

## **SOCIAL COMPETENCE AMONG LITHUANIAN AND LATVIAN STUDENTS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AGE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES**

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### **Abstract**

The paper strives to answer the research question what is the social competence among Lithuanian and Latvian students of senior high school age in physical education classes. Physical education is a major force in helping children and youth socialize with others successfully and provides opportunities to learn positive social skills. Especially during senior high school age, being able to participate in dances, games, and sports is an important part of youth peer cultures. The aim of this study was to analyse and compare the social competence among Lithuanian and Latvian students of senior high school age in physical education classes. Students of senior high school age (15 - 18 years old) were separated in randomize way from Lithuania and Latvia secondary schools. The participants of the study were 124 students (68 Lithuanian and 56 Latvian). The measure of social competence was evaluated using Social Skills Improvement System, (Gresham & Elliot, 2008). The test include 46 items that assess social skills on sub domains related to communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control. Participants respond using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from “not true” to “very true”. The reliability of this scale in our study was adequate: Cronbach’s alpha was 0.82 for social competence. The statistical hypotheses were tested by applying the Student t-test. It was found that 54% of the Lithuanian representatives and 56% of Latvia's representatives have an average level of social competence. There were only tendencies that girls have higher level of communication and responsibility ( $p > 0.05$ ). No statistically significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) were observed according communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control levels between Latvian and Lithuanian students of senior high school age in physical education classes. The results shows that by the level of social competence there were no statistically significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) between Latvian and Lithuanian students and between boys and girls of senior high school age in physical education classes.

**Keywords:** *physical education classes; social competence; senior high school age*