



The Cronus Syndrome: A Quantitative Study for the Evaluation of Local History as a Teaching Subject in the Educational Reality of Secondary Education in Gamified Inclusion Classes

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify local history as a necessary teaching subject in the educational reality of Greek Secondary Education, in gamified inclusion classes. The objective is twofold: to explore the attitudes of the school community towards teaching local history as an autonomous subject in the curriculum, and the role of gamification as a teaching tool for adolescent students. The study was based on the collection of quantitative data through questionnaires completed and processed by an adequate sample of both serving teachers in Lesvos in 2024-2025 and students from all three grades of the 2nd High School of Mytilene. Its originality lies in the gamification of local history inside and outside the classroom. The research results showed that the playful teaching of local history helps in discovering the past through the present in an experiential manner. The "Cronus syndrome" in history teaching describes a situation where the teaching of general history "overwhelms" local history, which is equally valuable for understanding historical knowledge and identity. Addressing this imbalance is important for a more holistic and meaningful history education that integrates both general and local dimensions. The "schooling" of local history requires further investigation in an attempt to make it "visible" instead of "invisible".

Keywords: locality, game based learning, historical consciousness, integrated classroom

1. Introduction

The revelation of the pluralism of local communities in the modern multicultural world seems to threaten general history as a structural component of shared national consciousness. The locality of events, "embedded" within the national and international historical context, has not been studied sufficiently or systematically so far. The approach to history appears "atopic", as the curriculum has absorbed it to the extent it is not distinct as history, but as fragmentary knowledge merged in the methodological approach of general history. Guidelines in the official curricula for Greek Secondary Education are limited to the ethical and regulatory framework

for teaching by subject, with Local History optionally incorporated in the timetable as an inseparable part of General History.

Nevertheless, the gap in the Greek educational curriculum is somewhat covered by the multi-level presentation of the teaching unit by the teacher, with the assistance of adequate and multimodal teaching material, though without adopting gamified historical environments with active teaching techniques. Our research arose from this concern for a holistic teaching approach to history connected with its locality. Gamification speaks the language of adolescents, without diminishing history as a subject, within the broader framework of their historical literacy, and highlighted the need for further study and application in relation to new educational needs in the new digital reality.

2. Theoretical Framework and Related Studies

The literature review recorded a limited number of gamified approaches to history as a teaching subject in inclusion classes of Secondary Education, and an even smaller number specifically in local history within the context of the Skills course in the third year of Junior High school, given its optional nature and its supporting role to General History, which cannot provide a broad sample for investigation.

The problem is multifaceted. Apart from the curriculum, both external and internal factors, such as teachers' studies, specialization and training, available time, and attitudes, can influence their decision to use gamification in the teaching of history as a capable learning tool. Iliadou (2006) describes the relationship between General and Local History as "Cronus Syndrome", for the elimination of which Microhistory plays a crucial role in modern approaches to local historical phenomena. According to Repousi (2009), "the new local history ceases to have a subordinate relationship to other histories and forms an equal relationship of mutual exchange."

It is not only technology that "sought" the light of historical knowledge to transform it into history games of derivative content, but also the science of history itself, adapting to the new conditions of digital technology by utilizing new types of sources and processes of remembrance (Chapman, 2016). Digital games have showcased new practices of public history, presenting the creation of past societies, drawing the player into watching historical change and participation (McCall, 2016). Research has shown that learning history with digital historical games is more relevant to students without lowering the class level or constituting mere entertainment. This meta-view of the world contrasts with the micromanagement of the game. Prensky (2012) believes that people "learn, play, communicate, work, and build communication communities vastly differently than their parents" within the tremendous discontinuity of world history. DelGaudio (2015) argues that school community members may perceive themselves as "non-specialists" in the "museum", but historical knowledge gained from digital navigation therein is still a form of informal education.

According to Halliday (2004) Systemic Functional Grammar (2004), Critical Linguistic Awareness, and the theoretical framework of multiliteracies (Fairclough, 1995: 219-233), the multimodal language of history follows principles of Critical Literacy that gamified learning supports. Greek research links multiliteracies to local history teaching mainly through exploratory activities and intercultural methods in Primary Education (Papadopoulou, 2014). De Freitas (2018) emphasizes the phenomenological approach to subjective historical self-consciousness. Squire (2011) questions the impact of complex world-history simulations in classrooms. Our research demonstrates their potential as powerful, yet understudied, sustainable educational tools. Within neo-Vygotskian socio-cultural theory (Karpov, 2005),

this study shows how classroom microcultures and broader social frameworks mediate play, fostering students' self-determination and dialectical relationships across time and place.

Greek studies on critical literacy and multiliteracies primarily target primary education, emphasizing language instruction and social analysis, with limited focus on secondary-level local history pedagogy. Few investigations e.g., Bouras et al. (2014) and Chostelidou et al. (2014), exclusively examine secondary education contexts for local history, underscoring significant research voids in adolescent historical literacy. This scarcity highlights untapped potential in integrating critical frameworks with local narratives at this level. The present study bridges this gap by investigating gamified historical literacy among adolescents in Greek secondary education, advancing multimodal and critical literacy applications.

2.1. Purpose of the Research

The local history of Mytilene, specifically its waterfront, was chosen for this study to investigate whether the teachers and students of the sample believe it should be taught, and whether gamified historical knowledge can harm its objectivity or serve as an effective method for managing learning difficulties. Additionally, the aim was to examine the development of skills in adolescents through gamified historical literacy in inclusive classrooms.

The research questions were:

1. What are the attitudes of teachers and students toward the necessity of teaching local history and including it in new Secondary Education curricula?
2. What are teachers' views on the social and cognitive skills adolescents can develop by "playing" history in inclusive classes?
3. What is the opinion of teachers regarding the more effective management of learning difficulties through in-class play as a learning tool?
4. What are the views of teachers and students on teaching local history through games?

3. Methodology

To address the research questions set here, two original research instruments (questionnaires) were developed and administered to teachers and students, respectively. The questionnaires were administered electronically and were accessible via standard digital devices (desktop or laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones). In both cases, sampling was based on available sampling frames, from which random samples were drawn and subsequently invited to complete the electronic questionnaires. For the student sample, parental consent was obtained prior to data collection. Response rates were satisfactory in both procedures, and only a limited reserve sample was required to achieve the target sample sizes. Data management strictly adhered to principles of research ethics and integrity and was fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The total population of teachers serving on the island of Lesbos during the academic year 2024–2025 comprised 1,013 individuals. Given that the minimum acceptable statistical power of 80% in order to detect a statistically significant proportional difference of $d = 0.15$ (under the most conservative scenario for a population proportion, $\pi = 0.50$) is achieved with at least 85 participants, a slightly larger sample was targeted (teacher sample size was $n = 105$). The student sample was approximately 50% larger, consisting of 156 participants, and was similarly obtained through simple random sampling from the population of a secondary school on Lesbos.

The assumption that teachers in Lesbos do not differ systematically from their counterparts across the rest of Greece, in combination with the applied sampling technique, provides the

necessary degrees of freedom for a discussion whose conclusions may be extended to the Greek educational system as a whole. Under the same assumption, a similar generalization may be applied to the student results.

Variables treated as categorical are presented using absolute and relative (percentage) frequencies. For symmetric and unimodal quantitative variables, the mean and standard deviation are reported, whereas for non-symmetric distributions the median and interquartile range are provided.

The chi-square (χ^2) test of independence was employed to examine associations between categorical variables. Group comparisons of quantitative variables were conducted using either the independent samples *t*-test or the Mann–Whitney U test for two groups, and in case of more either ANOVA or Kruskal–Wallis test, as appropriate, while normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Effect size was evaluated using the phi coefficient, Cramér’s V, and Cohen’s *r* for 2×2 contingency tables, *r*×*c* contingency tables, and the Mann–Whitney U test, respectively. All analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 27).

Although a stratified sampling design based on gender, teaching specialization, and employment status would have ensured proportional representativeness of teachers, the obtained teacher sample may nevertheless be considered representative, as only negligible deviations from population were observed (Table 1).

Table 1. Population-Sample Comparison for gender, teaching specialization, employment status

	Sample
Gender	n (%)
Male	41 (39.0)
Female	64 (61.0)
Teachers specialty	
Philologist	37 (35.2%)
Sociologist	2 (1.9%)
Maths & Natural Sciences	25 (23.8%)
Music	3 (2.9%)
Technologist	5 (4.8%)
Foreign Languages	16 (15.2%)
Informatics	3 (2.9%)
Physical Education	3 (2.9%)
Other	11 (10.5%)
Working status	
Substitute Teacher	16 (15.2%)
Permanent Teacher	60 (57.1%)
School Counselor	6 (5.7%)
Deputy School Director	9 (8.6%)
School Director	14 (13.3%)

The same considerations apply to the student sample with respect to gender, birth place, educational grade, and consequently age (year of birth; Table 2).

Table 2. Correlations of students according to their gender, class & birth place

	Sample
Gender	n (%)
Boy	81 (51.9)
Girl	75 (48.1)
Class	
A' Grade	34 (21.8%)
B' Grade	45 (28.8%)
C' Grade	77 (49.4%)
Birth place	
Provincial city	114 (73.1%)
Metropolitan area	42 (26.7%)

The reliability of the research instruments with respect to the dimensions under investigation may be considered acceptable, as most values were close or even exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. Specifically, for the teachers' questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was 0.773 for the dimension assessing the perceived importance of gamification in the teaching of local history, 0.914 for the dimension concerning skill development through game-based activities within the course, and 0.675 for the dimension capturing attitudes towards the teaching of local history. For the students' questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha for the items describing their attitudes towards gamification in history teaching was 0.609.

4. Results

4.1. Teachers

Teachers generally express positive attitudes toward the inclusion of local history in the curriculum, with 9.5% supporting its introduction as a standalone subject and 59% favoring its integration alongside additional relevant activities. Only a negligible proportion rejects any form of supplementary instruction (Table 3). Teachers also demonstrate a predominantly institutional approach regarding initiatives for integrating local history into the official timetable: 19% would act informally, while the majority would address the Ministry of Education Religious Affairs and Sports. (2023) or Parliament through formal channels (Table 3).

More than six in ten teachers report having taught local history in the classroom (Table 3), with the majority (40.2%) leveraging school celebrations and national commemorations for this purpose. A noteworthy subgroup teaches local history occasionally within general history classes (13%), while 12.4% report having never taught it (Table 3).

Table 3. Teachers' attitudes about local history teaching

inclusion of local history	N	%
standalone subject	10	9.5%
as activity	31	29.5%
both of the above	62	59.0%
none of the above	2	1.9%
initiatives for integrating local history into the official timetable		
address the Ministry of Education	73	69.5%
address the Parliament through formal channels	12	11.4%
act informally	20	19.0%
taught local history in the classroom		
Yes	66	62.9%
No	39	37.1%
If so,		
occasionally	20	21.7%
within general history classes	12	13.0%
school celebrations and national commemorations	37	40.2%
as a unit in the Skills Workshop course	3	3.3%
in a program	5	5.4%
in a project	8	8.7%
club of Activities	3	3.3%
as an action in the school's self-evaluation	2	2.2%
other	2	2.2%

Regarding the development of social and cognitive skills through local history instruction, teachers exhibit strong support. Nearly all respondents (98.1%) believe that teaching local history promotes social interaction, emotional expression, and collective responsibility, while similarly high proportions highlight benefits in self-control and self-esteem (97.1%). Comparable levels of agreement were observed for the development of critical thinking and metacognitive skills (95.2%), self-regulated learning and the “learning how to learn” process (93.3%), responsibility (92.4%), and academic knowledge (89.5%, Table 4).

Table 4. Teachers' attitudes about the development of social and cognitive skills through local history instruction

The game inside the classroom as part of the lesson provides the opportunity for development and social interaction	N	%
a little	2	1.9%
a lot	56	53.3%
too much	47	44.8%
of the expression of emotions		
a little	2	1.9%
a lot	55	52.4%
too much	48	45.7%
of self- control and self-esteem		
a little	3	2.9%
a lot	67	63.8%
too much	35	33.3%
of academic Knowledge		
a little	11	10.5%
a lot	72	68.6%
too much	22	21.0%
of responsibility		
a little	8	7.6%
a lot	68	64.8%
too much	29	27.6%
of collective responsibility		
a little	2	1.9%
a lot	62	59.0%
too much	41	39.0%
of learning how to learn		
a little	7	6.7%
a lot	62	59.0%
too much	36	34.3%

of self-regulated learning		
a little	7	6.7%
a lot	62	59.0%
too much	36	34.3%
of critical thinking		
a little	5	4.8%
a lot	61	58.1%
too much	39	37.1%
of metagognition (I know what I know)		
a little	5	4.8%
a lot	64	61.0%
too much	36	34.3%

Inclusive classroom practices are perceived to be best achieved through collaborative learning approaches (64.8%), followed by gamified instruction (22.9%) and experiential learning (12.4%). Notably, traditional frontal teaching was not endorsed by any respondents (Table 5). Despite these beliefs, years of teaching experience—and by extension, age—were not statistically associated with preferred instructional approach ($\chi^2(12, n = 105) = 6.779, p = 0.890$).

Table 5. Teachers' attitudes about the inclusive classroom practices

The functioning of the inclusion class is achieved more effectively through:	N	%
The cooperative group approach	68	64.8%
Experiential learning	13	12.4%
Gamified teaching	24	22.9%
The frontal teaching approach	0	0.0%

Gamification is viewed as a potentially effective pedagogical tool for local history, as 52.4% of teachers believe it increases students' interest in their local environment, while 45.7% consider that it facilitates learning history through play in the classroom. Only 1.9% suggest that it primarily enhances students' historical consciousness (Table 6).

Table 6. Teachers' attitudes about the gamification as a pedagogical tool for local history

Gamification can significantly improve the pedagogical approach to local history.	N	%
Gamification can increase students' interest in their local area.	55	52.4%
Students learn history more easily by playing in the classroom.	48	45.7%
Students can strengthen their historical consciousness through gamified local history lessons.	2	1.9%

Teachers predominantly express neutral (50.5%) or moderately positive attitudes (42.9%) toward the acceptance of otherness through learning local history, shifting toward strong agreement that knowledge of local history enhances self-understanding (48.6% agree; 50.5% strongly agree, Table 7). A similar distribution is observed for the statement “Those who do not know their past are condemned to relive it” (Table 7). Ambivalence is evident regarding the attribution of responsibility for the devaluation of local history solely teaching methods, as most teachers neither agree nor disagree (51.4%), while 25.7% agree and 22.9% disagree (Table 7).

Table 7. Teachers’ attitudes toward the learning of local history

Through learning local history the right to otherness becomes respected	N	%
strongly disagree	0	0.0%
disagree	7	6.7%
neither disagree, nor agree	53	50.5%
agree	45	42.9%
strongly agree	0	0.0%
Knowing the history of my place means knowing myself better.		
strongly disagree	0	0.0%
disagree	0	0.0%
neither disagree, nor agree	1	1.0%
agree	51	48.6%
strongly agree	53	50.5%
The teaching method alone isn’t solely responsible for undervaluing local history.		
strongly disagree	0	0.0%
disagree	24	22.9%
neither disagree, nor agree	54	51.4%
agree	27	25.7%
strongly agree	0	0.0%
Whoever doesn’t know his past is forced to relive it.		
strongly disagree	0	0.0%
disagree	0	0.0%
neither disagree, nor agree	10	9.5%
agree	47	44.8%
strongly agree	48	45.7%
Teaching local history is not a “waste of time”.		

strongly disagree	64	62.7%
disagree	33	32.4%
neither disagree, nor agree	1	1.0%
agree	3	2.9%
strongly agree	1	1.0%

As expected, philologists are more likely to teach local history than teachers of other specialties ($\chi^2(1, n = 105) = 5.895, p = 0.015, \phi = 0.237$), indicating a moderate association. They also show stronger alignment with the view that gamification fosters teamwork and cooperation compared to teachers of other disciplines ($\chi^2(3, n = 105) = 9.123, \text{ exact } p = 0.015$), with an effect size of $V = 0.295$ (Cramér's V), reflecting a borderline moderate association. No other attitudes toward gamification differ significantly between philologists and teachers of other specialties.

When grouping specialties into humanities (such as philologists, sociologists, foreign languages) and non-humanities (such as maths and natural sciences, technologist, informatics), a significant difference emerges regarding the view that gamification may compromise the historical integrity of events. Humanities teachers tend to either support or reject this view, but not adopt a neutral stance, whereas non-humanities teachers predominantly express neutrality ($\chi^2(3, n = 105) = 13.673, \text{ exact } p = 0.005, V = 0.361$), indicating at least a moderate association. A statistically significant difference is also observed concerning the belief that gamification enables emotional expression: humanities teachers express stronger agreement, whereas non-humanities teachers exhibit the opposite pattern.

4.2. Students

The majority of students recognize positive aspects of history instruction in contemporary Greek schools, with 46.8% expressing moderate satisfaction and 35.9% reporting slight satisfaction (Table 8). Notably, approximately 80% indicate an interest in learning about the history of their local area. The most frequently endorsed learning activities include educational walks (40.4%), museum visits (34.0%), and on-site visits to archaeological sites (33.3%) among other options (Table 8). The age distribution does not differ across the levels of desire to learn local history through educational walks (Mann-Whitney $U = 2649, p = 0.287$). This is, also, the case for museum visits (Mann-Whitney $U = 2661, p = 0.787$), and visits to archaeological sites (Mann-Whitney $U = 2629.5, p = 0.768$) as local history learning options. A similar inference can be made for the school grade distribution across the groups involved in these learning activities; for educational walks, $\chi^2(2, n = 156) = 2.644, p = 0.267$; for museum visits, $\chi^2(2, n = 156) = 1.583, p = 0.453$; and for visits to archaeological sites, $\chi^2(2, n = 156) = 3.498, p = 0.174$.

For most students, learning about local history through play is perceived as an enjoyable method of instruction (53.2%). Together with the additional enjoyment endorsed by 18.6% of students, over seven in ten perceive gamified learning as engaging. However, nearly 15% report that gamification increases fatigue, and a similar proportion do not align with any of the above statements (Table 8).

Table 8. Students' interest in learning local history

Student satisfaction with history teaching methods varies widely
a little
moderate
too much
Students often show strong desire to learn local history when taught engagingly
Yes
No
Desire to learn local history through:
Field trips in archaeological sites
Educational “walks”
Museum tours
Gamification into classroom
School celebrations
Frontal teaching
Knowing the history of my place by playing
I have more fun at school
I will learn the history of my place in a pleasant way
I get more tired at school
None of the above

Students' interest in learning local history is associated with age (median = 15, IQR = 1). The Shapiro–Wilk test indicated non-normality ($W = 0.883$, $p < 0.001$). Those expressing interest tend to be younger than those who do not (Mann–Whitney $U = 1481.5$, $p = 0.033$), with a small effect size (Cohen's $r = 0.17$).

No age-related differences were observed with respect to the proposed methods of integrating local history into the curriculum (mandatory or elective, Mann–Whitney $U = 1718.5$, $p = 0.556$), nor regarding the level of satisfaction with its mode of instruction (Kruskal-Wallis $H = 5.090$, $p = 0.078$). Furthermore, none of the gamification dimensions of local history (Table 9) were statistically associated with students' grade level ($\chi^2(8, n = 156) = 0.654$, exact $p = 0.445$ / $\chi^2(8, n = 156) = 2.666$, exact $p = 0.614$ / $\chi^2(8, n = 156) = 2.626$, exact $p = 0.109$ / $\chi^2(8, n = 156) = 1.512$, exact $p = 0.229$ / $\chi^2(8, n = 156) = 4.440$, exact $p = 0.038$ / $\chi^2(8, n = 156) = 0.020$, exact $p = 0.894$), except for the perception that gamified history instruction may threaten the objectivity of historical knowledge. In this case, students in lower grades exhibit greater sensitivity to the issue compared with those from higher ones.

Table 9. Students' attitudes of the gamification of local history

Playing, I learn better.	N	%
strongly disagree	1	0.6%
disagree	7	4.5%
neither disagree, nor agree	28	17.9%
agree	51	32.7%
strongly agree	69	44.2%
Local history should not be taught, but experienced.		
strongly disagree	8	5.1%
disagree	13	8.3%
neither disagree, nor agree	61	39.1%
agree	54	34.6%
strongly agree	20	12.8%
Knowing the history of my place means that I know myself better.		
strongly disagree	18	11.5%
disagree	41	26.3%
neither disagree, nor agree	47	30.1%
agree	31	19.9%
strongly agree	19	12.2%
Games in class don't turn history into "children's hour".		
strongly disagree	25	16.0%
disagree	28	17.9%
neither disagree, nor agree	47	30.1%
agree	31	19.9%
strongly agree	25	16.0%
Gamified historical knowledge doesn't threaten history's objectivity.		
strongly disagree	20	12.8%
disagree	33	21.2%
neither disagree, nor agree	62	39.7%
agree	22	14.1%
strongly agree	19	12.2%

I feel like a universal person.		
strongly disagree	12	7.7%
disagree	20	12.8%
neither disagree, nor agree	62	39.7%
agree	35	22.4%
strongly agree	27	17.3%

5. Discussion

The research aimed to determine whether—and how—local history should be taught, focusing on the interpretive nature of historical knowledge in secondary education, particularly through gamification. Findings align with Stock (2015), revealing that spatiality and temporality are not absolute but rather reflect the reality of the past, moving retroactively from “here and now” to “there and then.” The study proposes a more integrated approach to understanding both local and general history within the school curriculum, and educational use of games to foster deeper comprehension. Bain (2005) notably states that secondary school teachers should strive not only to teach history but also to “make history”.

Consistent with Scholz et al. (2021), this study highlights that the educational community seeks gamified learning in today’s inclusive classrooms, without compromising the historicity of locality (Kammen, 2014). The study recorded a new educational reality where academics, teachers, and students support the introduction of a new historical “literacy”, or “grammar of the internet,” closely related to students’ everyday lives, enhancing their metacognitive skills (Fikri & Mahdum, 2022). These results also echo McMichael (2007) that teachers who use games do so without commodifying history. The current research underlines the capability of digital history games to instill historical realism through the proximity of physical space, dialogic narration, social interaction, self-reflection, and both historical empathy and experience. McMichael considers that computer games help the student to “package” and “consume” their historical knowledge, without history becoming a commodity. Recent research by Auraa et al. (2023) affirms the possibility for students to “live more meaningful lives through greater self-understanding and personal development in a more connected world” by gamifying their historical reality.

Gamified learning’s effectiveness in addressing learning challenges in local history prompts the recommendation to use the classroom’s capacity for meaningful learning, tailored to each student’s unique needs, without lowering standards or reducing lessons to empty entertainment. Demers et al. (2015) describe historical awareness as experiential meaning-making that transcends individual needs and elevates them to collective goals. Students see themselves as “historical agents” entering the historical past through self-reference and self-determination (Conway et al., 2005).

The research examined teachers’ reasoning (regardless of specialty) regarding historical locality, education, gamification, and their teaching practices and attitudes, cross-referencing findings with those of Felices-De la Fuente et al. (2020), who link the potential for “living memory” to “physical presence” via technology. The study extended beyond teacher attitudes towards gamified historical literacy to record student perceptions, which proved inversely proportional to the Greek school reality. However, Oliveira et al. (2022), as well as Brambilla et al. (2024), of ‘autotelic flow’—connecting one’s intrinsic historicity with others—was not

confirmed here. Similarly, findings matched those of Huizenga et al. (2009): students with lower history achievement benefited more from gamified knowledge, supporting the concept that gamified local historiography does not compromise objectivity, instead facilitating social, experiential, and localized learning (Sintoris et al., 2013).

The development of all these critical literacy skills in inclusive classrooms, where all students can co-function, appears to hold its own place in the educational process. Meeting their learning needs potentially strengthens their self-esteem, and thus their emotional intelligence. Inclusive classrooms, according to the statistical findings, seem to lift the special educational needs of students and the potential inferiority they may feel compared to their stronger learning peers through gamified literacy, as they are given greater motivation to learn and can express their unique talents on an equal footing with the whole class. Roberge (2013) aligns with the idea that the development of critical literacy skills contributes to safer, more equitable, and supportive learning environments where all students can actively participate and be emotionally empowered.

Overall, the responses concur that inclusive education is characterized by a fundamental shift in pedagogical thinking, from an approach that works for most students to one that involves providing rich learning opportunities available to all through group collaborations, so that everyone can participate in the educational process (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). However, hidden in these indicative statistical measurements is the contradiction that, although educators believe that gamified history can, to a great and very great degree on the Likert scale, cultivate a broad range of social and cognitive skills, they simultaneously state that the cooperative teaching method is the most appropriate in the inclusive educational process. This implies that local history continues to be treated as an activity rather than as a formal approach as an equal teaching subject. Nzuza and Chitiyo (2023) state that cooperative learning enhances student engagement and social interaction, and they strengthen the findings of our research that the integration of local history as an equal subject, not merely as an activity, requires a transitional and structured approach. This observation confirms that our description concerns the need for a transitional approach for the effective integration of local history within a framework of equal and systematic teaching.

These findings are justified by the students' own views on the meaning they attribute to gamification as an opportunity for joy and fun within their already burdened schedule. They believe that the history lesson becomes easier in terms of understanding and memorizing events, while they "see" that the difficulty of the local history lesson can be alleviated through gamification because it is not done solely from the book. Of the 156 students in the population sample, only few of them claim that the traditional frontal teaching approach to history helps them understand historical events better because the teacher-centered management of the lesson within the exam-delivery framework does not allow the lesson to transform into "child's time," as is characteristically stated by them in the open-ended question response. According to Martínez-Hita et al. (2021), gamified historical literacy could be interpreted as a stereotype of an outdated perception of the disproportionate benefits of conventional teaching in subjects like history, which bear the weight of objectivity and validity of facts and thus the strictness in their instructional approach both inside and outside the classroom, without forgiving the playful manner of learning it. Al-Azawi et al. (2016) demonstrated through their research that gamification is based on historical content and becomes competitive within the context of a history or the creation of history, motivating students and teachers to approach it in a playful manner.

6. Conclusion

Statistical results reveal teachers' and students' positive stance toward systematically teaching local history, establishing the necessity of knowing "my place's past." This knowledge should not be excluded from compulsory education, unlike the privileged status of general history. A key finding is the strong support from Greek teachers across all specialties for integrating local history into the school curriculum, coupled with near-unanimous approval that it promotes social interaction and academic knowledge. However, ambivalence persists regarding whether playful teaching methods turn lessons into mere playtime.

The research also demonstrates that play in learning is not exclusive to younger ages but benefits adolescents—even in historical literacy—as evidenced by non-significant age effects on methods for integrating local history into the Greek school timetable. Adolescent students embrace play inside and outside the classroom as an enjoyable, engaging way to learn their local history without compromising objectivity.

These findings could spur change by urging legislators and academics to establish local history as an autonomous secondary school subject and to transform history pedagogy by blending general and local history through gamification that turns "knowledge into play" and "play into knowledge." The conclusions illuminate current educational realities and aim to improve the system, given that all teachers—regardless of specialty—unanimously agree gamified historical literacy promotes socio-emotional skills.

While the quantitative method yielded rich, precise data, it cannot capture the full research process. Evaluating local history as a vital, gamified subject in inclusive secondary classrooms remains urgent yet unimplemented at scale. Teachers favor collaborative learning (followed by gamified and experiential approaches) over frontal teaching, though humanities teachers hold polarized views on gamification's risks to historical accuracy versus its benefits for emotional expression; non-humanities teachers remain neutral.

Future research should encompass all education levels and learner needs for a holistic approach to history in local contexts. This study breaks new ground in Greek secondary education by pioneering gamified local history pedagogy for adolescents, debunking stereotypes that it suits only younger children. It validates multiliteracies for teens, enabling gamified and AI-enhanced expansions. Most students found gamified local history enjoyable and engaging, with responses revealing a positive attitude toward gamified historical literacy—confirming its power to playfully but objectively trace history backward from present to past.

Additionally, the "Cronus syndrome" in history teaching describes general history's dominance, which marginalizes local history. Targeted professional development in gamification and age-appropriate curricula are recommended to address these gaps.

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