Role of Teachers in Fostering the 'Industry' among Primary School Students through Gamification: A Psychosocial Perspective

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Abstract

The primary school years constitute a critical period in children's psychosocial development, particularly the stage of Industry versus Inferiority proposed by Erik Erikson. During this stage, children strive to develop competence, confidence, and a sense of accomplishment through meaningful learning experiences. The present paper aims to examine the role of teachers in fostering a sense of industry among primary school students through gamification in the English language classroom. Grounded in Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and the principles of gamification, the study explores how game-based learning strategies contribute to the development of competence, self-efficacy, self-esteem, motivation, and learner engagement. Specifically, the paper seeks to understand the concept of industry, analyse the educational significance of gamification, and identify the role of teachers in creating learning environments that promote industrious behaviour among children. The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive methodology based on a review of relevant books, research articles, and scholarly publications related to psychosocial development, gamification, and language learning. The reviewed literature indicates that gamification enhances student participation, collaboration, language acquisition, creativity, and intrinsic motivation while reducing learning anxiety. Furthermore, gamified learning environments provide opportunities for achievement, recognition, autonomy, and social interaction, thereby supporting the successful resolution of the Industry versus Inferiority crisis.

The paper concludes that teachers, through the purposeful integration of gamification in English language instruction, can effectively nurture industrious, confident, and self-directed learners while fostering essential twenty-first-century skills and laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning and personal growth.

Keywords: industry, gamification, Erikson's psychosocial theory, primary education, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-worth, English language classroom, teacher's role

Introduction

The primary school years mark a crucial stage in a child's psychosocial development, identified and explained by Erik Erikson as the stage of Industry versus Inferiority, where children strive to gain competence through productive tasks and social recognition. In this stage, the teacher plays a strong and active role in cultivating and boosting the confidence level, perseverance, accomplishment and self-satisfaction along with a sense of pride in productivity. Introducing gamification into an English language classroom offers an innovative approach in achieving the objectives of language learning. By transforming learning into engaging, goal-oriented experiences through elements like points, challenges, and rewards, teachers can motivate students, promote active participation, and thus reinforce their sense of industry. From a psychosocial lens, gamified learning environments enhance the linguistic skills and also contribute to the holistic development of students, elevating both academic growth and emotional resilience.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand Erik Erikson's concept of Industry versus Inferiority and its relevance to primary school children.
2. To understand the importance of developing a sense of industry among primary school students.

3. To explore the role of gamification in enhancing student motivation, engagement, and participation in English language learning.
4. To understand how gamified learning experiences contribute to the development of competence, self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among learners.
5. To identify the role of teachers in fostering industry through gamified classroom practices.

Methodology

The present study is a theoretical and descriptive review based on secondary sources of information. Relevant books, research articles, journal publications, and scholarly works related to Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, gamification, English language learning, learner motivation, and primary education were reviewed and analysed. The collected literature was examined to understand the characteristics of the Industry versus Inferiority stage and the potential of gamification in promoting competence, achievement, and positive learning experiences among children. Studies related to gamified learning environments were analysed to identify their influence on student engagement, self-efficacy, collaboration, motivation, and language development. Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, the paper explains how teachers can utilise gamification as a pedagogical strategy to foster a sense of industry among primary school students in English language classrooms. Since the study is conceptual in nature, no primary data were collected from participants.

What is Industry

The word ‘Industry’ depicts that it is nothing but about mastering skills, following rules, completing tasks and having a sense of pride in achievements. Erickson (1963) believed that the word ‘industry’ may be described as a child’s urge to be perfect in his work as a learner, as an individual in the family, school and society. In the stage of Industry versus Inferiority a child

naturally takes initiative to study, to do their work neat and well. He or she may become capable of doing their own tasks without forcing. Feeling capable is the key factor which boosts the self-confidence and sense of belonging. Successful completion of the assigned tasks builds self-confidence among children and this lays a base for firm self-esteem and healthy self- worth. Erik H. Erickson is a German American psychoanalyst and developmental psychologist and he framed 8 stages of human development each characterized by a psychosocial crisis. Erickson's stages of psychosocial development paves a pathway for individuals to develop their social identity and personality. To develop social identity, each individual must travel through 8 stages of crisis that must be resolved. Among the 8 stages of psychosocial development, 'Industry versus Inferiority' plays a key role in the psychosocial development of children.

The stage of Industry versus Inferiority holds children from the age of 6-12. Children should attain a level of mastery in important social and academic skills. This is the period when the child compares him or herself with a peer group. If the child is sufficiently industrious, the child may acquire the social and academic skills to feel self-assured. Failure in acquiring these important attributes may lead to a sense of inferiority. Significant social agents who are responsible in fostering the industry among the children are none other than the parents, teachers and peers. The characteristic features of an industrious child include the sense of competence, perseverance, team spirit, cooperation and responsibility. An industrious child may have the ability to take initiative within guidance, possess a pride in productivity and diligence. He or she should actively build positive peer relationships. Intrinsic drive which is also the internal motivation. Internal motivation is a major characteristic feature of an industrious child. An industrious child might also enjoy the process of learning.

Fromm (1955) warned that, people who have a thought that work is the only purpose they should deal with in life may become blind slaves to the technological era.

Fromm's words are in tone of warning that if the children only learn to work and produce without thinking or creating they grow into adults who are blind obedient ones depending on technology who lose creativity and imagination. They may lack competence, sense of autonomy, self-regulation and such similar qualities. So, by stating 'Industry versus Inferiority' as a stage of psychosocial development Erickson needs to build a cluster of industrious children.

How to Foster a Sense of Industry Among the Young Buds

Countless ways are made use to foster the sense of Industry in children and some ways are as follows:

1. Encouraging mastery and skill development among children.
2. Through the emotional support provided by parents, teachers and peers.
3. Countless opportunities are to be given which make them capable in taking initiatives under proper guidance.
4. Letting children be independent.
5. Giving them responsibilities which they are capable of taking up.
6. By providing continuous positive feedback.
7. Ensuring diverse learning environments.
8. Children are to be kept engaged in creative tasks by providing them with practical hands-on learning.

What is Gamification

Gamification, is the process of integrating the game elements in non-recreational contexts, and has emerged as an innovative strategy in education to enhance student motivation and

engagement. Werbach and Hunter (2012) revealed that, Gamification can be explained as a craft which derives fun and he has also given focus on the addictive elements present in games and thought about making use of them in the real-world to foster productivity.

Key Elements of Gamification

Gamification incorporates several game-design elements into educational settings to enhance learner engagement, motivation, and achievement (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). Among the most commonly used elements are points, badges, levels, and feedback loops.

Points

Points are numerical rewards awarded to learners for completing tasks, participating in activities, answering questions correctly, or demonstrating positive behaviours. In educational contexts, points serve as indicators of progress and achievement. They provide immediate recognition for effort and encourage learners to remain actively engaged in learning activities (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). For primary school students, points can strengthen motivation and create a sense of accomplishment, thereby contributing to the development of competence and industry.

Badges

Badges are visual symbols or tokens of achievement awarded for accomplishing specific goals or demonstrating particular skills. They act as markers of success and provide recognition for learners' efforts (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). In English language classrooms, badges may be awarded for achievements such as reading proficiency, vocabulary mastery, teamwork, creativity, or consistent participation. Badges enhance learners' self-esteem and encourage them to strive for further accomplishments while reinforcing positive learning behaviours.

Levels

Levels represent stages of progression through which learners advance as they complete tasks and acquire new competencies. Similar to levels in digital games, educational levels provide structured learning pathways that gradually increase in complexity (Kapp, 2012). Progressing through levels gives students a sense of growth, mastery, and achievement. This gradual advancement helps maintain learner interest and encourages persistence in the face of challenges. For children in Erikson's stage of Industry versus Inferiority, successful progression through levels reinforces feelings of competence and productivity (Erikson, 1950).

Feedback Loops

Feedback loops refer to the continuous process of providing learners with information about their performance and progress. Effective feedback is immediate, constructive, and specific, allowing students to understand their strengths and areas for improvement. In gamified learning environments, feedback may be delivered through scores, progress bars, rewards, teacher comments, or peer responses (Landers, 2015). Feedback loops help learners adjust their strategies, improve performance, and remain motivated. They also contribute to self-regulation and foster a growth mindset by emphasizing improvement rather than failure.

Collectively, points, badges, levels, and feedback loops create an engaging learning environment that promotes motivation, participation, achievement, and a sense of competence (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). These elements align closely with the developmental needs of primary school children and support the cultivation of industry as described by Erikson's psychosocial theory (Erikson, 1950).

Theoretical Framework

The present paper is grounded in Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development, particularly the fourth stage, Industry versus Inferiority, which occurs during middle childhood (approximately 6–12 years). Erikson (1950) proposed that children pass through a series of psychosocial crises that influence personality development throughout life. During the stage of Industry versus Inferiority, children strive to acquire competence, master new skills, and gain recognition for their accomplishments. Successful experiences during this stage foster a sense of industry, characterized by confidence, diligence, responsibility, and self-efficacy. Conversely, repeated failures, lack of encouragement, or negative comparisons may lead to feelings of inferiority and self-doubt (Erikson, 1950).

Schools serve as one of the most influential social environments in shaping children's psychosocial development. Teachers, therefore, play a crucial role in providing opportunities for achievement, recognition, and constructive feedback. Erikson emphasized that supportive interactions with significant social agents, especially teachers and peers, contribute substantially to the development of competence and a positive self-concept. Thus, educational practices that promote active engagement, collaboration, and mastery-oriented learning are likely to strengthen the sense of industry among primary school learners.

The concept of gamification provides a complementary theoretical lens for understanding how learning environments can nurture industry. Gamification refers to the incorporation of game-design elements such as points, badges, levels, challenges, rewards, and leaderboards into non-game contexts to enhance engagement and motivation (Werbach & Hunter, 2012). Within educational settings, gamification transforms traditional classroom activities into interactive learning experiences that encourage participation and persistence.

The effectiveness of gamification can be further explained through Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000). According to SDT, human motivation is influenced by the fulfillment of three fundamental psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Competence refers to the feeling of effectiveness and mastery in performing tasks; autonomy involves having a sense of control over one's actions; and relatedness refers to meaningful connections with others. Gamified learning environments often satisfy these psychological needs by providing immediate feedback, opportunities for progression, learner choice, and collaborative activities. Consequently, students experience enhanced intrinsic motivation and engagement in learning tasks.

The relationship between Erikson's theory and gamification becomes evident when examining the developmental needs of primary school children. Gamified activities provide opportunities for learners to accomplish meaningful goals, receive recognition for their efforts, and experience success in a supportive environment. Such experiences directly contribute to the development of competence, which is the central developmental task of the Industry versus Inferiority stage. Moreover, cooperative games and team-based challenges strengthen peer relationships and social interaction, further supporting psychosocial growth.

In the context of language learning, gamification encourages active participation, reduces anxiety associated with language use, and promotes communication, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Sailer & Homner, 2020). Through carefully designed gamified activities, teachers can create learning environments that not only facilitate language acquisition but also foster self-confidence, perseverance, responsibility, and self-regulation. Thus, the integration of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Gamification Theory provides a strong

theoretical foundation for understanding how teachers can cultivate a sense of industry among primary school students through innovative language instruction.

Role of Gamification in fostering 'Industry' in an English Classroom among Primary school students

As part of English language learning, Sailer and Homner (2020) explained Gamification can be used to provide absolutely engaging and truly dynamic experiences, to facilitate language acquisition and it can become a firm support in developing linguistic competencies. Existing studies indicate that the implementation of rewards, badges, and point systems fostered both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in second language learning. From a cognitive perspective, Deci & Ryan (2000) believed that, gamification and Self- Determination theory can be tied together which assentuates the significance of competence, autonomy, and relatedness in learning motivation. According to Landers and Nicholson (2015) a gamified classroom environment is utilized to reduce the anxiety associated with language learning and the role of teacher is to provide immediate feedback and foster the cooperation among children which in turn lead meaningful learning practices through interactions.

Numerous studies clarified that gamification not only fosters student motivation but also brings a positive impact on their academic performance and the development of their communicative skills. According to Zainuddin (2018) the inclusion of gamification in language learning accelerated reading comprehension, oral fluency, and also optimized the writing skills and it received firm academic support (12). Contemporary research has expounded how gamification and digital technologies in English instruction nurtured a more engaging and effective educational experience, promoting critical thinking and creativity among students. Torres Illescas,

et all (2024) stressed on how important the technology is and the integration of technology and interactive learning activities promotes the early-stage reading skills. The language competency is truly enhanced by methodologies filled with digital and gamified tools. From the existing studies we are able to know how the adoption of technology based strategies strengthens the acquisition of language and it accelerates the capacity of retention of knowledge. Incorporated gamification in a second language class may accelerate the student engagement and motivation. The effect of gamification in an English class may generate a participatory space for children for getting interacted. Integrating gamified environments may facilitate creativity too. So findings from existing studies showed that addition of technology or a gamified English classroom may advance learner motivation, collaboration, cooperation, coordination, self-regulation, confidence and so on. Existing literature has enumerated the increased emphasis on the scope of mobile applications, simulations, and online platforms in contributing to the learning at children's own pace, which would highlight a notable student progress in language learning (Landers, 2019). Thus, gamification cultivates motivation, self-efficacy and academic achievement and also nurtures student autonomy while learning English language.

As the sense of competence, responsibility, taking initiative, cooperative learning, maintaining positive peer relationships, self-confidence and self-efficacy are all part or the characteristic features of an industrious young child and all these features are being cultivated and nurtured through the inclusion of gamification in a second language class, it is proven that gamification plays a crucial role in shaping the healthy industrious buds in primary schools. Though many studies came out highlighting the benefits of gamification in a language class, no one has documented the role of gamification in fostering a sense of 'Industry' among children.

Role of Teacher: In building a Cluster of Industrious Children

Keeping Children Engaged through Practical, Hands-On Learning

Children during this stage of 'Industry versus Inferiority' might benefit significantly from engaging in hands-on activities that make them apply what they learned in practical contexts. Giving children, group projects, and interactive activities nurtures their active exploration and curiosity. And this makes learning more relevant and enjoyable.

Promoting Mastery and Skill Development

Giving major focus on the mastery of skills rather than competition can help children develop a sense of industry. Teachers and parents play a crucial role in encouraging children's improvement based on a child's previous performance rather than comparison with peers. This approach helps in developing an internal motivation to learn and a personal sense of achievement.

Positive Feedback and Constructive Criticism

Constructive feedback is an essential component at this stage. It aims to address the efforts and improvements, offering specific advice on how to do better next time. This type of feedback supports a growth mindset, wherein children understand that intelligence and abilities can be developed with effort and persistence.

Giving Children the Opportunities for Independence and Responsibility

Teachers should shape children confident enough to take on responsibilities, on classroom jobs or leadership roles in group activities and can improve their sense of industry.

Providing Diverse Learning Environments

Teachers should recognise the varying interests, needs and learning styles and should provide them with a range of activities and instructional methods which are visual, auditory,

kinesthetic and may ensure that learning happens in an ease, accessible and engaging for all students. This diversity in teaching also helps to uncover and promote individual talents and interests.

Emotional Support and Encouragement

The role of teachers in providing emotional support cannot be overstated. Guidance, Encouragement, understanding, and reassurance are essential factors in helping children resist the challenges and setbacks without developing feelings of inferiority.

Peer Interaction and Cooperative Learning

Collaboration with peers is vital for social development and positive learning at this stage. Thus, the teachers should incorporate cooperative and collaborative learning tasks and both require teamwork and communication and it may enhance social skills, communication skills in English language and it also help in broadening the understanding of academic content through peer-to-peer teaching and learning.

All the above said essentials are necessary and are ensured by teachers in a gamified English classroom thereby fosters the 'Industry' among primary school students who are today's buds and tomorrow's blossoms. The above said roles are played by a single teacher to ensure the fact that his or her students are industrious up to an extent.

Role of Teacher in Strengthening Sense of Belongingness among Children

The role of a teacher in reinforcing children in a gamified classroom truly helps children feel noticed, appreciated, and included. As they receive encouragement and recognition for their efforts and achievements, they develop a stronger sense of belonging to the classroom community.

The sense of belongingness accelerates the feeling of self-worth which will naturally boost the industriousness among children that is very important.

Conclusion

Teachers play a pivotal role in building a cluster of industrious children by designing learning experiences that inspire effort, creativity, and confidence. Through gamification, English classrooms may transform into spaces where students find fun and joy in learning, value collaboration, and take pride in their achievements. In the light of various arguments which support the psychosocial perspective, few approaches help children develop not only language skills but also a lasting self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. Teachers play the role as a guide with empathy and purposeful design, they nurture both competence and character, laying the foundation for lifelong learning and self-worth.

Furthermore, gamification serves as more than a motivational tool; it acts as a psychosocial intervention that supports the successful resolution of the Industry versus Inferiority crisis proposed by Erikson. By providing opportunities for achievement, recognition, and meaningful participation, gamified learning environments help children perceive themselves as capable and productive learners. It also highlights that the effectiveness of gamification depends largely on the teacher's pedagogical competence. Teachers are not merely facilitators of game-based activities but architects of learning experiences that balance enjoyment with educational purpose. Their ability to provide timely feedback, encourage reflection, and ensure inclusive participation determines the extent to which students develop a sense of industry. Another significant implication is that gamification contributes to the development of twenty-first-century skills such as collaboration, communication, problem-solving, creativity, and self-regulation. These competencies extend beyond language learning and prepare children for future academic and

social challenges. The integration of gamification in primary education may also promote learner autonomy by enabling students to monitor their own progress, set goals, and take responsibility for their learning. Such experiences nurture intrinsic motivation and foster lifelong learning habits. Finally, it opens a new avenue for educational research by linking Erikson's psychosocial theory with gamified language learning. Future empirical studies may investigate the long-term impact of gamification on the development of industry, self-esteem, resilience, and academic achievement among primary school learners.

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