EXTRACURRICULAR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE SOCIO-SCHOOL COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS AGED 10-11 YEARS

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to verify the effect and function of school extracurricular activities on the socio-school competence of primary school students.
The study sample consisted of 87 subjects (N=47 girls and N=40 boys). The experimental design exposed the experimental group to psychostimulative treatment, while the control group served to control the effect of relevant variables within the psychostimulatory variability. The social and school competencies were measured through the Socio-School Competence Scale (SCSS).
Contrary to expectations, no differences were found in socio-school competence depending on the preferred extracurricular activity (hobbies, completing school tasks, and play), and it was concluded that only the preferred activity is statistically significant predictor for socio-school competence in a positive direction.
The results are discussed in the context of their impact on school competence and achievement and suggestions are offered for their implementation in the school system.

Keywords: Extracurricular activity, social competence, school competence, lateralism, the dominant hand.

1. Introduction

Primary education represents one of the most critical phases in human life. Within this phase, children not only assimilate and accommodate knowledge, but they are also actively in the process of building personality, life curiosity, and the desire to learn. In this context, it is very important that special attention is given not only to classroom learning but also to extracurricular activities that impact students' lives (Faxridinovna, 2025).
The importance of planning and implementing extracurricular activities lies in the fact that they form a complementary environment that helps in the socio-emotional socialization of children as well as in improving academic achievements, because these activities emphasize growth, development, and learning through experience.
Theories continuously emphasize the importance of intertwining different developmental environments because these open up more opportunities for new social interactions, helping them to develop and create new skills and abilities (Evans, 2026). In this context, children of school age, especially those who, due to their age (7 to 10 years old), are characterized by logical and concrete thinking (Cherry, 2026), need to learn by combining imitation channels (Bandura, 1991) to enable them to have a concrete example to then follow and imitate, as well as channels of real experience – which allow children to learn not only through passive information acquisition but through a cyclical process that includes experiencing, reflecting on, and implementing or applying them in new situations (Kolb, 1984). This form of learning combination (Piaget, 1952), would be explained through assimilation and accommodation.
When school and extracurricular activities complement each other and are accepted as such, they provide the opportunity for change. The school continues to remain in the most favorable position to develop in students the skills necessary for extracurricular activities. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers in schools support freedom within the educational process, as well as the feeling of satisfaction that comes with it. Because it is precisely in this way that school can serve as a preparatory step for free activities (Ankica Antovska & Borce Kostov, 2016).

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1.1.Extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities are those activities that find application among students and take place outside their classroom hours. Since school is a place where students acquire basic knowledge, it is also worth emphasizing the important role played by activities outside of school, cultural, where students tend to participate (Samuel, 2024). These activities can take various forms, starting from debates, competitions, writing articles, singing, dancing, organizing various events, etc. As such, these activities have mental and physical importance because they serve as tools through which the overall development of children is mediated (Pukkinen et al., 2024).

The importance of these activities is manifested in the field of students' adaptation to the school environment, enabling them to develop comprehensively, starting from academic, political, and social aspects. Therefore, extracurricular activities should be given special priority because they enrich students' minds, stimulate new ideas, and enable the strengthening of their intellect and character. It is worth emphasizing that it is not simply about play alongside learning, but about learning through entertainment, creating a sense of freedom and minimizing stress (Marrone et al., 2022)

To better understand the importance and role of extracurricular activities, we can refer to the SOR theory (Mehrabian, 1974). This theory presents a framework through which it explains how external stimuli determine individual reactions of individuals via internal cognitive and emotional mechanisms. In this case, stimuli appear as external factors originating from physical, social, or situational nature, which cause certain reactions in people (Jacoby, 2002). Thus, in this context, extracurricular activities serve as stimuli for students, influencing the formation of emotional and cognitive states that ultimately determine behavior or outcomes (Chetioui et al., 2025).

1.2.Extracurricular activities in support of socio-school competencies

Research focused on the importance of extracurricular activities describes the same organized voluntary programs that promote personal and social development (Zhang, Y., & Xu, W, 2022). In this context, these activities have been identified as important for developing interpersonal skills such as communication, collaboration, and leadership, precisely because through these activities, they have the opportunity to have frequent collaborative contacts (Chetioui et al., 2025), meanwhile, the lack of student involvement in this regard may limit them in this regard (Mariano et al., 2021).

In this spirit, studies (Fakhrurrozi et al., 2023) stated that one of the benefits of participating in extracurricular activities is that students develop good interpersonal relationships through their communication skills, because they have developed this ability since they are used to communicating and interacting with their peers and teachers. In fact, according to Syder, students develop communication skills in informal or face-to-face environments (Buckley P & Lee P. , 2021). A study conducted by Mark and his collaborators concluded that students who participated in such activities were more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors, such as cooperation and leadership, and were also less likely to engage in antisocial activities, such as violence or unjustified absence from school (Mark et al., 2023)

On the other hand, studies have also concluded that students' collaboration among themselves in extracurricular activities significantly affects their academic performance, especially when they participate in older, independent academic and professional activities. This is explained by the fact that students who take part in these activities only have a clearer path for their future aspirations (Ricker, 2023). He also emphasizes that when students are engaged in such

activities outside of regular classes, they are more likely to achieve higher results on their tests (Kanar A & Bouckenooghe D, 2021).
Extracurricular activities foster social competence, providing opportunities to interact with their peers, both in competitive and collaborative settings (Margaret, O. J & Kazaara, A. I, 2024). In fact, student participation in these activities is associated with higher levels of engagement at school as well as academic achievement (Fredricks, J. A & Eccles, J. S, 2006). These students tend to have better relationships both with peers and with teachers and parents, and are more likely to engage in prosocial behavior, enabling them to help others and participate in activities such as volunteering (Seth, 2019).

2. Methodology

The study problem can be determined whether extracurricular school activities serve the socio-school competence of primary school students.

2.1. Purpose and Hypothesis

The aim of this research is to examine the importance of predicate variables in explaining the total variance of the criterion variable "socio-school competence."
The following research hypotheses emerged from the stated objective:

H1. The components: preferred activity, family type, gender, and dominant hand are important and positive predictors in explaining the variance of socio-school competence indicators.

H2. There are significant differences in socio-school competence depending on preferred activities (hobbies, completing school tasks, and play).

2.2. Subjects

The study included primary school students from Tetovo (from fourth grade). The data were collected from students of multiple primary schools (N = 87). Of the total number of participants, 50.6% were female (N = 47) and 49.4% (N = 40) were male, aged 9 to 11 years (M = 9.37; SD = 0.506).

2.3. Measuring instruments

Socio-school competencies were assessed by combining two self-reported subscales of two different scales, namely, the subscale of children's social competencies "Social Competence Scale – the version for children." (2007)" and the subscale of self-perception of school competencies "Self-Perception of Scholastic Profile – the children's version" (2012)".
The overall scale includes 12 items, of which 6 assess social competencies, while the other 6 assess children's school competencies. The answers were evaluated using the Likert scales: 0- completely disagree, 1- strongly agree, 2- somewhat agree, 3- strongly agree, and 4- strongly agree, where the higher the achieved result, the higher the socio-school competence. The authors report that the sub-scales used to assess socio-school competencies have a high internal consistency in the literature, where the reliability of the social competency subscale is 0.85 (Anderson-Butcher & Amorose), while the subscale of self-perception of school competencies is 0.71 (Harter).

3. Results

The main objective of the study is focused on verifying the function that extracurricular activities have on students' socio-school competencies. Before presenting the results of the predictive and regressive analysis, we first introduce the results of the internal consistency of the instruments used to assess the variables in question.

3.1.Metric characteristics of the "Socio-school Competences" instrument.

Table 1. Reliabilility Statistics for pre-test and post-test n=12.

	Socio-school competencies
PRETEST	0.356
POSTTEST	0.584

The data presented in Table 1 suggest that the reliability of the socio-school competency test, after the psychostimulant intervention, tends to provide more reliable results compared to the results before the intervention.

3.2.Regressive analysis

At the core of the study lies the research question about the predictive value of predicate variables on the criterion variable: *socio-school competencies*. The regression analysis and the results of the conducted analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the stepwise regression analysis using the variable "socio-school competence"

	Predictors	**Model Summary[b]**		**ANOVA[a]**		**Collinearity Statistics**
		R	R Square	F	Sig.	Durbin-Watson
1	Favorite activity	0.212	0.045	4.488	0.037	1.558
	Type of family	0.099	0.010	0.947	0.333	1.619
	Gender	0.076	0.006	0.548	0.461	1.579
	Dominant hand	0.057	0.003	0.306	0.581	1.575

The results showed that the preferred activity is a statistically significant predictor of socio-school competence in a positive direction and explains 4.5% of the total variance. It can be seen that the type of preferred activity predicts a more pronounced presence of socio-school competence.

In the regression model, the other three predicates of students' socio-school competence family type, gender, and dominant hand turn out to be statistically insignificant. Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis has been partially confirmed. In regression analysis, the square of this value is usually also examined. This means that the model in which predictors such as family type, gender, and dominant hand are included together explains only about 1.9% of the variance of the dependent variable: socio-school competence.

Table 3. Beta coefficients from multiple linear regressions for the socio-school competence variable criterion

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
Type of family	0.551	0.566	0.973	0.333
Favorite activity	1.098	0.518	-2.119	0.037
Dominant hand	-0.475	0.858	-0.554	0.581
Gender	-0.454	0.614	-0.740	0.461

a. Dependent Variable: Socio-school competence

As we can see from Table 3, the preacher variables: family type, gender, and dominant hand, only preferred activity (β = 1.098; p <0.05), statistically contribute significantly to explaining the variance in the socio-school competence criterion. Knowing the preferred type of activity of students makes a distinction among students in the context of representation of socio-school competence. This does not imply that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the predicate and the variable criterion, but that the important predicate predicts socio-school competence in school-aged students.

On the other hand, the type of family (β = 0,551, p> 0,05) dominant hand (β = -0,475, p> 0,05) and gender (β = -0,454, p> 0,05) did not prove to be significant predictors in explaining the variance of the socio-school competence criterion variable.

3.3.Differential Analysis

Based on the differential analysis, the question was raised about the existence of differences in the context of socio-school competence depending on the type of preferred activity of the students.

Table 4. Analysis of variance for differences in socio-school competence depending on preferred type of activity

	Type of activity	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-testi
Socioschool competencies PRE	Electronic games + movies	13	32.9462	5.73333	F=0.003; p>0.05
	Hobbies	64	32.9809	4.32113	
	Reading and homework	20	32.8736	6.76860	
	Total	97	32.9542	5.04298	
Socioschool competencies POST	Electronic games + movies	13	34.8142	3.16448	F=1.311; p>0.05
	Hobbies	64	34.2999	3.24748	
	Reading and homework	20	32.9730	4.89573	
	Total	97	34.0953	3.64372	

The analysis of variance for differences among students in socio-school competencies depending on the type of activity was conducted separately for the results before and after the application of psychostimulation with extracurricular activities, specifically:

- The F-test value for pre-application psychostimulation results is F=0.003 with a significance value (p-value) of 0.997, and it is extremely close to zero, indicating that the variance between groups — or the variance explained by the model — is practically negligible when compared to differences within the groups themselves.

- The F-test value for pre-application psychostimulation results is F=1.311, while the significance value (p-value) is 0.274, which is higher than the standard signifier threshold of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

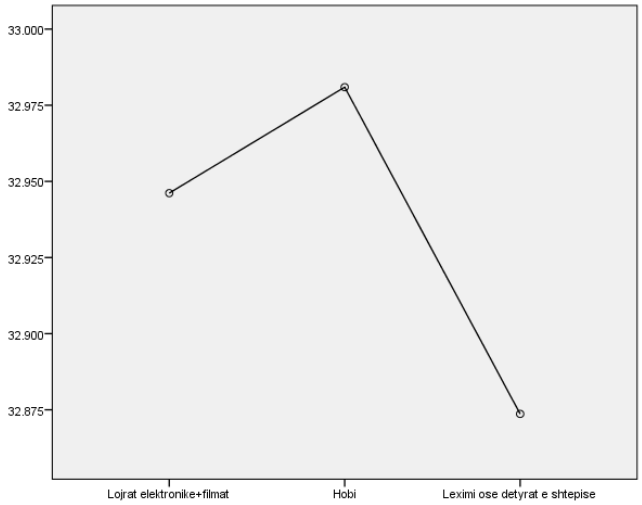

Chart 1. Graphical representation of preferred activities and socio-school competencies

Based on the graph, the average value of socio-school competencies before a specific activity or treatment is shown, categorized according to the students' preferred activity. The group whose favorite activity is "Hobbies" has the highest average value, with an average closest to the highest point on the chart (M=32.98). Students who prefer "electronic games and movies" have an intermediate average value of approximately 32.95, which is higher than the average achieved for students who prefer "reading or homework" (which is statistically considered the lowest average value, with an average of approximately 32.87). Although the line on the graph appears to show large increases and decreases, in reality, the differences are extremely small. For example, the difference between the average for the preferred activity "hobby" and the lower one "reading and homework" is less than 0.11 points.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to identify and verify the extent of explanation that extracurricular school activities have regarding students' socio-school competence, as well as to determine differences in the manifestation of socio-school competencies depending on students' preferred activities. The study in question verified that the reliability of the measuring instrument was below the acceptance criterion, although it showed increasing trends after psychostimulant intervention.
In this regard, the current study concluded that preferred activity is a statistically significant predictor of socio-school competence in a positive direction, while family type, gender, and dominant hand turn out to be statistically insignificant predictors. On the other hand, differential analyses in the context of socio-school competencies depending on students' preferred activities emphasized that there are no significant differences in this regard, either before or after psychostimulatory intervention.
Presenting a preferred activity as an important predictor of socio-school competencies appears as an indicator of orientation toward the student's interests and internal motivation; more specifically, by engaging in activities that are the student's favorite, they have the opportunity to experience satisfaction, autonomy, and interaction with others (Harter S. , 1978). The preference for an activity outside the school context, as well as the motivation to get involved and engaged in it, are important elements that explain how students engage in the school environment. And precisely, studies emphasize the essential role of autonomous motivation

through students' preferred personal activities in predicting the developmental outcomes of young people (Yeo et al., 2023).
Research conducted by Anne and her collaborators (Fletcher et al., 2003), stated that greater student participation in extracurricular activities is linked to high grades at school, more positive evaluations by teachers of the same students on one hand, while on the other hand, this participation is also associated with high levels of psychosocial maturity. These findings support the results of current research, which emphasize that extracurricular activities are predictive of socio-school competence. Another empirical support for the findings of our study is the study focusing on identifying the relationship between participation in preferred extracurricular activities and students' behavior, highlighting that students who participated in extracurricular activities had higher social competence compared to children who did not participate in any extracurricular activities (Howie et al., 2010).
Eva and her collaborators (2019) do not treat participation in extracurricular activities as a factor that always brings positive results to students, further asserting that such activities are not always aimed at improving well-being or various positive competencies. Furthermore, they add the additional explanation that results often reported as preferred may be presented as such due to external expectations, and not always because of their personal interests (Oberle et al., 2019).
The study in question confirmed that gender does not appear as a contributor to explaining the variance of socio-school competencies, a finding supported by a meta-analysis aimed at examining the relationship between behavioral problems and social competencies. This meta-analysis emphasizes that there is no gender difference interfering with the predictive power of the relationship with social competencies, since both genders exhibit different levels of social competence (Hukkelberg et al., 2019). Meanwhile, another study gives this relationship a different direction, emphasizing that social skills have significant effects on students' academic achievement, and furthermore, gender differences in the acquisition of these skills indicate a gap in students' academic results (Jennings, 2012).
Another finding of this study is the lack of predictive power of the family type regarding socio-school competencies, findings that are not strongly supported by the literature, emphasizing that the family structure is closely linked to the child's socio-emotional development, and it is presented as an important predictor of the child's social competence in the future; however, they stressed that it is not enough to know only the type of family to significantly predict the child's socio-emotional development (Sharon H Bzostek & Lawrence M Berger , 2018).
In the context of the lack of predictive power of the dominant hand over socio-school competence, it can be explained by the fact that the dominant hand represents laterality, while socio-school competence represents a more complex construct, including aspects of communication, collaboration, adaptation, and academic success. There are also studies focused on the relationship between the dominant hand and social competence, which have concluded that the dominant hand does not have a significant connection with prosocial behavior, which is a component of social competence (Maria Sifaki & Eirini Flouri, 2025).

4.1.Implications and limitations of research

The limitations of the study, as evident in every study or publication of the work, are also evident in the subject. The definition and measurement of laterality is considered one of the limitations of the study in question: hand dominance is treated as a simple concept, whereas in fact hand dominance exceeds the binary framework (right-wing/left-wing), but instead, there exists dimensional and mixed laterality (the ability to use both hands with similar dexterity). We are aware that the constructs defined and treated as such in the study, such as competence and lateralization, are defined very broadly (including communication, cooperation, and

success, or simply lateralism through hand dominance). In this way, a research limitation is created because, from a statistical-methodological perspective, the parameter of the very broad definition of constructs often loses "effects" such as correlations or differences with components that we have not included in the study. In other words, latent effects (if not small but important) effects remain marginalized due to the broad definitions of constructs p.sh laterality may correlate with a specific and narrower sub-competence of socio-school competence (p.sh., a certain type of verbal communication or spatial orientation within an academic context), but since we have broadly defined an interactive effect, it remains latent.
The findings imply a lack of predictive power, but this does not take into account latent mediator mechanisms. The absence of a direct link does not exclude the existence of mediating variables (p.sh., anxiety, or social stigma faced by students who use the left hand in certain cultures), which can indirectly influence socio-school competence.
The results and findings from this study are generalized within a narrow developmental perspective, covering only the 10-11 year age group. The relationship between brain lateralization and the development of socio-academic competencies can change during the maturity process (from puberty onwards through adolescence — a period not captured by statistical findings).
The findings have broad pedagogical and practical implications. Teachers, psychologists, and special educators should not use hand dominance as an indicator or prerequisite to assess a student's social adaptation or academic success. The fact that a student is left-handed or right-handed does not affect whether they will have better or worse socio-emotional development.

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