

## REVIEW

from

**Associate Professor Silvana Venelinova Boeva, PhD,  
Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv**

of the dissertation thesis for awarding the academic and scientific degree *doctor* in the higher education field 1. **Pedagogics** professional area 1.3. **Pedagogy of training in:** doctoral program *Theory and methodology of physical education and sports*

**Author: Markus Alois Senft**

**Topic:** *Sports-pedagogical and Psychological Aspects to Optimise WingTsun Training*

**Scientific supervisor:** Prof. Veselin Zhelyazkov Margaritov, D.Sc., PhD  
*Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv*

### **1. Overview of the procedure and the doctoral student**

#### ***Data on the procedure***

In compliance with order No. ПД-21-711 issued on 4 April 2024 by the Rector of *Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (PU)* I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to conduct a procedure for the defence of a dissertation thesis on the topic *Sports-pedagogical and Psychological Aspects to Optimise WingTsun Training*, for the acquisition of the academic and scientific degree *doctor* in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogics; professional area 1.3. Pedagogy of training in:, doctoral program *Theory and Methodology of Physical Education and Sports*.

On the first council, held on 2 April 2024, the scientific jury was introduced to the documents for the competition. At that meeting, I was appointed to produce a review.

The set of materials submitted to me by *Markus Alois Senft* are in accordance with the regulatory requirements specified in Art. 36(1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU, which allows for a correct evaluation of the results achieved by him.

The following documents are included:

- a request to the Rector of the PU to launch a procedure for the defence of a dissertation thesis;
- curriculum vitae - European standard;
- minutes from the department council related to their disposition to open the procedure and preliminary discussion of the dissertation work;
- dissertation thesis;
- abstract;
- a list of scientific publications on the subject of the dissertation;
- copies of scientific publications;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
- certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements

#### ***Brief biographical data of the PhD student***

**Markus Alois Senft** – Education: in 1997 he graduated with a master's degree from the University of Ludeburg, majoring in Applied Cultural Studies. In the same year, he became the editor-in-chief of the printed and electronic magazine - *WingTsun-Welt*. He then devoted more than 10 years to teaching *WingTsun* and managing the *EWTO* association. In 2009, he successfully completed his master's program *Sports in School* at *Paisii Hilendarski* University of Plovdiv. To the present day, the PhD student has been closely involved with management functions in the association. Over the years, he also achieved personal growth in the martial art of *WingTsun* and holds the 5th degree at present.

Markus Senft has also done several qualification courses related to psychological counselling and practices in this field.

## **2. Relevance of the subject**

The structure of the dissertation is based on the *Heidelberg Competence Training (HCT)*. This theoretical model is relatively unfamiliar to our educational and scientific community, but especially relevant in the context of the growing call for changes of the educational model in our country. In recent years, a number of policies have been introduced and implemented, allowing the application of the competence approach in the education of adolescents in all grades and stages of the educational system.

The concept of *HCT* is based on the possibility of developing the so-called *mental power*, which will allow a person to exercise adequate self-control, achieve the set goals and overcome critical and complex situations of a different nature. Applicability of the concept to the optimisation of *WingTsun* training is investigated by Markus Senft in his doctoral dissertation. The above described gives me reason to believe that the topic of Markus Senft's thesis submitted for defence is a relevant and significant issue for sports practice. Its illumination would not only render applied significance, but would also contribute to complementing the *HCT* concept.

## **3. Competence on the subject**

The PhD student has many years of practice in the field of *WingTsun*. He is not only a practitioner and master of this martial art to a high degree, but gained experience as a teacher and process manager in the *European WingTchun Organisation - EWTO*, which is the largest *WingTsun Kungfu* association in the European space.

The positions he held and still holds, as well as Markus Senft's long years of commitment to the problems of the development and validation of *WingTsun* not only in Germany, but also in Europe, have significantly influenced the in-depth knowledge of the subject of the dissertation work.

The rich practical, management and administrative experience of the PhD student is reflected on the quality development of the dissertation work and increases objectivity when drawing specific conclusions and recommendations.

## **4. Research methodology**

The varied and well-grounded set of established and reliable research methods utilised by the doctoral student allows him to solve the set tasks and develop evidence of the work hypothesis of the scientific study.

## 5. Characterisation and evaluation of the dissertation work and its contributions

The doctoral dissertation of Markus Alois Senft is in line with the scientific requirements in the field of theory and methodology of physical education and sports and adopts the classical structure. It consists of an introduction, four chapters, references and appendices. It is logically structured in 202 pages and is visualised with 48 figures and 32 tables. The author used 151 literary sources in Latin.

Along 4 paragraphs, in the **first chapter**, a brief description of the sport of *WingTsun* is provided and the specific sports didactic features of preparation in this martial art are examined. The essence of the *Heidelberg* competency training is revealed. Its place in the sports and pedagogical practice of *WingTsun* preparation is justified in relation to the characteristic features and nature of the martial art.

The comprehensive theoretical analysis offered in this part of the thesis in the amount of 62 pages is sufficient and complete and is in accordance with the requirements. In this chapter, it is logical not to search for scientific contributions due to its nature, but the presence of new theoretical propositions related to the consideration of concepts and phenomena existing in the field of physical education and sports should be emphasized.

The profound knowledge of the author on the subject under consideration and the comprehensive analysis of the literary sources lead to a well-formulated working hypothesis.

In the **second chapter** of the dissertation, the draft hypothesis is offered and methodological issues related to the research design are discussed. It is developed in 15 pages.

The purpose of the dissertation work is clearly outlined, and the 7 tasks allow for the accomplishment of a research thesis corresponding to the topic of the dissertation. Their subordination allows the proof or rejection of the draft hypothesis and guarantees the full unfolding of the dissertation work.

The methodological toolkit implemented by the PhD student to establish the basic changes in the psychic, physical and motor state of the trainees is rich and enables the tracking of indicators which have a direct and immediate relevance to the needs of the research. Appropriate mathematical and statistical methods are employed for processing the empirical data. The research is conducted with students in the *WingTsun* schools of *EWTO* in Austria and Germany. The contingent of the study is sufficient to derive reliably significant results. In order to properly implement the introduced experimental methodology and in relation to the possibility of making corrections in accordance with the model, video recordings were made during the training. They have been analysed, as a result of which the management of the training process adhered to the requirements of the experimental methodology as much as possible.

A separate paragraph is dedicated to the organisation of the study. It is presented briefly and clearly.

I have a remark concerning this particular part of the work. When formulating the object of research, it would be advisable to put an emphasis on the fact that it is the object of impact and not of the research work in order to avoid misinterpretation of the two concepts.

The **third chapter** is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the results of the experiment. It is distributed in three separate paragraphs and the research material related to the dynamics

in the mental and physical capacity of the examined participants and the manifested correlational dependences between them is analysed sequentially.

The results obtained in the course of the research were subjected to correct mathematical and statistical processing using the statistical package IBM SPSS 26.

In each of the sub-chapters - III.1, III.2 and III.3 - a detailed analysis of the initial and final results is carried out, evidencing the changes occurring in the observed groups of trainees. In this stage of the dissertation, a competent analysis of the results obtained in the various tests is offered. A good impression is made by the conclusions accompanying the interpretation of the changes which occurred in the monitored data.

For this part of the thesis I have the following remark. In the text between pages 154 and 165 the terms mental and physical activity instead of mental and physical capacity are used, which I assume is due to a technical error in the translation.

The conclusions and recommendations derived in the **fourth chapter** reflect objectively the results obtained in the course of the dissertation research. They reveal not only Markus Alois Senft's ability for clear analytical activity, but also, as already indicated, his extensive practical experience in the field of the martial art of *WingTsun*.

The credibility of the peer-reviewed dissertation allows me to draw its contributions to theory and practice:

1. A technology has been developed to optimise *WingTsun* training based on the psychological and educational concept *Heidelberg Competence Training*.
2. The possibilities of the innovative approach applied in the sports and pedagogical practice of *WingTsun* have been experimentally proven. It contributes to improving the motor and mental abilities of those involved.
3. The experimentally proven effectiveness of the application of sports methodology based on the *Heidelberg Method (HCT)* in *WingTsun* training enhances the theory of the *HCT* concept and complements its areas of application.
4. The proven effectiveness of the experimental model allows it to be recommended for implementation in practical training.

### **Evaluation of the PhD candidate's publications and his personal contributions**

**Markus Alois Senft** submitted three publications of which he is the sole author. Each one of these is related to the topic of the dissertation work and covers separate stages of the research work.

I have no doubt that the texts, the empirical research, the interpretation of the results and the outlined contributions to the dissertation work are the personal work of the PhD student.

### **7. Abstract**

The abstract adequately reproduces the content of the dissertation thesis and highlights the most important points of it. Its volume and structure are in accordance with the required standards.

### **CONCLUSION**

The dissertation **holds practical and applicable results with original contribution and significance** in relation to *WingTsun* training, implanting the psychological and educational concept *Heidelberg Competence Training* in the educational methodology in a logical and

natural way. The presented materials and dissertation results meet all the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria (ASDA), the Regulations for the Implementation of ASDA and the relevant Regulations of *Paisii Hilendarski* University. On the basis of the materials offered to me for review under the procedure by **Markus Alois Senft**, I can definitely confirm that he **possesses** the necessary theoretical knowledge and practical experience, as well as the skills to independently perform research activities. No texts with traces of plagiarism were found in the doctoral student's dissertation and articles.

Based on the above, I give my **positive evaluation** and propose to the honorable scientific jury **to award the scientific and academic degree *Doctor* to Markus Alois Senft** in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogics, professional area: 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... doctoral program *Theory and Methodology of Physical Education and Sports*.

19.04.2024.

Reviewer: ...

/Assoc. Prof. Silvana Boeva, PhD/