

General Pedagogy of Traditional Wrestling: The example of Turkish people

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ABSTRACT

Background: This study generally examines the physical, intellectual, and moral pedagogy of Turkish people in their traditional wrestling. Born in the depths of the Paleolithic Age, wrestling has managed to survive in all cultures until today. This is because it tends to give meaning to expressions of physicality.

Aim: To find an answer to the questions “How and what were the pedagogical elements of these trends?” and “What can it contribute to today’s athlete training?”.

Methods: The descriptive identification and comparative methods of qualitative approach were used in the study. The researches of M. Türkmen, a traditional sports specialist, were taken as references in this study.

Results: The study was limited to Turkish peoples. In the conclusion, it was seen that traditional wrestlers, who are trained with master-apprentice training in Turkish peoples from past to present, emulate their masters as role-models. The ancient Turks, who had lived the steppe-nomadic life, had to be strong, combative, and durable by nature. They had to reach a collective consciousness as well as the intellectual and moral aspects. People who grew up with all these aspects were called “alp”, which stands for the wrestler at the same time. “Alplik”, which gives its place to Persian term “*pehlewān*” in the XII. Century, was the right of nine conditional seculars and another nine conditional spiritual world achievement.

Conclusion: It was understood that some of these pedagogies coming from the Pehlewān tradition contributed and would contribute to contemporary sports education.

Keywords: Turkish peoples, traditional wrestling, pedagogy, culture.

INTRODUCTION

As is known, ‘pedagogy’ is often described as the approach investigating behavior disorders in children and their origins. However, by its nature, this study also includes traditional cultural elements. It is historical and enthusiastic in culture and tradition. In this context, including the term *general-pedagogy* in the title was associated with the fact that the subject covers all the titles of pedagogy such as *education-pedagogy*, *orthopedagoji*, *transcultural pedagogy* and *ethnopedagogy*. Born in the depths of the Paleolithic Age of the humankind, wrestling has managed to survive in almost all cultures until today, in numerous forms. That it has done so speaks to the widespread propensity for human beings to attach meaning to expressions of physicality that, at their core, necessitate the struggle of one person to gain mastery over another (Hatton, 2011: 3). Physical culture is one of the historically formed parts of national culture and is also one of the most important tools for training a person.

To understand Turkish sports for an outsider looking in undoubtedly sheds a lot of light on other aspects of Turkish social life as well. In a study on traditional sports of Central Asian Turkic peoples, it was stated that *Buzkashi* (*kok-boru* in Turkey) equestrian game (literally “goat pulling in Persian) is the most popular traditional sport in Kyrgyzstan, while wrestling is seen as the most popular traditional sport among other Turkic peoples in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Uygur etc. These peoples express their national identity with the wrestling sport. In the entire Turkic world, including Siberia, the Caucasus, Anatolia, and the Balkans, there is no other sport that carries as much symbolic “weight” as wrestling. The feelings

inspired by the wrestling are far from being static or ordered. Interpretations of symbols and images of wrestling can, of course, be used in different ways and can be adopted as instruments in hegemonic processes and their counterparts. In fact, wrestling is used systematically in the capacity of “alp” in the creation of myths depicting the national power and in morals education, in the understanding of virtuousness, in competitions and exhibitions. Clearly, wrestling sport is a carefully-structured and public domain organization that is formed up around the social values of broad moral and political influence, rather than a change to “sweat off”, or an opportunity to manifest “natural” agonistic instincts or to express them through symbols.

In Turkic-Mongolian peoples’ sports culture, competitions in horse racing, equestrian, and wrestling, known as “Threesome Strong Games”, have importance and social norm far beyond a game and sport. Thanks to traditional male triathlon of the Mongolian peoples, “*Eryn GurbanNaadan*”, the same tradition continues to be one of the popular mass phenomena of traditional culture even today among the Turkic peoples, such as Altai, Khakas, Sakha, Shor, Telengit, Teleut, Tuva etc., who live in those geographies. Petroglyph and archaeological records show that wrestling had begun with the history of humanity, while sports history authorities agree that wrestling was the first sports format and the first organized sport in the world (Türkmen&Buyar, 2019: 160, Ilkim and Mergan 2021).

The KokturkKhaganate, the First Turkic Khaganate, was established in AD 552, a very critical period in human history. Because until then, even though the Mediterranean and Far East cultures were aware of each other, no communication could be established between them. Vast

steppes and mountain chains were preventing the east and west from embracing. However, caravans, which replaced manpower after the invention of metal stirrups and equivalent sets, managed to go across the deserts and arêtes. Thus, the East and the West established trade relations. Turkish history, of course, is older than the earliest records in Turkish (Gumilöv, 1999: 12). In this case, the Turks not only played an intermediary role but also changed their own culture, which they supposed can resist the Chinese, Persian, Byzantine, and Indian cultures. Of course, Turks and other nomadic tribes were no less capable than their neighbors. But their cultural materials felt, leather, wood, and fur, could not last as long as stone. As a result, the Turkish name has not disappeared, on the contrary, they have spread to three-quarters of Asia. Consequently, the ancient Turks took a very wide and important place in the history of humanity (Gumilöv, 1999: 14).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research articles of M. Türkmen, a traditional sports specialist, which were generated from the projects he has carried out in the last three years, in particular, were taken as references in this study. The descriptive identification and comparative methods of qualitative approach were used in the study. The research was limited to classical pedagogy in traditional wrestling among Turkic peoples.

RESULTS

To explain the significance of wrestling, to highlight the continuity between social signs, and to create a social meaning and national identity, M. Türkmen (2021b: 135) uses a mythical proposal. Coming across in almost all ancient civilizations, wrestling has taken place in different dimensions in the culture of each nation and has performed different functions with different satisfaction styles (Türkmen&Alimov, 2019). Wrestling appeared in almost every stage of social structure and life of Turkic peoples, who are among the ancient civilizations, and had an important place in the formation of art, literature, customs, and traditions. Wrestling has also been an integral part of the national, religious, economic, private and general ceremonies of all Turkic societies from Siberia to the Balkans (Türkmen & Useev, 2019: 148).

Thanks to their long-lasting studies and effort, the researchers collected traditional wrestling in the world into an encyclopedia and revealed with solid documents that 506 of them still remain standing (Mandzyak and Artemenko, 2010: II). But, they also included competitions not suitable for the wrestling format in this encyclopedia, such as matches performed with only hands, arms, or with only feet, or mas-wrestling (*mas tard'yhy*) of the Sakas or "Cockfighting / Camel wrestling" of Turkey. 27 of the wrestling styles in this encyclopedia, prepared with great effort, do not fit the wrestling format. Thus, we can say that there are around 479 traditional wrestling in the world today (Türkmen, 2021a: 136). The subject of a dissertation written up in 2018 in the Department of Coaching Education, School of Physical Education and Sports, Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, was "*Traditional Wrestling of the Turkic Peoples*". This dissertation named

"Argen Nurmamut-uluu", whose advisor was M. Türkmen, was not prepared very meticulously, in fact. Yet, with this dissertation, it was revealed that there were 39 traditional wrestling styles, previously known as 28 styles in the Turkish world. For this reason, the fact that 39 of the 479 wrestling styles in the world consisting of 195 countries belong to Turks is interesting and is also evidence of the importance Turks attach to this sports game (Türkmen & Useev, 2019: 151).

Building on the theory, the study considers physical culture as a part of a culture which is a combination of values, norms and knowledge created and used by society for the purpose of social adaptation through the physical and intellectual development of a person's abilities, the development of physical activity and the creation of a healthy lifestyle, and physical education. Physical fitness and physical development based on analysis of historical sources are manifested in a certain pedagogical process framework and tradition (Shokoufeh & Türkmen, 71). The causal influence of young children of Turkic peoples in Asian steppes on labor education is achieved through an ethnic culture that combines all material and spiritual national wealth. In the ethnic culture of these Turkic peoples, children's labor education thoughts are the focal point of the idea of being a perfect person. Contents of various traditional arts and of women's and men's education leach into physical education and leisure activities (Türkmen, 2021b: 292).

In Turks, wrestling enables one to see the competition in a different light as well as seeing it metaphorically. Thanks to this journey to written sources, it is easy to conclude that wrestling is a symbolic expression of a kind of "traditional" male authority that is being restated and reformulated within the current dominant political framework and that it is moral and intellectual, as well as physical (Türkmen & Dhanuzakov, 2019: 3527).

Traditional education culture is associated with the characteristics of ethnic life, the socio-formative and mental characteristics of a person, his family, and social life, that is, with ethnical culture in a broad sense. Ethno-pedagogical traditions are a product of the collective creativity of many generations, including experience of a traditional education culture built up over a long period of time, methods of shaping the child's personality and adapting him/her to live in a particular society. Therefore, in the period of formation of a personality, national education, familiarization with people's traditions, are particularly significant and important. Because a person lays the foundations of moral, ethical, and aesthetic culture in early childhood (Türkmen & Useev, 2020: 106).

Spiritual wealth and moral and ethical foundations of the peoples are reflected in the desire of young people to instill high moral qualities and this creates conditions for maintaining a suitable moral climate for future generations. The education process, therefore, has a continuous and multilateral character depending on social status, gender and age of the educational object. Along with advice and persuasion, the personal model has always been the most important training method. With the progress of physical development, an important role was given to the development of certain moral and voluntary qualities, such as courage, endurance, self-control, etc. Ethno-pathology

is a treasury of cultural heritage and national experience that aims and systematically ensures the development of cognitive needs at a certain level and preparation for a specific practical activity appropriate to the needs of the society (Türkmen & Okudan, 2020: 92; Türkmen & Alimov, 2019: 1392).

RESULTS

Studies to maintain and restore the various traditions, rituals and spiritual values of the national culture show that the main components of the national image of Turkic peoples are physical exercises and games. It was understood that wrestling, which requires strength and skill along with ethical values, was used not only as a festival entertainment but also as a test of people's physical and moral strength and spirit in Turkic peoples, and that it also shows the expression of flexibility, determination, and healthy spirit.

Wrestling is a national sport among Turkic peoples and it was understood that although it is not the most popular sport, it has contributed significantly to maintain the national identity of Turkic peoples such as Altai, Kazakh, Khakas, Kyrgyz, Shor, Tatar, Turkoman, Tuva, Uyghur, Uzbek, etc., who lived in the borders of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. National power myths, ethical codes of competition and exhibition which are based on Alp ideals are several cultural representations directly related to wrestling and they underline the importance of the manly power and reconciliation notions in social coding.

Traditionally, wrestling, which takes place in the social structure and life of Turkic peoples far beyond a sports format, was trained with a master-apprentice relationship. In historical places such as wrestling lodges, on the other hand, although the education system was the same, mystical aspects were also predominant. In these pedagogical systems, wrestlers did not only have physical training but also were trained intellectually and ethically. Besides, including undressing and dressing up in traditional wrestling, appearing on the scene, and the amount and distribution of the prizes, each of its movements covered national and religious aspects. However, changing the rules of traditional wrestling again and again in recent years caused wrestling to lose this idea and some of the moral rituals. These rituals that are still fresh in the minds of people over the age of 50 are also present, albeit limited, in documents and printed sources. We suggest that their lost national qualities be replaced in a way that will not make it difficult for the wrestlers to adapt to the rules of wrestling.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Man has become a human not only during the development of tools, but also in the process of continuous improvement of the human body as the main productive force. As a form of labor, hunting played a key role in the progress of mankind. A person who qualitatively acquired new skills and movements in the work process was freed from the never-ending domination of biological laws and socio-historical models were decisive in his development. With such a statement, it can be said that the origin of the sport is mainly linked to the development of forces of production (Türkmen & Şener, 2020: 439). The world of

childhood and the methods of raising children are the old and, at the same time, the new and important subject of the human and social sciences. Without knowing how a nation educates its children, it is impossible to understand its lifestyle or features of its social history (Türkmen & Arstanbekov, 2020: 96).

The study made it possible to characterize such an important component of the social culture of Turkic peoples as the raising culture of traditional wrestling. Traditional education culture is the norms and values that ensure the assimilation of the opinions aimed at a complex tradition, idea, a set of socialization mechanisms and institutions, educational tools, methods and ways, empirical pedagogical view, and the education of the young generation (Türkmen, 2019: 1108). In this context, traditional wrestling is the richest and most diverse layer of folk culture associated with the basis of the existence and protection of any ethnic group, its fundamental questions, and the preservation of its ethnical culture. In this study, traditional wrestling, presenting an analysis of the socialization model characteristic of Turkic peoples in the 19th and early 20th centuries, in our opinion, indicates that in these socio-historical conditions it has been successfully and efficiently moved and the social norm of education was benefited to some extent.

The physical culture of the Turkic peoples is based on the economic life unique to the development and continuity of the people and traditional sources with the geographical environment that nourish this life. One of the most important elements of wrestling culture, which allows maintenance of identity and bond between the generations, is attributing meanings beyond a traditional sport that has the leading value among the original games of the people. Natural conditions and characteristics of the historical development of Turkic peoples have given traditional wrestling a national identity through education. Therefore, there are special wrestling games that are different from other ethnic groups and this difference can rather be analyzed by the specific importance attributed to ritual meanings.

Wrestling, which is an integral part of ancient mysteries, "toy" (assembly, meeting or state council), "yuğ" (lamentation), and ritual ceremonies peculiar to the ethnicity, had a ritual significance in Turkic peoples. The physical aspect of the training (i.e. pedagogy) of these traditional wrestling was happening with the master-apprentice relationship. The apprentice's emulation to his master was covering also to undertake the role of the carrier of this ancestral moral understanding. Besides, myths depicted in rituals were intended to reproduce today's cosmogonic deity acts (Türkmen et al., 2019: 63).

CONCLUSION

In this era, a legendary hero, a skilled warrior, an aesthetic ideal that fights against universal evil emerges, wandering in search of glorious. Scientific and pedagogical analysis of the ethnic history and culture of Turkic people has shown that Turkic peoples have a strong educational potential. The decisive effect of wrestling on the labor education of Turkish people, children and youth was performed through

an ethnical culture that combines all material and spiritual wealth.

Traditional wrestling is the focal point of the idea of being a perfect person in the ethnical culture of this people, in their labor education thoughts and appears to pervade the content of all kinds of traditional arts, women's and men's education, physical education and leisure activities.

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