

1 Article

# 2 Martial arts tourism. Meta-analysis of publications 3 from 2005-2020

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13 **Abstract:** A feature of modern society in the era of cultural globalization is its mobility. One of the  
14 manifestations of this social mobility is people spending free time on tourist trips. Tourism, as  
15 understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon, is a special manifestation of glocalization. In addition  
16 to the motives for undertaking trips in martial arts tourism, individual destinations, specific  
17 tourism potential and the typology of participants in tourist meetings are analyzed, and individual  
18 cases are examined. The research materials were forty five articles published in scientific journals  
19 indexed in *Scopus*, *Web of Science* and *EBSCOHost* databases. Publications, which appeared in the  
20 sources discussed between 2005 and mid-2020 were considered. Some periodicals were present in  
21 all three of the quoted databases, therefore specific articles were taken into account only once. As a  
22 research tool, the Atlas.ti program was used (mainly used in qualitative research or analysis of  
23 qualitative data), by means of which correlations and dominant items were sought. A comparison  
24 with other publications suggests that no similar meta-analysis has so far been performed in relation  
25 to the literature devoted to the subject of "martial arts tourism".

26 **Keywords:** fighting arts; tourism; destination; journals; bibliometrics

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## 28 1. Introduction

29 A feature of modern society in the era of cultural globalization is its mobility. One of the  
30 manifestations of this social mobility is people spending free time on tourist trips. Tourism, as  
31 understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon, is a special manifestation of location, which is "a set of  
32 complementary processes of merging and separating, introducing something into the global space  
33 and reserving for a given area. These are inseparable pressures of what is 'local' with what brings the  
34 current of globalization (...) It consists in introducing local attractions to the global tourist market,  
35 with some of the benefits returning to the local cultural space, for example by promoting the place  
36 and tourism investments" [1] (p. 62).

37 We embrace the concept of tourism in the broad sense, without being limited to trips motivated  
38 by entertainment and pleasure. Noteworthy are the more "ambitious" forms of tourism, in which  
39 tourists are motivated by higher-order needs - self-realization, educational, aesthetic and cognitive.  
40 This is implemented, among others, in various forms of cultural tourism. The monograph [2] (pp. 7-  
41 450] describes eighteen characters, which probably does not exhaust the issue.

42 Among the various forms of cultural tourism we find 'martial arts tourism'. These trips are  
43 motivated by practicing, studying, teaching or promoting martial arts [3]. This is in particular the  
44 acquisition of new knowledge from a long-distance culture system, outside the place of permanent

45 residence [1] (p. 56). Alternatively, someone as a teacher transmits some cultural content from the  
46 martial arts area or, as a scientist, participates in the exchange of knowledge in this area.

47 The theoretical perspective for scientific reflection on martial arts tourism is most often cultural  
48 anthropology, on the basis of which a given case, tourist event, series of events, or tourist activities  
49 or the whole socio-cultural phenomenon is analyzed. It can for example, be an analysis of this type of  
50 tourism as a form of non-entertainment tourism, i.e. cultivated for educational, ethos and self-  
51 creation purposes [4,5].

52 Other authors consider the issue from the point of view of the system theory of tourism and its  
53 structural arrangement, and also emphasize the humanistic dimension of the tourism phenomenon  
54 [6,7,3]. Information and education are at the center of the attractiveness of various forms of cultural  
55 tourism, which is indicated in particular by humanist-oriented researchers and theorists [8-10].

56 Another approach by Yi-Fu Tuana that co-creates the scientific framework is the anthropology  
57 of space and the concept of place as a space transformed in the center of fixed values. Special places  
58 are somewhat sacred, and this also applies to special places in martial arts. These include exercise  
59 places called *dōjō* in Japanese, tombs and monuments to great teacher-master and other special  
60 places both historical or symbolic [11-13] (pp. 40-47).

61 The global popularity of martial arts, their multiformity and their presence in tourism in their  
62 countries of origin (as cultural heritage and attraction, used to promote the brand of a given country,  
63 for example China, Japan, Korea and Thailand) require that martial arts tourism should also be  
64 explored from the new perspective of the paradigmatic theory of martial arts. Since the new  
65 paradigm requires that the subject of research be considered systemically, and the human being as a  
66 whole, the Humanistic Theory of Martial Arts or the General Theory of Fighting Arts seems optimal  
67 [3,14]. The new paradigm of science must be humanistic, cultural, systemic and holistic [15-17].

68 We understand man as a whole as a psychophysical being with the needs of both their physical  
69 and spiritual nature. We here define traditional martial arts as: "a historic category of flawless  
70 methods of unarmed combat fights and use of weapons combined with a spiritual element." [18] (p.  
71 63). In turn, 'martial (path) way' is here defined as: 'particular forms of physical or psycho-physical  
72 culture based on the traditions of warrior culture (→ *cultura militum*) which lead through the  
73 training of fighting techniques, to psycho-improvement and self-realization. These are simultaneous  
74 processes of education and → positive asceticism. In other words: "the 'way of martial arts' is a  
75 psychophysical process of improvement and of understanding the complex systems of values,  
76 knowledge and skills" [18] (p. 63). The ways of martial arts, their entire team, are described in  
77 different terms: Japanese *budō*, Chinese *voodoo*, *Mudo*, they are treated by experts as educational  
78 systems and paths of psychophysical and personal improvement [19,20].

79 In May 2003, in Biała Podlaska (Poland), the Scientific and Methodical 'Tourism and religion'  
80 Conference took place, at which Wojciech J. Cynarski presented a paper based on his several-week  
81 stay in Japan three years earlier [21]. It was the first publication in Polish about a trip for martial arts  
82 studies using the conceptual categories of 'para-pilgrimage tourism' and 'travel to the sources of  
83 martial arts', although reports and reflections from that stay and other similar trip had appeared  
84 previously [22]. The para-religiosity and resemblance to a pilgrimage are due to the presence of the  
85 spiritual dimension, the genetic connections with Far Eastern religions and the great respect, and  
86 even honor, which is given to historical monuments associated (in this case) with samurai traditions  
87 and Japanese martial arts [21,22].

88 Several years have passed since the announcement of the concept of the theoretical approach to  
89 the phenomenon of "martial arts tourism" to its monographic elaboration [22-24]. At that time:  
90 1) special events and important destinations were analyzed, 2) maps of martial arts geography were  
91 created, 3) the motives and goals of participants in tourist events were analyzed, 4) issues related to  
92 this topic were presented at conferences and published in various scientific studies.

93 There has, to a limited extent, been scientific institutionalization of the research in the form of  
94 the establishment of a special Tourism Commission at the Idokan Poland Association (IPA) and a  
95 separate thematic section in the journal "Ido Movement for Culture: Journal of Martial Arts  
96 Anthropology" for martial arts tourism. A special issue of "Sustainability" is devoted to this topic,

97 and perhaps the effect of international collaboration by researchers will be a multi-author  
98 monograph, collecting works from this special issue.

99 Analysis in the field of research methodology in martial arts tourism or detailed typology have  
100 rarely been made. Suggestions for the use of qualitative research, such as participant observation or  
101 observatory participation, as well as analysis of photographic record from the point of view of visual  
102 sociology dominate the subject [25,13]. “The source materials for martial arts tourism research are,  
103 among others, autobiographies and biographies of martial arts masters (...) and reports from stays  
104 on foreign martial arts internships, trips to competitions and other” [3] (p. 347). They may also  
105 include photos, as well as tourist notes and other “personal documents”, according to the  
106 methodology proposed by Florian Znaniecki [26,27,13] (pp. 10-13).

107 Martial arts tourism is divided among other categories, into, trips according to their direction  
108 and according to the main purpose. Examples of travel destinations are shown in Table 1.  
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**Table 1. Examples of travel destinations in martial arts tourism**

DIRECTION	COUNTRY	PURPOSE of the TRIP
From Europe to East Asia	China	<i>Shaolin kung-fu</i> [28-30], <i>Chenjiago</i> and <i>Chen taijiquan</i> [31-33], <i>Nanquan</i> , south styles [34,35]
	Indonesia	<i>Pencak silat</i> [36,37]
	Japan	<i>Budo</i> , different disciplines [21,38,13]
	North Korea	<i>Taekwon-do</i> ITF [39,27]
	South Korea	<i>Taekwondo</i> WT [40]
	Thailand	<i>Muai Thai</i> [41,13] (pp. 29-31)
From North America and Europe to...	Brazil	<i>Capoeira</i> [42]
	Russia	<i>Sambo</i> [43,13] (pp. 100-113)
	Germany	Munich, school of <i>meijin</i> L. Sieber, 10 dan [44-46], Hockenheim, EWTO, European WingTsun Organisation seminars [47,48], Aurach, <i>modern jujutsu</i> [49,50], Billerbeck, Congress of IMAF, International Martial Arts Federation [22]
	Austria	Vienna, <i>jujutsu</i> , GM F. Strauss [50-52]
	France	e.g. <i>aikibudo</i> and <i>kobudo</i> [23,13] (pp. 18-22)
	Poland	Rzeszow, e.g. International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society Congresses [53-55]

Source: Own research.

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113 The types of trips (sub-forms of martial arts tourism) result from different purposes and  
114 motivation on the part of tourists. These can be trips for teaching and promoting; for new knowledge  
115 and confirmation of competence (higher master's degrees); strictly sports trips (competitions,  
116 training); trips to support athletes/team; trips to learn about other related exercise systems (e.g.  
117 *qigong*); participation in meetings of historical reconstructors all of which concern trips and stays  
118 directly related to studying martial arts [3] (p. 350). Alternatively, they can be trips to special places  
119 (such as the Shaolin Monastery), field studies or conferences devoted to martial arts research, i.e.  
120 when tourism is indirectly associated with the practice of martial arts.

121 Of course, tourists can be motivated by the goal of integration, as it concerns the community of  
122 enthusiasts – a kind of new tribe. For example, *copoeira* is associated with a specific inculturation and  
123 adopted lifestyle for the people who practice it [56,42,1] (pp. 68-72). In addition to the motives for  
124 undertaking trips in martial arts tourism, individual destinations are examined, the specific tourist  
125 potential, the typology of participants in tourist meetings, and individual cases are examined [57,3,  
126 13]. The authors of this paper also note economic differences to attendance, in that some  
127 organizations conduct seminars on teaching martial arts commercially in high-standard facilities,  
128 while others are held in fairly ascetic conditions, with participants living on campsites and exercising  
129 in fields. The offer is adapted to the participants' financial capabilities.

130 In addition to published papers, as chapters in collective works (scientific monographs), as  
131 cited above, numerous texts are also published in scientific periodicals, especially those devoted to  
132 the study of martial arts and combat sports. However, there are also articles in magazines devoted to  
133 tourism, recreation and traditional sports [58-60,39], though this is rare. This topic has never  
134 appeared in some tourism magazines.

135 In 2007, the researchers Lothar Sieber, Wojciech J. Cynarski and Artur Litwiniuk announced 'the  
136 existence of martial arts tourism', i.e. its appearance in scientific reflection. They did it in the pages of  
137 "Ido Movement for Culture", which, at that time [24] was originally published mainly in Polish [61]  
138 with a relatively small impact on a world scale. Contributions to the scientific interpretation of the  
139 phenomenon of martial arts were already being published here, along with descriptions of events  
140 relevant to the latest history of martial arts as well as the process of the institutionalization that was  
141 taking place in martial arts organizations in Europe [44,62]. Since 2011, it has been a quarterly  
142 publication published entirely in English under a new name "Ido Movement for Culture. Journal of  
143 Martial Arts Anthropology", and is gaining recognition among scientific communities and  
144 organizations of specialists from the various martial arts [61,63-65].

145 Scientific texts on martial arts tourism are regularly published in a permanent thematic section.  
146 There are also works resulting from field research, i.e. trips for the scientific interpretation of cultural  
147 traditions related to martial arts (which applies not only to East Asia) [31,66,67,46] (p. 30).

148 Another Journal, recommended by the International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific  
149 Society, is the Spanish "Revista de Artes Marciales Asiáticas". In addition to one article devoted to  
150 martial arts tourism, a series of reports on scientific events related to the functioning of the martial  
151 arts environment have been published in it, which for the analysis of the phenomenon of martial arts  
152 tourism may constitute valuable factual source material [63,43,68,69]. Methodological-training  
153 seminars and scientific conferences devoted to the fighting arts (combat sports and martial arts) are  
154 the goal of trips for both enthusiasts and professional researchers, thus co-creating martial arts  
155 tourism.

156 The thematic profile of the periodicals listed here is mainly focused on physical culture and  
157 cultural research, which is best-suited to martial arts tourism research. This is strengthened by  
158 "martial arts" being included in the names of both these scientific journals. For many other Journals,  
159 authors have the difficult task of preparing something interesting from for example an economic or  
160 psycho-sociological perspective. This tends to be the dominant narrative in magazines devoted to  
161 tourism. Therefore, individual articles are scattered through periodicals devoted to cultural studies  
162 of East and Southeast Asia [59,32,40], research into the history of sport [28] or more generally in the  
163 physical culture sciences [48,70] and social sciences [35]. An economic periodical is essentially  
164 interested in the economic dimensions of martial arts and its impact on the efficiency of the tourism  
165 industry [36].

166 Despite numerous contributions, only some of the works bring new insights, particularly in the  
167 field of research methodology. It seems interesting to view a tourist event from three different points  
168 of view: the organizer, a guest and an external analyst, as has been undertaken in work by Cynarski,  
169 Sieber and Mytskan [45]. It is possible that this approach best meets the methodological standard of  
170 the "humanistic factor" in this type of socio-cultural research [26].

## 171 2. Materials and Methods

172 The research materials were forty-five articles published in scientific journals indexed on the  
173 *Scopus*, *Web of Science* and *EBSCOHost* databases. The articles were published in the discussed  
174 sources between 2005 and mid-2020 (up to the start of this research) and searched for using phrases  
175 such as "martial arts tourism", "combat sports tourism", "martial arts leisure", and "combat sports  
176 leisure". Some periodicals (presented in Table 2) were present in all three of the quoted databases.  
177 Specific articles were therefore only considered once.

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**Table 2. List of periodicals reviewed**

JOURNALS	
Managing Sports and Leisure	Journal of Sports Tourism
Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights	Ekoloji Dergisi
Physical Activity Review	Asia Life Sciences
Revista de Artes Marciales Asiaticas	International Journal of the History of Sport
Poetics	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research
International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research	Rozprawy Naukowe Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu
Information, Communication and Education Application	Journal of Computational and Theoretical Nanoscience
International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health
Ido Movement for Culture. Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology	

Source: Own research.

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Specific thematic categories such as 1) destination country, 2) direction of travelling, 3) destination name, 4) type of martial art, 5) main purpose of the trip, 6) type of event (gala, tournament, conference, training seminar, master exams, sports camp, study trip) and 7) number of participants, were examined. Their presence testified to the characteristics of a specific thematic profile in the publications identified (in this case, research on martial arts tourism).

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The following research questions were posed: 1) Based on what content were the themes of martial arts tourism and combat sports presented?, 2) Which martial arts and combat sports were described in the researched publications?, 3) What types of events were described in articles, 4) Were the types of events depicted as particularly popular?, 5) Which destinations were the most frequently repeated in publications?

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The research method used was a qualitative analysis of the content of the literature on the basis of which the subject scope of the publications was categorized. As a research tool, the Atlas.ti program was used (mainly used in qualitative research or analysis of qualitative data), by which correlations and dominant items were sought. In addition, this program was used to prepare the research material for interpretation.

### 199 3. Results

#### 200 3.1. Thematic relationships

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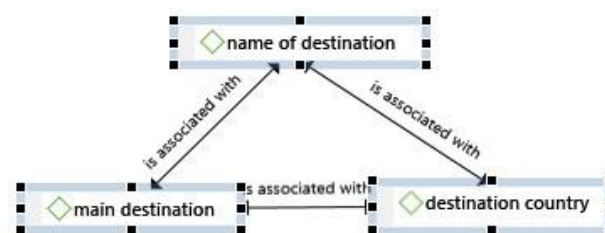
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The first question concerned the characteristics of content depicting the theme of tourism for martial arts and combat sports. It was assumed that their wording was indicated by categories relating to 1) destination country for travel participants, 2) destination name and 3) main purpose for people travelling. The results obtained are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Content presenting martial arts and combat sports tourism

Source: Own research.

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210 The results obtained indicate mutual thematic relationships between the three categories  
 211 indicated. The destination countries were: the Czech Republic, Poland, China, Democratic People's  
 212 Republic of Korea, South Korea, Brazil, Portugal, Japan, Italy, Germany, Malaysia, New Zealand and  
 213 others. Tourist stays in these countries were organized as were individual trips, whose directions  
 214 were various cultural areas: Asian, Australian and European.

### 215 3.2. Martial arts that appeared in the analyzed publications

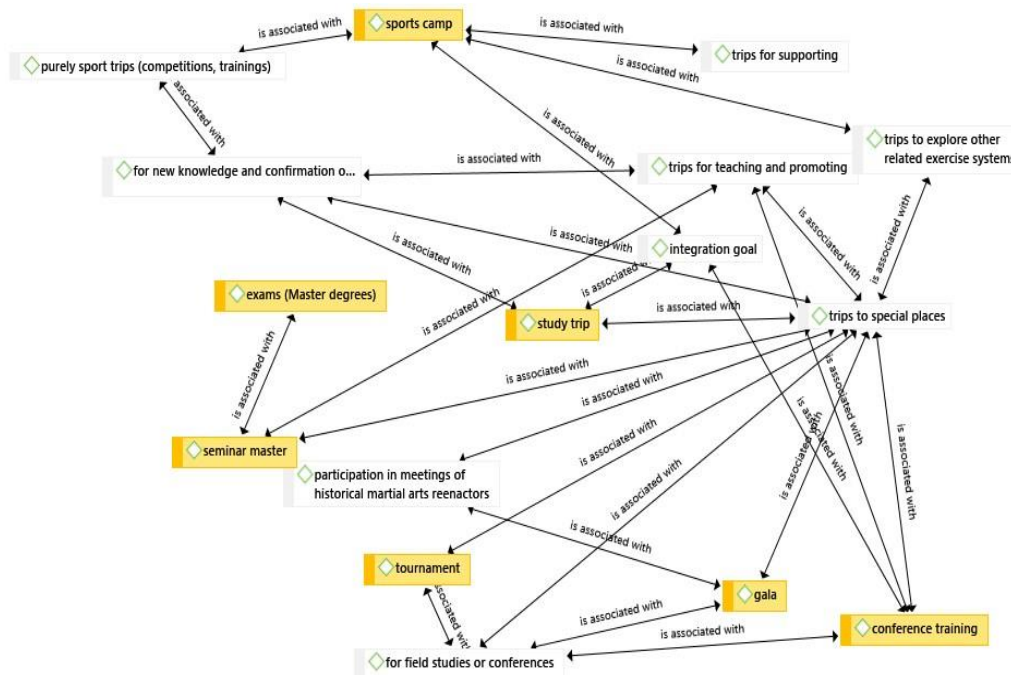
216 The second research question referred to martial arts in particular and those martial arts that  
 217 appeared in the analyzed publications. This research category concerned *capoeira*, *taekwondo* (ITF),  
 218 *kung fu*, *karate* and *sambo*. Other martial arts and combat sports were also present, appearing only as  
 219 disciplines that were not the main subjects of these studies.

### 220 3.3. Depicting types of events

221 In the third research question, which concerned the types of events indicated in the researched  
 222 publications, it was assumed that two categories were related to them: their type and the main  
 223 purpose of the trip. The results of their analysis are presented in Figure 2.

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**Figure 2.** Content depicting types of events as the main purpose of trips



Source: Own research.

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229 The results shown in Figure 2 indicate variation in the relationship between the types of events  
 230 and the travel goals of participants in different events. Participants took part in various events. There  
 231 was also diversity between them in terms of the purpose of the trip, according to which they were  
 232 travelling to participate in scientific, recreational, sports, educational and other gatherings. Their  
 233 activity was manifested, among others, in training, taking exams, visiting places and facilities related  
 234 to martial arts and combat sports, participating in conferences and other tourist events.

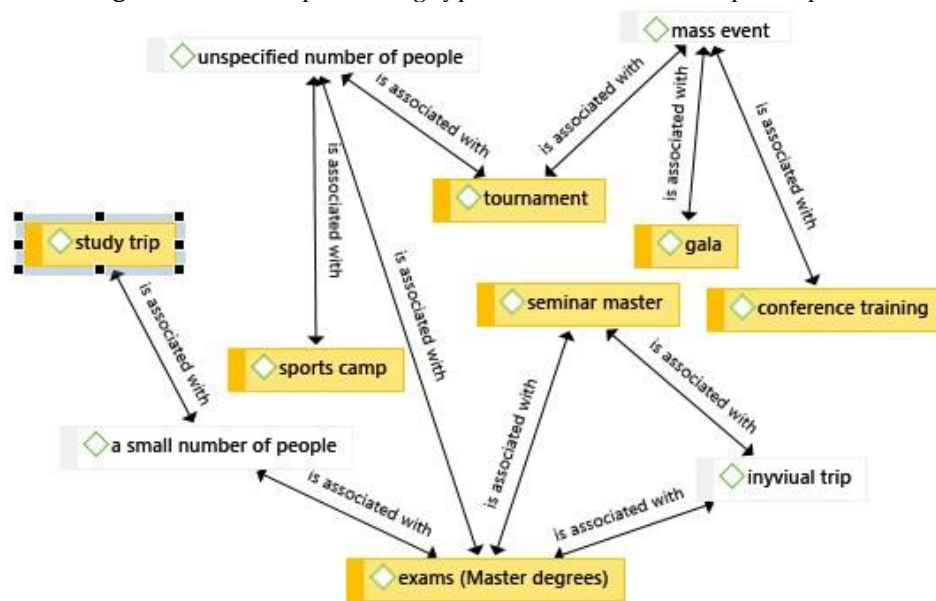
### 235 3.4. Content presenting types of events

236 In the case of the fourth research question, related to determining which types of events were  
 237 presented as particularly popular, it was found appropriate to use the category *event type* and *the*  
 238 *number of participants*. The results obtained are presented in Figure 3.

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**Figure 3.** Content presenting types of events and their participants



Source: Own research.

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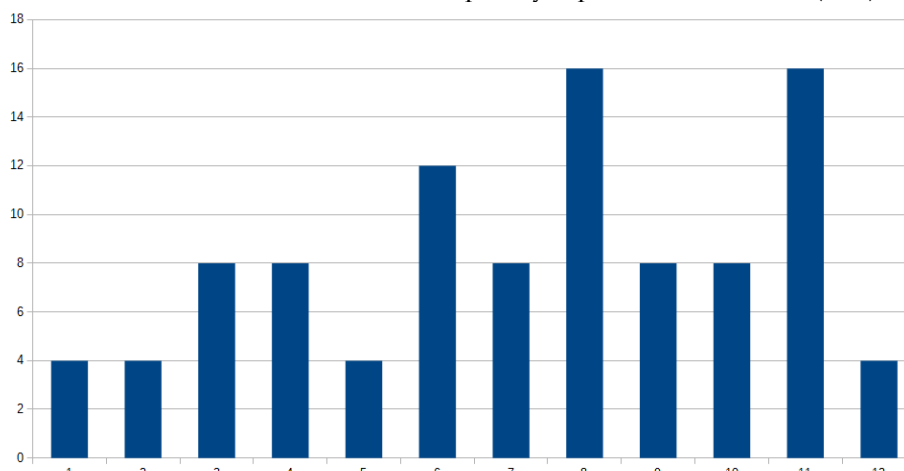
The information shown in Figure 3 shows the popularity of some events related to martial arts and combat sports. In addition, the presented dependencies also indicate the diversity of the occurrence of any gathering of people interested in these topics. Therefore, training, galas, seminars and others can be treated as events of various formats and with an unspecified number of participants (in scientific publications).

249 **3.5. The most frequently recurring destinations**

250 The answer to question 5 (enquiring into the most frequently recurring destinations) is  
251 presented in Chart 1. It contains relevant percentage indicators.

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**Chart 1.** Indications of the most frequently repeated destinations (in%)



Source: Own research. 1- Serbia, 2-Russia, 3-Brazil, 4-North Korea, 5-South Korea, 6-China, 7-Czech Republic, 8-Japan, 9-Germany, 10-Portugal, 11-Poland, 12-Italy.

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The results obtained indicate the greater presence of Japan and Poland (16% each) as destinations than other countries. There were four times fewer articles about Serbia, Russia, South Korea and Italy (4% each).

In the case of Japan and Poland, these destinations were related among others to martial arts centers, academic centers and scientific associations. However, in the case of countries with the

263 lowest percentage share the topic of sports and scientific events which were also related to “martial  
264 arts tourism” was discussed.

#### 265 4. Discussion

266 A comparison with other publications suggests that no similar meta-analysis has so far been  
267 performed in relation to the literature devoted to the subject of “martial arts tourism”. In his  
268 monograph, W.J. Cynarski discusses the state of the literature on the subject, but he does so  
269 separately considering methodological and geographical issues, research by destination and special  
270 places, comparison to the wider sport tourism, tourism on the border between martial arts and  
271 science [13], and writing elsewhere, on specific architecture and interior design matters [12,71,60].

272 Virtually every article contains references to the literature on the subject and cites the state of  
273 knowledge in a similar field. It might be the borderland between martial arts and cultural tourism,  
274 or a problematic, historical article [66,28,37,39], or just a small case study. Sometimes the issue  
275 appears only once - in one publication. An example here may be the relationship between the  
276 cultural tradition of a given martial art and music [37]. In turn, reports from scientific events and  
277 festivals, constitute only small contributions to the state of knowledge, which is evident even in the  
278 results of the answer to the fifth question.

279 What is new about this work? Well, this is a collective analysis with a numerical approach to  
280 obtain relatively hard data on martial arts tourism, based on major scientific publications. We  
281 managed to obtain information on statistically significant dependencies, for which in most available  
282 publications we find only intellectual reflections and attempts at intuitive assessments. In addition,  
283 only a few scientific journals regularly discuss martial arts tourism. These include “Ido Movement  
284 for Culture. Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology”, “which between 2014 and 2019 published  
285 content on tourism covered from 6.7 to 17.8 percent of all published content” [65,64].

286 The rapid development of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software has contributed to  
287 reducing the burden of importing, sorting, grouping and coding data (including those related to  
288 “martial arts tourism”). The use of the Atlas.ti program also allows the analysis of other trends in  
289 tourism [72].

290 However, the inferences should be specified for the inference. The limitations are: 1) a relatively  
291 small number of publications resulting from this niche form of tourism; 2) lack of accurate data,  
292 especially on the number of participants in the described tourist events; 3) multilateral dependencies  
293 of individual categories that impede explicit model inference.

#### 294 5. Conclusions

295 Considering the results of the research, five particularly interesting conclusions can be  
296 identified. Firstly, in the case of “martial arts tourism”, there are thematic relationships between  
297 destination country, main destination and destination country. Secondly, various martial arts and  
298 combat sports are treated by researchers as both primary and secondary themes. Thirdly, there is a  
299 difference seen between the travel destinations and types of events to which people interested in  
300 martial arts and combat sports participate. Fourthly, the diversity of event formats plays a role in  
301 popularizing the subject of these forms of physical activity. Fifthly, the number of publications  
302 describing specific destinations is not particularly associated with specific countries as destinations.  
303 It can be assumed that the deepening of knowledge in subsequent studies should concern, among  
304 other topics, extending the list of research facilities, including other types of mass media. A positive  
305 accent would also be to analyze the impact of martial arts tourism publications on recipients.

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307 formal analysis, W.J.C.; investigation, W.J.C and P.Ś.; resources, W.J.C.; data curation, P.P.; writing—original  
308 draft preparation, W.J.C., P.Ś. and P.P.; writing—review and editing, P.P.; visualization, P.P.; supervision, W.J.  
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