

The Investigation of Lusory Attitudes of Students in Educational Games: A Case Study in a Primary School

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ABSTRACT

Games have increasingly been integrated into educational environments because they have the potential to increase motivation and enliven learning activities. Games provide students with a situation where they will actively participate and create interesting environments. However, some issues need to be considered to increase the educational value of games. For example, they need to be correctly adapted to predetermined educational goals and these goals need to be clearly shown. In addition, the rules that are indispensable for games need to be presented in a way that does not leave any gaps. Although educational games have aspects that encourage learning and participation, they also have aspects that cause undesirable results under competitive conditions. In this case, students may violate the rules to win the game. Thus, the educational purpose can be deviated from, and the intended integrity can be disrupted. This study emphasizes how the competition between two classes playing an educational game violates the rules of the game and the risks posed by competitive dynamics. Thus, it shows how games deviate from their purpose when they diverge from being collaborative learning tools to competing ambitions. The aim of this paper is to show educators what negative consequences educational games can have in situations where competition is high and how students can go beyond ethical rules.

KEY WORDS: Educational Games, Prelusory Goal, Constitutive Rules, Lusory Effect, Rule Violations

1. INTRODUCTION¹

Educational games have critical roles in lessons that aim to enrich students' learning experiences and encourage students' participation in activities. Games come to the fore as an effective tool for students to use theoretical knowledge practically and apply it in interactive environments (Gee, 2003). Games make the subject learned more attractive, make the learning process more enjoyable and motivate students more. Students develop skills such as teamwork, joint problem solving and effective communication, which are also necessary for their social development, thanks to their active participation in games (Prensky, 2001). Although many benefits of educational games can be listed, some difficulties arise in practice. These games may lead to negative results and trigger competitive dynamics when necessary conditions appear. In such environments, students get more ambitious to win, resort to some tricks, sabotage their opponents and break the rules. Thus,

conditions that contradict the basic goals set for games arise. Due to the nature of the competitive environment, jealousy, expectation and anxiety about losing the game emerge predominantly and weaken the cooperation that was set to be the aim of educational games (Vygotsky, 1978).

The concept of games can be interpreted in different ways depending on the context in which they are used. According to Zeng et al. (2020), games are activities that should be perceived as entertaining by their nature. However, they have an effective teaching potential when used appropriately. When games are integrated into educational environments, they increase students' motivation and develop their cognitive and social skills through effective communication with each other. They also create an engaging learning environment. Etemad (2019) states that games include the following elements: competition, strategy and goal orientation. They argue that when these are used effectively, the learning process accelerates. Games also have a dual nature such that

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while some perceive games as mere entertainment, others see them as educational activities structured in accordance with their purpose. Therefore, different perceptions have emerged in the evaluation of games (Bawa et al., 2018). While some see games used in educational activities as fun activities with minimal educational value, others have developed a deeper perspective. According to the latter, games encourage discipline, strategic thinking and cooperation (Romero et al., 2015). Although the value attributed to games varies, there are some universal features that show the applicability of games in educational environments. For example, all games contain rules and goals. According to Habgood and Ainsworth (2011), games can have strict rules or looser rules. However, even in their current state, there is no obstacle to their use in different educational environments. While strict rules require strict adherence to predetermined regulations in games with strict rules, there is flexibility in free-form games and participants use rules and strategies dynamically and can make adjustments when necessary.

This study shows how competitive pressures can negatively affect student behaviors and how they can distort social dynamics, and it also draws attention to the dual nature of educational games (Burguillo, 2010). It will be seen how two classes competing with each other in a game environment violate the rules and encourage unethical behaviors. This research, which is a qualitative observation, examines the mechanisms behind these actions, the influencing factors and provides an insight into their applications in education. It is certain that supportive and collaborative learning occurs when games are included in educational environments (Hamari et al., 2016). However, it is expected that the negative aspects of games to be revealed in this study will contribute to educators' development of ideas on how to direct students to cooperation rather than competition and reduce the risks related to negative behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As a result, it is aimed to inform educators about the negative consequences of competition in educational games and to show a way to encourage cooperation and ethical behavior. In this way, it is thought that the value of educational games will be fully revealed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Role of Rules and Objectives in Games

The effectiveness of games, which are inherently attractive, when used as educational tools lies in their prelusory goals and constitutive rules. Derived from the Latin term *ludus* (game), "prelusory" describes the goal that everyone agrees on before starting the game (O'Connor et al., 2024). This goal determines the general framework in which participants operate within the game

and ensures that the activity is compatible with the desired educational goals and outcomes. Constitutive rules can be described as restrictions that direct players to the goal by using predetermined tools. Thus, students learn to develop their skills and solve problems creatively by staying within the rules (Hsu & Wang, 2018). Casey et al. (2016) state that these rules cannot be considered as mere guidelines. They also ensure fairness and equal opportunity during the game. Players need to complete the game without external help. Accordingly, a player, for instance, cannot use any other tools during the run. Thus, the player's focus remains on his own skills and efforts. Players learn integrity and perseverance through the challenging dilemma of following the rules and achieving the game's goals.

2.2. Lusory Attitude and Its Significance

Duncan (2016) expresses an important aspect of educational games. According to this term defined as Lusory attitude, players must accept the rules and restrictions of the game in advance and participate in the competition willingly within the framework of these rules. Without these determinations, the probability of players resorting to unethical methods is quite high. In this case, the educational aspect of the game is damaged, and the learning experience does not reach its goal.

Lusory attitude cannot be perceived only as the participation of the players. It also means a more sincere commitment to fair play and adherence to agreed rules. Kreider (2011) argues that arbitrary rules adopted in this way turn into immersive learning experiences. In educational environments, games are often used to simulate real-world scenarios and teach complex concepts. In this case, the student having lusory attitude does not only focus on winning, but also gains meaningful insight.

However, some difficulties arise when students prioritize competition rather than learning. Thus, rules are violated, and negative behaviors emerge. In social settings where competition is highly emphasized, the pressure students feel to succeed at any cost can lead them to break the rules. Bilgin et al. (2022) state that in order for a positive lusory attitude to emerge, educators must carefully moderate and force students to strictly follow the rules. They should even make students fear the negative consequences that violating the rules will bring (Suits, 2014).

2.3. Educational Value and Challenges of Game-Based Learning

The inclusion of games with motivating aspects in educational activities ensures active participation and critical thinking of students. It has also been shown to lead to effective learning (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2017). In addition to directing students to teamwork, games also

have the aspect of developing problem-solving skills and providing resilience. However, all these activities of games depend on the correct design and implementation. Annetta (2010) emphasizes the need to design games in line with educational objectives and adapt them to the needs of students. Cruaud (2018) emphasizes the selection of the right students who are suitable to compete with each other and the importance of students' autonomy within the game. In this way, students make interactive decisions and learn more permanently. It should also be taken into account that students develop a sense of ownership within the game. In cases where the goals of the games are not fully determined and very strict rules are applied, poorly structured games emerge, and these situations can distract students from the learning goal (Marklund & Taylor, 2016). Therefore, a balance should be established between the rules that structure the game and flexibility. In this way, students' motivation and lusory attitude become more effective. In modern educational theory, game-based learning is not only an add-on, but it is also an integrated part of teaching strategies which support cognitive and affective skills (Woo, 2014). Teachers have important roles in this integration because teachers' guidance of students during the game helps to preserve the educational value of the game and prevents students from violating the rules (Rodriguez, 2006).

2.4. Survey of Previous Studies on Game-Based Learning

Some recent studies have focused on the use of games in educational environments. For example, Gee (2003) stated that video games improve problem-solving and critical thinking skills and significantly activate students' cognitive potential. Prensky (2007) emphasized the motivating aspect of games and showed that digital natives give more effective responses in game-based educational environments than in traditional pedagogical environments. Similarly, Hamari et al. (2016) stated that student participation is higher in games with competitive feedback and reward systems and also touched on some negative situations. Accordingly, the effectiveness of the game also varies according to the quality of the application. The pedagogical effects of games have also been addressed in other studies. For example, Kiili (2005) found that meaningful learning, challenge, control and feedback are effectively realized in games. In addition, Squire (2011) investigated how games affect different cultural environments and found that collaborative game-based learning permanently imprints knowledge in students' minds. Connolly et al. (2012) analyzed some experimental studies and observed that games made a positive contribution to learning in education. At the same time, they drew attention to the need for careful adaptation of games to educational environments.

In addition, some studies have made some warnings against competitive dynamics because the problematic aspects of competitive environments have also attracted their attention. For example, Bayeck (2020) emphasized that students in games display unethical behaviors such as acting out and breaking rules when they aim to win rather than learn. This approach adopts a narrative parallel to the lusory attitude emphasized by Suits (2014). Accordingly, in order for educational games to be effective, it is important to accept the rules of the game voluntarily and to exhibit fair behavior.

These studies emphasized the importance of game-based learning and stated that it can yield successful results to the extent of students' goals and attitudes. It has also shown that negative consequences will arise if the rules of the games are not followed and the desire to win in a competitive environment violates ethical rules.

2.5. Future Implications and Research Directions

Although the benefits of games are clearly experienced in educational activities, new research is needed to see the interaction between students' competition with each other, compliance with the rules and lusory attitude more clearly. The difference in students' age groups and educational backgrounds can affect the adoption of this attitude and provide realistic insights for educators. Although games have competitive aspects, designs that encourage more collaborative games and more inclusive and supportive learning environments can contribute more to student development. Educational games enrich students' learning experiences and offer new opportunities for their socialization. In this case, games that are successfully implemented, have well-defined rules, have clear goals and will develop lusory attitudes among students should be produced. In addition, educators have a critical role in every stage of the game. Teachers have an inevitable effect both in directing the game and in balancing entertainment and educational dimensions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design of the Study

This study was implemented to discover how much students adopt a lusory attitude during competitive educational games. It is also aimed to observe the potential consequences when the lusory attitude is absent. The lusory attitude means being immersed in an activity while willingly accepting the rules for the intrinsic enjoyment it comes up with. This study posits that the students who exhibit highly competitive manners might prioritize winning the game over abiding by the rules, and this situation could provide insights into the implications of such behavior in educational settings. This study reveals that when the lusory attitude

disappears, not only the attractive aspect of the game itself is lost, but also the learning environment is negatively affected. Furthermore, the interaction of the students also changes negatively. To collect data comprehensively, qualitative methodologies that give way to detailed, context-rich observations were implemented. The approach that was chosen facilitated the discovery of student behavior in a naturalistic setting, which provides insights into the subtle dynamics of competition, abiding by rules, and peer responses.

3.2. Research Model

This research was structured so as to be a qualitative and observational study. A non-participant observer approach with documenting the events as they happen in real time was applied, which is believed to foster objectivity and minimization of interference with natural student behavior. In this way, free interaction among students was ensured, and the strategies and expression of emotions were recorded to remove any bias and probable pressure that might have stemmed from an authority during the activity.

This observational model was enriched with field notes and recording the session in order to capture the student interaction and attitude that they developed during the game. This data also ensured more detailed analysis of the moments when the students complied with or deviated from the predetermined rules. This recording also helps to see how the violations of the rules affected the group dynamics and individual performances.

3.3. Sampling

The groups that are the subject of this study are composed of 6th grade students at a middle school. In the selection process, students from two different branches were taken into consideration. Thus, it was thought that diverse representation within the grade would be provided. 4 groups were formed from these students and. Each group consisted of two students... To keep a balance among the competing groups and to create a competitive environment triggering the desire to win, students with high academic performance were chosen in consultation with their teachers. In this way, the results to be obtained in the research could be revealed more effectively. The reason for selecting students with high success was to observe how individuals who constantly focused on success would behave in competitive environments. The balanced distribution of students' skill levels was done consciously to ensure the continuity of competition and to ensure the emergence of natural student behaviors. Thus, it was aimed at revealing the students' reactions to difficult competitive environments and their potential to violate the rules for the sake of winning. In this case, the data to be obtained would be more realistic.

3.4. Data Collection

The data were collected through non-participant observation, which involves detailed, structured observation protocols to provide consistency and focus during the data collection process. The students were observed over multiple sessions to catch recurring patterns and variations in behavior under different competitive conditions.

Observation Tools and Techniques:

Field Notes: In each session, some detailed notes were taken, and some instances were specifically focused: abiding by and violating rules, interactions between the members of the groups, and others' reactions to deviations from rules. In this way, a comprehensive account of events and interactions was recorded.

Video and Audio Recordings: these sessions were recorded in order to provide further analysis. This particularly helped while reviewing subtle cues such as facial expressions and body language. Verbal interactions that show frustration, cooperation, or strategic planning were also observed more clearly through recordings.

Behavioral Checklists: The checklists were also used to record specific behaviors related to the lusory attitude, which means respect for rules in the game, attempts to violate the rules, and responses to others' behavior.

Observation Focus: Several key aspects were focused on during the observation.

- Rule Compliance: The situations where students adhered to or intentionally violated game rules.
- Motivation and Strategy: How the students approached the game, whether they valued winning over fair play, and the strategies they employed to achieve their goals.
- Peer Reactions: How other students reacted to violations of the rules, either through disapproval, mimicry, or in a neutral way.
- Adaptations Over Time: If the students changed their behavior across different sessions was an important criterion, and it was observed if they learned the targeted content or developed more strategic adjustments after the previous sessions.

3.5. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis method was used to identify behavioral patterns and the themes concerning adopting or removing lusory attitude. Some categories were defined for checking like "rule adherence", "competitive behavior" and "peer reaction", and some important instances were coded in relation to these categories that will help define divergences from lusory attitude. The field notes were also justified with video analysis, and the research was enriched with deeper observation from videos in order to catch the instances that went unnoticed during notetaking. This detailed analysis was expected to provide insights into the dynamics of abiding by rules,

the probable consequences of deviations from the rules and their impact on learning and group interaction.

3.6. Procedure

The name of the educational activity implemented in this study was Running Dictation, which was specifically selected to test the pronunciation and spelling skills of the students. The game is also suitable to create a competitive atmosphere. The school garden, as it was wide enough to provide enough space for the students to run freely, was chosen as setting, and in this way, enough space was also provided for the spectators, who were the other members of the classes. The two classes of 6th graders participated in the activity, and they formed four groups comprising of two students each. One of the group members was the runner, and the other was the writer. Other students from their classes were the participants to encourage and support their friends and contribute to the competitiveness.

Before the game started, the teacher hung 10 sentences on different parts of the walls so as to be far away from each other and require running faster than others. The runner was expected to reach the sentence as quickly as possible and read it until he kept it in mind. Then he would run back to the writer to dictate it. The runner's duty was only dictation; he would not make any correction on what was written.

In this way, their communication skills, endurance, patience, quick thinking, memorization and physical effort were all included in the activity.

3.7. Rules of the Game

To provide fair play and the integrity of the competition, the following rules were set:

Runner's Restrictions: The runner's duty was only limited to searching for, reading, and memorizing the sentences. They were not allowed to help the writer with spelling or writing and could not make any correction on what is being written.

Writer's Restrictions: The writer would not be allowed to change his designated spot. He also did not have any right to attempt to go toward the posted sentences or look for ways to get help.

Prohibition of Obstruction: Any behavior that prevented the competitors in other groups from running was prohibited.

Protection of Materials: The behavior that would prevent opponents in other groups from looking at the sentences was prohibited. In addition, no damage would be done to these papers.

No External Help: Non-participant students would not give any support in any way, either verbally or physically.

No Notetaking: The runners would not be allowed to take notes or write on their hands or clothing.

Maintaining Sentence Positions: The posted sentences should stay in place without being given any damage.

Scoring System: Points were given taking the completion time and accuracy of the sentences into account. The first group which completed all sentences correctly would receive +10 points, the second group would get +7, the third group +4, and the fourth group +2. Each sentence would be reviewed by the teacher, and they would be evaluated out of 10. If any group declared that they finished before writing all of their sentences, they would be disqualified from the competition.

Prizes: A prize will be given to the winning group to motivate the participants for further events.

3.8. Limitations

Although the data based on observations give way to detailed analysis of student behavior, there are some limitations, too. Since the observer from outside was present there, the students felt intimidated at first until they immersed into the competition. They may also have been affected by the observer during the time they focused on the game. Moreover, the group size was relatively small, and the most competitive students were selected with the teacher's help. It would have created a different atmosphere if some of the students had exhibited different characteristics. This sample size may draw severe boundaries around the generalizability of the findings to wider educational settings. Other research in the future may focus on including diverse samples with additional data collection methods like resorting to students' opinions and surveys to analyze more deeply.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Infringement of the Rules

Since the game took place in an extremely competitive atmosphere and the students had a strong desire to win, several rule violations were recorded, which showed a lack of lusus attitude among the students. As a matter of fact, the support of their friends from outside played a role in increasing the excitement. It was also observed that they prioritized winning the game over fair play by exhibiting utmost ambition.

Physical Obstruction: A runner intentionally blocked an opponent's way, preventing him from reaching the sentence quickly. This was a clear attempt to hinder an opponent from progressing and gaining an advantage.

Manipulation of Materials: One participant took a posted sentence from its original location to somewhere else, making it difficult for others to find. This was a deliberate action that violated the principle of fair play.

Defacement: A student attempted to make a word illegible on one of the posted sentences with a pen and intended to hinder other groups from outperforming them.

Direct Writing Intervention: One runner seeing that his partner was having difficulty writing correctly, took the paper and wrote the sentence himself. This was also a clear infringement of the game rules.

Spelling Assistance: A participant helped the writer by spelling out words during dictation. He apparently opposed the rules that prohibited verbal assistance.

Outside Help: A non-competitor corrected the pronunciation of a runner, offering unsolicited help that affected the final result of the game considerably.

Cross-group Assistance: After listening to one group, a spectator uttered the sentence to another group's writer, which undermined the competitive fairness.

Selective Reporting: Some students reported the infringements of opposing teams to the teacher, but they ignored similar violations by their own teammates. This was a clear illustration of selective enforcement and bias.

Refusal to Accept Defeat: The loser groups did not accept the results by indicating the rule infringements of the winning group, which was against fair play. Non-participant friends also supported their friends.

Blaming the other: The competitors of the losing groups put blame on the other member and held the other friend responsible for losing the game. Although this was not violating any constitutive rule, it was against fair play.

Call for Revenge: Another sample of violation of fair play was calling the winning group to another competition, which showed their intention to take their revenge.

5. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

In this study, other data were obtained regarding the educational aspect of games. However, those data were not included in this study, only those that were suitable for the purpose of the study were selected. These observations show how students violate the rules under the pressure to win and how a structured game can lead to rule-violating behaviors in the absence of a lusory attitude. This extreme behavior displayed by the students revealed the dual nature of competitive environments: on the one hand, motivation and the immersion of the game lead to desired behaviors, on the other hand, if not managed correctly, games lead to some unethical behaviors. It was also observed that competitive students prioritized winning victory over the constitutive rules of the game. In this case, both the educational value and integrity of the game was harmed. While the lusory attitude, which is expected to provide integrity in the game, requires you to voluntarily accept and comply with the rules of the game, the extremely competitive environment greatly jeopardized this rule. As a result, it was observed that even when the students were willing and motivated, they neglected the fundamental aspect of

fair play in their approach. Students neglected the fair process that they had to follow the game within their own capabilities and focused on getting instant results unfairly. In addition, the students who lost chose to put the blame on their other friends rather than taking responsibility themselves. The desire for revenge of these students also emerged as a driving sentiment.

6. DISCUSSION

These findings show how competitive student behaviors can reach extreme levels during a game. In particular, the tension between classes, which is a factor that increases competition, is a sign that students' behaviors towards each other have reached even more extreme levels. Competition encourages motivation and participation on the one hand, but it also causes undesirable behaviors. This study has particularly shown the extreme behaviors of competition and jealousy between two classes through the game because students who immersed in the game have violated many ethical rules and focused only on winning. This emphasizes the aspect of games that clearly reveals some of the character traits. The intense competitive environment that emerges between classes does not only occur in games. Comparisons of academic performance between students, grades received in exams and other interactions can take this competition to extreme levels. In some cases, the points that will feed the feelings of hostility between classes may also arise. In this case, educators need to be careful about possible dangers. The ambition of winning displayed by students in the game shows a nature that is so compelling that it will push them to ignore previously adopted ethical rules. Thus, students may largely forget the understanding of fair play that they have gained throughout their lives in society, living according to rules, and willingly adopting moral rules, resorting to unethical means in order to secure victory. In this case, it is necessary to emphasize the dual characteristics that emerge in students: on the one hand, there are the moral rules that they adopt in normal life, and on the other, under the pressure of winning, they put these rules aside and focus on the result and secure victory. Although they behave friendly towards each other in their social environments, they adopt an understanding that violates the existing rules with the attraction of winning in competitive environments. Therefore, when the importance of socializing in their own groups of friends, especially at these ages, it should be taken into account that competitive environments can cause irreversible problems. If the competitive environment continues over time, it is highly likely that they will develop a quarrelsome attitude that feeds hostile feelings towards each other but what is desired for young individuals is totally different: to socialize in a healthy way.

According to these findings, student behaviors can go beyond ethical rules in extremely competitive environments. These extreme behaviors are especially prominent in the mutual relations of competitive classes. Thus, students can violate many rules with the desire to win the competition. Burguillo (2010) showed in their study that although competitions with educational games increase motivation, they also trigger stress and excessive competition.

Although competition between students is a strong motivating factor, it also triggers counterproductive behavior. These behaviors become even worse, especially in cases where teacher guidance is inadequate. Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory determined that intrinsic motivation changes direction in extremely competitive environments and directs students to get results. Similarly, Amory and Seagram (2003) stated that in cases where students emphasize competition, the educational aspects of the games are secondary and winning at all costs is prioritized.

The ethical violations observed in this study are in parallel with the findings by King and Delfabbro (2009). They found that excessive motivation in digital play environments can distort moral judgments. As students become increasingly absorbed in the competitive aspect of games, they may exhibit behaviors such as cheating, exclusion, and aggression, even if these are inconsistent with their real-life moral compass (Salen and Zimmerman, 2004).

6.1. Observational Dynamics and Behavior Shift

At first, students were conscious that they were observed, and thus they exhibited proper conduct. This awareness pushed them to stay away from rule violations and encouraged them to abide by the game's guidelines. However, as the game progressed and the competitive atmosphere prevailed, this initial restraint died down. Students started to behave in a way that was driven by the pressure of observing their rivals gain an advantage over themselves. This increase in the competitive atmosphere, fueled more by the vocal support and cheers of their friends, caused them to forget about the observer's presence and engage in natural, but unethical, competitive actions.

This behavioral shift shows what Zimbardo (2007) identified in his Stanford Prison Experiment. The individuals may lose personal moral restraint and act contrary to their usual behavior under the influence of group norms and expected roles when they are put in competitive contexts. In educational games, a similar effect can occur when students shift from being ethically aware individuals to emotionally driven group members.

Moreover, Bandura et al. (1996) discussed the concept of moral disengagement, which is closely related to the behaviors that the students exhibited in this study. The

individuals selectively omit self-regulatory mechanisms that typically require ethical conduct. In this case, students' growing desire to win and their absorption in the game may have overridden their internalized sense of right and wrong, especially when they are reinforced by peers. When the rivals gain an advantage over them, it may trigger feelings of relative deprivation and force them to justify unethical actions as necessary or harmless.

It was remarkable that even students who did not actively participate in the competition itself, like spectators and supporters, contributed much to the rule-breaking atmosphere. Their participation meant that the competitive spirit extended beyond the immediate players to involve the whole class members. These students, in spite of being conscious of the rules and the consequences of violating them, intervened with impunity, implying that the collective excitement overshadowed their sense of accountability.

Reicher, Haslam, and Smith (2012) explain this phenomenon through the Social Identity Theory which states that when people strongly identify with their group, they may act in defense or support of group interests even if such actions contradict personal values or social norms. The cheering, intervention, or approval by the students who are only watching reflects their identification with their class group and their shared interests under the competitive conditions.

6.2. Analysis of Ethical Implications

The findings underscore a critical insight: when there is intense competition in educational settings, educators should reinforce the importance of ethical behavior over the pure ambition to reach victory. Competitive environments can lead to detrimental effects when ethical boundaries are not clearly shown, although they may be invaluable for creating motivation and drive. This study demonstrated that students' natural inclination to win, when unchecked, can manifest in behaviors they would not typically exhibit in less pressurized situations.

Kohn (1992) argues that excessive emphasis on competition in education often distorts cooperation and ethical behavior. It also promotes a "win-at-all-costs" mentality that can be detrimental to students' sense of fairness and respect.

Similarly, Tauer and Harackiewicz (2004) found that competitive settings can improve performance but also increase anxiety and aggressive behaviors if ethical guidelines and social norms are not clearly expressed. They argue that educators should carefully choose competitive activities to maintain ethical concerns and minimize negative social consequences.

Johnson and Johnson (2009) highlighted how group dynamics influence moral conduct in educational settings. They underlined the point that pre-existing interpersonal conflicts often worsen the competitive

atmosphere. These conflicts can promote unethical behaviors as students prioritize group loyalty and winning over personal integrity. They also recommend that educators must consider social dynamics carefully during competitions.

Social Dynamics and Rule Violations

This research also indicated that some deeper dynamics of social communication issues among students gave way to the rule violations that were observed here. Interpersonal conflicts that existed beforehand and strained relationships made competitive behavior even worse, causing students to be more inclined to engage in unethical practices during the game. As students gain a competitive spirit as a result of their communication with each other during the socialization process, group dynamics and student interactions can be negatively affected. Teachers need to take this reality into consideration when categorizing students for competitions.

In line with this, Sherif's (1966) classic work on intergroup conflict demonstrated that rivalry tends to escalate when groups are already divided by social or interpersonal tensions, and it leads to hostility and rule-breaking behaviors. Taking these into consideration can help educators design more balanced competitions.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

It is essential that teachers design activities that emphasize cooperation alongside competition to mitigate these negative consequences. It is also essential that educators be conscious of the social dynamics in their classrooms and work towards creating a sense of unity, integrity and collective achievement. Activities that bring competition and teamwork together can help students realize the balance between the desire to win with mutual respect and compliance with rules. This approach is expected to support the development of a positive competitive spirit which will give way to a sense of ethics, fairness, and collaboration.

Moreover, if the teachers take into consideration the integration of ethical behavior and the necessity of competitive spirit with fairness into the curriculum and lesson plans, it will help students develop positive characteristics during a certain period. By accentuating these aspects of competitiveness and mutual respect, students are expected to prioritize integrity over victory. Additionally, for classes with some negative social communication problems, basic activities that focus on making peer relationships stronger may be beneficial. This will ensure that when competitive activities are implemented, they will build on a base of respect and consideration.

8. BALANCING EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS WITH POTENTIAL RISKS

Some of the remarkable benefits of games are problem solving, developing strategic thinking and encouraging socialization. However, it has also been observed in this study that in classes where social relationships are tense, any kind of competition can turn into a hot competition and hostile feelings towards each other. Teachers need to be very careful about classes that have developed such a class culture and social relationships. In fact, if we consider that the intensity of conflict between classes emerges as a result of a process, it is appropriate for teachers to consider that such competitive environments can lead to undesirable results and take precautions accordingly. For this, in an environment where competitive reactions begin to show a tendency to feed hostile feelings, teachers need to emphasize unity, integrity, working together, fair play and friendship. In this case, the strategies determined by teachers will help both the social environment to be formed with softer dynamics and the students to socialize in a healthier way. In environments where competition exceeds certain limits, teachers need to be more careful when planning and take precautions against the possibility of negative behaviors caused by competition. Encouraging teamwork and implementing cooperative tasks can have an effect that will balance the egocentric attitudes among students and direct them to a certain ethical standard. Although educational games are a very effective tool for learning, they can produce the opposite results in places where there is uncontrolled competition. In this case, teachers have critical roles. The educational potential of games will be effectively activated if they encourage students to positive social behaviors by guiding to a competition where ethics and cooperation are emphasized.

9. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the lusory attitude shown by students can lead to significant negative outcomes, especially under the pressure of competition. When the ambition to win overshadows abiding by constitutive rules, it signals deeper underlying social relationship issues that may contribute to these behaviors. This indicates that the lusory attitude, as an essential component of a game, can be compromised in such competitive environments.

It is important for the teachers to recognize these dynamics and create game settings that are sensitive to students' social interactions and ethical conduct. Teachers must design games carefully so that balance between competition and cooperation will prevent the breakdown of mutual respect and fair play. While competition in games is full of excitement and motivating students, it can

also lead to strained relationships and emotional conflicts if it goes unnoticed. It is commonly accepted that educational games should promote a healthy balance of challenge, collaboration, and ethical behavior, and this will enhance their educational benefits while preserving positive interactions among students.

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