the assertiveness level of men who practice karate and men who practice other sport disciplines



Bar chart 4. The collation of the results of assertiveness level obtained by men who practice karate and men who practice other disciplines three times a week and men who practice other disciplines once a week.



Bar chart 5. The level of assertiveness among the karate adepts surveyed considering their sex



Bar chart 6. The results of the assertiveness among women and men who practice other sport disciplines

Table 2.

The collation of the results obtained by women who practice karate and women who practice other disciplines

Results (points)	Centile	Number of women in the research	
		Women who practice karate actively	Women who practice other disciplines
55	99	1	
48	97	2	
45	95	1	
37	90	2	
31	85	3	
26	80	5	
23	75	6	
19	70	1	
17	65		
14	60	1	
11	55	4	1
8	50	1	2
6	45	1	1
2	40	2	3
-1	35		1
-4	30		2
-8	25		1
-13	20		2
-17	15		3
-24	10		1
-34	5		3

groups who practice karate and men who do other sport disciplines.

The research conducted in the group comprised by men who practice karate and other sports disciplines, similarly to the group of women, show significant differences in the level of assertiveness in favour of karate adepts. The level of assertiveness among men who practice karate was between 40 and 99 centiles, while the level obtained by men who do other sport was relatively lower – from 15 to 90 centiles. A half of the men who do other sport disciplines reached the results between 15 and 40 centiles.

Bar chart number four presents data about the assertiveness level among men who practice karate and other disciplines concerning the division into men who practice regularly, at least three times a week, and those whose training takes place only once a week.

Comparing the group of men who practice different disciplines, considering the division into groups taking into consideration the frequency of training, it should be concluded that there is a huge difference in the assertiveness level in favour of men who practice sport systematically – the results oscillate between 20 and 90 centiles. Men who train only once a week obtained the result at the level between 15 to 25 centiles. It should be acknowledged that people who train other sport disciplines at least three times a week obtained lower results than men who practice karate.

Bar chart number 5 presents the collation of the results of assertiveness level taking into consideration the sex of respondents.

The analysis of the results of the assertiveness level among men and women shown, that men are more assertive than women and they obtain higher results than women as well. Men's results oscillate between 55 and 99 centiles, women's results are between 40 and 99 centiles.

The last bar chart is a collation of the assertiveness level among people who practice other sport disciplines considering their sex.

The analysis of the results of assertiveness among women and men who practice different sport disciplines revealed that men are more assertive in comparison to women and they achieve higher results than women as well. The results of men's assertiveness oscillates between 15 and 90 centiles, women's assertiveness oscillates between 5 and 55 centiles.

#### **The comparison of own research to norms and results.**

Questionnaire form based on the Rathus Assertiveness Scale was applied as the tool in this research, whereas each question posed to the respondents was presented on a scientific scale. The scale accepted (3 – yes it definitely refers to me; 2 – refers to me; 1 – rather refers to me; -1 – rather does not refer to me; -2 – does not refer to me; -3 – definitely does not refer to me) was used to examine the respondents' attitudes and reactions to those situations in which assertiveness can be manifested. The differentiation gave the researchers an ample opportunity to quantify disparities in the meaning of particular terms among people who practice karate. It facilitated the process of determining the emotional component of

attitudes towards different objects, gave an opportunity to assess the intensity of different emotional components of assertiveness and its cognitive structure.

Table 2 contains the results concerning the level of assertiveness among women who practice karate and those who practice other disciplines compared with norms.

Table number three contains data concerning the level of assertiveness among women who practice karate and women who practice other sport disciplines. The data is divided into respondents who train regularly – at least three times a week, and those who train once a week. The results are presented both in points and centiles.

Table four presents the results of the assertiveness level among men with the division into men who practice karate and other sport disciplines. The results are presented both in points and in centiles.

Table number five contains data concerning the level of assertiveness among men who practice karate and men who practice other sport disciplines. The data is divided into respondents who train regularly – at least three times a week, and those who train once a week. The results are presented both in points and centiles.

Table six presents a collation of results of the assertiveness level among people who practice karate considering sex. The results are presented both in points and centiles.

The last table presents a collation of the results of assertiveness level among people who practice other sport disciplines considering sex. The results are presented both in centiles and points.

The results of the research presented in centiles on the Rathus Assertiveness Scale show us how many points were gained by the respondents in the questionnaires, and at which level of assertiveness the obtained results are on the centile scale. For instance, if women obtained 45 points, it means that her result exceeds the results of 95% of women from the standardization sample. It means that the assertiveness of such a person is higher than the assertiveness of 95% of statistical women.

As the results of the research conducted in a group of 100 people, in this 50 people who practice karate, show that the results are distributed differently.

It is an undeniable regularity that the level of assertiveness among people who practice karate is higher in comparison to people who do other sports. Karate doers, both men and women obtained better results compared to the second group of sportsmen/women. This regularity can be observed among men, but it is more perceptible among women. Generally speaking, it can be stated that people who practice karate are far more assertive than other people. The results of the research conducted among people who train other disciplines three times a week or more frequently and those who train regularly but only once a week show, that the first group of people is more assertive than the second group mentioned. The results show that the practice of any sport discipline results in a higher level of assertiveness, in comparison to people who do not practice any sport discipline.

Assertiveness is nowadays a trendy word which is used very often. One can get the impression that it is overused,

Table 3.

*The comparison of results obtained by women who practice karate and women who practice other disciplines (with the division into groups which train at least three times a week and once a week)*

Results (points)	Centile	Number of women in the research		
		Women who practice karate	Women who practice other disciplines (at least three times a week)	Women who practice other disciplines once a week
55	99	1		
48	97	2		
45	95	1		
37	90	2		
31	85	3		
26	80	5		
23	75	6		
19	70	1		
17	65			
14	60	1		
11	55	4	1	
8	50	1	2	
6	45	1	1	
2	40	2	1	2
-1	35			1
-4	30			2
-8	25			1
-13	20			2
-17	15			3
-24	10			1
-34	5			3

Table 4.

*The results among men who practice karate and other sport disciplines*

Results (points).	Centile	Number of men in the research	
		Men who practice karate actively	Men who practice other disciplines
65	99	1	
54	97	1	
49	95	2	
40	90	3	1
33	85	2	
30	80	4	2
26	75	3	1
24	70	1	2
19	65	1	2
17	60	1	3
15	55	1	2
11	50		1
8	45		
6	40		1
3	35		1
1	30		4
-3	25		5
-7	20		3
-11	15		2

wrongly applied and misunderstood. Nevertheless the term penetrates into people's lives and functions in interpersonal contacts.

The outline of the term presented in this paper and the short explanation of the assertive theory aim to bring the issue to people who actively and regularly do sport. Particularly, we think here about one sport discipline which is karate.

The aspects which entwine karate and assertiveness is showed in the above considerations. The examination conducted among a representative sample of 100 people showed that people who practice karate are more assertive than people who practice other sport disciplines. Is therefore karate a road to a better self-qualification, to find a place in the contemporary world? The results of the research tend to indicate that a different, philosophical

Table 5.

*The comparison of results obtained by men who practice karate and men who practice other disciplines (with the division into groups which train at least three times a week and once a week)*

Results (points).	Centile	Number of men in the research		
		Men who actively practice karate	Men who practice other disciplines at least three times a week	Men who practice other disciplines once a week
55	99	1		
48	97	1		
45	95	2		
37	90	3	1	
31	85	2		
26	80	4	2	
23	75	3	1	
19	70	1	2	
17	65	1	2	
14	60	1	3	
11	55	1	2	
8	50		1	
6	45			
2	40		1	
-1	35		1	
-4	30		4	
-8	25		4	1
-13	20		1	2
-17	15			2
-24	10			
-34	5			

Table 6.

*Comparison of results obtained by women and men who practice karate*

Results (points)	Centile	Number of men and women in the research	
		Women who practice karate actively	Men who practice karate actively
65	99	1	1
54	97	2	1
49	95	1	2
40	90	2	3
33	85	3	2
30	80	5	4
26	75	6	3
24	70	1	1
19	65		1
17	60	1	1
15	55	4	1
11	50	1	
8	45	1	
6	40	2	
3	35		
1	30		
-3	25		
-7	20		
-17	15		

attitude toward sport is a factor which helps a human being to find themselves in the hectic, complicated society we live in. It shows us the way to care about ourselves thanks to special educational methods and frequent trainings.

Hence, karate is not only a marital art, but also, and maybe first and foremost, a road to a better, more respectful life.



The results obtained by men and women who practice other sport disciplines

Results (points)	Centile	Number of men and women in the research	
		Women who practice other disciplines	Men who practice other disciplines
65	99		
54	97		
49	95		
40	90		
33	85		1
30	80		2
26	75		1
24	70		2
19	65		2
17	60		3
15	55	1	2
11	50	2	1
8	45	1	
6	40	3	
3	35	1	1
1	30	2	1
-3	25	1	4
-7	20	2	5
-17	15	3	3
-24	10	1	2
		3	

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