

Visual precedent in pedagogical projection as a means of forming ideas about hand-to-hand combat without weapons systems

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Authors' Contribution:

- A Study Design
- B Data Collection
- C Statistical Analysis
- D Manuscript Preparation
- E Funds Collection

Received: date: 10.01.2026

Accepted: date: 28.02.2026

Published: date: 02.03.2026

Dictionary:

Innovative agonology – is an applied science dedicated to promotion, prevention and therapy related to all dimensions of health and regarding the optimization of activities that increase the ability to survive from micro to macro scales [1].

Creolized text – ‘means a text characterized with two constituents, verbal (speech) one and non-verbal one. The specific nature of creolized text consists not so much in the visual and verbal information acting as a single information space, but rather in one component of the text being unable to keep its initial interpretation without the other. Unlike the conventional illustrated text, here the completeness of the information conveyed can only be achieved by perceiving all components of the text simultaneously.’ [37, p. 792].

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Abstract:

Background and Study Aim: Modern living conditions require a reassessment of many aspects of the problem of human development, preparing one for life in a multidimensional society based on a complex balance of interests. In a pedagogical perspective, this requires addressing issues directly related to the analysis of practices and factors that can influence the formation of ideas about danger and ways to overcome it, rivalry, and the struggle for primacy. The phenomenon of hand-to-hand combat without weapons systems (martial arts without weapons) is a unique model that reflects these aspects. The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions: How are hand-to-hand combat without weapons systems (martial arts without weapons) symbolically embodying competitive activity and certain aspects of national culture, selected and depicted in educational publications? What types of international and national martial arts weapons systems do the compilers of illustrated publications select, and how are the images of martial arts participants presented?

Material and Methods: In this study, we assumed that the world of martial arts without weapons has been presented in educational publications over the years through didactic illustrations that create a visual representation of learning. Identifying the frequency of representation of unarmed combat phenomena and their qualitative uniqueness in educational texts allows us to identify the intentions of the publications' authors as communicators in shaping ideas about the world of agonistics. The empirical sample consisted of illustrated publications combining text and illustrations, including visual dictionaries, primers, copybooks, Wimmelbooks, and textbooks on morality and the rule of law. Of 122 modern publications from 27 countries, 36 publications from 14 countries were selected, covering unarmed combat. Three thematic publications from the 17th and 19th centuries were included.

Results: A trend toward selecting martial arts without weapons was identified, with boxing, judo and karate predominating, as well as national wrestling styles in countries with Turkic populations. The theme is presented primarily through the image of a child practicing hand-to-hand combat without weapons. French, Israeli, and Italian authors demonstrate martial arts

without weapons by introducing animal imagery, thereby avoiding the depiction of the characters' ethnic and national affiliations. Russian publications do not cover traditional Russian martial arts without weapons, such as fistfighting, vorotok wrestling, and sambo. Wrestling styles cultivated in countries and republics with predominantly Turkic populations are widely represented, such as kuresh, khapsagay, and Bök (Kazakh wrestling).

Conclusions: When choosing the options for representing hand-to-hand combat without weapons system there is a tendency to favor combat sports that were previously considered national but have now achieved international status (boxing, judo, karate). The use of images of women practicing these sports demonstrates the desire of educators and illustrators to overcome ingrained patterns of stereotypical thinking among people from predominantly Muslim countries. National martial arts are not represented in European publications. This publication may be an example of countering the tendency to promote neo-gladiatorism under the attractive name of mixed martial arts (MMA).

Keywords: agonology, boxing, educational publications, judo, karate, national types of wrestling,

1. Introduction

The social, economic and political changes occurring in the modern world are leading to a growing tendency to consider and evaluate the surrounding reality from the perspective of security, survival, improving health, and understanding the mechanisms that can contribute to the preservation of personal and social well-being. New living conditions require a reassessment of many aspects of the problem of human development, preparing one for life in a multidimensional society based on a complex balance of interests. In a pedagogical perspective, this requires addressing issues directly related to the analysis of factors that may influence the formation of ideas among the population of various typological groups about danger and measures to prevent it, and about possible responses to risks and threats [1-3]. In this regard, an analysis of the indirect preconditions that contributed to the formation of ideas among residents of various countries about the forms of confrontation, rivalry, competition, the struggle for primacy, etc., will allow us to identify the attitudes that guided the compilers of educational publications studied by schoolchildren in different countries.

Knowledge about the surrounding world is acquired through formal and informal education. Acquaintance with the material, as well as the ideal, world occurs first through visual and sensory perception, and then through rational cognition. Through the senses, visual images of perception emerge, which are subsequently generalized. An individual's ideal world is formed, encompassing ideas, ideals, morality, and forms of social consciousness [4-6]. The most important means of mastering the realities of the surrounding world are both reality itself, directly presented to a person through sensations, and specialized educational publications. Modern educational publications are creolized texts that activate visual imagery in cognition [7-9].

The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions: How are hand-to-hand combat without weapons systems (martial arts without weapons) symbolically embodying competitive activity and certain aspects of national culture, selected and depicted in educational publications? What types of international and national martial arts weapons systems do the

compilers of illustrated publications select, and how are the images of martial arts participants presented?

2. Material and Methods

Main assumptions and justification

In organizing our study, we proceeded from the hypothetical notion that creolized texts, mastered by students in formal and informal education, form the basis for understanding the realities of the surrounding world, its processes, and cultural patterns, which are essential for the development of a worldview. The world of sport is presented in educational publications through didactic illustrations reflecting its various manifestations and artefacts—sports equipment and facilities, images of athletes, and moments of competitive practice. Of interest is the reflection of the positions of communicators (text writers, artists, and editors) representing the national specificities of the world of sports in various countries. We believe that the differences and qualitative distinctiveness of cultural discourse are particularly evident in the presentation of combat sports and martial arts, which vividly reflect the tension and intensity of competitive practices.

Study design

The first stage of the study analysed the history of the inclusion of illustrations dedicated to martial arts in textbooks. The use of illustrations depicting unarmed combat sports is a unique marker characterizing the desired vector of expanding the understanding of students of various typological groups about international formats of sports disciplines and national sports.

The empirical sample consisted of illustrated publications that combined text and images, including visual dictionaries, alphabet books, copybooks, *Wimmelbooks*, and textbooks on morality and the rule of law. An analysis of 122 publications from 27 countries was conducted: Arab countries (16 editions without specifying the country name), Russia (16 ed.), China (10 ed.), Thailand (10 ed.), Turkey (9 ed.), Armenia (5 ed.), Germany (5 ed.), Greece (4 ed.), Netherlands (4 ed.), Serbia (4 ed.), France (3 ed.), Israel (3 ed.), Italy (3 ed.), Uzbekistan (3 ed.), Vietnam (3 ed.), Kazakhstan (2 ed.), Kyrgyzstan (2 ed.), Mongolia (2 ed.), Belarus (1 ed.), Bulgaria (1 ed.), Canada (1 ed.), Estonia (1 ed.), Finland (1 ed.), Latvia (1 ed.), Moldova (Transnistria) (1 ed.), Spain (1 ed.), Sweden (1 ed.).

From these publications, materials from 14 countries on the topic under study were selected. The selection was based on the presence of illustrations depicting exclusively combat sports (or their fragments and attributes), classified as hand-to-hand combat. Combat involving bladed weapons or board games were not included in the sample.

A separate sample of three publications from the 17th to 19th centuries comprised publications. They characterize specific moments in the development of thematic didactic illustrations dedicated to unarmed combat.

The methodological optics a multi-sample cross-sectional approach combined with scientometric and ethnocultural approaches was chosen. Theoretical research methods employed included comparative analysis, content analysis, cluster analysis, generalization, interpretation, abstraction, and systematization [10].

During the content analysis study, two analytical approaches were identified. The first—the concept of ‘martial art without weapons’—was the semantic unit of analysis.

It included images of various martial arts, officially recognized sports in which competitions are held, as well as images of traditional ‘fun’, ‘amusements’, and ‘leisure activities’ that constitute elements of national cultures. Furthermore, the semantic unit ‘single combat’ applies to didactic drawings characterizing illegal behaviour patterns. The unit of counting was a drawing that reflected the theme of combat. Similar didactic drawings repeated in a single publication (on the cover and in the text) were counted as one unit of counting. The unit of measurement was an illustration or artefact (accessory) clearly related to the topic under study. Data visualization after calculation was performed using EXCEL and PAINT programs [11].

Due to the specific nature of this publication, we combine the ‘Results’ and ‘Discussion’ sections to facilitate the perception of the entire material in conjunction with the analytical results and implications.

3. Results and Discussion

One of the earliest attempts is the illustrated textbook on familiarization with the surrounding world, ‘Orbis Sensualium Pictus’, by Jan Amos Komenský, published in 1657 and reprinted numerous times in many European countries [12]. In the engraving ‘Palaestra’ (Chapter CXXXII, Illustration / Engraving 132), alongside depictions of swordplay, rapier wrestling, and the combat of and abates—gladiators who fought blindly wearing helmets—an example of a wrestling match is shown in the upper left corner.



Figure 1. Engraving ‘Palaestra’ from the Orbis Pictus. Source: Archive Storage Unit from «Bibliothek der Bildungsgeschichtliche Forschung» (Berlin, BRD) https://pictura.bbf.dipf.de/viewer/image/21638_89350651-53ec-4421-a21b-1561384935de/1/-/

This is the only image that has been given a detailed commentary by J. A. Komensky. From it, the reader learns that ‘wrestlers (among the Romans in the past who were naked and anointed with Oyl) take hold of one another and strive to see if they can

throw the other, especially by tripping up their heels' [12, engraving 132]. J. A. Komensky's commentary contains a description of an element of fighting technique.

An approach to demonstrating a diagram of combat techniques is illustrated in the publication 'Vom Balanciren fremder Körper, vom Ringen und Faustkämpfe und das Fechten / From Balanced Families, from Rings, and Faustkämpfe, and from the Fechten', published in 1818 [13]. It contains examples of martial arts with weapons, as well as examples of wrestling and fist fighting (Figure 2).

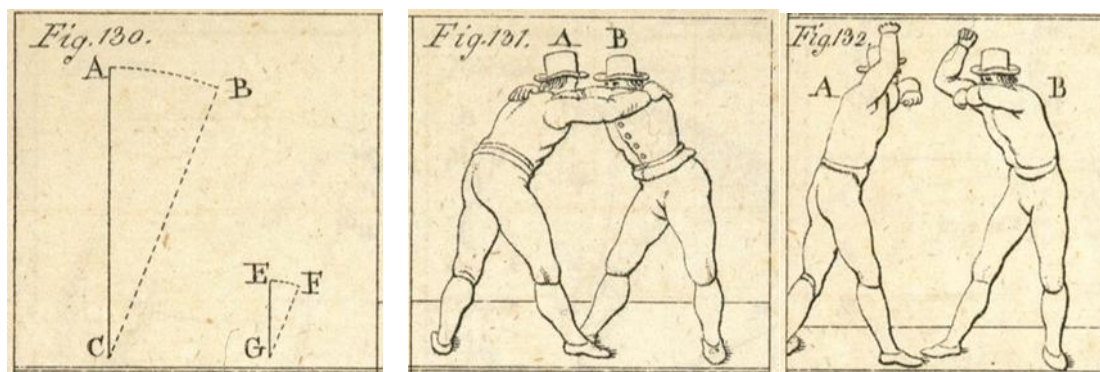


Figure 2. Drawings from the publication 'Vom Balanciren fremder Körper, vom Ringen und Faustkämpfe und das Fechten' Source: Archive Storage Unit from «Bibliothek der Bildungsgeschichtliche Forschung» (Berlin, BRD) https://pictura.bbf.dipf.de/viewer/image/42025_89350651-53ec-4421-a21b-1561384935de/1/-/

Diagram demonstrating the condition of human equilibrium. This condition is the placement of the vertical projection of the gravity vector within the support surface.

A German alphabet book published in 1830 also contains illustrations from the 'unarmed combat' series, which authors and illustrators used to introduce new letters of the alphabet to children learning to read. This approach was unusual for its time, as visualization of themes related to physical activity for self-defense, competition, or sport had not yet been used. To introduce the letters 'U' (Unwaelzung – grab) and 'H' (Hamburger – Hamburgers), illustrations depicting two opponents are used. While the 'U' is based on a wrestling technique, the 'H' has a symbolic connotation reminiscent of the popular expression 'According to the Hamburg results'. This expression signified a genuine, unostentatious contest of superiority between wrestlers, held in a closed tavern with no public and aimed to determine the true balance of strength, agility, and skill. The characters in the drawings are dressed in European clothing from the early 19th century. The drawings evoke the concepts of 'scramble' and 'intransigence' [14].

Thus, it can be concluded that the idea of visualizing martial arts and unarmed combat had its own history, which, in a pedagogical projection, was associated with both the technical and moral aspects of confrontation or participation in competitions.

The second stage of the study sought to identify the qualitative characteristics of modern didactic illustrations in foreign educational publications. Based on a content analysis of images presented in 14 educational publications, the types of martial arts and their number by country were determined (Figure 3).

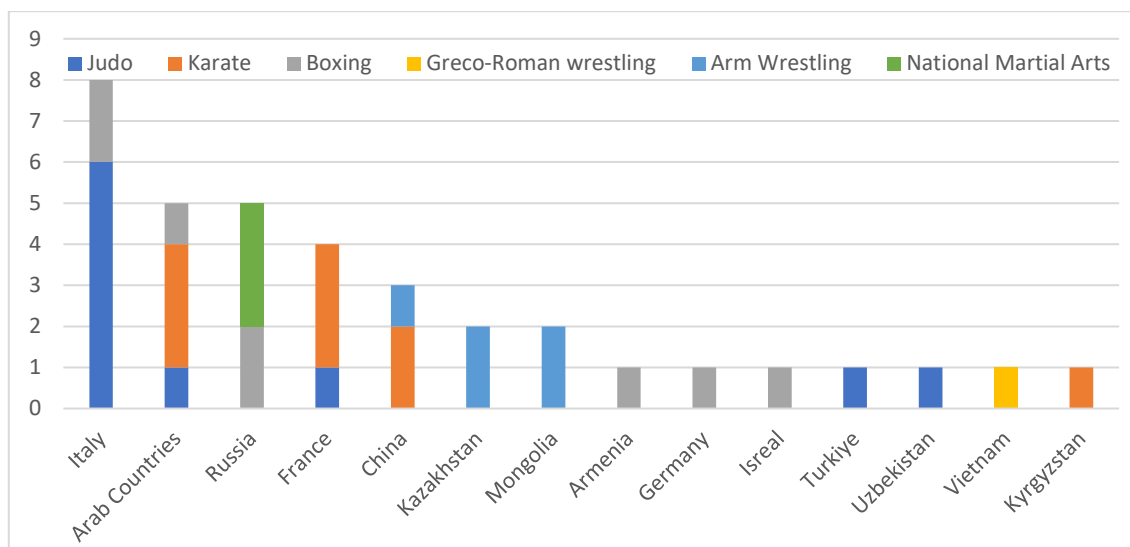


Figure 3. Distribution polygon of illustrations depicting unarmed martial arts in publications from 14 countries (ordinal variable: from the highest value, index and variety of items to a single item in alphabetical order).

A total of 36 martial arts images were found. Of these, 7 are from Eurasian countries (Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey), 13 are from European countries, and 16 are from Asian countries, the latter being the most common. The most popular are judo (10 images), karate (9 images), and boxing (8 images). Illustrations depicting national sports confidently rank second (7 images). Greco-Roman wrestling and arm wrestling rank third (Figure 3).

An analysis of the country-specific origins of the presented illustrations suggests a discernible trend, whereby the selection of certain illustrations for introducing letters does not correspond to historical national traditions. Textbooks from Greece and Italy, unlike the Vietnamese edition [15], do not contain materials concerning Greco-Roman wrestling. Arm wrestling, whose history dates back to Ancient Rome, is presented in the Chinese edition as a form of competitive practice that schoolchildren dream of [16].

Based on the broadest criterion—the high-level taxonomic rank ‘kingdom’—two clusters were identified: ‘Humans’ and ‘Animals’ (with the understanding that humans, in certain biological taxonomies, also belong to the order Primates). Using cluster analysis, a histogram was constructed, depicting the distribution polygon between taxa (Figure 4).

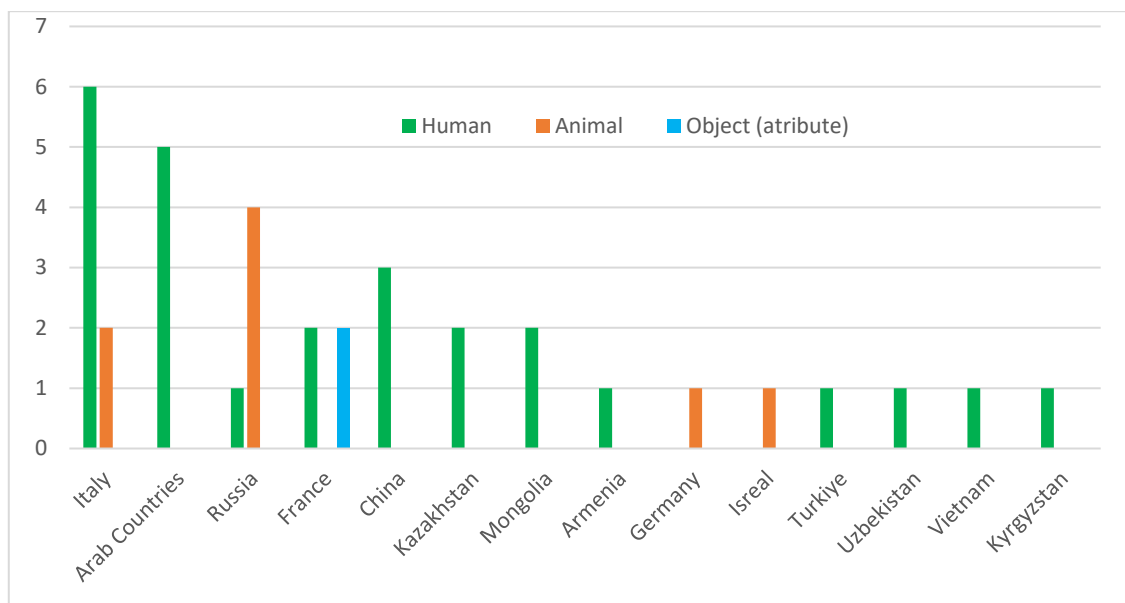


Figure 4. Polygon of distributions of illustrations reflecting unarmed martial arts in the clusters 'human', 'animal', 'object'.

The dominant representation of the competitive theme is the human image. Animals represent the world of martial arts 10 times. It is noteworthy that two countries – Israel and France – do not use the human image. The image of a bristling hedgehog in a boxing stance is used by Israel [17].

Authors from European countries (France) also use animals to represent official martial arts or special clothing as attributes [18]. Karate traditions are represented by a jaguar in a kimono, the image of which helps to master the letters "J" and "K" [19]. Italian authors believe it is appropriate to use an emotionally charged thematic plot to introduce the letter "T" (torneo / tournament), reflecting a boxing match between a hippopotamus and a giraffe as boxers of different weight classes and physical structures [20].

In a German Olympic *Wimmelbuch*, the heroes are hares boxing for fun without a referee, to the delight of the public [21]. Russian alphabet books [22] feature images of fighting rams, which not only allows for the introduction of the Cyrillic letter 'B' but also condemns the behavioural pattern of intransigence outside of competitive practice. The same tendency continues with the introduction of images of unyielding goats meeting on a narrow bridge [23].

When introducing letters based on illustrations related to martial arts, images of people are predominantly used. We found a total of 24 illustrations. All depicted characters are characterized by a pose that evokes the dynamics of active athletic movement. An exception is a didactic illustration in a Kazakh textbook, which captures a moment of peaceful discussion between athletes, one of whom is a boxer, as evidenced by the boxing gloves they wear [24]. In 80% of cases, images of children, rather than adult athletes, are used to represent various types of official combat sports (boxing, judo, karate). When introducing letters into the alphabets of countries with predominantly Muslim populations, images reflecting female combat sports practitioners are actively used (Turkey [25], Arab countries [26, 27]). This demonstrates the overcoming of stereotypical social thinking in countries with predominantly Muslim populations.

National sports are also a focus of attention in educational publications. All national martial arts have their own rituals, rules, and specific characteristics. National hand-to-hand combat sports are important elements of national culture, popular sports, and pastimes. They are always presented as an essential element of folk festivals, recreation, and competitions. An analysis of images of national martial arts revealed that educational illustrations invariably depict outdoor activities, primarily during national holidays and celebrations.

The greatest number of didactic illustrations of this type are presented in Russian alphabet books. However, this point requires special clarification. Due to the fact that Russia is not a mono-ethnic, but a multinational country, didactic illustrations reflect the national types of wrestling of the peoples living throughout the territory of the state, in the national republics and districts. Introducing illustrations of national types of wrestling in the alphabet books, the authors specifically emphasize that some types of wrestling, for example, sash wrestling 'kuresh', are the heritage of the Turkic peoples: 'The Tatars and Bashkirs have kuresh (Keresh), the Uzbeks have kurash, the Turks have guresh, etc. Translated from Turkic, kuresh means wrestling' [28, p. 31] (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Illustration of the introduction of the letter 'K' through an illustration of the Kurnesh struggle in A. Karimova's textbook 'Alifba. Tatar alphabet'. Artist – Anvar Saifutdinov [28].

Among the peoples of the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia, and also among the Turkic peoples living in Asia, all the way to Iran and Turkey, the national types of wrestling are generally very similar to kuresh (Figure 6).

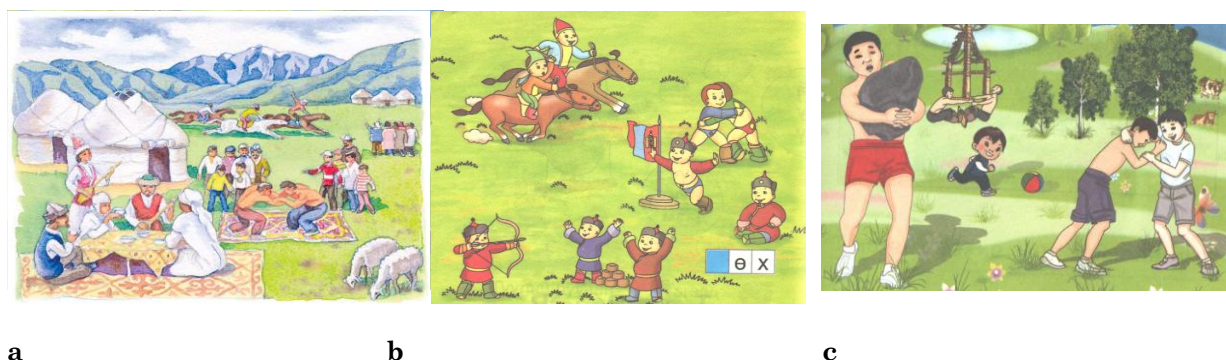


Figure 6. Illustrations reflecting national types of wrestling in the alphabets: a – Kazakhstan [29]; b – Mongolia [30]; c – Russia (Yakutia) [31].

In Russian primers published in the Republic of Yakutia, schoolchildren are introduced to the techniques of the national wrestling 'khapsagai' [31, 32]. In general, national martial arts are presented in the textbooks of Mongolia [30] (the national wrestling of the Mongolian people's Bōkh, which is widespread in Mongolia, Buryatia, and Tyva), Kazakhstan [29] ("Wrestling in Kazakh" – "қазақша күрес").

The quality and artistic level of illustrations used to introduce the letters of the alphabet using the concept of "unarmed combat" vary greatly. They can be primitive drawings executed in the "naïve" style, characterized by primitive forms. For such illustrations, artistry ends with the basic recognition of the objects depicted. At the same time, one can also see examples of a highly artistic decorative style, reflecting the author's vision of reality [33].

The symbolism of combat sports can be creatively used in the process of teaching reading and writing. The metaphor of combat as a path to mastery allows students to perceive the educational process as a conscious, step-by-step development of competencies – from basic letter recognition skills to fluent reading comprehension and the creation of coherent written texts. Just as systematicity, concentration, and respect for rules are essential in combat sports, regular practice, patience, and the pursuit of precision are crucial in language education [34].

Visual references to training, the ring, or the mat can provide students with a clear code of meaning, in which "overcoming spelling difficulties" or "struggling with text" takes on a positive, motivating character. The student is not a passive recipient of knowledge, but an active participant in the process, who – like an athlete – develops their competencies step by step, learning self-discipline and perseverance. This symbolism fosters a sense of agency and responsibility for one's own progress.

At the same time, it's worth emphasizing the health benefits of combat sports, which reinforce the importance of invoking their symbolism in education. Training develops overall physical fitness, motor coordination, strength, and flexibility, and also improves body performance. Regular activity has a beneficial effect on the circulatory system, reduces stress, and promotes mental balance. Combat sports teach emotional control, concentration, and impulsivity, which also translates into more effective cognitive processes, including the ability to focus while reading and writing [35,36].

4. Conclusions

When choosing how to represent combat sports, there is a tendency to favour sports that were previously considered national but have now achieved international status (karate, judo, boxing). The use of images of women practicing these sports demonstrates a desire by educators and illustrators to overcome ingrained patterns of stereotypical thinking among students from predominantly Muslim countries.

National martial arts are not represented in European publications. Russian publications do not cover national Russian martial arts, such as fistfighting, vorotok wrestling, and sambo. Wrestling styles cultivated in countries and republics with predominantly Turkic populations are widely represented, such as kuresh, khapsagay, and Bökh (Kazakh wrestling). These martial arts constitute an important part of the cultural heritage of the population and are presented in textbooks against the backdrop of traditional national holidays, ethnocultural rituals, and/or scenes from native nature. In this way, through the representation of elements of national culture, ethnic identity is instilled.

The use of animal imagery in the presentation of unarmed martial arts, as presented in educational publications from Israel, France, and Italy, may indicate a trend toward neutralizing ethnic specificity in the depiction of appearance and creating conditions conducive to the development of tolerant attitudes.

The presentation of unarmed martial arts in educational publications is a formative factor, indirectly influencing the development of ideas about the surrounding world and social adaptation to its realities.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Citation: Meng W, Fedotova O, Cherkashina E et al. Visual precedent in pedagogical projection as a means of forming ideas about hand-to-hand combat without weapons systems. Arch Budo J Inn Agon 2026; 22: 11-22