



The Historical March of The Development of Kendo from The Middle Ages to Modern Times

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Abstract

Study Purpose. highlighting the origins of the sport's philosophy. Studying the development of the sport of kendo across different historical periods and its adaptation to societal and cultural changes. Identifying the establishment of the most prominent organizations and federations that contributed to its development, and exploring the sport's basic tools and rules and its most prominent championships.

Materials and Methods. The historical approach was adopted in studying the historical process of the development of kendo, as it is appropriate to the nature of the problem. The information has been simplified and presented in a sequential manner that presents the development of the sport of kendo, starting from the origins of its philosophy, its origins, and the development of its equipment and basic rules, in light of the cultural and social changes from the Middle Ages to the modern era, relying on several historical, cultural, and sporting scientific references related to the sport of kendo, including books and research articles, Official documents and data are available on the official websites of the International Kendo Federation.

Results.

The integration of women into this sport progressed slowly, as kendo was traditionally viewed as a male-only activity for many years. This perception may be attributed to the cultural traditions of Japanese society, which played a significant role in the development of kendo and its status as a martial art rooted in historical battles.

Conclusions. The sport of kendo has been shaped by various traditional philosophies, concepts, and principles that represent the culture of Japanese society. These influences include samurai traditions, Zen Buddhism, the values of bushido, and the principles of kenjutsu. As a result, kendo has evolved from a mere martial art into a philosophical system that encompasses physical, mental, and spiritual development.

Keywords: Traditional Martial Arts, Kendo, Sports Cultural Heritage.

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Introduction

Human knowledge has no limits, and in our rapidly fragmented world, in which technology often takes center stage, it is necessary to stop and appreciate the rich history, and sports history is rich in experiences, events, and theories that contributed to the formation of sports and athletics in the form they have reached now.

The history of sports goes beyond simply recounting events and statistics; it involves examining the changes that have occurred, understanding their causes, and identifying the characteristics of their development. To gain a clearer and more profound understanding of sports and their evolution, it is essential to explore the origins of these games, the historical context in which they arose, and the social changes that have influenced their growth (Saja, 2022).

Sports have a role in the progress of societies (Salam, 2021). They point out that sports are an essential element in the development of society and are a real phenomenon that works to educate individuals and develop them physically and intellectually. It is also mentioned that sports as a human activity began to expand and branch out. Due to the increasing growth, interest in it is a measure that reflects the extent of countries' progress (Mohammed, 2021).

Kendo, which translates to "the way of the sword," is one of the traditional Japanese martial arts. It is a sport that has not only withstood the test of time but has also evolved from its ancient origins in Japan into a beloved global sport enjoyed in many countries (Victoria, 2011).

Today, Kendo represents a worldwide phenomenon. (Saba, 2022) indicate that combat sports have historical and cultural importance, as they are considered a tradition and cultural heritage. Every society has its own culture, values, and inherited customs that constitute its identity, so it must be preserved.

Kendo is characterized by the fact that it combines artistic and spiritual elements. Wooden swords similar to real swords are used. It aims to develop physical and mental skills and uplift the spirit. It also combines physical fitness, mental focus, and the morals of samurai warriors. Despite its cultural importance, its impact on personal development, and its role as a competitive sport, it remains anonymous in many societies, because historical studies in the field of sports are among the studies that play a vital role in building a comprehensive understanding of sports games and activities and provide a vision of how sports develop over time and how they interact with changes and societal, educational, and political systems, and they also explain the impact of this development on different societies and cultures. Although kendo is one of these sports, few academic historical studies have dealt with it with comprehensive research and investigation. Therefore, the historical path of the development of this sport within its successive eras was studied in the hope of igniting a deeper appreciation for the rich heritage of this martial art and its cultural importance in societies.

It may provide a comprehensive understanding for those interested and researchers, and serve scientific and cultural knowledge to keep pace with the wheel of scientific progress and promote the practice of kendo in different societies. With all that was mentioned, there remains a deficiency in documenting historical events, as the written facts do not necessarily have to be final, as there is at different stages of history what is buried that is not mentioned and written down, for various reasons that may be social, political, or economic.

Includes the purpose of the study. highlighting the origins of the sport's philosophy, Studying the development of the sport of kendo across different historical periods and its adaptation to societal and cultural changes. Identifying the establishment of the most prominent organizations and federations that contributed to its development, and exploring the sport's basic tools and rules and its most prominent championships.

Materials and methods

The historical approach was adopted in studying the historical process of the development of kendo, as it is appropriate to the nature of the problem. The historical method is a collection of past data and an objective evaluation and provides an interpretation of the facts and events that occurred in the past, which contributes to drawing up systematic plans for the promising future. The information has been simplified and presented in a sequential manner that presents the development of the sport of kendo, starting with its philosophy, origins, and the development of its equipment and basic rules, in light of cultural and social changes from the Middle Ages to modern times, relying on several historical, cultural, and sporting scientific sources related to the sport of kendo, including books and research articles. And official websites, such as international kendo federations.

The origins of kendo philosophy

The influence of samurai culture on kendo is profound, as (Musa, 2020) indicates that every day, there are new experiences that need to be discovered and a philosophy that requires a deeper understanding.

To fully understand the development of Kendo, it is necessary to delve deeply into the rich history of samurai traditions, as this is the era in which Kendo appeared, and its origins go back to ancient Japan, where it appeared as a form of training for samurai warriors in feudal Japan, it appeared as a form of training for samurai warriors in feudal Japan, who were trained to use Japanese swords called (Nihonto) in combat, so the samurai developed a deep appreciation for the principles of the swordsmanship (Alexander B. , 2012).

In ancient Japan, the samurai were an elite warrior class who wielded great power and influence. They followed a strict code of conduct known as bushido, which emphasized loyalty, honor, and self-discipline (Oleg, 2011).

The sport of kendo, known as Kenjutsu at that time, was an essential part of the education and training of the samurai. Kenjutsu which means (the art of the sword), focuses on developing the skills of using the sword in combat and includes many techniques, strategies, and philosophies related to the sword. Samurai warriors trained in the art of kenjutsu since childhood to master swordsmanship in battle (Teruo, 2015).

During Japan's medieval period 1200–1600 known as the Sengoku Period, wars became more frequent and intense. This led to greater emphasis on the importance of martial arts, including kenjutsu. Samurai warriors engaged in regular practice and training, honing their skills and expanding to improve their techniques (Alexander B. , 2012).

Over time, kendo became more than just an integration of skill techniques as it developed into a comprehensive system that included a strong philosophical foundation, and the concept of *kisemi*, which means creating a strong presence by activating all mental and physical abilities, became an essential aspect of kendo training. Practitioners have learned mental development, which enables them to respond quickly to the actions of their opponents, and Zen principles, such as mindfulness, concentration, and the pursuit of clarity of mind, have become an integral part of the practice of kendo as practitioners strive to achieve a state of mental clarity, in which the mind is free of distractions and fully present in the moment. The influence of this Zen culture not only enhances the physical capabilities of the practitioner but also enhances a deeper understanding of the spiritual aspects of the martial art of Kendo. All cultural, religious, and philosophical influences, including the influence of the samurai culture, which shaped the spirit of Japanese society in the Middle Ages, contributed to the formation and development of Kendo as a comprehensive martial art for physical and mental training. The martial prowess of the samurai, their discipline, and the principles of Zen Buddhism contributed to shaping the techniques, philosophy, and values of kendo, making it a martial art that carries in many respects the spirit of the samurai warriors of ancient Japan.

Kendo in modern times

1. Edo Shogunate period (1603-1868)

The Tokugawa Shogunate government (1603-1868) had an important role in shaping and formalizing kendo as a martial art .

The shogunate government acknowledged the necessity of regulating various martial arts, including swordsmanship, to enhance their battle effectiveness. The shogunate government established strict regulations and methods. Uniform training for kendo, Making it an essential part of samurai education. The organization not only preserved kendo techniques but also helped popularize it among the samurai class. In addition, the peace and stability of that period allowed the development of kendo as a cultural practice beyond its military applications. Its practitioners focused on refining their skills, enhancing their personal growth, and embracing kendo as a means of personal development, The concept of Katsunin-ken encompasses not only theories of swordsmanship but also principles of a disciplined life. According to (Takahiro, 2011), these ideas were compiled in various books on the art of war during the early Edo era. Notable examples include "Hiho Kadencho" (The Life-Giving Sword) by Yagyū Munenori, "Fudochi Shin Oroku" (The Liberated Mind) by the priest Takuan, "Ken to Zen" by Tokugawa Iemitsu, and "Go Rin no Sho" (The Book of Five Rings) by Miyamoto Musashi. Many other works on swordsmanship theory were published throughout the middle and later parts of the Edo era. and many of these classic writings have influenced many kendo practitioners today, as they became the basis for the rules of modern kendo, as a comprehensive practice that includes dimensions Physical, mental, moral and spiritual.

Many sword masters were also influential in the creation of the sport of kendo we know today. In the early 1700s, a man named Nagano Mashirozaemon Kunisato of the Jeikishin Kabaji-ryu school invented the protective kendo shield called the (do-gu), which was made of leather and which was painted, in addition to the training mechanism using a bamboo sword (Shinai), and in the middle of the eighteenth century AD. Nakanishi Chaozo Kotake, a pioneer of Ithryu in the late 18th century, introduced innovative training methods and equipment, such as men's head guards and bamboo swords. During this time, competitions between schools became frequent, and fencers moved around the country in search of stronger opponents to enhance their skills (Jinichi, 2003).

From all that was mentioned, the Shogunate government played a role in organizing and developing the sport of kendo due to the awareness of the officials of this government of the importance of kendo techniques in refining the military skills of fighters, which contributed to preserving the kendo philosophy and techniques and increasing its popularity among samurai warriors. In addition, the sport of kendo has gone beyond military applications and has returned in times of peace and stability as an educational practice, as its practitioners focused on honing their skills and developing their personalities through the combat concepts of this sport. Competitions between schools also enhanced the refinement of experiences among practitioners. Updating the equipment, such as gradually replacing the traditional wooden swords called (Bokken) with Shinai swords, played a role in practicing kendo more dynamically and safely. In addition, improving the bogu protective shield provided better protection while maintaining smooth movement. Therefore, these updates in the tools not only enhanced safety but also facilitated the development of kendo techniques faster.

2. Meiji and Taisho government period (1868-1941)

During the period of the Meiji government, Japan underwent major transformations, as it was considered a period of reform in many aspects of Japanese society. This era was a decisive turning point in the history of Japan, as the country moved from feudalism to modernization it mixed with Western influences.

After these reforms, samurai institutions were dismantled, and carrying swords became illegal. This led to a decline in the popularity of kenjutsu. In 1877, there was a resistance movement of samurai against the newly established imperial government called the Satsuma Rebellion, and as a result, the art of kenjutsu was revived (Jeong, 2021).

Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) also led to increased national consciousness, and in this climate kendo again began to attract attention as a means of teaching juveniles, as it underwent reforms in line with modern educational principles and the rapid development of the nationalist movement that sought to incorporate principles Kendo is offered in several schools, and Ozawa Onosuke was one of the pioneers of this trend. Encouraging discipline and fostering a nation with strong physical fitness, akin to that of Western countries (Alexander B. , 2004).

Japan's openness to the outside world during the Meiji Restoration period was an important step in the spread of kendo globally. Through international relations and competitions, Kendo was permitted to be integrated with other martial arts practices, and it was one of the prominent organizations that played a role in this integration The Dai Nippon Butoku Kai (Great Martial Virtue Society of Japan), which was founded in 1849 and aimed to standardize and organize martial arts, set standards for training and classification of these Japanese arts, and provided a unified platform for practitioners from different schools and styles to meet, exchange knowledge and compete, and the sport was recognized as a sport. Kendo, along with other martial arts such as judo and karate, is an integral part of the martial arts of this organization (Alexander B. , 2012). In the same year, Nitobe Inazo's famous treatise, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, was published in English, which presented the culture and philosophy of the samurai scientifically to the whole world (Hiroshi, 1997).

The tournaments held in Butokukai were not competitive events designed to determine the champion, although they were conducted on a three-point system, winning and losing in tournaments was not seen as a symbol of the true skill of kendo fencers, although they were consistent with the concepts of Hanshi and Kiyoshi, this means that the kendo fencers obtained the highest ranks in the classification system, and the match lasted for over than 10 minutes. Kendo was also adopted in the Meiji era as part of the physical education curricula of Japanese schools, Competitions were organized to enhance student participation, and their role extended beyond just improving students. physical fitness. Rather, it also contributed to strengthening discipline and building character, as the sport of kendo was considered a tool for cultural education due to its philosophy of promoting traditional Japanese values (Yasuhiro, 2018).

From the above, we find that the growth and spread of the sport of kendo ensured its preservation and continuity and contributed to the establishment of administrative bodies that could represent the rights of kendo practitioners. These bodies played a vital role in setting standards, organizing tournaments, ensuring fair play, and adhering to the traditional values and principles of the sport. And gradually the sport Kendo is recognized outside the borders of Japan, as its practitioners participate in international events and festivals, which had an impact on the development of the sport of kendo. Its practitioners participated in international events and festivals, which had an impact on the development of the sport of kendo, and the development of a more diverse and adaptable martial art form.

The changes in Japanese society in the Meiji era brought an emphasis on the sportsmanship and etiquette of kendo, as the focus on respect, discipline, and proper behavior became an integral part of the practice of kendo, and this transformation highlighted the kendo values of personal growth, moral development, Mutual respect between practitioners, going beyond its military origins and aligning it with broader societal values, and traditional techniques were merged with modern practices to suit societal changes. The integration of some martial arts techniques into military training and educational reforms led to the transformation of kendo into a more accessible and strategic martial art, and discipline. These amendments not

only ensured the preservation of the sport of kendo, It also paved the way for its continued development and global recognition in later eras.

Kendo in the twentieth century

1. Internationalizing the sport of kendo

In 1912, the Nippon Kendo Kata Organization was founded, and its purpose was to bring together traditional fencing schools, and to transfer the technique and knowledge of the Japanese sword to future generations, as kendo training became more practical through its reliance on bamboo swords.

In 1919, the terminology that had been relied upon was changed. In the sport of kendo, such as replacing the term bujutsu with the term budo and the term kenjutsu with the term kendo, this change emphasized the educational and spiritual aspects of kendo rather than Technical or competitive aspects only (Victoria, 2011).

In 1917, the ranking system was adopted in the sport of kendo, which starts from 1 dan and ends with 5 dan. In 1937, ranks above 5 dan were recognized, and on this basis, the classification system adopted by Butokakai, starting from 1 dan and ending with 10 dan. The rank tests assessed both practical skills and theoretical knowledge of concepts such as ideals and ideology relevant to sword fencing (Yasuhiro, 2018).

For several years, the sound of striking bamboo and the loud cries of kiai were absent in Japan due to the official ban on kendo and other budo arts, although secret sessions were held. The Manchuria Incident of 1931 marked an important stage in the revival of kendo, as Japan's seizure of Manchuria served as an announcement. On strengthening the tendency toward military nationalism, which strengthened the principle of the nation's genius, the value of kendo began to be highly valued as one of the pillars of national education (Hiroshi, 1997).

In May 1948, kendo competitions were held in Tokyo. The Shinai sword used in the competition differed from the traditional Shinai sword. It was made up of four segments and was divided into 32 segments in the upper third, 16 segments in the middle third, and eight segments at the closest end. To the first, the bamboo was wrapped with a leather sheath similar to the sheath of the Fukuro Shinai sword in the eighteenth century, and the protective equipment was similar to that used in Western fencing.

Practitioners wore shirts and pants instead of the traditional kikuji and Hakama. Matches were conducted on a designated court. A time limit was enforced, with the player who scored the most points declared the winner. Penalties were imposed for violations, physical clashes (Teatari) were not allowed, and the matches were officiated. Three referees, as is the case with kendo today.

In September 1949, the Tokyo Kendo Club was founded to revive kendo as a sport suitable for Japan's post-war democratic society. The Shinai Kyogi competition was introduced, which focused on the sporting aspect of kendo (Alexander B. , 2004).

Women's participation in kendo began in Japan after World War II (Katherine, 2015).

Following Japan's defeat in World War II and during the Allied occupation, kendo was temporarily banned. However, it was revived in 1952 with the establishment of the All Japan Kendo Federation (AJKF). Since then, kendo has become a popular sport practiced by people of all ages, and many view it not just as a sport but as a way of life (Alexander B. , 2004).

Kendo is recognized as one of the Japanese martial arts disciplines by the International Martial Arts Federation (IMAF). This organization was founded in Kyoto in 1952, shortly after World War II, and is the first international body dedicated to the promotion and development of martial arts around the world (Kanno, 2009).

The inaugural All Japan Kendo Championship was held in 1953 and was won by Sho Sakakibara (Alexander B. , 2012). Over time, kendo gained global popularity as Japanese culture spread further throughout the world.

In 1970, the International Kendo Federation (IKF) was founded during a meeting of representatives from 17 countries and regions in Tokyo to promote goodwill for the sport through the global dissemination of kendo sport (Alexander B. , 2004).

The federation is considered the central authority for kendo practitioners around the world, and is responsible for organizing the World Kendo Championship every three years, holding international seminars, supporting the development of the federation's infrastructure in developing kendo countries, and exchanging information on ways to advance this sport (Alexander B. , 2004), its name was changed from IKF to FIK, and since its founding there were 17 countries and regions affiliated with it, and by June 2024 the number reached 64 countries and regions (International Kendo Federation).

We infer from the historical narrative that the integration of kendo into traditional martial arts organizations preserved the transfer of knowledge of sword arts and techniques to future generations, and this was a strengthening of kendo as a traditional martial art. We also find that kendo has undergone changes in nomenclature and the establishment of a rank system in classification. Which reflected the fusion of educational, spiritual, artistic, and, competitive aspects. Kendo also witnessed a development in its equipment, which was similar to Western fencing equipment. This is an indication of its influence by other cultures, and the merging of Japanese culture with different cultures. Likewise, the establishment of the Tokyo Kendo Club, which was appropriate to the needs of the democratic society after the war, was a turning point for the sport of kendo from being a martial art to a mass sport, in addition to the establishment of the International Kendo Federation. It had a significant impact on the internationalization and promotion of this sport globally as a competitive sport subject to specific rules and laws, (Musa, 2020) indicates that However, the efforts made by federations to improve the level have a significant impact on developing the sport and achieving results by employing all capabilities and abilities to develop performance.

2. Basic rules of modern kendo

There are no restrictions on who can participate in Kendo, as age, gender, or disability are not an obstacle. People between the ages of 7 and 80 participate in it, and the practitioner is known as Kendoka.

The Shinai bamboo sword is used in a three-point match (Sanbon-Shobu), and the point is determined by three referees (Shinban) by raising colored flags (red or white). Modern kendo involves players trying to hit targets in specific areas of their opponent's body. Using a bamboo sword (shinai), these targets are protected by lightweight armor (bugo), strikes and thrusts using the shinai form a personal kendoka attack (Shikaki), Defense techniques (Oji) that are directed to the opponent's target areas (Alexander B. , 2012).

including these areas: (Kwangyul, 2020)

1. Head (Men-bu): This point is calculated by directing a blow to the top of the head helmet or its sides.
2. Wrist (Kote-bu): It is calculated by directing a blow to a padded and protected spot along the protective part of the right or left wrist.
3. Torso (Do-bu): A point is scored when you hit a spot on the left or right side of the opponent's shield that protects the torso.
4. Neck (Tsuki-bu): It is calculated when a spot on the helmet located directly in front of the throat is hit.

These targeted areas were intentionally selected as they are the hardest parts of the body to strike. It is not enough for the Shinai sword to simply strike the opponent, and strikes or thrusts cannot be considered valid unless the attacks are executed correctly, on the exact target area, with Controlling Kiai (Sound Spirit) and manifesting Zanshin (Consciousness).

The individual match is held between two kendo players, while in the team match, there are about three to five participants for each team.

During World Championships and Continental Championships, each team must consist of five players on each team competing in five matches. The duration of the match varies between children and adults. For children, the match lasts 3 minutes, while it lasts 5 minutes for adults. The match continues until one of the kendoka scores two points or until the specified time runs out. The match is won by the player who obtains the largest number of points during the entire round. During the World Championships and Continental Championships, each team must consist of five players on each team competing in five matches.

The duration of the match varies between children and adults. In children's matches, the duration is 3 minutes, whereas, for adults, the match lasts 5 minutes. The match is ongoing. Continues until one of the kendoka scores two points or until the specified time runs out. The match is won by the player who accumulates the highest points throughout the round. If the result ends in a tie, a new match is held and ends when one of the kendoka scores the first point. As for team competitions, the match is won by the team that obtains the largest number of points (International Kendo Federation).

From the researcher's point of view, not specifying an age for the fencer makes kendo a comprehensive sport, as it provides everyone with opportunities to practice it. The mechanism of choosing the most difficult areas of the body to hit and score points is an indication that this sport requires the fencer to be precise, fast, and highly skilled in performance. It also requires a balance between the Shikaki attack and the Uji defense. With blows being struck, there is a defense to avoid those blows.

3. Kendo tools and equipment

Kendo equipment and tools consist of the following: (Ray, 2013).

1. Shinai sword: made of bamboo.
2. Hakama pants: These are traditional Japanese loose cotton pants, designed similarly to the design of samurai warrior uniforms.
3. Kendo-gi training jacket: It is a protective jacket that covers the upper part of the body and is lined with cotton.
4. Men's head protector: It is a mask that covers the head and contains bars in front of the face. It is made of solid metal or titanium and is attached to ropes that are passed around the head and tied at the back. The protector is also lined with a piece of cotton called Tenugui.
5. Torso Protector Do: It is a shield to protect the torso that is made in a traditional way from bamboo strips, lined, embroidered, and secured with ropes.
6. Tabby socks with split toes.

In addition, each player attaches a red crosshair or white Do-him to their back as a means of identification during the match.

From the above, we conclude that kendo equipment has evolved to ensure greater safety and protection from injuries and has also achieved progress in achievement, as the design of the modern Shinai sword is characterized by lightness, flexibility, and safety in training and competition. Despite all the developments that have occurred, the sport of kendo still maintains its traditional Japanese heritage by wearing loose hakama pants, which were worn by samurai in the Middle Ages, in addition to the fact that they have become loose so as not to hinder the swordsman's movement.

4. WKC World Kendo Championships

The first WKC World Kendo Championship was held by the International Federation in 1970 in Nippon Budokan - Japan, and since that date, it has continued to be held every three years (Oda, 2024).

Although it is an official men's tournament, there was women's participation as a goodwill initiative in the team competitions, such as the participation of Solveig Malmqvist, a player with her Swedish team, who attracted the attention of the local media and the cheers of the fans during her participation. She was not the only woman, as Kazuko Nakamura from Team Canada also competed in the team competition with her male colleagues, in 1997, the first WKC championship was held in Japan for women (Katherine, 2015).

By reviewing the participation of countries in the world championships of the International Kendo Federation (Kendo Federation, official web), it was found that the number of countries participating in the men's championships has increased from 17 countries that participated in 1970 to 60 countries participating in the world championships in 2024, as well as an increase in the number of countries participating in the women's world championships from 34 countries in 1997 to 60 countries participating in the world championships in 2024. This is an indication of the growth and spread of the sport of kendo, its development globally, and the increasing interest in it in many countries to enable its players to achieve outstanding results, and therefore reflects the efforts made in promoting the philosophy of kendo and developing it as a competitive sport at the global level. Tables 1 and Table 2 show the ranking of countries according to advanced positions in the world championships for men and women, based on detailed data of participation results from the International Kendo Federation.

Results

Displaying the ranking of countries according to the advanced positions they achieved in the World Kendo Championships over its various editions, for both the men's team and individual competitions (1970-2024) and the women's team and individual competitions (1997-2024), highlighting the countries that have established their position in this traditional martial sport of Japanese origin.

Table 1. Ranking of countries according to advanced positions in the World Kendo Championship in the men's team and individual competitions (1970-2024)

No.	Countries	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Total
1	Japan	34	18	22	74
2	Korea	3	15	23	41
3	USA	4	5	19	28
4	Canada	4	5	8	17
5	France	5	2	3	10

Table 2. Ranking of countries according to advanced positions in the World Kendo Championship in the women's team and individual competitions (1997-2024)

No.	Countries	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Total
1	Japan	21	11	16	48
2	Korea	4	13	17	34
3	USA	3	3	15	21
4	Brazil	4	5	9	18
5	Canada	2	2	10	14

It is clear from Tables 1 and Table 2 that Japan topped the world kendo championships for men and women, and this was a reflection of the depth of Japanese culture and traditions

associated with this sport, which was embodied in the historical process of the emergence and development of this sport in Japan, as it was known as a traditional martial art before it became a competitive sport that was popular worldwide.

Discussions

Korea also came in second place, and there is no doubt that Korea is one of the countries that has a long history with other martial arts, which was the reason for its superiority in the sport of kendo, while the United States came in third place, and this may be due to the presence of several Japanese communities in the states, which transferred the traditions of this sport to American society, and also contributed to highlighting it and increasing interest in it and the demand for practicing it in the United States. Also, achieving advanced positions in competitions is an indication of its superiority in this sport by preparing all the capabilities and advanced training in preparing the players, as (Al-Issawi, 2019) indicates that the training process and what it includes in terms of physical and skill preparation of the players, and preparing them for competition requires great efforts so that they can perform their training duties with high efficiency.

The fact that other countries, such as Canada, Brazil, and France, achieved advanced positions is an indication that the sport of kendo is no longer exclusive to Japan but rather has become a global sport that is practiced competitively in many countries of the world, and this reflects the development of the sport of kendo in many countries of the world and its sporting superiority.

The World Championships for Women in Kendo saw female participation after World War II; however, they did not become official until 1997. This indicates that the integration of women into this sport progressed slowly, as kendo was traditionally viewed as a male-only activity for many years. This perception may be attributed to the cultural traditions of Japanese society, which played a significant role in the development of kendo and its status as a martial art rooted in historical battles.

Conclusions

The sport of kendo was influenced by several traditional philosophies, concepts, and principles that represented the culture of Japanese society, such as the samurai traditions, the philosophy of Zen Buddhism, the values of bushido, principles of kenjutsu, and the concept of *kisimi*, thus moving from being a martial art to a philosophical system that integrated physical, mental, and spiritual development. The Shaughnay government contributed to organizing and unifying the methods of kendo and preserving its traditions and techniques.

Military and philosophical books and academic studies also played a major role in shaping the rules and foundations of modern kendo. Martial arts organizations played a role in consolidating the sport of kendo, integrating it with other classical martial arts, and recognizing it as an integral part of the martial arts of these organizations. Furthermore, The formation of kendo clubs and federations has facilitated the internationalization of its sporting culture, transforming it into a globally competitive sport and a lifestyle embraced by people of all ages while preserving its Japanese cultural roots.

The change in terminology in the sport of kendo served as a reflection of its fundamental transformation in its philosophy, and the development of a classification system moved it from being a traditional martial art to a sport with educational and spiritual standards and dimensions. Also, the development of kendo equipment throughout the historical journey of this sport has contributed to the greater safety and efficiency of fencers and the advancement of the sporting level while preserving the traditional Japanese heritage. The establishment of the World Kendo Championships and the increasing number of countries participating in them reflects the efforts of its International Federation to promote and develop this sport in many countries of the

world. Japan's dominance in the World Kendo Championships for men and women also reflects its superiority and long history in this sport and the depth of its traditions and culture. In addition, the achievement of advanced positions by several countries in the world in the World Kendo Championship reflects the growing interest and the provision of all possibilities for the growth and development of this sport and the achievement of advanced achievements at the global level. The holding of the first world championship for women in 1997 was an important step in achieving equality in sports, the delay in its establishment compared to the first championship held for men reflects the social challenges the women faced in joining and competing in this sport.

Acknowledgment

The research includes a survey study that relied on scientific sources.

Conflict of interest

There is none.

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