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### PEDAGOGY / PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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# Fight disciplines in physical education undergraduate courses: analysis in Brazilian higher education institutions

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#### Abstract

Background. The teaching of fighting arts in initial training in Physical Education mostly uses disciplines which focus on common fighting modalities and few are identified as mandatory disciplines in the curriculum.

Problem and aim. Analyze the proposals for fight disciplines in Brazilian public universities, considering their nomenclatures, syllabus, bibliographies and character. Methods. The study is qualitative in nature, characterized as descriptive, as a source of documentary information.

Results. In the results, 131 disciplines corresponding to fighting and martial arts were found. Of these, 80 syllabuses were accessed and analyzed subdivided into categories, highlighting the predominance of the conceptual aspects of fighting and martial arts in the syllabus descriptions. The analysis of the bibliography was carried out across 12 disciplines, highlighting the predominance of specific literature by modalities of fighting and martial arts. In addition, the results also identified the number of mandatory (54) and elective (26) subjects.

Conclusion. The analyzed HEIs present different disciplines related to fighting and martial arts in their curricular matrices. It is therefore suggested that HEIs promote actions that enrich the contents of their disciplines around fighting arts.

#### Introduction

Investigations on the teaching of fighting arts in initial training in Physical Education present a contradictory scenario in relation to the contents that are offered to undergraduates. Studies show that most subjects focus on common fighting modalities (judo and capoeira) and few are identified as mandatory subjects in the curriculum. In research on the subject, it is possible to identify that some courses do not offer subjects related to fights, showing a gap in the training of future teachers, which can reduce the perspective to analyze, understand and systematize the content that they will develop in the school environment [Vecchio, Franchini 2006; Gomes, Avelar-Rosa 2012; Bowman 2017; Pereira 2018].

Notoriously, initial training courses should include the content of fights in their curricula of their pedagogical projects, in a way that makes learning possible for the future teacher. In this sense, the disciplines should meet the teaching and learning processes, related to fights in the school context, being inserted in the curricula of HEIs, thereby reducing the tensions around the content [Gomes, Avelar Rosa 2012; Bowman 2017; Ruzickova, Jirasek, Petr 2019; Pereira *et al.* 2021].

In Brazilian reality, regulatory frameworks that guided teacher training, until 2015, were centered on resolutions of the National Education Council (CNE) n. 01/2002 and CNE n. 02/2015 [Brazil 2002; Brazil 2015] that set out the workload for the courses and the essential skills for teacher training. Among them, some are focused on teaching and learning, namely: content mastery; pedagogical knowledge; and improvement of pedagogical practice. Thus, competencies inserted in disciplines of undergraduate courses can contemplate the filling of the gaps mentioned and train teachers capable of dealing with the content effectively in the school context.

Furthermore, CNE resolution n. 01/2002 [Brazil 2002] also established that HEIs should be flexible in their curricula and, consequently, meet the priorities of school Physical Education in different contexts. Accordingly, this flexibility was also mentioned in CNE n. 02/2015 [Brazil 2015], which discussed the importance of the curriculum being contextualized with the students' reality.

Resolution CNE n. 06/2018 provides Physical Education as an area of knowledge focused on the body culture of human movement, in which the teaching of its objects should be addressed, namely: sports, games, dance, gymnastics, and fights. In addition, it is important to emphasize that, in the Brazilian scenario, the Physical Education course, through its purposes and professional objectives, presents two formations: the bachelor's degree, focused on knowledge, attitudes and professional skills in the scenarios of sports training, the guidance of physical activities, physical preparation, recreation and leisure; and the degree, focusing on the study,

knowledge, attitudes and professional skills, mainly in the school scenario [Brazil 2018].

Corroborating with the resolutions mentioned, the disciplines of fights should be structured in initial training with the aim of providing future teachers with pedagogical skills so that they acquire the appropriate knowledge for intervention in basic education effectively, diversifying the content and seeking strategies that match the reality [Figueiredo 2009; Bowman 2017; Ruzickova, Jirasek, Petr 2019; Pereira *et al.* 2021].

Therefore, presenting theoretical subsidies to the scientific and professional environments, with the intention of providing an opportunity for reflections on the disciplines related to fighting arts in initial training becomes a challenge, since paradigms such as weaknesses in the teaching processes and the curriculum of courses, which generally do not provide some discipline of fights still plague the content [Gomes, Avelar-Rosa 2012; Bowman 2017; Jennings 2017].

Although the relevance of studies related to the theme is understood, the investigations that deal with disciplines related to fights during initial training are still incipient. Given the context presented, the objective of this study was to analyze the proposals for fighting disciplines in Brazilian public universities, considering their nomenclatures, syllabus, bibliographies and character.

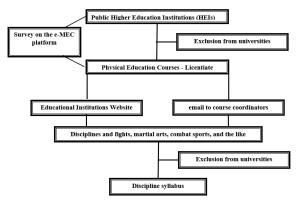
#### Materials and methods

The qualitative approach study is characterized as descriptive, which analyzes information collected without manipulating it [Tong *et al.* 2012]. The source of information is documentary, having as principle the search for official documents, in this case, through on-line material. Official documents were used as information sources, namely the programs of disciplines related to fights (martial arts and combat sports) of the Physical Education undergraduate courses of Brazilian public HEIs (Federal and State), including the syllabus and bibliography.

To collect the information, a survey of the HEIs was initially carried out by the e-MEC platform of the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2019 with the perspective of identifying those contemplated in the platform and the identification of HEIs in different Brazilian states, according to each administrative organization. After the survey, a visit was made to the website of each HEI registered in e-MEC platform to search for their pedagogical projects and, consequently, the curricular matrix, program, or teaching plan of the disciplines in order to search for: content, bibliography, and character of the fighting subjects.

At the same time, an email was sent to each course coordinator, requesting relevant information and the forwarding of data that were not available on the website. It

is important to point out that the HEIs that did not have any fighting discipline were excluded from the research.

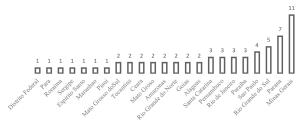


**Figure 1.** Procedures for searching and extracting information from disciplines related to fights in Physical Education degree courses.

With the information on the documents collected for the data analysis process, the content analysis technique was adopted [Bardin 2011], through three phases. In pre-analysis phase, the nomenclatures, syllabus, and bibliographies of the disciplines were grouped and read. In the coding phase, the registration units were listed, relating them to the similarities between the name and the disciplines' syllabus. In the categorization phase, categories were created *a posteriori*, regarding the nomenclatures, the syllabuses, and the bibliographies of the courses. The categories were quantified by frequency, thus making it possible to analyze the predominance of each term in the investigated syllabuses. To organize the material, NVivo 9.2 software was used, which helped in the data analysis process.

#### Results

The survey conducted by e-MEC platform resulted in the amount of 67 public HEIs, corresponding to 23 states and the Federal District. Figure 2 elucidates the number of investigated HEIs per state.



**Figure 2.** Number of investigated HEIs considering each Brazilian state.

Brazilian HEIs that were not included in the study, namely, do not have a degree course in Physical Education, were not registered in e-Mec platform or do not have disciplines of fight (both compulsory and elective or optional disciplines) in the matrices of the pedagogical projects of the course.

131 disciplines corresponding to fighting arts were found, which were characterized according to their nomenclatures: fighting and martial arts; capoeira; judo; karate; taekwondo; fencing; boxing; and jiu jitsu. Figure 3 shows the categorization of the disciplines by nomenclature.

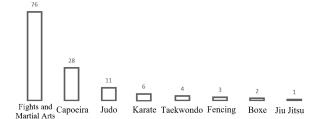


Figure 3. Fighting disciplines by nomenclature.

In the syllabuses analysis, six categories were listed, considering their aspects: critics of fighting and martial arts; modalities of fighting and martial arts; and benefits of fighting and martial arts. The aspects of each menu corresponded to three categories: conceptual, pedagogical, and technical. It is important to mention that among the 131 subjects that made up the analysis, 80 syllabuses were analyzed, and the syllabuses of the remaining 51 subjects were not analyzed because they were not available on the HEI website, as well as no feedback was received by e-mail from the information requested from coordinators. Table 1 shows the categories and the frequency of these categories on the syllabuses.

**Table 1.** Analysis categories regarding the fight disciplines syllabus.

Categories	Frequency (%)
Conceptual aspects of fighting and martial	102 (32,28%)
arts	
Educational aspects of fighting and martial	73 (26,26%)
arts	
Technical aspects of fighting and martial	54 (17,09%)
arts	
Fights and martial arts modalities	43 (13,60%)
Critical aspects of fighting and martial arts	23 (7,27%)
Benefits of fighting and martial arts	11 (3,50%)

For the analysis of the bibliography of disciplines, only 12 syllabuses of disciplines presented the bibliography available on the HEI's website. Considering the limited bibliography, five categories were systematized, namely: specific literature by modalities of fighting and martial arts; the historical context of fighting and martial arts; fighting and martial arts training; theories and pedagogical methods for teaching fighting arts at school; and guiding educational documents. Table 2 presents the categories and frequency in which they appeared in the bibliography.

Table 2. Analysis categories of disciplines bibliographies.

Categories	Frequency (%)
Specific literature by fighting modalities	33 (39,75%)
and martial arts	
Historical context of fighting and martial	23 (27,71%)
arts	
Training in fighting and martial arts	16 (19,27%)
Theories and educational methods for the	8 (9,65%)
teaching of fighting arts	
Guiding educational documents	3 (3,62%)

Finally, the character of the HEIs' disciplines was analyzed, given that it totalled 54 compulsory disciplines and 26 elective disciplines. It is noteworthy that among the 80 subjects that had their syllabuses available on the websites, all of them provided information on whether they were compulsory or offered as elective courses. However, we understand that the focus of the compulsory subjects becomes the target of training qualification.

#### Discussion

Brazil presents an academic context of 2,448 HEIs, considering universities, university centers, colleges, and federal institutes of education, of which 87.9% are private and 12.1% are public, according to the last census of higher education carried out by the Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (INEP). Brazilian public HEIs correspond to a total of 296 and are consolidated with the largest number of enrollments in the country in the period from 2016 to 2017. Regarding the degree courses in Physical Education from public HEIs, this is in second place in the ranking of courses offered, below only the pedagogy course, being one of the 15 courses with the highest number of enrollments held in the period from 2016 to 2017 (44.7%) [Brazil 2017].

Regarding the results of the study, there is a variety of institutions in all Brazilian states, especially in Minas Gerais, which has the largest number of HEIs with degree courses in Physical Education, followed by Parana, Rio Grande do Sul and Sao Paulo. Physical Education courses are attractive in the Brazilian scenario and have different institutional views regarding their interests, their market place, and the proper contents of Physical Education to compose their programs [Silva et al. 2018]. In this sense, some HEIs are justified in not having fighting disciplines in their curricula, because they seek to elaborate their programs in order to meet corporate and administrative demands, thus aiming at the predominance of disciplines of certain sporting events [Gomes, Avelar-Rosa 2012; Bowman 2017]. However, they distance themselves from the indications of official documents (Common National Curriculum Base - BNCC) [Brazil 2017], which provide the content of fights as part of the Physical Education curriculum in basic education, context intervention of professionals trained in undergraduate courses.

In this context, the absence of disciplines of fights in some HEIs reflects the non-insertion or exploration of this content in the school environment and thus restrict body practices that include the content of fights in Physical Education classes, not enabling future teachers with pedagogical efficiency to work with the content [Figueiredo 2009; Gomes, Avelar Rosa 2012]. Thus, we understand that fights should be developed in school Physical Education classes as they are one of the contents of the body culture of human movement, besides adding cultural meanings and manifestations throughout life [Bowman 2017; Ruzickova, Jirasek, Petr 2019; Pereira *et al.* 2021].

Regarding the disciplines nomenclatures, we can observe the predominance of disciplines named fighting and/or martial arts. Such a fact corroborates studies that discourse about the use of the polysemic term that fights present, which are: confrontation; self-defense; sports practice; cultural values; among others [Jennings 2017; Cynarski 2019; Ruzickova, Jirasek, Petr 2019]. Besides the term martial arts being considered a metaphor for war, of Roman and Greek origins (martial: Mars, the Roman god of war; Ares, the Greek god of war), it can be presented as a synonym for fighting [Reid, Croucher 1983].

Thus, Brazilian HEIs tend to use the term "fighting and martial arts" more predominantly, given the range of meanings they present. We observe that fights, as well as martial arts, have been present in Brazilian HEIs since the end of the 20th century, and with that evolving until they are specified in modalities according to the culture in which the HEI is inserted [Gomes, Avelar-Rosa 2012].

As an example of this fact, capoeira is presented, which had a prominent place in the results. As it is a Brazilian cultural manifestation, it has been generating interest among HEIs to address it in their curricula, due to its range of content that can be explored, highlighting: the relationship between capoeira and national history; its beliefs; and its martial techniques [Nunes, Oliveira, Wanderley 2009].

Notoriously, disciplines related to judo are more frequent in institutions, due to the fact that it is a safer modality to practice in the school environment because it does not have blows such as punches and kicks, besides teaching practitioners to fall correctly [Gomes, Avelar-Rosa 2012; Pereira *et al.* 2021]. However, just like capoeira, specific modalities limit the range of manifestations that fighting presents, making the content superficial and specific to the modality [Pereira *et al.* 2021].

Likewise, other disciplines that present specific nomenclatures of fighing arts types (karate, taekwondo, fencing, boxing and jiu jitsu) also weaken the teaching of fighting arts in the school context, due to their specificities. It is important to emphasize that the teacher does not need to be a generalist, presenting all the existing types of fights to his students, but it is necessary that he offers diversified content corresponding to the range of possibilities when presenting the topic, dealing with the historical, attitudinal and procedural concept [Bowman 2017; Jennings 2017; Cynarski 2019].

About the course syllabuses, which were organized in categories and ordered by frequency, the HEI's concern with the conceptual (historical and philosophical) aspects of fighting and martial arts is remarkable. Fighting arts present a historical context that extends since prehistory, with tribes that already used attack and defense techniques, until the sporting process of their modalities [Johnson, Ha, 2015; Bowman 2017; Cynarski 2019], as well as the influence of peoples who preserve their cultural traditions over time, as an example, the oriental millennial fights [Reid, Croucher 1983]. This dense historical process of fights presents important content to be developed during graduation, providing the future teacher with the conceptual dimension of the content, being able to systematize classes with stories, fables, and discussions about historical aspects of fights.

Educational aspects of fighting and martial arts appear soon after, also considering didactic and methodological aspects in this category. Culturally, disciplines of fights in the academic field do not have any information on how they will perform their educational processes to teach the content to future teachers, in addition to not presenting the school as a place where fighting arts will be introduced, a fact that corroborates the analyzed syllabuses, which do not provide further information. In short, some universities do not provide educational support to students in order to enable them to theme fights in the school environment [Gomes, Avelar-Rosa 2012].

Nevertheless, the focus should be on what will be taught about fighting in the context of school. At first, organize the content, and the content dimensions proposed by Zabala [2001] favor this as an educational means. Therefore, the conceptual dimension, which explores stories, fables, and rules of fighting, is linked to the attitudinal dimension, which explores values, norms and attitudes present not only in fighting, but in society. Finally, it is also linked to the procedural dimension, which is directed to actions that will be performed during the classes, not only by experiences of technical aspects of the fights, but also tactics and games of different classifications and modalities [Lopes *et al.* 2016; Pereira *et al.* 2021].

Regarding the technical aspects of fighting and martial arts, these have a huge relation to the development of the disciplines and much of the content in school Physical Education classes. The fighting technique is important for the specificity of each modality type, however the way in which they are often developed causes one of the recurring paradigms of teaching fights: being a fights practitioner to be able to develop the content [Lopes et al. 2016; Kusnierz, Cynarski, Gorner 2017; Pereira et al. 2021]. This implies negligence on the part of teach-

ers regarding the teaching of fights at school, precisely because they are not practitioners of the sport.

On the other hand, technical aspects can also develop another paradigm, the gestural reproduction of techniques which, in turn, presents a mistaken way of teaching [Pereira *et al.* 2021]. Fighting arts in school Physical Education classes and during the disciplines in undergraduate courses should not treat the content as if it were a kind of training identical to the fight academy, but present the technique linked to the concept with educational strategies that address the thematization of the content [Gomes, Avelar-Rosa 2012].

Fighting and martial arts modalities are eminently present in the syllabuses, emphasizing the greater predominance of capoeira and judo. They can be considered cultural and widespread fighting modalities due to their historical and sporting context [Brousse, Matsumoto, 1999; Gomes, Avelar-Rosa 2012; Calmet *et al.* 2017]. HEIs should offer other types of modalities and contents that are part of the culture of other countries, spread around the world, and even of Brazilian culture, such as: *huka huka*, the fight of the indigenous peoples from Xingu; the *marajoara* fight from the state of Pará; and jiu-jitsu itself; thus, expanding the diversity present in the fights and presenting other teaching possibilities.

Critical aspects and the benefits of fights and martial arts appeared less frequently in the results, however, they are still important, due to the reflections that can be made about the content, namely: fights and violence; cultural fights from other countries and from Brazil; recognized fighters, legends and fables; sports and Olympic modalities; well-being and health; modalities techniques and motor skills. Critical aspects and benefits of teaching fights are very important for the future teacher to provide a reflective environment and explore the content in its fullness.

The results regarding the categories of the bibliographies of fighting disciplines presented a higher frequency in relation to the specific literature by modalities of fights and martial arts. It is important to emphasize that not all available subject programs presented their bibliographies, but it is notable that the focus on specific modalities such as judo and capoeira is still evident.

Regarding the literary context of the fights, the scarcity of bibliography on the content in the school context tends to provide HEIs with a search for literature focused on other contexts and more widespread modalities, thus seeking more accessible scientific books and articles, which generates a tendency to specific fight modalities [Gomes, Avelar-Rosa 2012].

When it comes to the historical context of fights and martial arts, the disciplines that present this aspect in their bibliography use classical literature, as an example, the book "The way of the warrior: the martial arts paradox" [Reid, Croucher 1983], appearing as the most used book, for showing an overview of martial arts. This

fact is consolidated due to the availability of the book in its dissemination and because it contains a variety of fight modalities in its chapters.

Another bibliography that is presented with some surprise is the training in fights and martial arts, as this literature would not be common in teaching courses. Even though the frequency of this result is low, it can be considered a mistake for HEIs to address training in their courses. Furthermore, studies that have investigated fights in the school environment condemn the use of training-oriented practices during classes, since the main objective is to teach fights at school. The idea of thematizing fights through the dimensions of the content is highlighted in the literature, with the purpose of the student reflecting, creating and developing as a member belonging to a society, acquiring knowledge about fighting, being able to be a practitioner and/or a spectator and discussing fights, based on the knowledge acquired during and beyond the classes [Olivier 2000; Bowman 2017; Jennings 2017; Pereira et al. 2021].

When reporting on theories and educational methods for the teaching of fights at school, we can mention that the literature is still limited, although some authors seek hard to present systematizations that meet the development of the content, such as studies and pedagogical proposals that use games and textbooks as strategies [Lopes *et al.* 2016; Kusnierz, Cynarski, Gorner 2017; Pereira *et al.* 2021]. Such educational strategies provide an opportunity for a paradigmatic rupture in relation to the execution of techniques during the classes, supplying the student with content full of challenges and reflections; and also allowing teachers to organize and systematize the content in a diversified way.

Regarding the guiding educational documents, the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC) [Brazil 2017] and the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN's) [Brazil 1998] were mentioned. The BNCC is presented as the current guiding document for Physical Education and demonstrates that universities have tried to include it in the disciplines, for being a contemporary document, which presents the concept of fights, besides contextualizing the historical, philosophical and moral scenarios, and also the characteristics of regional, western and eastern modalities of fights [Brazil 2017]. Accordingly, the PCN's, in their validity, also provide a range of contextualization of the content and assign their dimensions to theme fights in an organized and appropriate way, according to the level in which the students are [Brazil 1998].

With regard to the character of the disciplines, all the institutions investigated presented at least one mandatory fighting discipline. This data corresponds to the interests of educational institutions that aim at the contents present in school Physical Education in the BNCC. In the study by Pereira [2018], who investigated the disciplines of fights in federal institutions of higher education, among the 45 institutions, 34 present some discipline

of fights on a mandatory basis, and 11 courses do not present. We noticed a huge mistake of these HEIs in not providing some discipline on fights, thus limiting even more the content in Physical Education classes.

Regarding the elective disciplines of fights and martial arts, we noticed that some HEIs are concerned about providing their students with more academic grounding on the theme. This fact reveals the possibility of future teachers obtaining knowledge for their performance in the school context, presenting their students with systematized and theoretically grounded content.

In this context, we can say that the national public HEIs present a range of possibilities in their disciplines of fights, with different intervention focuses. With regard to professional performance, in order to thematize the content of fights in the school context, in addition to the HEIs reflecting on their curricula, it will be up to graduates to seek continuing education and deepen on the subject. Furthermore, they should look for teaching materials about fights in the school environment, in order to contribute to the teaching of fights in their classes, analyzing, systematizing and diversifying all the content.

#### **Conclusions**

In general, it was possible to notice similarities between the nomenclatures of the disciplines, with emphasis on fights and martial arts, besides the syllabuses and bibliographies of those that involved themes both related to the concepts and philosophy of martial arts and to school physical education and training. On the contrary, it can be seen that, despite the HEIs belonging to different Brazilian states, the subjects show diversity as to their mandatory nature in physical education undergraduate courses.

This divergence can be a result of university autonomy, even leading to the exclusion of subjects in certain universities. In this sense, we identify the relevance of proposing concrete guidelines with the purpose of helping in the construction of a minimum consensus on the aspects to be addressed in physical education undergraduate courses, since martial arts are one of the macro contents of Brazilian basic education and, from the results, it shows difficulties in being legitimized in HEIs, impacting on its effectiveness in school physical education

In this direction, it is necessary to understand the reasons for the absence of martial arts in the school context in a legitimate way, based on a reflection on how it is carried out in Brazilian curricula of physical education undergraduate programs. In short, the results point to new studies about the process of construction, implementation, and adequacy of syllabuses and bibliographies that can support the training of future physical education teachers who will work in

the school environment and be able to have the support of the initial training in martial arts subjects to discuss the content at school.

It is necessary to point out that, at the end of this investigation, only a few researched HEIs provided the documentation in its entirety, especially with regard to the course descriptions, syllabuses, and bibliographies, and this can be considered a limitation of the study. In future studies, an analysis of the teaching plans of each subject, interviews with teachers and students of the subjects, and class observations are expected. In addition, we hope that HEIs enrich the content of their disciplines about fighting arts, providing subsidies and pedagogical strategies, so that they can justify and prove the benefits of a systematized and diversified teaching of the fighting arts in Physical Education undergraduate courses, reflecting on the teaching carried out in schools throughout Brazil, as well as in other countries. Finally, fights as one of the Physical Education content, being supported by the guiding documents and by the resolutions that define its teaching at a school and university level (Physical Education undergraduate courses) should not be left out, or be treated as an elective subject in the HEI curricula. Surveillance bodies, such as INEP, and also the university teachers themselves should demand that the curricular matrix include fight subjects, providing the student, as a future teacher, with the support to teach the content in Physical Education classes at any level of basic education.

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## Dyscypliny walki na studiach licencjackich z wychowania fizycznego: analiza w brazylijskich instytucjach szkolnictwa wyższego

**Słowa kluczowe:** walka, sztuki walki, szkolnictwo wyższe, wychowanie fizyczne

#### Streszczenie

Tło. Nauczanie sztuk walki we wstępnym szkoleniu na kierunku Wychowania Fizycznego zawiera w większości dyscypliny skoncentrowane na wspólnych modalnościach walki i niewiele z nich jest identyfikowanych jako dyscypliny obowiązkowe w programie nauczania.

Problem i cel. Celem niniejszej pracy było przeanalizowanie propozycji dyscyplin walki w brazylijskich uczelniach publicznych, biorąc pod uwagę ich nomenklatury, sylabusy, bibliografie i charakter.

Metody. Badanie miało charakter jakościowy, scharakteryzowany jako opisowy, jako źródło informacji dokumentalnych. Wyniki. W wynikach znaleziono 131 dyscyplin odpowiadających walkom i sztukom walki. Spośród nich przeanalizowano 80, do których uzyskano dostęp, podzielono je na kategorie, podkreślając przewagę aspektów koncepcyjnych walk i sztuk walki w ich opisie. Przeprowadzono analizę bibliografii wśród 12 dyscyplin, podkreślając przewagę literatury szczegółowej według modalności walk i sztuk walki. Ponadto wyniki określiły liczbę przedmiotów obowiązkowych (54) i fakultatywnych (26). Wnioski. Stwierdzono, że analizowane uczelnie prezentują w swoich matrycach programowych różne dyscypliny związane z walkami i sztukami walki. W związku z tym sugeruje się, aby uczelnie promowały działania wzbogacające treści swoich dyscyplin o sztuki walki.