

MARTIAL ARTS TOURISM

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Tourism of martial arts researchers: a case study of participants in an international congress

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Abstract

Problem. Among the scientific organisations operating on an international scale, whose interest is focused on the area of fighting arts (martial arts, combat sports, self-defence, combat systems, martial cultures and hoplology), the IMACSSS – International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society comes to the fore. This association was established in Rzeszow and was registered in 2010. Each year it organises or patronises the organisation of a scientific conference devoted to the problem area of fighting arts. The scientific perspective for the research carried out here is co-created by: the theory of scientific and congress tourism. Because the scientific congress on fighting arts is part of the above-mentioned types of tourism. Problem questions were posed: 1) How were the topics discussed during the IMACSSS Congress in terms of quantity and quality, as a scientific conference on martial arts and combat sports?; 2) How does the aforementioned scientific event combined with tourism related to martial arts and combat sports broaden or supplement the knowledge on the subject discussed in this article?

Methods. The adopted research methodology is co-created by: 1) Analysis of the scientific event in the area of fighting arts, which was the 11th International Conference of IMACSSS & 5th World Scientific Congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts, from the perspective of the martial arts tourism concept; 2) Analysis of the ways of Grand Masters of various varieties of martial arts according to their statements; 3) Participant observation of authors; 4) Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the content of the extended abstracts contained in the Abstract Book.

Results. A total of 51 papers were submitted to the conference, which were to be presented during three scientific plenary sessions (15), panel sessions (28), and one poster session (8). The conducted research in quantitative terms concerned the following numerical values: 1) Participants of scientific sessions by gender and continent; 2) Types of speeches presented during the analysed scientific sessions; 3) Topics of speeches presented during the analysed scientific sessions according to the forms of combat; 4) Topics of speeches presented during the analysed scientific sessions by research areas, and *chi-square* test; 5) Topics of speeches presented during the analysed scientific sessions by research areas and the nationality of their authors.

Conclusions. Scientific events, such as conferences organised by the IMACSSS, are – as it can be assumed – a way of stronger emergence, promotion and legitimization of these especially less known on an international scale, varieties of fighting arts.

Introduction

Among scientific organizations operating on an international scale, whose interest is focused on the fighting arts area (martial arts, combat sports, self-defence, combat systems, martial cultures and hopology), IMACSSS – International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society stands at the forefront. This association was established in Rzeszów and was registered in 2010. Every year it organizes or patronises the organisation of a scientific conference devoted to the problem area of fighting arts.

The scientific perspective for the research conducted here is co-created by: the theory of scientific and congress tourism [Rogers 1998; Cynarski 2015; Sawicki B. 2016; Slocum, Kline, Holden 2017], and the concept of martial arts tourism [Cynarski, Sieber 2007; Blach, Swider, Sieber 2020; Cynarski 2020; Pawelec, Swider, Cynarski 2020]. Because the scientific congress on fighting arts is part of the above-mentioned types of tourism.

Problem questions were posed:

- 1) How were the topics discussed during the IMACSSS Congress, in terms of quantity and quality, as a scientific conference on martial arts and combat sports?;
- 2) How does the aforementioned scientific event combined with tourism related to martial arts and combat sports broaden or supplement the knowledge on the subject discussed in this article?

Methodology

The adopted research methodology is co-created by: 1) Analysis of a scientific event in the field of fighting arts, which was the 11th International Conference of IMACSSS & 5th World Scientific Congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts, from the perspective of the concept of martial arts tourism; 2) Analysis of the ways of Grand Masters of various types of martial arts according to their statements; 3) Authors' participant observation; 4) Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the content of extended abstracts included in the Abstract Book.

The indicated Congress is an analysed case of an event that is both scientific and important for the martial arts community, being – in the research assumption – a magnet for martial arts tourism and scientific tourism at the same time. It is less about facts or a review of a scientific event, and more about qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The Panel of Grand Masters provided an opportunity to ask high-ranking martial arts masters about their martial arts tourism journeys – firstly for learning, later for teaching. There were also talks and interviews, such as a bilateral interview, when the leaders of various Japanese and Polish organisations inquired about the institutionalisation and functioning of the other side's institutions with a view to cooperation. For example, there were

questions about *Idokan*, an organisation founded and operating mainly outside of Japan [cf. Cynarski 2019; interlocution 2; Matsui 2022].

Participant observation is one of the basic methods of qualitative research in cultural anthropology since Bronisław Malinowski (the creator of this method), and is used in martial arts research [Green *et al.* 2019]. In this case, three authors were active in the Organizing Committee (members of the organizational team), two – in the Scientific Committee, and one was an invited speaker, playing the role of a “special guest” important in the typology of participants [Cynarski 2020: 50].

A qualitative and quantitative analysis was also used, as well as a statistical elaboration on possible dependencies between the presented topics concerning individual martial arts and sports and indicators concerning their gender and the represented area of the continent: European or other. The occurrence of particular categories was also examined. For this purpose, the method of analysis presented, among others, in by Joanna Gotlib, Jaroslawa Belowska, Anna Kaczynska and Mariusz Panczyk [2014].

Description of the event / scientific event

On October 13-15, 2022 in Rzeszow, at the facilities of the Institute of Physical Culture of the University of Rzeszow, an event called the 11th International Conference of IMACSSS & 5th World Scientific Congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts took place. During this event, the IMACSSS General Assembly was held, during which the President, Treasurer and Secretary of this organisation were elected (respectively: Prof. Wojciech J. Cynarski, Dr Pawel Swider and Przemyslaw Pawelec, MA).

In total, there were: three plenary sessions, discussion panel – Grand Masters and their pathways, poster session, and also deliberations in five sections (*Bio-technical Approaches; Science and Logic of Combat; Sociology, Anthropology, History; Kinesiology; Coaching and Psychology*). This event was complemented by Martial Arts Shows and Martial Arts Workshops. Quantitative data will be presented in the Results section.

Seven experts of the highest rank were invited to participate in the Panel of Grand Masters: Prof. Keith Kernspecht (*WingTsun*, 10 toan, Germany), Dr James Lee-Barron (*jujutsu*, 10 dan, UK), Dr Roland J. Maroteaux (*aiki-jujutsu*, 9 dan, France), Prof. Sergio Mor-Stabilini (*karate*, 9 dan, Italy), Dr Zbigniew Sawicki (*Signum Polonicum*, 9 dan, Poland), GM Volodymyr Pilat (*Boyovyy hopak*, Ukraine), and Dr M. N. M. Shapie (Malaysian *silat*, 9 dan, Malaysia). Unfortunately, the first four mentioned could not come for many different reasons, despite the fact that Prof. Kernspecht was to receive the Medal of the University of Rzeszow from the Rector of the University of Rzeszow. *Nota bene*, a similar Medal was previously received by two experts of merit for IMACSSS and IPA

– *Meijin* Lothar Sieber (*Idokan*, 10 dan, Germany) and Prof. Fuminori Nakiri (*kendo*, 7 dan, Japan).

This panel was about presenting the path to mastery and the specificity of a given style or variety of martial art. The moderator of the Grandmasters Panel was Prof. Wojciech J. Cynarski, 10 dan *Idokan ido*, 9 dan *jujutsu* and *karate, hanshi*. He himself did not perform as his martial arts style and achievements have already been described [cf. Cieszkowski 2010; Sieber, Cynarski 2013]. Cynarski asked each of the Grand Masters: “I would like to ask each of you about trips for learning or teaching martial arts – the martial arts tourism”.

Volodymyr Pilat, with the help of Elias Sidoruk and Michal Kurak, discussed the specificity of the combat hopak [cf. Cynarski 2021: 64; Pilat, Sidoruk, Kurak 2022]. This knowledge was supplemented by an interview in which GM Pilat pointed to trips to the cities of Sumy, Kuban and Odesa for his own practical studies of Cossack traditions [Interlocution 1]. Together with my own individual experience in fighting arts (including in the field of boxing, *Kyokushin karate*, knife and saber fighting), this enabled the creation of an educational system called *Boiovyi hopak*. The headquarters of the same is located in Lviv, where the personnel of this martial art are trained.

Zbigniew Sawicki discussed the origins and characteristics of the Polish martial art *Signum Polonicum* [Sawicki 2014; Cynarski 2021: 152-153], he himself first practiced *karate* before he became a restorer of the old Polish art of fencing. During the Martial Arts Gala shows, it was noticeable that the techniques of taking the saber from the attacker are similar to those used in classic *jujutsu*, so fencing in *Signum Polonicum* is complemented by hand-to-hand combat. GM Sawicki learned from Polish emigrants in London (UK), where this fencing was preserved, and also conducted long-term historical studies (query of libraries and archives) to recreate the authentic technique, teaching methods and ceremonial. The headquarters is located in Zawiercie, and the teaching focuses on improving the teaching staff.

Mohamad Nizam Mohamed Shapie was presented as the leader of the modern Malaysian style of *silat*. He himself discussed its specificity and entering the path of sports competition. Dr. Shapie studied with Aminudidn Anuar (*Seni silat*, 10 dan) in Malaysia; currently trying to promote *silat* as a sport on an international scale [Cynarski 2021: 147; Hassim *et al.* 2022].

To sum up, the knowledge about the martial arts tradition of a given country and the appropriate skills were acquired in a given country or among emigrants of a given nationality. Teaching also has its headquarters in a given country, in the place of residence of the main master, and focuses mainly on educating instructors. In the case of sports competition, which concerns *silat* and *hopak*, these new disciplines are currently also being promoted on an international scale.

Results

A total of 51 papers were submitted to the conference, which were to be presented during three plenary sessions (15), panel sessions (28) and poster sessions (8). The detailed type of papers is presented in Table 1. It should be noted that in the case of co-authors of more than one paper, they were counted in terms of share in authorship.

Table 1. Participants of scientific sessions by gender and nationality

Session type	Total number of reported occurrences	Number of authors and co-authors of submitted papers	Sex		Nationality	
			F	M	Polish	Other
Plenary sessions	15	20	3	17	7	13
Panel sessions	28	79	23	56	20	59
Poster sessions	8	20	5	15	9	11
TOGETHER	51	119	31	88	36	83

Source: own research.

The data in Table 1 indicate that 51 presentations had a total of 119 authors (an average of 2.33 authors/presentation). Among all the authors there were a total of 31 women and 88 men. However, in terms of nationality, there were 36 Poles and 83 people with other nationalities.

The discussed congress as a scientific event was an undertaking for which various types of studies were submitted. As already mentioned, there were 51 such submissions, among which there were submissions concerning new content or a review of previously known knowledge. A full list of presentation types is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of speeches presented during the analysed scientific sessions

Session type	Total number of reported occurrences	Opinion / new ideas	Review paper	Original paper	Case study
Plenary sessions	15	7	2	2	4
Panel sessions	28	4	8	14	2
Poster sessions	8	1	2	4	1
TOGETHER	51	12	12	20	7

Source: own research.

Based on the information presented in Table 2, it was found that the majority of original papers were (20), and review and review papers accounted for almost a quarter of the submissions (12 each). There were relatively few case studies (7).

Another interesting problem is the issue of the topics of individual speeches due to the forms of combat (martial arts, combat sports and other forms of combat, as well as topics combining martial arts with combat sports). The collected data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Topics of speeches presented during the analysed scientific sessions according to the forms of combat

Session type	Total number of reported occurrences	Martial Arts	Combat Sports	Martial Arts & Combat Sports	Other forms
Plenary sessions	15	12	1	2	0
Panel sessions	28	17	6	3	2
Poster sessions	8	4	1	2	1
TOGETHER	51	33	8	7	3

Source: own research.

Based on the numerical data in Table 3, it can be concluded that the majority of topics concerned martial arts (33). There were much fewer issues related to combat sports (8) and syntheses related to both mentioned forms of combat (7). Other forms of struggle in terms of the issues raised were analysed marginally (3).

Individual issues have been included in individual thematic categories corresponding to scientific disciplines and diverse areas of knowledge. These differences in terms of reported occurrences are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Topics of speeches presented during the analysed scientific sessions by research areas

Session type	Total number of reported occurrences	Bio-technical Approaches	Science and Logic of Combat	Sociology, Anthropology, History	Kinesiology	Coaching and Psychology	Other
Plenary sessions	15	1	2	9	1	1	1
Panel sessions	28	4	6	6	6	6	0
Poster sessions	8	4	1	1	1	0	1
TOGETHER	51	9	9	16	8	7	2

Source: own research

According to the information presented in Table 4, it was found that the largest number of presentations concerned Sociology, Anthropology and History (16). The following topics were taken by Bio-technical Approaches and Science and Logic of Combat (9 each), as well as Kinesiology (8), Coaching and Psychology (7). There were the fewest analyzes in the *Other* category (2).

It was also examined (using the chi-square test, with a significance level of 0.05) whether there is a correlation between the internationalization of the IMACSSS Congress and the studied forms of combat as the subject of the reported speeches. It would be an analysis of the possibility of situations in which people reporting the above-mentioned speeches practiced science tourism due to the presentation of the results of international scientific cooperation. The collected data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Topics of speeches presented during the analysed scientific sessions by research areas and the nationality of their authors

Authorship of speeches	Total number of reported occurrences	Martial Arts	Combat Sports	Martial Arts & Combat Sports	Other forms
From one country	27	32	7	7	2
International	3	1	1	0	1
TOGETHER	51	33	8	7	3

Source: own research

Based on the chi-square test used, the result was 5.64. This result is lower than the test value read from the chi-square distribution table (7.81), with $df = 3$, so with a probability of 95% it can be confirmed that there is a correlation between the internationalization of the IMACSSS Congress and the examined forms of combat as the topics of the reported speeches.

Discussion

In scientific tourism, trips for research or to conferences of martial arts researchers are distinguished [Cynarski 2015; Johnson 2018, 2019]. In turn, in martial arts tourism, participation in scientific events on martial arts is also distinguished, which is included in the concept of martial arts studies [Cynarski 2020: 125-140]. It is an exchange of knowledge, and sometimes also technical and tactical skills in various types of fighting arts. Especially when the program of a given congress also includes shows and workshops – practice on the mat [cf. Slopecki, Obodynski 2011; Pawelec *et al.* 2015; Sieber, Cynarski, Mytskan 2015; Johnson 2018; Swider 2022].

In the academic environment, trips to this type of conferences generally concern martial arts enthusiasts and researchers, a relatively small group [cf. Cynarski 2015; Swider, Cynarski, Kubala 2018]. It is not a problem area of interest to the larger scientific community. However, practitioners - trainers / teachers, ambitious students, enthusiasts are also invited to similar seminars and symposiums, conferences and congresses. These are often people who are trying to gain additional knowledge about martial arts or think about using their knowledge and skills to promote their own school and style, or also to pursue their scientific aspirations. Participants in these simultaneously tourist and scientific events play different roles according to their scientific or status position in the martial arts community (*Vide*: typology of participants in tourist events [Cynarski 2020: 48-60]).

Martial arts enthusiasts most often travel for knowledge and to acquire new skills from their teachers or to centers teaching particular martial arts [cf. Sieber, Cynarski, Mytskan 2015; Pawelec, Swider, Cynarski 2020; Johnson 2021]. Masters, founders of new schools and styles, usually train instructors first, as is the case

with martial arts that are less known on a global scale. Famous schools try to compete in the “martial arts market” in order to continue to develop within private or social organisations. Japanese martial arts retain their headquarters and main teaching centres in Japan, where teachers of these varieties of martial arts wander to gain new competence and higher master’s degrees [Figueiredo *et al.* 2020].

Martial arts, less known on an international scale, are at a different stage of development and popularisation. While various Chinese and Japanese martial arts have been practiced for centuries, new varieties of martial arts necessarily have less recognition and usually a smaller number of people practicing them. This translates into study or teaching trips. For example, the *Tenshinshoden Katorishinto-ryu* school has been teaching continuously since the fifteenth century [Sugino, Ito 2010], so the *shihan* of this school is invited to foreign training seminars, and interested instructors visit the main *dojo* to improve their skills [Cynarski 2020: 14-34]. The situation of the Grand Master, who inherited the running of the school as a successor, is different; another is someone who has yet to become known with his school in the national and global martial arts community.

Conclusions

Scientific events, such as conferences organised by IMACSSS, are – as it can be assumed – a way to strengthen the presence, promotion and legitimisation of these, especially less known martial arts on an international scale.

The activity of IMACSSS as a scientific association is conducive to expanding the network of knowledge exchange between scientists from different countries and environments. The benefits for people participating in related tourism (both nationally and internationally) include: improving the quality of research, its internationalisation, as well as supporting new talents among scientists [NN 2017].

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Turystyka badaczy sztuk walki: analiza przypadku uczestników międzynarodowego kongresu

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, studium przypadku, analiza jakościowa i ilościowa

Streszczenie

Problem. Wśród organizacji naukowych działających w skali międzynarodowej, których zainteresowania koncentrują się na obszarze sztuk walki (sztuki walki, sporty walki, samoobrona, systemy walki, kultury walki i hopologia), na pierwszy plan wysuwa się Międzynarodowe Towarzystwo Naukowe Sztuk i Sportów Walki / *International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society*, IMACSSS. Stowarzyszenie to powstało w Rzeszowie i zostało zarejestrowane w 2010 roku. Corocznie organizuje lub patronuje organizacji konferencji naukowej poświęconej problematyce sztuk walki. Perspektywę naukową dla prowadzonych tu badań współtworzą: teoria turystyki naukowej i kongresowej, ponieważ kongres naukowy poświęcony sztukom walki wpisuje się w wyżej wymienione rodzaje turystyki.

Postawiono pytania problemowe: 1) Jak prezentowały się pod względem ilościowym i jakościowym tematyki podejmowane podczas kongresu IMACSSS, jako konferencji naukowej o tematyce sztuk walki i sportów walki?, 2) W jaki sposób wspomniane wydarzenie o charakterze naukowym w połączeniu z turystyką związaną ze sztukami i sportami walki poszerza lub uzupełnia wiedzę na temat podejmowanej w tym artykule tematyki?

Metoda. Przyjętą metodologię badawczą współtworzą: 1) Analiza wydarzenia naukowego z obszaru sztuk walki, jakim była XI Międzynarodowa Konferencja IMACSSS i V Światowy Kongres Naukowy Sportów Walki i Sztuk Walki, z perspektywy koncepcji turystyki sztuk walki; 2) Analiza dróg wielkich mistrzów różnych odmian sztuk walki według ich wypowiedzi; 3) Obserwacja uczestnicząca autorów; 4) Analiza ilościowa i jakościowa treści rozszerzonych abstraktów zawartych w Księdze abstraktów.

Wyniki. Na konferencję zgłoszono łącznie 51 referatów, które miały zostać zaprezentowane podczas trzech sesji plenaryjnych (15), sesji panelowych (28) i jednej sesji plakatowej (8). Przeprowadzone badania ilościowe dotyczyły następujących wielkości liczbowych: 1) Uczestnicy sesji naukowych według płci i kontynentu; 2) Rodzaje wystąpień wygłaszanych podczas analizowanych sesji naukowych; 3) Tematyka wystąpień wygłaszanych podczas analizowanych sesji naukowych wg formy walki; 4) Tematyka wystąpień wygłaszanych podczas

analizowanych sesji naukowych według obszarów badawczych oraz test chi-kwadrat; 5) Tematyka wystąpień wygłaszanych podczas analizowanych sesji naukowych według obszarów badawczych i narodowości ich autorów.

Wnioski. Wydarzenia naukowe, takie jak konferencje organizowane przez IMACSSS, są – jak można przypuszczać – sposobem na silniejsze zaistnienie, promocję i legitymizację tych szczególnie mniej znanych w skali międzynarodowej odmian sztuk walki.