

SPORTS SCHOOL FESTIVAL: EDUCATIONAL VALUES

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Abstract: The study examines the Japanese school sports festival (undōkai) as a cultural and educational practice aimed at the comprehensive development of children—physically, socially, emotionally, and morally. The work answers the research question of what educational values undōkai promotes, based on an analysis of sources and the results of a questionnaire survey.

Key words: undōkai; educational values; teamwork; inclusivity; discipline; resilience; school festivals; Uzbekistan

The Japanese school sports festival (undōkai), is one of the most popular and important cultural events in Japanese education. This event happens every year at most primary and secondary schools. It is more than just a day of sports. Undōkai is part of Japan's way of teaching children in a way that looks at the whole child. This means looking after their physical, social, emotional and moral development. In recent decades, undōkai has also been used internationally as part of cultural exchange and educational cooperation. It has appeared in schools in Indonesia, Ecuador and other countries where teachers have adopted Japanese educational practices.

Undōkai may look simple, with teams competing in games and dances, but it is actually very structured and educational. These values include working together, being disciplined, never giving up, including everyone, getting involved in the community, and learning about different cultures. This paper aims to answer the following question:

What are the educational values promoted through the Japanese school sports festival (undōkai)?

To answer this question, the paper looks at the academic sources that have been uploaded, and a small survey conducted via Google Forms, with responses from more than 40 people. Sources give us information about how undōkai is put into practice, what it aims to do, what the results are, how important it is in culture, and how it has been adapted around the world. The questionnaire was aimed at identifying the importance of academic values and their relevance. These materials show that undōkai reflects broader Japanese educational philosophies and can also support valuable learning outcomes in other cultural contexts.

The results of the survey are similar to what is written in academic literature. They show a strong connection between the educational values of the Japanese school sports festival (undōkai) and the values considered most important by students in Uzbekistan. Although most respondents had never taken part in an event similar to undōkai, the results show that they understand the same most

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important principles – teamwork, inclusivity, collective effort, discipline, and overall development – as meaningful educational outcomes.

The literature repeatedly describes undōkai as an event that aims to help students develop physically, emotionally, socially and morally. The Japanese education system focuses on teaching responsibility and teamwork, as well as encouraging the development of good mental and physical health (Fujiwara, 2018). The same ideas appear in studies from Indonesia and Bhutan, where undōkai was used not only as a sport but also as a way to encourage people to work together, be motivated, and get involved in their community (Mori, 2019; Fujiwara, 2018). These values are similar to the results of a survey in Uzbekistan.

The literature and the survey show the same thing: teamwork and cooperation are very important. Studies show that undōkai helps people to feel more connected to each other and to their community through activities and events that they do together (Tamura, 1989). In the survey, teamwork was the most popular educational value chosen, showing that students in Uzbekistan get and like the idea that learning is better when work is done together. This shows that the values in undōkai are not just for one culture, but may be liked all over the world.

Inclusivity is another important thing they both have in common. Japanese sources emphasise that undōkai is for everyone, and it does not matter how good individuals are at sports or what kind of background is there (Mori, 2019). People who took part in the survey also said that it was very important for a school festival to be educational and include everyone. This means that students in Uzbekistan think it is important for everyone to have an equal chance to get involved and to share their ideas. This shows that undōkai can be successfully used in schools that focus on inclusivity.

The survey also showed that people understand that development is about more than just physical and emotional well-being. Japanese PE literature states that sociality, motivation and health are the most important things to focus on when teaching PE (Shiraishi, 2022). People in Uzbekistan said the same things. Festival-style events can make people feel more confident, stronger, and more cooperative. They can also get people more active. These similarities show that the way undōkai develops can be understood even in places where the tradition itself is not well known.

It identified important skills for the job, like leadership, resilience, and the ability to overcome challenges. These results are consistent with Japanese educational goals, as highlighted in the research literature. In Japan, events like undōkai are used

to build character, teach moral values, and strengthen a sense of community (Tamura, 1989).

The literature tends to focus on the positive outcomes of undōkai, but some sources indirectly hint at possible challenges. One example of this is the Japanese PE curriculum, which focuses on "disciplined collective action" and "mastery through repeated practice" (Fujiwara, 2018). While these goals are important, they can sometimes put pressure on or physically stress some training students. Getting ready for undōkai is often really hard. It needs a lot of preparation, practising, timing, and endurance. Research on the changes in Indonesia and Bhutan also says that introducing undōkai takes a lot of time, coordination and effort from teachers, which can be difficult for schools that don't have many resources (Mori, 2019). Furthermore, as undōkai is deeply part of Japanese cultural traditions and community norms, it may need to be changed to fit with other countries' expectations, or to avoid making competition and discipline too important. These possible problems don't mean undōkai isn't valuable, but they show that the event needs to be changed carefully to work in new places.

In general, the results of the survey match the values shown in the literature and what the students said their preferences were. This means that undōkai, or a similar event adapted for local schools, could provide a useful support for educational goals in Uzbekistan. But this will only work if we are careful to manage cultural differences, preparation demands and inclusivity considerations.

This paper reviewed the benefits of Japanese school sports festivals (undōkai) for education and assessed their value in Uzbekistan. This was done by studying relevant literature and conducting a small survey. The findings show that undōkai is a way of life that values teamwork, inclusivity, discipline, perseverance, overall development and community engagement. Students in Uzbekistan consider these values to be just as important, although there are cultural and structural differences between the two education systems.

Research shows that undōkai is a well-designed educational programme. It combines three things: exercise, moral development, and teamwork. It also encourages community participation. All of these things fit closely with Japanese educational principles, such as disciplined collective action and responsibility. The survey results clearly show that people believe cooperation, communication, resilience and inclusive participation are all important parts of meaningful learning experiences.

The difference between the two shows that undōkai is not a tradition that is separate from other cultures. Instead, it uses a teaching method that can be used in many different situations.

Participants in Uzbekistan, even those with no direct experience, identified the long-term benefits of festival-style events and were positive about adopting similar practices. At the same time, the literature indicates potential challenges including the physical demands of preparation, the intensive organizational requirements for teachers, and the need to adapt cultural elements thoughtfully when implementing undōkai outside Japan.

The study's overall conclusion is that undōkai is a good educational model for students in Uzbekistan. However, adapting this model will require careful planning to make sure that it is inclusive, safe and relevant to Uzbekistan's culture.

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