
THE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS IN THE CITY OF JAGUARIÚNA ABOUT COMBAT SPORTS

PERCEPÇÃO DOS DIRIGENTES DAS ESCOLAS DO MUNICÍPIO DE JAGUARIÚNA SOBRE AS LUTAS

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RESUMO

O objetivo desse estudo é conhecer a percepção dos dirigentes de escolas do ensino fundamental sobre os potenciais benefícios das Lutas e como viabilizar a inserção dessa prática na escola, nas aulas de Educação Física ou como atividade extracurricular. Entrevistas semiestruturadas foram realizadas com os diretores e coordenadores dos estabelecimentos de ensino de Jaguariúna, interior de São Paulo, que somaram 15 escolas entre públicas e particulares, totalizando 30 entrevistas gravadas e transcritas, constituindo uma matriz para análise textual qualitativa. A maioria dos dirigentes teve pouco contato e apenas três escolas desenvolvem aulas de Lutas, entretanto, verificou-se como principal resultado que essa prática é considerada como possível e bem vista no ambiente escolar. Os dirigentes entendem, sobretudo, que os benefícios estão ligados à capacitação e inserção do profissional no contexto escolar e que devem ser desenvolvidas no contra turno, como complementares às atividades curriculares. Diversos foram os benefícios percebidos pelos dirigentes das escolas, ligados principalmente, aos aspectos de transmissão de condutas e valores, desenvolvimento emocional, relações sociais e benefícios relacionados à atividade física.

Palavras-chave: Pedagogia das Lutas. Perfil do Profissional de Lutas. Reflexões Pedagógicas.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to understand the perceptions of elementary school leaders in the municipality of Jaguariúna (State of São Paulo, Brazil) about the benefits that combat sports can bring to education in Physical Education classes or as extracurricular activities and the possibilities to enabling this process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school directors and coordinators in all 15 public and private schools, totalling 30 interviews. Most of the interviewed had little contact with combat sports and only three had this activity at the school. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and organized for qualitative textual analysis. The results point out that combat sports are valuable teaching tools in elementary schools, and that in order for their benefits to be achieved, they should be developed following school regular activities, and the professionals must be inserted in the school context. Several benefits were emphasized by the school leaders, including aspects of student attitudes, transmission of values, emotional development, social relations and benefits related to physical activity.

Keywords: Combat Sports Pedagogy. Professional Features of Combat Sport Teachers. Pedagogical Reflections.

Introduction

Combat sports have always been present in the history of mankind, known for their attack and defense attitudes. Its status as a sport was added, especially, when federations and confederations were created, strengthening the institutionalizing process of these practices as a sport. According to Galatti et al¹, combat sports were introduced in Brazil with the main purpose of teaching their art and traditions aiming at combat results, and then progressing to a sport practice. However, the competitive format drove combat sports away from their fundamental characteristics, establishing them, above all, as a sport modality. This fact, although important for the maintenance and growth of combat sports practice in Brazil, is not immediately positive¹.

In this context, we believe that a rescue of the objectives and methodologies used to teach combat sports should be sought out. The school environment should be taken in consideration, so that it could provide a differentiated pedagogical practice, allowing new experiences. Combat sports should be offered as a possibility, allowing the children and youngsters new experiences in the recovery of behavioral, social and cultural values, benefiting their development and formation.

The teachers' role is of extreme importance in knowledge transmission derived from combat sports, regarding their insertion in the school environment. The improvement of didactics in their teaching is also essential, when we take in consideration the importance in the individuals' formation in school. According to Correia and Franchini², a didactic and pedagogical transformations are needed in the 'how to' and 'know how' for the integration of combat sports in school.

Correia³ affirms that the current visibility of Combat sports have reached levels never seen in history, with the expansion of technologies and the globalization process. This is a relevant political and economic phenomenon, encompassing various instances of social life, such as gyms, institutes, associations, companies, media, industry and commerce of sports products, literary production and in public sports policies, leisure, culture, health and education. Combat sports are becoming an important contemporary phenomenon that requires a closer look at its unfoldings³.

Rufino and Darido⁴ affirm that combat sports are an integral and constituent part of modern culture body and that they must be taught in the most diverse environments, even if this does not ensure their practice by many people. This will only be achievable with the understanding of the meaning specificities that generate meaningful experiences to practitioners. "That is, through their own and singular senses, these body and cultural practices constitute an inherent part of human movement, which are of historical, social and cultural importance"^{4:292}.

It is our belief that this research, from the point of view of school leaders regarding combat sports, will allow for the beginning of a discussion of common sense about these practices, allowing an approximation between theory and practice. When we also consider the interface with the contributions of our research on the subject, we hope to create mechanisms that can meet the emerging needs and expectations in the school context, thus enabling a pedagogy focused on combat sports taking all these aspects into consideration.

With this in mind, we intended to open an opportunity for individuals who wish to establish or even benefit from these practices, expanding a more comprehensive knowledge regarding their real meaning. Also, with our results, we seek to extend the knowledge expressed here for the benefits of a differentiated pedagogical practice in other non-formal environments.

After all, as Lopes and Tavares⁵ stated, formal education comprises educational institutions, whether it is a school or not, in which there is intentionality, systematicity and conditions previously prepared with explicit objectives, contents, teaching methods and didactic procedures. Non-formal education maintains the character of intentionality, but there is frequently low degree of systematization and structuring, which are out of institutional milestones. However, according to these authors, formal education can occur in other social environments, as well as non-formal education practices can occur in school⁵.

When presenting the school leaders' point of view regarding Combat sports pedagogy, a fresh look may be given with regard to the professional performance, adjusting the methodology so that it reaches new aspects in the teaching and learning process of Combat sports.

Our choice to carry out this study in Elementary Education is justified because it is the age group of sports initiation. The interviewees were the Principals and Coordinators of Elementary School I in the municipality of Jaguariúna (SP), due to the ease of access and opening of a dialogue on the subject between the school leaders and the researchers. For their approach, the following questions stand out: How are combat sports seen within the school context from the leaders' perspective? Is there a demand for these practices in school? What objectives would have to be fulfilled with the introduction of combat sports in this environment? How should this introduction be made to achieve the goals proposed by the school coordination? Are there fears from school leaders to include combat sports in the school environment?

The main objective of this work is to understand the perception of school leaders of Elementary Schools on the potential benefits of combat sports and the feasibility of their introduction in this environment. As a specific objective, we aim to identify the demand for introducing combat sports in the school and what would be the most appropriate way for doing it so that it fulfills the educational wishes of school leaders.

Methods

Participants

We interviewed fifteen coordinators, women aged between 29 and 64, with several degrees such as Teaching, Mathematics, Letters, Public Relations and Administration, Law, Dance, Psychology and Philosophy. All but one coordinator have a degree in Pedagogy; nine have graduate degrees, eight in Psycho-pedagogy. Some also have other graduate degrees, such as Entrepreneurship Education, Environmental Education, Special Education and Intellectual Impairment. Five coordinators obtained their degrees five to 15 years ago and eleven got theirs 16 to 30 years ago. As for how long they held their position in the current school, seven have been coordinators for less than a year, seven between 1 to 3 years and one for 12 years. As for how long they have been working in the school, it varies from three to 30 years: six coordinators have been working from three to 10 years, five for 11 to 20 years and four for 21 to 30 years.

We also interviewed 14 principals and one deputy principal. The predominance was for females, making up 67% of this group. Ages ranged from 33 to 66 years. They were trained in Teaching with degrees in Geography, Philosophy, Administration, Mathematics, Sciences and Mathematics, Law, Biology, Chemistry, Physical Education and Languages. Several school leaders pointed out to their training in Teaching as important, although this course no longer exists. Like the coordinators, almost all principals have a pedagogical background. Seven have postgraduate degrees, five in Psycho-pedagogy. The deputy principal is also a Pedagogue with post-graduation in Psycho-pedagogy. Specialization degrees in Pedagogy in School Administration and Supervision and a Master degree in Pedagogy were mentioned. Six principals got their first degree one to 15 years ago, five 16 to 25, two 26 to 35 and one 46 years ago. The deputy principal graduated 12 years ago. Five of the 14 principals have been in office at their school for less than a year, seven between one to five years, one

for eight years and one for 22 years. The deputy principal has been in office for five months. Nine of the principals have worked in the school between 10 to 15 years, three for 21 to 30, one for 34 years and one for 46 years. The deputy principal has been working at the school for 25 years.

Procedures

This is a qualitative work, as considered by Thomas et al⁶. It is a study guided by more general questions that progresses into an inductive process of hypothesis and theory development, as the data are unfolded. Therefore, the researcher is essential in all the research stages, acting in data collection by observations, interviews and other instruments designed and analyzed, with narrative descriptions, quotations, graphs and tables.

It is also a descriptive research, which occurs very frequently in the behavioral sciences and education. Its worth is based on problem solving and improved practices from observation, analysis, and objective and complete descriptions. We used the exploratory method, with survey as a technique, seeking to determine practices or opinions of school leaders, as a specified population⁶.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the leaders of elementary schools. According to Negrine⁷, this strategy allows the researcher to establish a better rapport with the interviewee, thus, obtaining greater depth in the issues addressed. The interviewed group consisted of the coordinators and principals of Elementary Education I in the city of Jaguariúna (SP).

We contacted the Secretary of Education of the Municipality to obtain his permission so that the schools could participate in our research. He provided us with information on all Elementary Education I public schools in Jaguariúna as well as their leaders. We identified the private schools in the telephone directory and internet consultations. The Secretary of Sports and the responsible officer in each of the city's school units signed letters of consent. Finally, the interviews were scheduled individually with the coordinators and principals. One of the principals refused to participate and was represented by the coordinators of the institution. On the other hand, a deputy principal from another school asked to take part in the survey, totaling 30 interviews in all 15 schools, four private and 11 public.

Of the schools selected, nine are public schools that also offer other levels of education and two exclusively offer Elementary Education I. Of the private schools, three offer all levels of education and only one offer kindergarten and Elementary Education I. The interviews were later transcribed, as suggested by Negrine⁷, guaranteeing impartiality and the absence of value judgments in their analysis. All the research subjects signed a free and informed consent form respecting the guidelines set forth in Resolution CEP 466/12 of the National Health Council on research on Human subjects.

The data collected was analyzed using the qualitative textual analysis, which according to Moraes⁸:

[...] can be understood as a self-organized process of building up understanding in which new understandings emerge from a recursive sequence of three components: deconstruction of texts of the corpus, the unitarization; establishment of relationships among unit elements, the categorization; the capture of the new emergent in which the new understanding is communicated and validated^{8:192}.

To do so, we built up an analysis matrix based on the transcribed interviews, allowing the understanding of the data collected. Data were collected from April to July 2015, except in one unit, in which we collected in December of the same year.

Results and discussion

Of the 15 Elementary Education schools in Jaguariúna, only three (one state and two private) mentioned combat sports as an activity offered in the school, in all cases the practice of capoeira.

The importance of combat sports and the possibility of introducing them in the school environment were mentioned in all 30 interviews. Only two leaders did not comment on this possibility. 54.8% had a favorable opinion and 38.7% approved, but expressed some fears. We were able to identify a positive view in several statements, as of these two principals:

Every sport that is practiced and that comes to school in order to work on the issue of values, concentration and interaction, I believe to be positive.

I think it is very important to have martial arts acting in a general way in children's development in school, I believe there must always be one of them.

Most concerns regarding the introduction of combat sports in schools, even when seeing it as positive, are attributed to the professional's performance and the stereotype of aggressiveness they possess. In the words of a coordinator: *The practice of martial arts is good if the professional takes it on the good side, because there are some people who imagine practicing martial arts so that they can fight and beat others.*

From these findings, we agree with Breda et al⁹, when they affirm that combat sports were introduced in Brazil as something out of the ordinary and even violent. Therefore, we observed that by choosing this practice, some parents may be afraid that their children will become more "quarrelsome" or even aggressive. This can be seen in the school leaders discourse when they emphasize this view, contrary to the authors' argument, signaling that combat sports should not induce aggressiveness as seen in television shows, but to arouse the interest of children or practitioners, teaching them how to cope with aggressiveness, without causing harm to their colleagues or themselves⁹. It is important to emphasize this concern in society, represented here by the school leaders, because by democratizing the practice of combat sports it will be possible to improve provided information and present the benefits that these practices can bring to the students' lives.

The arguments supporting the almost unanimous favorable opinion on the introduction of combat sports in schools are shown in Table 1. The responses were grouped into five categories: Transmission of conduct; Emotional development; Relationship with physical activity; Social relationships; and Health and Quality of life.

CATEGORIES	SUB CATEGORIES	Frequency	%
Transmission of conduct	Rules	14	22.2
	Respect	13	20.6
	Discipline	10	15.9
	Reduction/control of aggressiveness	9	14.3
	Limits	4	6.3
	Values	3	4.8
	Calming effect	2	3.2
	Responsibility	2	3.2
	Dialogue	2	3.2
	Knowing how to win and lose	1	1.6
	Politeness	1	1.6
	Citizenship Education	1	1.6
	Cooperation	1	2.0
	Sub Total	63	42.3
Emotional Development	Balance (emotional/energy)	5	14.3
	Focus	5	14.3
	Impulse control/self-control	5	14.3
	Psychological/mental	5	14.3
	Emotional Education	4	11.4
	Extravasate energy/anxiety	4	11.4
	Understand the moment/patience (wait their turn)	3	8.6
	Self-esteem	2	5.7
	Overcome shyness	1	2.9
	The child learning to focus	1	3.0
	Sub Total	35	23.5
Relationship with physical activities	Physical Education (body/movement)	14	43.8
	Motor Coordination (fine, gross)	5	15.6
	Self-defense/personal defense	4	12.5
	Self-knowledge (knowing one's own body)	3	9.4
	Contribution for the child development	3	9.4
	Respecting the body-touching-body contact	2	6.3
	Laterality	1	3.1
	Sub Total	32	21.5
Social Relationships	Socialization/interaction	6	35.3
	Experiences for their everyday life	3	17.6
	Different experiences/new knowledge	3	17.6
	Belonging/inclusion	2	11.8
	Cultural	2	11.8
	Ethics	1	6.0
	Sub Total	17	11.4
Health and quality of life	Health/quality of life	2	100
	Sub Total	2	1.3
Total Geral		149	100

Table 1. Principals' perceptions on the benefits of Combat Sports in the students' development, substantiating their introduction in schools.

Source: Research data.

The category “**Transmission of conduct**” is related to the influence on the attitudes that school leaders understand that Combat Sports classes provide, such as discipline, respect, limits, reduction or control of aggressiveness, politeness, rules, dialogue, patience (knowing when to speak and listen, the right moment for each attitude), knowing how to win and lose, mastering impulses, values and responsibility. This category was the one that represented the majority of the leaders’ answers, comprising 63 of 149, or 42.3% of the occurrences. The main behaviors mentioned were: setting rules (22.2%), respect (20.6%); discipline (15.9%); and aggressiveness reduction/control (14.3%).

Most school leaders reported the importance of passing on these values and conducts so that they could become part of the students' daily lives. They considered that combat sports, when properly conducted, is capable of favoring the students’ general development, as exemplified by a coordinator:

Discipline, respect, the balance of knowing what to do with their strenght, with their energy, which is something that children often do not know how to handle, with so much energy. So it would be an emotional education, along with an education, let's say physical, and it is a discipline that we do not leave in the classroom, does not leave only on the mat, we take it for a lifetime. I think it is very important.

The category “**Emotional development**” refers to what school leaders understand as important in the emotional and psychological scope of students, the child's focus, the emotional and energetic balance, emotional education, psychological and mental development, keeping calm, understanding each moment of the lesson as that of fighting, knowing how to wait for it, alleviating their energy and anxiety, focusing, mastering their impulses and having self-control. These conducts are extremely positive for the child's development, encouraging self-esteem and ways of coping with frustration.

This category represented 23.5% of the total, ranking second with 35 citations. The main points emphasized were: balance (emotional/energetic), psychological/mental focus, and impulse control/self-control, representing 14.3% each, and also emotional education and energy/anxiety relief capacity, with 11.4% each.

Violence is strongly emphasized in the school leaders’ discourse. They do believe that combat sports would be of great importance, allowing for the release of energy, aiding in the students' self-control, balancing the emotional, psychological and mental aspects as well as the physical. However, there is still some concerns expressed by some of the respondents, as follows: *Dealing with frustrations, working with the focus that a child must have, demand for self-control mainly in the use of force, in the body movements (principal).*

On the other hand, other school leaders insisted that violence is not something inherent to these practices: *Sometimes people think that this activity generates violence; it is the opposite [...], children who practice, who really do martial arts, are calmer, follow the rules. It is cool. I like it (principal).*

We believe that more than releasing energy and containing violence and anxiety, other factors are equally and even more important in this category. Combat sports teach us how to deal with defeat and strive for victory, respecting our own limits and also our colleagues’ whom we fight against. Therefore, we agree with Olivier¹⁰ when he states that when the student is defeated, even though temporarily, having been symbolically "killed", the child is faced with momentary failure and with frustrating situations. This is important for the students’ social life, since it is also made up of frustrating situations. Thus, the diversification

of confrontations enables the student to experiment them, endure them, and overcome them, since, like defeat, these activities also offer the experience of victory¹⁰.

The category “**Relationships with physical activity**” is related to factors such as physical education linked to physical, technical and movement development; discovering and respecting their own bodies, the relationship with touch and contact with colleagues so that students learn how to deal with physical contact with other students; self-knowledge; self-defense or personal defense, motor coordination (gross and fine) and laterality. This category represents 21.5% of citations with 32 responses. The main points raised by school leaders were: Physical Education, physical/movement (43.8%); fine and gross motor coordination (15.6%) and self-defense/personal defense (12.5%).

Usually, when the theme is combat sports, it is common to think first of the philosophy, the values passed on and the conducts to be taught, as well as everything that was mentioned above. However, there is no doubt of the benefits that these practices can also bring as a physical activity, for we are complete and non-fragmented beings, in which in order to achieve our well-being we must be healthy and happy in every way. Ferreira¹¹ highlights numerous benefits that practitioners can have, such as motor, cognitive and affective-social development:

In the motor aspect, we observed the development of laterality, the control of muscular tone, the improvement of balance and global coordination, the improvement of the idea of time and space, as well as the notion of body. In the cognitive aspect, combat sports enhance perception, reasoning, strategy formulation and attention. As for affective and social aspects, we can observe some important aspects, such as the reaction to certain attitudes, social posture, socialization, perseverance, respect and determination^{11,39,40}.

All these aspects mentioned by the author were also observed in the school leaders discourse, who always emphasized the cognitive and social aspects .

I believe it is cool because you get to know yourself... because you work your body and mind and I think this is important at any age, at any stage of life, any situation you are going through. It is a moment that you can really indulge yourself right there, it will do you good... we should not see it as evil. (principal)

The category “**Social relations**” is related to the students’ daily life and their socialization in and out of school, such as taking experiences into their everyday life; a sense of belonging and inclusion; citizenship education; socialization; interaction; philosophy of life; different experiences, new knowledge; ethics and culture. With 17 occurrences, this category represented 11.4% of the school leaders' comments, with the main aspects being socialization and interaction (35.3%), experience for daily life and different experiences and new knowledge (17.6% each).

Social relations coming from combat classes, as in other sports, are seen as very important and should be more emphasized as mentioned by the school leaders. The work with self-esteem and respect greatly favors the students’ social relations with their friends, family members and other members of society.

In addition, this research considers sports initiation as extremely important in the appreciation of all the aspects mentioned above as well as a differentiated pedagogical practice that is pleasurable for the students, stimulating playful experiences and favoring the teaching and learning processes. For Olivier¹⁰, playing to oppose is to find the other, this should mean recognize and respect the other as an adversary and partner. Combat sports

achieve this by beginning and ending a fight, which demonstrates the acknowledgement of the opponent as someone who must be respected and valued. This contributes to situations where a difference in weight, for example, can be an advantage, such as when a lighter and faster girl could escape a stronger student, thus the differences become sources of value. In the context of combat games, roles are reversed, partners change, therefore, becoming violent and harming the other would no longer be a demonstration of respect and would violate the rules of the game, as well as risk of exposing one to the violence of the opponent¹⁰. Therefore, we believe differences can become friendships and incentives in these activities. Moreover, it can also help in the acceptance and understanding of frustrations, as already mentioned above.

The testimony that follows, from one of the interviewed coordinators, reports a positive position in the Social Relations category, reaffirming an integrative aspect:

Every human being has a thirst for belonging, we see it, unfortunately sometimes in a negative way. If you do not give this sense of belonging to an individual, within his family, within his values, within what he sees, in a concrete way, that is positive for him. This thirst to belonging is so great that he will belong to whoever lend an ear, even if he has the capacity to judge, to evaluate that it is not so positive. Some families are able to realize this, perhaps not in an academic, structured, pedagogical way, but they have this sense of belonging. When we put a child, for example, in a school and there is a teacher who has a proper behavior, who has an ethical position, who is professional, the student will readily have this sense of belonging to the new group, and if this new group has the notion of the importance of the individual's education, this will really help, not only there at that moment, but in the school environment as a whole. What we are and the person we are becoming day by day, we take with us, in some moments acting with knowledge in the area that we are taking a course, for example, whether it is martial arts, or our family experience, or our social coexistence.

The category **“Health and quality of life”**, which links combat sports with students' quality of life and health improvement was mentioned by only two school leaders. Despite this, we believe that they are important in order to signal new possibilities of combat sports practice in schools. Antunes^{12,13} emphasizes that combat sports' functions in the present are composed by education, sport, leisure and health. Thus, given that quality of life is a subjective value that encompasses different aspects of human life, these functions of combat sports enable several forms of acquisition and exercise of this value by their practitioners.

Considering the objectives and possible results mentioned by the school leaders in their previous answers, we asked how they imagined that combat sports should be introduced. We divided Table 2 into five categories, grouping the 84 statements related to the issue by the school leaders. The categories are: “Time load for introducing the activities in school”; “Introducing the teacher into the school dynamics”; “Verifying the Professional's Background”; “Presenting the project and the activities to students and their parents/guardians”; 'Knowing the school context”.

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES	Frequency	%
Time load for introducing Combat Sports in schools	After School/Saturdays/Full time school	20	64.5
	Physical Education classes	6	19.4
	Regular time load	5	16.1
	Sub Total	31	36.9
Presenting the project and the activities to students and their parents/guardians	Planning	12	57.1
	Parallel Project	5	23.8
	Presenting it to students and parents/guardians	4	19.0
	Sub Total	21	25.0
Introducing the teacher into the school dynamics	Dialogue with the direction, coordination, teachers and parents.	6	50.0
	Introducing the teacher into the school dynamics (being a team player)	4	33.3
	Set up a study group with other school professionals	1	8.3
	A bimonthly pedagogical meeting with the teacher	1	8.3
	Sub Total	12	14.3
Verifying if the teacher's background is appropriated for the school	Verifying the teacher background	6	54.5
	Adjusting the age groups	3	27.3
	Entertaining Activities	1	9.1
	Continuous Education	1	9.1
Sub Total	11	13.1	
Knowing the school contexto	Start from the beginning	3	33.3
	Having a suitable physical space	3	33.3
	Reestructuring the school	2	22.2
	Knowing the community	1	11.1
Sub Total	9	10.7	
Total		84	100

Table2. How the introduction of Combat Sports should take place with positive or expected results according to school principals in the Elementary Education I - Jaguariúna (SP)

Source: Research data.

“Time load for introducing the activities in school” refers to the period that is conducive to carry out combat sports in the school environment, with 31 citations, or 36.9% of the occurrences. The aspects mentioned were: combat sports classes should be carried out either after school, on Saturdays, as an activity if the school is full time (64.5%); during Physical Education classes (19.4%) and o projecto at regular school time (16.1%).

School leaders said that the time load is too tight to add additional subjects. Many of them said that the change to full-time school is positive. They believe that activities such as combat sports can bring many benefits to students and should take place during their own moments, so that it can fulfill the expected objectives. Thus, they positively emphasized the after school shift to carry out these activities.

The category **“Presenting the project and the activities to students and their parents/guardians”** had 21 occurrences, 25% of the total responses. The most relevant aspects were: need for planning (57.1%), suggestion of a specific parallel project for combat sports (23.8%), and presenting the project to the students and their parents/guardians (suggestion of experimental classes) (19.0 %).

The family must be taken into consideration in all educational proposals in the school, for better development and transposition of what one learns to social life, valuing the meaning of knowledge. *“The family must know the objective of having Martial Arts at school, the teacher has to be well-trained so that they can train citizens who will know when and how he can use Martial Arts against civilians”*, reported one principal.

The category **“Introducing the teacher into the school dynamics”** is related to the presence of the teacher in the school environment, being part of the team and not only in the Combat sports project and in their classes. The setting up of a study group with other school professionals was suggested, as well as the dialogue with direction, coordination, teachers and parents/guardians and a bimonthly pedagogical meeting. The association with other professionals should also be part of this integration within the school community, proposing attitudes such as the creation of new work routines.

This category represented 14.3% of the total, with 12 occurrences. The main subcategories were: dialogue with direction, coordination, teachers and parents/guardians (50.0%) and introducing the teacher in the school dynamics – being part of the team (33.3%).

School leaders were very concerned about choosing the right professionals to carry out these activities in the school environment, a concern that appeared throughout the interviews. This can be seen in a director's statement:

The choice of the Martial Arts teacher must be very well thought out inside the school, he/she needs to be trained, needs to have a bond with the school team, needs to exchange ideas with the other teachers, after all who else knows the students better than the teacher? He is the one who is there with them every day, so the teacher can help with advice, on issues that arise in the things that may happen, so I think that, by doing so, you can really think of a project like that. (Principal)

The category **“Verifying the Professional’s Background”** refers to the choice of an appropriate combat sports instructor, according to the school expectations. Some factors were mentioned in this category such as the need for continued education, adjusting the classes according to the age group to the teacher’s profile and preferences, and the playful character of the activities. This category presented 11 occurrences, 13.1% of the total. The main aspects were: verifying if the teacher profile is appropriate for the school (54.5%) and adjusting the age groups (27.3%).

These data revealed the concern with the professional formation, highlighting the importance of a continuous training process, as exemplified by a coordinator: *“I think it would be interesting, I believe it could really contribute to the children’s development. But I think it has to be given by a teacher qualified in Physical Education, no less than that.”* For Ortega and Antunes¹⁴, the training of the professional who would work with the teaching of combat sports for children and adolescents is an important element for the success of the pedagogical intervention. This idea is reinforced by the answers of the interviewees when they expressed their concerns regarding the combat sports teachers.

In an article analyzing the teaching of combat sports in Physical Education courses, Rufino and Darido¹⁵ affirm that the specialists responsible for these disciplines believe that the emphasis converged on the possibilities of teaching combat sports beyond its modalities. They proposed that teachers should find contributions in the theory that would substantiate criteria for the systematization and selection of contents regarding the teaching of combat sports in schools. Therefore, we can understand that in Physical Education courses, students mainly learn the didactic and pedagogical parts of teaching combat sports, with the purpose of introducing these activities in Physical Education classes in the school solely by the teachers trained in this course.

In this way, if a parallel project is proposed, as suggested by principals, especially in the case of a specific modality, other fields of expertise would have to be learned, thus broadening the students' motor repertoire. According to Rufino and Darido¹⁵, Physical Education teachers face difficulties regarding the pedagogical treatment of the combat sports subject, related to their academic training. They could be better prepared with continuous formation processes, such as meetings, debates, courses, qualification courses, among others, as they take into consideration the teachers' daily life, as well as their knowledge and related social contexts¹⁵.

From the answers given, we can infer that the technical knowledge and the knowledge of a specific modality is not enough, just as a degree in Physical Education is not either. Therefore, what the school leaders suggested when seeking a qualified professional for their school was a teacher who knew the combat sport he intended to teach. This professional should also have specific pedagogical and didactic knowledge that would allow him/her to adapt the practice to different age groups and students characteristics. Thus, he/she would meet the specific objectives of each school group or each class that he/she would come to work with, always taking in account the dialogue and multidisciplinary as a prerogative for achieving educational success.

There were only nine (10.7%) citations in the **“Knowing the school context”** category. This category is linked to the school restructuring, supplying a proper physical space, knowing the social aspects under which the school is placed, starting the basic work, that is, with the children. The main aspects were: adequacy of the physical space and starting the basic work (33.3% each) and school restructuring (22.2%).

Finally, concerning the structure of a project for introducing combat sports in schools, we may summarize with the quote from one of the coordinators regarding the need for pedagogical restructuring in schools: *“Whether the after school period may not be enough, we have to think about a structured school. [...] thus, the school needs a better structure as well, a place, a space, so that the classes can be carried out with quality”*.

Conclusions

We presented in this study the expectations and demands for introducing combat sports in schools, based on the view of school leaders of Elementary Education I in the city of Jaguariúna (SP).

Based on the data analysis, we concluded that the majority (93.3%) of school leaders believe that combat sports classes can benefit their students. However, many expressed some concerns especially regarding the conduct of the combat sports professionals and their pedagogical qualification when dealing with the students. School leaders would like to have

professionals with pedagogical knowledge of combat sports with differentiation for each age group, favoring entertaining experiences, including aspects of the school community and their needs. This refers to the comprehensiveness of the subject with a pedagogical commitment in the teaching process planned in the school. Another point of concern is the supposed aggressiveness and violence that can be created in the combat sports teaching, since they believe that if the work is not well planned, students will learn techniques that they can apply in undue moments.

We understand that pedagogical practices should be prioritized to emphasize vocational training in order to propose projects for combat sports, whether in school or outside this context. The majority of principals propose combat sports in the after school period, in order to favor the benefits of this practice.

Among the benefits mentioned by school leaders, we highlight those related to the improvement of the students' integral development, especially regarding their conducts, such as discipline, respect, control of aggressiveness and understanding of rules. When dealing with students' emotional development, they mentioned their psychological balance, self-control and concentration. As for physical and technical practice, school leaders emphasize mainly the motor coordination, self-defense and body knowledge. Among the benefits brought to social relations they mentioned the socialization, the interaction among students, their experiences, the new knowledge that is taken from the classroom to their daily lives, the relation with health and quality of life.

We believe that the democratization of combat sports may come to happen, reducing the fears and the association between them and aggressiveness and violence. The present study allows us to understand the existence of yearnings, perceptions and expectations on the part of school leaders in the city of Jaguariúna regarding combat sports in schools. However, the selected sample and specific encompassment of the one municipality does not allow for extrapolation of the results, being a limitation of this study. Further research should be carried out in order to broaden the understanding of the possibility of introducing combat sports in schools, as well as the perceptions of the actors involved in the school dynamics regarding the opportunity to implement a culture of body movement.

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