

Sports Tourism And Karate: An Example of Adana/Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Karate is one of the martial arts sports that is practised widely around the globe. However, as with other forms of martial arts sports, it is also wrongly perceived as being wild and cruel when compared with other forms of sports. It is believed that one reason to this perception is due to limited academic research on the subject that presents the origins and philosophy of the martial arts. This paper hopes to shed a small light on this matter by providing a brief history of Karate, how it is practised in the World and in Turkey by concentrating Turkey's 5th largest city, Adana specifically.

Keywords: Sports Tourism, Karate, Adana

INTRODUCTION

Sports Tourism is defined as travelling away from home for the purpose of participating actively or inactively in any sports related non-commercial activities (Hazar, 2007). Keskin (2008) provides a similar but shorter definition: Sports Tourism is participating in all sorts of sports activities actively and inactively.

Participating actively in a sports activity refers to an individual's desire to pursue his/her sports related hobby such as skiing or scuba diving. Participating inactively in a sports activity means attending to any form sports activity as a spectator.

It could be argued that sports activities have a strong contribution to the tourism revenues of a country or a region. Countries can generate great amounts of incomes with the help of sports activities along with using it as a marketing tool to advertise the country to tourists. It also helps to identify alternative areas for different types of sports activities and help to improve local communities in this respect. Furthermore, countries could concentrate on a specific sports activity that they believe represents them most in abroad with the help of famous sports people on the given activity.

A study that was carried out by the International Sports Committee (STIC) revealed revenues that are generated through sports tourism constitute 32% of the overall worldwide tourism revenues. This constitutes more than \$150 billion in 2012, out of almost \$500 billion total tourism income in the world. The amount of tourists increased 10.4% in Seoul in 1996 where the city hosted Olympics. Sydney, capital city of Australia displayed similar pattern. In 2000 where the Olympics organised, Australia enjoyed 10% rise in the number of tourists she received. Perth, another city in Australia organised 20 different international sports events in 1 year, an achievement quite extraordinary. Lake Placid city in USA hosted winter Olympics twice and a bill-board at the entrance of the city proudly presents this fact to the visitors. Kuala Lumpur, after hosting Commonwealth Games set aside some funding to support sports tourism related activities, along with announcing a sports and recreation year specifically for the sports tourism events (TURSAB Ar-Ge Dept., 2002). Sports Tourism also contributes advertisement of the country as mentioned before. With this in mind, countries market a destination starting on regional then moving into national level. In this way, benefits of these marketing efforts could be received gradually and in long term.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Karate's Brief History

There are numerous publications about Karate in various languages. Majority of the publications use relatively new other publications as references. The main reason for this the lack of old and well established publications on the subject. This inevitably resulted some of these publications (old or new) being lack of credibility. It is, therefore, fair to comment that there is a gap in literature and any publication that seeks to explore this area further is a contribution to knowledge.

Kung-fu practised today owes its main principles to a Buddhist monk who developed these exercise like movements for the purpose of helping monks to escape from the monotonous life of the monastery they lived in.

These techniques modified and enriched by Chinese before moving to Okinawa, Japan. Okinawa was under the influence of Chinese because it is located further to main Japanese islands. Okinawans under the ruling of Chinese first then Japanese, experienced different self-defence styles. With the help of these different styles, they developed their own style, which was named as Okinawa-te.

Gichin Funakoshi

Gichin Funakoshi sensei¹ is accepted as the founder of "Shotokan" karate school and seen as the father of modern karate. Coming from a samurai family background in Okinawa, he practised Karate with then the most famous karate instructors Itosu and Azato senseis. Despite his intense training under the careful watch of Itosu and Azato senseis, Funakoshi sensei managed to continue his formal education and after graduation started to work as a primary school teacher. With the help of his background as a school teacher, he started to work on Okinawa karate in order to systemize and improve it. During this process, he shared the problems he encountered with his senseis and benefited from their knowledge and experiences. Following the footsteps of Itosu sensei, he managed to include karate to the curriculum of Okinawa Education Ministry. Special displays he organised in order to promote karate attracted the attention of Okinawa's famous people, including high-rank government and military officers. In a very short time, Funakoshi sensei became one of the foremost experts on karate in Okinawa.

Karate in Japan

Funakoshi sensei displayed his developed methods for karate publicly first time in 1906 in Okinawa-tang-te dojo². The approvals and appraisals he received from others encourages him synthesize Shorin and Shorei methods. He set eyes to Japan after his success in Okinawa and responded to the invitations he received in mainland Japan. The karate displays he performed with his students received much attraction from the public and other martial arts instructors. Two pioneers in their field he met one of these visits, Jigaro Kano sensei, founder of Judo and Hoan Kasugi, head of Tokyo Art Association recommended him to move to Tokyo from Okinawa. Following this recommendation, he moved to Tokyo by leaving his family in Okinawa.

Funakoshi sensei set Tokyo military dojo right after moving to Tokyo with the help of his contacts within the Imperial Palace. In 1922 he published his first book on Karate with the help of Hoan Kasugi. The same year he also set-up Keio University Karate Club, the first karate club in history. Responding to an invitation by the Emperor, in 1928 he made a karate display in the Palace. Continuing with the university clubs, in 1930, he set-up Tokushoku University Club, followed by Chodo, Shodei, Gokuhu, Hosei, Nihotu and Neigi University Clubs, totalling more than 200 university clubs under his instruction. In 1936, his students opened-up the first karate dojo in the world for him, naming it Shotokan. The name of Shotokan (the way of the Shoto) later on becomes the style he devised during a life-time of his work.

Four Traditional Japanese Karate Styles

Funakoshi sensei's tiresome efforts to get karate recognised as a traditional martial arts activity paid-off. Karate is now considered as one of the Japanese oriented martial art all over the world. Following Funakoshi sensei's footsteps, other Okinawan karate senseis arrived other big cities of Japan like Osaka and Kyoto, along with Tokyo. Kenwa Mabuni sensei for example set Shito-Ryu³ and Chojun Miyagi sensei set Goju-Ryu. The fourth traditional karate style that is practised world-wide, Wado-Ryu is set by Hironori Ohtsuka sensei, a student of Funakoshi sensei.

First Karate Tournaments

Japanese karate training consisted of only Kata 4 until 1940s. In those early days it was taking 3-5 years to master a kata fully. Professor Jigaro Kano, himself a student and follower of Funakoshi sensei first suggested that, like in some other martial arts, karate should also include kumite⁵. Following this suggestion, Funakoshi sensei devised different forms of kumite such as kihon-ippun kumite, sanbon kumite and jiyu-ippun kumite that later on helped him to develop free competition style kumite.

In 1954, Funakoshi sensei's students organised a convention in order to regulate different forms of karate and form an association. Following this gathering, in 1955 JKA (Japan Karate Organisation) was established. JKA's perhaps one of the most important objectives was to decide on how to regulate karate competitions all over Japan. This would have reduced amount of injuries encountered while performing free style kumite matches. When the matter was brought to his attention Funakoshi sensei indicated that he would allow a tournament organised in line with the "Karate's spirit". By keeping Funakoshi sensei's comments in mind, head of JKA's Education Committee Hidetaka Nishiyama sensei prepared a JKA competition rule book after a year's hard work and the book was distributed all over the karate schools in Japan. As a result, first karate tournament abiding JKA's competition rule book was organised in 1957 at Tokyo Gymnasium. However, at the same year Funakoshi sensei also passed away, being unable to watch the

tournament.

Karate in the World

In 1963 in France first European Karate Convention was organised. Perhaps the most important outcome of this convention was to regulate karate in Europe despite the variations and different styles in each country, along with setting-up a joint referee committee.

In 1966 first karate tournament in Europe was held. The following tournament took place in 1967 in London with an appraisal from the critics for being carefully organised. The next step was to organise World Karate Federation (WUKO). In 1970 WUKO was announced and J. Delcourt elected as the first president of WUKO. In order to finalise the details of next coming event, WUKO member countries met in Paris under France's presidency. In 1973, first World Karate Championship was organised in Japan by WUKO.

JKA, on the other hand, as a counter move to WUKO announced International Amateur Karate Federation (IAKF) in 1974. Some countries decided to join IAKF, others continued with WUKO. In 1975 WUKO organised its third World Championship whereas IAKF organised its first in Los Angeles.

KARATE AS AN OLYMPIC SPORTS CATEGORY

In 1970 WUKO decided that it was time for karate to be categorised as an Olympic sports activity. For this in, an application was made to the International Olympics Committee (IOC). However, IAKF also applied to IOC, declaring that WUKO was not the sole representative of karate in the world. After evaluating both applications separately, IOC decided that WUKO was more suitable to represent karate, hence to join Olympics. Following a counter strategy to this result, IAKF declared that it was renamed under International Traditional Karate Federation (ITKF). Their application to IOC as the sole representative of karate, on the other hand was again rejected. Appealing against IOC's decision, ITKF took the matter to the International Sports Court in Lausanne, Switzerland. The court in Lausanne ruled in the favour of WUKO on the matter. Finally, WUKO also decided to change its name and became WKF.

Karate in Adana and Turkey

Karate in Turkey started in the early 1970s. Hakki Kosar sensei is believed the first karate instructor in Istanbul that officially practiced karate. Using his background in Judo, Kosar sensei set the foundations of karate in Turkey. As being part of WKF, Turkish Karate today developed from strength to strength. A quick glance on Turkish Karate Federation's official website (www.karate.gov.tr) could give the reader an idea about this steady improvement and success story of the Turkish Karate.

According to Turkish Ministry of Sports official figures, there are 20 karate schools and 60 instructors that practice karate in Adana. 39 of these instructors are first stage (assistant instructor), 11 are second stage (instructor), 8 are third stage (advanced instructor), 1 is fourth stage (experienced instructor) and 1 is fifth stage (highest level instructor). In addition, there are 22 assistant referees, 16 regional referees, 10 national referees and 2 international referees registered (<http://adana.gsb.gov.tr>).

Karate was introduced to Adana by Huseyin Bahar and Ekrem Turkmen senseis in 1980s. First tournament was organised in 1981 with limited to Adana only. Consequent years the number of clubs participating in the competitions increased with the help of other towns such as Kozan and Osmaniye. Later on these tournaments even expended further with the participation of other cities in the region, namely Mersin, Gaziantep, Osmaniye, Kahramanmaras, Hatay, Kilis, Sanliurfa and Adiyaman (Turkeri, 2008).

Below is a list of events that are held annually in Adana:

- Southern Towns Karate Championship
- Adults-over 20s Adana Karate Championship
- Adults-under 20s Adana Karate Championship
- Cadets Karate Adana Championship
- Youth Karate Adana Championship
- Children Adana Karate Championship
- Primary and Secondary Schools Adana Karate Championship
- High Schools Adana Karate Championship

Following is an example of the championships and the courses/ seminars that were organised in Adana:

- 1985- Third Regional Karate Championship
- 1986- Adana/Istanbul Teams Championship
- 1986- First Stage Instructor Training Course
- 1986- Assistant Referee Training Seminar
- 1987- Adults-over 20s National Karate Championship
- 2000- Universities National Karate Championship
- 2001- Second Stage Instructor Training Course
- 2005- Universities National Karate Championship
- 2005- Primary, Secondary and High Schools National Karate Championship
- 2005- General Training in Karate Seminar
- 2006- Warming-up in Karate Seminar
- 2006- Kumite Training in Karate Seminar
- 2007- First Stage Instructor Training Course
- 2007- Special training Methods in Karate Seminar
- 2008- Fifth Stage Instructor Training Course
- 2008- New Competition Rules in Karate
- 2009- Third Stage Instructor Training Course
- 2009- Fourth Stage Instructor Training Course
- 2009- Kata Training in Karate Seminar
- 2009- World Shotokan Karate Federation (WSKF) Seminar
- 2010- Second Stage Instructor Training Course
- 2012- First Stage Instructor Training Course
- 2013- Instructors Training Seminar (all stages) (Turkeri, 2008).

Comparing Adana with Gaziantep

Adana will be compared with Gaziantep, a city which is located about 200 km north-east of Adana. It is believed that two cities look similar in many different ways. Population wise, for example, 2012 figures shows Adana's population about 1.8 million whereas Gaziantep's 1.7 million. Perhaps another similarity is both cities being among one of the most developed city in their region and pioneering many different activities, including karate.

Between 2001 and 2012 Turkish Karate Federation organised 10 adults-over 20s national championships around the country. Clubs and individual competitors from Adana on different levels attended to these competitions. Adana collected 6 medals in these championships and all of them were bronze. Gaziantep collected 7 in total out of which 1 gold, 4 silver and 2 were bronze medals. This performance gap between two cities even widens when the statistics were compared adults-under 20s championships. Between 2003 and 2012 Turkish Karate Federation organised 12 adults-under 20s national championships in Turkey. Adana collected 22 medals and 1 of them was gold, 10 were silver and 11 were bronze medals. Gaziantep on the other hand, totalled 24 in which 5 were gold, 5 were silver and remaining 14 were bronze medals. Although total numbers were similar, it is fair to claim that Gaziantep's overall success rate was higher than Adana. First reason to reach this conclusion is, Gaziantep's gold and silver medal numbers were greater than Adana in both categories (under 20s and over 20s). Second, there are 5,261 licensed and 517 active (the ones attend to championships) karate practitioners in Adana whereas in Gaziantep the numbers are 4,186 and 340 respectively. That means despite having less number of participants from Gaziantep attended tournaments, total number of medals they collected were greater than the ones from Adana. (<http://adana.gsb.gov.tr>, <http://gaziantep.gsb.gov.tr>).

Discussion and Implications

Although being one of the high achieving sports in the country with high success rates, Turkish Karate is still taking baby steps when compared with rest of the world. Karate is still perceived a violent sports activity rather than

being a martial arts which has its roots in self-discipline, respect to others and physical development. One reason for this could be Karate's being one of the grass-roots favourite sports in its early days in Turkey (1970s and 1980s). Perhaps, despite having very promising results in Europe and in the World, lack of official attention and support (including financial) it received from the Turkish government is another contributing factor. Public's lack of interest to Karate also worth to mention. As the author of this article witnessed on various occasions, beach volleyball or a private kick-box display privately organised in a supermarket's car-park attracts more attention than official, Turkish Karate Federation and WKF organised European Championship.

When it comes to attract visitors to the country as sports activity, Karate fails on this as well. It is even worse when Turkey compared with other neighbouring countries. For example, JKA (Japan Karate Association) Turkey is part of JKA Europe based in Belgium. A seminar organised in Belgium 2012 attracted hundreds of participants from all over the Europe whereas a similar seminar organised in Istanbul same year with an invited Japanese sensei only had a handful of participants. The situation was even worse at the European Championship that was held in Serbia in April 2013. Out of 385 competitors from 9 different European countries, there was not a single Turkish participant. There could be several reasons for this lack of interest. Without much speculation, one possible reason is lack of sponsorship. Karate in Turkey still perceived as a hobby and an individual sports activity. This makes it difficult to get sponsorship, especially when compared with some other more popular sports. Adding on top of this is Turkish Karate Federation's (TKF) attempts to dominate Turkish Karate in a rather aggressive way make it difficult for individual organisations such as JKA to organise any event without the approval of TKF. Combined with these is the lengthy and costly process of applying for a European visa for Turkish citizens makes it more difficult for a Turkish Karate-ka6 to attend such an organisation.

As stated before, history of Karate in Turkey relatively new when compared with some other countries in the region. Although in recent years there is an uptrend in the success of the Karate, some of these promising results are due to individual efforts. A long-term and a more stable achievement can only be the outcome of planned and joint effort with the Government, TKF, independent organisations like JKA, WSKF and SKIF and related other parties. When it comes to academic support for this proposed future, more work needs to be done. There are a number of insignificant individual efforts such as this study and some other limited work that the author of this article is aware of with the help of his personal contacts. These efforts should be coordinated and orchestrated in order to get better results. It is therefore, fair to comment that academic research on Turkish Karate is even far behind than Turkish Karate on the field and academics should contribute more to the development of the activity.

1sensei is a Japanese word roughly translates as tutor or instructor, although in martial arts it symbolises someone with a years of deep knowledge and experience on the topic.

2dojo means sports hall or school where the karate is practised.

3ryu means school or style.

4kata is one of the three main components of karate and consisted of certain moves and combination, as if fighting against an invisible opponent.

5kumite is another one of the three components of karate and could be explained as a controlled competition against an opponent using certain allowed karate techniques.

6karate-ka is a person who practises Karate.

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