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THE PERSONALITY OF SEMPAI AS A MOTIVATIONAL ASPECT IN THE UPBRINGING OF A CHILDREN'S GROUP IN AIKIDO

The authors of this article consider the role and significance of sempai in the process of motivation, training and upbringing of children's aikido group members. It was revealed that a sempai is an elder student, a sensei's assistant, who not only makes greater progress than other students in studying aikido, but also of his own free will takes the initiative in helping and explaining to the other students, usually younger in aikido practice or less experienced.

It was determined that, although the presence of a sempai in the group implies additional work of the sensei, aimed at the formation and development of certain psychological and psycho-emotional qualities, it has a very positive effect on the physical and intellectual growth of the group, its cohesion and motivation.

In addition, it should be noted that not every group can have such a personality, and not always the atmosphere in the dojo and, in particular, the training methods used by the sensei will contribute to the development of such an initiative.

The presented article reveals and characterizes the state of physical culture and sports activities of childhood and adolescent aikido athletes, which is considered from the point of view of pedagogical motivational points. These moments work not only in the "sensei-pupil" or "sensei-group" plane, because the relationship between the pupils themselves is no less important. According to statistics that, in the context of aikido, remain constant over the decades, only one child in a hundred will continue practicing aikido into adulthood. At the same time, only one adult out of a thousand will reach the black belt. Moreover, even fewer will continue to study Aikido as a discipline of Budo and a unique form of physical and mental recreation. Out of a thousand black belts who have not left the practice of aikido, only one has the opportunity to become a sensei, a teacher who, in the role of a mentor, will help his pupils to pass the path of aikido in a safer way, taking into account the individual characteristics of each pupil.

Thus, the presented study reveals the value and importance of raising a sempai in a dojo, ideally in each group, which is especially important for children and adolescents, because it teaches the group to discipline, subordination, and respect not only for adults, but also to peers who have a special success in aikido study. Separately, it is worth noting that, based on our own experience, we can say that in 90% of cases a young sempai who in the future grows up to be a high-skilled sensei, as well as teachers, mentors and managers not only in the field of physical education or martial arts, but in different spheres of life.

Key words: *Senpai, martial arts, aikido, upbringing, aikido training, a children's group in aikido.*

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ОСОБИСТІТЬ СЕНПАЯ ЯК МОТИВАЦІЙНИЙ АСПЕКТ У ВИХОВАННІ ДИТЯЧОЇ ГРУПИ З АЙКІДО

Автори даної статті розглядають роль та значення сенпая на процес мотивації, навчання та виховання учасників дитячої групи з айкідо. Виявлено, що сенпай – це старший учень, помічник сенсея, який не тільки робить більші успіхи, ніж інші вихованці у вивчення айкідо, а й по своїй волі проявляє ініціативу у допомозі та роз'ясненнях іншим вихованцям, як правило, молодшим, або менш досвідченим.

Визначено, що, хоча наявність сенпая в групі і передбачає додаткову роботу сенсея, направлену на формування та розвиток певних психологічних та психо-емоційних якостей, проте вона дуже позитивно впливає на фізичне та інтелектуальне зростання групи, її згуртованість та замотивованість.

Крім того, слід відмітити, що не у кожній групі може з'явитися така особистість, та не завжди атмосфера в доджо та, зокрема, методи виховання, які використовує сенсей, будуть сприяти розвиткові подібної ініціативи.

У представленій статті розкрито та охарактеризовано стан фізкультурно-спортивної діяльності спортсменів з айкідо дитячого та підліткового віку, яку розглянуто з точки зору педагогічних мотиваційних моментів. Дані моменти працюють не лише у площині «сенсей-вихованець», або «сенсей-група», адже не менш важливими є відношення між самими вихованцями. Згідно статистичних даних, як, в контексті айкідо, впродовж десятиліть лишаються сталими, лише одна дитина зі ста продовжить займатися айкідо у дорослому віці. При цьому лише один дорослий із тисячі дійде до чорного поясу. І ще менше продовжать вивчати айкідо як дисципліну Будо та унікальний вид фізичної та ментальної рекреаційної діяльності. Із тисячі чорних поясів, що не полишили практики айкідо, лише один має можливість стати сенсеєм, вчителем, що в ролі наставника допомагатиме своїм вихованцям проходити шлях айкідо більш безпечним шляхом, з урахуванням індивідуальних особливостей кожного вихованця.

Таким чином, у представленому дослідженні розкрито цінність та значення виховання у доджо сенпая, в ідеалі – у кожній групі, що є особливо важливим для вихованців дитячого та підліткового віку, адже це привчає групу до дисципліни, субординації, поваги не лише до дорослих, а й до однолітків, що мають особливі успіхи у навчанні. Окремо варто зауважити, що, на базі власного досвіду, можемо стверджувати, що у 90% випадків саме із юних сенпайів у майбутньому виростають сенсеї високого рівня майстерності, а також вчителі, наставники та управлінці не лише у сфері фізичного виховання чи бойових мистецтв, а й у різних сферах життя.

Ключові слова: сенпай, бойові мистецтва, айкідо, виховання, тренування з айкідо, дитяча група з айкідо.

Formulation of the problem. Originally, senpai was the most senior warrior in a group, under the group's commander or leader. The senpai was responsible for development and direction of the lower warriors, and, critically for protection of the leader. As

time progressed, the role remained very much the same in Japanese martial arts, with senpai sitting between sensei and kohai in the hierarchy of a martial arts dojo. Senpai would maintain the relationship between sensei and the students.

As the senior member of the dojo, sempai had trained under sensei for many years. This developed an understanding of Sensei, their training methodologies and philosophies, and, of course, the personality of the teacher, which is an important part of style. With this relationship, that was often more personal than others in the dojo, came trust from sensei, reciprocated by responsibility from sempai. With these privileges, sempai had the sole responsibility of protecting sensei with his life. In times of war, depending on the skill and strength, sempai could be either the strongest or the weakest link in the command chain.

Sensei has the most valued skill and experience to impart knowledge of his art to the students, and the group should therefore cherish sensei's time. The delegation of responsibility for reigi to sempai means that more time can be dedicated to developing the art through sensei's teaching. Much of what martial arts teaches us, extends beyond the mere practice of the skills and develops our values.

The teachings that are delivered in the true spirit of martial arts will help us to grow in confidence and stature, but to maintain humble thoughts and a culture of respect. This is another reason why sempai is often called upon to deliver correct etiquette.

Part of the role, regarding reigi, in a traditional school is for Senpai to order the students to line up for Sensei at the start of class. This should be done as Sensei enters the dojo, or, when sensei is already in attendance, that it is obvious to Senpai that sensei is ready to begin. This shows respect for Sensei in not keeping him waiting, and not wasting any training time. Senpai will align himself at the right of the dojo line. It is traditional for sempai to position himself slightly forward of the line and facing at a 45-degree angle, while the kohai are facing forward, to kamiza. In ancient times, this positioning comes from sempai's role as protector of sensei. He positions himself with this viewpoint to ensure he has a clear view of both sensei and anyone who would be a potential attacker.

Today the role of sempai has changed, but it remains an important part of aikido studying and discipline in a dojo, that is very important for the upbringing of children and adolescents.

The purpose of a given research was to consider the issue of upbringing and training in a children's aikido group from the point of view of the sempai's personality and one's influence on general pedagogical process, motivation and quality of the preparation for aikido certification.

Background of the research. Studying the principles of training and education in aikido has long been a point of interest for many scientists and martial arts coaches. After all, in its essence, aikido is a unique

experience, the basis of which is not preparation for competitions, but first, multifaceted internal work aimed at the development of such qualities as self-control, mental stability, stress resistance, the ability of effective cooperation with various partners, etc.

Among foreign researchers, the topic of aikido methods of teaching, deciding the problems even in a sphere of business and communication is very popular, but the context of motivation is not studied well enough. Among the most striking works of the last years, we can single out the following: D. Boguszewski, K. Kerbaum, B. Suchcicka, J. Grzegorz Adamczyk (2011-2013), M. N. Zetaruk, M. A. Violan, D. J. Zurkowski (2005). With regard to domestic research, the topic of aikido is actively considered in the works of such Ukrainian authors as O.G. Shalar (2020, 2021), E.A. Strikalenko (2019, 2020, 2021), S.I. Stepanyuk, O.K. Serputko (2022) (Serputko, Stepanyuk, Lemeshko, 2022: 46-49; Stepanyuk, Serputko, Kharchenko-Baranetska, Koval, Tkachuk, 2022: 13-16; Stepanyuk, Serputko, Lukyanchenko, Turchyk, 2022: 15-17; Stepanyuk, Serputko, Kharchenko-Baranetska, 2022: 299-314; Stepanyuk, Serputko, Lukyanchenko, Turchyk, 2022: 19-22).

In order to solve the tasks, we used the following methods of research: analysis of literature sources, theoretical analysis and generalization of scientific data, our own experience of aikido practice and teaching.

Presentation of the main material of the study.

To understand the purpose of sempai in the dojo we are to realize that such a status in Japanese culture is presented not only in martial arts, but also in many spheres of society. In addition, relationships Sensei-Sempai (teacher – senior student) as well as Sempai-Kohai (senior student – junior student) in a status-based society are completely organic and naturally recognize their obligations to each other, and follow these social norms without issue (Gozo, 2013: 82-90).

Noted relationship works not only in one-way direction, and we should not understand it as a possibility of training with a senior member of a certain group. In addition, it is not about a simple respect or a color of a belt. On the first place of correct understanding the role of sempai, stands the sociological importance in an upwardly motivated society of Japan. Though aikido has become an international martial art, that still forms its basis and takes the features of actual physical skills and types of activities, it is still focused on Japanese cultural aspects and traditions.

The understanding this relationship in the terms of the Master – Protégé as the most part of western

scientists attempt is incorrect. Because the rank of senpai is given to a person acknowledged as having earned the privilege of a higher status by means of seniority within the organization. Age or even ability do not necessarily dictate senpai status.

Within martial arts, typically, the advanced students (dan and high kyu ranks) are encouraged or placed with newcomers. They recall being taught in a manner that their sensei would instruct them. Correcting them, the sensei corrects the mistakes of the whole group. The sempai, therefore, is responsible for the growth of the kohai. In this way, the sempai is responsible for the guidance, protection, and teaching of the kohai (Saotome, 1993: 115-119).

In this case very important is the fact a certain limit of understanding the principles of Aikido for those who just practice (kohai) is present. In order to understand more deeply, one has to teach others by oneself. Talking about senpai's work in a children's group, according to our own experience, we can note, that explanation of one child is often more appropriate to another child than the explanation of the adult, even with a very high Dan degree.

The role of kohai is as much important as the roles of senpai and sensei. In many schools, the kohai is often expected to clean the dojo, stack mats after training, and may even be required to do laundry. This is viewed as a means of testing the resolve of the kohai. Essentially, the expectation of the kohai is to respect, obey, and assist their sempai, and this relationship will generally continue for as long as the two maintain contact, regardless of any transition in status (Yamada, 1994: 95-100).

The relationship between these two roles is symbiotic; both parties are benefitting from their interaction. The sempai gains the experience necessary to become sensei; kohai gains the experience necessary to become senpai. If both parties acknowledge and respect their part in the society, then the formal nature of the class is upheld, and a natural order is maintained in the class as a whole (Ueshiba, 1984: 15-36).

The individuals benefit from this sort of relationship on an individual level. It is vital that the newly indoctrinated be protected and trained, that the elder students learn what it means to lead and to follow (even being a senpai, one still is a kohai to someone) and to be responsible not just for yourself but for the class as a whole.

Results of the research. Because of the research, we found that senpai is not only a role in traditional eastern martial arts, the performer of which should be a connecting chain between beginners in the dojo and

owners of high levels and sensei. The task of senpai is much broader and it is based on the principles of feudal society, the features of which are inherent in all spheres of life of the Japanese people to this day. In addition, we are not talking about the relationship between the boss and the subordinate, but about the harmonious interaction of various sections of society, without coordination between which there is no effectiveness of joint work.

As for the senpai's personal traits, as a potential future sensei, he should initially copy the behavioral norm of his teacher in order to experience its consequences firsthand. Then, through comparison and analysis, the senpai must adjust his actions and work principles according to the situation, the characteristics of other students and taking into account his own traits. The next stage of training as a senpai involves the opportunity to learn from different sensei, based on your own priorities and inclinations.

The ability to analyze the technique, explain it and demonstrate it, break down complex movements into simple ones with an explanation of the expediency and practical component of each moment – these are the qualities that distinguish the future senpai and which he must deepen and develop in himself during the training of aikido.

Conclusions/ discussion. Despite the fact that the role of the senpai is increasingly reduced to helping beginners with belts, or assisting the coach in demonstrating techniques, or helping him with equipment, the role of the senior student is seen as requiring the presence of certain psycho-emotional qualities, and is perceived more as the presence of experience in the practice of aikido. In addition, more and more dojos today are abandoning the appointment of senpais, even in children's groups. Nevertheless, the conducted research gives the right to assert that the presence of a senpai in a group or dojo is a very important aspect of the upbringing of both children and adolescents, and sometimes adults. Thanks to which, both the physical and motivational level of both the younger students and the senpai significantly increases, and the personality of the senpai plays a significant role in this process, as well as the sensei's interest in educating not only students, but also future senseis.

Prospects for further research. As a direction for further research on this topic, we see the study of the personality of a sensei, and how his/her own rank in aikido, experience in taking part in aikido shows and studying seminars of international level, as well as gender and his/her own motivation influence the process of teaching and training in the dojo.

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