

What makes Japan favored in Budo tourism? A theoretical analysis of the authenticity of Budo tourism



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Abstract

Background: The article discusses the authenticity of Budo Tourism in Japan. Through a literature review and semi-structured interviews with five Taiwanese Kendo enthusiasts, the article identifies that Japan has the clear advantage of developing the authenticity of Budo Tourism. Since the start of the millennium, Japan has attached great importance to creating a 'Japan-branded tourism'. In 2019, a new concept of 'Budo tourism' was established, hoping to inspire more foreigners to visit Japan and enjoy a unique experience in the place where Budo originated.

Purpose: Authenticity is the critical factor that the researchers identify in whether special tourism, such as Budo tourism, could be a success or not. Understanding how authentic the tourists feel during their journey, the Japanese government, the Japan Tourism Agency or even the Japanese Budo tourism business operators could scrutinize the potential business model and value of Budo tourism in the future.

Methods: Through the semi-structured interviews, selected Taiwanese participants provided admirably consulting responses about how foreigners discern about travelling to Japan for Budo tourism. The interviewees were asked through three aspects of designed questionnaires, objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity, to clarify their thoughts on the authenticities of the current Japanese Budo tourism.

Results: Based on the interview results and the literature review, as the origin of the Budo and Kendo, all the foreign tourists interested in Budo will naturally see Japan as the prior destination for sports tourism and travelling. The annual All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai and various Budo-related activities arranged in Japan have become an 'imagined community' for all Budo enthusiasts. The objective facts and the

subjective imagination towards Japan create Japan Budo tourism's constructive authenticity. The All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai is the inevitable object for the tourists to construct their imagination of Budo and the distinctive objective tourism attractions that no other countries can replace.

Conclusions: The critical problem for the Japanese Budo business operators is creating true, actual, accurate, sacred and deeply immersed travel experiences for the tourists to feel authentic.

Keywords: *Sport tourism, Budo, authenticity, All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai, Kendo*

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1. Introduction

Since the start of the millennium, Japan has attached great importance to the tourism industry, with a heavy emphasis on sports tourism. Japan has reoriented its national industrial strategy from traditional industries, manufacturing, and trade to tourism and has actively committed itself to create a 'Japan-branded tourism' with a unique appeal (Japan Tourism Agency, 2007). In 2017, the Japan Sports Agency (JSA) surveyed consumers in seven countries (China, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, USA, Thailand and Australia) about their 'sports tourism' preferences and discovered that Budo sports, including Sumo, Kendo, Karate, and Judo, which originated in Japan, are very popular among foreign tourists. In 2019, a 'sub-project' of Japanese sports tourism development was established with a whole new concept of 'Budo tourism', which combines Japanese Budo culture with tourism, in the hope of inspiring more foreign fans to visit Japan and enjoy a unique experience in the place where Budo originated. However, making Budo tourism attractive, understanding the motivation of tourists to participate, and meeting their various potential needs remain difficult and urgent problems to resolve (Japan Sports Agency, 2020). In the previous studies, Ito (2020) noted that tourists desiring to participate in Budo tourism often expect to have 'authentic experiences' through the activities. Nevertheless, how authentic are the things tourists see and experience when they travel? Is what the tourists see the genuine daily life of the local people, or is it a modified look that is purposely packaged for the tourists? According to Cole (2007), there are positive and negative as-

pects to the commercialization of tourism. It packages local culture and sells it as a commodity to travellers, which enhances the economic benefits for local indigenous people, but may also lead to a loss of authenticity. According to a systematic literature review by Takata and Hallmann (2021), some scholars have questioned the existence of authenticity in sports tourism since 2005. However, most studies on the subject have only objectively described the authenticity of sports tourism from the researcher's perspective, whereas empirical research on individuals who actually participated in sports tourism, visited specific sports tourism destinations, and attended special sports tourism events (i.e., the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai mentioned in this paper) are limited. In other words, there are not enough personal interviews, participated observations, and first-hand studies on actual participants in sports tourism, as well as in Budo tourism, as this study discusses. This study conducts semi-structured interviews with Budo enthusiasts in Taiwan who had travelled to Japan to experience Japanese Budo tourism, with the objective of effectively investigating the direct feedback from the participants. This investigation is rarely seen or is missing in the current studies of Budo tourism in Japan, which marks the primary purpose and value of this study.

2. Theoretical Approach: the Budo Tourism and the Authenticity in Tourism

The *All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai* has a deep historical and cultural significance, as it is the most traditional and dignified Kendo tournament in Japan and is a symbolic cultural event. Kendo enthu-

siasts in Japan and overseas all consider it the highest honour to participate in this competition. However, no studies have been conducted on the authenticity of foreign Budo enthusiasts' experience after participating in the tournament. With Wang's (1999) three types of authenticity in tourism serving as the theoretical basis for questionnaire design, this study conducted semi-structured interviews with five Taiwanese Kendo enthusiasts and senior Kendo rank holders, who had participated in the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai. The intent was to explore foreign Kendo enthusiasts' perceptions of the authenticity of Budo tourism in Japan. *The Connotation and Current Status of Budo Tourism in Japan*

Japanese Budo draws on the traditional values of Japanese Bushido, which include rectitude, courage, benevolence, politeness, veracity and sincerity, honour, and the duty of loyalty. Through the practice of Budo, practitioners develop their character, enhance their sense of morality, and cultivate a respectful and courteous demeanour, which has led to the formation of a sporting culture. Currently, nine types of Budo are registered as official 'Japanese Budo' (Nippon Budo Kiogikai, 2008). *The Budo Charter*, established by the Japanese Budo Committee in 1987, states the following: Budo is a form of Japanese traditional culture that has its origins in the ancient tradition of Bushido—the way of the warrior. Practitioners of Budo develop technical martial skills while striving to unify mind, technique, and body; develop their character; enhance their sense of morality; and cultivate a respectful and courteous demeanor. As such, Budo has attracted strong interest internationally and is studied around the world'. (Original

in Japanese, translated by the author) (*The Budo Charter, 1987*).

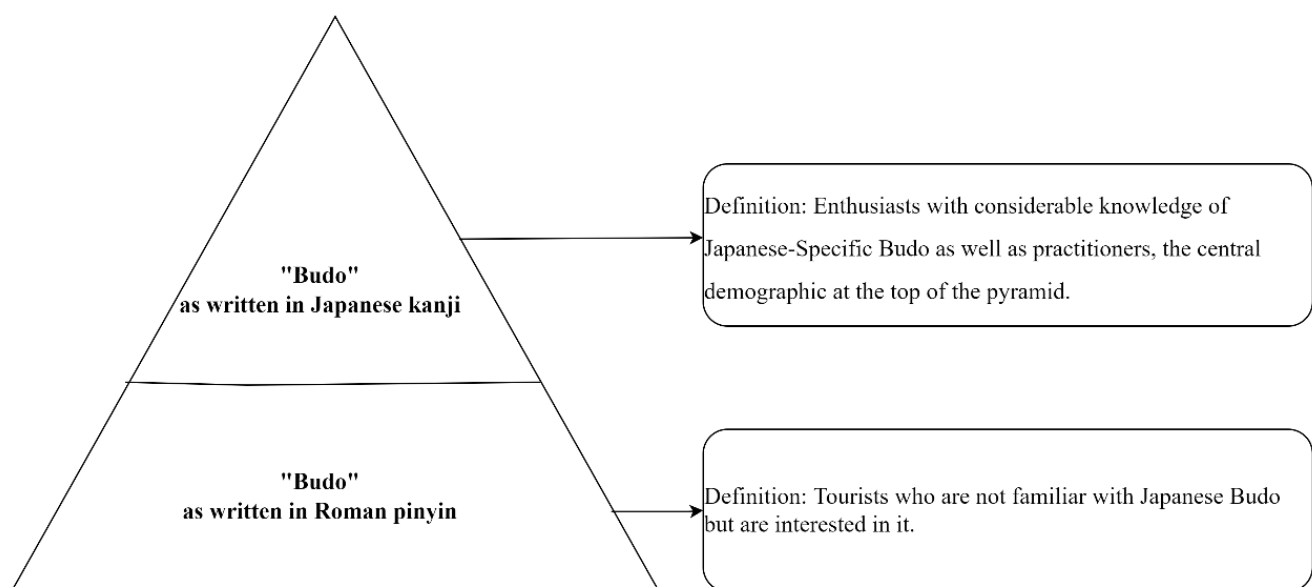
Budo is an important part of the traditional Japanese culture. With its unique and distinctive artistic charm, as well as the interaction between Japanese contemporary social civilization and the intangible cultural heritage it represents, it has developed its own special sports culture. At the same time, its ideology and moral consciousness reflect the path of Japanese history. Although the social identity of the 'Samurai' has disappeared with the modernization of Japan, the traditional spirit of Bushido has become the core of Japan's unique national culture. Nevertheless, this particular culture resource has never been effectively used to promote Japanese Budo to the world (Harada, 2020). Budo tourism is a unique sports culture that can only be experienced in Japan, where the activity originated, and it is an extremely rare combination of traditional Japanese material culture and traditional values. The development of Budo tourism not only promotes the national image of Japan and the characteristics of its different regions but also significantly increases the motivation of foreign tourists to visit Japan. While preserving the Japanese Budo culture and traditional values, Budo tourism also brings effective economic benefits to contemporary Japan (Ito, 2020).

The Japan Sports Agency (JSA), Agency for Cultural Affairs, and Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) jointly signed a collaboration agreement in 2016 to launch a policy to combine sports, culture, and tourism. Furthermore, JSA expects to make effective use of Japanese cultural resources to impress foreign visitors who are interested in Japanese Budo. The promotion policy of Budo tourism

clearly distinguishes two concepts, the word '武道' (Budo) in Kanji and the Romanised word 'Budo' and proposes corresponding target tourist groups for each. Among these, tourists who can use and understand Kanji and write '武道' are professions, enthusiasts or hobbyists who have a certain level of experience with a specific Japanese Budo and are practicing it; thus, they belong to the core target customers at the top of the pyramid. On the other hand, the scope of the other program includes social and economic development based on traditional Budo and entertainment and recreation activities. It targets tourists who use the Romanised letters 'Budo' and have not been exposed to or are unfamiliar with Budo itself but have an interest in it. The promotional policy, which is based on the Japanese tourism nation promotion basic law, and the differences between the two mentioned concepts are shown in figure 1.

Although JSA has established guidelines for the development of Budo tourism, concrete proposals and strategies for the integration of necessary activity facilities and other major resources or related services, or for how to meet the various needs of visitors during their stays are not yet provided. In other words, Budo business operators in Japan are still exploring the Budo business model or the potential Budo commercial strategies on their own. Therefore, if sports and Budo tourism are to be considered important tourism policies for Japan in the future, the primary goal should be to eliminate the doubts of Budo business operators and to provide them with clear policy directions and solid suggestions. The concept of Budo tourism is still at the formation stage, and despite being actively promoted by the Japanese Budo associations, no significant positive outcomes have been seen yet.

Figure 1
Pyramid of the Budo tourism



Additionally, there have been few academic studies on Budo tourism; however, opinions and arguments from the first-person perspective of 'Budo enthusiasts' are still missing from scholarly sources. The nature of Budo tourism from the perspective of Budo enthusiasts and their views on its current situation should serve as an important reference for the development of Budo tourism in Japan.

Authenticity in Tourism

Authenticity refers to the experience of integrating into the social environment and culture of a destination that people with a 'specific purpose' desire and appreciate when they travel. However, scholars also note that authenticity is negotiable and non-fixed; it can be assessed, defined, and interpreted by different people from different perspectives (Xie, 2006). Therefore, sports tourism scholars (Hinch & Ramshaw, 2014; Lamont, 2014; Takata & Hallmann, 2021) advocate that authenticity research in sports tourism should be conducted from the traveller's perspective to understand what type of authenticity tourists seek for better utilization and development of tourism resources. Meeting the experiential needs of tourists who participate in sports tourism and receiving their feedback also contributes to the development of authenticity theory in tourism (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). Moreover, Reisinger and Steiner (2006) suggest that tourists with a certain purpose are particularly interested in the unique culture of the place they are visiting, including the expectation of seeing a specific object of their appreciation and having a special traveling experience. MacCannell (1973) describes such tourists as 'pilgrims of authenticity'.

After the Industrial Revolution, the sense of alienation between individuals grew, and the connection between people and places in modern society weakened. Consumption has become the focus of people's lives, through which they pursue rationality and the mechanization of work, and 'culture,' as a result, has been excluded from our work, life, and even travel. Moreover, in today's tourism business model, tourists are limited to experiencing the 'front stage' and surface level of attractions. Even if they are allowed to enter the 'backstage' of these sites on rare occasions, the scenes might be staged and packaged instead of being an authentic reflection of local life.

The term 'authenticity' has been defined differently in various academic fields. The primary use of the term in tourism research is to understand and explore tourists' motivations and experiences (Cohen, 1988; Wang, 1999). Wang (1999) noted that while much of the research has focused on the nature of authenticity, in the case of travel and the tourism industry, emphasis should be on the construction of authenticity and understanding of the interrelationship between authenticity and the experiencers, that is, tourists and participants of sports tourism. In light of this, Wang (1999), drawing on Cohen's (1988) research, divided the authenticity of the tourism experience into two aspects—object-related authenticity and activity-related authenticity in tourism. These in turn can be placed into three categories—objective, constructive, and existential authenticity. The concept is illustrated in Figure 2 below:

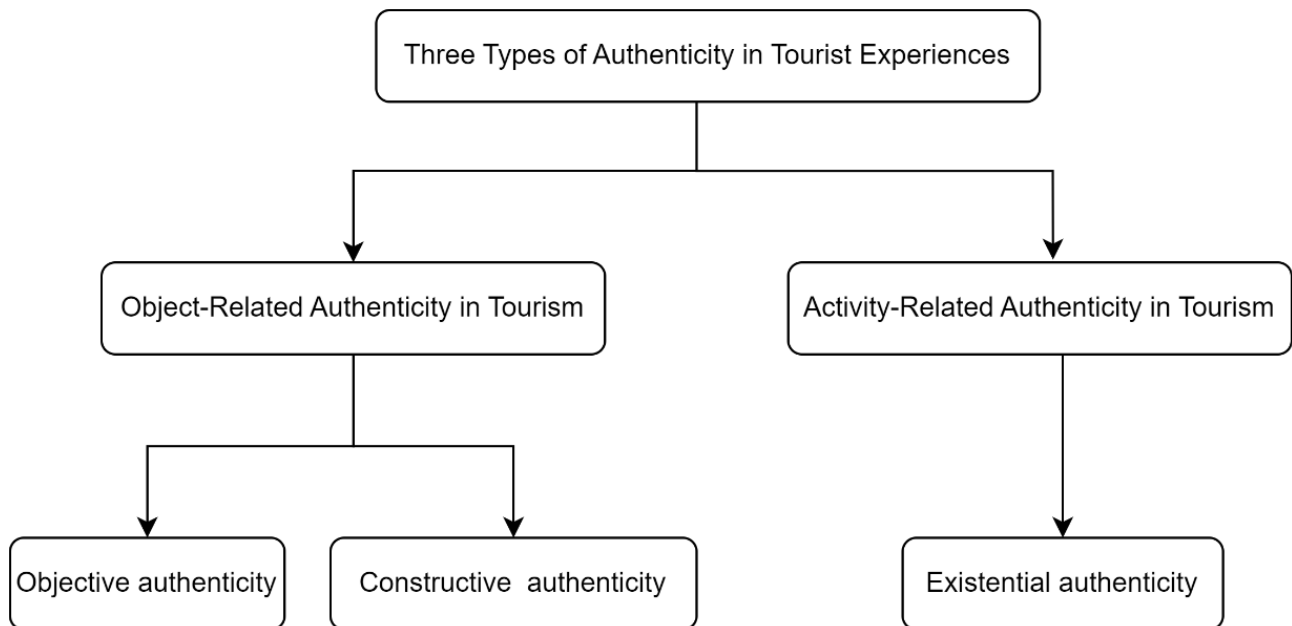
First, objective authenticity underlines the target of the tourism product, which can be objectively

verified as genuine. According to Sharpley (2018), whether tourists experience a tourism product and judge its authenticity depends on whether the product (or itinerary) allows them to actually experience the local area and whether it reflects local residents' customs and traditions. Thus, objective authenticity is deeply correlated with the concepts of local traditional culture, originality, and uniqueness.

Second, Bruner (1987) introduced authenticity under constructivism. The alleged constructive authenticity is a concept developed through social

constructionism. According to social constructionism, authenticity implies negotiability, flexibility, mutability, plasticity, fluidity, relativity, contextuality, and pluralism. In addition, authenticity significantly determines values: as tourists, local residents, businesses, governments, and even experts and scholars are involved in the experience and creation of tourism products; the product designs are tailored to the different standpoints, expectations, imaginations, preferences, and beliefs of the aforementioned stakeholders to achieve authenticity (Bruner, 1994).

Figure 2
Three types of authenticity in tourist experiences



That is, as far as the tourist standpoint is concerned, constructive authenticity is the projection of the tourist's own subjective consciousness onto the visited object. At the same time, the projection of one's subjective consciousness, the extended personal context, the subject's feelings about the situation, and the object—the object of the traveling experience—determine what is real and what is good or bad. According to Wang (1999), the quality evaluation of such tourism is highly dependent on the individual tourist's psychological assessment. From the individual's point of view, the satisfaction of their subjective feeling of 'seeing is believing' is constructive authenticity.

Third, in terms of existential authenticity, Moore et al. (2021) suggest that tourists can find their true selves through taking part in certain inspiring sight-seeing activities. Compared to regular daily life, tourists can feel more authentic and liberated while traveling: through traveling, they are free from the normality of their daily lives and can engage in 'exceptional' activities. In other words, traveling is no longer about viewing the unseen, but an opportunity to express and shape oneself and seek one's true nature. Therefore, the value determination of tourism activities that are about feeling the real existence of the individuals is different from the objective and constructive authenticity in tourism; the tourists focus on the object. Existential authenticity is not only relevant to the object but also to the activity itself. It focuses on the authenticity of the 'object' of the tourism product and the subjective experience of the tourist that is brought about by tourism activities. Existential authenticity encompasses not only exploring the authenticity sought by tourists through travel experiences but also the tourism operator's understanding of tourists' motivations and experiences through interactions with them (Wang, 1999).

Authenticity is an emerging research subject in

the field of sports tourism. Cohen (1988) suggests that authenticity varies based on the individual's experiences while traveling; thus, the exploration of authenticity can more accurately describe the meaning of tourism and help develop more recognizable tourism products. Meanwhile, Morgan (2007) identifies authenticity as a key factor that enhances tourist participation in sports tourism and in sports events, in which the 'authenticity' of participation that tourists can experience during sports tourism is an important motivation. Nonetheless, the construction of sports tourism authenticity is clearly fraught with a subjective sense of personal, social, and cultural significance. According to Gibson (1998), the uniqueness of sports tourism lies in discovering travellers' reason for choosing to pursue or engage in a particular sport as the purpose of their trips. Do people who are passionate about sports or sports events become pilgrim-type tourists due to their strong pursuit of authenticity in sports tourism? Determining whether sports tourism satisfies traveller's requirements for authenticity can adequately clarify the motivations of participants in sports tourism. For example, according to Lamont (2014), cycling tourists who participate in the cycling tours of Le Tour de France have a clear participatory purpose and a much higher demand for product portfolio and authenticity than the average tourist. Therefore, the design of sports tourism products should focus on the authenticity of the experience that sports enthusiasts want in a product portfolio. Similarly, Lu et al. (2015) argue that tourism products need to be designed with a focus on both objectives—constructive and existential authenticity—as they will help to build richer and more personalised stories of the place.

All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai

The All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai, also known as the Kyoto Taikai, has been held in Kyoto, Japan,

every May since 1895, for over 120 years. About 3,000 Budo enthusiasts participate in the event every year, marking it as the largest Budo exchange event in the world (Dai Nippon Butoku Kai, 2022). Initially held by the Dai Nippon Budokai, the governing institution of Japanese martial arts, the tournament was developed for a Kendo event, with various other martial arts being included later. In early 1895, the tournament was held in a temporary dojo at the site of the former exhibition hall of Heian Jingu Shrine. In 1897, the event was relocated to the Kyoto City Budo Centre, and in 1943, it was suspended due to the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War. In 1946, the Dai Nippon Budokai was disbanded, and in 1952, the All Japan Kendo Federation, the successor to the Dai Nippon Budokai, was established. It organized the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai 10 years later, which became the first national Kendo tournament after the war and has continued until today. The initial purpose of its establishment was to foster friendship among Kendo enthusiasts from across Japan through competitions and to provide training sessions in which they could practice with each other. Due to the large number of applicants each year, their eligibility to attend is strictly regulated. The details of the requirements of Dan-grade, title (Shogo) in Kendo and two important regulations related to the selection of research interviewees are as follows:

- (1). the participants must be registered with the All Japan Kendo Federation; have at least 6-dan in Kendo, Iaido, or Jodo; and hold the titles of Renshi, Kyoshi, and Hanshi.
- (2). Secondly, Participants who are registered with

foreign Kendo federations can apply, even without holding the titles issued by the All Japan Kendo Federation, if they have at least 6-dan in Kendo, Iaido, or Jodo. However, priority will be given to those recommended by federations of member countries.

Those who have the title designated by the All Japan Kendo Federation or of a foreign Kendo federation shall be treated the same as those qualified in (1); however, those who do not have the title shall be treated as Renshi. Therefore, the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai is a symbolic event for Budo enthusiasts in which they can explore the authentic experience of foreign Budo practitioners, thus demonstrating the authentic appeal of Budo tourism.

3. Method

This study was conducted through semi-structured interviews. The subjects were selected from the recommended list published by the Republic of China Kendo Association from 2016 to 2019 and those who had participated in the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai at least twice. Five Taiwanese Kendo enthusiasts were interviewed, four of whom were male and one of whom was female. Their information is shown in Table 3 below.

As the eligibility to attend the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai mentioned in the last section, the participants must have at least 6-dan in Kendo and Renshi titled hold. Considering this strict restriction, all the Taiwanese participants who had been to the Taikai between 2016 and 2019 are included. Secondly, the article mainly focuses on the attraction and authenticity the Japanese government provides to foreign Budo enthusiasts.

Table 1
Requirements of the Dan-grade within the international Kendo Federation

Dan-grade	Requirements	Age limited
Shodan (First Dan level)	Ikkyu (first Kyu level)	At least 13 years old
Nidan	At least 1 year of training after receiving Shodan	
Sandan	At least 2 years of training after receiving Nidan	
Yodan	At least 3 years of training after receiving Sandan	
Godan	At least 4 years of training after receiving Yodan	
Rokudan	At least 5 years of training after receiving Godan	
Shichidan	At least 6 years of training after receiving Rokudan	
Hachidan	At least 10 years of training after receiving Shichidan	At least 46 years old

Source: organized by the author.

It means this sample chosen strategies for choosing all qualified Taiwanese Kendoists provide strong foreign aspects to discuss the authenticity and motivation of participating in the Budo tourism activities. The Taiwanese interviewees' opinions are highly representative, considering the colonial background and the historical connection between Taiwan and Japan.

The semi-structured interview outline was designed according to Wang's (1999) concept of three authenticity categories—objective, constructive, and existential authenticity—and raised questions and sub-questions about the respondents' motivations for participating in the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai, expectations before participating in the tournament, feelings after participating in the tournament, subjective and objective experiences of the tournament, and whether they felt 'authenticity'. To ensure the anonymity of the respondents, the date of the interview will not be indicated

when quoting the respondents in this article. At least one week before the interview, the researcher provided the instructions and outline of the interview to the respondents so that they could prepare adequately for the interview. The interview was conducted in a semi-open-ended manner as described above, with the researcher and the respondents starting the conversation by asking the questions listed in the outline, but the content was not limited to the topics specified within, allowing the respondents to talk freely about relevant issues. Compared to structured interviews, semi-structured and semi-open-ended interviews can present a more objective picture of the respondent's comprehensive feelings and provide the respondent with greater latitude to respond in terms of time and scope. All face-to-face interviews were conducted after the annual Taikai held in Kyoto in May. All participants agreed on the terms of the interview, and informed consent

Table 2

Shogo (title) in Kendo

Shogo (Title)	Grade required	Other criteria
		Those who have practiced and succeeded to show the principle of the sword and have good knowledge of Kendo.
Renshi	Rokudan	After receiving Rokudan, one must wait 1 or more years, pass screening by the Kendo organization, receive a recommendation from the regional organization president then pass an exam on Kendo theory.
		Those who have mastered the principle of the sword and have excellent knowledge of Kendo.
Kyoshi	Renshi Shichidan	After receiving Shichidan, one must wait 2 or more years, pass screening by the Kendo organization, and receive a recommendation from the regional organization president, then pass an exam on Kendo theory.
		The highest of all. Those who have mastered and completed the principle of the sword, have outstanding knowledge of <i>Kendo</i> and excellent personality with a virtue.
Hanshi	Kyoshi Hachidan	After receiving Hachidan, one must wait 8 or more years, pass screening by the Kendo organization, receive a recommendation from the regional organization president and the national Kendo organization president, then pass an exam on Kendo theory.

Source: organized by the author.

forms were signed by all the participants before conducting the interview. The interviews took from 45 minutes to 120 minutes, with around 100 minutes on average. Additionally, questions were added and deleted as appropriate, depending on the context of each interview and care was taken to avoid leading or suggestive questions. All results were recorded, transcripts were sent back to the interviewees to confirm the corrections; the data were analyzed using the 'investigator triangulation' method within the multivariate testing approach; respondents were asked to help correct the conceptual wording and confirm the correctness of the researcher's assessment in addition to the researcher's analysis. At least one expert Kendoist joined the triangular to analyze the data as the objective third party rather than respondents and re-

searchers. At the same time, the first author of the article is also an experienced professional Kendoist, who can identify the key elements and findings of the research. After presenting the results of the study, the respondents were asked to confirm the answers again to improve the validity of the data. An example of the interview design is shown in Table 4 below:

This study highlights the authenticity of Budo tourism and how it can be constructed and defined through the establishment of authenticity. In the case of constructivism, reality is multifaceted and complex and is not as explicit as natural laws or generic propositions. Conversely, authenticity can appear as multiple and varied depending on the interpreter's interpretation of a particular event (Appleton & King, 1997; 2002; Wright, 1997).

Table3

Background Information on the Interviewed Taiwanese Kendo Enthusiasts

Interviewees	Title	Grade	Number of times participated in the Taikai
A	Hanshi	8-Dan	4
B	Kyoshi	7-Dan	3
C	Renshi	6-Dan	4
D	Renshi	6-Dan	2
E	Renshi	6-Dan	3

Table 4

Three major interview outline of the semi-structured interviews

Questions	Purpose of the question
Why did you participate in the tournament held in Japan particularly?	To collect the relevant connotation terms of objective authenticity.
What is the difference between competing in Japan and Taiwan?	To collect the relevant connotation terms of existential authenticity.

Many *Budokuden* were also built in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial rule. Currently, Kendo tournaments and practices in Taiwan are also held at the *Budokuden*. Is there any difference between a tournament and practice at the *Budokuden* in Japan?

To collect the relevant connotation terms of constructive authenticity.

*original in Chinese, translated by the author.

Constructivists emphasize the need for researchers to conduct their research in natural contexts to have the opportunity to discover the experiences or perspectives of their subjects and to learn more about how individuals interact with their environments and are influenced by society, culture, or language in each case. Because social constructivists are concerned with human experience, their research method presents what the subjects underwent; that is, the subjects' experiences, perceptions, or thoughts about the people, events, and objects surrounding their lives

(Willig, 2013). For this reason, this study adopted a semi-structured and open-ended interview method to obtain the complete experience and feelings of the respondents about Budo tourism in Japan. Furthermore, follow-up questions were asked and flexible outline adjustments were made during the interview according to the responses of the research participants. According to Picken (2018), research and interviews conducted in natural contexts can be flexibly adapted and the data collection methods can be changed, if the researcher perceives that

some of the observations during the interviews are worth exploring with the feedback provided by the respondents.

4. Research findings: An analysis of the authenticity of Taiwanese Budo enthusiasts' feedback on Budo tourism in Japan

Representation of Objective Authenticity in Budo Tourism

Objective authenticity underlines the need for objective criteria for the 'authenticity' of tourism products. This concept focuses on the information or physical objects that tourists acquire during the tour, such as artifacts, food, clothing, or rituals. There are two criteria for determining the authenticity of a tourist product after experiencing it: whether it is indeed a local experience and created by local people according to their customs and traditions. Objective authenticity is deeply associated with concepts such as local traditional culture, originality, and uniqueness (Sharpley, 2018). Considering this principle, it is clear that foreign Budo enthusiasts—in this case, the Taiwanese Kendo enthusiasts interviewed—are in no doubt about the 'objective' existence of Budo tourism in Japan.

'Why come to the Butokuden in Japan? Because this is a sacred place for me and I must come on a pilgrimage, and anyone who has practiced Kendo knows that this is where the development of Kendo began.' (Original in Chinese, translated by the author)

'Although I often practice at the Butokuden in Taiwan, I feel that the atmosphere here is different.' (Original in Chinese, translated by the author)

Considering the Butokuden in Kyoto, Japan, as a sacred place of Budo; recognizing Japan as the birthplace of Budo; and believing that all practitioners of Budo should make a pilgrimage to Japan, among other practices, are all affirmations of the objective authenticity of Budo tourism in Japan.

Representation of Constructive Authenticity in Budo Tourism

As mentioned previously, constructive authenticity emphasizes tourists' expectations, beliefs, etc., and their own psychological projections of the objects, places, and experiences of traveling, which are more symbolic in meaning. When respondents were questioned about why they were willing to travel thousands of miles to participate in the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai, the motivation on psychological dimensions were widely cited:

'This tournament has been in existence for a century; as a Kendo practitioner, for some reason, I feel that I must come here to participate.' (Original in Chinese, translated by the author)

'In fact, I no longer care about winning or losing the competitions; what I care about is whether or not I can show my understanding of Kendo to my opponent in just a few minutes during the competition.' (Original in Chinese, translated by the author)

Representation of Existential Authenticity in Budo Tourism

Existential authenticity stresses the relationship between tourists and the tourism activities. This study considers the most important activity or event to be the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai, which was mentioned

by the respondents repeatedly. In describing their experiences of the event, the respondents also expressed their emotions about participating in the tournament, how they valued the activity, and how they were touched by their participation, that is, involvement in the process was valued over winning or losing.

'Although there are 8-dan Hanshi in Taiwan, the numbers are small. But at the tournament, I was able to see the Japanese 8-dan Hanshi that I usually only know through magazines; it's like a dream come true to be able to compete with them and receive their personal instructions, which would be impossible in Taiwan.'

'After watching the Kendo Kata shown by the Japanese 8-dan teachers, I felt deeply that they demonstrated their lifelong understandings of Kendo. When we practiced Kendo Kata in Taiwan, we could only understand through the inheritance of Taiwanese teachers and not every teacher in Taiwan had received instruction from a Japanese practitioner, and many were taught in an old-fashioned way, so I always felt that what I learned from the teachers in Taiwan was only superficial.'

The representation of authenticity

In general, the interview results show that Taiwanese Kendo enthusiasts interested in the Budo are deeply concerned about the representation or reproduction of the authenticities. Based on the articles reviewed and the results of the interviews, specific types of

tourism should focus more on authenticities. Such as sport tourism or culture tourism, the success of these kinds of travel is based on the level of authentic representations and could be analysed subjectively, objectively and verifiably. As we mentioned, existential authenticity relies highly on the tourists' highly subjective and personal experiences. It is easy to understand that the relationship between tourists and tourism activities depends on personal, subjective knowledge. The Budo business operators could only try to approach the consensus. Nevertheless, on the other hand, there are things that are objective and could be seen or felt objectively. In the past, there was at least one Butokuden in the major cities of Japan. The existence of Butokuden become the center of the cities, where people learn the Bushido and social-interact with others. In 1895 the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai was established; it targeted to educate the Japanese people about the spirits of the martial arts or the Budo (Kyoto Kendo Association, 2020). Yet, 1895 was also the year that Japan started its colony in Taiwan. Numerous Butokuden were built in Taiwan as the centre of police education. Kendo became a compulsory subject that needed to learn in junior high school and became popular in Taiwanese society (Cheng, Lee & Chin, 2021). Although only a few Butokuden were retained through historical changes, their spirit and symbolism remain. The Taiwanese Kendo learner, trainer and enthusiasts all see the Butokuden as the spiritual properties of

Budo (Chen, 2013). Therefore, the visit to the Butokuden 'objectively' located in Japan is a significantly reasonable motivation for Budo tourists, at least for Taiwanese Kendo enthusiasts, to travel to Japan. Finally, through actual travel, the tourists could verify their imagination of the Budo or Kendo with the connection between subjective experiences and objective tourism activities. As MacCannell (2013) describes the behaviour of the pilgrims, they travel to places that may not be popular but have a special meaning for them. The stir and move to places different to daily life is the pathway to verify their authenticity, becoming the foundation of special tourism, just like Budo tourism (Urry, 2011).

5. Conclusion

The article concludes that the authenticity of Budo tourism could and should be the prior target that the Japan Sports Agency (JSA), Agency for Cultural Affairs, and Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) focus on. Firstly, Japan has the absolute advantage of developing the objective authenticity of Budo Tourism. As the origin of the Budo and Kendo, all the foreign tourists interested in Budo will naturally see Japan as the major destination for sports tourism and travelling. Secondly, the annual All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai and various Budo-related activities arranged in Japan have become an 'imagined community' for all Budo enthusiasts. These create the constructive authenticity of Japan Budo tourism. The All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai is the inevitable object for the tourists to construct their

imagination of Budo. On the other hand, the annual Taikai also becomes a symbol or emblem of Budo. The Budo enthusiasts, either Japanese or foreigners, see participation in the annual Taikai as the highest honor.

As the research limitation, the article provides the aspect from an East Asia country with a deep historical and cultural connection with Japan. Taiwanese Kendoists' experience provides a strong argument that Japan should use their advantages to create the authenticity of Budo tourism. However, different complex experiences might provided by the Kendo, Budo or Bushido enthusiasts from other countries. Hence, the article suggests that future research can investigate the different foreign groups' experiences of Budo tourists, especially European or American groups that are far from East Asia (not only geographically but also culturally). At the same time, the possibility of other countries creating their own authenticity of martial arts could be discussed. Such as Kurash in Uzbekistan or Bokh (Mongolia wrestling) in Mongolia; these sports or activities could be compared to Budo in Japan, and the possibility of these countries creating their unique tourism might be a great topic for future research.

In conclusion, the article identifies and suggests the following suggestions and aspects for future study. Firstly, the Japanese government should draw up laws or acts that encourage the Japanese Budo tourism business owner to better package their products, such as financial subsidies, tax deductions or providing clear policy directions. The Japan Sports Agency, Agency for Cultural Affairs, and Japan Tourism Agency are three key

government bodies that should provide operation instructions to business owners. However, the central acts and laws drawn from the central parliament could increase the authority of the policies. Secondly, from the view of the local city government, the Kyoto city government and the tourism office should realise the tourism potential of the annual Enbu Taikai. The historical and cultural advantages of the Taikai make Kyoto create the authenticity of Budo tourism that no other in the world can. Furthermore, if all the Kyoto citizens recognize this premise as well, the inner cohesion from the community can make the mentioned authenticity even more 'authentic'.

As we might say, the imagined community and the symbolism describe or explain the existential authenticity of Japanese Budo tourism. Using the words from MacCannell (1973), heading to Japan for the All Japan Kendo Enbu Taikai is as holy as the pilgrimage to Mecca for Budo enthusiasts. Thus, the critical problem for the Japanese Budo business operators is creating true, actual, accurate, sacred and deeply immersed travel experiences for the tourists to feel authentic.

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