GAME-BASED LEARNING IN DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

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ABSTRACT

An overview was provided on why the adoption of educational gaming would benefit the organisational and management competence development of higher education students. Hence, this article paves the way for advancing the concept of simulations, role-plays, and business games as a new medium for imparting learning management skills that are both theoretical and practice-oriented. On the other side of the interdisciplinary approach, it states that there are cognitive, as well as social and emotional, dimensions to organisational management competence, which provides one with a wealth of strategic thinking, effective communication, evidence-informed decision-making, and teamwork. It harmonizes the latest advances and research on the application of game-based learning for future managers, educators, and social specialists. The article pays particular attention to game-based educational technologies, as they bear a 'European' hallmark or feature when compared with other classical forms of education. They significantly impact motivation, the development of critical thinking, self-reflection, and responsibility for common results. A classification of gaming methods related to management task integration is suggested: simulation models replicate professional activity in reality; role-play games develop communicative flexibility and leadership skills, while business games build competencies in the area of strategic planning and system views. The article proceeds with a description of the key strategic aspects of the effective use of game-based learning, namely, gradually increasing task difficulty, embedding games within subject content, utilizing reflective practices, and promoting teamwork. Through the consideration of these topics via virtualized digital simulation and the added value of content

on a virtual platform, distance opportunities and blended learning experiences are further expanded.

Keywords: *game-based learning; organizational and management competence; learning models; strategies; efficiency.*

INTRODUCTION

Training in organizational and management skills is essential in a student's education program, preparing them for action, coordination, and control in the ever-complex social and professional environments in which everyone is involved (Marin-Díez & Reche, 2020). Competence training in management functions and principles of planning and control, along with other required skills in domains such as decision-making under uncertainty, teamwork, and communication, is also covered (Lohmann & Ohliger, 2021; Riemer & Schrader, 2020).

Therefore, it exposes students to various fields, such as management, education, public administration, business administration, and others. Students are putting these competencies forth increasingly as necessary for entry and success into the profession because, in reality, with the current trend that the profession is taking. It seems that for a brighter future, the speediness in adapting to changes and handling complex problems would be the key determinants of success in that profession (Kokun et al., 2023; Shatyrko, 2024). The significance of the acquired competency for an individual amid the constant evolution of techniques for addressing multidimensional dilemmas

underscores its relevance to students studying management, education, public administration, and business administration (Furuoka et al., 2023; Shatyrko, 2024).

Higher education renders traditional modes of study, such as lectures and seminars, which are likely less effective in fostering management and decision-making skills in a rapidly evolving environment (Brandl & Schrader, 2024). On the other hand, game-based learning (GBL) is for the interaction of teaching methods, allowing students to learn in semi-real situations while developing their leadership, teamwork, communication, and analytical skills, all solid grounds of organisational and management skills (Anderson & Lawton, 2009; Khuda Bakhsh et al., 2022; Leitner et al., 2023; Mospan, 2023; Pan, et al., 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research aimed to explore the potential and strategic effectiveness of GBL in fostering organizational and management competencies among students in higher learning institutions.

Considering this, the other research objectives are:

● Exploring current theoretical and methodological works in game-based learning in the areas of management and higher education.

● Defining the structure and components (cognitive, social, and emotional) of organizational and management competence.

● Revealing important forms of game pedagogical technology (simulations, role-playing, and business games) and their educative efficacy.

● Specifying the strategies and principles for the successful introduction of GBL into university programs.

● Defining the potential paths for empirical verification and digital adaptation of game pedagogies.

The following segments of qualitative and theoretical methodology concerning the effectiveness evaluation were selected for the study: theoretical modelling for developing a conceptual model encompassing simulation, role-playing, and business games as key tools for competence development within interactive learning.

Theoretical analysis used for synthesis, comparison, and systematization to assess the national and international literature on pedagogy in higher education, psychology for management, and the employability of gamification in learning.

The literature review has examined 19 academic sources that provide a sound and adequate basis for theoretical and methodological framing relevant to this study. Analytical and comparative research in higher education pedagogy justifies the choice of nineteen books. For maximum representation and depth in conceptual analysis, about 15 to 25 citations should be set as an aim. The selected sources cover a wide range, including game-based learning, developing organizational and managerial

competence, and integrating interactive pedagogical technology into the higher education curriculum.

The absolute dominance of international research in the reference corpus, over 80% in the cited writings, consists of peer-reviewed articles published in high-impact journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (for example: Simulation & Gaming, Computers & Education, Education Sciences, JMIR Serious Games). They provide recent empirical evidence and theoretical insight into topics of gamification, management simulation, and cognitive-socio-emotional development in education.

Recent research further broadened the theoretical perspective of the study, keeping in mind various cultural, psychological, and pedagogical interpretations of competence development. Their presence adds to the international dimensions of the research and connects the findings to national educational traditions and ongoing academic discourse in Ukraine (Klymchuk, 2020; Karamushka, 2024; Mospan et al., 2022; Shatyrko, 2024; Timchenko, 2000).

The goal of comparative analysis was to highlight the unique features and benefits of game-based technologies in comparison to traditional teaching modes. Generalization and structuring of data from academic sources and research reports on game pedagogy in management education were conducted through content analysis.

An example of an application related to simulation, role-playing, and business games is provided to illustrate the development of strategic thinking, teamwork, and decision-making skills. Self-questioning was completed with feedback and

self-reflection to compare the self-evaluation and evident behaviour characteristics by students during and after participating in educational games.

AI tools were utilized in various phases of this work to optimize translation, perform semantic and linguistic editing of the English version of the article, and standardize scientific terms in accordance with international academic standards. While noninvasive to the actual research and its outcomes, the use of AI supported utmost precision and quality in the scientific presentation.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Game-based pedagogies are well-designed and constructed techniques of learning that can simulate classroom or forum settings as pedagogical instruments, such as role-plays, business games, and similar forms of interactive learning activities, specifically designed to stimulate student involvement in an authentic learning experience. These methods could include those that facilitate a proper understanding and grounding of theoretical aspects in practical actions, thereby developing and nurturing critical thinking, as well as social competencies for informed management decisions (Klymchuk, 2020; Timchenko, 2000).

Simulation models enable the replication of professional and management processes in real-life settings with extremely close and justifiable assessments. Imparts assessment of impacts emanating from decisions made in dynamic work settings and develops their

predictive abilities. Encourages analytical thinking, strategic planning, and resource allocation (Yeager & Roberts, 2025).

Role-playing presents students with the chance to engage with their peers while gaining expertise in conflict resolution and developing skills in delegation. Further expanding the scope of leadership and organisational competencies through processes of coordination within groups. Group members here play out either the manager role or the business consultant side to effectively elicit teamwork (Apaydın & Çakır Çelebi, 2023).

Business Games are based on simulating business tasks related to strategic planning and decision-making. They enhance self-awareness in matters of critical and analytical capabilities, as well as uncertain decision-making concepts, and put theory into practice (Clarke-Habibi & Reimann, 2026).

As many realistic evaluations suggest, the effectiveness of individual games in terms of their psychological impact or within any discipline (Sokol et al., 2022; Sheerin et al., 2021), as well as the factorial combinations of these interactive pedagogical techniques for enhancing students' organisational and management skills, requires thorough investigation.

The combined applications of game-based pedagogies have not yet evolved into a comprehensive proposal for organisational and management competence. Indeed, the use of simulated experiences, either through role-plays or business games, has had several successes, but remains severely under-researched in terms of the simultaneous use of multiple models within a single

educational course. Or models connected across IPT and disciplines that nurture management skills. A systematic approach must also be established for evaluating the development of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies among students, thereby creating a research gap. This indicates the need to establish a framework for integrated models and effective strategies for the use of IPT in higher education.

The central theme of the study is game-based pedagogical technologies that enable the development of organisational and management competencies in students. This defines parameters for their choice of appropriate models, strategies, and indicators of success in integrating these technologies into higher education systems.

Following the above, game pedagogical technologies can be considered systematic pedagogical approaches. Possible gaming contexts include simulation and role-playing engagements that involve active learning participation by students throughout the entire learning process (Klymchuk, 2020). The literature presents some of the most clear-cut models for game-based learning in the development of management competencies, including game simulations, role-play formats, and business games.

GBL represents structured instructional methodologies (Connolly et al., 2012; Riemer & Schrader, 2020), leveraging gaming situations, including simulations, role-plays, and business

games, to direct focus toward student engagement and foster necessary professional skill sets (Klymchuk, 2020).

A primary benefit associated with IPT lies within its capacity to construct a regulated, safe educational setting wherein learners can replicate genuine occupational circumstances, make executive choices, assess resultant impacts, and receive constructive feedback. This facilitates integrative enhancement across cognitive, social, and emotional domains (Hauge, 2021; Riemer & Schrader, 2020).
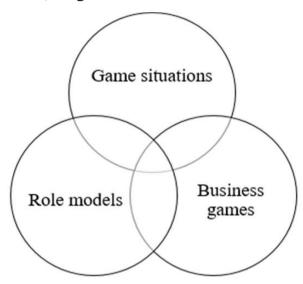

Figure 1. *Game Pedagogical Technologies*

Simulation models involve modelling real management processes in a learning environment. They enable students to gain practical experience in decision-making, resource management, and assessing the consequences of their actions in a safe environment (Timchenko, 2000). Simulations are designed to develop analytical, strategic, and critical thinking skills, as well as the ability to predict the outcomes of management decisions.

The table presents examples of tasks within various types of game-based pedagogical technologies, outlining their educational objectives and anticipated effects. The use of such tasks ensures the integrative development of students' organisational and management competence, combining cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of learning. Each type of game is designed to develop specific management skills and foster a strategic vision of organisational processes (see Table 1).

Table 1

Examples of game pedagogical technologies

Type	Example of Task	Objective and Expected Outcome
Simulation Models	**Virtual Company Management:** students allocate budgets, make staffing decisions, plan marketing campaigns, and evaluate financial results.	Development of strategic thinking, planning, and analytical skills; ability to forecast the consequences of management decisions.
	Crisis Management: simulation of emergencies such as supply chain disruptions or team conflicts; development of response plans and assessment of decision outcomes.	Formation of abilities for rapid response, risk management, decision-making under complex conditions, and stress resistance.
	Project Management: development and implementation of a team project involving the identification of priorities, role distribution, and task monitoring.	Improvement of organisational and management skills, team collaboration, planning, and control of task execution.
Role-Playing Games	**Management Meeting Simulation:** students act as managers, consultants, and employees, discussing project goals and making collective decisions.	Development of leadership competencies, communication skills, and the ability to coordinate teamwork.

	Interdepartmental Negotiations: simulation of situations involving the allocation of limited resources, argumentation of positions, and achievement of compromise.	Formation of negotiation skills, conflict management abilities, and consensus-building capacity.
	Team Conflict Resolution: practising mediation strategies and distribution of responsibilities within a team to minimise risks and enhance interaction efficiency.	Development of management and social competencies, the ability to effectively resolve conflicts, and facilitate teamwork.
Business Games	**New Product Launch:** development of a marketing strategy, production planning, budgeting, and evaluation of potential profits and risks.	Development of strategic and analytical thinking, planning, risk assessment, and management decision-making skills.
	Strategic Organisational Planning: formulation of an annual enterprise activity plan, resource management, and identification of key performance indicators.	Formation of systemic thinking, strategic planning skills, and comprehensive management of organisational processes.
	Case Study Analysis of Real Companies: evaluation of management decisions made by successful and unsuccessful enterprises; development of alternative strategies to enhance management effectiveness.	Deepening of analytical abilities, capacity for critical evaluation of management decisions, and development of practical alternative solutions.

Analysis of examples of tasks using simulation models, role-playing, and business games suggests the systemic effectiveness of game-based pedagogical technologies in developing students' organisational and management competence. It was established that:

Simulation models enable you to replicate real management processes in a controlled learning environment, fostering the

development of strategic thinking, planning skills, analytical risk assessment, and informed decision-making in complex conditions.

Role-playing games contribute to the development of leadership and communication competencies, as well as the ability to coordinate teamwork, negotiate effectively, and resolve conflicts.

Business games stimulate systemic thinking, integrate theoretical knowledge into practical activities, and form skills in strategic planning and comprehensive analysis of business processes, which is key for the training of future managers.

The combination of different types of game tasks allows for the comprehensive development of students' cognitive, social, and emotional competencies. The systematic use of game technologies in the educational process contributes to the development of high-level organisational and management skills, increases motivation for learning, and ensures the effective preparation of students for professional activity in a dynamic and competitive environment.

The combination of simulation, role-playing and business games ensures the comprehensive development of students' organizational and management competence, integrating the following components: cognitive component (development of strategic, critical and analytical thinking, ability to plan and predict results); social component (formation of communication skills, ability to work in a team, negotiate and resolve conflicts); emotional component (development of emotional intelligence, ability to control emotional reactions and adapt to stressful situations).

Thus, game-based pedagogical technologies create an integrated learning environment that combines theoretical training and practical activities, ensuring the effective development of students' organizational and management competence and their readiness for professional activity in a modern, dynamic professional environment.

DISCUSSION

Effective implementation of GBL for developing students' organisational and management competence requires adherence to systemic strategies that ensure the gradual complication of educational tasks. The integration of theoretical knowledge with practical skills, as well as the development of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies (Klymchuk, 2020; Timchenko, 2020). The main strategies include sequential task complication, integration with academic disciplines, a reflective component, and team interaction.

One of the key strategies is a gradual increase in the complexity of game exercises. At the initial stage, students perform basic tasks designed to master the principles of management and team interaction. In the future, the level of complexity will increase through the introduction of multi-level simulation scenarios, crises, or complex business games, which will stimulate the development of critical thinking, analytical abilities, and the ability to make decisions in uncertain conditions.

For example, a group of students initially manages a hypothetical department of a company, making simple decisions about resource allocation. At a more advanced stage, they carry out strategic planning for the development of the entire organisation, taking into account risks, budget constraints, and interdepartmental conflicts (Hauge et al., 2014).

Management, organisational psychology, project management, and leadership together should constitute IPT. Practical real-life projects must be rooted in the management curriculum to provide direction for practice-oriented achievements by students. It will demonstrate how students would implement a new product during learning simulations in the arena of Project Management, encompassing a comprehensive package of budgeting, team role distribution, and risk assessment, as if in a real-life professional process.

GBL will require such reflection, where students will analyse their behaviour after these games, evaluate the effectiveness of their judgments, and identify some strengths and weaknesses in their actions. The teacher and peers provide constructive feedback, which can be beneficial for personal development through the student's self-reflection. For example, at the end of the 'Management Meeting' role-play game, the students would reflect on how efficiently responsibilities were allocated, which decisions turned out to be optimal, and which ones require correction. Thus, students can apply their experience and enhance their retention of knowledge.

Collective games are designed to develop communication skills, the ability to delegate tasks, coordinate actions, and manage conflicts. Team interaction models real professional situations, stimulates effective communication, and forms leadership skills within the group. For example, during the business game 'Crisis Management', students distribute roles between units, coordinate joint actions to minimise risks, and make collective decisions to resolve an emergency, which ensures the development of teamwork and stress management skills.

We highlight the advantages of using IPT in developing students' organisational and management competence, including increasing motivation for learning, fostering critical and strategic thinking, cultivating independent decision-making skills, and enhancing teamwork and social interaction (see Table 2).

Table 2

Advantages of using IPT

Enhancement of Learning Motivation	• Emotionally engaging learning environment • Motivational effect
Development of Critical and Strategic Thinking	•Development of independent decision-making skills • Experimentation with diverse approaches
Improvement of Teamwork and Social Interaction Skills	•Development of communication competencies

Game-simulated assignments are very engaging activities that can help students self-direct their learning. These competitions generate an atmosphere of competition and reward

with maximum payouts possible for successful task completion, while appreciating the real-life relevance of the fruits of education. Management opportunities are required when modelling complex scenarios that have yet to be encountered as problems in business games and simulations, which necessitate identification, perspective, projection, and documentation within the decision-making process. This also equips students with the ability to evaluate risks, weigh alternatives, select the more favourable choice, and predict the outcome their decision will yield. Such technologies offer students a protected environment to experiment with various ideas and see how they work out, which is precisely what independent decisions sustained through games aim to provide – accountability and confidence in managers.

Teamwork and role-plays emphasise cross-cultural communication. The needed emotional intelligence and skills required while working in procedurally different team environments are, therefore, developed. The link between theoretical learning and application-oriented tasks is provided by the GBL. This means that students can correlate and build the applicability of knowledge in simulated environments similar to those in which it would be applied professionally. This also aids retention of this material and improves the overall effectiveness of education. Students, trained through role-plays and simulation games, possess significantly better management and organisational skills than those trained in an equally long

traditional manner, which involves lectures and seminars (Karamushka, 2024; Shatyrko, 2024).

Thus, the game exercises must be related to the various subjects of academic studies, according to the students' grasp of knowledge and skills, so that an adequate balance of challenge and success is maintained. We propose integrating simulation, role-play, and business games into a cohesive training scheme that equips learners with skills relevant to both organisational and management contexts. This procedure thus allows simultaneous advancement in cognitive, social, and emotional dynamics.

An important game reflection facility reinforces players' previous learning experiences by analysing decisions made during the game and evaluating their effectiveness, including receiving feedback from tutors and/or peers. Using online platforms, virtual entities, and online simulations would allow GBL to manifest through effective application and usage in distance or blended learning. Game scenarios, therefore, transcend the constraints of space and time, set free from geographical and temporal limitations.

Game-based pedagogy is likely among the most effective means of enhancing students' organisational and management skills, as it fosters practical experience while engaging in theoretical education, and builds critical thinking and social skills (Connolly et al., 2012; de Freitas & Routledge, 2013). Its successful application requires a structural design that

interweaves different gaming paradigms with reflective practice in a team-learning environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

Research findings indicate that the use of Game Pedagogical Technologies (GPT) is effective in enhancing organizational and management competence among students in higher education institutions. Generalizations of similar analysis can thus be made:

That is, in theoretical and developmental references, almost every kind of intensive research developed around gamified education has focused on energizing cognitive activity and developing management skills. Evidence suggests that traditional forms of teaching often lack the much-sought integration between theory and practice, whereas game technology may serve to facilitate practice-oriented learning.

The organizational and management competence structure has been defined as comprising the following competencies: cognitive, strategic, analytical, critical, social, communication, team interaction, leadership, emotional stability, self-regulation, and empathy.

These three ingredients are essential for the total development of any future specialist. The categories of game pedagogical technologies are:

●	Simulation training: including all the procedures that repeat the professional management process in terms of

methodology and develop in the person the skills of strategic thinking and forecasting.

● Role-playing games: develop flexibility, leadership, and negotiation skills.

● Business games: teach principles of organization-systems thinking, strategic thinking, and decision-making in uncertainty.

Included in the pedagogies that implement interactive technology in learning are the gradual complication of tasks, game integration into academic disciplines, reflection for the development of self-assessment and analytical thinking, motivation to collaborate in teams, and others. The key principles on which game technologies' conceptualization for efficient use are constructed would be: creating a safe environment for learning, where a student makes their own decisions, predictions, receives feedback, and develops management autonomy.

Thus, the performance of laid-out tasks has been enabled to further substantiate the placement of systematic application of game pedagogical technologies in higher education. This is an innovative approach to developing management skills, adapting to change, enhancing critical thinking, motivating learning, and preparing students for action in a dynamically changing professional environment. Future research will also consider the design of empirical frameworks for assessing GBL effectiveness. The development of digital simulation tools for management cases, and the creation of metrics to capture the changes resulting

from game-based learning in the competency profiles of various studying programmes.

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ІГРОВІ ПЕДАГОГІЧНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ У ФОРМУВАННІ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНО-УПРАВЛІНСЬКИХ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТЕЙ

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У статті здійснено ґрунтовний аналіз значення ігрових педагогічних технологій у розвитку організаційно-управлінської компетентності студентів закладів вищої освіти. Сформовано концептуальні засади використання симуляцій, рольових і ділових ігор як інноваційних інструментів інтеграції теоретичних знань і практичних умінь управління. У міждисциплінарному контексті організаційно-управлінська компетентність трактується як комплекс когнітивних, соціальних та емоційних компонентів, що забезпечують здатність до стратегічного мислення, ефективної комунікації, прийняття рішень і продуктивної командної взаємодії. На основі узагальнення сучасних наукових досліджень і практичного досвіду запропоновано підходи до впровадження ігрових технологій у підготовку майбутніх менеджерів, педагогів і соціальних фахівців. Переваги ігрових педагогічних технологій у порівнянні з традиційними методами навчання визначено через їхній позитивний вплив на мотивацію, розвиток критичного мислення, саморефлексію та відповідальність за колективний результат. У межах інтеграції управлінських завдань запропоновано класифікацію ігрових методик: симуляційні моделі відтворюють умови професійної діяльності; рольові ігри розвивають комунікативну гнучкість і лідерські навички; ділові ігри сприяють формуванню стратегічного планування й системного мислення. Визначено стратегічні принципи ефективного впровадження інтерактивних педагогічних технологій (ІПТ) у навчальний процес: поступове ускладнення завдань, інтеграція ігор у зміст навчальних

дисциплін, стимулювання рефлексивної діяльності та підтримка командної співпраці. Окрему увагу приділено ролі цифрових симуляцій і віртуальних платформ, які розширюють можливості дистанційного та змішаного навчання. Підкреслено, що системне застосування ігрових технологій підвищує ефективність професійної підготовки студентів, сприяє розвитку гнучких управлінських навичок та формуванню готовності до прийняття рішень у складних ситуаціях освітнього й соціального середовища.