

Martial Arts Research Study

Dr Carol Fuller at the University of Reading and Dr Viki Lloyd of Sei Shin Kan School of Karate and Reading Taijiquan Academy are conducting research on perceptions of the personal value and health and well-being benefits of martial arts as well as other, broader benefits emerging from the social. The research and data analysis is on-going but the following gives a taster of who has taken part and just a few of the findings. A more detailed report will be made available at the end of the research.

Who took part?

- 515 people, across the full age spectrum took part, with those aged 36 up to 85 years being the largest age groups (85%)
- 62% are male and 38% female
- All geographical areas of the UK are included, as well as 21% of people from across the world
- All forms of martial arts are included, with Tai Chi, Karate and Qi Gong the most frequent
- Experience of martial arts ranged from less than 1 year (7%) right up to 20+ years (33%)
- 54% were not martial arts teachers; 14% taught a little whilst 32% were martial arts teachers

Has Martial Arts contributed to health improvements?

MA has contributed to improvements in...	More Improvement
Concentration	70%
Sleeping	29%
Stress levels	69%
General health	77%
Posture	86%
General well being	83%
Balance	89%
Flexibility	86%
Rest and relaxation	60%
Levels of exercise	82%

Of course, a belief that there has been an improvement to health and well-being as the result of martial arts within the context of this research is about the perception of individuals' as opposed to a measurable reality. We are therefore keen to make clear that we are not suggesting that this research is 'proof' of a direct causal relationship between martial arts and improved health. However, we are saying that a significant number of people who took part did believe this to be the case and beliefs are very powerful in motivation and behaviour. Indeed, when asked directly, **83%** of those who responded

said they were '*very confident*' that the benefits they have noted in their health and well-being were the results of martial arts, with a further **13%** a '*little confident*'

In participating in martial arts, which three factors are the most important?

1. Skill of teacher
2. Experience of teacher
3. Getting to class

Which are the top three factors that impact on your ability to develop your martial art?

1. Time to practice
2. Getting to classes
3. Finding the right teacher

What are the top three factors important in a martial arts teacher?

1. Level of skill
2. Teaching style
3. Approachability

Nest Steps?

The data collected is truly fascinating and we are currently coding the very many comments we received within the survey. Needless to say, an analysis of the data that allows us to explore in much more depth, differences across a number of factors such as age, experience etc. will be both necessary and very important. Our next steps are to undertake some first stage data analysis and then around 40 interviews with people who took part in the survey. We hope to start these from the Spring 2016 onwards. We will share a much more detailed and fuller report sometime next year, when this will all be complete

Both Carol and Viki are very grateful to the very many people who took part in this research and who shared links to the survey, which helped us achieve a much bigger response than we had anticipated – so thank you! If you would like further information regarding either the research or the data, do please feel free to contact either Dr Carol Fuller c.l.fuller@reading.ac.uk or Dr Viki Lloyd viki.lloyd@gmail.com