

FIGHTING EXERCISES AGAINST MANY OPPONENTS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION LESSONS, SPECIFICALLY KARATE-DO, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST

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Abstract. *Background.* During the Karate lessons with the advanced students of the University of Bucharest, one specific method of training is represented by the exercise of Happo Kumite. It is practiced with great pleasure by the high ranking colour belts students because the defender must block and counter-attack continuously against eight adversaries surrounding him. (The word „Happo” refers to the eight main directions of possibilities for an attack).

Objectives. This Kumite is based on a principle of self-defence. One should be able to defend himself against any directions of an attack. It is possible to face such an encounter in life. If unaccustomed to this kind of exercise, a student who can successfully defend himself against one opponent would be helpless against many adversaries and the techniques used would not be effective if he fails to realise this important requirement of self-defence. In order to face, a period (30 seconds to 2 minutes) surrounded by adversaries, this Kumite, more than others, requires the following qualities: promptness, endurance, proper breathing, smoothness (Tenshin, Tai Sabaki) and physical and mental control such as: timing, balance, relaxed attitude, concentration, acuteness, etc. Special attention must be given to this method for developing these qualities.

Methods. In the initial stage, for the correct acquisition of motor skills specific to the respective theme, a wide range of methods is applied, in accordance with pedagogical principles:

The method of explanation. It is used in all stages of preparation. One of the basic requirements of the explanation is that it should be short and understandable to those who have to learn it.

The method of demonstration. It can be used in the discipline of karate through several procedures: the procedure of direct real demonstration and mediated demonstration procedure.

Exercise method. The exercise method in Happo Kumite includes several procedures: the procedure of the constructively decomposed exercise, global exercise procedure and the procedure of full exercise under the conditions of additional efforts.

Results. In performance of the Happo Kumite during physical education lessons at the University of Bucharest, the students will improve the coordination of mind and body, timing, balance, agility, endurance and fluidity of movement between techniques. To avoid the hazard of being winded, the students will also learn how to give special attention to the rhythm of breathing as this will greatly influence physical endurance and self-confidence.

Conclusion. Because Happo Kumite involve the use of the whole body, these movements are an ideal form of physical exercise. They can be learned first individually and after that, practiced in groups of physical education classes by students – young, old, male or female. With this kind of exercise, the physical educational lessons will be more attractive and the progress of the students of University of Bucharest will be notable. Efficiency is acquired by practise. This important point should not be forgotten.

Keywords: Happo Kumite, Kumite against many opponents, self defence, Karate do Shotokan.



Introduction

Confronting a large number of opponents in Happo Kumite is one of the most difficult tests of a karate student and the expression of techniques in such situations proves his true mastery. In order to achieve such a performance, superior physical qualities and thoroughly acquired specific motor skills are required, but above all, mental strength and a perfect knowledge of the tactics of fighting in numerical inferiority. During physical educational classes, specifically Shotokan karate, Happo Kumite it is practiced with great pleasure by the high-ranking color belts students because the defender must block and counterattack continuously against eight adversaries surrounding him. (The word „Happo” refers to the eight main directions of possibilities for an attack, Fig.1-2). It does not matter if the number of adversaries exceeds ten or twenty. It is possible to face such an encounter in life. If unaccustomed to it, even a person who can successfully defending himself against one opponent would be helpless against many adversaries and the techniques used would not be effective if he fails to realise this important requirement of self-defence and karate practice as a martial art and not only as a sport. This kumite belongs to the same group as *Kumite Kata: Oyo Kumite* and is based on a principle of self-defence (Kanazawa H., 2023). Until this stage of preparation, the defender was facing a single attacker as in Tanren, Kihon, Yakusoku and Jiyu Kumite (all being exercises intended for pre-set combat with a single opponent). The acquisition of technical attack, defense and countermeasures practiced by students in this type of exercise, as well as their transformation into deep automated skills, up to the stage of perfected motor skills, is the object of this study and an attractive challenge for the karate lessons held in sports classes of the University of Bucharest (Epuran M., 2011).



Figure 1



Figure 2

Method

If the three methodical stages (*the learning stage, the consolidation stage and the perfection stage*) are applied to the acquisition of karate techniques for the usual Kihon exercises, as well as their transformation into deep automated skills, *from a physical and technical point of view referring to Happo Kumite, the following requirements are required for the defending student:*

1. A sufficiently wide and well-suited technical skill;
2. The ability to correctly position the body according to the opponent's attack (Tai Sabaki).
3. The transition without any pause, fluid, of the body from one opponent to another;
4. Developing the speed of reaction expressed in promptly choosing the appropriate response;
5. Development of resistance in the effort mode;
6. Breath control;

7. Returning to guard (Kamae) as soon as possible after a technical execution and preparing for the next counterattack.

Mentally, the following requirements are required:

1. Keeping the body relaxed, but in a state of deep alertness, always ready for action;
2. The ability to sense the next offensive action;
3. Constant maintenance of a distributive attention;
4. Resistance to a discomfort caused by a certain pain;
5. Maintaining calm and lucid thinking as the heart rate increases during exercise;
6. Maintaining and concentrating Ki (vital energy) in the lower abdomen (Tanden).

For the attacking student, from a physical and technical point of view, the following requirements are necessary:

1. A varied and well-acquired technical skill;
2. Correct execution of attack techniques (rhythm, precision, speed, Kime as explosive force);
3. The development of endurance in the effort regime;
4. Correct assessment of combat distance.

Mentally, the following requirements are required:

1. Maintaining a calm but alert and goal-oriented spirit;
2. Maintaining the fighting spirit;
3. Constant maintenance of a distributive attention;
4. Resistance to a discomfort caused by a certain pain;
5. Breath control and proper application of Kime.

In the initial stage, for the correct acquisition of motor skills specific to the respective theme, a wide range of methods is applied, in accordance with pedagogical principles (Enache I., 1992):

Explanation method:

- It is used in all stages of preparation. It precedes all other methods and represents the means of which, based on the teacher's logical and reasoned presentation, the student in general acquires thorough specialized knowledge, that is established along the way in the norms or requirements of his next activity. One of the basic requirements of the explanation is that it should be short and understandable to those who have to learn it.

Demonstration method:

- In short, it is said that "the way is long through teaching, short and effective through example";
- It consists in the presentation of technical elements and procedures in order to ensure a perceptive support, sufficiently suggestive to make accessible the correct acquisition of certain knowledge and skills specific to karate techniques;
- It can be used in the discipline of karate through several procedures:

1. *The procedure of direct real demonstration:*

Presents the advantage that it reproduces the concrete image of the motor action to be learned. A technical process can be demonstrated by successively going through the stages from global to partial as follows:

- The global or integral demonstration of an element or several technical procedures in combination, without explanations, providing the real rhythm required by the practical activity and in the most correct form for the formation of an overall representation, being fixed in the visual memory of the students.

- The global demonstration identical to the previous methodical procedure, but the execution being done with reduced force and speed, several times and from several angles (to be observed by all students), in order to form the clearest possible image, on the basis of the perception of the rational chaining of the component elements of the motor action.
 - The demonstration in parts, with slowed down speed and accompanied by explanations, to give the trainees the opportunity to notice more easily the details of execution and the sequence of movements in time and space.
 - The explanations that accompany the demonstration of the parts will be clear and precise, focused on the main components of the action being learned. The methodical process is used especially when teaching a more complicated technical element and when working with a collective with a more modest previous training or with limited possibilities from a physical point of view. Newly taught material will be demonstrated (rehearsed) and explained until it is understood by all students.
2. *The process of mediated demonstration* – is used for the formation of anticipated representations about specific Happo Kumite motor actions, rules and conditions of execution. Mediated demonstration is done with the help of drawings, sketches and diagrams or through video sequences.

Exercise method

It presupposes performing an activity repeatedly, active and consciously, in order to acquire a skill, a habit, and is the main means for acquiring the technical and tactical content of karate discipline (Nakayama M., 2012).

The exercise method includes several procedures:

- *The procedure of the constructively decomposed exercise*

In the case of very complicated karate techniques that require a special coordination of body segments, they must be simplified by breaking them down into parts and performed separately. The parts will then be joined close to close (step by step), until the global execution of the action in question is achieved. The constructive decomposed exercise procedure is indicated especially in the initial phase of learning. It will also be used afterwards, whenever it is desired to connect more quickly some basic mistakes found in practitioners.

- *Global exercise procedure*

It presupposes the learning from the beginning, in the global form, of a motor action. The procedure is used only when the motor action in question is simple and easy or, although complex, has a structure that does not allow its breakdown into component elements.

- *The procedure of the full exercise under the conditions of additional efforts*

It is specific to the stages of consolidation and refinement, to chisel the technical karate execution and improve their quality base. Global training is done with strength, speed and coordination, scaled up to the actual demands during combat.

Practical method

The defender student stands at the center of a circle in Kamae position. The radius of this circle of eight equally separated attackers is approximately 2 meters (Fig.3). There is no set order for attacking. Nevertheless, the level and technique used must be mentioned before each attack. As soon as the attack is executed he must quickly return to his initial position. One attack each time is the rule. As soon as the attacking students notice the defender has executed his counter attack with Kime, they attack successively without stopping so that the defender is not given any chance to pause.

The defender must not be overwhelmed. He must always keep one foot at the center of the circle and move his body swiftly (Fig.4). He will maintain his composure against the next attack, the

body relaxed, the Ki concentrated in the Tanden and fully alert. He will execute his movement of Tenshin or Tai Sabaki according to the technique and position of the attacker (direction and mutual distance) and with an optional block, counter-attacks immediately, then quickly resumes the position Kamae for the next attack.

To avoid the hazard of being winded, special attention must be paid to the rhythm of breathing as this will greatly influence physical endurance and self-confidence. Confronting an adversary, even under conditions of compliance with predetermined rules, the student begins to get used to his reactions, feel him and decode his intentions more quickly. The themed exercise rounds are scheduled around the middle of the lesson (two-three rounds between 30 seconds and 2 minutes for each student) and are supervised by the teacher, who intervenes every time he notices serious mistakes in execution or exceeding the limits in the application of certain procedures, which could cause some trauma to the students participating in the lessons. For other minor observations, the break between exercises will be used (Kanazawa H., 2023).



Figure 3



Figure 4

Results

In performance of the Happon Kumite during physical education lessons at the University of Bucharest, the students will improve their motivation, the coordination of mind and body, timing, balance, agility, endurance and fluidity of movement between techniques (Bompa T., Buzzichelli C., 2021). To avoid the hazard of being winded, the students will also learn how to give special attention to the rhythm of breathing as this will greatly influence physical endurance and self-confidence.

Conclusions

Because Happon Kumite involve the use of the whole body, these movements are an ideal form of physical exercise. They can be learned first individually and after that, practiced in groups of physical education classes by students – young, old, male or female. With this kind of exercise, the physical educational lessons will be more attractive and the progress of the students of University of Bucharest will be notable. Efficiency is acquired by practise. This important point should not be forgotten.

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