

THE INFLUENCE OF GAMES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' SOCIAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract

The game takes a significant place in the educational process and it has a major impact on the acquisition and development of students' social skills. Depending on the teaching area where used games can be: sports games and activities, constructive games, rules, role play, games for relaxing, project activities, math games, games etc. information. In this paper we will focus exclusively on games in the area of health and physical education - sports games and activities, games used in the study of civic education and project activities in different subjects. Adoption of social skills, the use of the knowledge, skills, following the rules and regulations are an integral part of each student in order to successfully operate in a democratic society. This paper will focus on the impact of the games in three teaching areas on the development of the social competences among students.

Key words: *games, influence, students, development, skills.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The games and the activities are most attractive for students where there is a group arrangement, different views, roles, learning new skills, becoming a member, functioning as a group, spreading friendship and friendships and dealing with a problem. The enjoyment of the participants in the games and activities is often followed by a fun, positive, relaxing, comfortable and friendly atmosphere. In fact, it is the value of the game, where participants are treated with respect, have freedom in thinking and are not condemned because of it, they feel valued and believe in themselves. (Kocoska, 2003)

Every game has its structure, which consist of:

- activities conducted by the members of the group, the couple or the person
- previously set rules of behavior
- materials-natural, made, requisites, toys etc.

Today, the students' development is emphasized by an increased appetite and interest in independent work and learning how the things function, in terms of their personal development. Through the games, the student perceives the nearby environment in an authentic way. By being capable to act in the environment, to adapt it and to adapt himself to it, the student adopts and delivers certain models of behavior and by doing that he builds his identity. The games include different types of activities (sensor, motor, mental-logical, expressive) which allow the student to get appropriate cognitive, functional and affective development. The game, as a physical activity, provides many benefits for the students' physical and socially-emotional development. It occupies children's bodies and minds and give them an opportunity to leave the past and the present behind. Through the game the children get fun and development of their skills, and what is most important children are left to be children.

The game has an important educational role because through it rules are learned and applied elements of the technique of performance, implementation tactics and taking a competition as a form of proof. Throughout the game character of the student is formed, or the game forms it, and it can correct many drawbacks in his personality. The students represent micro-social group where various contacts and reactions take place caused by the rules of the game and the situations in it. (Spasija Kondovska-Sula, 1997)

The game is inseparably linked with creativity, hence we can describe it as a creative expression of the human spirit, creating activity that contains elements of entertainment, education and competition. As a game is considered the type of recreational activity through which students through fun develop their mental and physical skills. Perhaps most importantly, the game affects the personal psychological state, creating a sense of excitement and pride in their achievement. Surely, it is not a waste of time. On the contrary, free time is the time it would have to devote any of their research abilities through play and fun to learn and exercise their mind and body. (Poropat, 2011)

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

2.1. TYPES OF GAMES

The use of games in classroom is present in all classes by which the application of certain game types prevalent in certain classes according the volume and complexity of activities, rules and materials used. Games can be used in all phases of the teaching process, but depending on the type of game, duration, scope and complexity of activities. They come in many different teaching areas that can be used in different parts of the lesson, in order to implement the intended purpose. These include:

- Games for directing attention and stimulating activities for students
- Games for assessing student achievement and causing interest
- games for relaxation, to achieve a positive emotional climate in class
- active learning games for students
- combination of games and play activities

Depending on the teaching area where used games can be: sports games and activities, constructive games, rules, role play, games for relaxing, project activities, math games, games etc. information. In this paper we will focus exclusively on games in the area of *Health and physical education* - sports games and activities, games used in the study of *Civic education* and project activities the area of *Natural science*.

The sports activities offer new opportunities to learn the rules of life and the concept of fair play, which requires respect for their team, respect for the opposing team, his coach and self-esteem. The motivation of students is essential before the start of any game. They need to know if they are playing for fun, whether to develop their skills or play to win. The primary reason the same should be the enjoyment of students in it. (Kocoska, 2003)

Games and sports activities include:

- self-assessment and self-confidence,
- building mutual trust,
- development of interpersonal communication skill,
- encouragement and understanding among participants,
- acquiring skills and leading and
- extrusion of frustration and boredom. (Kocoska, 2003)

The representation of walking, running, jumping, and other natural movements in the game significantly affect healthy development and student resistance to his body to negative influences. The game develops motor skills, and mental abilities, develop attention, judgment, memory, imagination and affect psycho relaxation the student.

The critical thinking is part of the democratic style of learning curricula. The teaching methods that engage students in thinking and share ideas and opinions, engage and activate students. Sharing of critical thinking is very important because if there is no exchange of thoughts it will be impossible to hear feedback from people they led and there is no incentive for further consideration. The classroom setting must allow students to engage in critical thinking, but students that they need to operate. In order to engage in it and become effective critical thinkers they should:

- gain confidence and to realize the value of their opinions and ideas,
- be actively engaged in the learning process,

- hear the thoughts of others with respect and
- be prepared to formulate opinions and give up certain courts. (Institute)

The project activities in different subjects are usually used so that students can independently come to some information on the topic follows or already studied. They sometimes do and initiate it, but sometimes it is a task that should be met. Usually the division of roles and responsibilities in the overall project remains the desire and decision of the students themselves. These activities allow everyone to perform in the best light, depending on ability, interest, desire and talent.

2.2. STUDENTS' SOCIAL COMPETENCES

The social competence is defined as the way you use the acquired skills in relation to others. It is impossible to be socially competent and as such to function in society without adequate use of acquired social skills and knowledge, norms and rules of society. Competency includes attitude towards yourself and your feelings, and the relationship to others, their feelings and needs.

A student is socially competent if he:

- has learned the pro-social behavior (sharing, helping, cooperation),
- has developed skills that allow understanding of their environment,
- has developed coping skills in everyday situations,
- has successfully achieved their goals,
- shows positive forms of behavior and
- demonstrates the ability to control the self-centered, impulsive and inappropriate behavior (Social competence of child, 2014)

2.3. DEVELOPING SOCIAL COMPETENCES AMONG THE STUDENTS

The social competence develops along with growing, mostly in the home and through social interaction with parents, school staff, neighbors, peers. (Social competence of child, 2014) It can be broken down into the following competencies:

- **Ability for building good relation- empathy**

The empathy can be defined as the ability of identification with the other, recognition and understanding of others' feelings, thoughts and attitudes, as well as efficient management of the emotions. (Brooks, 2005) According to Marlowe, the social competence is the ability to understand their own and others' feelings, thoughts and behaviors in interpersonal situations, and appropriate behavior based on that understanding. According to the same author socially competent person should be sensitive to the reactions of other people, that is, at least to some extent to experience empathy.

- **Ability for cooperation align your goals and priorities with the goals and requirements of the group**

The cooperation in learning is defined as an active learning process that fosters academic and social skills through equitable interaction of students, individual responsibility and positive interdependence. (Jensen, 1995) In this way, students learn to choose common strategy to solve problems, make decisions and plan. (Ajduković, 2002) Given that we live in a competitive society, in everyday life, and in educational institutions, it attaches great importance to cooperation, and in large present competition. It as such often creates tension and aggression and cooperation, tolerance and a positive working climate.

The good part of the cooperation in teaching include: better success with student, his involvement in the adjusted program, greater awareness of diversity in cultures, acceptance of peers, a sense of belonging, self-esteem and greater responsibility for the development and improvement of social skills. (Jensen, 1995)

- **Ability to deal with conflicts and their resolution**

Conflicts are common daily occurrence in adults, and youth. They actually are a universal phenomenon that manifests itself in a person or between two or more persons. (Ajduković, 2002) Nowadays great attention is paid to non-violent communication and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Because it is a daily problem in schools, students should be taught to constructively resolve such situations. The conflict is not dealt with aggression, the withdrawal or avoidance of the problem, because it brings a sense of anxiety, weight, loss of self-esteem and so on. What students need to know is this: because of different interests we shouldn't get on each other's throats, to endanger, eliminate and isolate. The winning method of conflict resolution is one that does not attack each other, but together attack the problem. The skills of constructive and non-violent conflict resolution are based on the adoption and mutual integration of social skills empathy and active listening. (Ajduković, 2002)

From this it can be concluded that social competence has a complex structure and consists of more specific skills. What is important to know is that they can learn, but it is necessary to constantly evolve. (Social competence of child, 2014)

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

3.1. THE SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The subject of this research is the influence of the games in three teaching areas on the development of the social competences among students.

3.2. TYPE OF THE RESEARCH

This research is operational (applied), as implemented in the area of teaching practice with emphasis on the impact of the games of the three study areas on the development of social skills in students and it relies on knowledge experiential practice. This research seeks to generate knowledge that will contribute to solving some general or particular problems in practice in teaching. Through

this research could test the validity of certain information about the anticipated areas of teaching practice.

3.3. GOALS AND TASKS OF THE RESEARCH

The methodological goal of this research in the context of this paper is to determine the impact of the games of the three study areas on the development of social skills in students and to determine which of the games and with what intensity affects a given category of social competence among students.

The research has the following tasks:

- to identify the types of games in the teaching areas,
- to identify the categories of the social skills among students,
- collecting opinions by teachers from the elementary school to the intensity of the impact of the games of the three study areas on the development of social skills in students and
- collecting opinions by experts on the intensity of the impact of the games of the three study areas on the development of social skills among students

3.4. MAIN HYPOTHESIS AND SPECIAL HYPOTHESIS

The games of the three educational areas have approximately equal intensity of influence on the development of the social skills among students.

1. The project activities in the area of *Natural science* with highest intensity affect the development of the level of cooperation among students.
2. The project activities in the area of *Natural science* with highest intensity affect rising opportunity for independent decision making among students.
3. The games and activities in the area of *Civic education* have the strongest intensity on increasing the possibility for group decision making by students.
4. The games and activities in the area of *Civic education* have the strongest intensity on increasing the possibility of formation of attitudes and values of students.
5. The games and activities in the area of *Physical and health education* have the strongest intensity on increasing the level of tolerance among students.
6. The project activities in the area of *Natural science* with highest intensity affect the increasing of the possibility of actively listening students.
7. The games and activities in the area of *Civic education* have the strongest intensity on increasing the degree of empathy among students.
8. The games and activities in the area of *Civic education* have the strongest intensity on increasing the ability of the students to resolve conflict.
9. The games and activities in the area of *Physical and health education* have the strongest intensity on increasing the level of awareness of fair play among students.
10. The games and activities in the area of the *Physical and health education* have the strongest intensity on increasing the degree of self-confidence in students.
11. The games and activities in the area of the *Physical and health education* have the strongest intensity on increasing the level of mutual trust among students.

12. The games and activities in the area of *Civic education* have the strongest intensity on increasing the degree of respect and equality among students.

3.5. POPULATION OF THE RESEARCH

The population of this research will consist of elementary school teachers from four primary schools in the urban environment in Bitola. 20 teachers will be interviewed as sufficient representative sample. Also four experts, three of pedagogy in the field of methodologies and an expert in pedagogy will be interviewed.

3.6. INSTRUMENTS OF THE RESEARCH

As an instrument in this research will be used questionnaire, which is meant for teachers and experts in order to see their opinions for previously given certain categories of social competence among students and their development through a game in separate teaching area.

4. INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Table 1. Results from the polling of the teachers (T) and the experts (E)
1 (point) - lowest intensity, 2 (points) - medium intensity and 3 (points) - the strongest intensity

Social competences of the students		Types of games and activities according the teaching areas					
		Physical and health education		Civic education		Natural sciences	
		Sport games and activities		Playing games-dramatization		Project games and activities	
		T	E	T	E	T	E
1.	Higher degree of collaboration	36	5	37	8	44	11
2.	Greater possibility for independent decision	37	6	51	11	33	8
3.	Greater possibility for group decision	36	6	32	8	62	10
4.	Greater possibility for creating opinions and values	35	7	45	10	40	8
5.	Higher degree of tolerance	43	8	49	12	28	5
6.	Greater possibility for active listening	34	6	35	9	51	10
7.	Higher degree of empathy	49	8	43	8	28	4
8.	Greater ability for solving conflict situations	26	6	59	14	35	4
9.	Higher level of conscious for fair play	62	15	26	4	32	5
10.	Higher degree of self-confidence	54	11	34	7	32	5
11.	Higher degree of mutual trust	47	10	26	8	47	6

12	Higher degree of respect and equality	38	7	49	12	33	5
Total points for every area (T)		497		486		465	
Total points for every area (E)			95		111		81

Table 2. Results from the polling of the teachers (T) and the experts (E) in category 1

Social competences of the students		Sport games and activities		Playing roles-dramatization		Project games and activities	
		T	E	T	E	T	E
1.	Higher degree of collaboration	36	5	37	8	44	11

1. Comment

According to the teachers, but also to the experts, the project activities and games of the teaching area *Natural sciences* cause an increase of the level of cooperation between students with the strongest intensity.

Table 3. Results from the polling of the teachers (T) and the experts (E) in category 2

Social competences of the students		Sport games and activities		Playing roles-dramatization		Project games and activities	
		T	E	T	E	T	E
2.	Greater possibility for independent decision making	37	6	50	11	33	8

2. Comment

For category number 2 the opinions of teachers and experts that the games and activities in the teaching area of *Civic education* are harmonized, the games and the activities with the strongest intensity affect the rising opportunity for independent decision-making by the students.

Table 4. Results from the polling of the teachers (T) and the experts (E) in category 3

Social competences of the students		Sport games and activities		Playing roles-dramatization		Project games and activities	
		T	E	T	E	T	E
3.	Greater opportunity for group decision making	36	6	32	8	62	10

3. Comment

For category under number 3 the opinions of teachers and experts are harmonized. The games and activities in the teaching area of *Natural Sciences* with the strongest intensity affect increasing the possibility for group decision making among students.

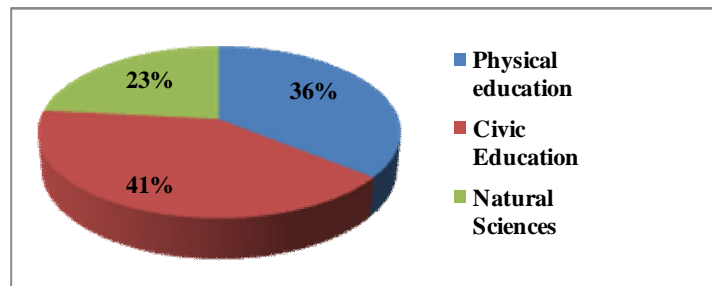
Table 5. Results from the polling of the teachers (T) and the experts (E) in category 4

Social competences of the students		Sport games and activities		Playing roles-dramatization		Project games and activities	
		T	E	T	E	T	E
4.	Greater possibility for creating opinions and values	35	5	45	12	40	7

4. Comment

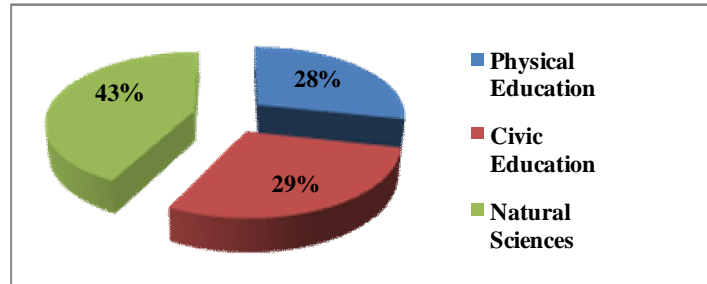
According the opinion of teachers and experts, games, and activities in the teaching in the area of *Civic education* with the strongest intensity affect the increasing of the possibility of creating opinions and values among students.

Chart 1. The intensity of the types of the games expressed in percentages about category 5 (T)



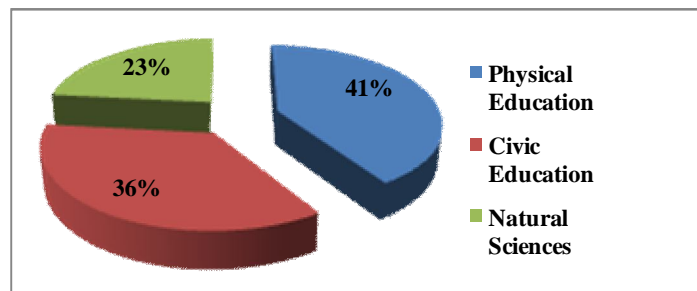
5. Comment

According the opinion of teachers and experts, the games and activities of the teaching area *Civic education* with the strongest intensity causes an increase of the level of tolerance among students.

Chart 2. The intensity of the types of the games expressed in percentages about category 6 (T)

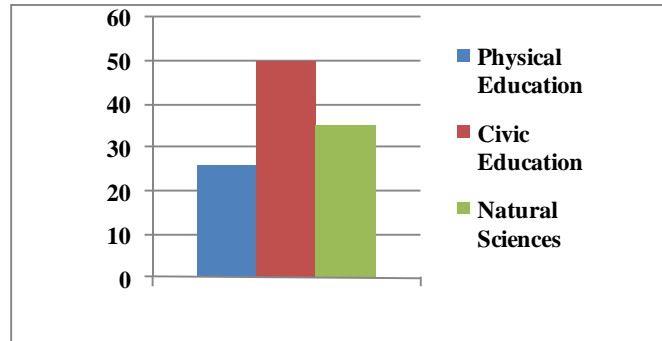
6. Comment

From the graph we can note that the opinions of teachers and experts agreed. They believe that the project activities and games of the teaching area *Natural sciences* with the strongest intensity affect increasing the possibility of actively listening students.

Chart 3. The intensity of the types of the games expressed in percentages about category 7 (T)

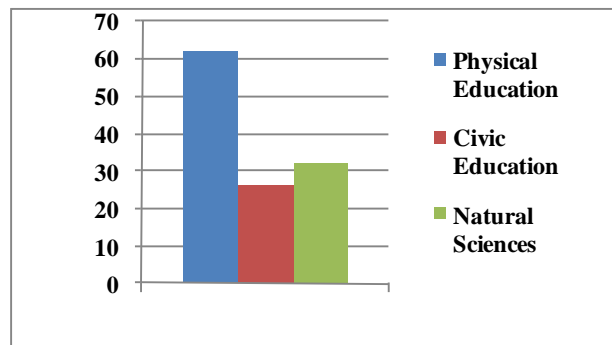
7. Comment

According to teachers, the games and activities in the teaching area *Physical and health education* with the strongest intensity affect the increasing of the degree of empathy among students. The experts support this opinion, but they think that the games and the activities in the area of *Civic education* affect the degree of empathy among the students.

Chart 4. The intensity of the types of the games expressed in percentages about category 8 (T)

8. Comment

The opinions of the teachers and the experts are aligned with respect to the category number 8. They believe that the games and activities of the teaching *Civic education* area with the strongest intensity affect the increase in the ability to resolve conflicts among students.

Chart 5. The intensity of the types of the games expressed in percentages about category 9 (T)

9. Comment

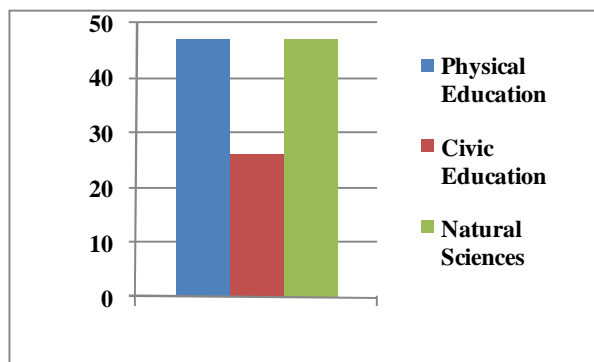
According the opinion of teachers and experts, the games and the sports activities in the teaching area of *Physical and health education* with the strongest intensity affect the level of awareness among the students about fair play.

Table 6. Results from the polling of the teachers (T) and the experts (E) in category 10

Social competences of the students		Sport games and activities		Playing roles-dramatization		Project games and activities	
		T	E	T	E	T	E
10.	Higher degree of self-confidence	54	12	34	7	32	5

10. Comment

The opinions of teachers and experts about the category under number 10 are harmonized. The sports games and activities in the teaching area of *Physical and health education* with the strongest intensity cause an increase of the level of confidence among students.

Chart 6. The intensity of the types of the games expressed in percentages about category 11 (T)

11. Comment

About the category number 11 experts believe that the games and activities in the teaching area of *Physical and health education* affect with the strongest intensity on increasing the level of mutual trust between students. From the graph it can be noticed that the teachers think that on this category with equal intensity affect the games and activities in the area of the *Natural sciences*.

Table 7. Results from the polling of the teachers (T) and the experts (E) about category 12

Social competences of the students		Sport games and activities		Playing roles-dramatization		Project games and activities	
		H	E	H	E	H	E
12.	Higher degree of respect and equality	38	7	49	12	33	5

12. Comment

The category under number 12 harmonized the opinions of teachers and experts that the games and activities in the teaching area of *Civic education* with the strongest intensity affect the rising level of respect and equality among students.

5. CONCLUSION

By processing and analyzing the results of this research we came to the string conclusions that we believe will contribute to the development of teaching practice forward when it comes to the development of social skills in students.

The analysis of the results of the opinions of teachers shows the following:

The sports games and activities of the teaching in the area of *Physical and health education* with the strongest intensity affect the development of the following social competences among students: the degree of empathy, the ability of fair play, confidence and mutual trust between students.

The games and activities in the teaching *Civic education* area with the strongest intensity affect the development of the following social competences among students: independent decision-making, the formation of attitudes and values, the degree of tolerance, resolution of conflict, respect and equality among students.

The project activities and games in the teaching area of *Natural Sciences* with the strongest intensity affect the development of the following social competences among students: the level of cooperation, group decision making, active listening and mutual trust between students.

The opinions of experts largely agreed with the opinions of teachers with the exception of the following:

Based on the category of the development level of empathy among students with the strongest intensity affect the games and activities of the teaching area of *Civic education*. The sports games and activities of the teaching area of *Physical and health education* have the strongest intensity on the development of mutual trust among students, not design games and activities from the area of the *Natural sciences*.

The main hypothesis of the three games educational areas with approximately equal intensity influence the development of social skills in students, partly accepted. The total number of points shows the intensity of the impact of games and activities from every teaching area separately on all categories of social skills among students.

According to the teachers their order is as follows:

- The strongest intensity on the development of social skills in students have the sports games and activities area of the *Physical and health education*.
- The average strength of intensity on the development of social skills in students have the games and activities area *Civic education*.
- The weakest intensity on the development of social skills in students has the design of games and activities area of the *Natural sciences*.

According to experts, their order is as follows:

- The strongest intensity on the development of social skills in students have the games and activities in the area of *Civic education*
- The average strength of intensity on the development of social skills in students have the sports games and activities in the area of the *Physical and health education*.
- The weakest intensity on the development of social skills in students has the design of games and activities in the area of the *Natural sciences*.

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