

The Influence of Educators' Tabletop Role-Playing Games Familiarity on the Implementation of LARPs in Adult Education

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Abstract

The principal purpose of this study is to investigate the overall attitude of adult trainers in Greece about educational live-action role-playing games (edu-LARPs) and their utilization as a teaching method. More specifically, it is an attempt to determine if the trainers' experience with various tabletop role-playing games affects their attitude towards this method and the frequency of usage. Moreover, the ultimate goal is to be an introduction to a large portion of this particular educational community with this innovative teaching method, setting the ground for further research that will help expand the academic field.

The results depict a statistically significant correlation between the overall attitude of the trainers towards edu-LARPs and their level of experience with tabletop RPGs. This correlation seems to extend also to the frequency of usage.

Keywords: edu-LARP, TRPG, Dungeons & Dragons, innovative teaching methods

要約

本研究の主な目的は、ギリシャにおける成人向けのトレーナーが教育的ライブアクションロールプレイングゲーム (edu-LARPs) およびその教授法としての利用について抱く全体的な態度を調査することである。より具体的には、様々なテーブルトップロールプレイングゲームの経験がトレーナーのこの教授法に対する態度および使用頻度にどのように影響するかを明らかにする試みである。また、本研究の最終的な目標は、この革新的な教授法を広く教育コミュニティに紹介し、学術分野を拡大するためのさらなる研究の基礎を築くことである。

結果として、トレーナーの edu-LARPs に対する全体的な態度とテーブルトップ RPG の経験レベルの間には統計的に有意な相関が見られた。この相関は使用頻度にも及ぶ傾向がある。


キーワード: 教育的 LARP, TRPG, ダンジョンズ&ドラゴンズ, 革新的な教授法

1. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a notable shift within the educational community away from traditional teaching methods characterized by rigid curriculums and teacher-centered approaches. Instead, educators are embracing alternative methodologies that prioritize not only cognitive development but also the cultivation of social and psychological competencies. Education itself has undergone a transformation, moving beyond the mere acquisition of factual knowledge to adopt a more holistic, humanistic perspective (Prager 2019, 5–6). Talmage et al (2018) argue that a primary objective of education is now seen as equipping learners with the skills and abilities necessary for independence and adaptability in an ever-

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evolving, uncertain world (114-115). In today's context, education must consider the progress and welfare of society on a global scale, given challenges such as climate change, pandemics, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, and the persistent threat of global conflicts (OECD 2022).

Kaplan in "Creativity in Education: Teaching for Creativity Development" (2019) suggests that a crucial aspect of preparing for this future is the cultivation of essential social skills, including effective communication, empathy, and creativity (141). Furthermore, Erdem (2019) contends that despite the pervasive influence of technology in contemporary life, critical skills for 21st-century citizenship extend beyond the digital realm to encompass qualities like curiosity, imagination, collaboration, adaptability, as well as various metacognitive abilities and social skills (5-6). Many of these skills are identified by the World Economic Forum as among the most valued for the workforce of 2025 (WEF 2020, 36). The alignment between educational systems and the demands of the labor market has long been a concern for researchers, with Burner (2018) advocating for educational reforms that prioritize fostering diverse talents, skills, adaptability, and creativity to meet evolving needs (125).

One innovative educational approach that has gained attention is educational live-action role-playing games (edu-LARPs), which have shown promise in promoting a wide range of skills and abilities without neglecting the importance of knowledge acquisition (Bowman and Standiford 2015).

2. Edu-LARPs and Tabletop Role-playing Games

Role-playing games (RPGs) are a type of game in which participants adopt the roles of fictional characters and collaboratively create stories. Players act within the constraints of their roles, and their progress depends on rules and guidelines provided by a designated facilitator referred to as the game master (Nikonanou and Venieri 2014). According to Montola (2009) it is the participants' choices that determine the outcome of the story, which does not result in winners or losers but rather "in an interactive process in which a group of individuals has redefined an imaginary world".

Role-playing games can be classified by their playing medium, spatial setting, temporal aspects, role distinctions, ethos, the character's role, game world, and even their rules. According to Zagal and Deterding's "Definitions of 'Role-Playing Games'" (2018), analog RPGs can be divided into two different types: Tabletop Role-Playing Games (TRPGs) and Live Action Role-Playing Games (LARPs). In TRPGs, a small group participates with a game master who oversees the game world and narrates scenarios, allowing players to interact with the world and each other in almost limitless ways (2014). LARP differs from TRPG in that it requires players to meet in person and act out their characters' actions rather than describing them (Pohjola 2003). Maragliano (2019), emphasizing the kinetic aspect that distinguishes them from tabletop role-playing games, defines them as "a type of game in which participants physically embody characters within the context of an imaginary scenario for extended periods of time" (457).

Edu-LARPs, which are the focus of this study, are defined as "any pedagogical method that uses LARPs as a student activity directly connected to the educational purpose of teaching or therapy" (Branc 2016, 37). Mochocki (2014) considers edu-LARPs to be the evolution of educational drama, a form of theatrical art with a purely pedagogical orientation, as it can overcome all the obstacles that educational drama encounters when implemented correctly. Additionally, other researchers attempt to define edu-LARPs through the educational philosophy they adopt, emphasizing that "the method of edu-LARPs, as a dynamic practice, is essentially the epitome of experiential learning" (Balzer and Kurz 2015).

The roots of edu-LARPs trace back to the late 1990s, building upon the foundations laid by tabletop RPGs that emerged with the publication of *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1974 (Gygax and Arneson 1974; Witwer 2015). However, the educational use of role-playing predates *Dungeons & Dragons*, with recorded instances dating back to the 1950s-1960s, where fictional scenarios were employed to facilitate practical communication skills within the principals of Situational Language Teaching theory (Hammer et al. 2024). During the 1980s, role-playing games transitioned from the humanities to the natural sciences, diversifying their didactical applications (Dorion 2009).

One early example of edu-LARPs is the Reacting to the Past project, initiated by Mark C. Barnes, a history professor at Barnard College, New York, in the late 1990s (Torner 2022, 179). Reacting to the Past

utilizes historical scenarios, such as the fall of the Roman Empire and the trial of Galileo, to engage learners in immersive learning experiences (Barnard College 2023). Presently, edu-LARPs find widespread application in Adult Education through various Erasmus+ projects, primarily categorized as non-formal or informal learning, with some offering certification through Youthpass (European Commission 2022). These scenarios enhance intrinsic motivation while fostering collaboration, inclusivity, and sustainability through experiential learning principles.

In recent years, edu-LARPs have garnered increased attention across educational levels, evidenced by the BBC documentary “The Documentary-Back to School: Supporting Neuro-divergent Students through LARP” (Power and Bowman 2023), and the establishment of specialized Master’s Degree programs focusing on the use of analogue role-play for personal development and social change (Uppsala Universitet 2023). These developments underscore the growing recognition of the connection between edu-LARPs and Mezirow’s perspective transformation theory.

3. Edu-LARPs and Adult Education

The role of adult educators encompasses a multifaceted and intricate set of responsibilities (Kalogridi 2019). Therefore, Beckett emphasizes in “Adult Learning: Philosophical Issues” (Beckett 2011) the crucial importance of teaching methods in Adult Education that can effectively fulfill educational objectives while ensuring that learners perceive themselves as central to the learning process (115-116). A significant challenge facing the contemporary educational landscape is the quest for methods that not only motivate learners but also foster positive shifts in their attitudes and entrenched beliefs (Burner 2018, 124). Edu-LARPs exemplify an experimental teaching approach that boosts learner engagement by tapping into intrinsic motivators, such as personal satisfaction, inherent in gaming experiences (Bowman and Standiford 2015, 6-7). Prager (2019) contend that the foundational principle of edu-LARPs is predicated on the concept of experiential learning, which is congruent with andragogical principles. They suggest that adult learners, as well as learners of all ages, tend to achieve more effective learning outcomes through active participation rather than passive reception (5-6). Mochocki (2014) similarly underscores the value of learners’ active involvement through collaboration or friendly competition, elements inherent in edu-LARPs (134).

Moreover, personal experiences within edu-LARP settings appear to enhance the acquisition of new knowledge while fostering higher-order cognitive skills highly valued in today’s job market, such as problem-solving and creative thinking (Prager 2019). Khan’s work on “Role-play: a Teaching Strategy that Adds Fun in Learning” (2017) shifts the focus to the social and humanitarian aspects of education, highlighting how edu-LARPs enable learners to embody characters differing from their own disposition, thus facilitating a fresh perspective on sensitive issues and nurturing empathy—a vital skill. Bowman (2014) underscores the link between edu-LARPs and empathy, noting their use in Scandinavia to raise awareness about various societal challenges, including poverty, immigration, homelessness, and discrimination based on race, gender, or disability.

4. Theoretical Framework

Bowman (2014) implies that edu-LARPs are the evolution of tabletop role-playing games, having more in common with *Dungeon & Dragons* (1974), *Vampire the Masquerade* (1991) or *Legend of the Five Rings* (1997) than the typical role-playing games which are used in education since the mid-1950s (Tychsen et al. 2006). This research was conducted with this belief as its foundation stone. More specifically, its purpose is to examine whether there is a connection between the level of experience an adult educator has with tabletop RPGs and their attitude towards edu-LARPs as a teaching method and if this connection extends to the frequency of usage as well. This theoretical framework is depicted graphically in the following figure (Figure 1).

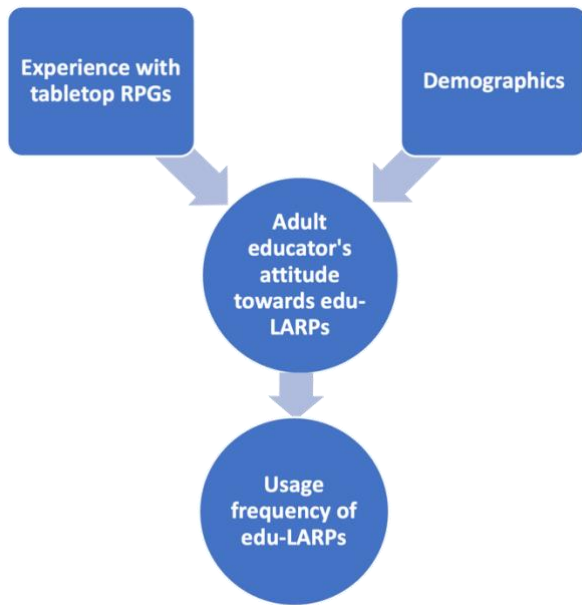


Fig. 1: Theoretical Framework.

According to Branc's "EDU-LARP as a game-based learning method for corporate training" (2016), edu-LARPs incorporate several key elements that are fundamental to Adult Learning (25-26). These include the ability to integrate various teaching subjects, the requirement for participants to collaborate to achieve their objectives (Schmit, Martins, and Ferreira 2009), the promotion of critical thinking and creativity through the challenges presented in scenarios (Bowman and Standiford 2015), and a theoretical structure that fosters self-awareness and independence in learners (Daniau 2016). These four principles—Interdisciplinarity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Inquiry-based Learning—form the core of this research and serve as the main independent variables that influence adult educators' attitude (dependent variable) towards the use of edu-LARPs as a teaching method. These concepts are essential values that every adult educator should aim to instill

in their students (Becket 2011; Cranton 2011). These terms are defined in the following paragraphs, as well as the notion of attitude. For purpose of clarity, it should be stated that when we refer to four notions that comprise the independent variables, we actually refer to the educators' beliefs, behaviors and feelings about them as fundamental aspects of Adult Education.

According to Michailidis and Zikos (2016) Interdisciplinarity "is a methodological approach that utilizes knowledge from different scientific fields to achieve a thorough and in-depth understanding of a specific issue" (16). Ehlers and Eigbrecht (2024) claim that, although nobody invented the need for interdisciplinary thinking, it is something that contemporary society and the many problems that ail it demand from us, so it is up to educators to cultivate its unique set of skills (165).

Collaboration is viewed as the essential skill underpinning all team-based efforts, fostering social constructivism through inquiry, perspective shifts, and negotiations (Sun and Kang 2022). More specifically, Laal et al. (2014) claim that a collaborative style in teaching emphasizes on discussion and active engagement on behalf of the trainees and is considered a much-appreciated shift from the traditional, lecture-centered teaching (4058).

Brookfield states that Critical thinking as a thought process based on personal experience, attributing meaning in theoretical and abstract subjects (Telemaque 2011). This process is viewed as a compelling connection between theory and practice (346). In Gafour and Gafour's "Creative Thinking Skills-A Review Article" (2020), critical thinking is described as the cognitive procedure of "analyzing and developing possibilities to compare and contrast many ideas" in order to "provide a sound foundation for effective action" (18).

In "Exploring the Integration of ChatGPT in Inquiry-Based Learning: Teacher Perspectives" by Adeyele and Ramnarain (2024), it is mentioned that Inquiry-based learning is an educational approach based on the notion that trainees actively involved in the learning process have better learning outcomes than when being passively handed down information (200). The implementation of inquiry-based learning allows students to safely use the scientific method, applying simultaneously knowledge, skills and attitudes. This leads to the cultivation of the necessary research skills, allowing trainees to fully understand a complex subject by thorough examination (Casa-Coila et al. 2024).

The notion of Attitude can best be defined as the opinion a person can have about a subject, an idea that is affected, shaped and limited by the sensory stimuli of each individual (Pandonge and Balol 2022, 55). Kara and Ada (2021), claim that attitude is comprised by three factors: thought, emotion and behavior. This statement implies that attitude can shape a person's ideas, feelings and responses (106).

This theoretical construction is visually analyzed in Figure 2. Once again, it is important to note that when we mention the four notions constituting the independent variables, we are referring to educators' beliefs, behaviors, and feelings.

5. Methodology

The research was based on the following research questions:

1. Is there a connection between the educators' level of experience in tabletop RPGs and their attitude towards edu-LARPs?
2. Is there a connection between the educators' experience in tabletop RPGs and the usage frequency of edu-LARPs in their teaching?

After a detailed literature review, encompassing studies on edu-LARPs as well as research on other innovative educational methods and practices, both in Adult Education and formal education, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. Adult educators in Greece do not frequently use the edu-LARPs method in their teaching.
2. Adult educators who more frequently use the edu-LARPs method are familiar with tabletop role-playing games.

Currently, there is a lack of similar research focusing on adult educators' overall attitude towards edu-LARPs, posing a challenge in developing a valid questionnaire. Furthermore, there is a paucity of academic interest in Greece concerning the integration of role-playing games in adult education. This dearth of scholarly attention posed significant difficulties in the development of a valid and reliable questionnaire. Consequently, the research was conducted using a modified version of the questionnaire employed by Al Basha (2018) in his investigation of teachers' perceptions and implementation of STEM education in the United Arab Emirates. This specific research instrument was selected for two principal reasons: first, Al Basha's study examined educators' perceptions of a particular educational approach, which closely parallels methods such as edu-LARPs, drawing upon numerous credible and contemporary sources. Second, the concepts incorporated in the questionnaire, with the exception of Engineering and Design which was omitted, are predominantly relevant to edu-LARPs and their application, as corroborated by multiple experts (Bowman and Standiford 2015, 8; Branc 2016, 34; Daniau 2016, 416; Geneuss, Obster, and Ruppert 2020). The revised questionnaire includes 32 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, categorized into five variables, along with a demographics section and an initial question about the frequency of edu-LARPs implementation in the educators' teaching schedules.

This revised version was constructed by feedback from a 3-member focus group, serving as a pilot survey. The group included an academic researcher with expertise in edu-LARPs, a founding member of Gamecraft specializing in educational larping in Greek museums, and an experienced adult educator. Each of them has at least five years of working experience in Second Chance Schools and/or Vocational Training Institutes. The deliberate composition ensured expertise in research, edu-LARPs, and Adult Education. The final questionnaire was translated into Greek and back to English (back translation) with the assistance of a native English speaker.

The survey was carried out using an on-line questionnaire that was made available via Google forms. The questionnaire link was distributed to all Second Chance Schools in Greece, as well as to three Vocational Training Institutes that formally agreed to participate in the research. Additionally, it was shared in Facebook groups for adult educators and trainers. All steps of this distribution process were conducted in strict compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679, and the necessary license was

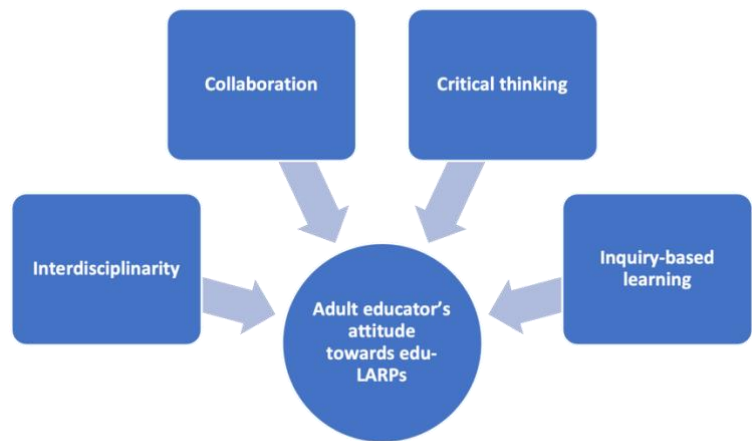


Fig. 2: Theoretical Construction of Attitude.

obtained from the General Secretariat of Vocational Education, Training, and Lifelong Learning. Quantitative analysis of the results was performed using inferential statistics and factor analysis, utilizing Jamovi version 2.3.18 (Fox and Weisberg 2024; R Core Team 2021; Revelle 2024; The jamovi project 2022).

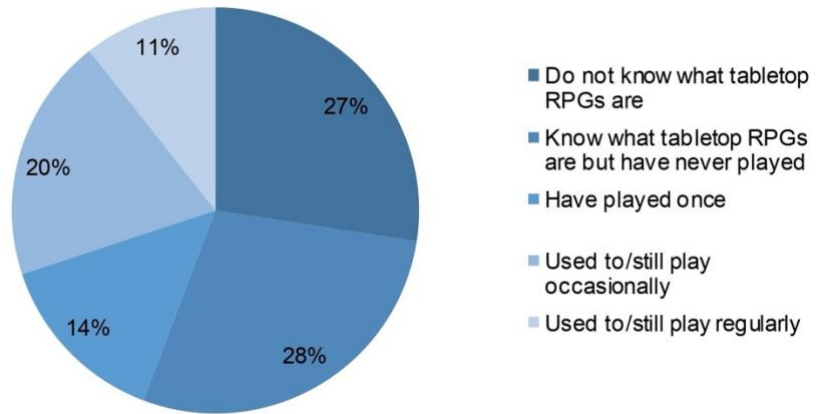


Fig. 3: Level of Experience in Tabletop RPGs.

6. Results

The sampling was that of convenience and was comprised of

113 adult educators, 49 men and 64 women, with the majority working in Second Chance Schools and Institutes of Vocational Education and Training. The quota regarding the level of experience in tabletop RPGs is shown in Figure 3.

As mentioned above, this research explores whether there is a connection between the experience of an adult educator with tabletops RPGs and their attitude towards using edu-LARPs scenarios. This was tested using one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA), specifically the Kruskal-Wallis test. The purpose of the Kruskal-Wallis test is to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the medians of three or more independent groups. These differences are measured by the value of p (probability). A low p value ($p < 0.05$) means that there is a statistically significant difference between the groups. The analysis showed that in all sub-scales that study the five concept-variables, there is a statistically significant difference in the responses of the participants. A detailed analysis of these differentiations follows.

The results of the ANOVA analysis regarding level of experience with tabletop RPGs and educators' Attitude towards the use of edu-LARPs are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1 — Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Dispersions between Level of Experience with Tabletop RPGs and Attitude.

Kruskal-Wallis			
	χ^2	df	p
Attitude	15.5	4	0.004

Pairwise Comparisons – Attitude			
		W	p
Used to/still play occasionally	Used to/still play regularly	2.723	0.304
Used to/still play occasionally	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-1.711	0.746
Used to/still play occasionally	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-1.668	0.763
Used to/still play occasionally	Have played once	-4.333	0.019
Used to/still play regularly	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-3.425	0.11
Used to/still play regularly	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-3.295	0.136
Used to/still play regularly	Have played once	-5.071	0.003

Pairwise Comparisons – Attitude

		W	p
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	0.379	0.999
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Have played once	-2.048	0.597
Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	Have played once	-2.408	0.432

Given that $p=0.004 < 0.05$, there is a statistically significant difference concerning the overall attitude of adult educators towards using edu-LARPs regarding their level of experience in tabletop RPGs. The DSCF test for multiple comparisons revealed significant differences between specific groups of educators. Notably, those who used to or still play regularly differed from those who have played only once ($p=0.019$), and those who used to or still play occasionally differed from those who have played only once ($p=0.003$). The magnitude of these differences is indicated by the absolute value of the W statistic; larger values signify greater differences in responses between the groups (Spurrier 2006). In this analysis, the W value is 4.333 for the first comparison and 5.071 for the second.

The results of the ANOVA analysis regarding level of experience with tabletop RPGs and educators' opinions about the Interdisciplinary aspect of edu-LARPs are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2 — Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Dispersions between Level of Experience with Tabletop RPGs and Interdisciplinary.

Kruskal-Wallis			
	χ^2	df	p
Interdisciplinary	17.1	4	0.002

Pairwise Comparisons – Interdisciplinary

		W	p
Used to/still play occasionally	Used to/still play regularly	2.079	0.582
Used to/still play occasionally	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-2.954	0.225
Used to/still play occasionally	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-3.168	0.165
Used to/still play occasionally	Have played once	-4.272	0.021
Used to/still play regularly	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-3.97	0.04
Used to/still play regularly	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-3.755	0.061
Used to/still play regularly	Have played once	-4.469	0.014
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	0.248	1
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Have played once	-1.161	0.924
Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	Have played once	-1.182	0.92

Given that $p=0.002 < 0.05$, there is a statistically significant difference concerning the cultivation of interdisciplinary skills via the use of edu-LARPs in respect of the educators' level of experience in tabletop RPGs. More specifically, the DSCF test for multiple comparisons showed that this differentiation is found in those educators who used to/still play occasionally versus those who have played once ($p=0.021$), those

who used to/still play regularly versus those who have played once ($p=0.014$) and those who used to/still play regularly versus those who do not know what tabletop RPGs are ($p=0.040$).

The results of the ANOVA analysis regarding level of experience with tabletop RPGs and educators' opinions about the promotion of collaboration with the use of edu-LARPs are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3 — Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Dispersions between Level of Experience with Tabletop RPGs and Collaboration.

Kruskal-Wallis			
	χ^2	df	p
Collaboration	18.7	4	<.001

Pairwise Comparisons - Collaboration			
		W	p
Used to/still play occasionally	Used to/still play regularly	1.796	0.71
Used to/still play occasionally	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-4.352	0.018
Used to/still play occasionally	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-4.377	0.017
Used to/still play occasionally	Have played once	-3.48	0.1
Used to/still play regularly	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-3.757	0.061
Used to/still play regularly	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-3.55	0.088
Used to/still play regularly	Have played once	-3.39	0.116
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	1.28	0.895
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Have played once	1.362	0.872
Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	Have played once	0.636	0.992

Given that $p=0.002 < 0.05$, there is a statistically significant difference concerning the cultivation of collaboration via the use of edu-LARPs in respect of the educators' involvement with tabletop RPGs. More specifically, the Tukey test showed that this differentiation resides with those educators who used to/still play occasionally versus those who do not know what tabletop RPGs are ($p=0.008$) and those who used to/still play regularly versus those who do not know what tabletop RPGs are ($p=0.0179$).

The results of the ANOVA analysis regarding level of experience with tabletop RPGs and educators' opinions about the cultivation of critical thinking with the use of edu-LARPs are depicted in Table 4.

Table 4 — Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Dispersions between Level of Experience with Tabletop RPGs and Critical Thinking.

Kruskal-Wallis			
	χ^2	df	p
Critical Thinking	14.3	4	0.006

Pairwise Comparisons – Critical Thinking

		W	p
Used to/still play occasionally	Used to/still play regularly	2.921	0.235
Used to/still play occasionally	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-1.214	0.912
Used to/still play occasionally	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-1.984	0.626
Used to/still play occasionally	Have played once	-3.888	0.047
Used to/still play regularly	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-3.245	0.147
Used to/still play regularly	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-3.74	0.063
Used to/still play regularly	Have played once	-5.312	0.002
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-0.513	0.996
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Have played once	-1.879	0.674
Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	Have played once	-1.249	0.903

Given that $p=0.006 < 0.05$, there is a statistically significant difference concerning the cultivation of critical thinking via the use of edu-LARPs regarding the educators' level of experience in tabletop RPGs. More specifically, the DSCF test for multiple comparisons showed that this differentiation resides with those educators used to/still play occasionally versus those that have played once ($p=0.047$) and those who use to/still play regularly versus those that have played once ($p=0.002$).

The results of the ANOVA analysis regarding level of experience with tabletop RPGs and educators' opinions about the promotion of Inquiry-based Learning with the use of edu-LARPs are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5 — Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Dispersions between Level of Experience with Tabletop RPGs and Inquiry-based Learning.

Kruskal-Wallis			
	χ^2	df	p
Inquiry-based Learning	13.3	4	0.01

Pairwise Comparisons – Inquiry-based Learning

		W	p
Used to/still play occasionally	Used to/still play regularly	3.295	0.136
Used to/still play occasionally	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-1.429	0.851
Used to/still play occasionally	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-2.655	0.33
Used to/still play occasionally	Have played once	-2.273	0.493
Used to/still play regularly	Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	-3.548	0.089
Used to/still play regularly	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-4.405	0.016
Used to/still play regularly	Have played once	-4.371	0.017

Pairwise Comparisons – Inquiry-based Learning

		W	p
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	-0.547	0.995
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	Have played once	-0.636	0.992
Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	Have played once	0.194	1

Given that $p=0.01 < 0.05$, there is a statistically significant difference in the responses of the participants depending on their involvement with tabletop role-playing games and their opinions regarding the promotion of Inquiry-based Learning through edu-LARPs. Specifically, by conducting the DSCF test for group comparisons in pairs, it was found that a statistically significant difference exists between those educators who used to/still play regularly versus those who know what tabletop role-playing games are but have never played ($p=0.016$), and between those who used to/still play regularly versus those who have played once ($p=0.017$).

This apparent differentiation in the overall opinions of adult educators regarding the five concepts studied in this work is summarized in the following table (Table 6), which compares the overall means of the five concepts for the entire sample in comparison with the respective means of those educators who occasionally or regularly used to/still play tabletop role-playing games.

Table 6 — Comparison of Means for the Entire Sample versus Those Educators who Occasionally or Regularly Used To/Still Play Tabletop Role-Playing Games.

	Attitude		Interdisciplinary		Collaboration		Critical Thinking		Inquiry-based Learning	
Mean	4.04	4.32	3.9	4.26	3.55	3.93	4.06	4.35	3.91	4.25
Standard Deviation	0.694	0.548	0.667	0.545	0.698	0.545	0.651	0.459	0.71	0.46

The number on the left in each column indicates the mean of the concept for the entire sample. In contrast, the number on the right indicates the mean for those educators who occasionally or regularly used to/still play tabletop role-playing games. In all cases, there is an increase in the mean of the responses by about 0.3, while simultaneously, the standard deviation further decreases. This implies that the responses of educators who occasionally or regularly used to/still play tabletop RPGs are even more concentrated around the value of 4 - Agree.

Through the literature review, a relationship emerged between educators’ engagement with tabletop role-playing games and the utilization of the edu-LARPs method. This finding led to the implementation of a statistical investigation into the correlation between experience with tabletop role-playing games and the frequency of edu-LARPs usage among adult educators during the teaching process. The relevant table (Table 7) displaying the chi-square test between these two variables follows.

Table 7 — Chi-square Test between Adult Educators’ Experience with Tabletop Role-Playing Games and the Frequency of edu-LARPs Usage.

		Contingency Tables				
		Frequency				
Level of Experience with Tabletop RPGs		Seldom	1-2 times a month	1-2 times a semester	1-2 times a week	Total
Used to/still play occasionally	Observed	10	5	1	5	21

Contingency Tables

Level of Experience with Tabletop RPGs		Frequency				Total
		Seldom	1-2 times a month	1-2 times a semester	1-2 times a week	
Used to/still play regularly	% within row	47.6 %	23.8 %	4.8 %	23.8 %	100.0 %
	Observed	3	5	2	2	12
Do not know what tabletop RPGs are	% within row	25.0 %	41.7 %	16.7 %	16.7 %	100.0 %
	Observed	19	4	6	1	30
Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played	% within row	63.3 %	13.3 %	20.0 %	3.3 %	100.0 %
	Observed	13	11	7	1	32
Have Played Once	% within row	40.6 %	34.4 %	21.9 %	3.1 %	100.0 %
	Observed	4	6	5	1	16
Total	% within row	25.0 %	37.5 %	31.3 %	6.3 %	100.0 %
	Observed	49	31	21	10	111
	% within row	44.1 %	27.9 %	18.9 %	9.0 %	100.0 %

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	21.2	12	0.047
N	111		

From the analysis of the above table, it is evident that respondents who occasionally or regularly used to/still play tabletop RPGs utilize the edu-LARPs method at least 1-2 times per month at a rate of 47.4% and 58.4%, respectively. Conversely, those who are unfamiliar with tabletop games, have never played, or have only played once exhibit lower rates of usage. Specifically, those who are unfamiliar with tabletop role-playing games use the edu-LARPs method at least 1-2 times per month at a rate of 16.6%, those who have never played at a rate of 37.5%, and those who have played only once at a rate of 43.8%. Therefore, it appears that the more experience an adult educator has with the tabletop format of role-playing games, the more frequently they utilize edu-LARPs in their teaching. This conclusion is further supported by the chi-square test, which yields a p-value of 0.047.

7. Discussion

From the statistical analysis of the questionnaire responses, it became clear that the majority of adult educators in our country have a quite positive view regarding edu-LARPs. This conclusion aligns with the assertions of Khan (2017). Nevertheless, the findings suggest that edu-LARPs is not a preferable teaching method among adult educators in Greece, according to their own responses. This is not something that comes as a surprise, since it is relatively new and only recently has started to establish itself, mainly through the various ERASMUS+ programs. Additionally, larping as a leisure activity remains, more or less, unknown through the Greek educational community. However, the results strongly indicate that there is a dynamic connection between the educators' level of experience in tabletop RPGs and their attitude towards edu-LARPs, meaning that the more time educators spend playing *Dungeons & Dragons* and other systems, the more sympathetic they are towards the implementation of edu-LARPs in their classroom. Veteran role-

players consider edu-LARPs a powerful tool for social change, as a method perfectly in harmony with the essence of Adult Education, as Beckett perceives it in “Adult Learning: Philosophical Issues” (2011). These educators that have a deep understanding of how role-play can affect students firstly as persons, employ edu-LARPs significantly more often than educators unfamiliar with tabletop RPGs. This outcome was anticipated during the literature review (Bowman 2014), which led to the formulation of the second research hypothesis stating that adult educators who more frequently use the edu-LARPs method are familiar with tabletop role-playing games. This finding is consistent with Mochocki’s (2014) research, which additionally suggests that the tabletop form of role-playing games can also be utilized in an educational context.

In general, the results of this study are consistent with prior research from various other countries, indicating that most of the educational community, including that of Greece, is still unaware of the advantages of game-based learning. They tend to regard it as somewhat inferior with respect to cognitive outcomes (Mochocki 2014). Therefore, for edu-LARPs to be introduced into Greek classrooms, educators must first familiarize themselves with tabletop role-playing games and their numerous benefits (Baker, Turner, and Kotera 2023). This familiarity will enable them to appreciate the advantages of this educational method and to fully grasp its constructivist approach, which is ideally suited for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. As Chalkia (2020) states, “knowledge is viable within the subject’s domain of experience” (54), and edu-LARPs exemplify experiential learning. The future of education can progress through innovative experimental methods that prioritize the student or trainee. This is especially true in adult education, which has remained relatively stagnant in recent decades; integrating edu-LARPs offers a promising avenue for revitalization.

Learning should be an enjoyable and dynamic process that unites learners, addressing both their cognitive and psychosocial needs. Most importantly, it should compel them to reflect on established beliefs. This conclusion has been reached by numerous experts, whether referring to educators (Bowman 2014; Prager 2019) or learners (Maragliano 2019; Mochocki 2014). Edu-LARPs, according to the findings of the aforementioned researchers, could have the potential to address various aspects of Adult Education, achieving satisfactory learning outcomes and fostering essential skills such as empathy, collaboration, and critical thinking. Undoubtedly, the implementation of edu-LARPs poses challenges, primarily stemming from the unfamiliarity with this innovative educational approach. Moreover, there persists uncertainty among many about the concept of larping. However, there is an expectation that these challenges can be gradually overcome.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study sheds light on the potential of edu-LARPs in Adult Education in Greece, offering a fresh perspective on how role-playing methodologies can enhance the learning experience. While the majority of educators surveyed hold positive views about edu-LARPs, the method has yet to establish itself as a preferred teaching approach in Greek classrooms. The novelty of edu-LARPs in Greece, coupled with limited exposure to larping as a leisure activity, contributes to this hesitancy. Although the relatively small sample size and lack of previous quantitative data pose limitations on the generalizability of the findings, the sample can still be considered adequate given the innovative nature of the field in Greece. As the first attempt to explore the use of edu-LARPs in Adult Education in the country, this research serves as a valuable foundation for future studies and discussions.

Despite these constraints, the research reveals a notable connection between educators’ familiarity with tabletop RPGs and their openness to edu-LARPs as a teaching tool. This suggests that with increased exposure and experience, educators may come to view this method as a valuable asset for fostering critical skills such as collaboration, empathy, and reflective thinking, aligning with the core principles of Adult Education. As this field of study grows, future research with larger samples and longitudinal data will be necessary to fully explore the long-term benefits and practical implementation of edu-LARPs in educational settings.

Ultimately, while edu-LARPs remain relatively unknown in Greece, their potential to rejuvenate adult learning through experiential and game-based methods is clear. Overcoming the initial barriers of unfamiliarity and skepticism will be crucial in its broader adoption, but the results of this study provide a promising foundation for future developments in this area.

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Appendix

Questionnaire summary

1st part

All the items in this part were to be answered via a 5 grade Likert scale (1: Totally disagree to 5: Strongly agree)

Attitude

- Teaching through edu-LARPs has a relation with what we experience in real world.
- The implementation of edu-LARPs promotes trainees' critical thinking.
- The implementation of edu-LARPs cultivates decision making skills.
- The implementation of edu-LARPs enhances problem solving skills.
- Teaching through edu-LARPs is focused on learning outcomes.
- Teaching different class subjects simultaneously through edu-LARPs enhances learning more than teaching each separate subject separately.
- Teaching through edu-LARPs is a connection between different subjects within an authentic context that enhances trainees' learning.

Interdisciplinary

- Through the implementation of edu-LARPs trainees learn concepts that go beyond the limits of one specific subject.
- The implementation of edu-LARPs can address to interdisciplinary, multi-perspective viewpoints to various issues. • Instructions are an integral part of edu-LARP scenarios.
- Different physical sciences subjects can be taught simultaneously through edu-LARPs.
- Different human sciences subjects can be taught simultaneously through edu-LARPs.

- Through edu-LARPs can be taught simultaneously both physical and human sciences.

Collaboration

- Educators that use edu-LARPs share their knowledge, in order to promote the implementation of this method.
- Educators that use edu-LARPs share their resources, in order to elevate the implementation of this method.
- Educators that use edu-LARPs share their ideas and scenarios.
- Educators that use edu-LARPs communicate in order to refine their teaching practice.
- There is constant training/further education of educators about the utilization of edu-LARPs.
- Through edu-LARPs trainees talk to each other and negotiate their solutions.
- Through edu-LARPs trainees improve their communication skills.

Critical thinking

- Problem-based learning is an important element of edu-LARPs.
- Through edu-LARPs I guide my trainees to develop interdisciplinary viewpoints for each given problem.
- Through edu-LARPs trainees can identify the problem and what needs to be done in order to solve it.
- Through edu-LARPs trainees do research and gather information from different disciplines about the given problem.
- Through edu-LARPs trainees develop probable solutions supported by evidence.
- Through edu-LARPs trainees share, communicate and refine their solutions.
- Through edu-LARPs are presented obstacles that require problem-solving skills, challenging trainees to think critically.

Inquiry-based learning

- Through edu-LARPs I promote inquiry skills in my class by raising questions that the trainees need to investigate.
- Through edu-LARPs trainees present results and reflect on them in a critical manner.
- Before I go through with an edu-LARP scenario, I first present the scientific facts.
- Scientific facts promote knowledge and skills for personal and societal decisions.
- Inquiry process provides more questions and requires higher thinking skills.

2nd part

Demographics

- Gender
Male Female
- Age
23-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 60+
- Do you have experience with tabletop role-playing games? (*Dungeons & Dragons, Legend of the Five Rings, Vampire the Masquerade*, etc.) Do not know what tabletop RPGs are
Know what tabletop RPGs are but have never played
Have played once
Used to/still play occasionally
Used to/still play regularly
- How often do you use the edu-LARPs method in your teaching?
Rarely
1-2 times per semester
1-2 times per month
1-2 times per week