

Peace Education, Emotional Intelligence and the role of Digital Games

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Abstract: This article is a literature review that investigates peace education in the context of the educational process, the importance of emotional intelligence, and the role of digital games in its enhancement. The results showed that peace education has cultural, social, and political dimensions. Also, it is connected positively to the development of emotional intelligence, considered necessary to improve the well-being of teachers, which is the basic principle for the success and effectiveness of peace education. Furthermore, the literature review illuminated the misunderstood path of digital games, which can only support this field's demanding and multidimensional process.

Keywords: peace education, SDG16, emotional intelligence, peace, teachers' well-being, digital games

1. Introduction

From 1989 to 2005, peace education was not prioritized, especially in international agreements. However, when countries rang the alarm bell and paid attention to past post-war strategies, a physical defense strategy was taught in educational institutions. Internationally, the peace education approach was initiated and integrated into education following peace-building research and practice (Zarif et al., 2019).

In 2015, the UN presented the 2030 Agenda for Peace, considered a globally authoritative document for establishing peace agreements and peace-building processes. It includes various peace activities, humanitarian reforms, socioeconomic development programs, and peace education (Zarif et al., 2019).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) includes 17 SDGs, and Goal 16 promotes peace, justice, and strong institutions. It aims to reduce and eliminate violence, discrimination, and conflict resolution and provide security for human rights (Goetz & Jenkins, 2016). Recent reports on the progress of the (SDGs) point to setbacks in achieving the goals due to the confluence of multiple crises, from COVID-19 to climate change and various conflicts. In education, significant negative trends are evident, such as students not returning to school after extended school closures, deepening inequalities in learning, lack of psychosocial support in the school context, Etc. (Maric & Jovanovic, 2022). In that context, mainstreaming peace education on a global scale could be a more achievable goal.

However, about 90% of countries reported that education for sustainable development (ESD) and international citizenship education (GCED) were partially integrated. Moreover, only 15% said they were integrated into education policies, curricula, teacher training, and student assessment. There is still much work to be done to make all of the above officially part of education systems on a global scale. There is also a need but also a will on the part of educators to learn and do more about peace education (Maric & Jovanovic, 2022).

According to Wong (2020), teachers believed to be a profession that brings relatively high job satisfaction as well as a high level of stress in their job settings because of various reasons such as heavy workload, long teaching hours, large class size, students' disciplinary problems, cramped classrooms, excessive administrative work, Etc. Peace education practitioners must be equipped with unique practices and techniques to nourish and protect themselves and their learners. A growing body of literature emphasizes teacher well-being's significance in effectively educating future generations.

Education is a tool that promotes peace, social justice, equality, human rights, democratic values, cultural diversity, environmental awareness, and the fight against poverty. Education intertwined with peace. Peace education provides principles whose application empowers people to change the dysfunctional structures of societies by providing the basic skills of conflict transformation, reflection, attentive listening, peace-oriented communication, self-evaluation, mediation, and creative problem-solving. Empowerment comes when people acquire these necessary "skills, attitudes, and knowledge to create a safe world, maintain healthy bodies, and build a sustainable environment." (Harris & Morrison, 2003) These practices develop emotional and cognitive intelligence and create self-awareness, emphasizing the role of human life and responsibility for all life forms on the planet.

Research has proven emotional intelligence as a factor and has been introduced as an essential and defining term for human well-being and personal happiness. Daniel Goleman defined EI as "the ability to recognize one's and others' emotions, manage them effectively, and motivate oneself." He emphasized the importance of EI as a success factor in a person's life. He argues, like other researchers, that EI affects many areas of a person's life and is a component of personal, professional, and social success. It is also worth noting that Emotional Intelligence is a set of abilities and skills that a person must train and cultivate to succeed in emotional self-actualization (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2021).

The literature gathers many reviews on peace education, with many studies examining the field of EI as a promising and directly related field of PE and its effectiveness. Similarly, many studies discuss the importance of emotional intelligence development as a functional tool for teachers' well-being, considered the driving force behind the principle of peace education. This review seeks to bridge the philosophy of peace education with the importance of EI and the digital games of the time. Furthermore, this literature review aims to contribute to peace education, EI, and digital games at a practical and research level.

2. Materials

The research aimed to explore the importance of emotional intelligence and the role of digital games in Peace Education. Through the literature review, we examined whether EI and digital games can help the work of PE in the educational process. We found many reports and articles and tried to focus on the relationship between these three concepts. We mostly found the latest research and articles published in international journals through search engines such as ResearchGate and Google Scholar. The search terms used were peace education, emotional intelligence, SDG16, peace, teachers' well-being, and digital games.

3. Sustainable Development Goal SDG16 and Peace Education in School Context

The sixteenth Sustainable Development Goal SDG, 16 of the 2030 Agenda, highlights the need to promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies. Some of the most critical issues in achieving this goal

relate to protecting children and young people and developing safe, welcoming, and non-discriminatory environments. To promote more just, peaceful, and inclusive societies, minors must be educated in environments and relationships where they feel safe and respected and where adults support them to express their potential beyond limitations or socio-cultural backgrounds from which they come (Fabris & Longobardi, 2023).

The problem of violence against children remains a social emergency, and the school is a context in which forms of violence can appear (Longobardi et al ., 2019 b; Badenes - Ribera et al., 2022). Violence against children and youth has short-term and long-term effects on individuals' psychological and social adjustment (Prino et al ., 2019; D'arcy - Bewick _ et al ., 2022), and this may also affect society in terms of costs and the risk of creating less just, inclusive and peaceful societies. Also, school violence sometimes associates with teachers' disengagement, turnover, or emotional well-being (Ardestani et al., 2022).

According to Fabris & Longobardi (2023), two studies have been dedicated to the issue of violence in schools. Pina et al.(2022) conducted the first study in Spain. The authors used qualitative techniques to increase knowledge about aporophobia and its relationship with school violence. The results show that aporophobic attitudes are related to using violence to make oneself feel better, to be perceived as legitimate, and to relate to peers. The authors suggest that children and adolescents perceived as "poor" are at greater risk of bullying at school. Students from families with high socioeconomic status may have a greater propensity to engage in bullying behaviors. The second study (Ardestani et al., 2022) examined the prevalence of teacher violence in schools in southern Iran, a region that has been little studied in previous literature on school violence. The authors found that, on average, teachers reported fewer experiences of violence than students, leading to the consideration that teachers may need to be made more aware of how they interact with students. In addition, the authors found that male, young, single teachers with graduate degrees and less professional experience reported significantly higher levels of violence than other teachers. In addition, public boys' schools tended to report significantly higher levels of teacher violence.

In addition, according to Gursel - Bilgin & Bengu (2021), a growing body of literature reports structural, cultural, social, and political barriers that make it difficult, if not impossible, to integrate peace education into teacher education and in-service teacher education programs.

On the other hand, the school promotes education and skills development, but it also plays a vital role in preventing and dealing with forms of threat and risk of victimization. Peace education is an important topic and a school guiding principle, and the primary goal of peace education is to consolidate peace between people, interpersonal relationships, groups, countries, and communities (Lauritzen, 2016).

Nevertheless, a growing body of literature emphasizes the importance of teacher well-being for the practical education of future generations. This emphasis has only become stronger with the conditions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic (Gursel - Bilgin & Bengu 2021).

4. Emotional Intelligence and teachers well being

Considering the above and examining the literature on the multidimensional topic of Peace Education, teachers' well-being in terms of burnout, occupational stress, anxiety, and depression also emerges as important (Gursel - Bilgin & Bengu 2021). According to Botha and Hugo (2021), teachers leaving the profession before retirement age is an ongoing problem in schools worldwide. This is because teachers fail to concentrate on their work because of such factors, which ultimately affect their EI.

Emotional skills are essential to facilitate and improve teachers' work performance and the teaching-learning process. (Extremera - Pacheco et al . 2016). Several authors have confirmed that IE plays a fundamental role in the profession of teachers and the satisfaction of teaching, that is, in acting and

expressing the emotions they feel (Baranovska & Doktorova, 2014). In addition, the literature illuminates EI in teachers as a factor that reduces stress and emotional exhaustion and is associated with greater personal satisfaction in job performance and improved social relationships with the entire educational environment. Teachers with higher levels of self-concept are more resilient in stressful situations and are more likely to maintain a sense of personal accomplishment. Teachers with higher levels of self-concept are more resilient in stressful situations and more likely to maintain a sense of personal achievement. In this way, the need to develop this series of emotional skills in the teaching staff is evident, which acts as protectors against the various stress factors caused by work situations, thus increasing the level of enthusiasm and dedication to the profession (Seddighi et al., 2016).

According to that Puertas Molero et al. (2019), IE is a skill that must be developed in teachers, making it essential from subject training, as it gives the person the ability to regulate their emotions, making them more potent in terms of decision-making in everyday situations in teaching environments, as well as a critical factor for educational success. Through the positive reinforcement of EI, the levels of stress and anxiety that are of so much concern to society are reduced, thereby avoiding frustration before their professional realization, which leads to improved teaching practice, as well as the health and mental well-being of teachers.

In a study by Vesely et al. (2014), it was expected that those pre-service teachers who completed the five-week EI training program would show significant increases in EI and measures of resiliency, efficacy, and well-being. Alternatively, decreases in self-reported stress and anxiety. Participants were 49 undergraduate teacher candidate students (89% female) with a mean age of 26.5 years ($SD = 6.19$) recruited from two large Canadian universities. Participants from one university comprised the group who received the EI training program ($N = 23$), and those from the other university served as control subjects ($N = 26$). In contrast, and as expected, the control group would not show significant changes in any of the measures from pre to post-testing.

Lucas - Mangas et al. (2022) analyzed the relationship and effect of psychological well-being and emotional intelligence with adequate regulation of burnout. Involved 386 active teachers (55%) and teachers-in-training (45%) studying for degrees in Early Childhood and Primary Education and postgraduate degrees in Secondary Teacher Education, of whom 71.5% were women. The Psychological Well-Being Scales, the Trait Metadispotion Scale, and the Spanish Burnout Inventory were used. Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were also performed. The results showed that enthusiasm for teaching work is related to psychological well-being, mainly to the environment and personal development. Multiple regression analysis made it possible to establish a predictive model of well-being, showing that psychological well-being is the main adjustment predictor and/or the mismatch in the work of the teaching staff in both samples through an adequate regulation of positive relationships, mastery of their environment, and having a purpose in life.

Another EI-related study was conducted in Botswana (Kgosiemang & Khoza, 2022) was 300 teachers from 16 Primary Schools in the Southeast Region of Botswana. Both male and female primary school class teachers across all levels with a range of fewer than two years to above ten years of work experience. The 9-layered model of the EI pyramid was used as the theoretical framework for the study. The pragmatism paradigm was used to blend qualitative and quantitative research approaches to arrive at trustworthy conclusions about the effects of EI on teacher performance in primary schools in Botswana's Southeast Region. The study's findings reveal a link between teachers' EI and academic performance and demonstrate that EI training can raise teachers' EI levels.

5. The New layered Model for Emotional Intelligence and Peace.

Drigas & Papoutsis (2018) developed a nine-level multilevel model for emotional intelligence. The model includes features from the Ability EI and Trait EI models. In addition, the EI pyramid is based on Gardner's intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence concepts. It is a more structured model of

evaluation and intervention with hierarchy levels to indicate each level of emotional intelligence in which each one is located and with functional processes to contribute to the strengthening of each level, but also to the progressive development of the individual in the following levels of emotional intelligence. It is a methodology for the further growth and development of the individual (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018).

The levels of the pyramid, in essence, reflect the levels a human must pass to reach the upper level of EI, which is Emotional Unity and well-being, and include the following levels: 1) Emotional Stimuli, 2) Emotion Recognition, Perception-Expression of Emotions, 3) Self-Awareness, 4) Self-Management, 5) Social-Awareness, Empathy, Discrimination of Emotions, 6) Social Skills, Expertise in Emotions, 7) Universality of Emotions, Self-Actualization, 8) Transcendence and 9) Emotional Unity.

According to the researchers above, Emotional Stimuli form the basis of the pyramid of emotional intelligence. Emotional Stimuli are processed by a cognitive mechanism that determines which emotion we will feel and then produces an emotional response that can influence the occurrence of a behavior. At the second level, Emotion Recognition involves accurately decoding other people's expressions of emotion. At the third level, developing Self-Awareness is the first step in developing EI because as self-awareness builds, thoughts can be changed, allowing for feelings and, ultimately, actions. At the fourth level, Self-Management allows controlling reactions to avoid impulsive behaviors and emotions. With Self-Management, we are led towards flexibility and extroversion; we become more receptive and, at the same time, less critical towards situations and less reactive to people's attitudes. At the fifth level, Empathy, as the most essential and fundamental EQ component, is directly related to self-awareness. It is the ability to put yourself in another person's shoes, understand them as a person, feel them, and consider the perspective associated with that person at a time. At level six, Social Skills include communication, conflict management, building relationships, teamwork, collaboration, influencing, leading, and developing others. Once all six of these levels are met, the individual has reached the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. At the seventh and next level, with Self-Actualization, considered one of the essential EI skills, one feels Empathy and kinship with humanity. Therefore, this cultivates the universality of emotions so that those with emotional intelligence in a culture probably have emotional intelligence and in a different culture can understand this difference and feelings. Then, transcendence to the eighth level strongly correlates with self-esteem, emotional well-being, and global Empathy. Thus, Self-Transcendence is the experience of seeing yourself and the world beyond the boundaries of the ego. Emotional Unity is the ninth and final level in the pyramid of emotional intelligence, which essentially refers to inner harmony. In Emotional Unity, one feels intense joy, well-being, awareness of the absolute truth, Unity of all things, and peace.

The pyramid is an improvement in one's personal development and a higher state of self-regulation, self-organization, awareness, consciousness, attention, and motivation (Drigas et al., 2018).

At all levels of the pyramid, from the response to emotional stimuli to the feeling of emotional unity, each has its own metacognitive and metaemotional skills whose progressive dominance contributes to their development. Metacognitive and metaemotional skills such as attention, self-regulation, awareness, flexibility, monitoring, and assessment can be trained and applied in a variety of contexts such as the educational context, the working framework for holistic emotional learning and thus contributing to the development of emotional intelligence and self-improvement and the acceleration of the success of students, employees, leaders and citizens in general in many aspects of their lives (Drigas et al., 2021). Finally, developing and enhancing emotional intelligence through learning and training strategies and skills will act as a catalyst in the work environment, resulting in better performance and well-being for employees and leaders (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2019).

6. Role of Digital games for Peace Education

Technology and games have already proven viable and effective for supporting therapy, promoting intercultural communication, increasing understanding of ethnic, religious, and historically based conflicts, and representing different perspectives on global politics and foreign policy issues. In addition, effects aimed to be achieved through games are changes in the user's knowledge, attitudes, cognitive skills, physical ability, health, or mental well-being. Furthermore, games play a significant role in increasing people's social abilities. One crucial social skill is empathy (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2016).

Neuroscience research has determined that empathy can "increase social understanding, lessen social conflict, limit aggression, increase compassion and caring, lessen prejudice, increase emotional competence, and motivate pro-social behavior" (Feshbach & Feshbach, 2009 in Kidd, 2015).

Generally, empathy is thought to integrate both cognitive and affective (emotional) elements, and "perspective-taking can increase intergroup positivity through both forms of empathic responding" (Todd & Galinsky, 2014, p. 79). Examples of cognitive empathy include a teacher thinking about what causes a student to act in class or two diplomats getting to know each other's motivations and goals before undertaking a delicate negotiation.

Cognitive empathy was explored with PeaceMaker by Cuhadar & Kampf (2014), a government simulation game about the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. PeaceMaker is inspired by actual events in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict and aims to have players gain a peace-oriented perspective. A player can play the role of the Israeli Prime Minister and the Palestinian President to provide a diplomatic solution to the events. To win (ensuring peace in the game), the player must make decisions that both parties agree with. Within the scope of Peace Education, there have been many types of research about PeaceMaker. Studies have shown that PeaceMaker contributes to players' knowledge about the conflict, reduces bias, and positively affects empathy and attitude.

Another game that addresses children's empathy is Ayiti: The Cost of Life. In this context, Ayiti contributes to the development of empathy in children. It is even more meaningful learning the difficulties of a family struggling with poverty while struggling with problems meeting essential life needs. In the game, the player has to take care of all the family's needs, such as education, while struggling to meet basic life needs. Each element in the game is related to the other and is necessary. It is easier to find a good job if there is an education. Proper health care is only available if there is enough money. When studies on Ayiti are examined, there are studies supporting the mentioned contributions and evaluating the game from a critical point of view. It was underlined by different researchers that to get the best benefit from the game, and it should be implemented with the guidance of the teacher and follow-up activities. The game should be more complicated, reflect real life better, including the culture, and be developed to better reflect the game's primary purpose to the player (Polat, 2020).

The production of emotional empathy is explored in Hush. This game takes place during the Rwandan genocide. Hush is the most moving of the games mentioned in the literature review. Maybe that is what is causing the anxiety. However, it is the game that evokes empathy the most by addressing the player directly with the character name Liliane. Perhaps, because of its characteristics such as lullaby, song, mother and baby, and even its relation to genocide, it is the most mentioned but least researched game in the literature. Hush is a striking example of evoking empathy compared to its peers. Hush uses a singing mechanic to immerse the player in the player character's role, a Rwandan Tutsi mother hiding with her baby in a shack during the genocide in 1994. The mother sings a lullaby to soothe her baby as soldiers pass by outside the window. If the lullaby falters, the baby begins to cry, and the soldiers may discover their hiding place. The player "sings" the lullaby by typing it at the precise rhythm indicated by on-screen prompts. Players have reported that as they miss notes in the lullaby and the baby's cries grow louder, and the soldiers come closer, they feel an escalating sense of tension

and dread. Eliciting such powerful parallel empathy through a game is a rare accomplishment (Polat, 2020).

Another game developed based on actual war is *This War of Mine*. The game requires the player to make difficult moral decisions. The player learns to make moral judgments during the fight for survival. This ethical awareness is also essential to peace education (Polat, 2020).

Additionally, Papoutsi and Drigas (2016) discuss various games for empathy for social impact. The games, especially those related to peace education, undoubtedly contribute to gaining socio-cultural perspectives and can be the pioneers of change.

However, research into the intersections of digital games, education, and the work of peace is only just beginning. Studies are scarce, and longitudinal and empirical studies still need to explore perceived benefits.

7. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to review the literature and view the field of peace education in the context of the educational process, the importance of emotional intelligence, and the role of digital games in its improvement. Teaching about SDG16 holds the most promise when integrated into the curriculum, but mainstreaming peace education on a global scale could be a more achievable goal. It also found that although teaching is associated with high job satisfaction, it is related to high levels of stress, leaving the profession before retirement, and failing to concentrate on their work due to factors that ultimately affect their EI, such as burnout, lack of well-being, occupational stress, depression, and violence problems in the school context. For these reasons, there is a tendency for researchers to agree that Peace Education practitioners need to be equipped with practices to nurture and protect themselves and their students and emphasize the importance of teachers' well-being for the practical education of future generations. In addition, many studies discuss the importance of emotional intelligence development as a functional tool for teachers' well-being, considered the driving force behind the principle of peace education.

The literature has revealed that there is a link between PE and EI training, which plays a fundamental role in the profession of teachers, and their mental well-being, also revealing the efficacy of Drigas & Papoutsi's structured and multi-level model of EI in its application as a model of assessment and intervention that works positively and progressively in the development of the individual for the education and cultivation of EI and peace, gaining well-being that is deemed necessary for effective and creative teaching of peace as well as teaching, in general, making more enjoyable the teaching journey of every teacher by improving as well as other aspects of her/his life.

Therefore, Peace Education depends on and is related to the development of Emotional Intelligence and the programs that cultivate it. When the development of EI as a skill is considered a priority in intervention programs or curriculums, the integration of Peace Education into education programs will probably follow.

Last but not least, the literature review illuminated the misunderstood path of digital games and offered a glimpse of the enormous potential that digital games have for the work of peace education and conflict resolution. Judicious use of digital games can provide safe spaces for contact and collaboration, produce empathy, help negotiate ethical and moral dilemmas, enhance cross-cultural understanding and facilitate the acquisition of historical and cultural knowledge and, where

appropriate, reflect for passive complicity when dealing with cases of suffering and injustice. Hopefully, these benefits will last and cause positive and sustainable changes in people's behaviors and attitudes. However, research into the intersections of digital games, education, and peace and justice work is just beginning. Studies are scarce, and longitudinal and empirical studies must investigate perceived benefits. Much work must be done before this emerging, rapidly evolving medium can be harnessed more effectively for social good.

In conclusion, considering the enormous development of digital tools, the literature review highlights the critical role of digital games, which can only be supportive and encouraging in this challenging area of Peace Education.

Finally we underline the importance of all digital technologies in education domain and emotional intelligence training and raising, that is very productive and successful, facilitates and improves the assessment, the intervention and the educational procedures via Mobiles which brings educational activities everywhere [37-46], various ICTs applications which are the core supporters of education [47-82], AI, STEM & ROBOTICS which raise educational procedures into new levers of performance [83-101], and games which transforms the education in a very friendly and enjoyable interaction [102-110]. Additionally the enhancement and combination of ICTs with theories and models of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation and emotional intelligence cultivation [111-157] as well as with environmental factors and nutrition [33-36], accelerates and improves more over the educational practices and results, especially in the peace education domain

8. References

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