

Principles, Methods and Tools of the Sustainable Approach in the Contents of Karate-Do Teaching

Sergejs Čapulis^{a*}, Valerijs Dombrovskis^a, Svetlana Guseva^a

* Corresponding author: Sergejs Čapulis, sergejs.capulis@du.lv

^a *Daugavpils University, 1 Parades iela, Daugavpils, Latvia*

Abstract

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Currently the emphasis in physical education is on sport achievements, leaving the effect of physical education on the development of adolescents' personality to drift along. In Latvia, the implementation of the humanistic approach in physical education is topical. We believe that today's organisation of physical education requires significant changes in the usage of principles, methods and tools in the frame of the sustainable approach. Karate-do, as a kind of martial arts in the framework of humanistic approach, stimulates self-development of adolescents' personality. In addition, the teaching process content of the sustainable approach includes adolescents' health culture education and upbringing, as well as the integrity of the body and mental development. Implementation of the sustainable approach of physical education in teaching Karate-do is vital, as it ensures development of the uniqueness of adolescent's personality and intrinsic potential. During the course of theoretical work, organisation and management methodology of the Karate-do teaching process in the context of the sustainable approach was designed. Within this methodology, a system of principles, methods and tools that allows implementing the sustainable approach in Karate-do was developed. It is suggested to use a system of methods in the sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process – words, demonstrations, exercises and games. The designed thematic conversation is proposed as one of the most important work techniques and relevant tools in the sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process. Doing Karate-do in the framework of the sustainable approach provides adolescents with satisfaction, positive perspective and self-confidence.

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1. Introduction

There are two practices in the system of martial arts which agree on the technique of element execution, but differ in teaching aims – these are Karate-do and Sport Karate. Sport Karate is viewed as a system for preparing adolescents for combat performance, and the main emphasis is placed on achieving results and on the number of wins. We believe that in Sport Karate not enough emphasis is

placed on the development of spirituality and morality of adolescents and that the educational effect of personality development in students is left out (Čapulis, Dombrovskis, & Guseva, 2014).

Among the martial arts, a special place is taken by the Japanese martial art – Karate-do, which ensures both the physical development and the mental and moral education (Takasuke, 2009).

We believe that teaching Karate-do stimulates self-development of students; thus, Karate-do is not only an effective martial art, but also a potential for realisation of sustainable development of education. In turn, teaching Karate-do with the sustainable education approach becomes purposeful and promotes formation of individual characteristics; it also ensures sustainability in the diverse and harmonious development of adolescent personality (Čapulis, Dombrovskis, & Guseva, 2015).

Currently, Karate-do is not only an effective martial art, but also an educational and healing system (Čapulis, 2010; Čapulis, Dombrovskis, & Guseva, 2014). Modern Karate-do includes history, traditions and etiquette (Sasaki, 2008), and anatomy and physics (Nakayama, 1989; Witte, 2008), physiology (Beneke et al., 2004), as well as philosophy (Kashtanov, 2007). Karate-do, as a Japanese martial art system, is being studied as an artistic form of spirituality, which educates, develops and forms a holistic world view, moral feelings and will (Takasuke, 2009). Karate-do is being also related to person's aesthetic education. By performing each of the exercises, the body, head, arms and legs should be held in balance. All Karate-do movements form a complete posture and are important from the aspect of movement mechanisms (Witte, 2008). Karate-do, as the acquisition of an antique Japanese culture, promotes the integration process of Western and Eastern spiritual values (Sasaki, 2008). Karate-do is very varied, and only by understanding it, it is possible to acquire knowledge and discover the deepness of traditions preserved for centuries (Funakoshi, 1990).

As a kind of sport education, Karate-do has become very popular all over the world, and in many countries nowadays Karate-do is also included in programmes of many higher education institutions and schools (Sasaki, 2006).

The spiritual and physical education of learners could also be realised in the framework of sustainable education. Sustainable education contributes to every person's opportunity to acquire knowledge, values and skills which are necessary in the decision-making process about individual and group activities at the local and global levels, with a view to improve life quality without posing threat to the needs of future generations. Some authors (Rompcyk, 2007; Sheri, 2008) emphasise the importance of the sustainability approach in all spheres, including sports. It is emphasised that sustainable education is not an isolated subject, but rather an approach that has to be integrated in all spheres, with a view to developing skills, competence and values. The approaches of sustainable education organically fit in understanding the Karate-do system using the holistic approach in teaching: they are expressed based on a process (Čapulis, Dombrovskis, & Guseva, 2015):

- previous experience and preparedness of the learner and the teacher;
- reflection and formation of the individual attitude of the learner and the teacher.

Karate-do, as a learning process of personality's physical and spiritual development and educational system, happens in several stages (Mikryukov, 2003), and we suggest to look at it from the point of view of the sustainable approach.

Firstly, when working with beginners, in addition to general physical and technical preparing, the focus has to be on the sustainability of spiritual development. At this stage, simultaneously with developing basic physical features, special attention has to be paid to spiritual development, as the main component of sustainability. The spiritual sustainability in the educational process is promoted by being aware of the history, traditions, schools and styles, everyday behavioural norms and rules, the etiquette of Karate-do lessons. The basic forms of training at this stage are specialised and are organised as complex lessons in physical, special, technical and moral preparedness, when the amount of knowledge to be learned and the load of training is being gradually increased. The duration of the first stage is from 2 to 3 years.

Secondly, the main task is to develop Karate-do special features and skills, to improve moral preparedness, intellectual and spiritual development. The methods of developing spiritual and physical features become more complex and are mainly aimed at coordination between perception, attention, thinking and movement, speed of reaction, improving and developing memorisation of movements. The duration of the second stage is 4 to 6 years.

Thirdly, the basic task is forming features that should be possessed by a master of the martial art: obtaining the experience of organising lessons and learning the methods of self-regulation. The physical preparing is aimed at maximal level of training and maintaining it for a longer period. At this stage, the improvement of technical skills, tactical methods, physical and will features continues. The physical, technical and tactical preparedness is being kept at the level of the previous stage. Sustainable individual preparedness at this stage is based on the learner's ability to control his/her emotions, feelings and actions. In moral and will preparedness, development of persistence, courage, certainty and energy is emphasised. The duration of the third stage is 4 or 5 years.

Fourthly, after 10-12 years of active Karate-do lessons, for the majority of Karate-do followers, this martial art becomes their meaning of life.

By evaluating the four stages of learning Karate-do, it is possible to state that sustainability is in the centre of this teaching approach, which is expressed in the form of the balance between spiritual and physical development and emphasises the education and teaching of health culture.

2. Sustainable approach in the contents of karate-do teaching

2.1. Principles of sustainable approach in Karate-do teaching

The aim of sustainable development in education is teaching and upbringing adolescents with an active civic stand, capable of critical thinking, assessing situations and predicting the consequences of their own actions (Education for Sustainable Development ESD, n.d., para. 2).

Sustainable development of education enables every learner to acquire the knowledge, values and skills necessary for decision-making in problem situations on a local and global level to ensure that the current quality of life improvement does not create a threat to the quality of life of future generations (United Nations, 1992). Representatives of non-governmental organisations consider sustainability an important development principle of all life spheres of society (UNESCO MemoBPI, 2005; The Saeima of Latvia, 2006). Sustainable development is viewed as an approach that must be integrated into all

spheres of education in order to facilitate the acquisition of skills, competences and values by future specialists (UNESCO, 1997; UNESCO World Report, 2005).

Realisation of teaching Karate-do in the framework of sustainable development of education shapes self-esteem and ability to overcome obstacles, helps to achieve the aim and control emotions and voluntary actions, broadens the outlook of adolescents. Consequently, cognitive activity and the need for self-improvement gradually become their lifestyle (Čapulis, Dombrovskis, & Guseva, 2015).

In organising a sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process, the didactic principles and general sport principles, as well as the pedagogical principles of martial arts, have to be observed; their interrelation is reflected in Table 1.

Table 1. Relations between organisational principles of sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching

The organisation principles of sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching		
Didactic principles	General sport principles	Pedagogical principles of martial arts
Conscientiousness and activity principle;	Principle of versatile and harmonic personality;	Etiquette, ritual and honesty principle;
Visibility principle;	Sports relations to preparedness for life and professional activity;	Spirituality principle;
Systematic principle;	Health promoting principle.	Harmony principle;
Accessibility principle;		Movement awareness and control principle.
Stability principle.		

The general principles of sport (Jansone & Krauksts, 2005) are as follows: the principle of versatile and harmonic personality; sports relations to preparedness for life and professional activity; and the health promoting principle.

The didactic principles are: conscientiousness, activity, visibility, systematic, accessibility, and stability. These principles form the common rules using different learning methods in organising lessons and in educational work. Thus, the usage of these principles should be obligatory (Jansone & Krauksts, 2005).

Further on, we analyse in detail the pedagogical principles of martial arts (Gagonin, 1996) that are used for Karate-do lesson organising in the sustainably-oriented approach:

The principle of etiquette, ritual and honesty is a fundamental principle of martial arts. From our point of view, overcoming oneself and focusing on honesty forms sustainability. This principle has a deep meaning, however in this case it has to be understood as a rule for behaviour: prevalence of morality and excellent behaviour; unity of learning and thinking; respect for older and elderly people; continuous self-development; and authority of the teacher, which is based on the personal example in the frame of learners' mutually respectful behaviour.

In Karate-do lessons, there is an obligatory ritual at the beginning and the end of the lessons. The ritual includes the greeting etiquette: elements of expressing respect to Karate-do founders, the teacher, place of lessons, to each other; exercises for inner disposition take place as well. The etiquette at the beginning and the end is the same; however the exercises for inner disposition have a completely different meaning. Inner disposition exercises at the beginning of the lessons focus on using the spiritual and inner energy for self-development. At the end of the lesson, the exercises for inner disposition are focused on releasing the stress from a person's inner world obtained during the lesson.

The principle of spirituality: The principle of spirituality in Eastern culture tradition is related to the fundamental philosophical concept “Do” – the way of development including a person’s spiritual development and unity with the nature. Karate-do teaching methodology is based on teaching and developing three elements (Kashtanov, 2007): “*sin*” (moral characteristics), “*tai*” (physical characteristics) and “*vadza*” (technical mastery).

In the system of Karate-do, the moral characteristics have to dominate over the physical and technical ones by having complete control over them. Neglecting spirituality for the sake of physical characteristics and development of technical skills in Karate-do can create danger not only for others, but also for those who are engaged in martial arts (Endresen & Olweus, 2005). Nowadays, this principle can be related to the cultural environment and to the individual’s inner culture, where the spiritual, intellectual and physical form one unit.

The principle of harmony is marked by the monad “*taidzi*”. The two beginnings – “yin” and “yang” are in continuous movement, therefore these counterforces have to be in harmony. Consequently, in martial arts, the basic technique and formal complexes of exercises and the art of close combat complement each other.

Awareness of movements and the principle of control mean comprehension of the technique and focusing attention on movements. By observing this principle in sport education system, which is implemented at different levels of skills, the educational potential of the sustainable approach is promoted.

2.2. Methods of sustainable approach in Karate-do teaching

For organising the sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process, the following methods were used: demonstration, exercises, game and verbal method. Each of the methods separately is not universal, and thus they are used in relation with each other. The choice of method is determined by the subject matter, the educational task, preparedness of learners, as well as the conditions of lessons. The suggested methods for a sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process are reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. Methods of sustainably-oriented approach in Karate-do teaching

The organisation methods of sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process			
Verbal method (thematic conversation)	Demonstration method	Exercise method	Game method

One of the most important working methods for implementing sustainably-oriented Karate-do lessons is the verbal method (the method of thematic conversation). In lessons, the duration of the thematic conversation is not strongly fixed; it can take place at the beginning or the end of the lesson, or during the lesson. Without this understanding, Karate-do lessons would become learning of mechanic movements and development of physical characteristics. The conversation has both a theoretically introducing and a practically demonstrating meaning. During a lesson, the teacher can call the group together several times in order to discuss the meaning of a particular technique or exercise, or to introduce or explain one of them. It depends on the complexity of the exercise and on the individual

peculiarities of learners' awareness of the problem. Only after the introductory conversation, the practical performance of the exercise can take place. Even at the initial stage of teaching, the complex elements of Karate-do technique can and should be demonstrated and explained. It is necessary for learners to see what they can achieve in the future if they work hard during the lessons of Karate-do. In demonstrations, the elements of the technique can be repeated at every following lesson by also adding new techniques; it is also obligatory to demonstrate the elements of Karate-do techniques which will be taught in the next lesson. In some cases, the most experienced learners of the school are involved in the demonstrations.

The conversation on the chosen topic can be repeated if necessary, and preferably the contents of the conversation should be divided into several parts according to their meaning, as it will allow learners to understand the meaning and essence of the process of Karate-do lessons more easily.

Conversation maintains the emotionally important background of the lesson. It promotes development of the meaning forming functions, namely it promotes learners' understanding of the meaning and essence of Karate-do as a martial art, about the importance of attending Karate-do lessons and the essence of every particular exercise. The teacher's conversation with the learners takes place during the whole lesson of Karate-do. Not always it is necessary to call together the whole group for carrying out the thematic conversation. The teacher of Karate-do provides the necessary comments and explanation while teaching the technical element, the teacher charges the learners emotionally, demonstrates and performs the exercise together with them. It all should be accomplished by telling emotional stories, legends and the history of Karate-do.

2.3. Methodological tools of sustainable approach in Karate-do teaching

All tools used in organising sustainably-oriented Karate-do lessons can be conventionally divided into two groups: general sport education methodological tools and specific Karate-do methodological tools. The suggested methods for a sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process are reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. Methodological tools of sustainably-oriented approach in Karate-do teaching

The methodological tools of sustainably-oriented approach in Karate-do teaching	
Methodological tools of sport education	Methodological tools of karate-do
Order exercises;	Kihon – basic technique;
General development exercises;	Kata – complexes of formal exercises;
Applied exercises;	Kumite – the art of close combat.
Acrobatic exercises.	

The general sport education methodological tools are used in organising Karate-do lessons and in other kinds of sports: order exercises, exercises of general development, applied exercises and acrobatic exercises.

In the designed sustainably-oriented methodology of the Karate-do teaching process, specific methodological tools are used for achieving the Karate-do mastery level: *Kihon* – basic technique; *Kata* – complexes of formal exercises, and *Kumite* – the art of close combat.

The specific methodological tools for achieving mastery in Karate-do are interrelated and united. In the system of Karate-do lessons, *Kumite* (the art of close combat), according to its importance, is primary, but *Kihon* (a basic technique) and *Kata* (complexes of formal exercises) have secondary importance. Historically, *Kihon* and *Kata* form the basis for teaching *Kumite*. Thus, it is possible to state that in Karate-do lessons there is an obviously noticeable link between purely technical aspects (*Kihon – Kata – Kumite*) and the individual features of personality (body – mind – spirituality) (Kashtanov, 2007), which promote personality development.

Improvement of the basic technique (*Kihon*) in Karate-do is carried out not only physically and technically; it is also spiritual work, self-development and awareness of one's own aims, as development is always related to the spiritual aspect (Kashtanov, 2007). Spirituality and sustainable development direct a person to development by involving the element of creativity in the martial art. In the learning process of the basic technique, learners of Karate-do need complete dedication and great spiritual concentration (Funakoshi, 1990; Nakayama, 1989). By performing the basic technique, the learner controls his/her own actions, develops self-control and will in order to achieve the set aims.

Unlike *Kihon* (basic technique), which is based on interaction with one partner, *Kata* (complexes of formal exercises) are “choreographic” compositions of combat, where one has to fight with imaginary or “shadow” partners. They are peculiar texts of the movement, which transfer information from the teacher to the learner, from generation to generation; it is a totality of successive methods, which are performed in a special line of movements. During the performance of *Kata*, the technique of kicks, posture, blocks and moving around, rhythm, reaction and precision of movements is being perfected. In *Kata*, all methods of protection and attack are assembled. Therefore, the meaning of sets has to be well understood and performed precisely (Mikryukov, 2003).

During intensive training of *Kata*, the ability to understand and get to the essence of Karate-do is being developed (Pflüger, 2001). Thousands of repeated concentrated sets create a stable coordination of movements and very precise sensitivity in close combat. It allows learners to foresee partner's movements and react with purpose.

The next tool for achieving mastery in Karate-do is *Kumite* – the art of close combat. It has to be emphasised that the art of close combat is primary according to its importance, but sets of formal exercises and basic technique are of secondary importance. The art of close combat is learner's self-development in trials (Kashtanov, 2007), as well as strengthening of the spirit by practically applying skills of protection and attacking in work with partners. With the help of blocking, kicks and hitting with arms, the desirable result is achieved. During close combat, in the state of stress, the learner controls his/her feelings and emotions.

In organising the sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process, the general, didactic and pedagogical principles of martial arts, specific teaching methods, as well as methodological tools of sport education and Karate-do are used and complement each other.

3. Conclusions

It has been emphasized the organisation of a personality-oriented sustainable teaching process, which promotes the development of learner's spiritual and physical aspects as a desire for self-development in order to experience a positive emotional background.

The analysed and summarised aspects of the general education-oriented approach prove necessary for application in sport education, as currently in sports the normative and high sport achievement oriented approaches still dominate. In our opinion, the diversity in the Karate-do teaching reflects a sustainable approach in education.

During the course of the research, the principles of organising the Karate-do teaching process, methods and tools in the context of sustainability were designed. The system of the sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process includes implementation of didactic, general and pedagogical sport principles of martial arts in a way that they supplement each other in teaching Karate-do.

During the sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process, the employed system of methods includes the methods of words, demonstration, exercises and game. The thematic discussion is offered as one of the most important working and bonding methods in teaching Karate-do. The thematic discussion allows the teacher of Karate-do to find methodological techniques that provide meaning and motivate learners to engage in Karate-do.

Sustainably-oriented teaching of Karate-do provides the mutual link and interrelation between *Kihon – Kata – Kumite* and the methodological tools of sport education. It is possible to assert that the sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching process is appropriate for 14-15 years old adolescents.

If during the teaching process of Karate-do learners are oriented only towards achievements in sport, it can decrease the perception of the subject matter and create excessive situational stress. Thus, it is necessary to apply sustainably-oriented principles, methods and tools in order to develop confidence, self-control in difficult situations and adaptive abilities of the individual.

Limitations

During the course of the research, the organisational principles, methods and tools of the Karate-do teaching process in the context of sustainability were designed and justified in practice, however the obtained results are partially described in the present article. Further on it is necessary to study in detail how the sustainably-oriented Karate-do teaching becomes the dominant motivating factor in acquiring knowledge about the Eastern culture and martial arts. Adolescents' gender differences were not taken into account.

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