

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL GAMES IMPROVE THE MOOD AND COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL SKILLS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

A school psychologist who is in constant contact with preschool children should understandably convey to both children and educators and the parent group the importance of sport in the physical and psychological well-being of children. In this paper, the impact of psycho-social games on the children of the third group of kindergarten, aged 5-6 years, is examined. This paper highlights the positive factors brought by engaging in sports and the use of psycho-social games in classroom settings and facilities frequented in leisure time by preschool children.

The hypothesis raised in this paper is: Psycho-social games and sports have positive effects on the rehabilitation and capacity development of children. Objectives of the paper; improving the psycho-social well-being of children, improving the quality of intervention with children by developing personal and social skills, hoping the skills of educators to use games and sports as a psycho-social tool, Strengthening the self-confidence and social life of children away from closed environments.

Methodology: The design of this paper is an interweaving of qualitative and quantitative methods. The children of the third group of 15 private and public kindergartens in the city of Shkodra and its surroundings were observed. Children were observed during their daily activity, behaviors were recorded and interpreted by a specialist, semi-structured interviews with educators and questionnaires for parents of children were implemented. Results were processed with SPSS while interviews and observations were interpreted. Observations helped to interpret the results. At the end of the data processing, conclusions were drafted, and then I came up with recommendations.

In conclusion, it is noted that games, sports, and creative activities help to develop skills in a terrestrial way in children such as - mental, psycho-social, and physical abilities. The goal is to change attitudes and behaviors and achieve long-term goals such as better self-confidence and self-esteem, a sense of security, and unity in a group.

Keywords: physical activity, social games, sports, holistic development.

1. Introduction

This paper examines the impact that sports and psycho-social games have on children. This paper points out the positive factors that bring the use of psycho-social games in kindergartens and environments frequented by children. What is worth noting is that sport activity and play is a very important factor that affects the growth and development of children. It helps the child to fill in the gaps that may exist in areas of his development. Sports and psycho-social games have positive and even immediate effects on the rehabilitation and capacity development of children. The importance of sports activities and games in the development of children is considered an essential component in the overall development of the components of the personality of children. Through sports activities and play, the child grows, develops, and learns new habits, he also expresses the problems he may have in society or family. Play is the most important activity in the life of children and as such should be put at the service of healthy growth and an effective teaching process. So that the educational process does not come to the children as a great effort sometimes even taking the tones of a "work" and "obligation" forced on the children. Thus, in the service of the best interest of the child for welfare and health, it is good to integrate play into the learning process. By placing the child's interest at the center of education and bringing it naturally to preschoolers. This will serve a harmonious development of both the physical developmental and psycho-social components of children. During physical activity and play, children do work,

explore the environment around them, learn and make connections with themselves and others.

Goals

1. Identify the self-development potential of personal and social skills of preschoolers.
2. Awareness of preschool students about their capacities and encouragement for the expansion of this potential.
3. Improving the quality of intervention for preschoolers in the service of their psycho-social harmony.
4. The use of sports activities and games as psycho-social tools in the service of consistent education.
5. Engaging in sports activities as a way of strengthening self-confidence and promoting a healthy social lifestyle.

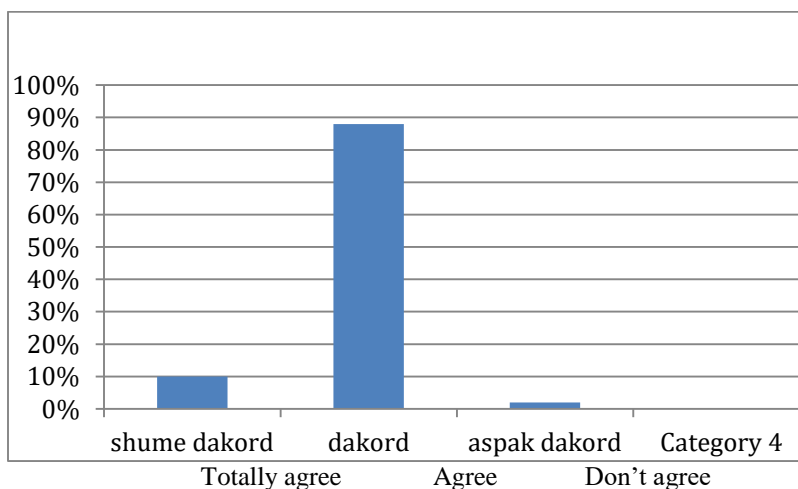
Sample

The data obtained from the field observation of preschool behaviors in kindergarten environments have prompted the orientation of semi-structured interviews with kindergarten educators. From the coding of the keywords of the semi-structured interview, the questions for the questionnaire addressed to one of the parents of each of the children were formulated. All children of the third group of 15 private and public kindergartens in the city of Shkodra were observed. This observation was made in the period March-April 2021, interviews were conducted with the educators of these groups in the period 1-30 May 2021, and in June the questionnaire was distributed to the parents of these children. The questionnaire was completed by 140 preschool parents. In September-October, the processing and interpretation of the work data were performed.

Results and data analysis

The results of the questionnaire are of particular importance because they provide a measurable overview of the problem under study. The data and their processing refer to various aspects of sports activity and physical games integrated with the teaching process in preschool. The results of the questionnaire are expressed in the analysis of the component questions;

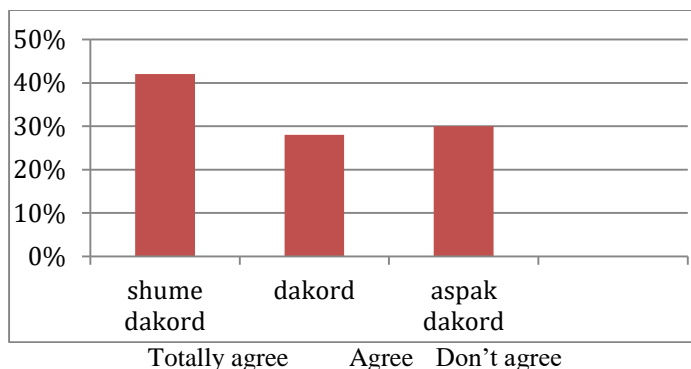
Question 1. My child learns by playing.



The answers given result that 88% of parents think that their children learn better through play, 10% of parents convincingly agree and only 2% of parents do not agree at all that play has an impact on their children to learn. Learning through play enables ever-increasing interconnectedness, which means that children will need a range

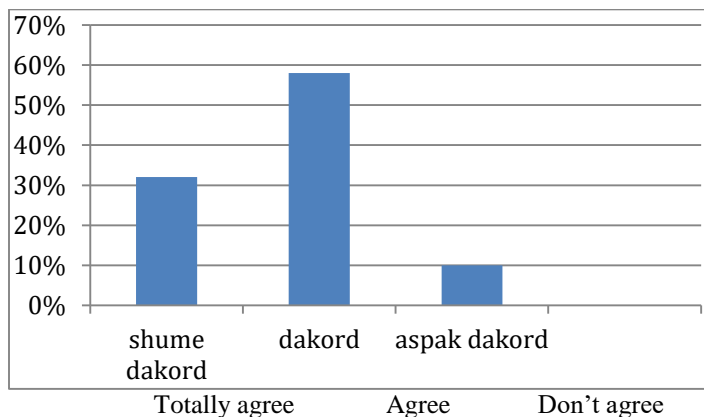
of skills as they grow up and will face a constant need for lifelong learning. Just as educators, also parents think that learning through play promotes healthy growth and the acquisition of both knowledge and thinking skills. Physical activity, therefore, stimulates the child's imagination, learning ability, executive functions, and self-regulatory abilities. Physical activity and play are the builders of the brain and have a direct and indirect effect on the structure and functioning of the brain by promoting or assisting executive functions. Learning should be with active actions and engagements in sports activities and games.

Question 2. My child remembers the concepts he has learned through play



About 42% of parents strongly agree with the idea that physical activity can affect a child's brain development in many ways, including the provision of life experiences that lay the foundations for brain development. 28% of parents agree that physical activity is the main activity in early childhood that improves creative abilities and brings the highest level of intelligence in later years of life. But about 30% of parents do not agree at all that these two activities should be combined. They stick to the idea of structured learning regardless of the developmental stage of preschoolers.

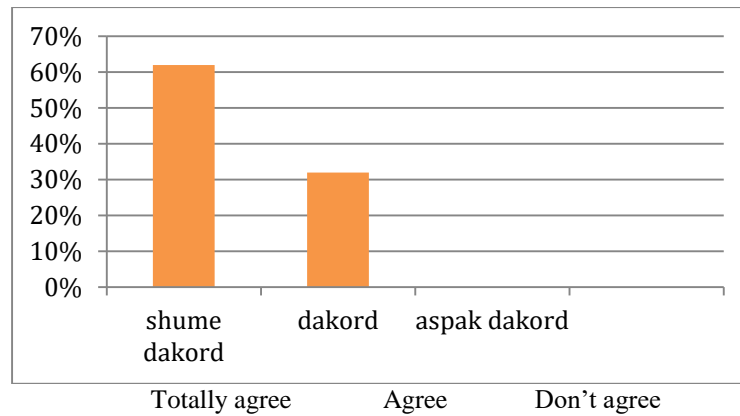
Question 3. My child comes home happy when they have done physical education class in kindergarten



As can be seen from the graph, 58% of parents strongly agree that physical activity adds fun, joy, and motivation, and is the main feature of the game with a profound impact on the mood of a child. This refers to the pleasure and joy of children during play which is expressed through laughter, singing, and expressing joy in their engagement in physical activities. This satisfaction is related to the positive active engagement that deeply engages the child in the activity and makes them have a high concentration. Consequently, memories, attention, mind shift, creativity, and motivation will be optimal. While in this line are also 32% of parents who agree. While 10% of parents do not agree at all that their children come home

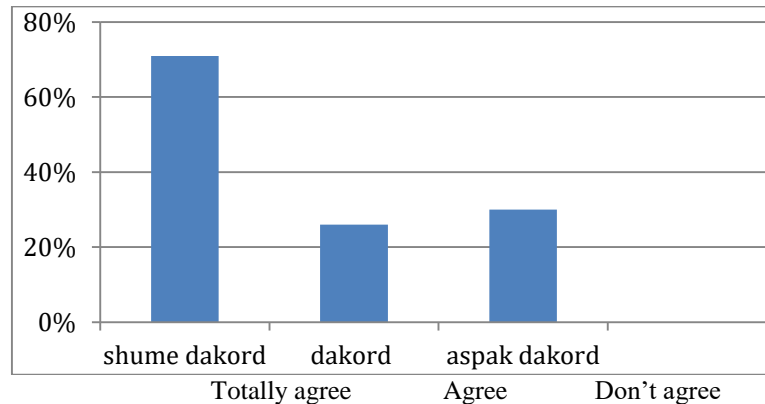
happier from engagements in physical activity, either are simply very tired.

Question 4. When my child plays outside in kindergarten he becomes more social with friends



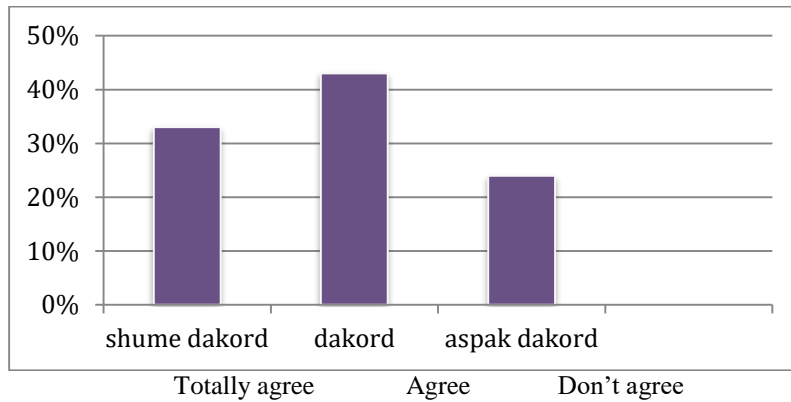
From the data analysis, we notice that 62% of parents strongly agree and 38% of parents agree. As can be seen, we have an extreme division in attitudes about the social aspect of the game and the exercise of sports activity. Most convincingly appreciate the social and communicative aspects of the activity. They see the game as an incentive for friendship and higher social competence. By playing preschoolers adapt more quickly and are more likely to interact with peers.

Question 5. I have noticed that by playing my child learns new solutions, you become more creative



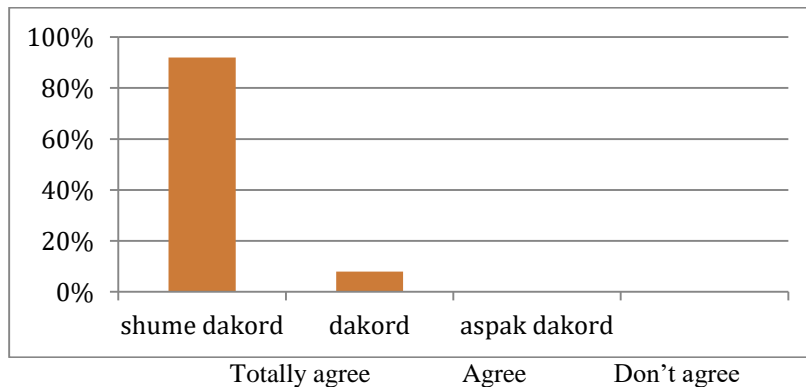
The results show that 71% of parents strongly agree that physical activity stimulates creative thinking in children. Creativity is thus closely related to divergent thinking which explores many possible solutions and usually generates creative ideas while 26% of parents agree and support this line of thinking and only 3% of parents strongly disagree with these benefits. The use of toys promotes cognitive functions and problem-solving skills. It also affects the motivation of children, allowing them to be more creative, and to explore and develop new ideas and roles.

Question 6. When my child exercises, he becomes more attentive to daily activities



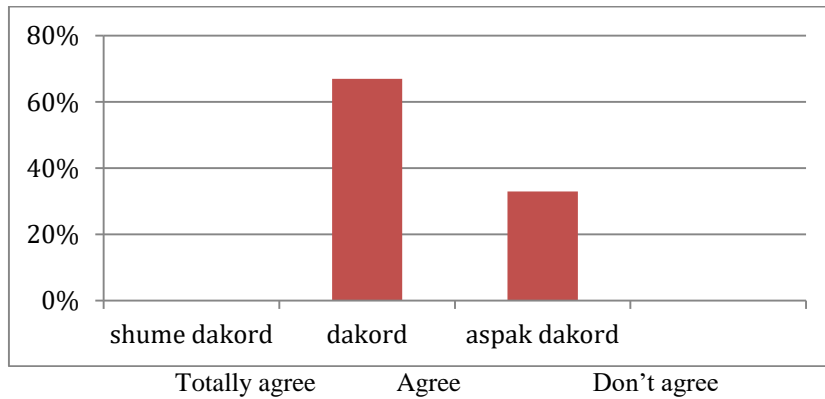
33% answered yes and 30% answered yes to this question, estimating that physical activity in outdoor environments allows children not only to develop their motor skills such as eye coordination, time and space orientation, interaction with objects, and position of each actor around himself but also gives the opportunity to calm down and relax and be more focused on the various activities that take place in everyday life. But even a sample of 24% says they do not agree at all with the alleged impact of play on children's concentration in everyday life.

Question 7. Physical activity in kindergarten has improved my child's motor skills.



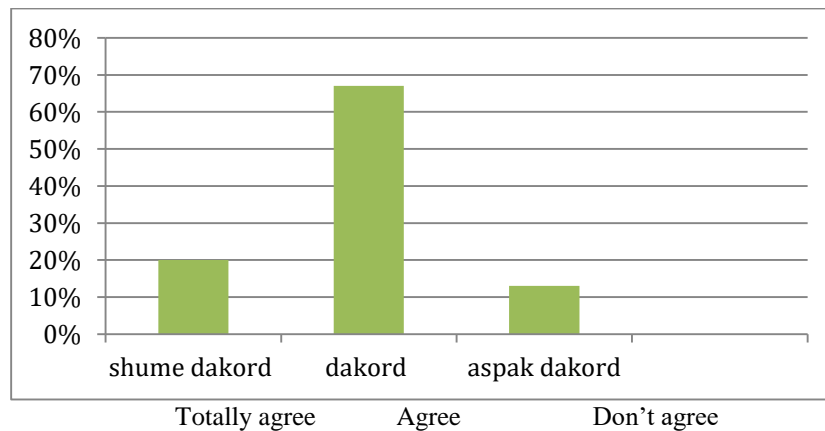
As can be seen from the graph, almost all parents agree 92% strongly that engaging in sports and physical activity sets in motion the lower and upper limbs of children and allow them to practice many fine and global movements that quickly become a habit thus improving children's motor skills. 8% of parents of the sample also go in this line, but they are somewhat more moderate.

Question 8. When my child plays, he puts into practice what he has learned in Kindergarten



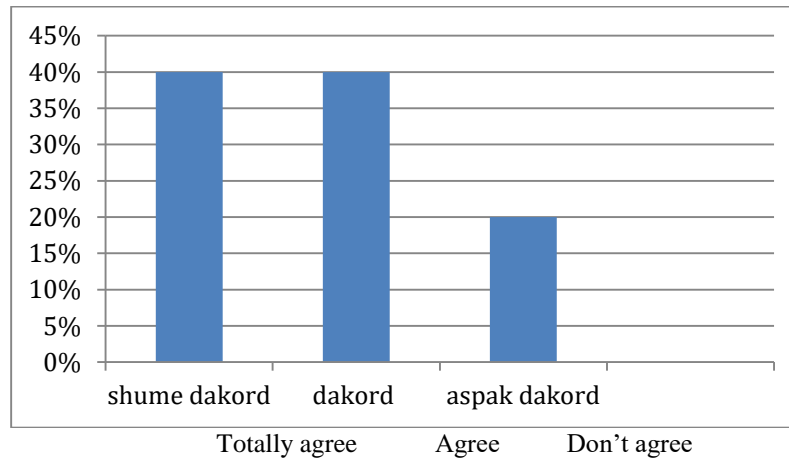
67% of the respondents answered this question, and agree with the statement stands out. The figure of 33% of parents does not agree at all, indicating a kind of dissatisfaction or disapproval of the spirit of knowledge transmission in the garden.

Question 9. By playing my child gets to know himself better.



Regarding the development of the concept of a self-formed child through play, we have a result of 67% agreeing. This shows high awareness of parents about the importance of exercising physical activity in the overall formation of their children. While 20% of parents strongly agree that sport is a powerful builder of self-concept. Admitting that through play children learn more about themselves, self-regulation of feelings, self-esteem, and self-confidence. To express themselves, to explore feelings, and to be shaped. During physical activity, my child knows better himself, his skills, and his capacity. While a figure of 13% of parents does not agree at all with the assumed impact of physical activity on the children's self-esteem.

Question 10. Physical activity enhances my child's communication skills



Regarding the question, about the development of communication skills under the influence of sports and games, almost 80 % of parents answered positively. 40 % of them agree and the other 40 % totally agree, therefore highlighting the estimated importance of physical activity in this regard. In this context physical activity improves the child's language skills and communication skills. Improves cognitive flexibility and increases self-regulatory ability. While a small percentage of 20% of parents do not agree at all that the child participating in physical activities increases communication capacity.

2. Conclusions

Involving children in sports and structured activities has a positive effect on a child, and plays a central role in preparing them for the challenges of childhood and adulthood. Learning through play is best done when experienced as fun, meaningful, actively engaging, repetitive, and engaging in social interaction. These 10 characteristics vary naturally as children engage in various physical activities. For most people, learning involves acquiring a specific new skill, and sporting skills have importance in early childhood that cannot be underestimated. This helps children focus selectively and ignore distractions. This allows children to develop the capacity to calmly reflect, look, hear and feel before acting on the stimulus. So, the game contributes to the growth, construction, and development of the brain. Helps children adapt to the world around them and cope with situations. Nourishes development and entertains at the same time. It gives children the opportunity to practice what they are learning. Reinforces learning by developing cognitive skills through play. Children use the skills they have acquired and expand their knowledge and understanding of the world. By playing, they feel achievement and self-confidence. By playing, they reinforce and develop large and small motor skills. Improve balance, coordination, and skills. They develop cognitive skills such as thinking, understanding, memory, imagination, communication, etc. Learning through play is best done when experienced as fun, meaningful, engaging, repetitive, and socially interactive. Engaging in the world through play is fundamental to learning in childhood, but also to building the foundations for lifelong learning. Such an independent search for knowledge and testing of what they think helps children learn and understand more about the world around them, and also strengthens critical thinking and reasoning. Practice increases engagement in the brain network associated with perspective thinking, flexible thinking, and creativity. The data show that engaging with the world through play is essential for learning, both in childhood and in building the foundations for lifelong learning.

Together with the sense of action, fun, understanding, and active engagement, they are necessary for the child to enter a state of learning through play. Including repetition and social interaction, all together lead to in-depth and safe learning.

Recommendation

Play, as an important element that helps to learn, is important to be introduced as part of the teaching methodology for lower-grade classes. Parents, guardians, or teachers are advised to be attentive so that they can help their children through play, to develop the aspects in which they are behind in the work.

Make parents and educators aware that play can also be used to educate children about communication, interaction, and support for others and themselves. Understand that through various physical or unstructured physical activities children can get to know themselves and others. The less structured and integrated learning process with different aspects of physical activity and sports is more result-oriented and teaches students voluntarily and naturally. Encouraging discussion with the psychologist in the activity makes teaching more productive and new concepts more sustainable, internalizing them as an integral part of the preschool development experience.

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