THE FOUNDATION OF SHAPING A SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION SUBJECT FOR PREVENTING/DECREASING VIOLENCE IN SCHOOL

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Abstract: *Aggressiveness and violence in school are major social issues which occur more often in the present time. Physical Education in school can contribute essentially in the development of interpersonal relationships and to secondary school group cohesion, as key factors of preventing violence. The study highlights the fact that active engagement in sport activities, teamwork facilitates empathy, a fair play state of mind and conflict management. The introduction of a general competence in social, emotional and civic level can contribute in the decrease and disposal of aggressive conduct can determine the enhancement of mutual respect and the improvement of students' social inclusion.*

Key words: *Physical Education; interpersonal relationships; social competences; aggression; preventing violence.*

1. Introduction

"Fighting school violence means improving the quality of relationships and communication between all those involved in education" (Dardel Jaouadi)

School violence, which is increasingly common, affects the safety and well-being of pupils, manifesting itself in aggression, bullying and social exclusion. Causes include family environment, negative influences and lack of emotional education. We consider the involvement of physical education and sport to be an effective solution for preventing/reducing violence, since the content, methods and forms of organization used encourage cooperation and develop social skills, reducing aggressive behaviour. Through sporting activities, pupils learn to manage their emotions, communicate effectively and resolve conflicts peacefully. Motor activities have been shown to reduce stress and anxiety and prevent violent reactions.

2. Purpose

This study aims to substantiate the usefulness of the formation of socio-

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affective and civic competence in physical education for the prevention/reduction of violence in school, through the development of interpersonal relationships and group cohesion among secondary school students as determinants in the prevention and manifestation of negative behaviors in general. Through a systematic review of literature, the study aims to highlight the role of sports activities in the formation of proactive-social behavior, the promotion of empathy and mutual respect, and the improvement of social integration of students. It also aims to identify effective teaching strategies for the formation of a general socio-effective and civic competence in the discipline of physical education and sport, secondary school, thus contributing to the reduction of aggressive behavior and the creation of a safe and inclusive educational environment.

3. Materials and Methods

This systematic review was conducted through an extensive search of recognized scientific databases, including PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus and Web of Science. The respective search engines were utilized, using keywords such as "physical education", "violence prevention", "social skills", "group cohesion", "interpersonal relationships in school". Peer-reviewed scientific articles, experimental and observational studies, meta-analyses and systematic reviews, educational and psychological reports, available in Romanian and English, were searched.

4. Discussions

4.1. Violence and aggression in the school environment

The World Health Organization defines violence as "the intentional use of force or power, actual or threatened, against oneself, another person, or a group or community, that results in, or has a high probability of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, developmental impairment, or deprivation" [14].

School violence, a reflection of violence in everyday life, is increasingly attracting the attention of the media and civil society, which is becoming more and more aware of this phenomenon. School is no longer perceived as an isolated environment, and students' indiscipline and violent behaviors underline the need for effective prevention and intervention measures [23].

A 2017 national survey of 190 schools shows a decrease in cases of violence since 2006, with more than half of principals reporting no such incidents in the last year. School counselors identify more cases than principals and teachers because of their direct contact with students. Most cases involve pupils and parents, and socio-familial factors are considered the main cause of school violence [11].

Violence in schools can be fostered by external factors (family and social) and by the personality of the individual. The family environment plays an important role, as violent pupils often come from disorganized or single-parent families with problems such as violence, lack of communication or alcohol consumption. These conditions can lead to rejection of school tasks and rebellious behavior. The social environment, marked by poverty and inequality, can also negatively

influence pupils' perceptions of education and values [16].

Personality traits such as self-centeredness, lack of responsibility, emotional instability and poor self-control are linked to violence. Low self-esteem is a common cause of impulsive behavior, and aggressive people usually have low confidence in their abilities. In addition to individual traits, age and gender characteristics influence the intensity of violent displays, which increase significantly during adolescence [12].

One study shows a significant link between hostility and exalted and un-restrained personalities in preadolescents, with aggressive manifestations such as verbal hostility and irritability. Research emphasizes the influence of the family and social environment on aggressive behavior, recommending educational and psychological interventions to manage it [20].

Symptoms of violence can appear as early as childhood and are influenced by factors such as family, school, social group, cultural and social factors. These include low self-esteem, difficulties in managing emotions, problems with concentration and hyperactivity, lack of opportunities for self-control and skills for respectful relationships, poor communication, antisocial behavior, alcohol and drug use and exposure to abuse. These factors can contribute to the development of violent behavior, affecting the individual and relationships with others [29].

The first systematic studies on school violence were carried out in the 1970s in Scandinavian countries, highlighting the seriousness of the problem. A recent study looks at different forms of violence (physical, psychological, social, social, social, sexual, digital), underlining that both pupils and teachers can be involved. Contributing factors include family influences, social problems and lack of preventive measures. The author of the study concludes that reducing violence requires a comprehensive, collaborative and respectful approach in the school environment [18].

Racu I. (2020) conducted a theoretical-experimental study on 144 preadolescents (11-15 years old), analyzing the causes, manifestations and variations of violence according to age. The research shows that aggression is more pronounced at 13 years old, being influenced by educational and personality factors. A psychological intervention program has been shown to significantly reduce aggressive behaviors [22].

Preadolescence is a period of transition marked by physical and psychological changes that influence behavior. Difficulties in adapting can lead to aggression, and the desire for autonomy manifests itself in oppositional attitudes. The family environment and the reference group have an essential role in shaping their behavior at this stage [25].

In the opinion of some researchers, the need to study the problem of aggressive behavior of preadolescents is determined by the real situation of the modern world, "in which there is a tendency to accumulate psychological stress and resort to antisocial behavior as one of the possible ways to get rid of the state of frustration and tension" [1].

"The ability to overcome stressful situations and the formation of self-control over aggressiveness, the discouragement of aggressive acts play an important role in the development of affective processes of empathy,

identification and decentralization, which are the basis of the ability to understand other people and to empathize with them, contributing to the formation of the idea of personal uniqueness", says S. Eftimie [9].

Another study, from 2022, shows that a lack of empathy favors aggression in preadolescents, influenced by the family environment, the group of friends and personality traits. There is an inverse correlation between empathy and aggression: preteens with low empathy are more prone to aggression. The bottom line is that developing empathy can reduce conflict and aggressive behavior [21].

A large study of 39,936 students (7-14 years old) in Finland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom analyzes aggression based on teacher evaluations. The results show that aggression correlates with behavioral and emotional problems, being similar between the sexes, although boys have higher levels. Aggressive students also have weaker social skills. Teachers identify externalization problems (e.g., aggressiveness) well, but less internalization problems (e.g., anxiety). Aggression decreases with age but remains stable among some students. The study highlights the need for assessments from multiple sources (teachers, parents) [30].

A study from Uzbekistan confirms global data on aggression in adolescents. The WHO reports 176,000 murders among young people over 15 years of age annually. Family support, education, and cognitive-behavioral therapies can reduce the risks of violence. Effective programmes must address individual, family and social factors, contributing to

the safety of society [28].

4.2. School-Based Physical Education – A means of social behavior development

Experts in education, pedagogy, and psychology agree that Physical Education and sports, as pillars of general education, play a crucial role in students' motor development. At the same time, they influence overall intellectual activity and contribute to the balanced formation of personality [4, 6, 8, 26].

The main objective of school-based Physical Education is to develop students' physical and mental potential, promoting both individual and collective expression through movement, while maintaining a balance between biological and psychological aspects of personality [24].

School is a learning and social development environment where students acquire skills such as rule-following, role-assumption, group pressure management, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Physical Education and sports contribute to this process through team activities that encourage participation and provide positive feedback to those who fulfill their roles [17].

Motor activities' diversity and complexity, combined with teamwork, foster positive behaviors such as respect, collaboration, and self-discipline. However, negative behaviors like selfishness and verbal or physical aggression may also emerge and must be corrected through positive role models [3].

Developing students' prosocial behavior through Physical Education is based on mutual support, collaboration, and respect. Physical activities encourage natural interactions where children learn

to help, provide feedback, and resolve conflicts through dialogue. These activities are ideal for developing social skills and promoting prosocial behaviors [10].

Through physical exercise, students develop a sense of belonging, recognize their own value, and cultivate self-appreciation. Motor activities promote moral behaviors such as fair play and cooperation. The desire to belong to a group encourages children to respect their norms and values, reinforcing socialization and developing social competencies [8].

Game-based activities enhance organizational skills, self-discipline, and teamwork. Students improve their perseverance and coordination, while game rules help instill discipline. Additionally, they promote social integration and group success, making them essential in the socialization process [5].

The groups formed for sports games and competitions become stable and homogeneous, and socialization has an institutional character. Team spirit is formed not only in this framework, but also through informal interactions that strengthen relationships between teammates [7].

Interpersonal relationships are essential for the social and emotional development of students. Positive bonds create a collaborative environment and improve performance, while conflicting relationships can lead to bullying, isolation, and stress, affecting their results and well-being [2].

Social and interpersonal relationships are links between children and the group, based on common interests and goals. The teacher must guide students towards balanced communication, collaboration and civilized behavior, avoiding conflicts. Relationships of knowledge and cooperation strengthen the cohesion and unity of the group [13].

A 2023 study by Savca L. showed that a psychological intervention program for aggressive preadolescents significantly improved social skills (self-awareness, personal management, relationship skills, and decision-making) and reduced aggression. The intervention was effective in decreasing aggression and improving interpersonal relationships, concluding that developing empathy and social skills helps prevent aggressive behavior [27].

Physical education and sport are essential for the personal and social development of young people, according to a study by Opstoel et al. (2019). Sports activities help develop skills such as responsibility, leadership and collaboration, which are essential for social integration. However, success depends on the environment created by teachers and coaches. The study highlights the importance of an intentional and systematic educational program to transfer the skills acquired in sport to other areas of life [19].

A psychologically safe educational environment is characterized by harmonious relationships between students, satisfaction with school and protection from violence. It supports the balanced development of children and a favorable learning climate. Collaboration between family and school is essential for preventing violence and ensuring the emotional well-being of students, contributing to their school success and active involvement in the educational process [15].

5. Conclusions

The literature review highlights that

violence is a negative behavior also present in schools. Counteracting requires an integrated educational strategy, where Physical Education and sports can contribute through the values of motor activities, specific teaching methods, and classroom organization. Sports activities and team games help reduce aggressive behaviors by fostering empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect.

Studies identify family environment, peer influence, social pressures, and low self-esteem as key factors in school violence. Schools, as social institutions, can primarily address self-esteem issues. Reducing school violence depends on strong collaboration between teachers, school counselors, and parents through educational programs that promote positive social values.

The findings support the scientific argument that Physical Education should expand its competencies by incorporating a socio-affective component, contributing to the prevention and reduction of school violence. The conclusions drawn from various studies provide solid arguments in favor of this proposal.

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