

SECONDARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND FOOTBALL COACHES' OPINIONS ON THE ROLE OF GAMES IN LEARNING FOOTBALL – SPECIFIC TACTICAL RELATIONSHIPS*

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Abstract

The game is seen as a teaching method by which tactical relationships are learned with more enjoyment and gradually replaces the traditional way of teaching motor skills. This study aims to determine the opinion of physical education and sports teachers/ football coaches about the impact of the games on the learning of football-specific tactical relationships. To achieve the intended purpose, we conducted quantitative research with a non-experimental design, the study being descriptive. The participants completed a questionnaire containing 12 items regarding their opinion on the impact of the games on the learning of football-specific tactical relationships. The sample was represented by 25 people, 12 football coaches, and 13 physical education and sports teachers. The study found that secondary school sports teachers and football coaches positively approve of the game's role in learning football-specific tactical relationships. The results showed significant differences between them only on specific dimensions considered.

Key words: Game; Football; Physical education; Tactical relationships.

1. Introduction

The game is an activity that can be used in teaching/learning football in psychical education lessons and any football training activities. Of course, the game is to the extent that the serious retains its place in its unfolding (Vamanu, 2001). Football as a team game is a game in itself, even is modified. It has a purpose as a way to score a goal or win, rules of the game, and an opponent or someone trying to

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stop from doing something. To keep the realism and relevance of learning the football game in its learning, the games chosen should usually include a ball and a natural element. They should retain these as many of the rules of football, which may be excluded or simplified to allow the participants to play freely (for example, no offside and with dribbles instead of throw-ins).

The use of games in football teaching/learning in school and other training contexts requires careful consideration. The choice of games from the variety of cooperative, competitive, territorial, modified games, etc., is made to ensure complete learning of the sport or a specific part of it (Barba-Martín *et al.*, 2020). Teachers/coaches must enable effective learning for the practitioner, which averages they must include as many learning moments as possible. It is essential to consider how representative the chosen practices are for the football game and, at the same time, the degree of involvement and repetition of similar situations that each participant will achieve. Customization can be done by considering the two approaches below: one is a traditional dribbling relay race, and in the other, everyone has a ball and dribbles without colliding with others; in the second activity, other people interfere with the space and get in the way. The second activity is, therefore, more suitable for almost all ages and learning abilities and offers more technical development through the repetition of ball control. The more realistic setting forces the participants to control the ball with their head up and looking around. So, the games used in football capture a new approach to learning, which ensures the training and development of each participant as an individuality, as well as the collaboration between team members. Learning thus becomes a problem-solving context during a game-created situation rather than achieving a specific goal (Singleton, 2009).

2. Theoretical background

Modern football has changed from tactical relations like "each with the neighbor" to superior, diverse, and dynamic ones like "each with each". The competitive attitude of the teams has increased, and, at the same time, physical training has gained speed, mainly on account of endurance, speed, and motor skills. The game's technique has been perfected and expanded to such an extent that it allows any player to perform adequately in any phase of defense or attack (Brîndescu, 2012). The spread of the game of football, the expansion of the area and the competitive forms, and the current imperatives of the competition make that in today's football, more than ever, the team seeks its progression, yielding in the strength and averages that the team possesses. Football is a game that promotes new tactical relationships between players, corresponding to the new dynamism of the game's organization. It is about relations in football as anticipation of the intention of the partner with the ball, directing the free teammate by the ball possessor, individual and collective support of the active phase, false demarcation, prompt retraction of the attackers after the exhaustion of the attack, drawing the opponent into side play areas (Ju, 2015).

However, how to teach and ensure efficient learning of modern football? The literature revealed various types of games to assure the demand for the modern

approach. Bunker and Thorpe (1982) mentioned that in teaching sports games, emphasis should be placed on understanding the game's logic and tactical structure should be learned before tackling the technical training of students. This theory emerged to counter the traditional methods of teaching games by traditional methods understanding the analytical method of teaching various technical procedures and tactical relationships. Osman (2017) shows us the effects of using Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) on the awareness of tactical relationships and the ability to make decisions during the game. The participants who learned football through games significantly improved their performance: their decision-making ability and were able to become more aware of the tactical relationships taught have a better understanding of all aspects and tactical issues (Pearson, Webb, McKeen, 2008) and a better motivation, engagement, and joy for the participant (Forrest, Webb, Pearson, 2006), achievement perception (Alcalá and Garijo, 2017) and better participation in sports lessons (Abad Robles *et al.*, 2020). The usage of TGfU and game-based approaches is essential for participants because they assure the understanding of the sense of the game and action principles linked immediately to the reality of the playing process (Martínez-Santos *et al.*, 2020).

Teaching football through games is considered a method through which tactical relationships are learned with more pleasure, gradually replacing traditional methods of teaching motor skills. García-Ceberino *et al.* (2020) analyzed the Tactical Games Approach (TGA) as a model for developing participants' understanding and decision-making using questions and interrogative feedback in different games. Using the Teaching Games for Understanding approach, has been shown to increase students' learning efficiency in various physical education situations and enhance their motivation for psychical education (Zhen-Rong, 2021).

The choice of games in football teaching must be centered on the learners. Thus, taking into account the age, physique, and motor skills, the teachers modified the exercises, for example, simplifying the rules and changing the size of the field, so that the game conforms to the abilities of the learners (Karo *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, students can think independently about the motor skills they are developing or the tactics applied in the competition when the game is modified (Stolz, Pill, 2014). More importantly, they can enjoy participating in physical education/ training classes. Using PE through games-based pedagogical models, teachers and coaches provide their students with an empowering motivational climate, which determines positive changes in students' perception of physical education (Choi *et al.*, 2021). Once oriented to students, the game could stimulate their interest in learning and help them understand the way of teaching the game of football (Yang, Lu, 2013).

The literature proposes an integrated model of football teaching that ensures focus on the participants. Buisic and Dordic (2018) proposed TPSR Integrated Sport Education Model that promotes students' positive affection, attitude, and behavior and has a positive effect on students' responsible behavior and self-efficacy in a football game. Other authors (Chunoh, Ronghai, Maochou, 2020) demonstrated that the responsibility gained through the TPSR model determines positive effects on

participants' motivation, mood and affection, and cognition in exercise self-efficacy. However, who is responsible for selecting and using the appropriate games for teaching/learning football? Football teachers and coaches must study the diversity of the games and the approaches to teaching football. Dinham and Williams (2019) mentioned that pre-service teachers are generally well-informed, committed, and confident but do not have the skills to develop children's physical literacy effectively. Also, it is essential to determine which instruments were used to identify the efficiency of different tactical learning in games (Barquero-Ruiz, Arias-Estero & Kirk, 2020). Webb, Pearson and Forrest (2009) proposed using specific questions primarily directed at the participants and given to the coach to understand the game better. Considering the multiple choice teachers and coaches have and the growing interest in teaching games through a tactical–technical perspective (Kinnerk *et al.*, 2018), it is essential for them to use it.

Teachers' inadequate preparation and physical education qualifications are significant factors in using games in teaching football (Hills, Dengel, Lubans, 2015). Kinnerk *et al.* (2018) conclude that the coaches need to be assisted through an action research framework in developing competence for using Games Based Approach in teaching. Zhen-Ron (2021) recommended that teachers design suitable goals and teaching content for learning football games. In this respect, he suggested that teachers participate in seminars or workshops for professional knowledge gathering. All of these emphasized that sports teachers are not only coaches but also transmitters of sports culture and games can provide a good ground for these aspirations (Dinham, Williams, 2019).

3. Research methodology

This study analyses the opinion of teachers and coaches regarding the impact that games have on the learning of football-specific tactical relationships. To achieve the intended goal, was carried out a quantitative research with a non-experimental design, the study being descriptive.

This study aims to determine the opinion of physical education teachers and sports/football coaches about the impact of games on football in terms of learning specific tactical relationships. The research objectives were:

O1. Identifying the opinion of physical education teachers and sports/football coaches on the degree and manner of using the game in teaching football;

O2. Analyzing the opinion of physical education teachers and sports/football coaches on the optimization of theoretical knowledge about the game of football by using the game and technique and tactics in the game of football by using the game;

O3. Presenting the opinion of physical education teachers and sports/football coaches on increasing interest and motivation for football through the use of the game;

O4. Discussing the opinion of physical education teachers and sports/football coaches on creating student-student communication during physical education classes/football training.

The hypotheses of the study were:

Hypothesis 1. Middle school sports teachers have a positive opinion on the game's role in learning football-specific tactical relationships.

Hypothesis 2. Football coaches have a positive opinion on the game's role in learning football-specific tactical relationships.

Hypothesis 3. There are significant differences between the opinions of secondary school sports teachers and football coaches regarding the impact/role of the game in learning football-specific tactical relationships.

The participants are physical education and sports teachers who teach in secondary education and football coaches who train children between the ages of 10 and 14. The study sample was composed of 25 participants, as follows:

Table 1. The sample of study

Profession	Number	Age	Sex
Football coaches	12	6 were aged between 25 and 35 years old	12 male
		2 were aged between 36 and 45 years old	
		4 were aged over 45 years old	
Physical education and sports teacher	13	10 were aged between 25 and 35 years old	12 male
		2 were between 36 and 45 years old,	1 female
		only one is over 45 years old	

Physical education teachers and football coaches received a questionnaire containing twelve items (See Appendix). The questionnaire was completed online on Google Forms from 17-31 May, 2022. The twelve items have five possible answers, using the following scale from 1 to 5 (1-not at all; 2-to a small extent; 3-to some extent; 4-to a large extent; 5-to a very large extent). The method of scoring used was the arithmetic average of the answers.

4. Results

In the specialized literature, we did not find studies that investigated the opinion of coaches and teachers of physical education and sports about the role of games in learning the tactical relationships specific to football. However, as we saw previously, the studies revealed more implications of the game on the participants' development or game optimization.

For item 3, the average of the football coaches' answers is 4.08, averaging they largely teach tactical relationships in training. In contrast, physical education and sports teachers in the gymnasium teach to some extent (3.38) only these relationships in the classes they support. For item 4, coaches responded that they use games to a very high extent (average of 4.5) to teach tactical relationships, and physical education and sports teachers use them to a large extent (average of 3.69).

Football coaches (average of 1.83) and physical education teachers (average of 2.07) answered that they find it, to a small extent, difficult to teach tactical relationships with the help of games. Both coaches and physical education and sports teachers said they received largely positive feedback at the end of a training session

or a lesson in which they used games to teach football-specific tactical relationships (average of 4.16-coaches and 3.85 teachers).

Item 7 shows us that coaches find that the preparation time of lessons containing only games is longer (average of 3.92), and teachers think that the preparation of lessons based on games is somewhat lengthy (average of 2.85). Coaches (average 4.17) and teachers (average 3.92) believed that by using games, students retain the rules of the football game to a great extent. The answers to item 9 reveal that the coaches believed that the games influenced to a great extent, the application of the basic rules in defense on the field (average of 3.67). The teachers believed that the games influenced the application of the rules to some extent (average of 3.38). Both coaches and teachers believed that they have activated students' interest to document themselves from other resources (films, books). The coaches are of the opinion that through the game they activated the students' interest to a great extent (average of 4), and the teachers to some extent (average of 3.07). Coaches (mean of 4.33) and teachers (mean of 3.53) believed that, through the game, they have caused a large increase in the motivation of students/players for the application of tactical relations in the game of football. Coaches (mean of 4.33) and physical education and sports teachers (mean of 3.69) are of the opinion that students communicated to a great extent during training/lessons, when they used games for teaching specific tactical relationships in football.

To present the differences between the answers of football coaches and physical education and sports teachers, it was used the T-test for independent samples (see Table 2). Were coded with one football coach and two physical education and sports teachers.

Table 2. T-test on differences in responses between football coaches and secondary school PE teachers

	Profession	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error
item_3	1.00	12	4.0833	.79296	.22891
	2.00	13	3.3846	.96077	.26647
item_4	1.00	12	4.5000	.67420	.19462
	2.00	13	3.6923	.94733	.26274
item_5	1.00	12	1.8333	1.26730	.36584
	2.00	13	2.0769	.95407	.26461
item_6	1.00	12	4.1667	.57735	.16667
	2.00	13	3.8462	.55470	.15385
item_7	1.00	12	3.9167	.79296	.22891
	2.00	13	2.8462	1.14354	.31716
item_8	1.00	12	4.1667	.57735	.16667
	2.00	13	3.9231	.86232	.23916
item_9	1.00	12	3.6667	1.23091	.35533
	2.00	13	3.3846	.76795	.21299
item_10	1.00	12	4.0000	.85280	.24618
	2.00	13	3.0769	.75955	.21066

item_11	1.00	12	4.3333	.65134	.18803
	2.00	13	3.5385	.77625	.21529
item_12	1.00	12	4.3333	.77850	.22473
	2.00	13	3.6923	.63043	.17485

The use of T-test to demonstrated whether there are significant differences between the views of physical education teachers and coaches regarding the use of games only in a few dimensions (see Table 3).

Table 3. Comparative data on the responses of two sample of research, on each item

Items	Samples 1=12 2=13	Score average	Value of T test	Significance level
I 3	1	4.0833	1.973	p =.061
	2	3.3846		p>0.05
I 4	1	4.5000	2.437	p=.023
	2	3.6923		p<0.05
I 5	1	1.8333	.540	p=.595
	2	2.0769		p>0.05
I 6	1	4.1667	1.415	p=.170
	2	3.8462		p>0.05
I 7	1	3.9167	2.697	p=.013
	2	2.8462		p<0.05
I 8	1	4.1667	.822	p=.419
	2	3.9231		p>0.05
I 9	1	3.6667	.681	p=.505
	2	3.3846		p>0.05
I 10	1	4.0000	2.863	p=.009
	2	3.0769		p<0.05
I 11	1	4.3333	2.761	p=.011
	2	3.5385		p<0.05
I 12	1	4.3333	2.251	p=.035
	2	3.6923		p<0.05

The results obtained in items 4,7,10,11,12 are statistically significant. The values of the T-test (2.437, 2.697, 2.863, 2.761, 2.251) and the significance threshold values (p<0.05) demonstrate that there are significant differences between the two samples on the following dimensions: the use of the game in teaching football-specific tactical relationships; the longer preparation time of some lessons/training that contain only games; activating students' interest in documenting themselves

from other resources; increasing the motivation of players/students for the application of tactical relations in the game of football due to the use of games; of the opinion that students/players communicate more if games are proposed during lessons/training. The results obtained for item 3,5,6,8,9 are not statistically significant. The values of the T-test (1.973, -.540, 1.415, .822, .681) and the values of the significance threshold demonstrate that there are no significant differences between the two samples on the dimensions of the teaching of tactical relations within the lessons/training; of the opinion that it is more difficult to teach students/players tactical relationships with the help of games; of the opinion regarding the feedback that students/players give at the end of a lesson in which they learned new tactical relationships through the game method; of the opinion that by using the game, students/players remember the rules of the game more easily; of the opinion that the game influenced the on-field application of the basic rules in defense.

5. Discussions

Regarding objective one of the research, teachers, and coaches teach tactical relationships to a large extent and, to some extent, using the game, which means that these results correlate with the first objective of our research. The responses proved once again the willingness of teachers and coaches to use the game in teaching tactical relationships in football (Chow *et al.*, 2009). The use of the game in teaching football was revealed by the low degree of difficulty and the largely positive feedback from the students. Using learning games is also about knowing when to introduce them in critical moments (Kirck and MacPhail, 2002) and allocating time to prepare the lesson. The coaches feel that the time of preparing some lessons is high, and physical education and sports teachers said it is somewhat high. The literature analysed the role of the games in developing different skills of the learner (decision-making, movement skills) to increase learning results and the transfer of knowledge (Chow *et al.*, 2009).

Relating objective two of the research, coaches, and teachers believe that through the use of games, the students/players retain the rules of the game of football to a great extent and that the coaches believe that the games have greatly influenced the application of the basic rules in defense on the field. The teachers believed that the games in football influenced the application of the rules to some extent (the second objective of our research). The use of dynamic games in physical education lessons helps students not only to know and apply the rules better but to improve their motor skills and provides a higher quality lesson regarding the density, attractiveness, and objectives of school physical education (Gheorghe, 2009).

Sánchez and Arias (2021) affirmed that using the Didactic Model Game Action Competencies in teaching tactical behavior will increase the learners' intrinsic motivation. The coaches believed that, through the game, they activated the students' interest to a great extent and the teachers to a certain extent, with significant differences between the two samples. In terms of motivation, coaches and teachers say that through the game, they have significantly increased the motivation of students/players (Forrest, Webb, Pearson, 2006) to apply tactical relationships in

football (the third objective of the research). The football game offers good interpersonal communication and interaction between students and teachers (Liu, 2021). The literature indicated that coaches with positive reinforcement, good skill instruction, and not using punishment determine the players to be more motivated, more satisfied, and lower anxiety and attrition rates (Barnett, Smoll, Smith, 1992; Smith, Smoll, Barnett, 1995).

Regarding O4, the teachers and coaches who responded to the questionnaire said that students communicate a lot about whether games are used during physical education classes and sports/training, with significant differences between the opinions of the two samples. In football, the players make decisions for the group under strict conditions (Márquez Jiménez and Martínez-Santos, 2014), so each player must always be communicative (Parlebas, 1999). This result demonstrated that they believe that football games can increase student interaction with the help of games. They manage to get to know each other better and understand each other, both during physical education classes and sports/training, as well as in extracurricular activities. So, the player will "read the game" to make choices for the correct strategic meanings, which will develop the behavior of other players (Oboeuf *et al.*, 2020).

6. Conclusions

Huang and Wu (2017) argued for the need for students to engage in activities that require higher level thinking and reflective processes, demonstrating understanding by applying new knowledge to new situations. Thus, football teachers and coaches must connect to these desires and ensure favorable contexts in the football game. Learning is a complex activity, and learning outcomes are quantified in the form of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values. These capacities' appearance occurs following the stimulation that comes from the environment and is also due to the cognitive processes developed through learning. In this respect, teachers and coaches must create a more varied teaching-learning atmosphere to stimulate students' interest for different forms of activities in physical education (Karo *et al.*, 2020). Football teachers and coaches must create learning situations using games that will create contexts for the formation and development of such capacities.

In this study, the importance of games in training and developing practical skills was recognized by all participants at the level of opinion. It was confirmed that: Middle school sports teachers have a positive opinion on the game's role in learning football-specific tactical relationships (Hypothesis 1) and football coaches have a positive opinion on the game's role in learning football-specific tactical relationships (Hypothesis 2). Hypothesis 3 was confirmed partially. There were significant differences between teachers' and coaches' answers, but only on: the use of the game in teaching football-specific tactical relationships; the longer preparation time of some lessons/training that contain only games; activating students' interest in documenting themselves from other resources; increasing the motivation of players/students for the application of tactical relations in the game of football due to the use of games; of the opinion that students/players communicate more if games during lessons/training.

This study has some limitations. The questionnaire we proposed is non-validated, which is the study's first limitation. In the literature, it took much work to identify such a questionnaire applied to physical education teachers and football coaches. Other limitations are the small number of participants and the unequal number of items for each objective. Lastly, we must state that opinions are sometimes subjective and not supported by quantifiable statistical data. It is essential to consider the opinion of professors/coaches regarding the role that games have in learning tactical relationships specific to football because we will thus know their attitude towards the implications of the game in teaching/learning tactics. This study explicitly promotes the use of games in teaching football and tactical relationships. These must be centered on the player and his training and development needs, as other research topics of interest to the modern football game.

Authors note: *The authors have equal contributions to this article.*

APPENDIX: Questionnaire on the opinion of football coaches and physical education teachers about the role of games in learning tactical relationships

Please, offer your support in answering questions referring to how the games were used during physical education classes and sports/football training. Completing the questionnaire takes approximately 5-7 minutes. The 12 items have 5 possible answers, using a scale from 1 to 5 (1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent). It is assured the confidentiality of the data provided.

1. What is your profession?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

2. How many years have you been teaching/coaching?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

3. Do you teach/train tactical relationships in your classes/ training activities?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

4. Do you use games to teach/train tactical relationships?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

5. Do you find it more difficult to teach students/players tactical relationships through games?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

6. Is the feedback given by the students/players at the end of a lesson in which they learned new tactical relationships through the game method positive?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

7. Is the preparation time for lessons/training that only contain games for learning/consolidating tactical relationships longer than for those that do not use the game?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

8. By using the game, the players/students remember the game's rules more easily?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

9. To what extent did you notice that the game influenced the application of the basic rules in defense on the field?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

10. To what extent do you consider that, through the game, you have determined the activation of the interest to document from other resources (films, books, articles, specialized websites) of the player/student regarding the game of football?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

11. To what extent do you consider that by using the game, you have determined an increase in the motivation of the players/students for applying tactical relations in the game of football?

1-not at all, 2-to a small extent, 3-to some extent, 4-to a large extent, 5-to a very large extent

12. To what extent do you think that the students communicated more if games were proposed during physical education lessons/football training?

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