

STUDY ON THE SELECTION OF TECHNICAL PROCEDURES FOR SPECIAL-STATUS PERSONNEL ATTENDING THE CAREER INITIATION COURSE

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Abstract. *On the occasion of the Career Initiation Course in the academic year 2023-2024, which was attended by 202 special-status officials working in the field of Public Order and Security, an analysis was made about the response to a series of attacks consisting of holds and strikes, but also defensive actions against weapons by applying specific Ju-Jitsu technical procedures based on throwing and joint techniques to gain forced control as a way of responding to operational situations. The study is intended for operational personnel who must be trained with the most effective intervention techniques in order to improve future operational activity, but mostly for specialists in the field in order to help them adapt to the learners' particular features. Analysing the perception of basic self-defence elements from a beginner's point of view gives information that can be used to guide future teaching approaches. The possibility of being equipped with a complex set of technical skills consisting of body-striking, joint-locking, throwing, forced transport and immobilisation techniques provides personnel at the beginning of their careers with psychological and technical-tactical safety. At the same time, in terms of teaching activity, we aim to constantly select and adapt our study programmes to the evolution of crime rates in our society.*

Keywords: *career initiation; Ju-Jitsu; technical procedures; operational activity.*

Introduction

Appropriateness of the topic addressed

The mission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI) is complex, continuous and adaptable to the variations of social life. In this context, MAI personnel must be trained and equipped with both detailed knowledge of legal provisions in force and the most appropriate means of psychophysical training and operational intervention. According to Bugala (2019), police education is the basis for police work, especially when we talk about the resolution of conflict situations.

We can point out the latest changes in the field: in recent years (due to NATO membership), there has been an attempt to refresh the field of physical education in public defense institutions, and participation in international missions with our allies has been a good opportunity to observe the role of physical training and how to prepare modern armies (Cracană et al., 2022).

According to the literature (Cristea, 2014), in the general context of the constant training of Romanian Police personnel, it is imperative to maintain and improve the active combat and professional self-protection skills and competencies acquired during the initial training programmes. A strong combat psychology, along with athletic qualities and individual

technique support and enhance the ability of police officers to quickly and unhesitatingly gain the point of dominance in the specific field of action.

Thus, while legal provisions are analysed and developed by appropriate legislative bodies, psychophysical training is much more complex in nature due to the multitude of directions in which it is performed. In this regard, we will give the following examples:

- physical training plans must be developed in full accordance with the specific nature of the missions, the degree of risk, the available time and the material resources;
- psychological training must aim at combating mental fatigue triggered by prolonged cognitive activities, which can lead to serious health problems in the short or long term, by identifying the most suitable ways and means to combat it;
- training in the field of using the equipment;
- training in martial arts and/or combat sports by identifying and approaching up to automaticity the most effective techniques and procedures adapted to the most varied operational means.

Considering the above, we used the experience gained during over 40 years of practical and theoretical study in the field of martial arts and combat sports to identify and implement the most appropriate technical procedures that cumulatively comply with:

- accessibility – that is, to be used by personnel with at least satisfactory practical experience in the field of martial arts;
- effectiveness – the technical procedures proposed by us are particularly effective when they reach a medium level of automaticity;
- adaptability – the selected procedures must be applicable to a wide range of situations, from assaults without conventional or improvised weapons to assaults with weapons or against multiple aggressors;
- possibilities of positive transfer to various areas – technical procedures must develop not only martial skills but also moral-volitional qualities such as confidence, self-control, endurance when dealing with operational situations, toughness, unconditional reflexes, control and tolerance in different situations, etc.

Considering the clarifications set out above, we agree with Pfaff & Cinelli (2018) who highlight that, although it is evident that athletes possess improved perceptual-cognitive and perceptual-motor capabilities, evidence suggests that these improved capabilities are highly task-dependent and are related to the specificity of their training.

Thus, we support the interdependence of all these factors in the training process. Petre (2014) also mentions that tactical training in combat sports involves the use of creative ability to put into practice all the elements and procedures acquired, the available physical and mental qualities and, last but not least, all the theoretical and methodological knowledge gained, depending on the opponent's particular features, in order to win the fight, which is why the training of officials with special status must be approached in a systematic and comprehensive way.

We agree with Udrea (2014) that claims that „we should not only acknowledge the fact that professional training for the police force is necessary, but we should also determine the most efficient strategies regarding the implementation of training programs for the personnel”.

The development and evolution of the human body is permanently exposed to aggression and challenges, under different aspects, uncontrollable changes in the climate and

social status. We need to understand that the individual, through his actions, tends to integrate as efficiently as possible in societal groups, but not always with positive ends. Environment, industrialization and aggressive processing of foods have a strong impact on the genetic evolution of individuals, even from the embryonic phase, since they become individuals of the next generation, fragile and even with different dependencies (Chera & Plăstoi, 2016).

There is limited research supporting martial arts as a mediator or enhancer of cognitive function. Martial art training may be considered a mediator of cognitive function as it is a mind-body exercise requiring greater cortical recruitment due the inherently more complex movement patterns compared to the more repetitive actions of the aerobic or resistance exercises that have already been investigated.

Renden et al., (2015) mention that theoretical and practical preparation involves many factors, including combat skills too. In the processes of law enforcement, officers usually do a sedentary (in the cabinets or cars) job, however, they may encounter and confront the offenders disobeying officers legitimate claims/ requirements at any moment.

As the physique and the psyche merge naturally and continuously, they give the ideal image of an individual's existence, with all the activities that must be carried out to live a meaningful life.

For the operational MI official who must accomplish assigned activities, technical-tactical training plays a vital role because:

- only exemplary technical-tactical training can guarantee maximum efficiency of actions carried out under stress and/or pressure;
- the diversification of technical-tactical elements makes it possible to spontaneously react and be effective at key moments;
- extensive and thorough technical training makes it possible to use technical elements in unpredictable conditions adapted to intervention tactics;
- superior technical-tactical training provides safety, positive thinking, mental balance, therefore effectiveness, etc.

Irregular schedules, diversity of intervention tasks, ever-expanding requirements, frugal and/or inadequate nutrition, insufficient rest and recovery/recreation, etc. lead to mental fatigue, which is manifested by poor concentration, irritability, impatience, decreased appetite, sleep disorders and many other problems that can negatively influence the entire specific activity.

Thus, in agreement with specialists in the field, we can deepen theoretical and psychological training. According to Dragnea et al., (2008), theoretical training and psychological training are constantly present during lessons, accompanying the means and methods used to achieve the objectives of physical, technical and tactical training, but at certain times, they can benefit from separately formulated objectives.

Specialists in psychology recommend:

- lowering decision-making level, i.e. reducing involvement or choosing an "easier path" to resolve some problems. This can be prevented by developing system procedures and learning how to give the best responses to specific situations;
- adopting a realistic perspective on tasks – refining the technical-tactical elements encountered in situations with higher mental involvement. Theoretically, this will reduce

overexertion in real activities. When a situation must be resolved, there is no time for “break” because a solution is required. In this case, the realistic perspective consists in adopting the most spontaneous and legally adequate technical procedures;

- with regard to frequent breaks, they are very often impossible to take because life and, unfortunately, criminal activity never end. Therefore, an operational MAI official needs to search deep inside their being for the most appropriate resources to move forward and find the most viable solutions to solve problems;

- personal introspection – refers to those moments when “you stay only with yourself” and analyse yourself or analyse a particular situation. This too is possible quite sporadically or only during specific training sessions.

Coming from ancestral times, deepened and diversified in the sphere of martial arts, a method of psychological “montage” (Deliu, 2002) is more current than ever: meditation, that moment when you stay only with yourself and your subconscious, you think “about nothing”, and your concentration and memory improve by cultivating inner peace.

Thus, we believe that certain techniques and procedures can contribute not only to the development of specific martial skills used in intervention situations at the right time but also to the improvement of mental energy, which is so necessary in the ordinary activities of law enforcement officers.

Yusuf et al., (2024) state that their research identified several factors that contribute to the occurrence of police brutality, including: lack of training, weak oversight, and accountability.

Approaching the world of Ju-Jitsu from both a competitive sport and physical self-defence perspective for more than 4 decades, we had the opportunity to apply a wide range of technical procedures in sports combat and police intervention situations.

If there is consistency in training, the technical-tactical manifestation of technical procedures is overwhelming in terms of effectiveness. If specific training is planned and carried out intermittently, then it is absolutely necessary to perform a set of technical procedures adapted to the most varied tactical-operational situations.

Throughout the years but especially in recent times, when operational MI personnel are recruited “from an external source”, it has proven appropriate to select a set of intervention techniques that can be understood and applied as effectively as possible, considering the rather short training period.

We agree with the statement of Dadelo et al., (2015) that the specific practical training programs in which officers and offenders’ behavioural programming is applied should be prepared for the training of officers of different attribution services.

In this context, the following technical procedures were used for special-status personnel attending the Career Initiation Course:

1. *Ude-gatame (straight arm lock)* – a simple procedure that uses the aggressor’s strength to place oneself outside the attack and create the opportunity of applying a very wide range of immobilisation or forced transport techniques, depending on the opponent’s reactions.

2. *Ude-osae (arm pinning)* – a continuation of the previous technique by which the aggressor can be easily controlled on the ground to discharge negative energy and furious attacks but also to immobilise and/or handcuff the opponent.

3. *Kata-ude-gatame (shoulder hold)* – an immobilisation and/or forced transport technique performed by effectively evading the attack, taking energy and placing a support point at the opponent's elbow for firm control.

4. *Waki-gatame (armpit arm lock)* – a technique with a slightly more complex execution mechanism, which is used to control the opponent's arm under one's armpit by adopting a firm stance and gaining joint control at the elbow and - ideally - simultaneously at the wrist.

5. *Ude-nobashi (wrist lock)* – a subtle technique used to immobilise the opponent very effectively, creating opportunities for forced transport or various other tactical actions.

6. *Yubi-dori (finger lock)* – apparently disarmingly simple, this technique involves the spontaneous detection and use of the aggressor's moment of inattention, being performed either through false actions or as a result of the opponent's uncontrolled manifestations.

7. *Kote-hineri (forearm twist)* – one of the most effective joint techniques of immobilisation and forced transport, which however involves a complex placement and execution mechanism that is developed after a fairly large number of repetitions. The use of all arm joints makes this technique ideal, which is why it should be known to most operational officials.

8. *Mochi-mawari (arm twist behind back)* – involves enveloping the opponent's attack/actions, placing behind them and wrapping their arm to gain effective control aimed at either a forced transport technique or immobilisation with extension towards handcuff.

9. *Kanuki-gatame (arm lock with the forearm)* – an elbow joint technique that can be initiated in front or behind the opponent, as well as inside or outside the attack through a simple and highly effective lock. The technique involves a certain level of skill resulting from hard training.

10. *Kote-gaeshi (forearm return)* – a wrist technique used to overthrow or immobilise the opponent.

11. *Ude-hishigi-juji-gatame (cross arm lock or arm bar)* – used for ground fight. As the elbow is engaged, a combination of technical-tactical actions is required, which leads the opponent to stretch their arm, and thus their extended elbow can be locked.

12. *Atemi-waza (body-striking techniques)* – the most common body-striking techniques are: Oi-tsuki (straight punch); Mawashi-tsuki (roundhouse or circular punch); Ura-tsuki (uppercut punch); Hiza-geri (knee strike); Mae-geri (front kick); Sokuto-kansetsu-geri (side snap kick to the knee). Simple, effective and with an accessible execution mechanism, the selected striking techniques are suitable for a variety of operational situations.

13. *Nage-waza (throwing techniques)* – aimed at the execution of accessible and effective technical procedures suitable for various operational situations and, most importantly, with a simple execution mechanism. The techniques selected and practised were: O-soto-gari (big outer reap); O-uchi-gari/Ko-uchi-gari (big inner reap/small inner reap); Ko-soto-gari (small outer reap); Seoi-nage (shoulder throw); Koshi-guruma (hip wheel). Approached in combination or as a continuation of joint or striking techniques, throwing techniques aim to bring the opponent into a non-combat position, opening the way for handcuffing immobilisation techniques.

All these technical elements were introduced in the students' training in a realistic way in order to improve their skills, agreeing with the opinion of other specialists that say that in this way knowledge is deepened (Modise & Masogo, 2024). Participants are immersed in realistic scenarios that mirror real-world challenges faced by police supervisors. These simulations

allow them to practice decision-making, communication, and conflict resolution skills in a safe and controlled environment. Feedback from instructors and peers can be provided after the simulation to enhance learning.

Methodology

The research methods used were those found in the specialized literature (Predoiu, 2022): the bibliographic study method, the observation method, the method of adapting theoretical requirements to practical applications (gradual progress method, small steps method, etc.), and finally, the statistical mathematical method and the graphic method necessary to highlight the results, being quantitative research.

Participants

The study took place from April 2023 to May 2024 and consisted in analysing the response to certain technical procedures according to the participants' psychomotor skills, by observing and adapting the analytical programme.

The research was conducted with four series of trainees in the following periods:

- April-August 2023
- September-December 2023;
- January-April 2024;
- February-May 2024.

A total of 202 learners of different ages attended the course and, in order to carry out our analysis, they were divided by age group according to the regulations in force, as follows:

- age group I – up to 30 years (inclusive), 111 learners;
- age group II – from 31 to 35 years (inclusive), 36 learners;
- age group III – from 36 to 40 years (inclusive), 35 learners;
- age group IV – from 41 to 45 years (inclusive), 20 learners.

According to Order 154/2004 issued by the Ministry of Administration and Interior (Ministerul Administrației și Internelor, 2004), motor skills for a normal exertion level are assessed by the following tests: speed, push-ups, sit-ups, standing long jump, endurance and demonstration of the acquired self-defense procedures.

The subjects of the study approached competence number 3 in the career initiation course „Apply self-defense techniques and tactics in police intervention” with a total of 102 hours, these being divided over the entire duration of the 4-month course with approximately two sessions per week.

The evaluation of the subjects was carried out at the end of the training process by demonstrating self-defense procedures in cases specific to operative situations.

We agree with other specialists in other fields who consider that learning should include: 1. the target situation analysis, which provides information about objective and product oriented needs: the skills and language needed for the context in which learners will use; 2. the learning situation analysis, which provides information about subjective needs; and 3. the means analysis, which provides information about the educational contexts. (Benaventa & Sánchez-Reyes, 2015)

Results

The provisions of the analytical program stipulate the use of a wide range of methods and procedures from various sports and martial disciplines, all of them aimed at strengthening a strong psychophysical system able to withstand the demands of operational activity. For guidance, we will give some examples:

- from gymnastics – various mobility and segmental coordination exercises;
- from athletics – especially exercises from the schools of running and jumping;
- from sports games – elements corresponding to teamwork and general coordination;
- from martial arts – self-defence techniques and techniques influencing coordination skills, etc.

Obviously, the range of sports disciplines from which different training methods and techniques have been extracted is much wider. For example, for physical conditioning, methods from bodybuilding, boxing, wrestling, etc. were (also) used. It is worth mentioning that, given that the group was heterogeneous in terms of both age and gender of the participants, the working methods had to be constantly adapted, according to the principles of teaching and learning.

Thus, for trainees in age groups III and IV, it was found that striking techniques were much more accessible than joint or throwing techniques, which was largely due to their poorer spatiotemporal orientation, while age groups I and II were better at complex actions (Table 1). The comparison of technical preferences by age group is shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. *Percentage of technical preferences by age group*

Age groups	Technical groups				Percentage of technical preferences
	Joint techniques	Throwing techniques	Striking techniques	Technical combinations	
Group I	5%	5%	5%	85%	Over 85%
Group II	20%	10%	20%	50%	Around 50%
Group III	15%	10%	45%	30%	Over 45%
Group IV	10%	10%	60%	20%	Over 60%

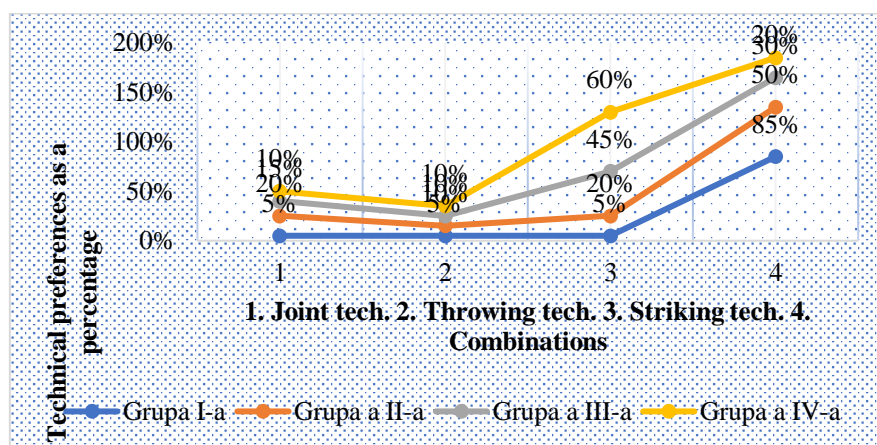


Figure 1. Comparison of technical preferences by age group

Conclusion

Although the selection of operational MAI personnel is done according to well-known objectives, physiological development considerations are also taken into account when assessing their psychomotor skills. This is the reason why they are periodically tested by assigning them to the six age groups specified in Regulation 124/2004.

The approach to self-defence concepts and procedures from different technical groups (joint, throwing and striking techniques, as well as their logical and effective combination) also aimed at creating a training stereotype to be used over a given period for at least 5, 7 or even 10 career initiation series.

After learning, repeating and consolidating the specific procedures for almost 10 weeks and conducting current and final assessments, we have noted the following aspects:

→ joint techniques, which are very effective especially in terms of protection of the aggressor/offender, who is brought into a non-combat position following the effect caused by the manifestation of the technique itself, were very well received and practised by age groups I and II. Undoubtedly, this is due to greater ligament flexibility and joint mobility at this age compared to the other two reference groups;

→ the execution mechanism is understood much faster and segmental coordination is clearly superior to the first two age groups, even if the difference in years is not very significant. This indicates the creation of a better spatial representation of movements at younger ages compared to older ages;

→ age groups III and IV preferred more “static” technical procedures, for example, striking techniques practised in combination with throwing techniques, where taking the opponent down made immobilisation easier;

→ controlling the technical execution, i.e. the point at which a joint can be locked, controlling the opponent’s body when using a throwing technique or stopping a striking technique at a fixed point, taken as single actions or as combinations, were more effective for the first two age groups;

→ the use of certain Ju-Jitsu technical procedures simultaneously with breathing exercises and especially meditation and concentration had the expected effect: all groups showed improved control compared to the first executions.

Summarising, we will emphasise that the use of technical procedures from the field of martial arts has a great impact not only on special technical-tactical training but also on the psychological system, beneficially influencing the moral-volitional qualities by consolidating a strong psyche.

Proposals for future activities

In order to constantly increase the quality of technical-tactical-psychological training for participants in the Career Initiation Course, but not only for them, we intend to carry out the following activities within our area of competence:

- updating, diversifying and implementing in the training programmes the most appropriate notions for our specialisation so that operational MAI personnel are not surprised by an ever-changing course of society;

- diversifying training also in the conventional or improvised “weapons” sector, as the number of interventions in this type of aggression is increasing alarmingly;
- initiating steps within our area of competence to allocate more hours of practical study, knowing that Repetitio mater studiorum est! (Repetition is the mother of learning!);
- exchanges of experience with specialists in the field of psychophysical training and martial arts from various sectors of the MAI structures;
- cooperation with various MAI structures, from Public Order to SAS or even SIAS;
- raising the awareness of all those who opt for the specific operational MAI sphere, through various programmes, brochures, demonstrations, etc., that operational activity is very risky, and specific training must be serious and assiduous.

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