

## **Gamification in the field of education, culture and tourism - cases from Bulgaria - Research Paper**

### **Grywalizacja w dziedzinie edukacji, kultury i turystyki – przypadki z Bułgarii**

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#### **Abstract**

The aim of the study is to examine some important practical-applied aspects of gamification in the field of education, culture and tourism. The game elements and techniques of gamification are presented, as well as the non-game cases in which it can also be applied were explored in the study. The main differences between gamification and traditional educational models are discussed. Practical examples from Bulgaria of gamification in the fields of culture, tourism and education have been researched and analyzed. The main characteristics and advantages of the application of gamification in education are clarified. The thesis that gamification occupies more and more space in education is proven and the main changes to which its application will lead are indicated.

#### **Key words:**

gamification, interdisciplinary education, educational models, traveling universities, intercultural exchange  
JEL: M3, Z12, Z33

#### **Abstrakt**

Celem pracy jest zbadanie kilku ważnych praktycznych aspektów grywalizacji w obszarze edukacji, kultury i turystyki. W opracowaniu przedstawiono elementy gier i techniki grywalizacji, a także przypadki niezwiązane

z grami, w których można je również zastosować. Omówiono główne różnice między grywalizacją a tradycyjnymi modelami edukacyjnymi. Zbadano i przeanalizowano praktyczne przykłady grywalizacji w dziedzinie kultury, turystyki i edukacji z Bułgarii. Wyjaśniono główne cechy i zalety zastosowania grywalizacji w edukacji. Udowodniono tezę, że gamifikacja zajmuje coraz więcej miejsca w edukacji oraz wskazano główne zmiany, do jakich doprowadzi jej zastosowanie.

#### **Słowa kluczowe:**

grywalizacja, edukacja interdyscyplinarna, modele edukacyjne, podróżujące uniwersytety, wymiana międzykulturowa

#### **INTRODUCTION**

"If I have done any work, it has been because I have felt it as a game. If I had to work, I would never get anything done."  
- Mark Twain

#### **Status of scientific research on the project topic in Bulgaria and worldwide and the relevance of the scientific issues**

The concept of gamification and its mechanics in non-game environments is gaining increasing popularity in the fields of marketing, education, serious games, teamwork, etc. The reasons for this are many and complex, with notable factors being the ease of perception, engagement, and participation, as well as its quick and easy application in various digital solutions (Bruke, 2011).

The concept of using gamification for marketing purposes has mainly evolved over the past decade, progressing from initial attempts to define the concept (Williams, 2006; Groh, 2012) to identifying its constituent components and interactions (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011), exploring marketing opportunities in the service sector (Huotari & Hamar, 2012), utilizing games in non-game contexts for organizational objectives (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled, & Nacke, 2011), promoting desired behaviors, skill development, and fostering innovation (Werbach & Hunter, 2012), engaging and attracting users (McGonigal, 2011), engaging and motivating employees (Alsawaier, R. S., 2018; Blohm, I., & Leimeister, J. M., 2013;

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Baxter, R. J., Holderness Jr., D. K., & Wood, D. A., 2017) in anti-corruption training, enhancing workplace efficiency through gamified training and education (Oprescu, Jones, Katsikitis, 2014; Kapp, K. M., 2012), and more.

Gamified solutions are entering an increasingly wide range of topics, with training and workplace efficiency being a growing focus (Alfaqiri, A. S., Mat Noor, S. F., & Sahari, N., 2022; Mahat, J., Alias, N., & Yusop, F. D., 2022). In Bulgaria, research related to gamification in the workplace is limited and scarce. Among them are the studies conducted by Stefanova-Yaneva, S., Koleva, A. (2021) regarding the possibilities of digital training in a specific organization, while a significant portion of the publications are dedicated to gamification as part of the educational process (Varbanova, A., 2011; Vitanova, N., 2019; Chipriyanova, G., 2021; Galabova, D., 2022; Saev, S., 2021). As evident, most of these publications have emerged in the last two years, confirming the timeliness and novelty of the subject matter.

The topic of the project is extremely relevant for the following important reasons. In Bulgaria, no similar studies have been conducted, and there is a lack of data regarding the main types of training in tourism conducted using gamified solutions, the identified benefits and deficits, and the profile of pioneering organizations in this field. There is no clearly defined field of training suitable for gamification, and there is a lack of a model and methodology for defining the training needs suitable for gamification or integration into other instructional formats, suitable for tourism activities. Clear indicators for assessing the effectiveness of gamified workplace training are also absent. Additionally, it is of interest to identify the main incentives and barriers for the implementation of gamification as a philosophy, approach, and toolset in tourism.

Tourism is a sector of the economy that is largely related to diverse experiences, adaptation and implementation of good and innovative practices. Sustainable tourism enables a good and/or innovative practice to be successfully implemented, taking into account the characteristics of each destination. In turn, this helps the overall development of the tourism sector. Often even these practices are further developed, which increases the quality of the offered tourist packages.

The specific objective of the project is to explore the possibilities and limitations of gamification as a solution in Bulgarian tourism conditions.

The aim of this research is to present practical examples of gamification in culture, tourism and education.

The descriptive method is used, as important conclusions are drawn based on the expertise of the team of authors, as direct participants in the events.

### **Methodology**

The main research methods include:

- Desk research of secondary information, comparative analysis, and systematic organization of results from international studies, as well as primary data related to the Bulgarian context.
- Systematic review of scientific publications and other secondary sources of information related to the evaluation of gamification as a learning solution and incentive for tourism.
- Survey research targeting selected respondent groups (research subjects) to gather primary empirical data.
- Semi-structured interviews with selected research subjects, representatives of various stakeholder groups, and potential users/adopters of gamified tourism solutions.
- Quantitative and qualitative methods for data processing and analysis.

### **Applying gamification to different forms of combining learning with tourism experience**

Experiential learning and gamification is a learning philosophy, which is still applied in many different fields such as nature learning, organizational development, student practices and activity-based learning.

The essence of Experiential Learning was summarized by Dewey (1925) who argued that “events exist without our intervention; what we are interested in is their meaning.” Experiencing happens, it is inevitable. The problem is how to make sense of the experience. At its purest, experiential learning is inductive – it begins with “raw” experience, which is processed through purposefully learned means and becomes actionable knowledge.

Dewey developed his “Theory of Experience” as a critique of “traditional education”. According to him, traditional schooling developed in response to the needs and demands of industrial capitalism. It is based on the opposition of mind and body, mind and the world around us, as well as deductive logic, which reduces the general to the particular. It presupposes the ignorance of the learner and the wisdom and authority of the teacher, who is

initiated into the type of knowledge or the specifics of the disciplines that the student must learn.

Experiential learning is conceived as democratic, holistic and integrative, based on the process of making sense of the experience. The idea that experience, learning, and development are interconnected lays the foundation for many types of experiential learning. Frere and Kolb apply Dewey's core ideas to the field of adult learning and social justice and to the context of lifelong learning and organizational development. According to Dewey, Lewin, Frere, and Kolb, the purpose of Experiential Learning is for one to learn to transform experience into knowledge and to use that knowledge for personal and collective development. (Aleksova, 2017)

Unlike traditional learning, Experiential Learning develops the idea that knowledge is created at the individual and group level as people learn about the world around them. Experiential learning rejects the Platonic idea that truth is independent of knowledge, that the learning of information is unrelated to its understanding, assimilation, and application. It overcomes the opposition between experience and knowledge, mind and body, and emphasizes the process of communication that unites them, which is accompanied by game elements. One of the values of any community is that it provides the space where such dialogue can take place. This dialogue is usually called 'reflection', bringing together experience and knowledge, mind and body, individual and community. The experience-reflection cycle is at the heart of all types of learning through adventure and interactive teaching. The main elements contributing to "quality of experience" can be reduced to: intention, authenticity, planning, clarity, orientation and learning, observation and judgment, reflection, continuous improvement, evaluation and finally recognition. Psychologists note that, in general, the more active the learning, the easier it is to remember. Indeed, for some learners, the very opportunity to actively participate in the learning process increases their desire to learn. (Aleksova, 2017)

An important tool in education is teamwork and group work in an interdisciplinary environment. She teaches students how to work with their colleagues in a constructive way. In working in groups, they learn to communicate, to be responsible, to work with others using game elements, and also to reach compromises and resolve conflicts.

Each member of the group contributes their own skills and knowledge. The more skills and knowledge a group has, the easier a task or project becomes. Group work requirements include: effective communication; building

trust; Conflict Solving; batch process; means of communication; writing a text in collaboration with others, as well as visual aids and role-playing.

A successful example is the university campaign for civic participation and sustainable development "Place for the Future" - an initiative of the Sofia Civic Association "The Shtastlivetsa", which provides an opportunity to combine the new and different with care for the environment and education. There is a place for the future when students, teachers, experts, travelers, nature lovers with a bright active civic position meet. Since 2013 dr. Dessislava Alexova has also been part of the organizing committee of university travelers. She took part as a mentor in working groups, developing and conducting role-playing games and case studies, she was a guide and a lecturer when the participants were visiting tourism sites and good practices for sustainable development. A place where anyone who is interested can learn, exchange experiences, learn and pass on what they have learned, thereby expanding the network of knowledgeable and active people. A place to establish itself in the university world, to become a center for information and debate, a tribune of good practices and to find the right position in university curricula (Aleksova, 2015). The success of the "Place for the Future" educational network is related to the creative way of thinking and the creation of teams of creative individuals, ready to implement non-standard solutions in a conservative system such as education.

The successful formula of the Education Network "Place for the Future" for implementing such an integrated approach is the so-called traveling universities, in which Bulgarian and foreign students from various majors have actively participated. (Aleksova, 2017) The training model is interdisciplinary - it is aimed at students and doctoral students from different programs and specialties. Participation in this educational event gives them the opportunity to work for a week in an international team with their peers from several European universities; to participate in discussions on current topics of our time; to absorb knowledge and experience from established scientists, young researchers, experts from various fields and authorities of local communities; to get to know the unique natural and cultural heritage of the town of Chiprovtsi and the region of Western Stara Planina; to familiarize themselves with good practices in the context of sustainable development in Europe; to produce a specific product dedicated to sustainable development through the prism of their specialty and interests, in the form of: a scientific article, a short story or a multimedia product. The

participation of a university lecturer from abroad gives the opportunity to expand the knowledge and competences of students by familiarizing them with models and practices in other European educational institutions. The first outdoor university in the village of Vlahi is in the form of a traveling seminar for culturologists from the bachelor's program in cultural studies at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", in partnership with CVS - Bulgaria and is entitled "The Bulgarian phoenix bird in the village". The aim of the seminar is to acquaint the students live and on the spot with the new social and cultural phenomena in Bulgaria.

A traveling seminar "Place for the Future" in Northwestern Stara Planina covers the area of Belogradchik, Chiprovtsi, Chuprene, Varshets and Zelen, where students are given the opportunity to get to know this part of Bulgaria in a new and unusual way, to feel the atmosphere, to touch good practices and experience them, gain a different perspective on nature, culture, history, tourism and people.

The Traveling University and Summer School for Sustainable Regional Development Practices "Place for the Future: Chiprovtsi 2013" is concentrated almost entirely in the region of Chiprovtsi and for the first time it was held with international participation. Lecturers are professors from the University of Burgundy and the House of Human Sciences in the city of Dijon, France, the New Bulgarian University - Sofia and the International Business School - Botevgrad, representatives of environmental protection organizations and initiatives, the local organization "Chiprovtsi, an alternative for development" (CHAR), the Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge at the BAS, etc.

The participation of students and teachers from eight departments of the New Bulgarian University and from the "Communications and Information" specialty of the University of Library and Information Technologies provides an additional incentive for a creative interactive approach, turning the traveling university into a colorful palette of different activities: lecture part, discussion blocks, demonstrations of real practices and visits to cultural, historical and natural attractions. Various implemented projects for sustainable development of local communities are presented within the initiatives. (Metodieva, 2013)

Spring University "Europe on the Road: Empowering Citizens and Sustainable Development 2014" aims to transform the university environment into a platform for broad public debate related to European, national and local initiatives, to create opportunities for interaction between active civil society and the academic

community. For the second year in a row, the event was held with international participation.

During the Seventh International Traveling University in Chiprovtsi, "Traditional and new communities in Europe - between past and future 2015", students, volunteers, university professors and experts from various scientific and practical fields shared their knowledge and experience for six days, while working to build communities.

Each working group managed to build its concept for the development of the Educational Center, which it presented to the other participants during the closing conference. The challenge for the participants was the sharing of experience by each participant through the lens of their own competences and thus, through interdisciplinary training and learning by example, intercultural exchange was also achieved.

The 8th International Traveling University "City of the Future / Future of the City 2016" was noted as a good example of creating sustainable practices for promoting and revitalizing the poorest region in the European Union as a place for the future - Western Stara Planina.

Participation in this educational event allowed students and volunteers to work for a week in an international team with participants from different European universities; to participate in interactive discussions on current topics and role-playing games; to gain knowledge and experience from established scientists, young researchers, experts from various fields and to Exchange them with authorities of the local community; to become familiar with the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Western Stara Planina region, participating in various practical activities; to experience inspiring feelings and adventures, to create interpersonal connections, new friendships and cross-cultural communication; to gain experience of working together in interdisciplinary teams, skills of dialogicity, mutual enrichment and community solidarity; to participate in the development of a practical task that will benefit the future development of the region and their own personal growth. The ninth international traveling university "Europe - a place for the future", held in the month of May 2017, simultaneously entered into the previous tradition and opened new opportunities and horizons of knowledge. Among the highlights were interdisciplinary learning through inspiring lectures, teamwork in groups, tasks with game elements focused on local identity and its interpretation in European parallels; interactive informal learning between teachers and students from several countries, walks through the beautiful nature of the

Balkans, familiarization with good practices for sustainable development, dinners by the fire.

### **"Bridge-inter-cultures" initiative as a good practice in educational tourism**

Association *Bridges - Eastern European Forum for Dialogue* is a non-governmental organization that unites representatives from several parts of the country of various religious traditions - Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, Protestant, Armenian, Baha'i. Mission? The main focus group of the organization are youth and teenagers and how to teach them on tolerance through non-formal education and interactive games. Bridges "golden" project – interfaith youth camp "Bridge-inter-cultures" is a wonderful example and working model of positive transformation in 5 days. It exists for six years. The idea of the camp is to promote dialogue by engaging young people to live together and explore culture and religion of „the others“; using interactive and innovative non formal educational methods, gamification elements and games to build culture of peace – focusing on issues as ecology, art, sport and mental health. All those important topics are led by youth leaders of the organization and trainers using gaming methodology. Living together for 5 days teenagers build bridges of tolerance, understanding and friendship across cultures. Also, they form a strong sustainable community of creative and proactive young people from different religious traditions, who cooperate on various social and socially important causes in the future. Intolerance and ignorance toward „the other“ is raising today. We need positive examples to teach the next generation how to live together and to create better society, free of stereotypes and prejudices. (Vladikova & Karadzkhova, 2018)

The initiatives and projects of the association are a good example of prevention of future conflicts and hard work with children and youth from different religious communities in the direction of understanding and acceptance of the "other" of the different in search of ways for constructive coexistence. Some of the gamification elements during the youth camps include: participating in team games, singing songs and talking freely with the priests in informal contact; through the visits to the religious communities in Stara Zagora and various joint activities, the young people discover the commonality in their differences - they have the opportunity to participate in a workshop for religious dialogue between children KidSpirit, to write or draw on the theme "The spirit of the adventurer", as the most vivid works are published in the organization's online

magazine; in friendly football matches, with the participation in the training of professional players from the youth team of the host club, everyone has the opportunity to look at their friends in a new way, as partners in a game that has conquered the world. Bread is an important part of each of the religions, imbued with ritual value and in this sector of the camp activity it becomes a unifying unit for the final day, so on the last night the campers mix the "Bread of Friendship" and go through the process of stories about myself, about who I am, what I dream about, what I want to become, what my relationships with others should be. Thus, the children imperceptibly go through the stages of kneading the bread, which, created by their hands, becomes unifying for their common table. Together they manage to prepare their bread, share the labor of its creation, share their dreams and difficulties, combine the supposedly incompatible of our different cultural traditions to show that they have a future together. In the second part, held in the city of Peace and Justice - The Hague, the participants have the opportunity to continue their journey to getting to know the "other", the different and to try to overcome and understand their cultural peculiarities. In this part of the camp, they received a "Learning to Live Together" training conducted by Arigatou International trainers. Within a few days, they learn how to look at themselves, how to communicate with others; reflect on how all are connected and interdependent in common humanity; how they should listen and respect each other's opinion and point of view, looking beyond stereotypes and prejudices. Through gamification elements, children learn that misunderstanding and disrespect can lead to violence, injustice and violation of human rights. (Aleksova, 2021)

The created interactive dialogue implies very different answers from both sides, which is an indicator of activation of thinking in this direction.

The mission of the Association is to pave paths, to look for ways to connect people, helping each other across time and space. Since its creation, its main goal has been to emphasize the importance of dialogue between people of the spirit, of building bridges of tolerance and responsible coexistence between the different religious communities in the country. (Vladikova and Karadzkhova, 2018)

### **Games and gamification in the event tourism**

According to Mileva et al. (2020), gamification is a relatively new field at a distillation level. The aspiration for its application is to add value to the tourist product and build

an emotional connection of tourists to the destination, as gamification fully meets the marketing objectives of engagement, loyalty and brand recognition. This gives reason to some authors to consider it as an opportunity for innovation, creativity and an opportunity to increase the competitiveness of the destination.

This applies especially to the organization and holding of various types of events.

The promotion of voluntary activities, environmental education and education, which are meaningfully filled with more and more diverse game elements, is gaining more and more popularity. The purpose of the events focused on nature, nature protection, biodiversity protection and protected areas is to provoke ecological thinking in children, responsibility and care for representatives of wild flora and fauna and their habitats.

The next examples, in the development of the concepts, communication and implementation, in which Dr. Dessislava Alexova participated, confirmed that a game element plays a major role in keeping their attention. The programs are mainly aimed at schoolchildren and students and allow them to get to know the characteristic features of the natural features in the respective destination, their inhabitants and the problems related to their protection and human intervention in the wild world.

The involvement of young people in the subject is done through gradual familiarization with the characteristics of the protected areas by including various game elements, history of nature protection, basic knowledge about the protected species and characteristic habitats and gradual upgrading of knowledge. The content and program of each green event aims to contribute to the acquisition of skills to recognize different types of plants and animals and further engage adolescents in conservation causes.

The Day of the Frog Swamp in Botevgrad is connected with the desire to protect the longest documented migration of amphibians in the world and the transformation of children into ambassadors of the cause. The holiday was organized for the first time in 2018 on the initiative of Dr. Desislava Alexova, who was the coordinator of tourism in the municipality of Botevgrad and the deputy chairman of the Consultative Council on tourism issues in the municipality, on the occasion of celebrating the 50th anniversary of the documentation of the migration of the mountain frog (*Rana temporaria*). The organizer is the Municipality of Botevgrad, in partnership with the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) - Sofia, Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem

Research (IBEI), Association of Parks in Bulgaria (APB) and WWF Bulgaria.

"Muhalnitsa" or "The Frog marsh", as it is known among the local population, is a protected area in the sense of the Law on Protected Areas and is located in the land of the town of Botevgrad, in the Zelin villa area. It was declared for the purpose of protecting the marsh and its adjacent territories and is known for the unique worldwide migration of the mountain frog *Rana temporaria*. Every year, the mountain frogs come down from the southern slopes of the Stara Planina part "Bilo" along the three rivers Echemishka, Chervena kiselitsa and Zelinska in late winter and early spring and, having traveled a distance of 7 km, appear in the Frog Swamp, where they spawn.

During their annual migrations from their wintering grounds (the streams in the higher parts of the mountain) to the "Muhalnitsa" swamp, mountain frogs cover a distance of up to 6 km in a few days, and some of them probably over 10 km. The breeding season itself only lasts about two weeks, usually in late February and early March, depending on temperatures.

To date, the migration is threatened by the strong anthropogenic pressure in the area: redevelopment and blocking of part of the migration routes, increased traffic, which leads to many frogs being run over on the road to the marsh every year, overgrowth with grass, which occupies almost the entire area of the marsh. In 2017, the municipality of Botevgrad, together with a team of scientists from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, as well as environmentalists from the Association of Parks in Bulgaria, started activities related to overcoming the established threats.

Then the municipal leadership, directed by Dr. Alexova, makes decisions to celebrate the Day of the Frog Swamp, the goal being to provoke positive attitudes among the local population towards the unique natural value and educational effect among adolescents. A cause that unites institutions, scientists, conservationists and local residents is the promotion of the preservation of the largest recorded migration of the mountain frog *Rana temporaria* worldwide.

The date chosen is 22/03/2018 in order to coincide with World Water Day and the first spring. The holiday is filled with a variety of content and many original games and interactive activities developed for the purpose. The main activities include: all-day games for children of different ages, a guided walk to the Frog Swamp with a professional guide - a doctoral student in biology and training in identifying plant and animal species with a identifier, a presentation about the Frog Swamp and

migration in the Botevgrad Historical Museum, by its discoverer – Dr. Vladimir Beshkov, photo contest for children, exhibition of children's drawings with a competitive nature, fun quiz.

Participants are divided by age. The first half of the day the younger ones participated in various activities – singing, playing games, quizzes, interactive activities, and the afternoon for the older ones. Two entertainers are available throughout the day and welcome visitors at any time. With them is an animator dressed in a mountain frog costume, specially made for the holiday. The games and other activities are thematic and through them recreate the life in the swamp: the jumping and croaking of the frogs, their reproduction and metamorphosis, way of feeding. All these activities allow the children to feel like they are part of the inhabitants of the swamp, becoming ambassadors of its protection.

On a special secured trampoline decorated with lilies and ferns, up to 5 younger children and up to 3 older ones can jump at the same time, and during this time there must be someone to watch them, and teachers can also help here. The game "Who will jump the farthest" is suitable for both children and adults. For this purpose, the participants take frog steps and compete to see who will jump the farthest. For older ones, if desired, the task can be complicated by jumping with sacks. "The life of frogs" is a game with different options, and the information is adapted according to the age of the participants.

Sing-along takes place in the so-called "qua-qua sector" where children can try playing different instruments and croaking like frogs. There are drawing corners, balloon games, making tadpoles out of beans and cellophane that are thrown into a container of water where they live until they grow up and become frogs. "Let's catch the flies or how the frogs eat" is a game suitable for both children and adults. With it, children put frog's feet on their hands, with a sticky surface, and try to catch flies in the air.

In the following years, the games and other educational and entertainment activities were enriched with various workshops led by local artisans, which included the making of clay and felt frogs. In addition to children's drawings, the exhibition also includes applications made by children from kindergartens and schools in the municipality. A theatrical production of the SKRIN traveling puppet theater "The Great Frog Journey" has also been developed, which has performances all over the country. (Popova et al., 2019)

Another similar holiday, again based on the idea and concept of Dr. Desislava Alexova and her leadership, is

the Day of the Wild Peony in Bozhurishte in 2019. The cause, whose ambassadors are the children, is related to the preservation of the last site of narrow-leaved peony near Sofia and Bozhurishte, which is threatened by plowing and poaching. Over 150 children from kindergartens and schools in the region of Bozhurishte and Sofia participated in creative workshops in three sectors: ceramics, folding and applications of paper peonies and painting.

A public lecture was organized by Dr. Alexova for the upper grades of students and adults, with a discussion "Is the wild peony - a symbol of Bozhurishte protected?" and "Protected territories in Bulgaria", presented by the guest speakers from the Association of Parks in Bulgaria and Directorate of Vitoshka Nature Park talked more about the different types of peonies found in Bulgaria. Citizens, scientists, environmentalists, municipal councilors and other representatives of the local government joined the discussion, as well as employees from the Ministry of Environment and Water and Regional Inspection Environment and Water, who were invited to the lecture and were participated in the discussion.

The Day of the Wild Peony ended with the awarding of the winners of the National Children's Drawing Competition on the theme "Wild Peonies", in which more than 160 children from all over the country took part. Numerous certificates and prizes were distributed, and at the end, the organizers cut a specially made peony cake and were treated to chocolates from the sponsors of the celebration. Due to the pandemic situation in the following two years and the lack of sufficient motivation on the part of local institutions, the Wild Peony Festival failed to become a tradition but the broad public response contributed to the long-term preservation of the habitat.

The game element is even more palpably present in various events in adventure tourism, including relay games and competitions, logical tasks, participation in various types of trials. A typical example is the Botevgrad Adventure Multifight, the concept of which was developed with the participation of Dr. Alexova. The sport-adventure discipline was developed specifically for the purpose of the municipality of Botevgrad to position itself as an attractive destination for sports, adventure and extreme tourism. The logical elements in the concept of the event, contribute the participants learn curious historical facts in an attractive way through experience. The organizer is the Municipality of Botevgrad, and the goal is to demonstrate in an attractive way an innovative format combining entertainment and active outdoor sports, presenting to potential tourists and guests the opportunities for recreation and tourism in the

region of the municipality, as well as the attraction to similar activities of children and adolescents from schools. (Aleksova, 2018)

The event has traditionally been held since 2017 on the meadows near the "Bozhenishki Urvich" fortress, near the village of Bozhenitsa, Botevgrad municipality. Those wishing to join the initiative are faced with challenges in the form of an adventure games and activities: climbing and descending rock faces below the fortress, entering a cave, map-orientation and logic tasks, archery skills. All areas to overcome are united by a common logical framework related to decoding a final message. Classes are suitable for adults and children over 12 years old. In parallel, a musical program is held on stage and workshops for making various products: ceramics, wood carving, carpet weaving, etc. (Aleksova, 2018)

The advantages of the chosen destination are related to the excellent location of the village of Bozhenitsa, the meadows with gazebos, a stage and a fountain, the municipal accommodation base and the Bozhenishki Urvich fortress. Tourist sites in the village and some of the attractions in the area: an old church, a woodcarving workshop, a horse farm, rock niches and caves, climbing rocks, small picturesque waterfalls. The Bozhenishki Urvich fortress was one of the last fortresses captured by the Ottoman troops during the fall of Bulgaria. The end of its existence is sought at the end of the 14th century, when it was burned and destroyed to the ground.

### **Conclusions**

Gamification is taking more and more place in education, because educational games, the introduction of roles, as well as various statuses and rewards, the creation of simulations and learning companies have already proven to be much more successful learning methods than a number of traditional approaches.

The changes that gamification will impose in education are expected to be the following:

1. In contrast to the traditional model, in gamification grading should be by points, with each student starting with 0 points. Based on his progress, they are accumulated, until finally, according to a set scale, his rating is formed.
2. This is how one of the main problems in training - demotivation - can be solved on the basis of the game. According to one study, over 60% of learners would be more motivated if there were grading scales because they would also increase competition between everyone in the learning group. When it comes to online courses and distance

learning, 89% of respondents believe that a point system would increase their motivation.

3. Important change is that through gamification, decision-making power goes to the learners. Working in a team and following their developed strategy, they can change the planned learning activities, add new information, include additional components, etc.

4. Another big change that gamification will force is independent work, outside of school hours, with the aim of better performance, more points and therefore reward. Gamification is a preferred approach because with it, learners have unlimited options, they are free to fail/lose without worrying about getting a low grade. This is one of the main principles of the game - it teaches us to lose, but also motivates us to try again.

Important feature of gamification is the freedom for learners to create new strategies and patterns. For this purpose, it is necessary to invest all their creativity, knowledge and effort. The game teaches us to think within the rules, but in a different way, through which we can get ahead of the other participants. There is also a fundamental difference here with classical education, which teaches us to follow ready-made models, not to create our own, it places us in a framework, and everything outside of it is wrong and even punishable.

The next main advantage of gamification is the freedom of learners to allocate their own time, to complete their tasks when they feel sufficiently prepared, and not only in the classroom.

In addition, with it, learners receive feedback after each task, which motivates them to continue completing their tasks.

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