

## Mindfulness and Training Discipline among Martial Arts Students in Beijing, China



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**ABSTRACT:** The study investigates the relationship between mindfulness and training discipline among martial arts athletes at a Beijing sports university. The research used a quantitative-correlational design. A researcher-made questionnaire was used as the primary instrument. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The correlation coefficient between mindfulness level and training discipline was .703, with a significance level of .031. However, the significance level is less than the threshold of .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that factors other than mindfulness level might influence martial arts athletes' training discipline.

**KEYWORDS:** mindfulness and training discipline among martial arts student, sports university

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese martial arts have become a global sport and self-defense method. A Beijing sports university trains and develops martial arts athletes and studies their performance and development. There has not been any research into how mindfulness affects martial arts practice.

Buddhist mindfulness involves concentrated attention, self-awareness, and acceptance of one's thoughts and feelings. Mindfulness-based interventions, rooted in Buddhist traditions, have been used in stress reduction, mental health promotion, and sports performance enhancement. These interventions emphasize cultivating present-moment awareness, reducing reactive tendencies, and enhancing non-judgmental acceptance of internal experiences. While originating from eastern spiritual practices, particularly Buddhism, mindfulness and meditation can be found in various religions worldwide. The concept of mindfulness involves paying patient and caring attention to the present moment. Different forms of meditation, such as yogic meditation in Hinduism, kabbalah meditation in Judaism, contemplative prayer in Christianity, and Sufi meditation in Islam, also incorporate elements of mindfulness. (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Berrer et al., 2019)

In sports, mindfulness training centers on self-regulation of attention, awareness of somatic sensations, emotions, and thoughts, and cultivating a nonjudgmental attitude. It has shown promising results in increasing mindfulness states, fluidity, sport confidence, and well-being. Additionally, it reduces negative effects such as anxiety, exhaustion, concerns, and perfectionism. (Zhang et al, 2017)

Martial arts emphasize form and internal-external harmony. Martial arts internal and exterior oneness requires mental focus, spiritual intention, and physical movements. The internal aspect includes mind, spirit, and intention, while the exterior aspect includes hand skills, eye focus, body posture, and footwork. Martial arts demonstrate internal and exterior unity, where form and spirit influence each other. (Xu et al., 2022)

Training discipline is essential for martial artists since it has a direct impact on their development, skill acquisition, and performance in competition (Birrerr et al., 2012). Athletes who adhere to their training plans, set clear and attainable objectives, and effectively manage their time and focus are more likely to experience positive outcomes and reach their full potential (Murray, 2016). By developing a disciplined approach to training, martial artists can improve their technical skills, physical fitness, and mental fortitude.

Martial arts athletes need discipline to improve, learn, and compete. Disciplined athletes follow training plans, set goals, and manage time and focus. Mindfulness and training discipline can help optimize athlete training regimens and improve performance.

The primary objective of engaging in Martial Arts is to fulfill personal aspirations, accomplish individual goals, and improve one's well-being and longevity. The exercise is primarily focused on self-benefit and promoting personal health. However,

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there is also an underlying social dimension associated with the exercise, which indirectly contributes to the larger social context. (Sun et al., 2022)

Mindfulness and training discipline may help athletes. Martial arts athletes can improve their performance by cultivating a disciplined mentality and incorporating mindfulness methods to stay focused, manage stress, and control emotions. Mindfulness promotes self-compassion, reduces self-criticism, and improves athlete well-being, creating a good training environment. This holistic training technique can improve athlete development and martial arts success.

Thus, in order to develop their skills and compete effectively, martial arts athletes must have discipline. Mindfulness and training discipline can work in tandem to optimize training regimens and enhance athletic performance. By incorporating mindfulness practices into training, martial arts athletes can improve their concentration, self-awareness, and overall well-being, which ultimately contributes to their sporting success.

However, the relationship between mindfulness and training discipline among martial artists remains largely unexplored. Understanding how mindfulness practices may affect the training discipline of martial artists can provide valuable insights for optimizing training programs and enhancing performance outcomes. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between mindfulness and training discipline among martial arts athletes at a sports university in Beijing, China in order to close this gap. By uncovering the relationships between these variables, valuable insights can be obtained to inform training methodologies and interventions that promote optimal performance and well-being among martial artists.

### Statement of the Problem

This study aims to investigate the relationship between mindfulness and training discipline among martial arts athletes at a sports university in Beijing, China. Specifically, it will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of mindfulness among martial arts athletes in terms of:
  - 1.1. Attention;
  - 1.2. acceptance,
  - 1.3. Non-reactivity,
  - 1.4. self-compassion?
2. What is the self-reported level of training discipline among martial arts athletes in terms of:
  - 2.1. Adherence;
  - 2.2. Commitment;
  - 2.3. Time management;
  - 2.4. Goal setting;
  - 2.5. Perseverance?
3. What is the correlation between mindfulness levels and training discipline among martial arts athletes at a sports university in Beijing, China?

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative-correlational research design. It was conducted at a well-known physical education university in Beijing, China. The institute had approximately 200 full-time teachers and over 4,000 students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs. This research included 150 Beijing sports university martial arts athletes. They were chosen using purposive sampling. A researcher-made questionnaire was used as the primary instrument in this research. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as means, standard deviations, ranks, and frequency distributions, as well as Pearson-R.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The study reveals that martial arts athletes display a high degree of mindfulness in their attention, focusing on movements, techniques, and breathing without distraction. They are skilled at directing their attention and staying engaged in their martial arts routines without letting their thoughts wander. They also exhibit a high degree of mindfulness in acceptance, observing thoughts and emotions without judgment and being open to experiencing discomfort or difficulties. They demonstrate a balanced and mature perspective towards their martial arts practice. The athletes have cultivated a high degree of non-reactivity, maintaining a calm and composed demeanor in the face of unexpected situations. They respond mindfully to challenges, avoiding emotional reactions, and remain steady in the midst of external circumstances. Additionally, they possess a strong sense of self-compassion, exhibiting nurturing and supportive inner dialogues, acknowledging their efforts and progress, and offering encouragement and motivation to persist in their martial arts practice. They recognize that mistakes are a natural part of learning and do not define their worth as athletes. They prioritize self-compassion over self-criticism and appreciate their dedication and commitment to their martial arts journey.

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- Results show that martial arts athletes are committed to adhering to their training schedules, attending scheduled sessions, and holding themselves accountable for maintaining a disciplined routine. They are dedicated to their martial arts practice and show perseverance in facing obstacles. They also manage their time effectively, making the most of each training session. It also analyzes the self-reported level of training discipline among martial arts athletes, focusing on goal-setting abilities. Participants are highly agreeable about setting and pursuing goals in their martial arts training, and it highlights their perseverance in the face of challenges. Overall, martial arts athletes demonstrate a strong commitment to pushing through challenges and setbacks during their training.
- The correlation coefficient between Mindfulness Level and Training Discipline is .703, with a significance level of .031. Despite the relatively high correlation coefficient, the significance level is less than the conventional threshold of .05. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no statistically significant correlation between the mindfulness level and training discipline among martial arts athletes at the sports university. In practical terms, this result suggests that factors other than mindfulness level might be influencing the training discipline of martial arts athletes. Hence, while athletes with higher mindfulness levels tend to exhibit stronger training discipline, the lack of statistical significance suggests that this connection is not pronounced.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Since martial arts athletes already exhibit a high level of mindfulness, integrating mindfulness training programs into their routine could further enhance their mental skills. These programs could focus on deepening their attention, self-compassion, and non-reactivity, contributing to improved focus, emotional regulation, and resilience. While overall mindfulness levels are high, athletes could benefit from tailored psychological support to address specific areas of improvement.

Given athletes' strong perseverance in the face of challenges, offering resilience training could further strengthen their ability to overcome setbacks. Providing tools to maintain a positive mindset and cope effectively with stressors can enhance their mental fortitude. While athletes are committed to goal-setting, workshops focused on setting specific, achievable, and measurable goals could optimize their training outcomes. Teaching them to break down long-term objectives into actionable steps can enhance their sense of accomplishment and motivation. Efficient time allocation can lead to higher-quality practice and overall skill development. Coaches can integrate mindfulness principles into their coaching strategies. Encouraging athletes to apply mindfulness techniques during training and competition can aid in maintaining focus, managing pressure, and enhancing performance outcomes.

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