

# Martial Arts Practice and Economic Development : A Comparative Analysis

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*"Physical exercise improves health, mental exercise improves wealth, laziness destroys both."*

*Bruce Lee*

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## Abstract

There are few studies on the link inbetween the practice of martial arts and economic development of a country, especially in a comparative analysis. Most scientific works turn around topics such as martial arts and personal development, the spread of martial arts in the world, its actual practice or its industry. The aim of the present analysis is to shed more light in the interaction between martial arts practice and its impact on the fight against poverty or simply said socio-economic development. To reach that goal an analytic approach was adopted based on literature review, document search, statistics following a mixed approach borrowing from both induction and deduction. The most economic developed countries were cross-analysed with the ones where martial arts is mostly practiced and later inferences were drawn concerning certain less developed countries with a special case study of the country Cameroon. The results shows that martial arts have the untapped potential to cultivate a better world for all and promote sustainable development at individual and community levels. Sport, development and peace are intertwined as stated by the author in [1]. Martial arts is the cement and the social determinants of health, wealth and education.

**Keywords :** martial arts ; economic development ; discipline ; performance ; Chinese culture.

## 1. Introduction

China is known as the world's largest manufacturing economy and exporter of goods but is also recognized for its culture and especially martial arts. Who has never heard of Shaolin Monastery also known as Shaolin Temple, a renowned monastic institution recognized as the birthplace of Chan Buddhism and the cradle of Shaolin Kung Fu.

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Could there be a scientific link between the practice of boudhist martial arts and economic growth, this is the question tormenting our mind. This question lead us to the analysis of the interactions among religion, culture, people's mentality, economy, historical background, educational system, hardworking or laziness habits, and even gender equality. It seems therefore that no aspects of life can be departed from the realm of martial arts especially individual or collective development. Discipline and hard working being the essence of martial arts, some believe that countries with less practice are not very far from being sluggish which explain a lot of thing concerning their state of development. All the domains are concerned and none can be spared let it be military, public service, economy per se, finance, health and anything defining the nature and state of well being of a nation whereby the rationale of this study. Most of the wealthiest countries according to the International Monetary Fund such as USA, China, Japan, Germany, France, UK and India seem also after observation and analysis to be the most advanced in terms of martial arts practice. This research will be structured in 14 parts i.e Key concepts, literature review, contextual background of the study, research problem, research objectives, research interests, analysis of martial arts developped countries, cross analysis with economic developped countries, focus on some less developped ones, research methodology, research results, research novelties, possible innovations and Conclusion as well as perspectives.

## 2. Clarification of some key concepts

- **Shaolin** : Deriving from the chinese term « Shàolín sì » it literally means 'young forest temple', it is a Buddhist monastery in Henan province, China. Kung Fu a martial art is always associated with. It is a place of cult devoted to spiritual, mental, moral and physical discipline and development.
- **Kung Fu** : According to the Wall Street Journal, kung Fu is a transcription of a Chinese term that has historically meant "workmanship" or skill achieved through great effort, it refers to merit, hard working, endurance, perseverance and mastery of a work or an art. It is considered the umbrella of many fighting techniques both from China and around the world such as wushu, tai chi, karate, taekwondo, judo, etc.
- **Martial arts** : The name 'martial arts' actually have roots in Europe, meaning 'arts of Mars.' Mars being the name of the Roman god of war and was revered as one of the most powerful gods of Ancient Rome. Therefore it refers to art or techniques of fighting, from a context of warfare it is extended to sport, economy, politics and other life situations.
- **Economic developement** : It refers to economic (production and consumption of goods and services and the supply of money) well-being and quality of life of a nation, according to the author in [18]. of the Rockefeller foundation, an economic developped country is determined by five interrelated characteristics i.e. participation, equity, growth, sustainability, and stability. For the author in [19]. three factors can create economic growth which are more capital, more labor, and better use or discipline of existing capital (labor).The most important advantages of a market economy include efficient allocation of resources, competition driving innovation, consumer sovereignty. In general, having more exports than imports is characteristic of a strong economy. The United States of America, China, Japan, Germany, and India are the largest economies in the world in 2023, as per their GDP data as revealed in the Forbes magazine of 2023.
- **Discipline** : The root word of discipline is "disciple," which comes from the Latin word discipulus meaning "student."Just like in martial arts practice, to be disciplined or being a disciple implies the practice of training

people to obey rules or a code of behaviour, using punishment to correct disobedience.

- **Performance and Poverty** :There are several ways of defining performance but the one that strike us the most in the context of this study refers to it as the execution or accomplishment of work, acts, a particular action, deed, or proceeding of an unusual or spectacular kind. In that regard poverty which is the state of lack or the state of being inferior in quality or insufficient in amount is the opposite of performance.
- **Buddhism, confucianism, taoism and Chinese culture** : Buddhism is an Indian religion or philosophy based on eight interconnected factors or conditions which are : Right View (or Right Understanding), Right Intention (or Right Thought), Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. The idea is to accept suffering and avoid the easier way and mundane pleasure through hardworking, perseverance and endurance. These various principles go in line with chinese religion of taoism, the important taoist principles are inaction, simplicity and living in harmony with nature. It should be recalled that Kung Fu is grounded in the philosophy of Taoism which pre-dates Buddhism considering the fact that kung fu was first practiced by Chinese monks who later established the Shaolin Temple.

According to the national geographic society, as Buddhism became more prevalent, its concepts merged with Taoist and Confucian ideas to become the basis of ancient Chinese society and government. Its influence is seen in Chinese art, architecture, and literature. Values and ideas from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are still prevalent in Chinese culture today.

### **3. Brief literature review**

Much is said and written about martial arts especially concerning the business of sport, its background and its impact on well being, however very few studies focused on the link between martial arts and countries' economic development, for this purpose by studying the various aspects underlined below, it will be possible to trace and review what was stated on the topic before drawing limits and further perspectives.

#### ***3.1. Martial arts and the academic study of martial arts***

According to the author in [2]. there is no need to define martial arts in order to study it however it is indispensable to theorise it before defining it. Martial arts such as Kung Fu, karate, Taekwondo, etc. appear to be academic Field of Study for both native and foreigners in some countries such as China, Japan or Korea. The author in [12] considers the latter as an unconventional and extreme form of martial arts tourism. In addition to academic programs in consecrated universities, there appears to exist martial arts studies research network whose role is to connect disciplinary and cultural discourses on martial arts by fostering dialogue through cross-disciplinary events. In putting together various researchers, this will develop knowledge on the importance of martial arts in the contemporary world and set future research in multidisciplinary fields around martial arts like in the case of Cardiff university during 2015.

forms of scientism and the widespread perceived need to define martial arts in order to study martial arts or 'do' martial arts studies. It argues instead for the necessity of theory before definition, including theorisation of the orientation of the field of martial arts studies itself. Accordingly, the chapter criticises certain previous (and

current) academic approaches to martial arts, particularly the failed project of hopology. It then examines the much more promising approaches of current scholarship, such as that of Sixt Wetzler, before critiquing certain aspects of its orientation. Instead of accepting Wetzler's 'polysystem theory' approach uncritically, the article argues instead for the value of a poststructuralist 'discourse' approach in martial arts studies.

### ***3.2. Martial arts and economic power***

The review of literature from various sources focus almost exclusively on marketing sporting events, effect on the culture of entertainment and recreational activities, history of martial arts, effects on health, globalization of martial arts, martial arts tourism, martial arts and its impact on youth education, martial arts link with culture and the film industry, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on martial arts training worldwide, chinese martial arts and politics as well as diplomacy or national identity. However, extensive literature is not much available concerning martial arts and impact on economic development. To some extent certain authors such as The author in [7] stated that martial arts are a heritage of humanity and represent an as yet untapped potential to reshape the world's development towards sustainability and integration in the world. But a real study on the effect of martial arts on economic power in general and in particular in a comparative approach is very scarce.

### ***3.3. Historical background of martial art and gender***

According to research carried out by the At NY Martial Arts Academy (2023), eventhough prominent forms of martial arts come from Asia such as Kung Fu or Karate, it must be emphasized that it is very possible that martial arts have not necessarily been born in that area. Martial arts have likely existed for as long as human civilization itself. This in the sense that the oldest work of art depicting scenes of battle dating back 3400 BC was the ancient egyptian paintings showing some form of struggle back to 3000 BC in Mesopotamia (Babylon). It is only in 2600 B.C. that China became the hub of the universe of martial arts. Emperor Huang Di 's troops learn martial arts around 770 B.C. From its background martial arts seems to be a male practice which is not always precisely true as some very efficient and popular kung Fu(wing chun style) practiced by Bruce Lee is the creation of a female martial artist known as Yim Wing Chun, daughter of a Shaolin kung Fu master called Yim Yee. The author in [3] believes that martial sports in particular and Sports in general within this society, is identified as masculine and, as a result, values masculine characteristics, this way of seeing things is not always accurate.

### ***3.4. Martial arts and entrepreneurship***

According to the author in [5] entrepreneurship, competitiveness and innovation triggers many scholars and business people to be involved in martial arts. According to author in [26] entrepreneurship can be defined as an activity that involves the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities to introduce new goods and services, ways of organising, markets, processes and raw materials through organising efforts that previously had not existed author in [25]. Entrepreneurship is therefore the process of a successful business organization. It can also be defined as the process of building a mindset and skills. The term entrepreneurship denotes the process of setting up one's own business venture as distinct from pursuing any other economic activity or any

employment. author in [21] states that entrepreneurship is the pursuit and exploitation of profit opportunities, the capacity for innovation investment and expansion in new markets product and techniques. Author in [13] defined that an entrepreneur is characterized as “someone who demonstrates initiative and creative thinking. Entrepreneurship is the process of making changes author in [13]. Martial artists are good entrepreneurs in the sense that martial arts make individual more confident individual who will then be able to handle the tough decisions and trying times that come with entrepreneurship, training martial arts will help push limits and teaches to overcome new challenges as we progress and to become more creative and innovative as required by business and economic development.

### ***3.5. Marketing, martial arts and internet***

Traditionnal martial artists and instructors used not to be too interested in marketing practices as they would prefer face to face contact author in [5] Martials arts schools were either supported by the State, the military or religious association therefore financial gains have never been the purpose but transmission of virtues and knowledge which was selective and highly secretive contrarily to mass production business aiming at profit and publicity for highest sale results author in [3] . This can explain the delay of the expansion of chinese martial arts though oldest but less popular than some other martial practices such as karate or Judo which thanks to some business-minds saw the necessity and the effectiveness of careful marketing in the accumulation of personal wealth author in [10]. Eventhough some are still resistant and advocate against too much marketing author in [10]. According to author in [5] martial arts school needs as well marketing as all types of schools in order to serve the well-being of the largest audience. Moreover, the growth of the Internet has also had a direct effect of the marketing of martial arts as a fast growing medium that provides easy access public relations author in [10] through promotion and communication.

### ***3.6. Martial artstourism***

According to authors in [27] martial tourism can be explained by the global popularity of martial arts, their multiformity, and their presence in tourism in their countries of origin as a source of cultural heritage and attraction, and their usage to promote the brand of a given country such as martial arts camps in China, Japan, Korea, USA, Brazil, Israel, Tibet and Thailand. Martial arts tourists travel therefore for the acquisition of new knowledge from a long-distance culture system outside of their permanent. Therefore Martial arts tourism is a form of cultural, sports and educational tourism that requires to be focused on authors in [7]. Author in [27] believes that tourism of martial arts offers a novel and interesting collection of experiences on tourism relating to martial arts activities. According to Author in [27] despite its economic and cultural significance, few studies have evaluated martial arts tourism as a social and cultural practice, the figures and personalities involved are impressive, in Thailand, Muay Thai tourism is actively promoted by Thailand’s official tourism body (TAT, 2019). British (11,219 British visitors to take Muay Thai lessons in 2016), Australian (6800), French (5852) and German (4688) nationals are the largest sources of martial arts tourism in Thailand (The Nation, 2017). Y Author in [27] stresses that sports tourism is generally regarded as a new growth point for economic development, and is gradually becoming a new way of life and leisure for people. Martial arts demonstration are regularly organized at world-famous tourism for cultural, sport, tourism, economic, financial and even diplomatic purposes.

### ***3.7. Martial arts as a tool for diplomacy***

Author in [7] states that more than a sports-diplomacy tool, the case of martial arts reveals the seemingly paradoxical nature of inter-Korean cultural heritage politics. Almost since its inception in 1955, taekwondo has been used as a form of soft diplomacy for the Republic of Korea (ROK) and then later by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Taekwondo demonstrations have been instrumental to bringing the ROK and DPRK back to the negotiating table. Taekwondo diplomacy has occurred at the governmental, organizational, and grassroots levels, indicating it may be the only sport used at all three levels of diplomacy (Author in [19]). Chinese wushu martial arts as a manifestation of China's cultural diplomacy. To the question whether the State of Israel pursue Krav Maga as an intangible cultural heritage of the Jewish people? History and politics say yes (Author in [19]). the authors emphasized by stating that Israeli martial arts has played a uniquely fundamental role in the (re)creation and preservation of the Jewish identity and the formation of the state of Israel and a privileged possible means of international affairs and domestic political processes. Olympics games and tourism contribute to martial arts diplomacy in that regard. Defence diplomacy which is linked to martial and combat arts is the co-formation and implementation of the state security policy, and its task to create stable, long-term international relations in the field of defence. It plays a role as one of the most important instruments of foreign policy and the security of contemporary states (author in [7]). In an nutshell, arts, festivals, culture, geopolitics are interrelated to martial arts which also appears to be an art of diplomacy.

### ***3.7. Martial arts and well-being***

Qualities of martial arts on human well being are undisputable, the table on longevity and the impact of longevity on wealth and economic prosperity are the points to review at this stage. According to author in [12] martial arts as a source of learning can contribute in important ways to health and well-being, as well as provide other broader social benefits. By practicing martial arts, one can master his mind and emotions. That can help develop greater emotional stability, assertiveness, self-confidence, and lessen aggressive feelings. Increased self-esteem. Just like exercise strengthens body, challenges and strengthen mind. Martial arts improve balance, cognitive functions, quality of life, psychological health, and community belonging. Author in [28] in his study found that martial arts training had a medium effect size regarding reducing internalizing mental health problems, such as anxiety and stress. Martial arts offers an opportunity to not only enhance your physical health but your mental health, too. Stress relief. For Author in [32] martial arts and combat sport exercises may "help people become fitter, defend themselves, feel more relaxed and developed. The effect of martial arts training on mental health outcomes is generally positive (Author in [28]). Martial arts is a pathway for people to reach their peak fitness potential. Martial arts can also help you to train your mind as well as your body and help you to recover from difficult situations or setbacks in life. By reducing aggression and anxiety through healthy activities, martial arts can also improve your emotional well-being.

### ***3.8. Theories on martial arts***

Most effective martial arts emphasize on the move in a circular way instead of a binary linear way. The first theory that gives us a special language of martial arts is the humanistic theory then secondly the

anthropology of martial arts (Author in [5]), Hopology, theory of Combat Sports, martial arts as performance, the human motricity concept, combatology are also worth studying. The humanistic theory states that is preferably a long-standing and practice at an advanced level of martial arts, which is its own psychophysical experience (effort, self-control, overcoming one's own weaknesses) and practical knowledge. Hopology is the study of human combative behavior and performance (Author in [5]) For Author in [5] the anthropology of martial arts investigates the cognitive effects of sharing knowledge related to the history and teaching of martial arts and their health-related effect.

### **3.9. African martial arts**

According to author in [34] Studies show that, since ancient times the phenomenon of “fighting against the beast for survival” or “competing with the fellow human being for land or resources”, etc. have globally being in existence in any corner of the world where human have appeared as a result, each nation has come to develop its own unique system of what is called today martial arts. Like Asia, Africa contains many martial arts styles, some of which date back to ancient times. Some of the renowned african fighting styles whose methods of fighting consisted in hand strikes, kicking, leg sweeps, throwing, pinning, submission holds, chokeholds, head butting, or the use of sticks, machetes, swords, and similar items that could be viewed as a weapon . Historians trace wrestling traditions back to ancient Egyptian artwork. African Martial Arts may differ from that of the West and the East, due to the cultural factors and the uniqueness of African people to deal with nature and their opponents. For author in [34] if African Martial Arts could be summarized in three words, it should be “Combat+Spirituality+Dance”. African martial arts as well as its culture and traditions have noticed the impact of foreign invasions such as colonialism and neocolonialism which could party explain why it is not so much influential in the world author in [34] .Some of the well known African martial arts include Dambe an African martial arts focused primarily on boxing but it also uses kicking techniques ; Laamb a Senegalese wrestling style that allows punches, west African wrestling ; NGolo ; Nguni Stick Fighting ; Nuba Fighting ; Tahtib an Egyptian martial arts focused on stick fighting. Students generally train with a 4 foot wooden stick and Zulu stick fighting is a South African weapons-based martial arts, etc. It appears that China (38%), Japan (28%) and India, Korea (12%), Brazil (10%) are from far the greatest martial arts pioneering countries.

### **3.10. Traditionnal martial arts vs modern martial arts**

The main difference between traditionnal and modern martial arts lies at the level of the physical and mostly metaphysical dimension ( spiritual and ethical). In tradition winning is not the issue contrarily to the modern perception but rather the purity, the methods and the manners used into winning. Traditionnal training is complete and is for life, about life, and with life while modern versions are about how to get the job done the fastest way possible. Nothing more, nothing less. Traditionnal training implies very much about fighting and using all your senses and physical prowess in a very powerful and controlled manner. Modern martial arts evolved in more recent times from elements of multiple traditionnal martial arts or other combat systems. These martial arts are often developped for sport, self-defense, fitness, or entertainment purposes. Modern martial arts may prioritize practicality, efficiency, and competition, and they often adapt techniques to suit contemporary contexts. Some believe that traditionnal martial arts are better than modern martial arts. When we speak of

traditional martial arts like Kung Fu, Karate, Aikido etc vs modern martial sport. Author in [4] talks of the difference between traditional martial arts vs combat sports or contemporary fighting sport. The difference appears to be on one side the respect of customs and traditions with specific rules of conduct while on the other hand what matters is efficiency and the results. So as far as efficiency is concerned modern practices of martial arts is better but in terms of ethics and virtues one will recommend traditional martial arts. The fundamental difference is the context and the realities of the era in which we live. Martial aims at defeating your opponent and there is always a minimum of rules except on the street where everything is permitted and that too can be considered as another set of rules.

#### **4. Contextual background of the study**

The study is carried out in the context of difference in between prosperity of countries such as China, Japan, India, USA, Brazil which are economically successful in comparison with countries marked with under development such as Cameroon whose background is characterized by a situation of generalized indiscipline which can be observed in all areas of the country, some civil servants go as far as living abroad but continue touching salaries and other bonuses unduly for numbers of years reaching ten (10) and above to the detriment of the state coffers of a developing and indebted nation. The social and economic environment is marked by current employers' attendance and absenteeism management problems that justify the insufficiencies, gaps, contradictions and necessity to draw attention once more on the phenomenon of punctuality and its impact on organizational performance. Cameroon's economy suffers from factors that often impact underdeveloped countries, such as stagnant per capita income, a relatively inequitable distribution of income, a top-heavy civil service, endemic corruption, continuing inefficiencies of a large parastatal system in key sectors. Among the common problems are unemployment, access to land, weak educational systems, gender discrimination, and poor health care systems. Add to that, external dependency It is believed that martial arts could be the panacea to all these problems if well organized and fully exploited whereby the rationale of our study.

#### **5. Research problem**

Despite the fact that researchers in the field of martial arts are becoming more aware of economic and marketing dimensions of martial practices in this modern era, there are still considerable research gaps in understanding and identifying the linkages between the two concepts of countries economic development and martial arts practices. This paper addresses these research gaps.

Further research is required in the field, although, most of the literature discusses the link between martial arts and well being, the history of martial arts, its touristic dimension; its diplomatic implications, the marketing of martial arts, martial arts and personal development, the spread of martial arts in the world, its actual practice or its industry.

It is strongly believed that martial arts plays an important role in human development therefore in the economic development of a society at large, this could somehow explain the economic level of a nation. The following questions deriving from the object of our research are:



- What are martial arts and its importance?
- Why does martial arts practicing impact (advantages and disadvantages) on economic development of a country?
- How does a country put in place an efficient economy through martial arts principles and practices?
- When and where is martial arts supposed to be practiced in a country?

## **6. Research objectives**

This thesis paper contributes to the academic literature by describing causative links between martial arts practices and economic development. It provides an understanding of the mechanisms by which martial arts impacts the performance of countries. Hence this study interlinks various fields such as HRM, marketing, economics, finance, time management, decision analysis, game theory, project management, knowledge management and some Sociology.

At this point, it should clearly be stated the aim and objectives of our research with regard to the various knowledge employed. Three main results aimed at in our study are as follows:

- Identify martial arts mechanisms that guarantee economic performance in a country ;
- Analyze the impact (disadvantages and advantages) of martial arts practices mechanisms on the smooth running of the economic development of a country;
- Identify how an efficient martial arts system can duly be put in place in developing countries in general and Cameroon in particular.

## **7. Research interests**

Our study is characterized with mainly three types of interests which are academic, socio-economic and managerial or professional. At the scientific or academic level, our research is interesting in the sense that it will explore concepts and investigate the principles underlying the design and implementation of such a complex, robust and persuasive environment such as the world of martial arts. The socio-economic interest is marked by the importance of the aspects and variables categorized into several categories including, economic, demographic, public services, fiscal and social. The social aspects may, for instance, involve community life as well as social and cultural attitude and values. At the managerial level, the interest of this study is that the research findings can contribute into ameliorating the quality and roles of management of martial arts through communication and better organization, the works of managers are revisited knowing that the field of management is vast and include various sectors such as topics and ideas also common to marketing, economics, finance, insurance, etc.

## **8. Analysis of martial arts developed countries**

The top ten largest economies in the world contribute significantly to global GDP and have a strong influence on international trade and economic policies. As of September 2023, the world's largest economies. According to the World Bank, The United States is the largest economy in the world with a GDP of 26,854 billion dollars.

China and Japan occupy the second and third spots respectively. The income per capita of the US is \$ 80,399. China is the second-largest economy in the world with a nominal GDP of 19,374 billion. The Income Per Capita of China stands at \$13,724. Japan is the third largest economy in the world with a nominal GDP of 4,411 billion dollars. The Income Per Capita is \$35,395. Germany is the fourth-largest economy in the world with a GDP of 4,309 billion dollars. The Income Per Capita in Germany is \$51,432. Recently, India overtook the UK to become the world's fifth-largest economy. Its GDP stands at 3,755 billion dollars and its Income Per Capita at \$2,389. The UK is the sixth-largest economy in the world with a GDP of 3,159 billion dollars. The Income Per Capita of the UK is \$45,850. France is the seventh-largest economy in the world has a GDP of 2,782 billion dollars and an Income Per Capita of \$46,314. Italy is the eighth-largest economy in the world is Italy with a GDP of 2,170 billion dollars. Its Income Per Capita stands at \$35,810. Despite being a small country with fewer inhabitants, Canada is the ninth-largest world economy. Its GDP stands at 2,090 billion dollars and its Income Per Capita is \$52,728. The tenth-largest economy in the world is Brazil with a GDP of \$2,800 billion dollars. The Income Per Capita of Brazil is \$9.67.

When we compare these figures with the world best martial countries we come to realize that the economic statistics matches with the level of martial arts knowing that USA martial artists are from asian origins in most parts. The popular martial arts of China are Wushu and Shaolin Kung Fu. Shaolin was used by monks in combat to fight against their enemies, Japan is known for Aikido, Judo and Karate besides other types of martial arts styles. Capoeira and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) originated from Brazil. Martial arts was introduced in China by an Indian monk, the country has also a great level of martial arts practices. Is that a coincidence that USA, China, Japan which are the wealthiest countries in the world are also the most developed in the martial arts kingdom, the author believes that it is not coincidental in the sense that martial arts is the cause of individual and collective wealth. Martial arts is not just about your *physical* self but *mental* self as well. The most important aspect of being a true martial artist is to have a high moral character is to have integrity. Discipline is key to being able to succeed at martial arts. Without discipline, you will not be able to progress and advance in your training. Focus is crucial to progression in martial arts. In order to learn from your instructor, you must be able to maintain focus on the class and lesson. Since learning martial arts is a process, a student can experience setbacks and obstacles in reaching their goals. Learning how to persevere and work harder is imperative to your success as a martial artist. The same goes to the economy because discipline, moral values, integrity, perseverance, hardworking is what characterized a strong and healthy population and economy. In the same way we can observe that the economically less advanced economies are not particularly known by their martial arts practices but by insecurity and all sorts of economic, social and political indiscipline and instability.

## **9. Focus on some less developed countries**

Least developed Countries in the world are found in Africa. According to UN list of least developed countries, 33 countries are among such as Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, etc. All of Africa's 33 least developed countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa, indicating the precarious nature of the subcontinent. According to UNESCO (2023), least developed Countries (LDCs) are low-income countries which are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and have low levels of human assets. Advancements in education and

science, as well as the safeguarding of cultural heritage are at stake and play a critical role in building more resilient, sustainable and inclusive economies.

A comparative analysis with the level of martial arts practice, we observe that contrarily to developed countries where organization and functioning of martial arts is professional and taken very seriously, for instance in China with the Chinese Wushu Association (CWA) the governing body of wushu in all of its forms throughout China, Beijing Sport University are evidence of the seriousness and investment of the State in the domain of martial arts which is part and parcel of the educational, spiritual, political and economic system. The same goes for the United States Martial Arts Federation (USMAF), the Japanese martial arts school with classes in shotokan karate, yoseikan aikido, nihon ju-jutsu, mma, self-defense classes & seminars, the National Korean Martial Arts Association or the Brazilian Association of Capoeira and Martial Arts Alliance, all aim at unifying and better organizing martial arts and inculcate the fruits in the society at large. The contrary is observed in most African countries especially in subsaharian one where there is disorder, disunity, disorganization, lack of seriousness, poor investment and mismanagement in martial arts characterized with low performance, poor quality training, corruption and unfair unequal treatment of athletes, the results are observable in the martial arts system in particular and the economy of the society at large.

## **10. Research methodology**

In order to follow a structured pattern and organised methodology, we chose the model of the research onion (author in [36]). Therefore, epistemologically we referred to a positivist philosophy assuming that knowledge is independent of the subject being studied. Hence positivist studies are often more scientific and quantitative in nature. We selected a deductive approach starting with a specific hypothesis development based on the literature review trying to test hypothesis and check if it holds in particular contexts. Our strategies include action case study research, document review as well as systematic literature review. We employed a mixed method based on cross sectional data. As far as data collection and analysis are concerned, we opted for the primary data and quantitative data collected from different sources.

## **11. Research results**

It appears from our study that Martial arts have the untapped potential to cultivate a better world for all and promote sustainable development at individual and community levels. Sport, development and peace are intertwined (author in [1]). Martial arts is the cement and the social determinants of health and education, this why most advanced martial arts and developed economic countries promote it right from childhood (author in [36]). Author in [1] believe that martial connect us with the real self and make us who we are in reality for individual and community emancipation. Martial arts is a brain developer encouraging creativity and innovation (author in [1]). Greatest politicians, administrators, religious leaders, businessmen have understood the untapped potential of martial arts such as Bill Gates, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Donald Trump, and Putin. In addition the best martial artist are not usually poor mentally, physically and even financially like Jackie Chan, Jet Li, Bruce Lee, Donnie Yen, they have proven with their martial arts values through discipline, hard work, motivation, perseverance and endurance that you can start from something to everything. The success story of Francis

Ngannou is one evidence upon many others. In that direction, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2021 organized activities around the topic world Martial Arts: Towards a global overview.

It was also observed that less developed countries in general and subsaharian african countries are characterized by enormous natural wealth, men and resources contrasting with low GDP, in many cases, inflation is still too high, borrowing costs are still elevated, exchange-rate pressures persist, and political instability is an ongoing concern. There is a general tendency toward disorder, corruption at the spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical level. Moreover concerning the organization of martial activities a country like Cameroon (country of the author) is noticed by sexual harassment of athletes ( karate federation) , division as there exists 02 karate federations, lack of competition, wanted logistics and infrastructures, corruption and bribery, no impact on socio-economic activities, no influence on population mindset, poor marketing and publicity, approximate quality training and practice, disorganization and disfunctionning, empty federation coffers, and exile of athletes to greener pastures due to poor living conditions ; inequality between male and female, unappropriate or absent support and funding by the state or big companies where the interest is much more on football due to its audience, etc.

## **12. Research novelties and perspectives**

From our results the following novelties are foreseeable as perspectives and recommandations :

- Martial arts as a whole are indeed a universal inheritance and should be considered as a Unesco World Heritage, martial arts being an embodiment of the country's social, cultural and religious values.
- Martial Arts History Museum is a great place for families to learn about Asian art, history and culture. African countries should develop museum and development centers for their own martial arts and cultural fighting styles.
- It is important at the national and continental levels for africans to explore the possibility to unify all martial arts at least to supervise activities in a single federation for more efficiency and impact eventhough that will not exclude the specificity of each martial arts practices but it will enable a better organisation and functioning as they say : « divided we fall, united we stand ».
- Education is the basis of everything and the solution to a world that is going upside down, we believe the implementation and integration of martial arts in the eductional system, military recruitment and compulsory civil service for graduates including martial arts will yield a more sound, hardworking and productive youth but that does not exlude exceptional cases.
- Just like in case of football martial arts training centers or even an academy should be of acceptable standard and be marketed and promoted around the world, developing economies stand everything to gain from this perspective.
- Intensification of martial arts cooperation with advanced ones will be advantageous, this will also use as benchmarking not only in martial arts practices but in other technological, economic, financial and even social domains.
- Competition should be organized as a local championship well structured and sponsored with the

needed visibility at the levels of schools, localities, subdivisions, divisions and at the national level in a regular, marketized, publicized and transparent way.

- It is of the interest of Cameroon to put other sports at the same standard than football especially martial arts which is one of the key for its development at all levels specifically economical.

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