

A STUDY OF SPECIALISTS' OPINION ON THE NEED FOR DEVELOPING A SPECIALIZED TEACHING METHODOLOGY IN JUDO FOR CHILDREN AGED 4 TO 7

Research notes

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Abstract

This study examines the opinion of judo specialists in Bulgaria on the possibility for earlier starting training age for building lasting habits for practicing judo. The experts' opinion on the training opportunities for children between the age of 4 and 7 and the need for a modern teaching methodology, taken in 2018, is compared to a similar study from 2008. The survey analyses and comparative analyses as methods of research were used. A survey was aimed to determine the opinion of judo experts from the Republic of Bulgaria in 2008 and later in 2018 and compare the opinion of experts. The survey in 2008 includes 48 participants from 54 judo clubs and in 2018, 62 participants from 78 judo clubs. The questions in the survey were aimed to determine the applied methodology when training judo with children under 7 years of age as well as tools and approaches used in practical work. According to the results, the existing teaching and training methodology in Bulgaria does not cover children in pre-school age (4-7-year-olds) and is not adjusted to the age characteristics, yet more and more specialists are working with this age group and are aware of the need for the development of such a methodology. According to a significant number of specialists, the training of pre-school children, besides improving their physical and motor abilities, should be geared towards safety and building of lasting motivation for engaging in judo but it should counteract the increasing aggression in society in recent years.

Keywords: judo, sport, children, teaching methodology

INTRODUCTION

The development of training in physical education and sports is associated with continuous modeling of the learning process. The study, systematization, and analysis of different and new ideas and concepts, as well as their testing in practice, are powerful factors for improving the methodology of physical education and sports.

A quality curriculum and related methods and tools should provide opportunities to improve knowledge, understanding, and skills to move across a wide and balanced range of activities that reflect cultural and traditional heritage. Martial arts such as karate, judo, wrestling, taekwondo, and others are some of the sports that are associated with the traditional heritage and the people who fight for survival and later for freedom and independence. They all reflect the characteristics of the place where they were created, can be used for improvement not just on motor development but also character building and can be successfully implemented in PE school curriculum (Popeska, Jovanova-Mitkovska & Dimkov, 2017)

Judo as one of well-established martial art disciplines, originated in Japan, but crossed borders and spread around the world, preserving the traditions of its origin country. It reflects the way of life of the Japanese people. Various philosophical currents and religions such as Confucianism, Shintoism, and Zen have left deep traces in the existence of the Japanese and like judo (Prokopov, Yaneva, & Vasileva, (Прокопов, Янева & Василева), 2002). In this regard, judo, carrying the tradition and principles of safety, as well as with its educational aspects are suitable for training: for every age and every individual, including people with disabilities and children at an early age. Modern children build their life position too early about the reality around them, unlike their peers from the transitional generations. A large amount of information, the dynamic social changes, the various factors that broaden the horizons of the child affect his overall development. (Prokopov & Yaneva (Прокопов & Янева) 2006)

Physical education and sports in kindergartens are aimed at learning and improving exercises with different coordination, necessary for the effective implementation of elements or overall technique of the age-appropriate educational content. In this regard, judo, unlike

other martial arts, has techniques that are accessible to children's abilities, are safe, and are suitable for children from an early age. The close contact between the children, as well as the possibility for a real victory without humiliating or hurting the defeated, is a wonderful way to suppress the aggression, to channel it within a sports match. Regulating the efforts and techniques to achieve victory, as well as the spirit of judo, respect and self-discipline are a wonderful tool for expression and physical and mental development of judo practitioners, regardless of age. (Yaneva (Янева), 2009a)

There is a current trend for the younger age at which children begin to practice various sports, which provokes specialists to prepare specialized methodological programs. Social and economic changes in society presuppose increased attention to the physical development of children, as the main idea is related to a healthy lifestyle and favorable overall development of the child. The World Health Organization recognizes the crucial role of physical activity for human health, but practice shows that people's opportunities for sports are declining daily. In this situation, sports educators play an important role by positively influencing children and their parents for the benefits of physical activity in early childhood (Peltekova, (Пелтекова), 2015).

Physical activity in preschool contributes to the development of intellectual qualities and performance of children, cognitive mental processes, moral and volitional forms of behavior and effort, aesthetic attitude to work, labor values, and more. In this regard, judo is the ideal tool for developing motor skills, which are stimulated through appropriate exercises. Increases the overall physical endurance, the special force needed when jumping, pulling, pushing, etc. (Yaneva (Янева), 2009b). Sport is not only a potential source of entertainment for children but is also related to the development of their motor habits, their cognitive skills, their emotional and physical health (Shabanski (Шабански), 2019). For the formation of a positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle in children in Bulgarian society, it is necessary to work purposefully to improve the health and working capacity of future generations, which should begin in kindergarten. Children's and students' sports-preparatory and sports activities,

organized according to educational standards, contribute to the development and improvement by exercising the physical and mental abilities of children and students (Prokopov (Прокопов), 2018).

In addition to all the above arguments for the early start of judo training, it can be argued that judo is a system of physical education and development, in which the feeling is the basis of the acquisition and perception of techniques. The close distance, the mutual help, as well as the feeling of right or wrong realization, lead the child to a desire for self-improvement and self-assessment of the achieved. Concentration and order in the hall, discipline, and respect are taken for granted because they are gradually and continuously nurtured in the young child (Yaneva (Янева), 2008).

In recent years in Bulgaria, judo begun to transform from mainly competitive sports to develop as a mass sport and martial art for training a wide range of people of all ages. The basic idea of the founder of judo Jigoro Kano for the massification of this martial art, for comprehensive development and improvement, is successfully realized to date (Bozhichkov (Божичков), 2007). It is this wide distribution, however, that poses a challenge to educators to create and apply an optimal methodology of judo training, adapted to the age characteristics of the trainees. Physical activity in preschool-age contributes to the development of intellectual qualities and performance of children, cognitive mental processes, moral and volitional forms of behavior and effort, aesthetic attitude to work, labor values, and more. Regarding the judo practicing with children in early school period, the author Peter Bogdanov (1980), defines the initial stage of training in judo, which covers children aged 9-10 years for two years of study. Bogdanov (Богданов), (1980) defines the goal in three directions: to strengthen the health condition, to increase the functional possibilities, and to enrich the motor culture of the children. Judo teaching methods also list the most used methods and tools for physical training, but there is no consistency in the levels of training, although it describes some basic didactic principles - from simple to complex, from easy to difficult, and suggests solutions. some pedagogical tasks - illustrating and illustrating the educational content, building the personality through education for the health of the body (Bogdanov (Богданов) 1980).

The methodical instructions, according Bogdanov (1980), are for "strict observance of the anatomical and physiological features of the growing organism", for the training of the peripheral vision and motor sensitivity - the accurate perception of the amplitude of movement, duration, and degree of muscle tension. Yet, in his work, Bogdanov (1980), does not offer a complete and specific training methodology for children at earlier ages, aged 4 to 7 which we consider important for overall development and also for enrollment in basics of judo.

The age limit, according to Bozhichkov (Божичков), (2001), starts at the age of 7. The emphasis is on the emotionality and the application of the game method in the training of young judokas, considering the age and individual characteristics of the person at this age. The author emphasizes that the rules in judo are an inalienable condition and supports the correct mastering of the technique and tactics of wrestling judo (Bozhichkov, (Божичков), 2001). Since very early dates, many other authors support the idea of practicing judo at early age with children. The author Moaze (1972) claims that children can start practicing judo at a very early age (from the age of 6), but only once a week under the guidance and supervision of an experienced teacher and with medical permission. (Moize, 1972: 5). The author's methodical instructions emphasize the correct dosing of the load, limiting the falls, emphasizing the work on the ground floor, and at the end of the training the physical qualities strength

and endurance, relaxation, and meditation should be developed. The same author emphasizes that caution is key to mastering judo along with athletic qualities but does not present a training methodology for children at this age. According to Jigoro Kano, if the time for preparation and training is short, you should first learn the techniques in posture, then on the ground floor, because only in this way it is possible to achieve the same skill in Tachi Waza (techniques in posture) and Ne Waza (techniques in the ground floor). If you start with ground floor training, you run the risk of not learning posture techniques.

Practice shows that children can start training in judo from 3-4 years of age, by the age and abilities of children (Yaneva (Янева), 2009a). The teaching methodology mainly includes the game method and the basic judo techniques, as well as the techniques in Ne za. In the education of children who start training at the age of 3, 4, 5- and 6-years age, with a sufficiently long time for preparation, all aspects of judo can be paid attention to and significantly more elements of the judo technique can be covered. Starting education at a younger age is subject to the principles of safety, as well as motivating children through games and their natural desire to "fight" on the ground, which gives an advantage over all martial arts (Yaneva (Янева), 2009a).

On official web page of Kodokan Judo in Tokyo (<http://www.kodokan.org>), as well as on each web page of the judo federations of the individual countries, and some clubs there is an organized training of groups for children aged 4, 5, 6 and 7 years. Some of the information about them indicates which techniques should not be taught, and indicates the use of games and game methods. Training in physical activity gives children the opportunity to:

- To acquire special knowledge about physical culture and sports, terminology, applied, and general development of sports-preparatory exercises and games.
- To develop their sense of self-worth, to form volitional qualities, to develop mentally, etc.

At pre – school and early school age, children are very sensitive, emotionally unstable, get tired quickly, but at the same time have increased motor activity and increased sensitivity to the remarks and approval of others (Prokopov & Yaneva (Прокопов & Янева), 2006). The studied literature sources confirm that the psychological and biological development of children in preschool ages from 4 to 7 years allow sports activities by age and optimal dosing of the load and volume of educational content (Prokopov & Yaneva (Прокопов & Янева), 2006; Sterkowicz-Przybycień, Klus & Amlansba, 2014). Study reports that practicing judo with pre- school children (4 – 6 years) improves children behaviour in sense of improved self – discipline, problem solving, persuading others as well as positive changes in attitudes toward physical activity and its practicing at home (Sterkowicz-Przybycień et al, 2014). Sport, and judo, helps to improve health and learn useful motor and life habits that are good for children. The importance of implementing judo with children in pre – school period as well as the requirement to use a specific methodology of work and particular pedagogic approach, was the initial idea for the study presented in this paper. In this regard and in support of the idea, this article examines the opinion of judo specialists in Bulgaria about the possibilities for training children aged 4 to 7 years and the need to create a modern teaching methodology.

METHODS

The purpose of the study is to analyze, compare and present the data from surveys conducted in 2008 and 2018 with judo specialists in Bulgaria on the possibilities for creating a methodology for teach-

ing preschool children. The study raised several issues:

- The existing methodology for education and training in the Republic of Bulgaria does not cover preschool children (4-7 years) and is not tailored to age, but more and more professionals work with this age group and realize the need to create such a methodology for training.
- The preparation of preschool children, according to a significant number of specialists, in addition to improving the physical and motor abilities of children, should be aimed at safety and creating lasting motivation for judo, as opposed to increased aggression in society. in the past years.

The survey analyses and comparative analyses as methods of research were used. A survey was aimed to determine the opinion of judo experts from the Republic of Bulgaria in 2008 and 2018. The survey includes 10 open and closed questions. The questions in the survey were aimed to determine the methods and tools applied in training judo with children under 7 years as well as to determine the methodology of education for all ages.

The study was made in two time points: first at 2008, done on paper and later in 2018 conducted as part of a larger online survey where data were collected online. In first point of data collection, 48 participants out of 54 judo clubs in Bulgaria completed the survey. In second time point, in 2018, it was completed by 62 participants, from 78 clubs. From them, 21 participants were from clubs from Sofia and others from other parts of Bulgaria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In first time point of the study, in 2008, 48 out of 54 judo clubs in Bulgaria were included and in 2018, 62 people from 78 clubs were surveyed. From them, 21 were from judo clubs in Sofia and others from other parts of Bulgaria.

These means that more than 80% of judo clubs in Bulgaria were included that makes the sample representative (Table 1. and Figure 1).

The results of the analysis of the survey in 2008 show that many of the surveyed specialists in judo (78%) have reservations about working with children aged 4-7 years, due to insufficient theoretical training and lack of methodology for pedagogical interaction for this age. They share that they would teach children at this age, but ask many questions, the first of which is the lack of methods for teaching children up to 7 years. They share that they are not familiar with the methodology of pedagogical interaction for children in kindergartens (Figure 2).

Experts say that even if they gather a group at this age, children who want to play sports quickly give up due to a lack of variety and inappropriate physical activity.

In the answers of the respondents in 2018, it is observed that the children, although few remain permanently in the training groups, still the specialists have difficulties in conducting the judo classes and keeping the children's attention.

To the question "Do you use any special teaching methods in judo training for children?" most of the respondents (72%) give a different answer. The exceptional variety of these methods presupposes the fundamentally different pedagogical situations in which judo is taught. Most often, they indicate that the methods of exercise are used, which means that they pay more attention to physical and special physical training, which is not suitable for this age (Yaneva, (Янева), 2009a).

The situation is largely similar for 2018., where coaches indicate diametrically opposed answers about the techniques preferred and difficult for children. Most of the coaches do not know how to present

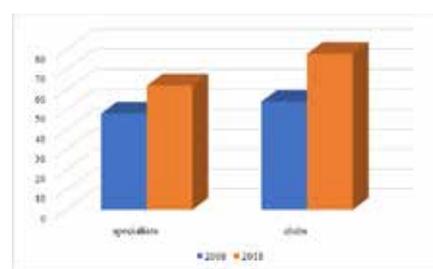


Figure 1. Survey of the participants

Table 1. Survey of the participants

Year	Specialists	Clubs	Ratio
2008	48	54	89%
2018	62	78	80%

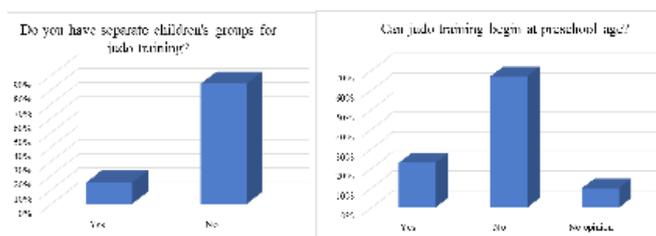


Figure 2. Survey data in 2008.

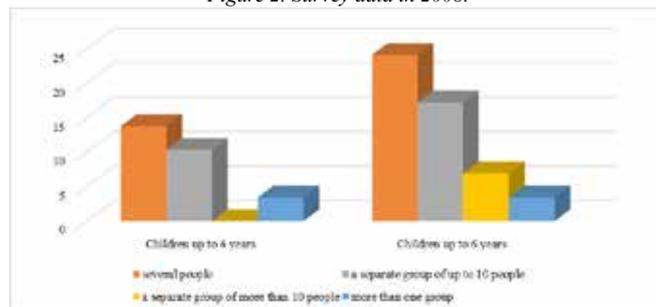


Figure 3. At what age do you work and what is the number of participants in 2018

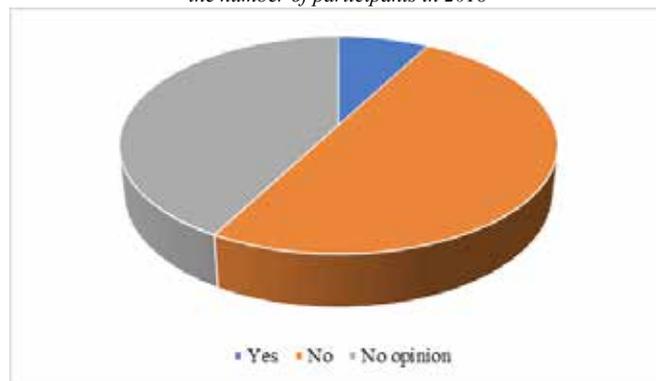


Figure 4. Is VI KYU available to children?

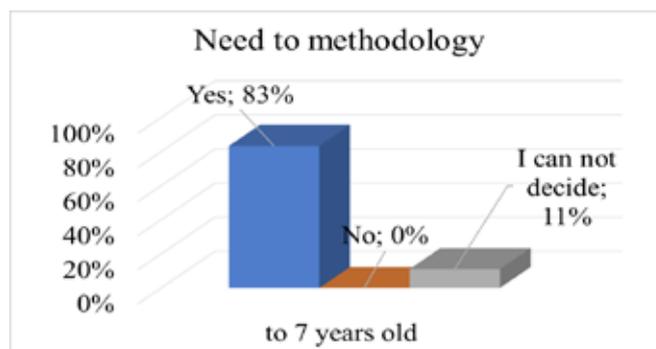


Figure 5. Is it necessary to prepare a methodology

for judo training for children in 2018?

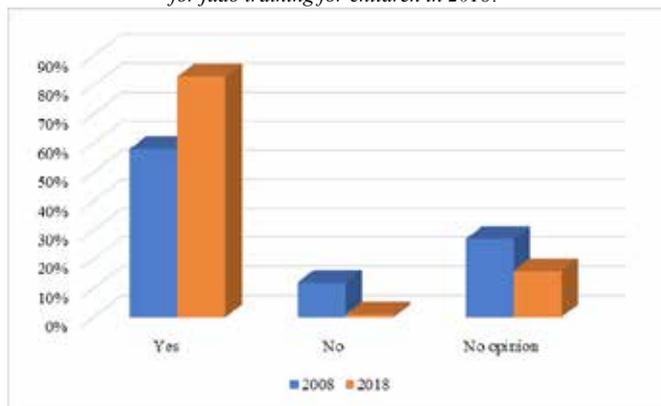


Figure 6. Comparative analysis of the opinion of judo coaches

the techniques for learning and acquiring lasting skills and habits in a more accessible way. Each specialist trains his competitors according to his preferences and abilities in mastering the techniques. A fact due to the unequal methodology of judo training for children and the emphasis on physical-functional aspects or competitive techniques, without them being systematically structured and justified by the training methodology.

Although not so suitable for children at this age, the Bulgarian KYU system is indicated by only four specialists as a training program that they use to prepare and cover a degree (Figure 4). The results show that the problems for the methodology of teaching children in preschool age are not the subject of theoretical research, which does not support the practice of pedagogical training and qualification. They are approached in most cases formally and without sufficiently clear motivation.

Eighty-four percent of respondents include the game method in judo training but identify it mostly with the use of games (football, basketball, volleyball, and some mobile games). The same percentage indicates a positive result from the inclusion of the game method, expressed in improving the qualities of agility, speed, accuracy, improved coordination, emotional satisfaction, etc., an optimistic fact, because of the effect described above in the inclusion of games as a full-fledged component of pedagogical interaction. None of the experts point to the game method as a training method or a form of organization.

Regardless of the pedagogical experience in teaching judo (from 1 to 37 years), the difficulties in teaching children are localized around the initial training. Specialists understand the need to start judo training early but are worried about working with children under 7 years of age. The lack of methodological instructions for work provokes “wandering” in various methodological techniques in 80% of the surveyed teachers and coaches (Figure 5).

It is quite natural in 2018 that the opinion of experts will change in favor of the future development of judo and children from 55% to over 80%. The opinion of the coaches is definite that there is a need to create a teaching methodology for preschool children, a consequence of the desire of both children and parents and the need to acquire knowledge and skills in judo (Figure 6).

Conclusions

From the analysis of the survey data it was concluded that because of the different teaching methods and the difficulties encountered in the education of preschool children, the preparation of a unified teaching methodology is relevant for solving a pedagogical problem.

The obtained results give grounds to conclude that in the last few years many coaches have been conducting training of preschool children, which speaks of a decrease in the age limit, the possibility of prior training and earlier performance of judokas, introducing a uni-

form methodology of preparation and training in judo for children.

The lowering of the age limit is an opportunity for long-term preparation and reduction of the time for the performance of the judokas. This, in turn, gives grounds to prepare a methodology that is consistent with the age characteristics of children from 4 to 7 years of age.

The experimentation and introduction of the proposals indicated in the survey would contribute to the unification of the forms of training in this age group. The training should be focused on safety and creating lasting motivation for judo, as opposed to the growing aggression in society in recent years. The introduction of an appropriate training methodology must be preceded by qualification courses for staff, which must be age-specific.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the introduction of up-to-date methods of judo training would unify the forms of training in this age group to build lasting habits to practice this sport, to enrich children’s knowledge, to develop habits for independent decision-making, to observe the regime, to develop a sense of responsibility, diligence and to improve communication skills in the environment outside the family and in the extreme conditions of martial arts.

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