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Curriculum overload - impact on the achievement and wellbeing of students and teachers

Pristina, 2022

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Preface

In the current discourse of education reforms, there is a constant demand to improve the quality of education and to enable positive change.

Nearly a decade after the beginning of the curriculum reform, and five years since the start of its implementation in all schools, the students', teachers' and parents' challenges and complaints are still common. There are uncertainties and dilemmas for specific aspects of the content, approach and implementation of the new curriculum

Recent studies related to curricular reform in Kosovo, mainly focus on thematic treatment of aspects related to preparations of curriculum implementation, its piloting, the scope of implementation, the challenges in its implementation, etc., without a in-depth focus on dealing with aspects of curricular overload.

OECD countries have conducted an analysis of curriculum overload in education (Curriculum Overload: A Way Forward, OECD (2020). This study addresses aspects of curriculum overload in four dimensions, which can also serve as a guide for other contexts and educational systems.

Kosovo Pedagogical Institute in collaboration with the University of Mitrovica organized this conference in order to deal with curricular overload and its impact on the student's achievements, on the well-being of students and teachers, in various thematic aspects, practical and theoretical, providing evidence scientific and the opening of the professional and scientific debate on the strategies and possibilities of influence in the determination of the following policies on this issue.

In this international conference, we aim to understand the issue of overload by experts in the fields of curriculum implementation and reform, university professors and school teachers. A real overview of these aspects is added value for decision makers and the directions of the development of the education system.

In this conference, the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute will present the report with the results of the study: Curricular overload in primary and lower secondary education in Kosovo - (reality or perception?).

The study of this topic is a proof of the Institute's efforts to support new developments in education, with the aim of informing and guiding educational policies and practices.

The study comes at the time of the completion of a phase of the curriculum reform, since from the 2021/2022 school year, in all classes of pre-university education, work is being done with the new subject curricula, conceived in the spirit of the curriculum documents (Curriculum Framework for pre university education and Core curriculum) of based on competencies.

The conclusion of this phase of the curriculum reform lays the need for evidence, additional feedback information to make the necessary improvements for successful implementation of the curriculum requirements. Therefore, the KPI, within the professional and scientific studies plan for 2022, designed this special study, the issue of curricular overload, through which aim to research the most important issues related to the curricular load in primary and lower secondary education and provide a comprehensive and analytical information about this study topic.

From this study came out important findings for this topic of studies, elements of curricular overload in primary and secondary education important, from curricular documents, but also issues of overload induced by various factors, which are known as perceived overload.

In addition to the reflection of the findings, the study also offers recommendations, guidelines for establishing an educational policy that basically should have a functional strategy for the treatment and prevention of curriculum overload, as well as developmental directions for teaching effectiveness, as one of the main actions for guaranteeing the well-being of all students and eliminating inequalities in learning.

The results of this study will serve the educational community, readers and policy makers and other researchers of this field. Therefore, it is of particular

importance that the results from such studies are presented and discussed at such conferences with wide participation from the educational community. We believe that with this approach we increase the level of scientific, responsible and professional examination and discussion of important educational issues.

Nezir Çoçaj, director of KPI

Approaches to reducing curriculum overload in the implementation of curricular reform in upper secondary schools in Slovenia

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Abstract

The Slovenian education system faces pressure from society to expand the curriculum by adding new subjects, content and/or competencies (digital literacy, sustainable development, civic competencies, globalization issues, etc.) to the curriculum. Therefore, we have started with a systemic approach to developing the gymnasium program, whose purpose is to maintain the existing coherence of the curriculum and prevent the expansion of subjects and content/competencies, considering the needs of modern society. Therefore, the gymnasium curriculum reform is based on:

a) strengthening interdisciplinary integration between subjects through an interdisciplinary thematic package (ITP),

b) introducing an active and authentic approach to the development of civic competencies,

c) linking key aims of specific competencies/literacies with the aims of specific subjects.

ITP is a coherent whole, where the interrelated goals from the curricula of different subjects are realized. It is based on modern didactic approaches, complex student achievements, development of competencies and the school as an open learning environment.

Civic competencies are developed within the independent content section, Active Citizenship, based on a different organization and implementation of lessons. The focus is on active learning and an authentic approach. Through the setting up of authentic learning situations and providing quality feedback to students, the teacher encourages his/her active role, planning and reflection on learning.

The third approach links key process aims and competencies/literacies with subject-specific aims. It is crucial that the aims of these domains are not embedded in all subjects and not in the same way, but reasonably and professionally justified.

Keywords*: curriculum overload, competence, interdisciplinary, active and authentic approach*

Introduction

The Slovenian education system constantly faces social pressures. There is a relatively strong opinion among the public that many social or economic problems could be solved by appropriate adaptation of educational programs or by adapting the curriculum in primary school, and even more so at the secondary level. Such expectations are not based on professional foundations and do not consider the findings of pedagogy, psychology, sociology and other sciences related to educational research and development. They also do not take into account either domestic curricular traditions or results from the international arena. Yet, at the same time, they are almost always linked to broadening the range of school subjects or at least the content or competencies. Initiatives of this type are also accompanied by expectations for an increase in the number of lessons, which would increase demands on pupils and students in terms of content and time burden.

But on the other hand, we must admit that social changes also dictate adjustments in the field of education. In recent years, there has been a strong need to strengthen learners' competencies in digital literacy, sustainable development, active citizenship and other social skills, such as cooperation and teamwork, communication, leadership skills, as well as independence, creativity and critical thinking. In this paper, the two authors focus on presenting the latest established or planned changes in the curricula of Slovenian high schools, with which we follow modern global trends in education.

Basic information about the education system in the Republic of Slovenia and the location of gymnasiums in this system

Professionally considered and planned education in Slovenia begins in kindergarten, i.e. before entry into the compulsory nine-year primary school. Nevertheless, practically the entire population continues with education at the secondary school level, although this is not compulsory. Primary and secondary school education and training are carried out by primary schools,

secondary schools, music schools, primary schools with an adapted programme, institutions for educating children and adolescents with special needs and student dormitories. Most educational institutions are public; in addition to these, the public network in education consists of individual educational institutions with a concession.

Secondary education in Slovenia is made up of a multitude of diverse educational programs organized into a comprehensively thought-out system that enables the acquisition of appropriate education with different goals: for further education in university programs or for entering the labour market, for further education with the aim of specializing in a chosen professional field within of post-secondary and higher education professional education. Consequently, secondary schools are divided into two groups: gymnasiums and vocational and professional schools.

In vocational and professional education programs, the emphasis is on practical, flexible, specific, transferable knowledge for use in concrete problem situations, which equips students with the broadest range of skills related to the particular problem and professional challenges. On the other hand, in a gymnasium, which ends with the general matura, the goals are set at a higher level in terms of the complexity and abstractness of the content. In these programs, the emphasis is on general knowledge that can be transferred to different fields, general knowledge, critical thinking, and humanistic and natural science literacy, as well as a methodological and conceptual approach.

Education in gymnasium and professional programs lasts four years and in vocational programs three or two years. In addition, students attend four-year, i.e. secondary school, programs between the ages of 15 and 19.

Description of the gymnasium program - summary (Krek, 2011)

The gymnasium program is the most general secondary education program that prepares students for further studies.

The curriculum of the general gymnasium program consists of three essential parts:

a) four-year and other compulsory subjects where the number, scope and content of the courses are determined (almost 80% of the gymnasium program belongs to them);

b) hours for optional subjects, where the range of hours the student must complete is specified; they represent 14% of the entire program and are aimed at deepening knowledge in areas closer to individual students and preparation for matura;

c) other forms of teaching, including content sections, representing 6% of the entire program (300 hours over four years). This part of the program differs in its implementation method and content. It is about different knowledge and skills, which are only partly included in classical school subjects, but which satisfy the individual inclinations of students. This form is the so-called "open lesson" (Blažič et al.; 2003), which is characterized that the goals, contents and methods are adapted to the interests and abilities of the students, that it is oriented to the life of the local community and the anticipation and participation of the students.

Compulsory four-year subjects are Slovenian, mathematics, first and second foreign language, history, and sports education. Compulsory subjects taught for less than four years are geography, biology, chemistry, physics, music, fine arts, psychology, sociology and philosophy, and informatics.

The fundamental emphasis in the design of the program is given to:

- general education orientation and
- developing those knowledge, abilities, skills and habits necessary for further academic studies.

In addition to the mentioned general gymnasium program, the existing legislation also establishes a professional gymnasium. The program maintains the curriculum structure typical of general gymnasium programs, but the amount of hours for optional subjects is smaller than in general gymnasium programs. As part of the compulsory subjects, professional subjects are also included in the syllabus.

Based on domestic research [1]and the activities of the National Education Institute of Slovenia [2](hereinafter, the NEIS), identify some weaknesses in the implementation of the gymnasium curriculum, especially in the didactic field: the classic transmission approach with an explanation as a method of work prevails, the relationship between the activity of the teacher and the activity of the students is in favour of the teacher's activity, the students during the preparation for the matura exam excellently consolidate the acquired knowledge, but to a much lesser extent they develop independent thinking, teachers often equate goals with learning content, etc. Furthermore, teachers have a very pronounced low presence or absence of cross-curricular planning and implementation. As a rule, teachers of different subjects are focused on implementing only their subjects and are reluctant to connect.

The issue of curricula/syllabuses should also be highlighted. For example, an analysis of the curricula for compulsory subjects in the gymnasium program (Bačnik et al., 2021) showed that knowledge is insufficiently connected; knowledge of lower taxonomic levels dominates; insufficient authentic learning situations and connecting theory with practice, with real-life and with other subjects in order for students to build a "big picture of the world"; insufficient development of independent, critical and creative thinking and other transversal skills; low emphasis is placed on the development of both mental/cognitive and emotional-motivational and metacognitive activities. Moreover, in the curricula, too much content is specified, so the real meaning of the subject/discipline is lost.

Approaches to reducing curriculum overload

NEIS approaches curriculum reforms thoughtfully and professionally by intending to realize society's expectations, considering modern trends in

[1]Starting points for the renovation of the high school program (material of the 101st session of the Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education on 19 April 2007), Commission for the preparation of the concept of further development of the high school program and placement of general education in secondary school programs.

[2] Conversations with teachers at seminars, study groups, in projects; interviews with high school principals at dedications, regional meetings, etc.

education and the findings of domestic research and preventing the overloading of students and teachers. It implements innovations gradually, with the constant involvement of all involved (teachers, principals and other professionals, experts in the field of education, school policy, and students and their parents). In recent years, NEIS has introduced changes to the gymnasium curriculum with a systemic approach to preserve the existing structure of educational programs or the curriculum. In this way, NEIS want to prevent the spread of subjects and contents, mainly because of the demands of modern society, which are politically or economically motivated. It should also be noted that most teachers and principals do not favour changes to the gymnasium curriculum (Krek, 2011).

Therefore, the current reform of the gymnasium curriculum is based on:

a) strengthening the interdisciplinary connection between subjects through the interdisciplinary thematic package (ITP),

b) introducing an active and authentic approach to the development of civic competencies,

c) connecting the key goals of specific competencies/literacy with the goals of individual subjects.

In the following, we present the mentioned approaches in more detail.

Interdisciplinary thematic package

The beginnings of planned interdisciplinary teaching in Slovenian schools date back to the period of a large-scale project called "European classes", which also included the planned enforcement of the principle of **interdisciplinary knowledge and the active implementation of cross-curricular connections** [3]. However, despite the recognized advantages of this type of teaching, the project was not followed by a systematic arrangement. Thus, interdisciplinary teaching remained limited to individual

[3] Pavlič Škerjanc , K. European departments - starting points for adapting the high school curriculum , 2003 **and** Project European Sections I and II, 2004–2009 and 2009–11. Project manager Katja Pavlič Škerjanc; internal material of the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia.

episodes (class hours, project days), which individual teachers carry out on their initiative. In practice, despite the efforts of the teachers and the team approach, interdisciplinarity was not achieved; as a rule, team teaching was multidisciplinary. Therefore, the NEIS proposed a systemic solution, not only at the level of changing the curriculum but also with a normative arrangement that enables this type of teaching to be carried out in smaller groups and with support for teachers on training and counselling.

NEIS implemented the interdisciplinary thematic package (ITP) in a sample of schools in the 2018/19 school year. Since the 2020/21 school year, ITP has been an integral part of the general gymnasium program. It is a content-rounded whole, with which the interconnected goals of at least three disciplines or subjects are realized and deepened. The essential purpose of this type of teaching is to stimulate students' acquisition of knowledge at higher taxonomic levels, i.e. to strengthen complex thought processes and skills while enabling verification and assessment of complex achievements and results. In addition to ensuring higher standards of knowledge and raising the quality of learning achievements, with ITP, NEIS also strengthen the optionality and internal coherence of the gymnasium program, as the school can allocate hours for elective subjects in the 2nd and 3rd years. Therefore the ITP implementation plan is formed based on syllabuses of elective subjects or special (elective) knowledge from the syllabuses of compulsory subjects. Furthermore, this type of teaching considers the students' areas of interest and excellence, updating school contents and connecting the school with the environment.

By implementing ITP, NEIS promote the process by which students, as individuals and in groups, connect the views and ways of thinking of different disciplines or established fields and deepen understanding beyond individual disciplines (Kregar et al., 2020). Various connections can appear here, from connecting at the level of methods and tools through synthesizing and combining diverse views on the same problem to using diverse skills and approaches to solving problems brought by different disciplines. NEIS stress that an excellent disciplinary and substantive basis is necessary for an effective interdisciplinary connection. Interdisciplinary integration in schools is also encouraged by the latest guidelines in European and national

documents, including the Guidelines for the Renovation of Gymnasiums, adopted in 2007 (note 1, p. 3). Considering the diverse, flexible and open forms of demonstrating achievements and their complex interdisciplinary nature, NEIS believe that ITP can capture the broadest range of knowledge and skills with an emphasis on higher taxonomic levels and complex thought processes and skills. These processes and skills are more complicated and impossible to cover with classic and only mono-subject knowledge tests (Kregar et al., 2020).

With ITP, we can gain a lot with a slight change in the established method of school work: increasing the opportunities for "non-classical" forms of work with students, which is a rarity in schools with gymnasium programmes. This approach increases the chance of developing essential skills and competencies more in-depth. The result of this type of lesson organization is the integration of knowledge, a view of the problem from different perspectives, the achievement of higher taxonomic levels of knowledge, learning through authentic problem situations, the inclusion of topical issues in school lessons and integration with the environment. Besides positive effects for students, ITP is also an opportunity for collaborative, innovative and creative work of teachers and their professional growth, as well as for greater recognition and involvement of the school in the environment.

There are complications and resistance to implementing ITP in practice. However, ITP is a well-planned form of lesson, the guidelines for its implementation are clear and tested, and the NEIS provides professional support to the implementers. Most often, the reasons for resistance are:

- a lack of understanding of the purpose and basic requirements for ITP,
- different past experiences of schools with the organize of lessons,
- diverse backgrounds of teachers with teamwork, project work and cooperation with the environment,
- the inevitable interdependence of teachers - ITP providers,

- misunderstanding on the part of colleagues who are not involved in ITP, or
- unwillingness that external partners co-design the lessons (they are not just guests at the classes).

Active citizenship

In the Slovenian area, in recent decades, the questions of whether citizenship education is included in secondary school education programs, in what way and to what extent have been a constant. This area has also been the subject of research, e.g. Civic and Homeland Education in Slovenian education, conducted in 2008 by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana (Haček, 2008). In 2016, the NEIS conducted an in-depth analysis of the elements of civic and homeland education in the curriculum documents of secondary school education[4]. That study shows that the syllabuses of some subjects contain goals and contents needed for developing and strengthening students' civic competence. To achieve these goals, recommended forms and methods of work (didactic recommendations) are prepared for the teachers. Using these recommendations, the teacher can enable students to make sense of knowledge, use it, connect it, upgrade it independently, critically evaluate the results and, last but not least, build their attitude regarding environmental, social, societal, cultural and art issues. In addition to the goals and content of single subjects and cross-curricular content, other activities are also essential during schooling, which significantly co-shape citizenship competence. Many of them make a key contribution to knowledge and understanding of the political system, social reality and current socio-political issues, and at the same time, encourage young people to be active citizens. The described findings show that civic education was present in specific segments of secondary school programs but not in a way that would ensure a certain standard of quality of knowledge and competence necessary for the responsible functioning of young people in

[4] *Civic and patriotic education in curriculum documents of secondary education* : an analysis of established elements. Ljubljana: National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, 2016.

today's society. Therefore, in 2019, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports decided on the systematic placement of active citizenship in the secondary school curriculum.

When searching for a solution regarding the placement of active citizenship in gymnasium programs, the NEIS took into account the education legislation and, at the same time, wanted to preserve and additionally encourage the teaching practices developed during the implementation of the contents of citizenship at single schools. Therefore, NEIS prepared a new program element called Active citizenship, not a classical subject, but the content section.

The leading idea of the content section is that Active citizenship promotes active, informed and responsible democratic citizens. During classes, students systematically acquire knowledge about the structure of society and purposefully develop the ability to understand the complexity of personal and social life and the connections and contradictions between individual, social and global. Within the school curriculum, students are offered opportunities for participation and co-decision-making in democratic processes in and outside the class. Compared to subjects, the content component is based on a different organization and delivery of lessons. By establishing authentic learning situations and providing high-quality feedback to the student, the teacher encourages students' active role, planning and reflection on learning. Therefore, when planning and conducting lessons, teachers focus on the activity of students, who to achieve their goals, plan and implement various activities, especially authentic tasks in connection with the environment. To realize the objectives of the curriculum, teachers guide students by taking into account their interests and previous experiences and the social, economic, cultural and political context in which they live. Also, they take into account current events in society, political challenges, and various forms of communication through which the media report problems and events.[5]

[5]Starting points for the renovation of high school programs (material for the 203rd session of the Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education, 19 January 2019).

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the content, it can be taught in the gymnasium by teachers who otherwise teach sociology, philosophy, history or geography. However, especially from the point of view of integrating knowledge and implementing interdisciplinarity, it is justified and therefore recommended that a team of teachers teach students active citizenship.

Linking key objectives from the areas of specific competencies/literacies to subject objectives

The fact is that the education system, which is based mainly on imparting knowledge of the disciplines that traditionally form general education and are organized into mutually unrelated subjects, is finding it increasingly difficult to meet the expectations of modern society. Such a system does not respond to the key challenges of the time, as it does not systematically address areas vital for active participation in contemporary society, e.g. issues of sustainable development, health and well-being of the individual and community, entrepreneurship competencies, and digital literacy. As a result, despite modern teaching forms, school contents are becoming more and more distant from authentic challenges, and the acquired knowledge is without a meaningful context. In this way, education does not prepare or motivate students for lifelong teaching and learning.

A revision of the curricula of elementary school and gymnasium programs in Slovenia is planned for 2022-2026. The start point for the revision is represented by the document called Framework for the renewal of curricula in elementary schools and gymnasia (Ahačič et al., 2022). This document was prepared by a group of experts, theorists and practising teachers led by the NEIS. Among other things, the document foresees a solution that addresses the linking of key objectives from the areas of specific competencies/literacies to subject objectives. The expert group introduced and defined the term common goals: "Common goals are not the general goals of the programs defined in the Elementary School Act and the Grammar School Act or the general goals of the subjects defined in the applicable curricula, but rather, they are goals that arise from cross-cutting thematic areas, transversal skills, key competences, literacy, etc., which are common to all educational programs and subjects and relevant at all levels

of education." These common goals will consist of the key objectives from sustainable development, health and well-being of the individual and community, entrepreneurship competencies, and digital literacy. And maybe in the future, from other areas depending on national interest.

The group highlighted that different competencies, transferral skills, and literacies are often ignored in the curricular documents and practice. In this respect, the curricula do not address the teachers explicitly enough and do not empower them to achieve them in the lessons of the subject they teach (Bacnik et al., 2021). Therefore, one of the guidelines of the curricular renovation that has just started is the meaningful placement of common goals in the goals of subjects and, consequently, the knowledge standards. This setting does not mean that the common goals should be included in all subjects to the same extent and in the same way, but that they should be reasonably and professionally justified in the curricula. In different programs, these goals can be realized differently and reflected in goals and topics of varying complexity.

Conclusion

Despite the pressure from the public to add new subjects to the curriculum or change the number of hours in existing subjects, the professional public doesn't support it. For example, the last attempt to change the gymnasium curriculum was in 2006, when the then commission for the preparation of the concept of further development of the gymnasium program and placement of general education in gymnasium programs did not get support for such proposals (Krek, 2011). In the last few years, however, there has been increasing pressure to include new or additional content from the field of key competencies in the existing curricula, which NEIS found too extensive. This is reflected in proposals to have financial literacy, digital competence, critical thinking, well-being, etc., as content in the curricula. The result would naturally be an additional burden on students and teachers.

Of course, in their work through didactic approaches already in the existing conditions, some teachers successfully developed key competencies in students and looked for different didactic solutions. However, this was not

systematic but left to the knowledge and personal engagement of the individual or principal who encouraged such teachers. Therefore, the NEIS upgraded the gymnasium program on a systemic level that takes into account modern trends in education, such as the development of students' competencies, and thereby does not increase the overload of the curriculum. With the proposed changes, NEIS want to achieve the objectives of the gymnasium program as a whole without interfering with its structure. With this aim, in recent years, NEIS has managed to include in the gymnasium program an interdisciplinary thematic package and the introduction of an active and authentic approach to the development of civic competencies as a systemic part of the gymnasium program. Monitoring the implementation of the interdisciplinary thematic package showed positive results and the satisfaction of teachers and students[6]. NEIS will start monitoring the implementation of an active and authentic approach to developing civic competencies in the 2022/23 school year. In the coming years, a significant challenge awaits us, namely how to implement the idea of connecting the key goals of specific competencies/literacy with the goals of individual subjects in the curricula. In this case, the acceptance of this innovation by teachers and the success of teacher training will be decisive.

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Implementation of lesson planning in primary education

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Abstract

Lesson planning is a complex process that addresses and integrates three main components: outcomes, activities, and assessment. This is a mixed quantitative and qualitative research. The purpose of the study was to analyze the logical and content relation of the lesson plans, starting from the annual planning to the practical implementation of the contents planned in the lesson plans. To realize their interrelation, we carried out a case study, through which we present important data related to the lesson plans drawn up by primary education teachers and their implementation in practice.

The study was carried out in 12 schools, in which 26 classes were observed. Since there was an observation, the sample is small, however, the study provides important data regarding the way of planning primary education teachers, the connection between the teaching contents included in the annual, monthly, weekly plans and daily preparations, the harmonization between the teaching topics and the units learning activities, planned activities with learning outcomes, as well as the practical implementation of lesson planning.

The study outcomes show that teachers draw up annual, monthly, weekly and daily plans. Annual and monthly plans are drawn up at the school level, while weekly and daily plans are drawn up by the teachers themselves. The contents included in the daily plans are related to the teaching contents in the annual and monthly plans. Teachers clearly plan and describe the methodology that will be developed within the teaching class, but deficiencies were identified in the extension of learning outcomes in daily plans, their relation to the topic and the topic outcomes.

Most of the teachers deliver a teaching class based on daily plans drawn up in advance.

The study recommendations are addressed to teachers and responsible actors within the school, regarding the preparation, analysis, evaluation of lesson plans, and monitoring during the implementation in practice of the lesson plans drawn up by teachers.

Keywords: *lesson planning, implementation, primary education, outcomes, students.*

INTRODUCTION

Lesson planning is a systematic process, which includes the outcome-determining process and determining the ways to achieve the planned outcomes. It determines therefore which results should be presented, how they should be presented, how to achieve them when they should be achieved, as well as the evaluation of their achievement. The selection of appropriate topics, contents and activities are very important for achieving learning outcomes.

The study is related to the priorities of the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute and the research activity platform of the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute 2020-2022, as well as based on the findings of the competency-based Curriculum studies (Mehmeti, S., Bytyqi, L., Zylfiu, H., Potera, I., 2019). The theoretical context is included in the first part of the report, where we analyzed official documents, which provide necessary instructions for teachers regarding lesson planning.

The second part includes the methodology applied, such as the goal of the study, type of research, population and sample, and data collection procedure.

The analysis and interpretation of the outcomes are presented in the third part. The outcomes derived from data collected from teacher interviews and classroom observations.

The study outcomes show that lesson plans and programs have logical and substantive connections and that their design according to the requirements specified in official documents and their literal implementation help to achieve results with students.

Theoretical context

In this part, we analyzed local documents related to lesson planning, such as The Curriculum Framework, the Core Curriculum for the preparatory class and primary education of Kosovo, the Guidelines for the implementation of the Curriculum and the Subject Curricula.

The main issues we analyzed are the instructions related to the lesson planning, and the instructions for the steps to be taken during the lesson planning.

In the Curriculum Framework (MESTI, 2016) and in the Core Curriculum for the Preparatory Class and Primary Education in Kosovo (MESTI, Core Curriculum for the Preparatory Class and Primary Education in Kosovo (2016), general instructions are given for the main competencies, curriculum areas, subjects and teaching modules. The core competencies of the curriculum are broken down into learning outcomes, which are expected to be progressively achieved by all students upon completion of pre-university education. The Core Curriculum clarifies the outcomes for each level and the main competencies that are expected to be acquired by the end of each level, the learning outcomes designed based on the basic concepts of the area, and which contain the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, which are developed and deepen gradually through the degrees and enable the achievement of the six competencies defined in the curriculum framework.

In the guide for the implementation of the curriculum, necessary instructions are provided to teachers, for the interconnection of subject programs, the preparation, planning and implementation of the curriculum in practice, and instructions for the steps to be taken during planning, starting from the teaching planning for the curricular level, the compilation of the teaching schedule, the annual lesson planning, the two-month planning, the steps to be followed during planning, the aspects that must be included in the annual planning of subjects within a curricular area, the two-month planning, the weekly plan and the lesson plan.

In the subject curriculum for each grade, other than the preparatory class, the lesson plan for the corresponding class is presented, where the weekly hours stock for the curricular areas is set, while the concepts, topics and learning outcomes of the subject per topic are presented in tabular form for each subject. which must be achieved with students within the school year. Methodological guidelines, general guidelines for the implementation of cross-curricular issues, assessment guidelines, as well as guidelines for teaching materials and resources, which should help teachers in designing

curricula, are also provided. The instructions given in the subject curricula are general instructions, almost the same in certain subjects, for each grade. More detailed instructions are given in the area of arts (subjects Figurative Education and Music Education), also presenting cross-curricular issues that can be connected and addressed in the subject of Figurative Art, where additional clarifications are given for each of them as to how cross-curricular issues can be used, considering integrated teaching.

Curriculum design - is done by professional bodies. Professional bodies are obliged to compile, monitor and report on the implementation of educational plans and programs for certain periods within the academic year, such as annual planning for areas and subjects, planning according to educational periods (two and three months), weekly planning, while daily plans are drawn up and implemented by the teacher of the relevant subject.

Annual planning for areas/subjects - in the guidelines for implementing the curriculum, orientations are given regarding the steps to be followed during the annual planning. The subject curricula/learning programs drawn up by MESTI are the basis for organizing the educational process within the subject. Topics and learning outcomes for each subject during an academic year are defined there, while the annual planning instrument includes only the teaching topics distributed over the months and organized in three periods of the academic year (the first period: September-December, the second period: January-April and the third period: April-June), as well as their contribution to the learning outcomes for the main level competencies.

Monthly planning - for the pre-primary class and primary education is drawn up by educators/class teachers, while for level II it is drawn up by professional bodies, taking into account the duration of the period for a teaching topic and the results of the students' assessment at the end of a teaching period.

The learning topics, which are taken from the annual plan, learning outcomes for teaching topics, teaching units, learning outcomes for learning units, teaching methodology, assessment methodology, interrelation with other teaching subjects and life situations, as well as the necessary resources and preparations are defined under the monthly planning.

Weekly planning **-** is based on the monthly lesson plan. It is drawn up by the grade councils, which also draft a weekly planning instrument, which contains curriculum areas, subjects, topics and teaching units, as well as common aspects of the teaching week.

Lesson planning **-** it is done by the teacher of the relevant subject, based on the lesson plan for the period and the specifics of the grade he/she works with. Lesson planning contains (i) *general aspects* of the lesson plan, such as curricular area, subject, curriculum level, grade; (ii) *specific aspects* of the lesson plan, such as teaching unit, keywords, learning outcomes per lesson, success criteria, resources, requisites, teaching materials and the connection with other subjects or cross-curricular issues in life situations; (iii) *description of the methodology and activities of working with students during the teaching class,* (iv) *assessment of students, (v) assignments and independent work, as well as (vi) reflection on the course of the teaching class.*

According to the competency-based Curriculum study (2016), in the analysis of the findings on the lesson planning for the second grade, deficiencies are observed in the scope of the subjects of the subject programs, in the breakdown of the teaching units, the harmonization of the units with the teaching topics, deficiencies in the formulation of the learning results per lesson, the formulation of the criteria of success, as well as in linking activities with learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Research model

This is a mixed descriptive-type quantitative and qualitative research. It is a case study, aiming to collect evidence and facts through various sources related to the practical implementation of the teaching contents planned by the teachers. Through the research instruments, we collected quantitative and qualitative data about the learning contents included in the planning, the planning and implementation of the learning activities and the practical implementation of the planned contents.

Research purpose

The purpose of the study is to analyze the logical and content relation of the lesson plans, starting from the annual planning to the practical implementation of the contents planned in the lesson plans.

Population and sample

The research population comes from all primary education teachers, and we selected 26 primary education teachers as a sample. Since we had an observation in classroom teaching, the sample was limited to 26 classes, in which the selection of the sample of teachers was based only on the inclusion criterion of primary education teachers. The schools included in the research are from the regions of Prishtina, Mitrovica, Ferizaj, Prizren and Gjilan. Two schools were selected from each municipality, and in each school, we observed 2-3 teachers.

The plans of all primary education teachers in the selected schools were taken for analysis, while the observation classes were selected randomly.

Research questions

In order to analyze the lesson plans and their implementation in practice, we drafted some research questions in advance. The main questions we focused on during the study are:

1. What are the lesson plans that primary education teachers draw up?
2. Are there connections between the teaching content included in the annual, monthly plans and daily preparations?
3. Is there an alignment between teaching topics with teaching units and planned activities with learning outcomes?
4. Are the same activities planned in the teachers' plans implemented in practice?

Instruments

For data collection, we used checklists for the analysis of lesson plans, the classroom observation protocol, as well as a questionnaire with the teachers involved in the observation.

Through the checklist, we analyzed teaching curricula, the logical connection of teaching contents from annual planning to bimonthly planning and lesson planning.

Through the observation protocol, we collected data related to the implementation of learning activities in the observed classes.

While, through the questionnaire, we collected data from the teachers regarding educational planning, implementation in practice, and the opportunities and challenges they face in planning and practical work with students, for the practical implementation of pre-planned teaching content.

Data collection procedure

We collected data needed for the research on the same day within a school, namely one school per working day. From each school it was necessary to get:

1. Lesson plans, such as annual plans, bimonthly plans, weekly plans and lesson preparations for grades 1-5 (primary education);
2. Data from teachers regarding the implementation of lesson planning;
3. Data from classroom observation.

Data from the analysis of the teachers' plans were recorded in the checklist, which was prepared specifically for this purpose.

We collected the data from the observation in the classroom lessons through the observation protocol, in which we recorded all the observed aspects.

Meanwhile, we collected the teachers' opinions through a questionnaire.

Data analysis procedure

Since the study has a quantitative and qualitative approach, we analyzed the collected data in two ways:

1. Quantitative data through the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) computer software.

2. Qualitative data through systematic analysis, making description and interpretation according to thematic categories related to the research questions.

Data analysis enabled us to provide important information for teachers' planning and their implementation in practice.

Limitations

The study is not free due to sample limitations. Since it was a classroom observation, the sample is small and it is difficult to generalize the results. It is very important to conduct an in-depth study and a larger range of questionnaire surveys, including all primary education subjects and classes. For a better assessment, it is essential to do further research in this area. However, we successfully applied different approaches, which guarantee the validity, reliability and consistency of our empirical findings.

OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION

We have organized the research outcomes into three parts: the outcomes from the analysis of the teachers' plans, the outcomes from the observation of the lessons, and the outcomes from the questionnaires conducted with the teachers.

Planning analysis

During the planning analysis, the focus was on the curricula, which are drawn up by primary education teachers. The outcomes show that teachers draw up annual plans, bimonthly plans, weekly plans, as well as lesson preparations.

Table 1. Planning types drawn up by the teachers

Planning type	Alternatives					
	Yes		No		Yes, but it is not for presentation	
	.No	%	.No	%	.No	%
Annual plan	24	92.3	0	0	2	7.7
Bimonthly plan	25	96.2	0	0	1	3.8
Weekly Schedule	9	34.6	16	61.5	1	3.8
Lesson preparation	17	65.4	9	34.6	0	0

The outcomes in Table 1 show that teachers draw up four types of plans and that according to the data, it results that most teachers draw up only the annual plan and bimonthly plans. Even in terms of drawing up annual and bimonthly plans, teachers are doing well. They are drawn up according to the instructions given in the official documents. Annual and monthly plans are mainly drawn up by groups of experts engaged at the municipal level, or by professional bodies at the school level.

As for weekly preparations, it appears that a small number of teachers prepare weekly plans. Teachers, who use weekly plans, mostly design them themselves, but there are also cases when they are drawn up jointly by teachers at the grade level.

Although based on the Administrative Instruction on an employment contract for teachers of pre-university education (MESTI, 2015, p. 6), the teacher must prepare a lesson plan in writing, the outcomes show that not all teachers do so. Only 65% of the teachers had the lesson preparations. For most of the teachers who had lesson plans, they were undated. Also, we came across preparations that, according to the date they possessed, were prepared about 15 months ago, and which did not fully respond to the teaching content carried out in the classroom, but only contained some similar requirements/

tasks. Most of the teachers had only written preparations for the Albanian Language and Mathematics classes.

The results show that 35% of the lesson preparations did not have all the requirements that a lesson preparation should contain. Assessment planning was largely lacking. In 8% of lesson preparations, there were no assessment criteria, while in 31% of lesson preparations the criteria were not in line with the learning outcomes.

All daily preparations have learning outcomes, but only 29% of the outcomes set in the daily preparations have a correlation with the topic and the outcomes of the topic, 36% have some correlation with the topic, while 35% of the outcomes set in the daily plans have nothing to do with the topic and the topic outcomes, and that in most cases the outcomes are related to the text they read (they are questions about the text), go beyond the topic, or are very generalized, such as commenting, rating, writing...

Out of 29% of teachers whose learning outcomes are related to the topic and topic outcomes, 94% of them also have put the planned contents/activities in function of their achievement. They are also related to the teaching contents included in the annual, bimonthly and weekly plans.

On the methodological side, in the analyzed preparations, it appears that in 74% of them the methodology of working with students clearly shows the activity that will take place within the lesson.

Classroom teaching observation outcomes

The focus of the classroom teaching observation was the practical implementation of the lesson plan, such as the implementation of methodologies according to planning, achievement of results, inter-subject correlation, effective use of planned materials and evaluation of the achievement of learning outcomes per lesson.

The observation outcomes indicate only 65% of the observed classes, for teachers who had daily preparations. From this sample of teachers, the observation outcomes show that only 87.5% of them complete the content

and activities planned in the lesson preparations, while 12.5% of the teachers who have the lesson preparations do not adhere to such preparations. Although they have planned quite attractive techniques, which are adapted to the age, and content, and enable the achievement of results, the teachers do not consider the planning but continue with the discussion, and frontal work, which was planned only in the introductory part to achieve the goal. In most cases, such discussions are not in the service of the learning outcomes determined by the teacher himself/herself. The whole class passes like this, focusing only on one point of planning (in most cases questions about the text or solving tasks).

As to achieving the results set in lesson preparations, most teachers who stick to planning achieve the results set for the respective lesson.

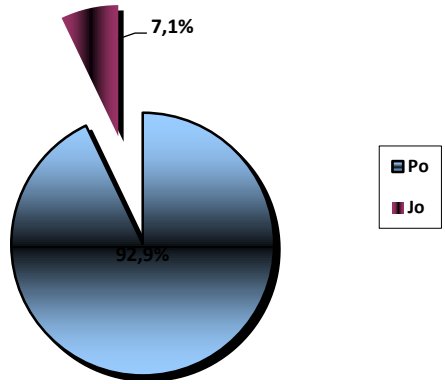

Chart 1. Do teachers achieve the results set in the daily plan?

From the graph, we see that in the observed classes that there were cases when the results set for the lesson were not achieved. In such cases, the results set in the daily plan did not correlate with the topic and the results of the topic. In this case, we noticed some omissions on the part of the teachers, such as:

- the results were set for a teaching topic, while thematic repetition was done in the classroom, where the set results were ignored;
- the results were related only to the text they read, not to the topic;
- the results were not defined for the relevant unit;

- the results were very generalized, such as: commenting, evaluating, writing..., it was not specified exactly what...

During the implementation of the daily plan, it was noticed that there was a correlation between the subjects, but in 42.9% of the daily plans, the correlation with other teaching subjects or with cross-curricular issues and life situations was not specified, even though it was one of the requirements of the lesson plan.

Regarding the effective use of the planned materials from the observation outcomes, it appears that not all teachers use the pre-planned materials in practice.

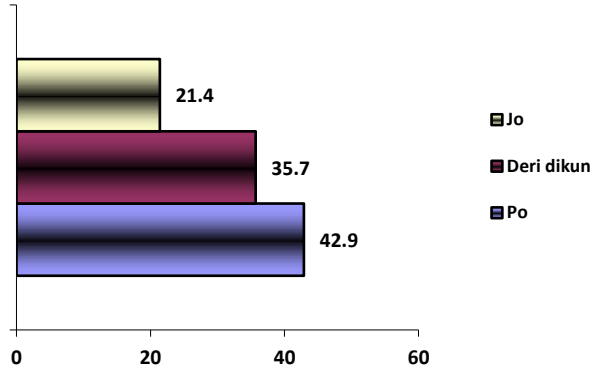

Chart 2. The teacher makes effective use of planned tools and materials

As can be seen from the data presented in the chart, over 21% of teachers do not use in practice the tools and materials that they have planned in the daily plan, while about 36% use only some of the tools and materials planned in advance. Most of the teachers in their daily planning have marked only the basic book as the only source of information, without specifying the tools and other materials. Apart from the basic book, workbook, blackboard, pencil, and notebook, the teachers did not use any other tools and materials at all. Only in one case, there was a laptop and a projector used for the students' PowerPoint presentations, but even this was outside the daily planning.

As to the assessment of the students' achievements, only in one case, it was mentioned in the planning that the student assessment will be done, but in none of the classes, we observed students were assessed. 5.9% of the teachers motivated the students during the classes for their commitment by using wording such as good, very good, and great. Most of the teachers had the assessment notebooks with them, and 6% of them were the forms prepared at the school level.

To measure the impact of daily planning on the achievement of learning outcomes with students, we used multiple linear regression analysis, and the analysis outcomes show that prior written preparation for the classroom lesson affects the achievement of learning outcomes with students. Based on the data obtained, we find that there is a significant statistical difference p=.001. The impact of the planned methodology was 91.4% (*ß=914)*.

Teacher questionnaire outcomes

The focus of the teacher questionnaire was also on lesson planning. Through the questionnaires, we collected data/opinions of teachers regarding the preparation of plans, cooperation between teachers during planning, cooperation with parents, difficulties during the implementation of plans and teaching tools and materials.

The questionnaire outcome also tells us about four types of teaching planning, whereby teachers guide their work with students; monthly plans, bi-monthly plans, weekly plans and daily plans. According to the teachers involved in the research, the annual and monthly plans are drawn up by the grade professional body (88.5%) or even at the municipal level (11.5%), while the weekly and daily plans are prepared by the teachers themselves.

Regarding the preparation of lesson plans, about 35% of teachers admit that they do not constantly prepare daily plans and of them:

- 7.7% never prepare them;
- 3.8% of teachers prepare their daily plans only in cases where official visits are announced during classes, such as by the school director,

MED officers, the Ministry of Education officers, researchers of the Pedagogical Institute, or the Education Inspectorate;

- 23.5% plan only for the Albanian Language and Mathematics subjects.

Regarding cooperation, the teachers are satisfied with the cooperation they have with other teachers within the school. When drafting the lesson plans, they cooperate more with the head of the professional body, and less with other teachers. They mainly cooperate with peers during the drafting of monthly plans, mainly when such plans need to be analyzed, improved, amended or supplemented.

While cooperation with parents regarding lesson planning, according to teachers, rarely takes place. They cooperate with parents in this aspect only in cases where individual plans are drawn up for students with special needs, or in relation to supplementary education for students with learning difficulties. The greatest cooperation with parents is in the provision of teaching tools and materials. Since, according to the teachers, the tools and materials provided by the school are insufficient, they are forced to provide them through self-financing or support from parents. According to them, the provision of teaching tools and materials is the most challenging part of planning, as well as in the implementation of plans.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning and practical implementation of planned learning contents are closely related to each other. A class carried out without prior planning is difficult to be delivered successfully and achieve the desired outcomes with students in the classroom. Attractiveness, dynamism, engagement, interaction and active participation of students in the classroom are common characteristics of an effective curriculum.

Official documents, such as The Curriculum Framework, the Core Curriculum for preparatory class and primary education in Kosovo, the

Guidelines for the implementation of the Curriculum and the subject Curricula, provide clarifications and instructions to teachers, for the interconnection of subject programs, preparation, planning and practical implementation of the curriculum. Also, instructions for the steps to be taken during planning, starting from the teaching planning for the curricular level, the compilation of the teaching schedule, the annual lesson planning, the bimonthly planning, the steps to be followed during planning, the aspects that must be included in the annual planning of subjects within a curricular area, the bimonthly planning, the weekly plan and the lesson plan.

Primary education teachers create four types of lesson plans: annual plans, monthly plans, weekly plans and daily plans. Annual and bimonthly plans are drawn up by professional bodies, while weekly and daily plans are drawn up and implemented by the class teacher or the teacher of the relevant subject.

Annual and monthly plans are possessed by all primary education teachers, weekly plans are possessed by only 34.6% of teachers, while daily plans are possessed by 65% of the teachers involved in the study.

In 94% of the daily plans, the included learning contents are related to the teaching contents of the annual and monthly plans. In 6% of the daily plans, the teaching unit was not in line with the topic, while the outcomes and activities were defined for the unit or the text being taught, which were not related to the topic outcomes.

In 74% of the daily plans we analyzed, it was seen that the planned methodology clearly shows the activity that will take place within the classroom lesson.

The results show that 35% of the lesson preparations did not have all the requirements that a lesson preparation should contain. Although all the daily plans had learning outcomes, only 29% of the outcomes placed in the daily plans are related to the topic and the topic outcomes.

Not all teachers deliver a teaching class based on daily plans drawn up in advance. Although they have daily plans, 12.5% of teachers do not adhere to such preparations. This also affects the achievement of results with

students, as 7.1% of teachers did not show success in achieving results, while 92.9% of teachers successfully achieve the results determined for each lesson in the daily planning.

This study highlights the importance of lesson planning, the preliminary preparation of teachers for lessons, we will therefore address our recommendations to teachers and responsible actors within the school:

- The cooperation of professional bodies when drawing up the lesson plans needed to be enhanced. Lesson plans should be drawn up together, under the leadership of the head of the professional body, but with the contribution received from each teacher;
- Plans submitted by the teachers need to be analyzed and evaluated by the competent persons in the school for the acceptance of lesson plans;
- Teachers need to be monitored from time to time regarding the practical implementation of the lesson plans;
- The professional development plan of teachers should be developed based on the analysis of the plans and the monitoring findings;
- Continuous professional support to teachers regarding lesson planning need to be provided. Based on the professional development plan. trainings and other forms of professional support for teachers need to be organized.

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Teaching practices in the implementation of the optional curriculum in upper secondary school

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Abstract

The optional curriculum is part of the pre-university education curriculum. Through it, students are provided with the conditions and opportunities to better meet their needs, personal aptitudes and interests, in accordance with the demands and needs of society and the labour market. The implementation of the optional curriculum remains a school competency, but the selection of subjects is often not done for the student's needs, as determined by the curriculum documents and administrative instructions, but to meet the teachers' norm.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the teaching practices of teachers and directors in the selection of optional courses in upper secondary schools, as well as to address the opportunities and challenges for ongoing support to teachers in the implementation of the optional curriculum.

The instruments used to provide quantitative and qualitative data are teacher questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with directors of higher education schools in the 7 regions of Kosovo. The research is carried out in 7 gymnasiums, with 128 teachers and 7 directors.

According to the study outcomes, the majority of teachers in the selection of the optional subject consider the students' requirements and the school itself designs a curriculum according to the students' requirements, while some schools do so from a list provided by MESTI The most frequent form of organization of optional learning applied by teachers is the selection of the teaching subject, while the organization of optional learning with optional projects and modules is applied less.

From the research outcomes, it appears that the directors fully adhere to the curriculum documents and administrative instructions in the organization of the optional lesson, consider the students' requirements in the selection of the optional subject and support the teachers with relevant training. The challenges faced by the school in the implementation of the optional curriculum, according to the directors and teachers, are: lack of support from institutions, lack of sufficient spaces, lack of adequate texts for the subject, lack of working and requisite tools, etc.

The research outcomes are expected to serve policymakers and teachers, providing recommendations related to the process of organizing optional learning, the implementation of optional curriculum, and continuous support to teachers.

Keywords: *optional curriculum, curriculum implementation, teachers, upper secondary school.*

Introduction

Curriculum implementation is an ongoing process, which always needs additional inputs to make the necessary improvements for successful implementation. This raises the need for studies related to the implementation of the curriculum (KPI, 2019). This is also taken as a reference by this study, through which the current situation is analyzed on the experiences of directors and teachers in the selection of the optional subject or course, as well as the needs and opportunities for ongoing support to teachers. Based on the fact that the optional curriculum is a school competency and is applied to the interests of the students, this issue prompted us to research the way of selecting optional subjects in gymnasiums.

The optional curriculum is part of the Pre-University Education Curriculum, just like the Core Curriculum, but the difference lies in the fact that the optional curriculum is determined by the school and takes place within the time planned by the curriculum, in accordance with the interests, potentials, opportunities, prior information of students, as well as with the school possibilities (Core Curriculum for HSE, 2016). These orientations provide an opportunity for a more individualized activity in the school, at the same time they provide standards for a more qualitative and equal educational process, regardless of the differences between students.

All curriculum documents, such as the Curriculum Framework, the Core Curricula of all levels, the Guidelines for the implementation of the curriculum and the plans and programs for the respective classes, provide instructions for the optional Curriculum, while the Administrative Instruction no. 32/2013 on *Organization of optional curriculum*, defines in detail the organization of the optional lesson.

The process for amending the curricula in pre-university education in Kosovo was initiated after the declaration of Independence of the Republic of Kosovo (2008). The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) approved in 2011 a basic document called the Pre-University Education Curriculum Framework in Kosovo, which is based on competency development, while in 2012 it approved the Core Curricula for three levels of pre-university education. These documents, along with

subject curricula developed by the schools themselves, were piloted for three consecutive years (CC, 2016).

The revised version of the Curriculum Framework is a result of the dedicated work of local and international education experts. This framework also uses research data and good international practices in the area of education and learning.

Based on the review and definitions of the Curriculum Framework document, during 2016, the Core Curricula were also revised: Core Curriculum for preparatory grade and primary education; Core Curriculum for lower secondary education; and the Core Curriculum for upper secondary education - gymnasiums. The revision process of the main curriculum document preserved in 2016 the substance of the concept and philosophy of the curriculum documents (2011 and 2012), defined for competency achievement-based approach, namely a learning outcome-oriented approach that must be achieved by all students, in different periods of schooling (PIK, 2019)**.**

I. THEORETICAL CONTEXT

The Core Curriculum is a basic document, regulating the progress of the learning process based on the Curricular Framework of pre-university education. The areas of the curriculum, the main curriculum elements and their description, the main learning competencies, learning outcomes for key competencies per curriculum level, elective curriculum, curriculum implementation methodologies, student assessment, time allocation, and the learning plan for each area are described therein.

The optional curriculum is an important part of the upper secondary education curriculum**.** Optional learning, such as learning provided through curricular areas, is compulsory for all students, but optional learning is provided by the school, based on the student's interest and the school's own opportunities. **(**Kosovo Curricular Framework, 2016)**.**

The purpose of the optional curriculum is to provide students greater opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, in

accordance with their opportunities, needs and interests, towards the mastery of the competencies defined by the CF, namely the achievement of learning outcomes for competencies for areas and curricular levels.

In this context, the optional curriculum enables students to deepen and expand their knowledge, and develop skills, attitudes and values:

- in the areas of the curriculum, respectively in the teaching subjects defined in the curriculum documents;
- in new subjects that are not foreseen in the curriculum documents;
- in topics related to social, cultural and natural issues, and
- in topics that are of interest at the local and international levels.

Administrative Instruction No. 32/2013 on *Organization of Optional Curriculum* defines in detail the organization of the optional lesson, starting from the definition, content, design, duration, selection, decision-making, and implementation of the optional lesson, up to the evaluation of students. According to Article 2, paragraph 1 of this Instruction, an optional Curriculum means a part of the curriculum decided and defined by the school in cooperation with students, parents and all other partners.

Even the Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo specifies the curriculum content, including the allocation of teaching time to the core and optional Curriculum (Law on PUE, 2011).

According to the curriculum documents, an optional curriculum can be organized into subjects, modules and projects, with a similar structure as the programs of compulsory subjects. Administrative Instruction No. 32- 2013 on the Organization of Optional Curriculum clearly defines the organization of optional teaching.

According to this Instruction, *an optional subject* is a form of didactic organization of learning contents in a certain area or branch, e.g. of science, art, mathematics, sports or life, which are delivered in school according to a plan and program.

An optional module is a form of didactic organization of the learning content, as part of a specific area or branch, e.g. of science, art, mathematics, sports or life, which is delivered at school according to a plan and program that

ensures a closer interrelation between theory and practice, which lasts at most one semester.

An optional project is a form of didactic organization of learning contents, from a certain area or branch, that takes place in school according to a plan and program undertaken by the students to research and solve any problem (AI 32-2013).

For the three types of the optional learning organization, the school designs the teaching programs or adapts programs suggested by MESTI.

The selection and approval of teaching subjects, modules or projects deriving from the elective curriculum are regulated by administrative instructions, while the duration of subjects, courses or activities provided for optional teaching is determined by the governing and professional bodies of the school, in cooperation with MEDs. Their duration differs depending on the fulfilment of the requirements and the fulfilment of the student's needs.

The subject, module or project at the time of selection by the students and definitive determination by the school, respectively the municipality, becomes mandatory and receives the same status as all other subjects defined in the curriculum documents and becomes an integral part of the teaching plan with a defined number of hours. The optional part for upper secondary education - education includes 6.67% of teaching hours.

The optional curriculum, namely the teaching curriculum, has the same structure as the subject curricula/programs of the teaching subjects determined by the curriculum documents. In the optional curriculum program, the following are addressed: the importance and duration of learning the chosen subject, module or project; goals of the subject, module or project; the learning outcomes that students should achieve through the course, module or project; relevant learning content/learning topics; methodical instructions for the realization of teaching topics, the achievement of the results of the foreseen competences at the relevant curricular level, the implementation of cross-curricular issues and the assessment of students (CC, 2016).

For the implementation of an optional curriculum, in addition to the teaching content, a teacher also selects the sources of information, methods, techniques and teaching methodologies for the implementation of the

activities. All of these aim at achieving learning outcomes determined based on the degree and area to which the optional subject belongs (Bytyqi-Beqiri & Gajraku, 2013).

The evaluation of students who follow the teaching programs of subjects, modules or projects coming from the optional curriculum is done by the same methodology and procedures as for the teaching subjects defined in the curriculum documents and by procedures that are determined by administrative instructions. The difference is that the optional subject, module or project is not part of an external evaluation, but contributes to the development of competencies (CC, 2016).

The reports of the analyzed studies on the development trends of the new curricula show that the curriculum documents differ from one country to another. Differences are observed both in the structure of curriculum documents, as well as in goals, and principles, in the organization of teaching content, the setting of learning outcomes, the number of curriculum areas or teaching subjects, etc. They also differ in the competency-based approach and the number of main competencies, the approach of integrating subjects in curricular areas and the number of subjects included within a curricular area. The curriculum documents in different countries also promote and require the inclusion of technology in teaching, the application of the system and different forms of evaluation, provide orientation for the stock of teaching hours for curricular areas or subjects, as well as clarify the responsibilities and autonomy of the school during the implementation of the state curriculum (KPI, 2017).

There are also differences regarding the optional curriculum. The optional curriculum in Albania is implemented in the course of the fifth and sixth levels of the upper secondary education curriculum, with a time extension of 2 hours in the 10^{th} grade, 3 hours in the 11^{th} grade and 14-16 hours in the 12^{th} grade (MES, 2016). Article 8 of the Regulation on school autonomy (1999) in Italy gives schools the power to build the curriculum while guaranteeing the existence of a national education system with the part determined by the ministry at the national level and the part that is the responsibility of the institutions, which take taking into account the specifics of each school and local needs. To do this, institutions must innovate at the didactic and pedagogical level, manage their staff training, produce and

distribute educational tools, and create networks of institutions that can foster the exchange of information, experiences, and learning materials. The development of the school curriculum is a concrete ground where the real capacity of any autonomous institution to project itself can be measured (Revue internationale, 2011). In Croatia, school curriculum refers to how schools implement the curriculum framework, taking into account the educational needs and priorities of students, the school and the environment in which the school operates. This is done in cooperation with school staff, students, parents and the local community. The period of the optional curriculum in general gymnasiums in Croatia is 2 hours in the second, third and fourth grades (Nacionalni Kurikulum, 2017). The Montenegrin curriculum also foresees elective teaching with a rate of 70 hours (for students of grades 1, 2 and 3) and 30 hours (for grade 4) (Zavod za školsto, 2007).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the teaching practices of teachers and directors in the selection of elective lessons in upper secondary school, as well as to address the opportunities and challenges for the ongoing support of teachers in the implementation of the optional curriculum.

Research questions

1. How do teachers practice optional curriculum in upper secondary school?
2. What are the forms of support from the school director in the implementation of the optional curriculum?
3. What are the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of the optional curriculum?

II. METHODOLOGY

Research model

The research model is descriptive, with a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach. In order to achieve the research goal and objectives, methods and instruments that enable the provision of quantitative and qualitative data are

used in relation to the questions on the experiences of schools in the implementation of the optional curriculum, the challenges and problems that schools and teachers face in the implementation of the curriculum, as well as the opportunities and needs for the continuous support of teachers.

Population and sample

The population of this study includes the teachers and directors of upper secondary schools in 7 regions of Kosovo. The research sample is chosen among this population, consisting of 7 directors of upper secondary schools and 128 teachers of these schools, i.e. a sample of a total of 135 respondents. From processing data from questionnaires, it turns out that 60% of them belong to the female gender, while 40% belong to the male gender. The majority are aged 31 to 40 and over 50 years old.

Instruments and methods

In the study, we used the questionnaire for teachers and the semi-structured interview for school directors as the key instrument. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data because it is an efficient approach to collecting data. It enables data to be collected in a short time and can cover a wide population. The questionnaire also allows the participants to deal with the questions without manipulating the answers (Creswell, 2003). Taking into account its disadvantages, since during the use of the questionnaire they do not allow the participants to be flexible and offer their opinions and interpretations, the questionnaire also contains some open-ended questions (questions 11, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 20), which enable obtaining qualitative data.

In order to obtain qualitative data on the practices of schools in the implementation of the optional curriculum, the challenges and problems faced by teachers in the implementation of the curriculum, as well as the opportunities and needs for the continuous support of teachers, a semi-structured interview was used with school directors.

For the implementation of the study, statistical methods and descriptive methods were used, whereby the results from the research carried out in the field were presented.

Data collection procedure

In the first state, the data were collected through cabinet research, which was examined, analyzed and compared. In the second stage, the research instruments were prepared, they were piloted in a school and, after the necessary amendments and supplementations, the research was carried out in the field, with the collection of data through questionnaires and interviews.

Data analysis procedure

Quantitative data were analyzed through the statistical method, through SPSS, and are presented in a graphic and tabular form. Qualitative data, collected from open-ended questions and interviews with directors, were analyzed by interpreting and grouping responses to each question, which were then interpreted descriptively.

The processing of the qualitative data, collected from the open-ended questions in the questionnaires, was done by extracting the topics and describing them. This approach enabled the problems raised to be classified, interpreted and described in thematic categories and related to the research questions, based on which conclusions were drawn from the research and recommendations on how to act in the future.

III. RESEARCH OUTCOMES

3.1. Research outcomes with teachers

This part of the report reflects the outcomes obtained from the processing of the data provided by the research about the practice of upper secondary schools in the implementation of the optional curriculum, the challenges faced by the teachers and the forms of school support, in the implementation

of the optional curriculum.

From the research findings, it results that in terms of qualification, more than half, or more precisely 57.4% of them, have a master degree, while 35.2% have a 4-year faculty. Only 7.4% of teachers have a bachelor degree. The experience of the respondents is also relatively vast. 41.5% of teachers have more than 17 years of work experience, 21.1.7% have 8-12 years, while about 18% of teachers, or approximately the same percentage, have 3-7 or 13-17 years of experience respectively. Only 1.6 of them have less than two years of teaching experience. The largest number of respondents are teachers of Albanian Language, English Language, Biology, Mathematics and ICT. Out of all the teachers, only about 25% have stated that they hold optional courses. The highest percentage of optional subjects selected by teachers is the English Language, with 20.7%, Psychology and ICT with 13.8% and Environmental Protection and Health and French Language with 10.3%.

Regarding the attendance of a training program for the implementation of the new curriculum and the number of training days, it turns out that about 91.4% of the teaching staff of the school have attended a training program for the implementation of the new curriculum, while about 8.6% have not been trained for the implementation of the new curriculum, although they teach in the classes in which the new curriculum is implemented. The largest number of them, about 63%, attended more than 10 days of training, about 27% attended 5-8 days of training, while 9.8% attended 8 to 10 days of training for the implementation of the new curriculum.

Practices of organization of optional teaching at school

In higher secondary education, the selection of the optional subject from the list of proposed subjects, modules or projects is done by the students themselves. To the question posed to the teachers, about how they make the selection of the optional subject, the findings from the research show that 76.4% of them consider the students' requirements in the selection of the optional subject, while 23.65% do not do so, specifying some of the reasons. *The students' demands are many and different and it is therefore not possible to consider their demands. We try to choose what is necessary and right for them*, reasoned most of the teachers. Another reason for ignoring the students' statements in the selection of the optional subject is to meet the

teacher rate. *We have problems with the teacher rate, therefore, to complete this, we opt for a small number of hours,* answers a teacher. Some of the respondents claim that the selection of optional subjects is made by the school management. About 15% of the teachers, who do not consider the student's demands in the selection of the optional subject, did not give the reasons for this disregard.

The selection of the optional subject is made before the beginning of the school year. The research findings show that 67.8% of teachers do this, while 20.7% of them select the optional subjects, modules or projects at the beginning of the school year and 11.6% during the school year.

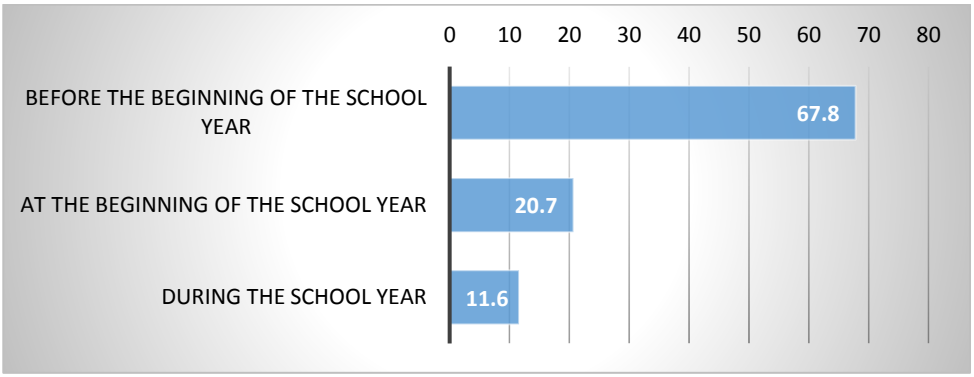

Chart 1. Selection of the teaching subject

Determination of the optional Curriculum, respectively the design of its teaching program, is done in accordance with the students' opportunities, needs and interests. The students themselves chose the subject offered by the school, or from the list provided by MESTI. Over 70% of teachers stated that the most appropriate way to implement the optional curriculum is for the school itself to design a program according to the student's requirements, while 27.3% affirm that the school should do this from the list provided by MESTI.

The reason for organizing optional teaching at school is to enable students to deepen and expand their knowledge and develop skills, attitudes and values in achieving learning outcomes for competencies, areas and curricular levels. As the main reason for organizing optional courses at school, 45.5% 3 of the teachers emphasize the enhancement of knowledge, while 38.2% affirm that the reason for organizing optional courses is to meet

the teacher rate, because, as one teacher says, *we have problems with the teacher rate, therefore, to meet this, we opt for certain subjects with which we meet our rate.* Another reason for organizing optional courses, according to 13% of teachers, is the additional content. Only 3.3% of them mention the choice of modules as a reason.

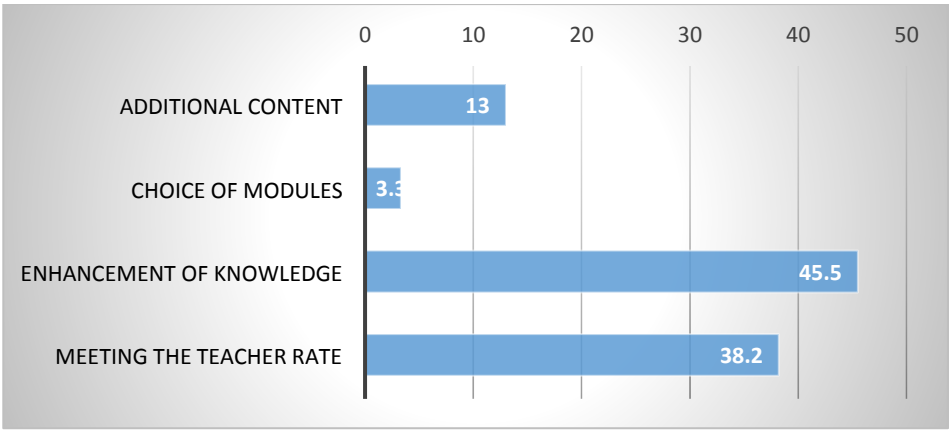

Chart 2. Reasons for organizing the optional teaching

The organization forms of optional teaching applied by teachers are optional subjects, optional modules and optional projects. The most frequent form of this organization, applied by teachers, is the selection of an optional subject, stated by 65.9% of them, while the organization of optional teaching by optional projects is applied by 27.6%. Only 6.5% say that they do this through optional modules. 4% of teachers did not respond.

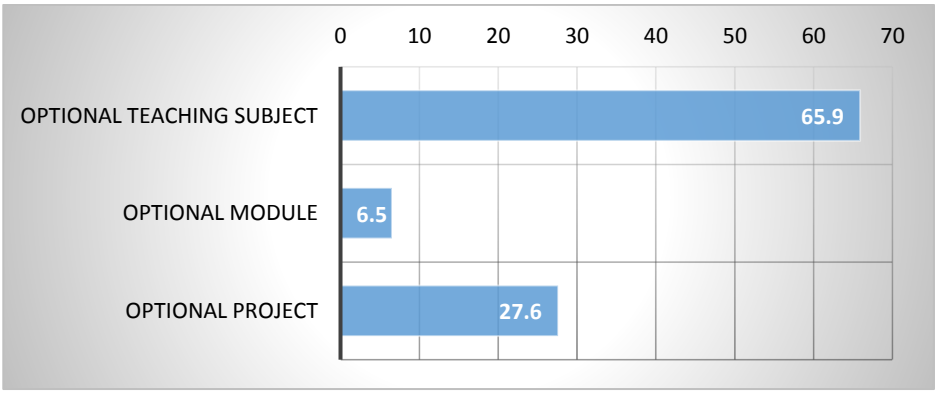

Chart 3. Organization forms optional teaching

To the question posed as to who designs plans and programs for optional subjects, the largest number of teachers, or more precisely 62.2%, have responded that they are drawn up by the respective teachers of the subject they deliver, while 31.7% of them do this in cooperation with students. Only some of the teachers state that plans and programs for the optional subject are drawn up by t school pedagogue or an external expert.

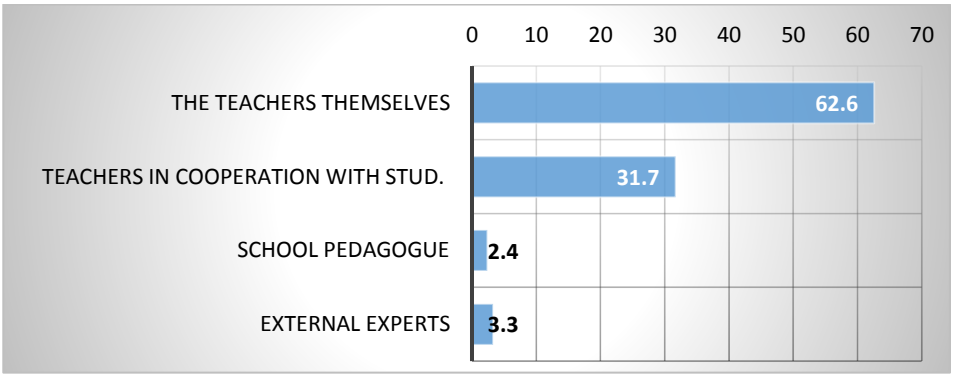

Chart 5. Drafting the curriculum for optional subjects

The support of uppers secondary school in the implementation of the optional curriculum

MESTI and MEDs are committed to providing materials and delivering trainings to teachers for the organization and implementation of optional courses. About 75% of the teachers affirm that they did not have support from MESTI and MED, while the rest state to have received such support. To the supplementary question, what is such support, 79% of them did not give any response, while 21% responded that the only support provided was through trainings. Most of the teachers, or over 90%, said to have attended trainings on the implementation of the curriculum. Their attitudes regarding the evaluation of the trainings, how much they are sufficient, practical and how much they have given results, are different. More than half of the teachers agree, or completely agree, that the support provided to teachers during curriculum training is sufficient, while 39.83% state that they somewhat agree with the support provided. Only 1.69% of them think that this support is not enough. The outcomes of the support provided by the trainings, according to the teachers, are quite high. More than half of them

agree, or completely agree, that they are satisfactory, while 44.26% somewhat agree. The attended trainings are practical and stimulating according to the majority of teachers, who agree or fully agree with their impact on the organization and application of optional teaching. Only a small number of teachers consider that the support provided to teachers during curriculum training is a waste of time, useless, boring and wrong. The following table presents in more detail the teachers' agreement or disagreement with the given statements.

Table 1. Support provided in the implementation of the optional curriculum

Support provided to teachers during curriculum training is:	1 I do not agree at all	2 I do not agree	3 Somewhat agree	4 I agree	5 completely agree
Sufficient	/	1.69	39.83	34.75	23.73
With satisfactory outputs	/	/	44.26	43.44	12.30
Stimulating	/	16.26	39.02	32.52	12.20
Practical	1.63	13.01	30.89	41.46	13.01
Waste of time	21.01	56.30	10.92	9.24	2.52
Worthless	31.93	49.58	10.92	7.56	/
Boring	26.67	47.50	18.33	7.50	/
Wrong	35.83	51.67	8.33	4.17	/

From the study participants, we also received opinions regarding the consultation of documents - publications and the professional support provided during the implementation of the new curriculum.

Curriculum documents (Curriculum Framework and Core Curriculum) by the majority of teachers are consulted, read and support is obtained from them for the implementation of the optional curriculum every time or often, while about 15% of them do this sometimes. Only 3.17% do not review these documents. In a high percentage, the teaching programs of the subjects that are held and the curriculum guides are consulted as well. Other MEST editions and publications on curriculum are read less by teachers. The chart below presents in more detail the frequency of consultation of documents and other publications on the curriculum.

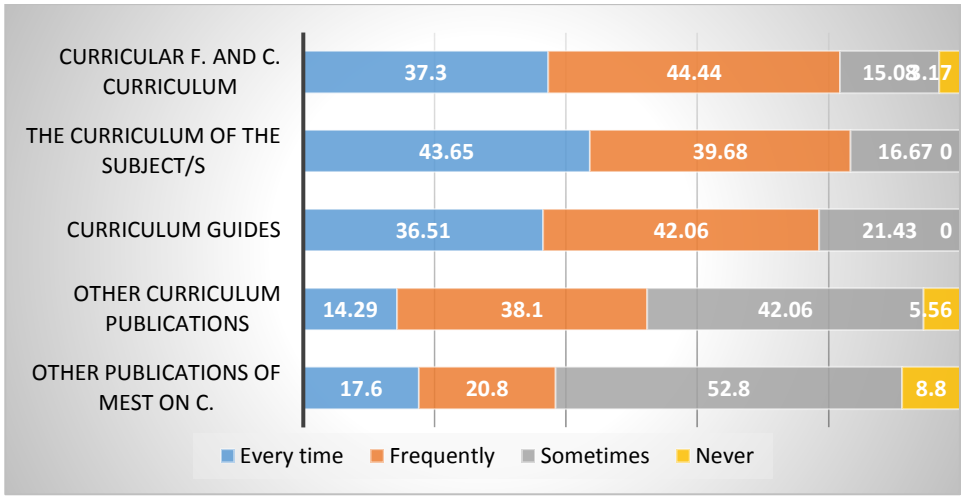

Chart 5. Review of curriculum documents, guides and other publications

Regarding the way of implementing the optional curriculum in gymnasiums by teachers, it is very important to consult with directors, lecturers, colleagues, trainers and education experts. About two-thirds of the teachers state that they talk and consult with the school director every time or often, while 30.16% say that they do so sometimes. 7.14% of them do not discuss and they do not consult the school director at all. The percentage of consultation and receiving support from the school pedagogue is lower than that of the director. About 20% of teachers have stated they do not seek support and do not cooperate with the pedagogue.

Teachers receive the greatest consultation and support from their school peers. Over 73% of them ask for support and discuss the implementation of the optional curriculum every time or often, while 26.98% do this sometimes. No teacher has stated that he or she does not discuss with his or her colleagues regarding the implementation of the curriculum.

Even with the head of the professional body, according to the majority of teachers, they enjoy cooperation and receive their support, unlike the consultation and support they receive from education offices in the municipality, education inspectors and education experts. The following table presents in more detail the frequency of consultations and the request for support from relevant education factors.

Table 2. Support to teachers through cooperation with the director, peers and education professionals

To what extent did you receive support for implementing the optional curriculum:	Every time	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
School director	22.22	40.48	30.16	7.14
School pedagogue	16.67	41.27	22.22	19.84
The head of the professional body	28.00	48.00	20.80	3.20
Peers	30.16	42.86	26.98	/
Curriculum trainers	16.00	26.40	36.00	21.60
Education officers in the municipality	0.79	11.90	46.83	40.48
Education inspectors	2.40	13.60	30.40	53.60
Education experts	4.03	13.71	25.00	57.26
MEST website	19.84	30.95	35.71	13.49

Challenges faced by upper secondary schools in the implementation of the optional curriculum

The research outcomes show that teachers face challenges. There are numerous challenges faced by schools in the implementation of the optional curriculum. According to the majority of teachers, the biggest challenges are the lack of requisites, teaching materials, lack of specific training and adequate texts. *There is a lack of school tools for the implementation of the optional subject during the implementation of various projects implemented in cooperation with students at school or outside the school*, says a teacher. *We lack the teaching materials which provide for delivering optional teaching. We have to work on our own and provide such materials*, added another one. The lack of textbooks and *lack of material information sources* is underlined by a smaller number of teachers as a challenge they face, and in this way, teachers are forced to use other information sources, such as the internet, materials from primary subjects, etc. *Adequate texts are missing for the subject I deliver,* says a teacher, without specifying which subject it is about. It is not only the lack of requisites, teaching materials and adequate texts for relevant subjects, stated by the teachers. They also state that there

is a lack of technological equipment, such as laptops, projectors, smart boards, through which students can at least present their projects on a projector, then sufficient space for delivering optional courses due to a large number of students. *Due to the lack of conditions, we have no opportunity to deliver practical courses in our school*, says a teacher. Many teachers, in their responses, emphasize that a big challenge they face is the issue of evaluation throughout three periods[7], suggesting to have evaluation reinstated to two periods. Some of them emphasize the lack of cooperation, the lack of experience of new teachers, the requirement to meet the teacher rate, etc.

To overcome the challenges related to the implementation of the optional curriculum, it is necessary to have ongoing support from MASTI, MEDs and other relevant education factors, through the provision of specific trainings by trainers experienced in curricula, who know well the organization of teaching according to the new curriculum; provision of literature and requisites and teaching materials; providing suitable conditions for work, etc. *MESTI should provide adequate literature, requisites, teaching materials and create opportunities for the delivery of optional courses outside the school, through the organization of research and visits related to the teaching unit, e.g. theater, historical places, etc*., responds a teacher. Among the frequent needs the teachers have stated in their responses is that for more frequent trainings related to practical implementation in the classroom/school, release from excessive preparation of pedagogical documentation, reinstatement of assessment in two periods, support from MED for field trips and enhancing cooperation between professional bodies, etc.

Regarding the change in the reform, more than half of the teachers did not respond at all. About 25% of those who responded, stated that there is no need to change anything. The organization of teaching and the assessment method are among the changes they suggest to be made. *In my opinion, it is*

[7] **Note**: At the time the research was carried out, April-May 2022, the assessment was carried out in three periods, and now, according to Administrative Instruction No. 06-2022 on Student Assessment in Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, the assessment is done in two periods.

better to have the teaching organized in two periods, because it gives us more opportunities and time, and also has less administrative work and more professional preparation says a teacher. *The assessment method needs to be changed and made in two periods, with the ratio VP1-60% -- VP2-40%,* added another one.

The feedback and suggestions of some teachers are related to the organization of optional teaching, the challenges faced by teachers during teaching and the support extended. They demand to have adequate trainings, better conditions for the implementation of the curriculum, greater assistance from MEDs, drafting of more appropriate texts for optional subjects, inspection in schools and evaluation of the work of teachers, as well as the organization of work in two teaching periods, not three.

3.2. Research outcomes with directors

This part of the report reflects the results obtained from the processing of the data provided by the research with directors about the practice of the schools in the implementation of the optional curriculum. These outcomes of the participants involved in the research are presented systematized in parts, which present the practices of the schools in the implementation of the optional curriculum based on the curriculum documents and the administrative instruction on the organization of the optional curriculum, the challenges faced by the directors in the organization of optional teaching and support for teachers to implement the optional curriculum.

Practices of organization of optional teaching at school

The role of the school management in the planning and implementing the process of the optional curriculum is important in planning, leading and supporting teachers during the implementation process of the optional curriculum, for the continuous development of practices in support of students to achieve competencies. During the analysis of the data from the interviews with the principals, it is observed that they are based on the student's demands for the selection and implementation of the optional

curriculum. *Our practices in the selection of optional subjects are in accordance with curriculum documents and administrative instruction. The proposal for a subject is made by the students, teachers, or the school management, while the selection is made by the school in agreement with the students and teachers. We do this at the beginning of the school year* - responded a director. *Complying with the administrative instruction, in addition to the Governing Council, we also cooperate closely with MED. We have many projects. A committee selected by the Governing Council of the school presents the selection, and then students declare through the relevant forms* - says the director of a gymnasium. In general, most directors say that in their schools, curriculum documents are strictly implemented, the subject is chosen by the students, approved by the school bodies and becomes a subject with equal status, as well as other subjects. However, some directors feel there are exceptions and there is not full compliance. *Our school is based on curriculum documents and administrative instruction, roughly more than 80%* - states a director.

The school support for the implementation of the optional curriculum

For the implementation of the curricular reform at the school level, a high level of preparation, organization and leadership of the school is required, in fulfilling the basic function of the school to create an environment that enables the development of students' competencies. MESTI and MED also play such a role by extending support in providing materials and delivering training for teachers in the organization and implementation of the new curriculum. Despite the existing numerous quality assurance documents on professional development, the Guide for conducting and implementing the Curriculum in the school and the Administrative Instruction, which provide a good orientation for schools on how the conduct and implement the process of professional development of teachers, directors state that they do not receive much support, except for the organization of teacher trainings for the implementation of the new curriculum, but not in all schools.

In our school, almost all teachers have been trained in the program for the implementation of the new curriculum by the trainers of the relevant areas,

but no other support in equipping the school with modern technological teaching and learning tools is extended - says the director of a gymnasium.

Ongoing support from MESTI is needed to overcome the challenges related to the implementation of the optional curriculum through specific trainings, curriculum documents and administrative instruction, which we constantly consult, cooperate and discuss with peers, teachers and education experts, through various workshops or meetings, where we receive instructions for the organization of optional teaching and exchange our experiences among ourselves - said another director.

To support teachers in the implementation of the optional curriculum, the directors state that they have undertaken a series of activities, starting with the training of teachers and heads of professional bodies, working with projects, enhancing cooperation among peers and cooperation with parents, and a greater mobilization is undertaken in the drafting of bimonthly and annual plans, through professional activities and drafting of tests for evaluation and improvement of the teaching approach. *Various groups of students have been established, with the purpose of expanding their knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as meeting specific interests and needs according to age for the implementation of projects. The cooperation with teachers, pedagogues, as well as the school cooperation with the parents has increased. Likewise, we have made a greater mobilization in the drafting of bimonthly and annual plans, through professional bodies and in drafting the assessment tests. In terms of support by the necessary requisites, we have not done much, because our school does not have such requisites available* - declares the director of a gymnasium. However, schools need specific support. According to the majority of directors, it is necessary to organize workshops on compiling plans and programs, establishing maximum conditions for a smooth running of the teaching process, equipping the school with cabinets, laboratories, and halls equipped with all the necessary requisites, enhanced cooperation with parents, drafting of clear plans and programs by teachers, providing literature for optional subjects, as well as a greater autonomy of the school, without interference from higher educational levels (MED).

Challenges faced by schools in the implementation of the optional curriculum

The directors also faced the same challenges that teachers have faced, starting with the problems encountered when it comes to understanding the changes brought by the new curriculum, and then the lack of textbooks and teaching tools in its implementation. The problems raised by the directors also refer to the lack of cabinets and relevant tools to develop students' competencies. Challenges faced by the school in the implementation of the optional curriculum are: the lack of working and requisite tools and the lack of support from the institutions. According to the directors interviewed, the successful improvement of the optional curriculum implementation in the school is done by undertaking a series of measures. *First of all, the harmonization of plans, the correlation between professional bodies and the interrelation between different curricular areas in the function of a holistic and diverse learning process needs to be done, enabling students to confirm the interrelation of all learning process aspects* - respond a school director. *The learning and implementation of the curriculum will be more successful when the staff is well trained professionally, knows how to work unconditionally with optional subjects, the work is taken seriously by the teaching staff, stimulating and motivating staff for hardworking and penalizing for neglecting work* - adds another director.

The feedback and suggestions of directors are also related to the organization of optional teaching, and the challenges faced by teachers during the teaching process. They demand to have adequate trainings, better conditions for the implementation of the curriculum, greater assistance from MEDs, drafting of more appropriate texts for optional subjects, inspection in schools and evaluation of the work of teachers, as well as the organization of work in two teaching periods, not three[8].

[8] **Note**: At the time the research was carried out, April-May 2022, the assessment was carried out in three periods, and now, according to Administrative Instruction No. 06-2022 on Student Assessment in Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, the assessment is done in two periods.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

From the study outcomes, it results that the majority of teachers in the selection of the optional subject consider the students' requirements and the school itself designs a curriculum according to the students' requirements, while some schools do so from a list provided by MESTI The most frequent form of organization of optional learning applied by teachers is the selection of the teaching subject, while the organization of optional learning with optional projects and modules is applied less.

In the implementation of the optional curriculum, teachers almost always consult the curriculum documents, the administrative instruction, the guide for the implementation of the curriculum, publications and other relevant publications, and discuss and collaborate with the director, the pedagogue and the school peers.

The majority of teachers, or more precisely 62.2% responded that they are drawn up by the respective teachers of the subject they deliver, while 31.7% of them do this in cooperation with students. Only some of the teachers state that plans and programs for the optional subject are drawn up by the school pedagogue or an external expert.

The main reasons for organizing optional courses, according to the teachers, are the enhancement of knowledge, the completion of the teacher rate, and additional content.

In general, most directors say that they entirely rely on the curriculum documents, the administrative instruction, and the curriculum implementation guide in the organization and implementation of optional teaching.

To support teachers in the implementation of the optional curriculum, the directors state that they have undertaken a series of activities, starting with the training of teachers and heads of professional bodies, working with projects, enhancing cooperation among peers and cooperation with parents, and a greater mobilization is undertaken in the drafting of bimonthly and annual plans.

According to the majority of directors and teachers, the biggest challenges are the lack of requisites, teaching materials, lack of technological equipment, such as laptops, projectors, smart boards, lack of specific training and adequate texts, as well as the lack of support from institutions.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the research outcomes, the following recommendations are drawn up:

- MESTI, MEDs and other relevant education factors need to provide specific trainings by trainers experienced in the curriculum, who know well the organization of teaching according to the new curriculum.
- MESTI need to provide adequate literature, requisites, and teaching materials and create opportunities for the delivery of optional courses outside the school, through the organization of research and visits related to the teaching unit.
- The selection of optional subjects should be made according to the students' needs in accordance with the curriculum documents and the administrative instruction, and not to meet the teacher rate.
- In order to overcome the challenges related to the implementation of the optional curriculum, workshops should be organized by gymnasium teachers of different municipalities, to share their experiences in the organization of optional courses.

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Aspects of the developmental approach in natural science teaching: Challenges and opportunities in curriculum implementation

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Abstract

The implementation of the new curriculum requires the reformation of the education system. The purpose of the research is to present the aspects of the developmental approach in the teaching of natural sciences, the identification of innovative challenges and opportunities during the practical implementation of the curriculum. The research is quantitative and qualitative. It was implemented with 210 participants, educators, teachers (coaches, coordinators) and principals, in 50 schools of pre-university education in Kosovo.

Questionnaires for educators, teachers and interviews with principals were used for data collection. The participants involved in the research were asked to analyze 10 questions, where 36 answers were given ready for approval or not (in compliance or not), based on basic curricular issues such as: competences, development approach, curricular load or other factors.

The results of the research in the four levels of the field of natural sciences, for the aspects of the developmental approach during the implementation of the curriculum, show the following data: the approved/positive answers at the pre-primary level are 16.2%, the primary level 18.5%, the lower secondary level 14.05 %, and at the upper secondary level 15.47%. The data obtained in total give 16.74% approved/positive answers.

The research identified challenges and opportunities in implementing the curriculum. Most educators and teachers present a challenge, the curricular load, didactic materials and limited time, while innovative teaching is an opportunity. The principals present the challenge of working conditions, and the professional development of the staff, as an opportunity to increase institutional responsibility.

The developmental approach as an opportunity, eliminates the bottlenecks of the implementation the program in natural sciences, with the change of teaching strategies and additional commitments to increase the interest of students.

Keywords: developmental approach, curriculum, teaching, opportunities

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INTRODUCTION

The development approach of the CC implementation, until the years 2013-2014, and the results of the implementation after this period until today have shown that the Curriculum Framework of Kosovo requires permanent commitment in achieving basic competencies in students and teaching them to learn throughout life, increasing the quality of teaching, as well as effective organization of the school, for the development of an educational system that contributes to socio-economic competencies.

The implementation of the new curriculum of pre-university education requires adherence to the principles of the curriculum in terms of the breakdown of learning outcomes into competencies in the curricular areas of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth curricular levels (CL1, CL2, CL3, CL4, CL5 and CL6). The implementation and development of programs in the curricular fields, especially in the Natural Sciences field, as well as the new methodological and practical aspects for the assessment of student achievements (MEST, 2016a).

Natural sciences represent the curricular field that offers students opportunities to develop an understanding of concepts, theories and laws in natural phenomena. In CL1 and CL2, students will learn about the natural and man-made environment. In CL3 and CL4, teaching is carried out in subjects (Physics, Chemistry, Biology), aiming at the interdisciplinary integrative approach. In CL5 and CL6, in general schools (in gymnasiums), natural sciences are developed in special subjects (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography and Astronomy (MEST, 2016b).

The developmental approach requires teachers and designers to organize the curriculum in relation to common learning themes across disciplines. For example; an interdisciplinary lesson on different phenomena, such as global warming, may include several subjects, such as: Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Geography.

Review of Literature

In relation to the developmental approach of teaching in the curricular field of natural sciences, studies/researches have been undertaken by various international authors, while in the local context this topic has not been researched enough, or has been mixed with the professional development of teachers. The implementation of teacher training programs should reflect the development of new approaches to the realization of effective teaching with students and modalities for their development.

In some countries, such as Albania, professional development is mainly based on personal initiatives and lacks support from educational institutions (Xhomara, N., 2018). This makes joint school initiatives and the development of professional competences difficult (Musai et al. 2004)

Teacher education programs should develop teachers' competencies to critique, adapt, and design materials to make them more research-oriented (Duncan et al. 2010) Teachers Professional Development (TPD) represents the inclusion of opportunities for active learning of new teaching strategies and other professional learning activities, including formative teacher assessment (Archibald et al. 2011)

One of the main issues, which has been addressed during various studies, quite important for the implementation of a new curriculum, is the understanding of the powerful influence of cooperation between teachers. Learning often happens incidentally rather than intentionally, as participants become part of a community of practice (Wenger, E., 1998). Members of a community need to bond informally to do together what they have learned through their mutual engagement in school activities. Sharing experiences is an aspect of development about issues or practices that are of mutual interest to all practitioners, such as a group of teachers (Colleen et al. 2009)

The curricular framework promotes holistic (complete) learning, which reflects the interdependencies of nature and the human-made world with the knowledge and information students have (MEST, 2016). While the developmental approach to teaching includes appropriate teaching practices, skills and strategies for developing learning while implementing the curriculum, the integrated approach to teaching natural sciences may be

appropriate for students to use scientific knowledge as a means to solve real-world problems and improve conceptual understanding (Venville et al. 2005)

Regarding the theoretical aspect of the developmental approach in the theoretical context, there are three curriculum theories identified by Ellis: learner-centered, society-centered or knowledge-centered (Ellis, A. K.,2004)

This research is based more on the student-centered curriculum, which focuses on individuals, as well as on the individual's goals and interests. The fundamental basis of a learner-centered curriculum is individual growth and development. The role of the teacher is to have a developmental approach, using the interests and needs of the students, to be oriented in the demanding and innovative way, to offer the students what they are looking for, becoming competitors with the achievements in science and beyond.

Curriculum theorists speak of two types of curriculum: one in which school subjects are kept close to their original disciplinary boundaries (for example, History-Geography or Biology-Chemistry) and another where disciplinary boundaries are more blurred (for example, a cross-curricular thematic development). The second type of curriculum is often called an integrated curriculum and is more common in early childhood and elementary school (Mutch, 2019). There are three broad goals of specific subjects in the natural sciences, related to the development of science learning: to do science; to know the content of the subject and make the connection between the understanding and the uses of science in everyday life.

According to the authors (Dillon et al. 2015), differentiation, or modifying content and instructional strategies to suit students, is much easier using an integrated curriculum, flexibility built into curriculum structure, integrated authentic real-life content.

Aspects of the developmental approach to teaching aim to connect the theory learned in the classroom with practical knowledge and experiences from real life. The importance of research is related to identifying aspects of curriculum implementation, critical connections between subjects, creating more holistic learning and mastery of competencies.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the research

The purpose of the research was to examine aspects of the developmental approach in teaching natural sciences, identification of difficulties and innovative opportunities during the practical implementation of the curriculum in the pre-university education of Kosovo. With this research, we also aimed to understand the role of teachers, as reformers of the education system, the commitment of principals in the management of the implementation of new policies, as well as the challenges they face on a daily basis.

Research model/design

The research was carried out through a mixed research approach, quantitative and qualitative, related to the identification (diagnostic) findings. The data were obtained through questionnaires with educators, science teachers (at all levels), and school principals.

The quantitative approach was carried out through survey questionnaires, while the qualitative approach was carried out through semi-structured interviews. The obtained data were analyzed, processed and interpreted through tables and charts.

Research questions

1. How much creative teaching has been implemented using the developmental approach in the field of natural sciences?
2. How does competency-based teaching support the implementation of curriculum and how does practical learning facilitate teaching and learning?
3. How much has the curricular overload influenced the implementation of subject programs?
4. What are the challenges and difficulties you faced during the implementation of the curriculum?

Population and Samples

The population consists of all the teachers of Kosovo, while the sample consists of 20 female educators, 80 primary level teachers, 70 lower secondary level teachers, 30 upper secondary level teachers and 10 school principals (N=210). The questionnaires were carried out with focus groups, in which 5-10 participants were included.

Research Instruments

For data collection, the questionnaire was used as the basic research instrument. The questionnaires contain data on the relevant qualification and level of teaching. All information received are fully confidential. 10 questions are provided in the forms, requiring a result from 40 ready answers. 9 of the specific questions are closed-ended questions, with ready answers, to understand easily and accurately, the compliance, the approval of the answers. The 10th question is an open question and it requires a comment of individual ideas from the research participants.

Data Collection Procedure

The research is planned to be carried out in March, April, May and June 2022, in 50 schools, in rural and urban communities (30 schools in the municipalities of Prishtina, Prizren, Ferizaj, Mitrovica, and 20 schools in Suharekë, Malishevë, Dragash, Klinë, Skenderaj). Questionnaires were delivered to the participants in the research through e-mail, they were filled in and individually returned through e-mail by the educators and teachers.

The qualitative part was carried out through interviews with 10 principals. Through phone conversation and email, the appropriate clarifications were provided regarding the importance of the research and their suggestions were received. Furthermore, questionnaires were forwarded to the principals, so that they are familiar with the purpose of the research. This approach has made communication with schools easier.

INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The data from the research are presented as follows: in charts and tabular form, adapting to the requirements of the questionnaires. The data results have reflected the degree of implementation of new/innovative approaches of the new Kosovo curriculum, with a focus on natural sciences.

These data present the results of ready answers, approved/positive or unapproved/negative, of 210 participants, accounting for 20 educators, 75 primary level teachers, 67 lower secondary level, 38 upper secondary level, and 10 principals.

- 20 educators, 9.82%, or 740 answers, pre-primary level;
- 75 teachers , 39.3%, or 960 answers, elementary level;
- 67 teachers, 34.39%, or 2,590 answers, lower secondary level;
- 38 teachers, 16.46%, or 1240 answers, upper secondary level;
- 10 principals were interviewed.

Table 1. The number of educators, teachers and principals, according to educational levels, and the total number of approved/positive and unapproved/negative answers in percentage.

EDUCATOR/ TEACHERS	PRE-PRIMARY LEVEL	PRIMARY LEVEL	LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL	UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL	DATA IN TOTAL
Total:	Educators 20	Teachers and Principals: 75+5=80	Subject Teachers and Principals: 67+3=70	Subject Teachers and Principals: 38+2=40	210
Total answers	740	2960	2590	1240	7530
Percentage %	9.82%	39.3%	34.39%	16.46%	100%
Approved /Positive	120	548	36	2	1261
Percentage %	16.2%	18.5%	14.05%	15.47%	16.74%
Unapproved/negative	620	2412	2226	1011	6269
Percentage %	83.7%	81.48%	85.9%	81.53%	83.25%

Data in Table No. 1 show the following results of approved/positive responses, by levels:

- 120 approved/positive answers or 16.02 % in the pre-primary level;
- 561 approved/positive answers or 18.05 in the primary level;
- 363 approved/positive answers or 14.05% in the lower secondary level;
- 229 approved/positive answers or 15.47% at the upper secondary level;
- 1261 approved/positive answers or 16.74 % in total;

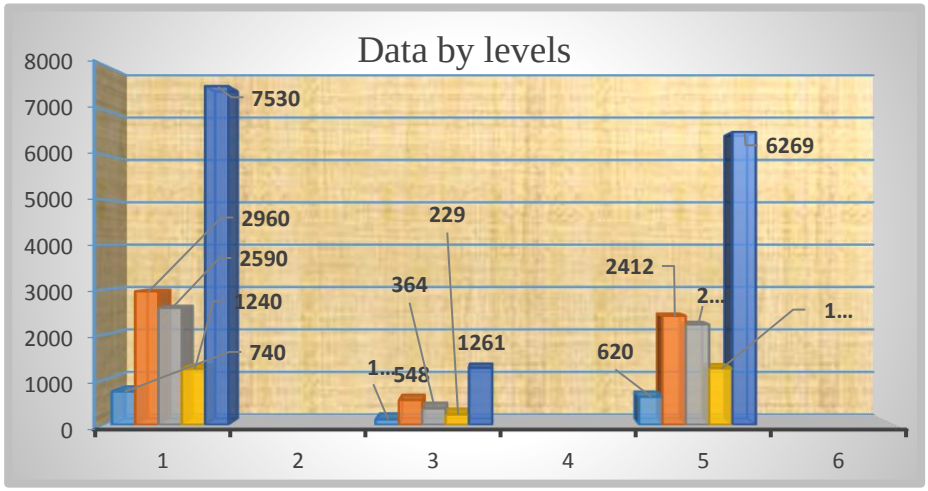

Fig. 1. Graphic presentation of data according to educational levels and the total number of approved/positive and unapproved/negative responses.

As can be seen in ne graphic presentation in Figure 1, we have the expected data of positive responses by levels and approved/positive and disapproved/negative responses by levels.

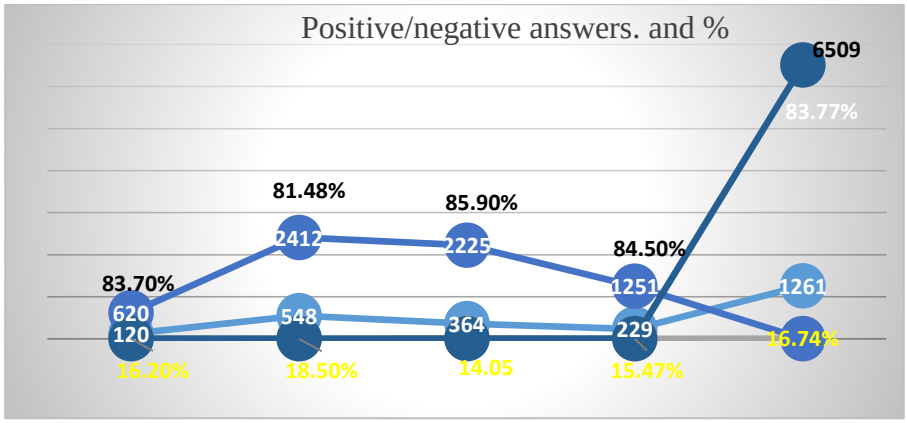

Fig. 2. Graphic presentation of general data on the answers approved/positive and unapproved/negative, numerical values and percentages according to the levels.

Figure number 2 presents, in more detail, the data for the 4 levels and the total values. The obtained results show, schematically, the approved/positive and unapproved/negative answers, expressed in numerical values and percentage for 10 questions.

Table 2. Tabular presentation of 10 questions at 5 levels, the results of the answers approved/positive, not approved/negative, for each question.

		The number of approved/positive & unapproved/negative answers from educators, teachers, principals, according to levels and percentage (%)					
No.	Questions addressed	Answer: Appr/Pos & not appr./Neg.	Pre-primary level 20	Primary level 80	Low Secondary Level 70	Upper Secondary Level 40	Answers Apr/Pos.& Not appr./Neg in %
1	How can you tell that the students in your subject have achieved a result in the learning process according to the CC?	Appr./Pos.	11	64	44	27	17.38%
		Unaproved/ Neg.	69	256	236	133	82.6%
2	How much have the concepts in the field of curriculumes been adapted and in the learning subjects during the implementation of CC?	Appr./Pos.	17	59	41	25	16.9%
		Unaproved/ Neg.	63	261	239	135	82.9%
3	How much does the level division help with the implementation of CC and how much does it facilitate learning and developmental practices in teaching and learning?	Appr./Pos.	12	62	40	23	16.3%
		Unaproved/ Neg.	68	258	240	137	83.6%
4	What achievements of students are involved in implementation of CC through the realization of competencies?	Appr./Pos.	13	60	39	26	16.4%
		Unaproved/ Neg.	67	260	241	134	83.5%
5		Appr./Pos.	11	63	35	25	15.9%

	To what extent has qualitative teaching influenced the students' success?	Unaproved/ Neg.	69	257	245	135	84%
6	To what extent was it possible to develop the students' creativity in the natural sciences subjects?	Appr./Pos.	17	62	46	26	17.9%
		Unaproved/ Neg.	63	258	234	134	82%
7	What are difficulties of the connection between competences and learning outcomes?	Appr./Pos.	12	(60)	33	24	15.35%
		Unaproved/ Neg.	68	260	247	136	84.6%
8	How relevant was the connection of the curriculum with the daily life, interests and motivations of the students?	Appr./Pos.	8	52	44	25	15.3%
		Unaproved/ Neg.	72	268	236	135	85.8%
9	Was the CC implementation monitoring properly planned in understanding how to teachers should develop the process?	Appr./Pos.	14	59	35	24	15.7%
		Unaproved/ Neg.	66	261	245	136	84.2%
10	Write some individual and independent comments as professional teachers, based on the quality of teaching: disadvantages and advantages on the implementation of the CC.	Appr./Pos.	5	7	6	4	10.47%
		Unaproved/ Neg.	15	73	64	36	89.5%
	Total:	Appr./Pos.	120	548	364	229	1261
		%	16.2%	18.5%	14.05	15.47%	16.74%
	Total:	Unaproved/ Neg.	620	2412	2225	1251	83.77%
		%	83.7%	81.48%	85.9%	84.5%	6509

The data in Table 2 present 10 questions. In 9 questions we have the data on 36 answers of 4 levels and in total received from the 210 participants in the research (educators, teachers and principals), whereas Question No.10 presents individual comments from the above-mentioned groups.

Of the total number of answers that had to be approved/positive which was 7530, 1261 or 16.74% were approved/positive. From these results, it appears that 6509 or 83.77% of the teachers did not give approved/positive answers and the comments provided are quite few.

The primary level presents more approved/positive answers, 18.05%, while we have fewer approved/positive answers in LSL 14.05%, USL 15.47% and PPL 16.2%.

In Table 2, Question No.6 has more approved answers, 17.9%**,** because the natural sciences should contain more creativity and application of the content and conceptual parts of the subject programs during the implementation of the CC. In questions No. 1 and No. 2 we have an increase in the percentage of positive answers, at all levels, 17.38% and 16.9%. The answers to other questions are approximately equal in percentage.

Question No. 4 has been approved at 16.4%. What achievements of students are included during the implementation of the CC through the realization of competencies? Sample answers:

a) Integrated and coherent curriculum of knowledge, skills, attitude and challenge facing;

b) Elements: Content (I Know); Curricular Competencies (I Do), Big Ideas (I Understand) and Deeper Learning (I Analyze).

Question No. 10 requires comments to be provided from the 210 research participants, but only few ideas and suggestions have been provided, only 22 or 10.47%. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principals, with 6 open questions, focused on the purpose of the research. Most of the directors' answers are about the same.

Questions for interviews with school principals:

1. How successfully has the realization of competences been implemented in the curriculum of natural sciences and how do teachers understand the philosophy and importance of CC?
2. What are the conditions offered by the school for creative teaching and what are the challenges you face?
3. Has the monitoring of the CC implementation by the responsible institutions been properly planned, in order to understand how the teachers should develop the process?
4. How ready are the experienced teachers in changing their traditional teaching method?
5. How suitable are the textbooks for developing an effective learning and are other alternative resources used?
6. How much has the school been supported by relevant institutions for professional development of teachers and working conditions?

Some of the comments we have received from interviews with principals

- They understood the curriculum as a teaching process that develops: knowledge, skills, attitude and content values, by reforming and transforming their knowledge, in a practical way, in everyday life, through competences and learning outcomes (Learning outcomes per degree-competency (RNSH), Learning outcomes for curriculum areas (RNF), Learning outcomes per class at the level of the curriculum area or subject (RNL)). The CC implementation has not encouraged all the teachers to use new methodologies and change teaching method.
- I think that quality in teaching is achieved with the use of technology and the concretization means of teaching practice, that students are not burdened only with theory. The implementation of the new

curriculum must be a continues process, adapting to the conditions that the schools must provide.

- The external evaluation to some extent has supported the teachers change the form of student assessment, based on SLO (subject learning outcomes) and the development of competencies, according to the concept of the new curriculum.
- Based on my long experience, efficiency and dedication are required in working with students. However, traditional teachers find it hard to change.
- Lack of infrastructure, cabinets, concretization tools, appropriate texts, large number of students in classes, etc remain still a challenge. The MEST drawn up books are highly insufficient and need improvement, because in our schools there are no conditions to look into other sources, such as from Internet.
- We have tried to motivate students through various practices, especially those in the rural area, in order to achieve the results expected with the curriculum.
- Quality in education requires a professional monitoring by competent people, books suitable to the theoretical and practical needs of students, conditions for work, adequate professional training for teachers, social respect for teachers and school management staff.

DISCUSSION

From the information we have received from the teachers involved in the research, we have seen dilemmas and avoidance of responsibility to accept the current condition of the developmental approach to teaching, as the results show a low level.

Questions that address compliance with answers require concrete results in the realization of competencies, because a professional and successful

teacher must be a promoter of changes in his/her professional development and research methodology in action.

According to the authors, the developmental aspect of hands-on and experiential learning of an integrated curriculum is facilitated through service learning (Drake et al. 2004) Service learning is not suitable for every subject or course, but it can be effective in any discipline (Jacoby et al. 2015) Service learning works well for students with a wide range of learning styles, from theoretical learners who learn best through abstract conceptualization to those who learn best through active, concrete experience. This way of learning is also applicable in restrictive conditions, such as during the previous years of the covid-19 pandemic, i.e. utilizing different learning methods.

Another aspect of the study developmental approach is related to the implementation of the curriculum, that aims to identify how much the teachers have difficulties in connecting competencies with curriculum area or subject (RNL), as addressed in Question no.7 presents: What are difficulties of the connection between competences and learning outcomes? This represents the connection with the required competence in achieving the specific learning results according to the subject or the results of a chapter. Some of the answers clarify how relevant the successes and obstacles have been.

An information that explains the procedures for solving problems in several different techniques, that not every solution can be found in the same way, can discovere students' persistence skills in Chemistry. For example, Mathematics should complement the conceptual understanding of Chemistry (Vula et al. 2022) A study considered as a developmental approach, of the implementation of learning in integrated subjects.

The results show that the curricular field of natural sciences includes research in action, as a developmental approach, new scientific ideas or resources; development of learning skills through projects and models, so that they are skilled as creators open to new ideas, and the world around them.

Some of the teachers involved in the research have agreed with the essential issues. They have provided comments on the challenges they face during the application of the natural science curriculum, but also the advanced opportunities/advantages that the new curriculum offers. Most of them did not provide their contribution and did not pay due attention to the importance of the study. They have positive opinion only in some answers.

Answers to Question No. 9 are offered in the form of questions, which means that during the monitoring, have the assigned tasks for the CC implementation been fulfilled, while the question should be answered with "yes" or "no". This analysis produces a different ratio between the levels, where participation is low. So, in most cases, the monitoring has not been performed in a professional manner and the teachers have deficiencies and limited information as to the development and support of the curriculum based on competencies.

Studies in New Zealand find the new curriculum complicated and the data show a low level of its implementation, as on a scale of 0-5 the average value is 2.7 in 2008 and 2.8 in 2009 (Clira, S., 2011). This data corresponds to our research**,** as our results also show low developmental level in the implementation of the curriculum.

Conclusions

Based on the research results , the data show that situation is grim as to the seriousness of teachers and management staff work in relation to the implementation of the reform in education. The research with the participation of teachers in the field of natural sciences, shows stagnation in the implementation of subject programs, and this condition will continue for a long period. The commitment of teachers in relation to the development of students' competencies is low (16.4%). Their willingness to analyze the relation between the subject plan with Core Curriculum and breakdown in measurable results. There were comments provided as to the difficulties during the implementation of the curriculum of natural sciences. However most of them did not give contribution and did not pay the required attention to the study requirements, since the CC implementation requires the

implementation of a fundamental reform, with new norms of the time. This is indicative of a very low number of positive responses (1261).

Furthermore, this research confirmed that the monitoring of the implementation process of the new curriculum in Kosovo is missing, or is inadequate (it is performed by individual who are not of the relevant field/subject), or it has happened rarely in schools, without any professional planning. Therefore, this issue requires to be addressed by the highest state institutions.

The results show that the challenges, which most of the teachers face, are: lack of continuous monitoring, lack of serious training, lack of punishments for various omissions in the teaching process, as well as support for innovative teachers. On the other hand, the work and commitment of dedicated teachers may decline for now known reasons, such as: the number of unsystematized students in rural and urban areas, inadequate professional and managerial staff, insufficient concretizing tools for quality work.

Additionally, interviews with the school principals have ascertained that they do not see quality improvement as an internal factor that could be improved with their concrete actions, with the strengthening of their role and responsibility as heads of schools. Another challenge is the understanding of developmental processes and other aspects that make a curriculum successful, despite the difficulties during its implementation.

These outcomes, however small they may be, remain meritorious for those teachers who organizee the teaching process based on competencies, according to curricular areas, teaching programs and interdisciplinary approach.

Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the research, a number of necessary recommendations were issued:

- Create more suitable conditions for implementing of learning practices, so that all teachers understand the importance of CC implementation in a more professional way.

- Perform external monitoring and assessment based on the results of the CC competences, with contents from the field of natural sciences, and never based on the contents of school textbooks. Addressing the research problem confirms that in Kosovo, the monitoring of the new curriculum implementation process is missing or is inadequate (it is carried out by individuals who are not from the relevant field/subject) and should be addressed by the highest state institutions.
- Assessment of students in Learning outcomes per class at the level of the curriculum area or subject (RNL) should be performed for curricular degrees and for educational levels, approach which would help on the increase of the success and create more advanced, evidence-based practices.
- The relevant institutions (MEST, MDE and HEI) should be more committed to understand and correctly and realistically accept, how is the teaching process being implemented and to what degree is the reform in the education system being carried out.
- This research which was carried out in relation to the quality teaching (developmental approach aspects), has provided quite interesting results. Despite the fact that the professional development of teachers through trainings has been practiced a lot in Kosovo, the results of teachers' work are not at a satisfactory level.
- Furthermore, from interviews with school principals, it is observed that they do not see quality improvement as an internal factor, which can be improved with concrete actions on their part, as school leaders.
- As a result of the current situation, the analysis of the performed researches in the field of education, and reports from local and international evaluations must be reviewed for undertaking concrete steps in relation to the development of the school.
- Based on the data obtained from this research and taking into consideration the stagnation in these two years of the pandemic, it is

worth noting that we have a lot of work ahead of us so that our students achieve the desired results. This statement should be analyzed in terms of the growth of quality and success in schools.

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The impact of reducing the number of lessons and textbook content reduction on the quality of teaching and student workload

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the effects of the education reform implemented in Montenegro in 2017, using the example of the subjects of Biology, Mathematics, and Informatics with technology. The key assumption of the reform was that reduction in the number of lessons and textbooks content reduction would improve teaching quality and decrease student fatigue and workload.

In order to test this assumption, the results of empirical research conducted by the Bureau for Education Services and the Institute for Textbooks in Podgorica during 2021 and 2022 were used. Those research studies investigated the effects of the implementation of a new curriculum and reduced content of textbooks on the quality of teaching and student workload. The research presented in this paper has shown that a reduction in the number of lessons and curriculum content as well as textbook content reduction does not directly lead to improvement in the quality of teaching or a decrease in student workload. There is also evidence that instead of improving the quality of teaching and reducing student workload because of undertaken measures there is a decline in teaching quality and an increase in student workload.

This paper recommends a different approach to solving the problem of student workload. Instead of taking learning time as a burden to be reduced, on the contrary, learning time should be seen as an opportunity to improve the quality of teaching, and thus as an opportunity to reduce student fatigue and workload.

Keywords*: student workload, curriculum, textbook, quality of teaching*

1. Education reforms and solving the problem of students' workload in Montenegro

In the pedagogical literature, the students' workload is often defined as **a discrepancy between the requirements that a school places on students and their ability to meet these requirements within the prescribed period.**

The workload is often paired with *learning time* and it is expressed in the number of hours a student spends in school, which includes the homework. Ivić, I. (1985) warns that in addition to the quantitative aspect, there are other aspects of workload, which are equally, if not more important than the aspect of time. The students' workload also depends *on the types of classroom activities*, e.g. whether the students are expected just to listen to the teacher or have the opportunity to participate actively. Then, it depends on the learning method, whether the students are expected to learn by heart or have the opportunity to express their opinion, etc.

Reducing students' workload appears as a goal in almost all reform documents in Montenegro. Thus, for example, the Guidelines for the Curriculum Revision from 2001 emphasize the need to reduce student workload and fatigue (2001, p. 16). This goal is transferred to all later strategic documents. We can find it in the Strategic Plan for Education Reform for the period 2005-2009, in the Strategy for the Development of Primary Education with the Action Plan 2012-2017, in the Strategy for the Development of General Secondary Education in Montenegro 2015-2020, etc. Education reform in 2017 was predominantly committed to addressing this goal. The number of lessons in most subjects was reduced as well as the contents of textbooks in order to improve the quality of teaching and decrease the students' workload and study-related fatigue. This paper examines the effects of reducing the number of lessons and the textbook content reduction on the quality of teaching and students' workload, using the example of Biology, Mathematics, and Computer Science.

1.1. Comprehensive reform of general education in Montenegro in 2001

Starting from 2001 (comprehensive reform of general education), the curriculum in Montenegro has been aligned with contemporary educational concepts. The Book of Changes (2001) envisaged *education cycles* (the primary school curricula are implemented in three three-year cycles), *elective classes* (students have the opportunity to choose individual subjects), *inclusive classes* (inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools), *school autonomy* (a part of the content for each subject is determined at the school level), etc. New curricula include *student-centered, not teacher-centered education*; *focus on goals and outcomes, not on contents; teacher autonomy* (the teacher has freedom in the implementation of the curriculum, but strongly focuses on the practice of active and interactive learning), etc. In parallel with the curricula development, the new textbooks were developed too. The focus in textbooks has shifted from the content to *the learning process*. Considerable attention was devoted to *ensuring the quality of work in schools and improving teachers' competencies*. External and internal evaluation systems have been introduced, as well as the school-based professional development of teachers.

The students' schedules were as follows. In the first cycle, students had up to 20 lessons a week. In the second cycle up to 26, and in the third cycle, up to 30 lessons a week. Based on comparative data (Eurydice, 2015, p. 4), it can be seen that **the school duties of students in Montenegro were at the level of the European average**. The annual number of compulsory lessons in Montenegro was 674 lessons for the school year 2014/15. The practice with more lessons was recorded in Denmark, Ireland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The countries with a similar annual number of lessons were Romania (692), Poland (693), Slovenia (698), and Finland (704). The countries with a smaller annual number of lessons were Croatia (600), Serbia (603), and Bulgaria (644).

1.2. Evaluation of the 2001 general education reform

Evaluation of education reform (Reškovec and Bešić, 2012), as well as several studies on the quality of education (Lalović, 2008; Pešikan and

Lalović, 2017), indicated a few key problems in the implementation of the 2001 curriculum. It turned out that teaching is still *focused on the curricula contents, and less on student and learning* (Pešikan, A. Lalović, Z. 2017; Reškovec, T. Bešić, 2012). Despite the accepted concept of active learning and interactive teaching, *lecture-based teaching and the passive position of students* are still dominant in practice (Lalović, 2008; Pešikan, Lalović, 2017; Reškovec and Bešić, 2012). In the opinion of parents, *the curricula are overloaded and students spend long hours in school* (Reškovec and Bešić, 2012). *Moreover, teachers lack competencies for the implementation of new curricula* (Pešikan, Lalović, 2017; Reškovec and Bešić, 2012).

The average achievement of students on the PISA test in 2015 was about 65-80 points lower than the achievement of students from OECD countries. Comparison with selected countries (Macedonia, Slovenia, Poland) shows that the quality of education in Montenegro is slightly higher than in Macedonia (by about 25-75 points), but lower than in Slovenia and Poland (by about 80-90 points). The main conclusion of the PISA study suggests that *teaching has retained a traditional orientation, the main goal of which is for students to master specific knowledge so that they can reproduce it*. (Pavlović-Babić, D. & Baucal, A. 2019, p. 52).

The aforesaid studies indicate that in the curriculum of Montenegro **there is a serious gap between the desired situation and its implementation**. While educational documents proclaim solutions in accordance with the European educational space, the practice is focused on *the uncritical acquisition of knowledge, the practical effect of which is to enable students to reproduce what they have learned* (Pavlović-Babić, D. & Baucal, A. 2019, p. 51). The main weaknesses of Montenegrin educational practice, seen from the position of professional analysis were:

- the focus of teaching is on the transfer of knowledge, and not on the development of competencies (lecture-based teaching and ex-cathedra teaching are dominant in the class);
- passive position of students in teaching (students listen to the teacher's lecture, and are rarely able to actively learn, solve problems, create, etc.);

- insufficient competence of teachers for the implementation of active teaching (initial teacher education is focused on the development of competencies for the transfer of content, not for their learning).

The main weaknesses of Montenegrin educational practice from the parents' point of view are overloaded curricula, a large number of classes and students overload with school duties (Reškovec and Bešić, 2012, p. 131). This public view on educational practice, which is not without significance, was expressed through the demands to reduce the number of lessons, the content of the curricula, and generally the students' school duties.

1.3. Reducing student workload, 2017 reform

The education reform in 2017 was primarily dedicated to the goal of reducing the students' workload. This reform envisaged a reduction of students' school duties by about 10%, which meant a reduction in the weekly number of lessons in grades 1 to 9 by 19 lessons, as follows: in the first cycle by three lessons, in the second cycle by seven lessons and in the third cycle by nine lessons. Compared to other European countries (Eurydice, 2019, p. 12), with a new number of lessons (674 lessons**), Montenegro belongs to the group of countries with the lowest annual student workload**. The average number of lessons in Europe for the school year 2018/19 was 734 lessons, ranging from 468 lessons in Bulgaria to more than double in Denmark (1051). The lowest number of lessons was in Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.

In order to achieve this, some of the subjects were excluded from the obligatory subjects list (for example, Civic Education). Some subjects were merged (e.g., the subject Biology with Ecology was merged into one subject - Biology; Informatics and Basics of Technology were combined into one subject. The weekly number of lessons was reduced for the most of the subjects: Mathematics (from 39 to 36), English (from 23 to 19), Art (from 14 to 12), Music (from 11 to 9), Nature and Society (from 9 to 6), History (from 7 to 6), Geography (from 6 to 5), Biology (from 8 to 6). For the first time, **teaching plan (annual number of lessons per subject) includes subjects with one lesson per week**, e.g. the number of lessons for the

subject of Biology in grades 8 and 9 was reduced by 50%, from two to one lesson a week. As a consequence of changes in the teaching plan, **changes in curricula** followed (the contents of individual subjects were reduced by about 30%) as well as the development of **new textbooks**.

According to the Report on the Implementation of Education Reform (2017, p. 4), it was expected that the reduced number of lessons and reduced textbook contents *would enable teachers to improve the way they work with students, i.e. that they would pay more attention to the learning process. As a result, student achievements on the PISA test are expected to improve.*

2. The effects of reducing the number of lessons and the content of textbooks reduction on the quality of teaching and student workload

The aim of this paper is to examine the effects of the education reform implemented in Montenegro in 2017, using the example of the subjects of Biology, Mathematics, and Informatics with technology. The key assumption of the reform was that reduction in the number of lessons and textbooks content reduction would improve teaching quality and decrease student workload.

In order to test this assumption, the results of empirical research conducted by the Bureau for Education Services and the Institute for Textbooks in Podgorica during 2021 and 2022 were used. The research of the Bureau for Education Services (2022) examined the quality of new curricula for the so-called STEM subjects. Groups of teachers in 32 primary schools evaluated whether the new curricula are understandable and scientifically based, how extensive they are, whether they are aligned with students' capabilities, and whether they are vertically and horizontally connected. After these evaluations were completed, focus groups were organized at the Bureau for Education Services, with the task to explain the obtained results (more than 100 prominent practitioners participated in the focus groups). The aim of the research of the Institute for Textbooks (Lalović, 2021) was to examine the quality of new textbooks. 1618 students and 105 Biology teachers participated in the research; 1733 students and 115 Computer Science

teachers; 1648 students and 208 Mathematics teachers. This empirical research covered 106 schools from all over Montenegro.

2.1. The effects of new curricula with the reduced number of lessons and textbook content reduction on the quality of teaching

Among the research topics were the extent and the way the curricula with the reduced number of lessons and textbook content influenced the quality of teaching and the students' workload.

2.1.1. Have the new curricula with a reduced number of lessons improved the quality of teaching?

The research of the Bureau for Education Services (2022) on the quality of new curricula showed that in comparison with other characteristics, teachers mostly objected to the **scope of the new curricula** (See: Figure 1).

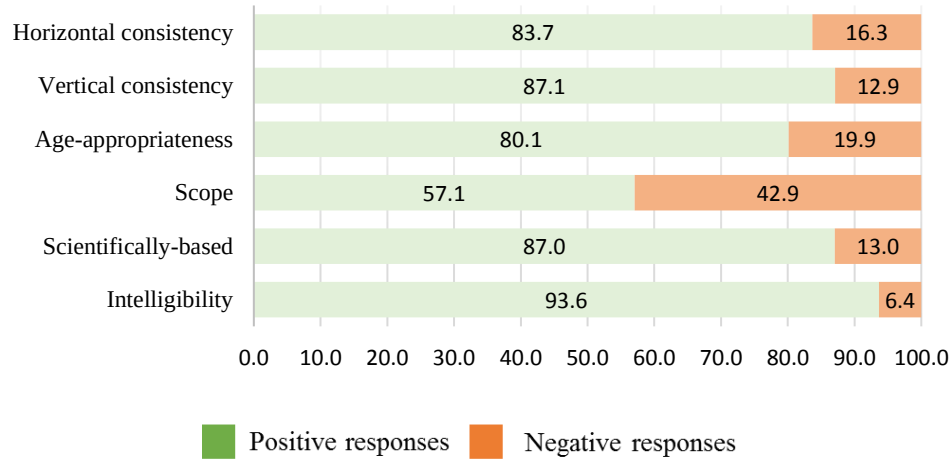

Figure 1. Quality assessment of the individual characteristics of the new curricula

To the question of whether the scope of the new curricula enables them to implement all the planned learning activities: learning new contents, revision, systematization, etc., **most negative answers referred to the curricula of Biology, Geography, and Informatics, i.e. precisely to those**

curricula that have undergone the most changes in terms of reducing the student workload (See: Figure 2). This opinion refers to the Biology curriculum for which the number of lessons in grades 8 and 9 was reduced by 50% (from two to one lesson per week). The findings are similar for the Geography curriculum (the number of lessons in grade 9 has been reduced by 50% from two to one lesson per week). The decrease in the number of lessons in Mathematics is somewhat smaller and amounts to, for five grades, on average about 13.54%. The curriculum for Informatics with technology became a new one, unifying the contents of informatics, technique, and programming, and it is taught with one lesson per week.

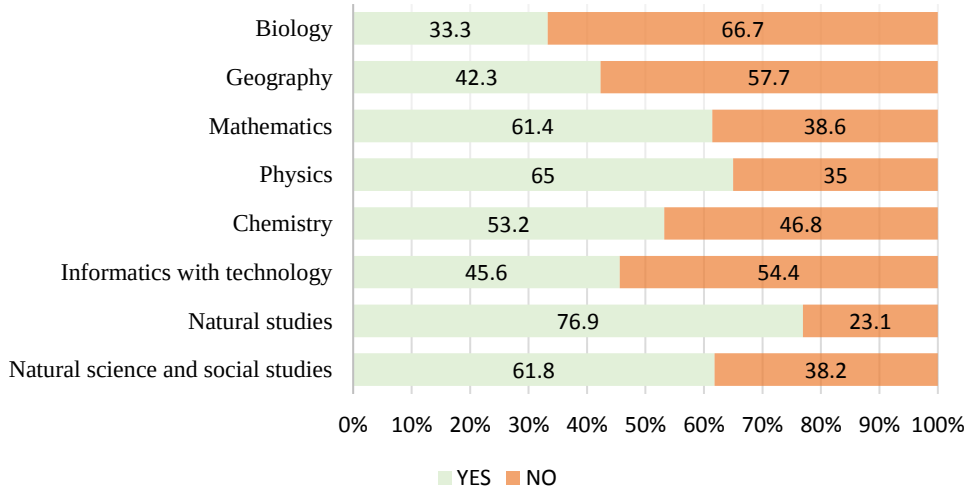

Figure 2. Does the scope of the new curricula allow you to implement all the planned learning activities (learning, revision, systematization, etc.)?

In the focus groups, the teachers of these subjects (Biology, Geography, Informatics) concluded that in the new circumstances, with a reduced number of teaching hours and reduced content:

- **some important content is missing** (they believe that curricula produce "holes" in students' knowledge);

- **there is a lack of time for implementation of all planned learning activities** (ex-cathedra teaching dominates, and there is a lack of time for doing the exercises, systematization, repetition, etc.).

2.1.2. Have the new textbooks with reduced content improved the quality of teaching?

In the research of the Institute for Textbooks (Lalović, 2021), when asked whether the new textbooks (Biology, Mathematics, Informatics) include all the contents necessary for achieving the curriculum outcomes, about 2/3 of teachers answered affirmatively. It is a worrying fact that a large number of teachers (about 1/3) believe the opposite, **that the new textbooks lack the content necessary for achieving all curriculum outcomes** (see: Figure 3).

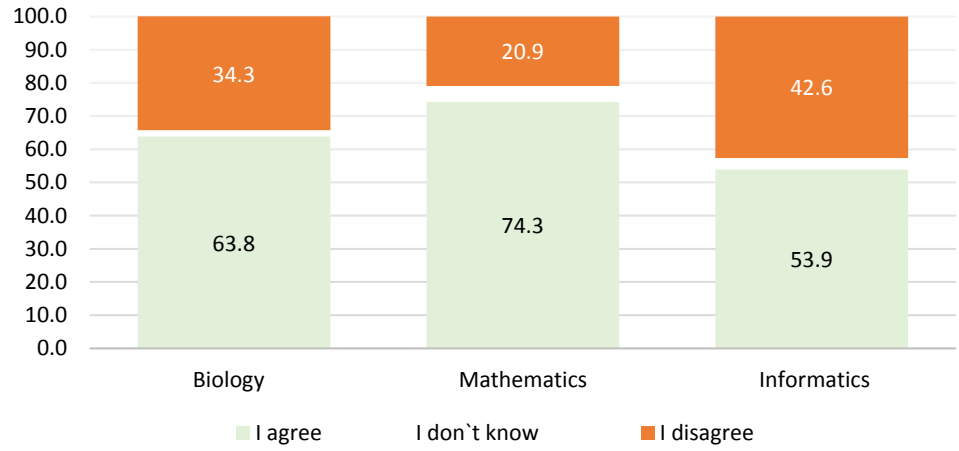

Figure 3. The new textbooks (Biology, Mathematics, Informatics) include the contents necessary for achieving all curriculum outcomes

When asked whether their new textbooks (Biology, Mathematics, Informatics) contain everything they learn about at school, about 2/3 of students answered affirmatively. It is a worrying fact that a large number of students **learn from notebooks and non-standardized notes from teacher lectures** (see: Figure 4). For example, 37% of students learn Biology from notebooks and teacher's lectures

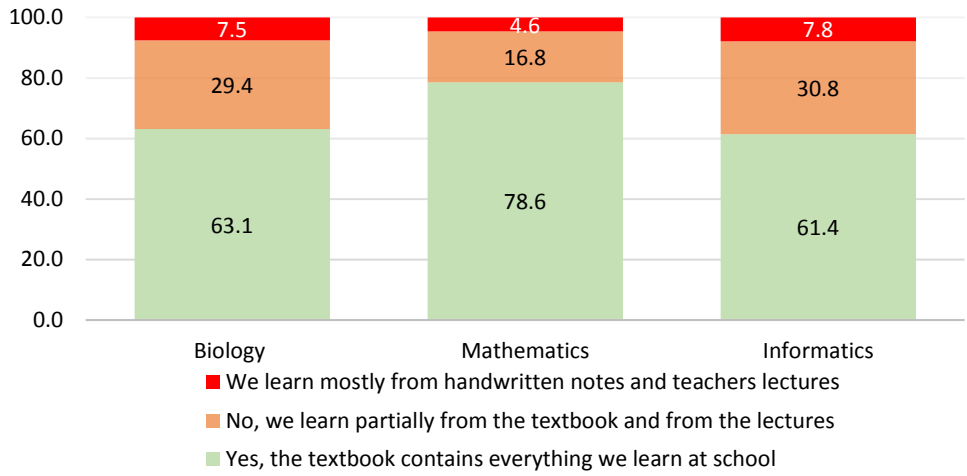

Figure 4. Do the new textbooks (Biology, Mathematics, Computer science) contain everything you are learning about at school?

These facts are best explained by the teachers' comments: *When some key contents are missing in the textbook, I feel obliged to add these contents, devise them myself and pass them on to the students so that the students do not have holes in their knowledge.* And in circumstances when teachers lack time for the implementation of all learning activities (learning new things, revision, systematization, etc.), teachers usually give up the time intended for learning (in terms of exercises, repetitions, systematization, etc.) and turn to lecturing, as the most efficient method of transferring content. In short, **when a curriculum or textbook lacks some "important" content, teachers come up with it themselves, and when they lack time to implement all planned learning activities, teachers opt for lecturing, as the most effective method for knowledge transfer.**

The obtained results unambiguously show that curricula with a reduced number of lessons and textbooks with reduced content have affected negatively the quality of teaching and the students' workload. Instead of reducing their workload, the students are loaded with extra load (the contents that, in the opinion of the teachers, were "missing" in the curricula and/or in the textbooks were added by the teachers themselves). Instead of improving the quality of teaching (in the sense that students get more time for active

learning), there was a decline in the quality of teaching (in the sense that teachers more often opted for lecturing and frontal teaching).

2.2. The impact of the new curricula with the reduced number of lessons and textbooks with reduced content on reducing students' workload and fatigue

Parents expected that the reform would reduce student fatigue and workload. The research of the Institute for Textbooks (Lalović, 2021) examined exactly whether the new textbooks with reduced content and reduced number of lessons affected the students' workload.

2.2.1. We asked the students about the extent of the textbook units

Most students believe that the lesson units from the new textbooks (Biology, Mathematics, and Informatics) are of moderate extension, or that they are not extensive at all, which leads to the conclusion that the **desired goal of reducing the students' workload** has been achieved by reducing the textbook content (See Figure 5).

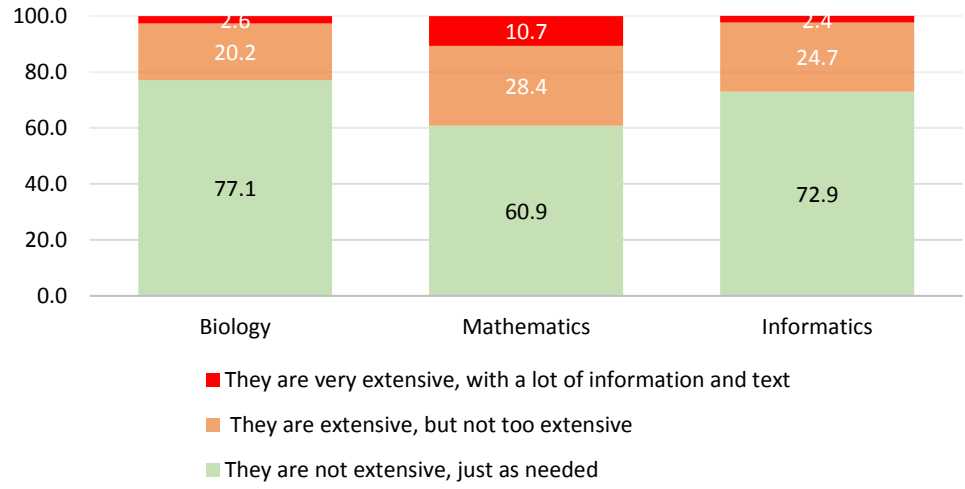

Figure 5. How extensive are the units in the textbooks?

2.2.2. We asked the students about the level of difficulty of the lessons from the textbook

Even though students perceive the textbook units as not being extensive, **a significant number of students find the lessons from the new textbooks difficult, or even too difficult to understand and learn** (see Figure 6). It is especially unusual that lessons from Biology textbooks, which are rated as the least extensive, are also rated as the most difficult (10% of students think that lessons from Biology textbooks are too difficult and they often need additional help to understand them).

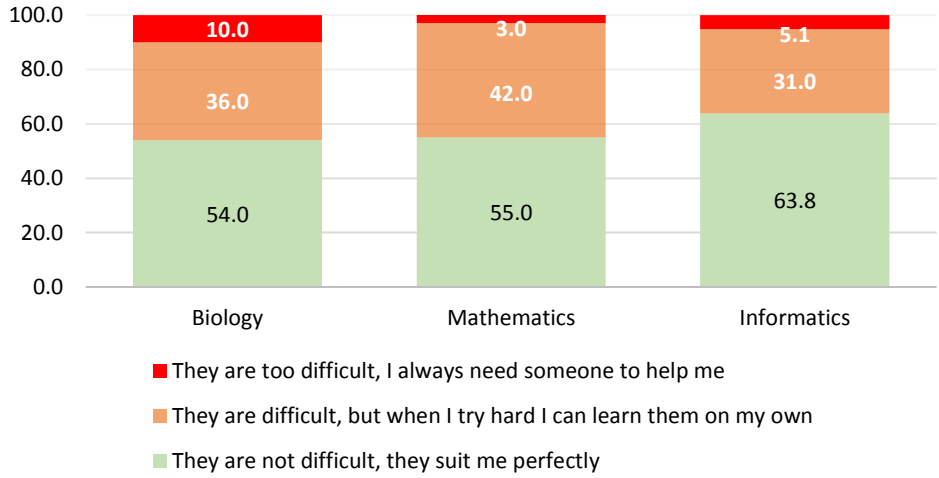

Figure 6. How difficult are the lessons from the textbook to learn?

The relationship between the scope and difficulty of the lessons points to the fact that **reducing the content in textbooks does not automatically make it easier to learn that content**, and often the opposite is true. When reducing the content of the textbooks, the authors first give up examples, explanations, and comments, which then significantly complicates learning and understanding of these contents, and students rely more on additional help, outside the textbook.

2.2.3. We asked the students how long it takes them to learn everything needed in a certain subject

The teaching plan (annual number of lessons per subject) has been reduced by about 10%, curricula by about 30%, and some syllabi even more than that, (e.g. the number of Biology lessons in grades 8 and 9 has been reduced by 50%). Did it affect the reduction of the students' workload?

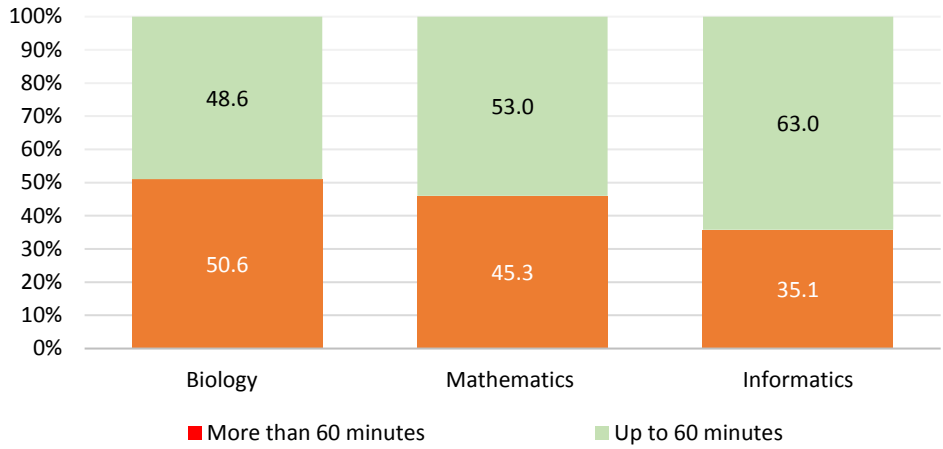

Figure 7. How long does it take you to learn everything needed in a certain subject?

Every other student says that s/he studies Biology and Mathematics respectively more than one hour (they need less time for Informatics). This confirms that **the measures taken in terms of reducing the number of lessons and the content of textbooks did not result in reducing the students' workload**, and there is evidence to the contrary, that even more work was added to them.

2.2.4. We asked students about the learning strategies they use when preparing for classes in certain subjects

Regardless of the subject, most students **learn by heart**, read lessons from textbooks and then repeat everything that is written (see Figure 8). As rote learning is the most difficult form of learning, **the real causes of student**

workload become clearer, which are further complicated by the measures taken to reduce the number of lessons and the content of textbooks, and it is confirmed by this research.

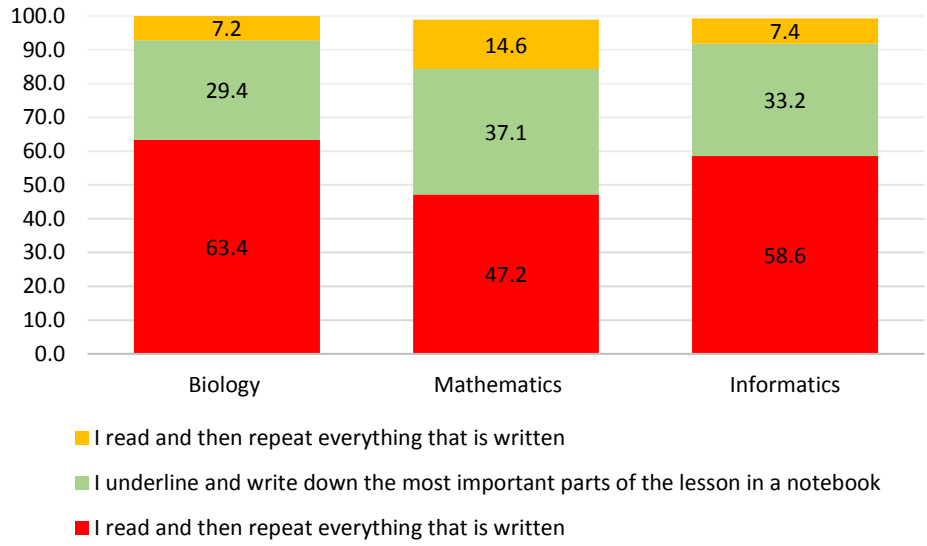

Figure 8. How do you learn when preparing for classes in certain subjects?

When they have a lot to learn for a short amount of time, **students usually decide not to dedicate a lot of time to thinking about the content and, instead, they learn it by heart.** This means that reducing the number of lessons and the textbooks content reduction have not led to the expected improvement in teaching quality and there are arguments that it had the opposite effect.

Discussion and conclusions

The results of the research conducted by the Bureau for Education Services (2022) and the Institute for Textbooks (2020) indicate that despite the measures taken in terms of reducing the number of lessons and the textbooks content reduction, the problems of teaching quality and student workload have not been solved. It is paradoxical that the mentioned problems even increased under the influence of the measures taken.

It has been shown that excessive reduction of the number of lessons does not result in a reduced workload, but in a **shortened study time.** In circumstances when teachers lack time to implement all the planned learning activities (learning new things, repetition, systematization, etc.), they first give up those activities that involve students, so they give up exercises, and decide to use lectures as the most time-efficient method of knowledge transfer.

Moreover, reducing the content of the curricula and textbooks does not reduce students' workload, but **makes it difficult for them to understand** particular topics and causes the appearance of the so-called ***hidden curriculum*** (in the form of additional content and teacher`s lectures). Reducing the curricula and textbook content teachers usually perceive as potential "holes in students' knowledge" and they try to add these "missing contents". Reduced textbooks usually lack examples, additional explanations, and interpretations, and learning from such textbooks is significantly more difficult than from the more extensive textbooks, but well supported and explained. In circumstances when they lack time (when the number of lessons is reduced), and when they have a lot to learn (because in addition to textbooks, students must also learn from teachers' lectures), students more often opt for **rote learning**. As this learning is the most difficult form of learning, it becomes clear what are the real causes of fatigue and workload of students, but also what measures would help in reducing them.

What crucially affects the quality of learning is the *combination of efforts, time and applied teaching/learning methods* (Bernard et al., 2004; Clark, 1994; Ni, 2013). Starting from this definition of quality learning, learning time should not be seen as an obstacle (and strive to reduce it), but on the contrary, learning time should be seen as an opportunity to improve the quality of teaching, and thus as an opportunity to reduce fatigue and students` workload.

Numerous studies prove there is a connection between the time students spend learning and students achievement, e.g. on the PISA test (Lavy, V. 2010). They also prove that the increase in the number of lessons has a positive effect on the students' interest in the subject, and later on the success in that subject (Traphagen, K. 2011). They prove that weaknesses in other

areas can be compensated by increasing the number of lessons, such as students' abilities or unfavorable positions, etc. (Gettinger, M. 1985).

The correlation between the study time and student success is not complete without the third factor, and it refers to the **quality of teaching**, i.e. the type of learning activity in which the student is involved in a class or through homework at home. When it comes to the students' workload, Ivić (1985) rightly emphasizes the importance of the **type of school activities**. According to this definition, the students' workload primarily depends on whether the students are expected only to listen to the teacher's lectures or they have the opportunity to actively participate in class; it depends on whether the students are expected to learn by heart or they have the opportunity to express their own opinion, etc. Therefore, the solution to the problem of student workload should not be sought in reduced number of lessons and the learning content, but in the **changed way of learning that content.**

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Teachers' attitudes about the administrative work overload and the challenges of implementing creative lessons with students in the classroom

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Abstract

This research aims to identify and describe teachers' positions about their administrative workload and their challenges in achieving creative lessons with students.

Research methods will be quantitative and qualitative. Questionnaires and interviews will be used as research instruments.

The questionnaires will be divided into two appendices: for teachers, for school principals, as well as interviews for experts in the field of education.

Primary and pre-primary teachers, of both sexes, will be part of this research. The sample of teachers during the survey is random and will include all regions of Kosovo, i.e. rural and urban. The survey is for 111 teachers with more than 5 years of work experience, while for the collection of qualitative data the sample will be purposeful, including interviews with education experts within the ministry and outside.

This research is expected to identify and describe the teachers' positions about the administrative workload and their challenges in using creativity with students during their classes.

The reflection of the current situation, of teachers' positions on the administrative workload, can help educational policies on reviewing new curriculum, contribute to the modification of educational policies at the pre-university level in Kosovo in accordance with the needs of teachers and students. Also, to identify the difficulties and needs of the teachers for keeping their lessons in a creative way, which will help the students that in easier and sustainable way benefit from the lessons acquired in the classroom.

Key words: *teachers' administrative overload, attractive work in the classroom, teacher's role*

Introduction

Teachers in our country every day more are facing administrative workload which is challenging the realization of creative lessons with students in the class. By increasing the administrative workload, increasing their workload, our country's system has affected and reduced the creativity in the class.

Therefore, the educational system in our country, since the post-war period until now, has made great and frequent changes in new methods, aiming to administer schools in a suitable way for an educational system of the twenty-first century, acquiring practices from different countries in the region or even in the world so that in the future we have children competing with other children of the world. In the field of education, the work and tasks of the teacher/pre-primary teacher must be flexible and acceptable: tasks that are not limited only within the classroom or school premises, but also include tasks outside classroom, in the community, and also in the family environment, where teachers should deal with administrative work. With these responsibilities it is assumed that teachers should do their best in discharging assigned and allocated tasks from higher authorities and other sources. Providing students/children with the knowledge and skills competence to survive and understand the world is one of the common views of the general public regarding the duties of teachers in society. Despite the lack of a clear definition of what quality teaching is, Henard & LeprinceRinguet (2008) argued that quality teaching is a neccessity which is student-centered.

Therefore, developments in the education system in Kosovo have stimulated changes in the role, duties and responsibilities of teachers/educators. The effect of administrative workload does not only affect classroom teaching, but also various tasks and responsibilities related to these changes. Workload refers to all the activities undertaken by the teachers, directly and indirectly, and relate to the duties, responsibilities and professional interests of the teacher/educator (Harold, 1984). According to Mohd Saudi (1998), workload refers to the amount of time spent by a teacher on academic and non-academic tasks inside or outside the classroom.

The administrative workload creates stress for the teachers and educators, Dibbon (2004) says. Teachers are preoccupied and overloaded with tasks

and responsibilities, be them teaching tasks or which are not related to teaching process (Dibbon, 2004). Some of these tasks and requirements complel educators/teachers to complete them at home, writes Tancinco, (2016). Therefore, this phenomenon is a teachers' global problem: workload, stressful work, responsibilities, work with children and parents, and therefore administrative workload brings disturbance in their work and all this affects the teachers work with students at class.

Review of Literature

In our country, the same in the rest of the world, the beginning of the 21st century was characterized by continuous demands for quality improvement in education, with various trainings being provided, changes in teaching schedules, frequent changes in curricula, assessment of educational performance. All these resulted in a situation where teachers/educators were loaded with work, and in this way it may have affect the level of achievement of the students, because of the decrease in the creative teaching on the part of the teachers. All this is related to the quality of teaching.

Wiebe & MC Donald (2014), a paraphrases according to Beck (2017), find that the workload of teachers with administrative work and raising of quality in education are not a new concept. It is generally described that teachers have too much to do and there is not enough time to practice teaching, which is considered by teachers to be a valuable activity.

Many researchers and educators believe that this type of practice presents several direct goals to a primary objective of education – "to provide and promote effective and efficient instruction for children who are in the hands of educators." An example of a theoretical framework was Apple's (1986) Workload Intensification Thesis. It argued that teachers/educators are concerned by the new educational reforms, with additional work and tasks different from policy makers and society's expectations, and which dilute the attractive work in the classroom with children. Therefore, such reforms have been adopted to determine exactly what teachers should do and for how long, Maguire (2002). While Ballet & Kelchtermans (2009) summarized Apple's thesis, the intensification of the teaching profession coincides with the

external increase in pressure, due to the fact that teachers have to perform a number of imposed tasks, for which they do not have enough time and resources. This limits teachers' opportunities for creativity in the classroom and for developing collegial relationships, and affects their private lives. Displacement is emotionally stressful for teachers and can lead to a chronic sense of workload, both during working hours and after.

A report by a panel of experts for the National Teachers' Union in that country (Gardner, 2001, p. 8), found that teachers/educators, especially young ones, felt perspective, lack of control over the way they taught. As a result of educational reforms, they are led to question their commitment to the profession, as most teachers repeatedly argued that there were too many educational reforms and too many educational initiatives imposed by external parties, haphazardly timed and mismanaged, to which they had little constructive role on shaping them.

According to Lukman (2008), one of the main sources of stress among teachers is the workload. This statement is supported by the Teachers' Health and Wellness study in Northern Ireland, in 2001. This research established that the main cause of work pressure and workload is the excessive administrative work. In a report published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), almost 40 million working days were lost in the United Kingdom (UK) due to stress-related illnesses and 60% of work absences were due to stress (HSE, 1995). Later, in 2000, the HSE reported that the highest rate of people facing stress were among teachers. Additionally, this research showed that 41.5% of teachers had high stress, followed by nurses (32%) and managers (28%), according to Bubb & Earley, (2004).

Research Methodology

Research Method

The research is of quantitative and qualitative type and initially the questionnaires with teachers and school principals were applied, while the interview was applied with experts in the field of education in Kosovo.

Respondents and sample

A total of 111 teachers, 10 principals and 3 education experts participated in the research.

Instruments

Questionnaires were prepared through Google form and sent to educators/teachers in electronic format, as well as the interview was sent to education experts.

The questionnaire included questions about the work of teachers, what the principals, MDE and the Minister expect and demand from them, their challenges, administrative workload, their treatment.

Data processing

The research was carried out during 2022, between June and August 2022. The questionnaire data were first put in Excel, in coded form, then exported to SPSS to perform data processing. To validate the hypotheses, we applied the factor analysis and correlation test.

Research questions and research hypotheses

Research question:

1. What are the positions of teachers and school principals about the administrative workload and the challenges faced by teachers during the realization of lessons?

Hypotheses

H1. The current administrative workload prevents educators/teachers from developing attractive classroom activities, proper assessment of students/children, and creates various problems in their cooperation with professional activities.

H2. Stress and health problems of educators/teachers are due to their administrative workload, lack of cooperation, and the problems and burden of children/students evaluation.

Research Results

A total of 111 teachers from various schools from different regions of Kosovo participated in the research. From principals' level, 10 of them were included, as well as 3 interviews conducted with education experts. From the teachers, we see that 30 of them are male or 27%, and 81 are female or 73%. 11 of them or 9.9% are teachers of the pre-primary cycle, and 100 or 90.1% of the primary cycle. There are 47 teachers with experience of 1-10 years or 42.3%, 34 with experience between 11-20 years or 30.6%, 18 with experience between 21-30 years or 16.2% and another 12 with experience of 31-40 years or 10.8%. As for the regional participation, we see that Ferizaj has 11 respondents or 9.9%, Gjakova with 5 or 4.5%, Gjilan with 8 respondents or 7.2%, Mitrovica with 8 or 7.2%, Peja with 13 or 11.7%, Prishtina with 52 or 46.8% and Prizren with 14 or 12.6%.

Table 1. Teachers Descriptive Data

Gender;	Respondents (N)	%
Man	30	27.0
Woman	81	73.0
At what level of education do you work?	Respondents.	%
Pre-primary education	11	9.9
Primary education	100	90.1
Work Experience	Respondents (N)	%
1- 10 years	47	42.3
11- 20 years	34	30.6
21- 30 years	18	16.2
31- 40 years	12	10.8
Region	Respondents (N)	%
Ferizaj	11	9.9
Gjakova	5	4.5
Gjilan	8	7.2
Mitrovica	8	7.2
Peja	13	11.7
Pristina	52	46.8
Prizren	14	12.6

At the principal level, we see that 4 of them are men or 40% and 6 are women or 60%, while there are 3 principals with experience of 1-5 years, 2 with

experience between 6-10 years, 4 with experience of 11-15 years and 1 with experience of 16-20 years. Their academic level: 2 with a Bachelor's degree and another 8 with a Master's degree.

Table 2. Principals Descriptive Data

Gender;	Respondents	%
Man	4	40.0
Woman	6	60.0
Work experience as a school principal	Respondents	%
1- 5 years	3	30.0
6- 10 years	2	20.0
11- 15 years	4	40.0
16- 20 years	1	10.0
Your last qualification	Respondents	%
Bachelor	2	20.0
Master	8	80.0
PhD	*	*

Within the scope of the problems and tiring administrative work faced by teachers, we present the opinion of the teachers who say that the administrative work is a very tiring and time-consuming element and creates them problems in the realization of other important tasks. They allege that administrative work hinders creative work in classes. Over 78% of them agree that the administrative work is a very hindering factor in developing creative work during their classes. The assessment of children/students is also a very important element of teaching, which is in fact being hindered by excessive administrative work.

Furthermore, we could conclude that excessive administrative work is seen as an obstacle in the development of cooperation between professional activities, which is one of the main pillars of the school. Grievances in relation to administrative work are also present at teachers' personal level, as they say that the administrative work is challenging for them. Namely, according to them administrative work creates an additional workload and stress for them at work and after work. Most of them agree that the excessive administrative work has a negative effect on their mental health, therefore this problem should be addressed with high importance by the relevant institutions.

Table 3. Teachers' opinion on school administrative workload

	I fully disagree		I disagree		Neutral		I agree		I fully agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Administrative work hinders creative work during classes.	4	3.6%	5	4.5%	15	13.5%	56	50.5%	31	27.9%
Administrative work hinders practical assessment of children/students	3	2.7%	16	14.4%	15	13.5%	55	49.5%	22	19.8%
Administrative work hinders the cooperation between professional activities in the framework of the preparation of creative activities in the classroom	2	1.8%	14	12.6%	21	18.9%	57	51.4%	17	15.3%
Administrative work is challenging for me as a teacher	4	3.6%	20	18.0%	19	17.1%	49	44.1%	19	17.1%
The administrative workload gives teachers stress at work	2	1.8%	5	4.5%	5	4.5%	59	53.2%	40	36.0%
Administrative workload negatively affects your mental health	3	2.7%	16	14.4%	24	21.6%	45	40.5%	23	20.7%
Administrative work is stressful in terms of accountability from the school principal	1	0.9%	11	9.9%	21	18.9%	58	52.3%	20	18.0%

Also, time wise, we see that most teachers have asserted that the daily schedule takes them more than 1 hour and 30 minutes up to 2 hours and 30 minutes, while the rest say that it takes them from 45 minutes up to 1 and 30 minutes.

Table 4. Time to prepare the daily schedule

	45 minutes - 1 hour		1 hour - 1 hour 30 minutes		1 hour 30 minutes - 2 hours 30 minutes		Over 2 hours and 30 minutes	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How much time does your daily schedule take per working day?	30	27.0%	25	22.5%	38	34.2%	18	16.2%

Most of the teachers agree with the statement that if their daily schedule were to be prepared in short points, they would have more results during their classes, namely, the classes would be more successful. On the other hand, they do not agree with the statement that working with three gradebooks is more efficient. On the contrary, most of them say that they disagree with that statement and that working with three gradebooks does not contribute to raising the quality of assessment and work of educators and teachers. A good part of them agree that the online gradebook "e-shkollori", has increased the volume of administrative work.

Table 5. Teachers' opinion on general planning

	I fully disagree		I disagree		Neutral		I agree		I fully agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
If the daily plan were to be in short points, the class would be more successfully realized.	1	0.9%	7	6.3%	14	12.6%	89	80.2%	0	0.0%
Daily planning, separated from the core curriculum, is more successful than a conceptualized or simplified daily planning.	9	8.1%	26	23.4%	34	30.6%	42	37.8%	0	0.0%

Working with three gradebooks, such as the class gradebook, the personal gradebook and the online gradebook, contributes to increase in the quality of the assessment and work performed by you as educators/teachers.	23	20.7%	51	45.9%	15	13.5%	22	19.8%	0	0.0%
The online e-school gradebook has increased the volume of your administrative work	9	8.1%	16	14.4%	31	27.9%	55	49.5%	0	0.0%

Teachers claim that in their schools it is necessary to have permanent psychologists, exclusively for teachers mental health, as roughly 47.7% of them say that its services are absolutely necessary.

Table 6. Necessity of having a school psychologist

	Not necessary at all		Somewhat necessary		Absolutely necessary	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Do you think that in our schools there is an essential need for permanent psychologists, exclusively for the teachers' mental health	8	7.2%	50	45.0%	53	47.7%

Over 75% of teachers agree that their work would have been made easier with an assistance from a pedagogue, who would have helped them draft their lesson plans and programs.

Table No. 7. Facilitation of school work with the involvement of a psychologist

	Not at all		Little		Neutral		Significantly:		Always	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How much would it facilitate your teaching process the presence of a pedagogue to assist you in the drafting of teaching plans and programs?	7	6.3%	4	3.6%	24	21.6%	55	49.5%	21	18.9%

Principals

Below we have presented the opinion of the school principals in relation to workload in schools, namely administrative workload. As we can see, most of them agree that administrative work hinders creative classes. Namely, roughly 90% of them emphasize that administrative work diminishes the creativity of work in the class, both in the pre-primary and primary levels. School principals agree that administrative work is challenging for teachers too. On the other hand, however, there is also a lack of motivation for work, considering the workload caused by the tiring administrative work of teachers. Furthermore, it's evident that school principals consider that there should be permanent psychologists engaged in schools, within the framework of health care for teachers.

Table 7. Teachers' administrative work and their challenges

	I fully disagree		I disagree		Neutral		I agree		I fully agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Administrative work hinders creative work of educators/teachers during classes.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	30.0%	4	40.0%	3	30.0%
Do you think that administrative work in the pre-primary and primary education lowers the creativity of classroom work?	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	10.0%	8	80.0%	1	10.0%
Administrative work is challenging for teachers	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	20.0%	6	60.0%	2	20.0%
Is there a lack of work related motivation considering the administrative workload of teachers?	0	0.0%	2	20.0%	1	10.0%	6	60.0%	1	10.0%
Do you think that in our schools there is an essential need for permanent psychologists, exclusively for the teachers' mental health?	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	20.0%	4	40.0%	4	40.0%

VALIDATION OF HYPOTHESES

H1. The current administrative workload prevents educators/teachers from developing creative classroom activities, proper evaluation of students/children, and creates various problems in their cooperation with professional activities.

To validate the above hypothesis, we applied the Factor Analysis Test, which enables us to find the factors influencing the work of educators/teachers. As we can see below, in the of KMO and Bartlet Test table , we have "sig.0.000", which tells us that the data are significant and that we can continue with the interpretation of the statistical results.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0,728
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	523,862
	df	91
	Sig.	0,000

From the following results, we see that the variables have been classified into five factors. Namely, the Eigen value has increased from 1.103 to 4.150. By this we understand that the data has been divided into five main factors which have an impact on the work and the development of educators/teachers learning. From the statistical tables, we understand that the presented hypothesis has been validated.

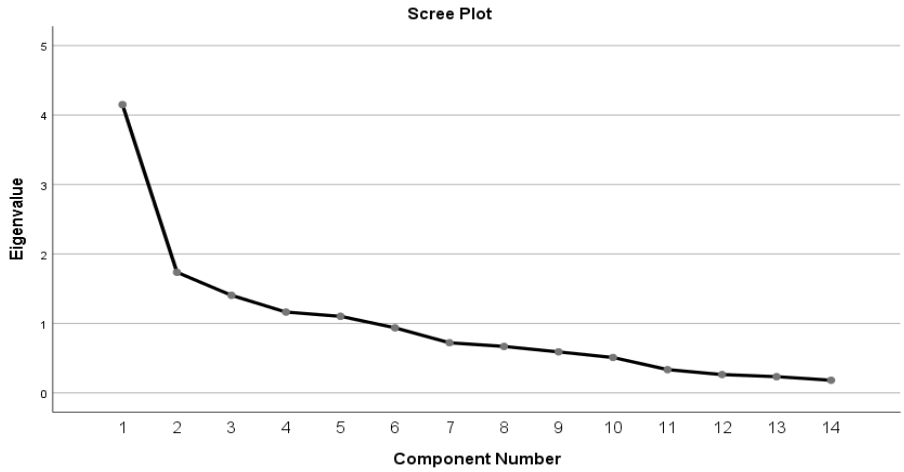
Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4,150	29,642	29,642	4,150	29,642	29,642	2,913	20,810	20,810
2	1,736	12,402	42,044	1,736	12,402	42,044	2,567	18,333	39,143
3	1,405	10,035	52,079	1,405	10,035	52,079	1,560	11,145	50,288
4	1,164	8,313	60,391	1,164	8,313	60,391	1,333	9,524	59,812
5	1,103	7,875	68,266	1,103	7,875	68,266	1,184	8,454	68,266
6	0,937	6,694	74,961						
7	0,722	5,157	80,118						
8	0,669	4,777	84,895						

9	0,590	4,217	89,111		
10	0,510	3,643	92,754		
11	0,335	2,390	95,144		
12	0,264	1,888	97,032		
13	0,234	1,668	98,700		
14	0,182	1,300	100,000		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The graph below shows a decline from the fifth factor. Namely, the decline of the curve started from this factor and five main factors were created.



From the results of the Rotated Component Matrix, we can see that the variables are classified into five main factors. The first factor incorporates the variables: Administrative work is challenging for me as a teacher (0.606) of coefficient; Administrative workload gives you stress at work (0.829); administrative workload negatively affects your mental health (0.859), and Administrative work is stressful in relation to accountability on the part of the school principal (0.748), and we can name this factor as Stress and Mental Health of Educators/Teachers.

Then the following variables are classified within the second factor: Administrative work hinders creative teaching at classes (0.873); Administrative work hinders the practical evaluation of children/students (0.870) and Administrative work hinders the cooperation between

professional actives in the context of the preparation of creative activities in the classroom (0.758), and this factor is named as the lack of creativity and evaluation in the classroom, as well as lack of cooperation with professional actives.

The following variable is classified within the third factor: Daily planning, separated from the core curriculum, is more successful than a conceptualized or simplified daily planning (0.848) and How much would the presence of a pedagogue to assist you in preparing teaching plans and programs would facilitate your work during the teaching process? (0.733), which shows that initially it has to do with the daily planning of the core curriculum, while on the other hand, the importance of the pedagogue increases in the designing of the teaching plans and programs.

The fourth factor has two variables: Working with three gradebooks, such as the class gradebook, the personal gradebook and the online gradebook, contribute to raising the quality of your evaluation and your work as educators/teachers (0.642), and the online "e-shkollori" gradebook has increased the volume of your administrative work (0.833), which is named as an administrative physical and online workload. And within the fifth factor we have the following variable: Do you think that in our schools there is an essential need for permanent psychologists, exclusively for the teachers' mental health(0,827), which is named as the psychologist in the school.

Table 8. Administrative work, challenges, stress and creativity of teachers

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Administrative work hinders creative work during classes.	*	0,873	*	*	*
Administrative work hinders practical evaluation of children/students	*	0,870	*	*	*
Administrative work hinders the cooperation between professional actives in the framework of the preparation of creative classroom activities.	*	0,758	*	*	*
Administrative work is challenging for me as a teacher	0,606	*	*	*	*
Administrative workload gives you stress at work	0,829	*	*	*	*

Administrative workload affects your mental health	0,859	*	*	*	*
Administrative work is stressful in terms of accountability on the part of the school principal	0,748	*	*	*	*
How much time does your daily schedule takes you per working day?	*	*	*	*	*
If the daily plan were to be in short points, the class would be more successfully realized.	*	*	*	*	*
Daily planning, separated from the core curriculum, is more successful than a conceptualized or simplified daily planning.	*	*	0,848	*	*
Working with three gradebooks, such as the class gradebook, the personal gradebook and the online gradebook, contributes to increase in the quality of evaluation and work performed by you as educators/teachers.	*	*	*	0,642	*
The online e-school gradebook has increased the volume of your administrative work	*	*	*	0,833	*
Do you think that in our schools there is an essential need for permanent psychologists, exclusively for the teachers' mental health.	*	*	*	*	0,827
How much would it facilitate your teaching process the presence of a pedagogue to assist you in the drafting of teaching plans and programs?	*	*	0,733	*	*

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

In conclusion we assert that factors which are a result of the administrative workload and seriously affect the teachers' work are stress and health problems of teachers, the lack of creative work with the students and their poor evaluation, while there are also difficulties with the cooperation between the professional actives. Likewise, the drafting of daily schedule is also an important factor, and that the support by a pedagogue in the classroom should be taken into account. The administrative workload is also manifested as a result of working with three gradebooks and the "e-shkollori", and the other factor is that we must have a school psychologist to take care of the teachers' health.

H2. Stress and health problems of educators/teachers are due to their administrative workload, lack of cooperation, problems and workload in terms of children/students evaluation.

In order to validate the above hypothesis, the correlation was applied, where we see that we have measured the relationship between factors such as administrative overload, problems with the children/students' evaluation, lack of cooperation and teachers' challenges, analyzing them with the purpose of seeing how much do they relate to teachers' stress and health problems.

Table 9. Administrative workload, assessment and cooperation

Correlations

		Increased stress	Deterioration of health
Administrative workload	Pearson Correlation	0.422**	0.330**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,000
	Respondents	111	111
Problems/workloads with children/students' evaluation	Pearson Correlation	0.277**	0.243*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,003	0,010
	Respondents	111	111
Lack of Cooperation	Pearson Correlation	0.433**	0.433**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,000
	Respondents	111	111

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As it can be seen above, there is a correlation between workload and stress level (0.422**, p-value-0.000), that shows that the greater the administrative workload, the higher the teachers' stress, while the same is true also in relation to deterioration of teachers' health (0.330**, p-value=0.000), which shows that administrative workload worsens the educators/teachers health. On the other hand, problems with children's/students' evaluation have a significant correlation with increased stress (0.277**, p-value=0.003) and with health deterioration (0.243**, p-value=0.010). So, the more workload and problems during the process of children/students' evaluation, the higher the level of stress and the deterioration of educators/teachers' health. Correlation is also present in terms of the lack of cooperation, which shows

that there is a correlative relation with the increase in stress (0.433**, p-value=0.000) and with the health deterioration (0.433**, p-value=0.000).

In this case, we accept this hypothesis and say that the stress and health problems of educators/teachers statistically have a correlative relationship and are caused by the administrative workload, the lack of cooperation and problems, and the workload of children/students evaluation, p-value <0.01.

Interview Analysis

Table No. 10. Initial interpretation of interviews

Question	Initial interpretation	Respondents' answers
What is your opinion on the current state of administration in schools?	It is understood that the current level of administration is considered busy, with a short work schedule at the school.	EX1. The administrative aspect is quite busy, considering the short work schedule at the school and the large number of students in the class. EX2. In general, a lot of workload, which also takes from the time of the students' learning and engagement EX3. Not good.
What is your opinion about the level of administration in the pre-primary and primary education?	They say that we have a busy administration in both the pre-primary and primary education levels.	EX1.! EX2. Overloaded EX3. An administration with a minimum standard.

In your opinion, how challenging is the administrative work for teachers?	They think it is challenging. Nevertheless, they add that if it were to be a full-day education, the current administration would not be a problem.	EX1. Very challenging EX2. Very challenging and unnecessary EX3. If it were to be a full-day education, it wouldn't be challenging at all.
What should be done to avoid the administrative workload for teachers?	The removal of unnecessary elements, which create problems and workloads in schools and also the extension of working hours is required.	EX1. Remove unnecessary elements that cause workload. EX2. A discretion should be given to the teacher to adjust the administrative aspect as needed and not be given to him/her as an obligation. EX3. Extension of working hours.

FINAL INTERPRETATION

Topic 1: The current state of administration in schools

The current administrative situation in schools can be considered very busy. Taking into account the opinion of teachers and students and also those interviewed, they indicate for a situation which is not good. It should be borne in mind that this workload in administration is having a very negative effect on the increase in stress and the deterioration of teachers' health.

Topic 2: The level of administration in the pre-primary and primary education cycle

The workload is also present in the primary and secondary education cycle, so we have not a good situation in this aspect. Hence, measures should be

taken to improve the administrative conditions at the pre-primary and primary education level.

Topic 3: Challenges and administrative work for teachers

It is considered to be challenging as we have an inconvenient working schedule with an extremely large volume of work, which just keep on piling up. At both levels, the workload is seen as problematic and adequate measures should be taken to address it. The possibility of full-day teaching is also considered, while the professional capability of performing administrative work should also be considered.

Topic 4: Administrative workload and the right solution

The right solution would be everyone in their own work. The school administration should employ the right persons who deal with human resources, data, and the same people cooperate with teachers for the performance of administrative work.

Discussion

Administrative workload in schools is a problem that must be discussed at all levels of education. According to the results of the research, it represents a situation for concern, which endangers the lives of teachers by increasing the level of stress and their health problems, and in particular problems with their mental health. Teachers are concerned with the current administrative situation in schools. According to the results of the hypotheses, we emphasize the fact that many daily problems in schools, such as the inability of developing creative lesson in class due to the workload, the inability for an evaluation since many details are required, while, on the other hand other, we have short working hours. The absence of a pedagogue in school has a negative impact on the quality of planning. The absence of a psychologist results in the increase in stress and the deterioration of the health of teachers. According to different sources, stress and overload of teachers create an additional pressure for them in their daily work. Namely, according to Lukman (2008), one of the main sources of stress among teachers is the

workload factor. This statement is supported by the Teachers' Health and Wellness research in Northern Ireland in 2001. This research established that the main cause of work pressure and workload is the excessive administrative work. Namely, our research also concluded that the administrative workload of primary and pre-primary teachers creates an additional pressure for them in their daily teaching activities, and this is hindering creativity in the classroom. In a report by The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), nearly 40 million working days were lost in the United Kingdom (UK) then in 2000, the HSE reported that the highest rate of people facing stress comes are among teachers. Also, this research showed that 41.5% of teachers had high stress. Our research also indicates that the administrative workload gives teachers stress at work, and it results to be (0.829). Also, the administrative workload negatively affects mental health (0.859) and administrative work is stressful in relation to accountability on the part of the school principal (0.748), and we can name this factor as The stress and mental health of educators/teachers. All this is never discussed about, researched and addressed by our system, although we see the mental health risks for teachers and by causing successive stress and workload.

Research Conclusions and Recommendations

From the results of the Rotated Component Matrix, one can see that the variables are classified into five main factors:

The first factor incorporates the variables: According to teachers, administrative work is challenging in the course of the teaching process.

The administrative workload gives teachers stress during their work with students/children.

Administrative workload negatively affects the mental health.

Administrative work is stressful in relation to accountability on the part of the school principal, and we can name this factor as The stress and mental health of educators/teachers.

Then the following variables are classified within the second factor: Administrative work hinders creative work during classes.

According to school principals, administrative work hinders the practical evaluation of children/students during their work.

Administrative work hinders the cooperation between professional actives in the context of the preparation of creative activities in the classroom, and this factor is named as the lack of creativity and evaluation in the classroom, as well as lack of cooperation with professional actives.

The third factor incorporates the following variables: Daily planning, separated from the core curriculum, is more successful than a conceptualized or simplified daily planning..

How much would it facilitate your work during the teaching process the presence of a pedagogue to assist in the designing of teaching plans and programs, which shows that it is first about the daily planning of the core curriculum, while, on the other hand, the importance of the pedagogue in the design of teaching plans and programs increases.

The fourth factor: Working with three gradebooks - the classroom gradebook, the personal gradebook and the online gradebook is named as Physical and Online Administrative Workload.

And within the fifth factor we have the following variables: In our schools there is a need for permanent psychologists, who would exclusively deal with the mental health of school teachers.

In conclusion we assert that factors which are a result of the administrative workload and seriously affect the teachers' work are stress and health problems of teachers, the lack of creative work with students and their poor evaluation. Additionally, there are difficulties in terms of cooperation between the professional actives. Likewise, the drafting of daily schedule is also an important factor, and that the support by a pedagogue in the classroom - school, should be taken into account.

The offload of teachers' from their administrative work increases the efficiency and quality in teaching.

Recommendations for the MESTI

Simplify the daily schedule for teachers.

Support primary and pre-primary teachers in facilitating their administrative work.

Engage pedagogues in schools to facilitate annual, bimonthly and daily planning.

Engage psychologists for the teaching staff in treating their mental health.

Find mechanisms for offloading the administrative work of primary and pre-primary teachers.

Reduce time pressure and daily/monthly obligations.

Engage support teachers for teachers/educators in classes with over 30 students.

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Teachers planning, administrative load or progress in quality assurance

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Paper reviews:
Msc. Fatbardha Emerllahu
Msc. Vjollca Llazani

Abstract

The teaching process is a very complex, responsible and important activity. In order to achieve a contemporary and well-organized teaching, prior planning and preparation for teaching work are more than necessary. However, planning the teaching work is a process that requires effort, dedication, time and responsibility, and at the same time it is a challenge for the teacher.

In our research, we will focus on presenting the impact on the teacher of the lesson planning. We will compare how the planning of the learning process affects teachers: as an administrative burden or as progress in quality assurance. Also, through the descriptive and analytical method, the teachers' challenges and difficulties in planning will be presented, and the recommendations of the teachers in the planning process will be given. The research approach used in this study is based on quantitative and descriptive data received from questionnaires. From the obtained results, we will see that planning is mainly a burdensome process for the teacher. Therefore it is recommended to review and change the curriculum in terms of planning, reducing planning, etc.

Key words*: planning, workload, progress, teacher, quality.*

Introduction

In the framework of the education reform in Kosovo, as defined in the document of the Core Curriculum of 2016, and in other documents, a radical change has also been made in the planning activity for the teaching process.

Lesson planning is an inseparable job of the teacher. According to the Core Curriculum (Kosovo Curriculum, 2012: 89), the lesson plan is a document, on which the entire organization of the learning process at school depends, at the curriculum level or for certain class.

To plan means to organize and to prepare the teaching work, in other words to set the objectives, goals and techniques for the development of any teaching activity. In order to have a quality teaching, we must first plan, i.e. organize, design, prepare, create a strategy to achieve the set goal in teaching.

The teaching process is an activity which bears a lot of responsibility and is important as it contains education, schooling, and the complete formation of the student's personality. In order to meet this activity, planning is more than necessary. Lesson plan means the understanding of all learning units broken down according to the didactic requirements of a teaching subject, through which the learning process becomes concrete and synthesized. With the planning of the teaching process, a contemporary teaching is achieved and at the same time a preliminary preparation for the teaching work is done. Through planning, the educational activity of learning situations is presented in different conditions and circumstances, therefore, planning is a fundamental process that characterizes the learning process and based on this, the entire learning process is developed.

Regardless of the changes made in the educational system to achieve a contemporary and well-organized teaching, planning and prior preparation for teaching work are more than necessary. However, planning the teaching work is a process that requires effort, dedication, time and responsibility, and at the same time it is a challenge for the teacher.

The teacher is the one who should know and must arouse the student's interest for new knowledge, using diverse activities, methods and techniques. He is the leader, the instructor, the one who stimulates and motivates the student. And, in order for the teacher to do all this, his/her first task is to plan these activities. Planning reflects the organization and fulfillment of learning process during a year, during a period, month, week, and during a lesson.

This analytical-comparative study aims to present the objectives of the teaching process planning impact the on the teacher.

Purpose and hypotheses

The main purpose of the analysis of the teaching process planning is to make a reflection and give a clear overview of how the teaching planning affects the teacher, as an administrative burden or as a progress in quality assurance, with special emphasis on the challenges that the teacher faces during the planning process, as well as to present recommendations for a more suitable planning activity for teachers in order to reduce the workload of teachers in terms of some procedures in the preparation of documentation, in order to give them more time for good organization of classes.

Our hypothesis is that the planning activity should be reduced in order that the teacher should not feel more burdened with administrative work, which he considers unnecessary and ineffective for quality work. Additionally, let's present the demands of teachers to make the teaching exercise easier and more effective, considering that the administrative work creates an additional burden for the teachers and does not help them in organizing the lesson.

Research Method

The research is descriptive, comparative and statistical. The statistical data were obtained from teachers, through questionnaires.

Population and Samples

The population of this research are teachers from different municipalities and schools of the country, at the primary education, lower secondary education, and upper secondary education levels.

The sample consists of 123 teachers from Kosovo schools, with different work experiences.

Research questions

- Do you think that planning is progress in quality assurance or administrative burden?
- How satisfied are you with the plans offered by the curriculum?
- If planning is a burden for the teachers, should it be reduced?
- What are the teachers' challenges in planning the teaching process?

Research Instruments

As an instrument we designed the questionnaire for teachers. The questionnaire is anonymous and we have included open-ended questions and questions with alternative answers.

With the aim of carrying out this research, namely for collecting our data, we used the questionnaire through Google form, which has been published on the "Teaching in Kosovo", "Pre-university teaching", and "Teaching/Learning of mathematics, class 1/ 9" websites. Additionally, via groups formed by the teachers in "biber", PLSS "Hasan Prishtina" Milloshevë, and PLSS "Zenel Hajdini" Lupq i Poshtem.

In our research, we analyzed the descriptive statistics with percentages, provided in the answers of respondents, as well as the teachers' opinions through open questions were provided.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

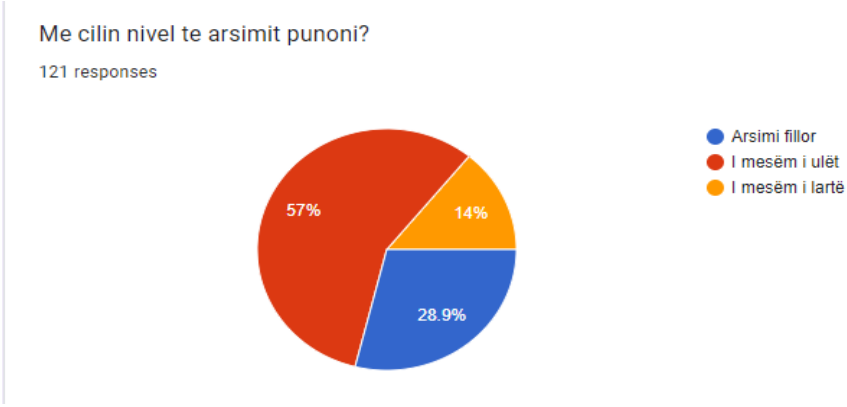

Fig. 1. Sample structure according to job level

In the presented graph it can be seen that 57% of the surveyed teachers work in lower secondary education, 28.9% in primary education and 14% in upper secondary education.

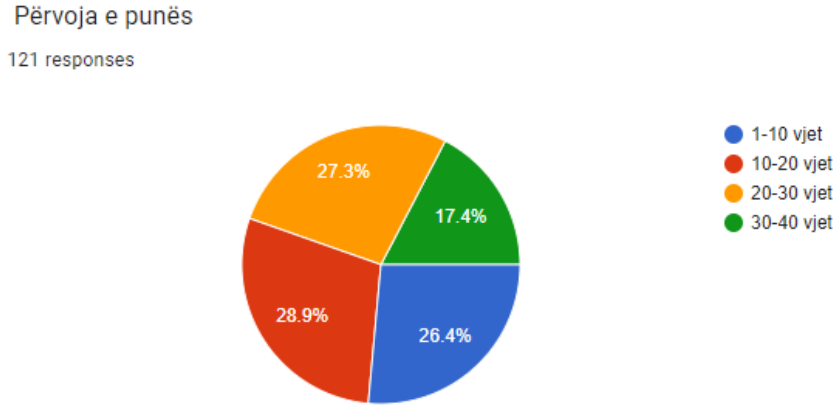

Fig. 2. Sample structure according to work experience

The surveyed teachers have different work experience. Based on the chart, we see that 26.4% of them have 1-10 years of experience, 28.9% have 10-20 years of experience, 27.3% with 20-30 years and 17 or 4% with 30-40 years of work experience.

Planning is an important process, which derives from three steps: preparation, designing and implementation process, and results. Preparation is the part which includes lesson plans and programs, equipment, techniques, methodology and learning space, where by applying all these the teacher aims to reach the product (result)**.**

Lesson planning is well represented in the Curriculum Framework, which outlines the main orientations and guidelines for educational goals, content, learning styles and student achievement. The curriculum is the main document for the organization of the educational system. The framework guides educational actors and stakeholders on key aspects of the curriculum as a basis for effectively providing quality education for all. At present, for a quality lesson, the teacher's task is to prepare annual, monthly, weekly, daily plans, individual plans, evaluation plans, etc. The process of drawing up the plans is really an obligation and a very complex process that requires a responsible approach, because it takes time and dedication. It should be a well thought plan and a decision has to be made on what lessons should it contain, and what the student should do to get the most out of it. Then assign tasks for evaluation, select measuring instruments and select data analysis procedures for observation, etc.

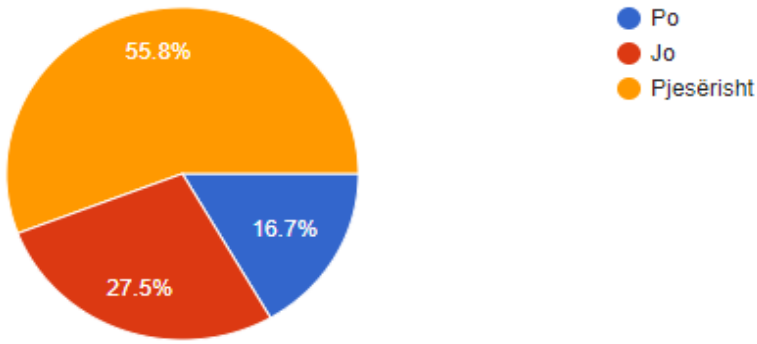

Fig. 3. How satisfied are you with the planning offered by the curriculum

In the question of How satisfied are you with the planning offered by the curriculum, 55.8% of respondents are partially satisfied, 27.5% are not at all satisfied, while 16.7% are satisfied.

In other words, most of the teachers are partly satisfied with the planning offered by the curriculum.

While the majority of respondents have responded that they are partially satisfied with the planning offered by the curriculum, it's obvious that planning is seen by them more as an administrative burden than as progress in quality assurance.

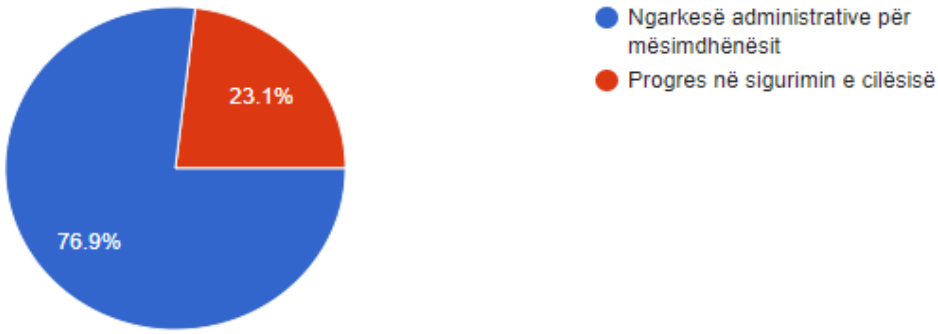

Fig. 4. Planning, administrative burden or a progress in learning

On the question how planning affects the teacher, from the obtained results, it appears that the vast majority, namely 76.9%, think that teaching plan is an administrative burden, while for 23.1% of the respondents planning is a progress in quality assurance. In other words, the teaching plan provided by the curriculum does not result in a development or progress in the quality of learning.

From this it results that the planning of the lesson offered by the curriculum mainly creates a burden for part of the teachers and does not help in quality teaching.

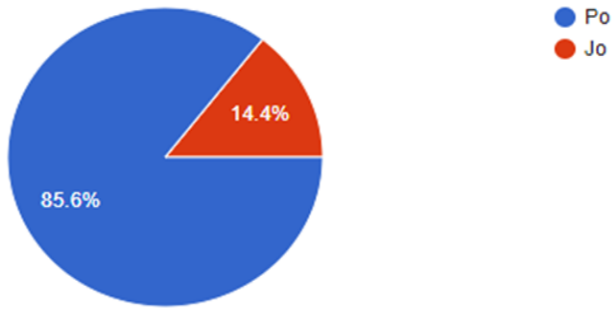

Fig. 5. If planning is a burden for the teachers, should it be reduced?

Given that the teaching plan results mostly as an administrative burden, in the question *whether The plan need to be reduced*, 84.6% of teachers are of the opinion that teaching plan should be reduced, while 14.4% do not think that plan should be reduced. Teaching plan, according to the surveyed teachers, needs simplification, because it is a futile challenge that takes time.

In this regard, teachers feel challenged in planning the teaching.

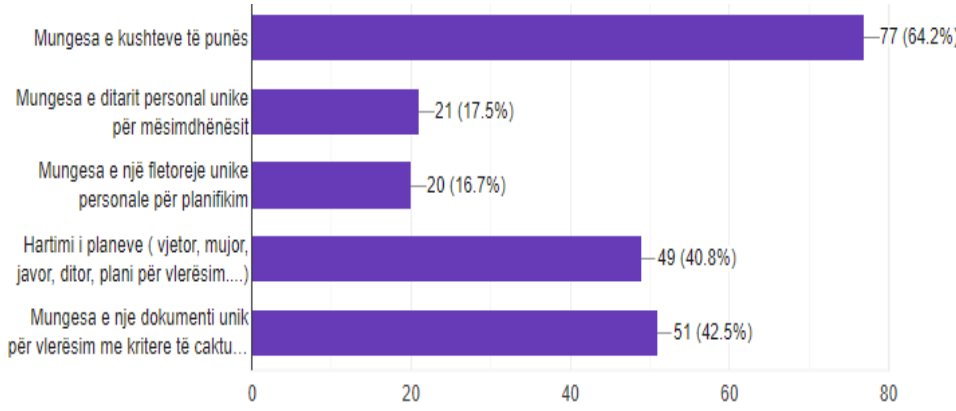

Fig. 6. The teacher's challenges in planning the teaching process

In the question what are the teacher's challenges in planning the teaching process, 64.2% of the teachers consider the lack of working conditions as a challenge, 42.5% are of the opinion that there is a lack of a standard evaluation document with predetermined criteria for teachers, 40.8% of them see the drafting of lesson plans (annual, monthly, weekly, daily) as a

challenge, 17.5% see the lack of a standard personal gradebook for teachers as a challenge, while 16.7% consider the lack of a standard notebook for planning as a challenge.

In addition to these, teachers have mentioned other challenges when answering to open-ended questions. In section, *Indicate other challenges, not mentioned above,* the following opinions have been provided:

- Wasting time designing weekly plans..., I don't think they are necessary;
- Workload with administrative work;
- Inconsistency of subject curricula with literature;
- Lack of ICT equipment at school, as well as lack of personal equipment (laptop);
- Lack of printer or photocopier. Even if the above-mentioned equipment do exist, they do often lack toners;
- Teachers at their own cost print and photocopy plans, and worksheets for the development of any activity;
- Weekly plans, excessive administrative burden;
- In daily planning, the challenge is to adapt Learning outcomes per subject to competency, and field competency to subject. For the schools in villages, the daily plans are also a challenge, because we work with all grades, from 6-9, which means 4 plans for each day take at least 1 hour of planning time for each;
- Personal gradebooks should be removed from use and grades should be put in the main gradebook, based on the criteria, because parents are not happy with that. For 60% of VP-1, it is more a correct approach if grades are seen in the gradebook;
- Dealing with administrative issues, teaching productivity is lost.

Teachers' planning, progress in quality assurance

Ensuring quality in teaching is the main condition and task that the teacher sets for himself/herself. Without quality teaching, we have no development of students and no progress in the development of education in the country. So, the quality in teaching is and should be the teacher's priority in planning and organizing the lesson. In order to have a quality teaching, we must first plan, i.e. organize, design, prepare, create a strategy to achieve the set goal in teaching. Planning is the main activity that ensures quality in learning. Without a good planning there will not be a successful class.

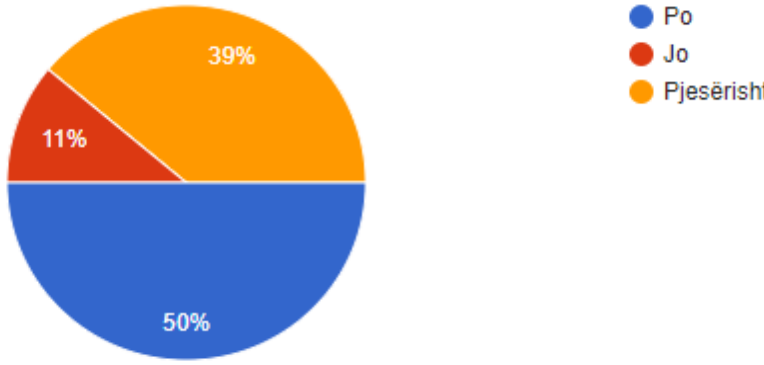

Fig. 7. Planning ensures progress in quality learning

Referring to the results presented in the graph related to our statement, that planning ensures progress in quality assurance, 50% of them think that planning ensures progress in quality assurance in teaching, 39% think that planning partially ensures quality in teaching, while 11 % are of the opinion that planning does not ensure quality in teaching. From this result we can say that without planning we will not have quality development and teaching.

However, ensuring quality in education remains challenging for teachers, since, according to them, too much planning is one of the main causes that hinder advancement in quality teaching.

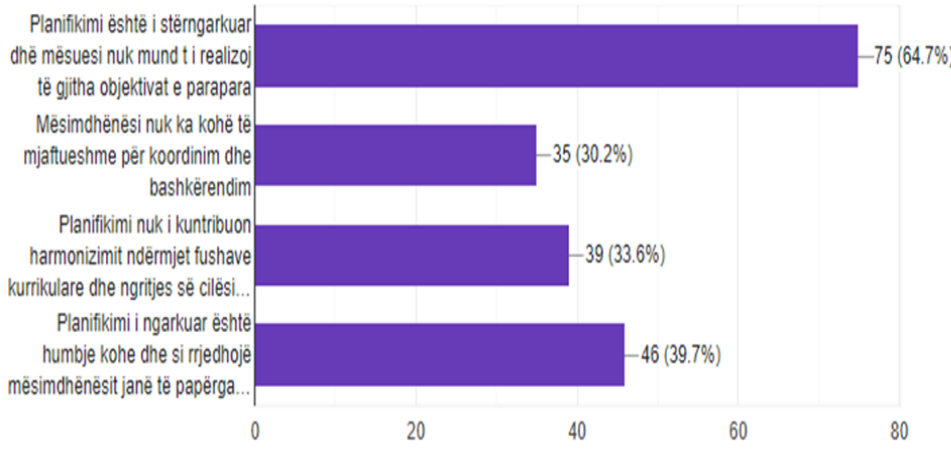

Fig. 8. Challenges in quality assurance

In the question of What are the teacher's challenges in quality assurance, we have received the following result: 64.7% of the respondents share the opinion that planning is burdensome and the teacher cannot achieve all the objectives set for teaching, 39.7% of the respondents think that planning is burdensome and as a result the teacher cannot prepare for quality teaching, 33.6 % think that planning does not contribute to harmonization between curriculum areas and quality improvement, 30.2% of them think that the teacher does not have enough time for coordination activities.

A number of other challenges mentioned in the segment which refers to the question *Write another challenge other than those mentioned above,* are the following:

- There is too much work in relation to the evaluation process;
- Planning is overwhelming;
- Planning has nothing to do with quality improvement, there are many other factors that directly affect quality improvement;
- Make the subject curriculum for professional schools as soon as possible;
- Despite the good planning, in school there are no conditions (except the chalk board) to complete a full lesson class;

- Teachers, despite the many trainings, do not apply what they have learned;
- Big difference between teachers in the students' evaluation criteria;
- Unproductive cooperation with parents;
- Unwillingness of cooperation and exchange of experiences among teachers, and many other challenges;
- The lack of technology in classrooms is a big challenge, and in books it is required;
- The same curriculum planning each year.
- -Weekly field plans per subject and for all subjects, it is really excessive;
- Time;
- There are no conditions in the school for quality learning, there are no adequate textbooks;
- Mismatch of textbooks with plans.

Conclusions

According to the research findings, it takes time and responsibility to design a teaching plan, including annual, monthly, weekly, daily plans, evaluation plans, etc. In fact, the teacher dedicates most of his time to administrative work and has no sufficient time remaining for good organization of the teaching process, as he is burdened more with administrative work than dedication to teaching.

The teachers have a clear vision and concepts of planning and organization in general, and the time designated for teaching in particular. Teaching can be successful only if the teacher plans all this. So, the success at work relies only on a good planning. However, from the results of this research, we can in general assert that the planning provided by the curriculum is not suitable for teachers, because it is mainly an administrative burden, which only partially results in quality assurance.

According to the findings of the research, the planning provided with the curriculum is not the key factor in achieving progress, assurance or development of quality in teaching. The teachers deem it as a burden that does not reflect positively on the quality. Therefore, in order to achieve the predetermined objectives, the planning of the teaching process provided by the curriculum, must be simplified, reduced. The weekly plan turns out to be mostly unnecessary, and the daily plan should be simplified as well.

Quality assurance is the main part and task of teaching. It is indisputable that without a good plan and without suitable conditions for work, there will not be qualitative education. Nevertheless, in order to achieve quality, we came to the conclusion that the administrative work with the designing of teaching plans makes it difficult and hinders the realization of the objectives foreseen during teaching preparation. Therefore, the less paper work, the more progress in quality.

Therefore, it is our conclusion that in order to make the teaching process more productive, the curriculum must first be reviewed, improved and supplemented by the relevant experts as the main document in relation to the organization of the teaching process. Respectively, teaching planning should be simplified, reduced and the teacher should have more time for the individual (student), his/her achievements and to dedicate himself/herself to the teaching activity to achieve the results set in the plan.

Recommendations

Simplify plans: In the bimonthly plans, there should be no need to indicate the learning outcomes by degree (competencies) (RNK), learning outcomes by field (RNF), but only the teaching units. The daily plan should only foresee the activities that are planned for implementation in each stage of the hour, and results of the degree and competence should not be repeated, since they included in the bimonthly plan.

Simply the curriculum requirements by 50% and revise the curriculum, as well as integrate the teaching subjects.

Establish a professional team for the drafting of annual and bimonthly plans, according to the fields, which would work continuously at MEST in

coordination with teachers. The planning should be the same for all of Kosovo, adapted to the textbooks provided by MEST.

Administrative aspect planning should be reduced - register notebooks, student portfolio and weekly plan should be removed.

Use the standardized electronic format, since a large portion of the data does not need to be repeated (insert certain data and it is very simply then transferred automatically through topics, units, months, periods, etc.). Create a software that enables this, and reduces the workload by over 70%, then the teacher will focus on the content and not on administrative tasks, it's as simple as that.

Have periodic and annual plans drafted at the municipal level, by a group of professional teachers, with the participation of parents, and textbooks should be adapted to the curriculum.

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The role of the school principal in the implementation of the curriculum at the first and second level in the municipality of Kaçanik

Teuta Guri

Paper review:
Ilire Raka Zeneli, Akif Shkreta

Abstract

Without a doubt, the most important person in the curriculum implementation process is the principal. He has a key role in the successful implementation of the curriculum, including his knowledge, experience and competence in the fluency of the new curriculum, approach to school staff, and interest and enthusiasm to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum.

The purpose of the research is to identify the role of the principal, what strategies, methods and forms he uses to ensure an easy implementation of the new Kosovo curriculum, but also what can be done to encourage teachers to be dedicated and motivated to accurately implement the curriculum.

The methodology used for this research is of a mixed nature and for the quantitative approach we used questionnaires with a Likert scale, while for the qualitative approach semi-structured interviews were used. Quantitative data were processed in the SPSS program, while qualitative data were processed based on thematic analysis.

The research population consists of all the teachers and principals of the lower secondary schools of the municipality of Kaçanik, while the representative group consists of 150 teachers and 10 principals of these schools. The selection of the participants of the population was made by the random method.

This research will identify what school principals offer, how they ease the challenges in effective teaching and successful teaching, how willing they are to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum and help teachers to implement it.

Key words: *cooperation, curriculum, management, teacher, implementation*

INTRODUCTION

The role of the principal, as a school leader, has an impact on quality education for a progressive and developmental school, which must create a safe and pleasant environment. His task is also to support teachers and other school factors in the implementation of strategic documents, such as the Curriculum Framework, a document that regulates the entire education system in Kosovo. The principal must be in step with the times, inform the teachers about the ongoing changes and support them in identifying collaborative forms, such as: workshops, consultations, mentoring, monitoring, for achieving learning outcomes and developing curricular competencies.

If we refer to the Law on Pre-university Education in Kosovo, the principals have executive responsibility in the management and administration of the school and one of the main responsibilities is to ensure an easy implementation of the new curriculum of Kosovo. Kosovo aims to rise to the level of European standards and, consequently, has updated the curricula with new content, teaching methods and materials and new evaluation methods, which are related to the achievement of educational standards. There is an urgent need to build on the best experiences in Kosovo, to develop a more consistent and unified approach to the curriculum and learning process across all grades. The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), with the curriculum documents, the Pre-university Education Curriculum Framework and the Core Curricula, have defined a higher degree of school autonomy and responsibility in the planning and implementation of the curriculum of competency-based cloud (PIK). Today, the new curriculum is being implemented in all schools, since principals and teachers are the main promoters of the implementation of the KCF philosophy, and this research is intended to address this issue from their perspective.

Considering the importance of this issue, as well as the implementation of the new curriculum, at all levels of the educational system in our country, this research tries to analyse the role of the principal in this aspect. The implementation of the KCF can be successfully achieved when all members

of the school, under the leadership of the principal, work together with the same goal, so that during the implementation of the reform, it is not faced with many challenges. Based on the arguments that emerge from this research and recommendations, the principal's maximum commitment is required in the management of all tasks, in order to make appropriate and appropriate decisions.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature focuses on the role of the principal, as one of the very important factors that affects the implementation of the curriculum. Through this analysis, the factors and circumstances that influence the implementation of the KCF, at the first and second level, are identified and clarified.

1.1. Educational reform

Five hundred years ago, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus told his students that "everything changes except the law of change," which makes it clear that we live in a changing world.

Even the changes in Kosovar education were seen as very necessary and radical, but without properly calculating the path, difficulties, uncertainty and fear towards the unknown. Education in Kosovo is now found as in the definition "Planned voyage in unknown waters with a ship that has been pierced and with a mutinous crew" (Fullan, 2001, p. 42). The reform in Kosovar education was seen as necessary, since now we must be in step with the world and be involved in globalism, which makes the world a place for everyone.

1.1.1. Kosovo Curriculum Framework

The Curriculum Framework, as a document that regulates all education in Kosovo, aims for the citizens of Kosovo to face the challenges of the XXI century and generate new competitive knowledge, actively, for the global

labour market. (KCF, 2016). This document defines the role of the school in the function of the implementation of the curriculum reform, where the principal as the leader of the school has an influence on the creation of the common concept for the curriculum. The focus of the principal and teachers should be the achievement of competences, the support of work in principles and the implementation of the main forms of assessment, this is achieved by joint planning of activities at the school level.

1.1.2. The role and function of the principal in the implementation of the curriculum at the first and second level

The role of the principal in implementing the new curriculum includes changing communication, professional development of teachers, cooperation, and positive climate.

Research suggests that there is a strong relationship between the personal qualities of leaders and leadership success (Day, C & Leithwood, K. 2007). Most researchers support the idea that the easy implementation of the reform lies in the qualities of the principal. Nias et al. conclude that principals were central and powerful figures in their schools and had control over the developments taking place in them (Nias et al., 1992, p. 243).

With this challenge of change, which principals, teachers and students are facing, the work of teachers must change in a broad and comprehensive way, because we want to contribute to the basic acquisitions of students. Since teachers are the only agents of change (Fullan. M, 2010), the principal in the school, in addition to being a good leader, he must be a good teacher, prone to these qualities: effective communicator, good collaborator, well aware of teachers' needs, visionary, and reflect a positive climate inside and outside the school institution. In this context, we can talk about the role of the principal in the implementation of the curriculum and the contribution he can make by focusing on these properties.

1.1.3. The role of the principal in the professional development of teachers at the primary level

The principal, as the leader of the school, must ensure that the primary level staff is professionally prepared. Professional development does not mean seminars and courses, on the contrary, it is essentially the development of learning habits, which are powerful when they occur day by day (Fullan, 2001, p. 376). In fact, it seems very consistent to emphasize that the principal has a major role in teacher training.Every teacher has a responsibility in creating a school capable of continuous renewal (Fullan, 2010, p. 62). The question arises: Is a five-day training and a manual sufficient to guide teachers in the literal implementation of the Curriculum and its operational documents? It is worth emphasizing that in order to face the changing world each subject must develop the ability to carry and change - the ability to develop new skills and attitudes: in short, the ability to learn. (De Gues, 1997, p. 20).

It all depends on our views as a principal or teacher. If we really work for students and want good results, then reform needs to be embraced and things made easier. Success in trying to achieve changes in school is much more achievable if problems are treated as natural and expected occurrences even when they are deliberately sought (Fullan, 2010, p. 44).

1.1.4. Creating a positive climate in the first and second degree

School climate is the core and value of a school that brings a healthy place of learning, where the dreams and ambitions of students and parents are in the central focus, where teachers are motivated to give their best, where everyone is respected and feels related to school (Freiberg & Stein, 1999).

The principals work for the school to be a warm place, with a positive climate and to be a child-friendly school." The philosophy of child-friendly schools is part of the reform of education and the improvement of its quality. (MEST, 2015).

1.1.5. First and second degree cooperation

According to the fourth standard of the Administrative Instruction for professional practice standards for school principals, "Cooperation and interaction", the principal through his influence manages to increase collegial cooperation in the school. The school principal creates stable relationships with the school community, students, teachers, parents, the school's Governing Council and other stakeholders and encourages joint leadership in accordance with the interests of the students of this community (MEST, 2012). Collaboration is true dialogue, in which people engage with each other, not to dominate, but to prompt and be prompted, to learn and help others learn, to change minds. , but also to help others to change their minds (Stacy, 1996b, p. 280). The author Barth (2001) points out that collaboration helps teachers cope with the uncertainty and complexity of their work and react more naturally to teaching changes.

1.1.6. The principal's professionalism

One of the main tasks for school principals is to create a collaborative climate, both inside and outside the school, which enables the realization of the goals of the curriculum reform. Cooperative schools with "enriched learning" do better than those that continue with isolationist teaching traditions (Rozen, 1989; Fullan and Havgreaves, 1991). This is where the principal's professionalism affects, his ability to discover forms of cooperation between teachers, because closed practices in themselves create isolation and isolation is the enemy of improvement. (Elmore and Burney, 1998, p. 20).

The principal reaps results when the work is properly coordinated and each teacher is engaged in doing his work and influences the fruitful work of the other. At this stage of the implementation of the KCF, uncertainty must be kept in balance with the challenges, it is the duty of the principal to contribute to the control of difficulties through support. The implementation of the Curriculum Framework is very important for the entire educational process of the country. Also, the role of the principal in this aspect is extremely important.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. The purpose of the research

Kosovo, as a new state, is a country that is reforming the pre-university education system to continuously improve student achievement. Therefore, this paper aims to highlight the role of the principal in the implementation of the new Kosovo Framework, the difficulties and challenges faced by principals and teachers during its implementation in practice. The research will compare descriptions, experiences from principals and teachers, the relationship between them, and help us understand the advantages and challenges of curriculum reform and implementation. Some of the specific duties of the principals in the implementation of the curriculum are the professional development of teachers, cooperation, positive climate and clear vision, to achieve high results, which is very important for the entire educational process of the country.

2.2. Research questions

1. What is the role of the principal in the implementation of the KCF at the first and second level?
2. What are the ways of leader-teacher cooperation in implementing the KCF at the first and second level?
3. How do the principals motivate the staff for collegial cooperation for the implementation of the KCF at the first and second level?
4. Does the level of professionalization of the position of the school principal affect the implementation of the KCF at the first and second level?

The answers to the research questions were obtained through interviews with principals and questionnaires developed with teachers. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the research. My study is representative, it aims to compare descriptions, experiences from teachers and principals, also to help us understand the advantages and challenges of curriculum reform.

2.3. Population and sample

The survey is focused on principals and teachers of lower secondary elementary schools (lower cycle), first and second degree, in the municipality of Kaçanik. The survey population is made up of all principals and teachers of Kaçanik municipality. The type of sample in this research is a probability sample (random), by which it is shown that it is representative of all principals and teachers of primary schools in the municipality of Kaçanik. The sample was limited to 10 primary schools with their principals and 150 teachers from these same schools, where they were successfully implemented.

The selection of the participants of the population was made by the random method.

2.4. Instruments and methods

The research was carried out with the instruments that are in function of data collection and processing. Data collection, related to the study, was done in several different sources:

Distribution of questionnaires: This research was done in ten schools of the municipality and the distribution of questionnaires was done in all schools. The administration of each school was initially notified about this. After receiving the approval from the directorate of each school, I completed the questionnaire within a week.

Individual interviews: Interviews were conducted with the principals of ten schools in the municipality. The principals responded according to the interview protocol. The interview lasted 30-50 minutes.

Research instruments: The following research instruments were used to carry out the research: questionnaires and interviews.

Teacher survey questionnaire

The main instrument for data collection is the questionnaire, which, among other things, measures the perceptions of the first and second level teachers about the role of the principal in implementing the KCF. The questionnaire is built according to the Likert scale, the answers range from 1 (not at all), 2 (a little), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree).

Quantitative data was analysed through the SPSS program, where I found correlation between the two variables, I also set cross-sections using CROSSTABLE and CHI^2. Also, I set the reliability test to see if the measurer was reliable.

Meanwhile, the qualitative data were analysed with the inductive method.

2.5. Data collection procedure

The selection of the sample of principals was random, selecting every third from the list of the Municipal Directorate of Education. The selection of the sample of teachers was made by the random method, from the teachers who were present, selecting them by numbers according to the list of teachers of the selected schools.

2.6. Data analysis and results

2.6.1. Qualitative analysis

Qualitative data were processed based on thematic analysis. The interviews were recorded in audio format and then transcribed. While reading them, the elements related to our problem are highlighted. The data analysed in this chapter show that the aim of the study has been achieved, that is, the role played by the principal in the implementation of the curriculum has been discussed and identified. The findings include the main

"Trained not, but in 2009-10 I was a participant in working sessions on the preparation of the KCF, at the state level, and since then I have had a good knowledge of the KCF, its implementation and the challenges that await us in the future close to her"

Shfmu"Jusuf Gërvalla", Bicai-Kacanik

role of the principal as an instructional leader to ensure implementation of the curriculum framework within which teachers must interact, create a positive school climate, monitor, support and motivate staff to inspire commitment to successful curriculum implementation. The role of the principal in the implementation of the curriculum, among other things, is to supervise the implementation of the curriculum in the school, to understand the education legislation, and to interpret it to the teachers, to manage the planning of the curriculum (curriculum, work schedules and learning) plans. Manage human resources, which is the use of teachers based on age/training, manage resources for curriculum implementation, manage the development and implementation of strategies for cooperation and creating a positive climate, ensure that classroom activities are focused by students and focus on students.

Participants in this research are (5) principals of primary and lower secondary schools in the municipality of Kaçanik.

2.6.2. Analysis of interviews held with school principals

Based on the analysis of the interviews, we will present its results below. From the data obtained, the following topics were singled out: reforms in education, cooperation, professional development, positive climate, motivation, professionalism of the principal.

2.6.3. The role of the principal in implementation

The qualitative data of this research were collected from the interviews conducted with ten (10) principals of primary and lower secondary schools. These interviews took place in school facilities, namely in their offices. The purpose of the interviews was to understand their role in the implementation of the curriculum, the role of the principal as a school leader in building the spirit of the group, the way they develop the staff professionally, how they cooperate and what forms they use to provide resources to overcoming curriculum challenges, staff motivation, creating a positive school climate and the impact of professionalism in implementing the reform. These were the topics that emerged from the ten (10) interviews conducted with the

principals of primary and lower secondary schools in the municipality of Kaçanik.

2.6.4. Interview with school principals

> *We welcome every change and advancement of the teaching process, let's not discuss the KCF, when it is a unique system for higher quality of education at the state level. In short, any change in education requires collaborative leaders in its implementation and success.*
>
> *Shfmu"Idriz Seferi", Bob - Kaçanik*

The principals of the interviewed schools were satisfied with the implementation of the curriculum, as well as with its realization, which they described as a special system in raising the quality of education at the state level. Those with full responsibility referred to laws and administrative instructions to fulfil their duties. They also stated that the principal has the main role in the implementation and progress of this educational system, starting from communication and creating optimal conditions, cooperation in every aspect, sharing information for teachers, encouragement and participation of teachers in the implementation of the KCF, the creation of a supportive environment for favourable conditions for learning, coordination and evaluation in the applicability of the KCF. As school leaders, we delegate some tasks to the coordinator and they have full authority to complete them. The coordinator is ready to help teachers with any challenges that arise in the implementation of the curriculum when they are involved in collaborative activities within the classroom. Such a working atmosphere is created by building bridges of trust and support between teachers.

Regarding professional development, the principals stated that almost all teachers are trained to implement the curriculum, except for those who have just been hired. They express that they are satisfied with how effective the training is, but when the teachers have challenges in implementation, they try to solve the difficulties by consulting the municipal coordinators and trainers. While, when it comes to the training of the principals, only one was trained when the implementation began, the other principals only had information and this is seen as negligence by the Municipal Directorates and MEST, which did not take measures at the beginning of the implementation

of the curriculum for their engagement from the very first stages when the training for curriculum implementation began. This presented them with ambiguity and they had problems during implementation, but the cooperation and communication between teachers, also with other schools, eased their challenges.

The principals say that it would be good if the teachers were also trained in the fields of Arts and Life and work, because they need to be skilled in visual arts, drama, dance, wind instruments, principals and teachers need training that are focused only on the curriculum and its implementation.

From the answers received, we can conclude that the principals were not satisfied with their training for the implementation of the curriculum, they thought it was not very efficient, even though they were trained late. The principals expressed that they needed a longer and more detailed training, because they were the main factors in their schools and every solution to the emerging problems was required of them. The principals expressed that they were not ready to manage the implementation of the curriculum, but fortunately all the teachers who started the implementation of the curriculum were trained and they relied on their knowledge. The principals affirmed that, thanks to the collegial cooperation they have in the schools, many challenges presented during their work were overcome.

> *Unfortunately, time was short to discuss all the information in its entirety. At the end of the training I was confused, not knowing where to start because they cover so many topics in a short time.*
>
> *Shfmu"Dituria", Ivajë - Kaçanik*

As for collegial cooperation among first and second grade teachers, the principals said that their relationship with these teachers is excellent. They claim that in general teachers are cooperative, but there are rare cases when teachers are not cooperative or indifferent to work with others, but here the principals use different forms to frame them to be cooperative, eliminating misunderstandings. Some principals state that the activities of some teachers create closer relationships with the principal, they state that great help in this direction is provided by the KCF, which has very defined the cooperation of

teachers and leaves no room for them to remain indifferent to it others. Based on the opinions of the principals, we can arrive at conclusion that they cooperate with teachers and educators in different forms, providing help with systematic observations to see the positive sides of the implementation of the KCF and sharing experiences to achieve results.

> *We have a very good cooperation with the first grade teachers. Meetings are regular and as needed, it depends on the activities taking place. We have conversations and clarifications every day, and there is no shortage of advice among ourselves*
>
> *Shfmu"Emin Duraku"Kaçanik*

The principals state that the best way to communicate between teachers and management staff is to build good, professional and collegial relationships, in order to implement tasks in accordance with the responsibilities of teachers.

The principals affirmed that motivation is another factor in the successful implementation of the curriculum, so when teachers lose motivation they use different methods to engage them about things that bring them satisfaction at work. These forms used by principals are: communication with teachers, cooperation regarding their ideas and goals, help in accomplishing tasks, support in creating conditions for work, etc. Based on the criteria that are determined at the beginning of the year, there is also a reward for outstanding teachers (acknowledgment, praise, commitment to certain tasks, the most successful class). One of the principals claimed that the innovations they bring to the school affect the motivation of teachers, because they have no problems for successful work.

From the data obtained, we can conclude that principals use a collaborative and advisory style to motivate teachers. According to the answers received from the interview, the principals are always there for the teachers even when they have difficulties and lose motivation for work. The principals say they are ready to consult and resolve the various issues.

From the responses of the principals, we understand that the challenges during the implementation of the curriculum are presented by consulting with the teachers of the degree, frequent meetings and various activities. The attitudes of the principals are that every change in education is made for the

benefit of the student, therefore time and commitment are needed to be implemented. From this we can conclude that the principals adhere to the rules and administrative instructions, being cooperative with the teachers in performing the tasks and obligations defined.

2.7 Quantitative analysis

2.7.1 Results with teachers

Quantitative data collection was done through a questionnaire. The selection of the sample of teachers was made by the random method from first grade teachers.

The data were extracted from the questionnaires completed by the school teachers, which were then set for analysis, as well as for the generation of various statistics in the software application IBM SPSS Statistics, in order to reflect a result as realistic as possible.

In the first part of the questionnaire, there were questions that aimed to obtain basic information, such as: the gender of the teachers, the place where they work, the work experience, the class in which they practice their profession, and the level of studies they have. These data are presented below in the form of graphs.

Gender structure of research participants

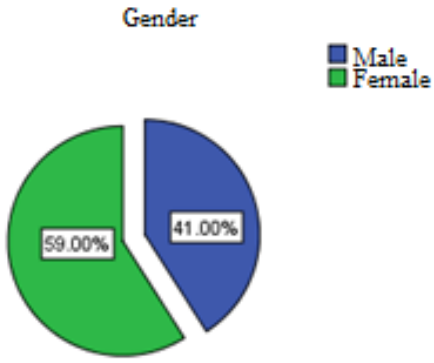

Fig. 1. Gender structure of teachers

The data reflect the perceptions of teachers participating in the questionnaire. Of the surveyed teachers, a large number are women, 59%, while 41% are men.

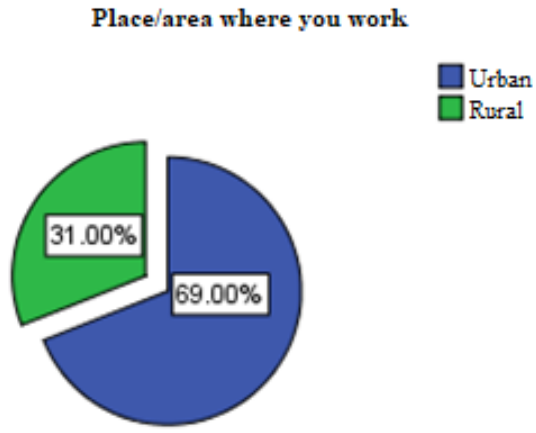

Fig. 2. Place/area where you work

The teachers involved in this research are primary school teachers. From the teachers surveyed, it can be seen that we have teachers from the urban area 69% and 31% of the respondents work in schools in the rural area.

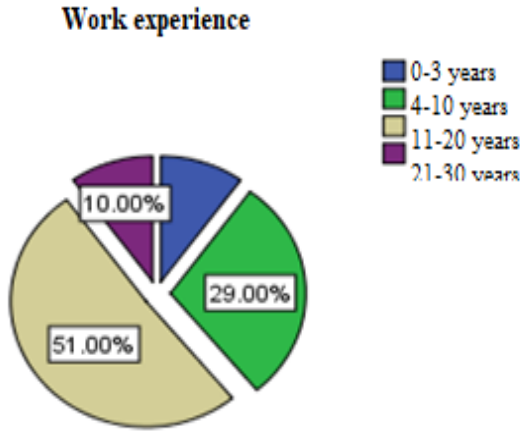

Fig. 3. Work experience

From the surveyed teachers, it appears that teachers with 0-3 years of experience are 10% of the respondents, with 4-10 years of experience are 29% of the respondents, with 11-20 years of experience are 51% of the

respondents, and with experience 21-30 years are 10% of respondents. It can be seen that the largest number of respondents have experience from 11-20 years.

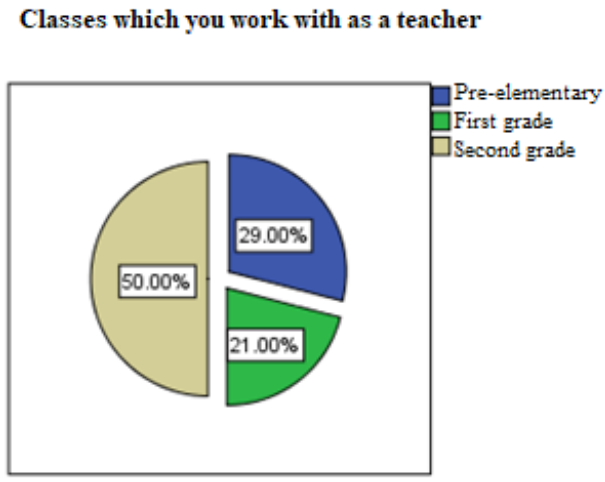

Fig. 4. The classes which you work with as a teacher

The teachers surveyed in this research are first grade teachers and pre-primary teachers are 29%, first grade teachers are 21%, second grade teachers are 50.00%. So, a slightly higher number is seen in the second class.

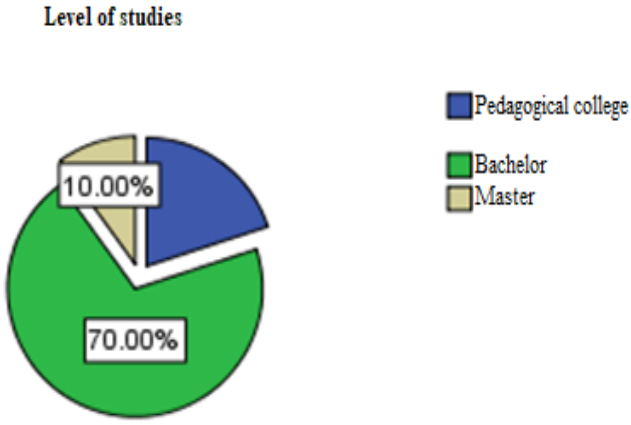

Fig. 5. Level of studies

From what has been presented, we see that 70% of the surveyed teachers have completed their bachelor's studies, while 10% of the respondents have

completed their master's studies and 20% are from the Higher Pedagogical School.

The second part of the questionnaire for teachers

The following diagrams reflect the teachers' perceptions regarding a series of questions, on issues related to the role of the school principal in the implementation of the curriculum, the leader-teacher collegial cooperation, the forms of motivation for collegial cooperation, as well as the professionalism of the position of the principal in collegial cooperation for the implementation of the KCF, at the first and second level.

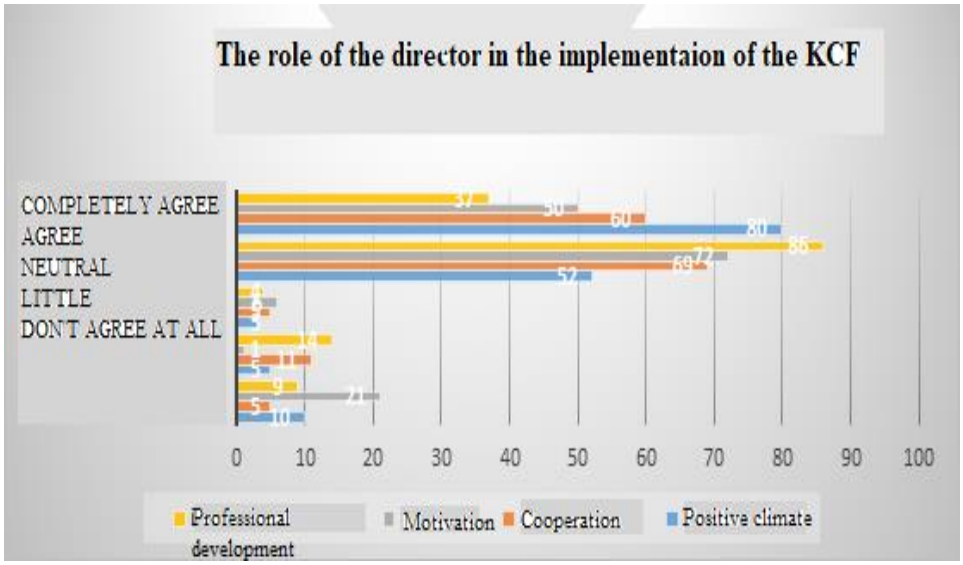

Fig. 6

The findings show us that the role of the principal in the implementation of the KCF is multiple: creating a positive climate, cooperation, motivation and orientation of teachers. The study concluded that principals are aware of their role and are professionally prepared to perform it.

What are the ways of leader-teacher cooperation in the implementation of the KCF in the first and second degree?

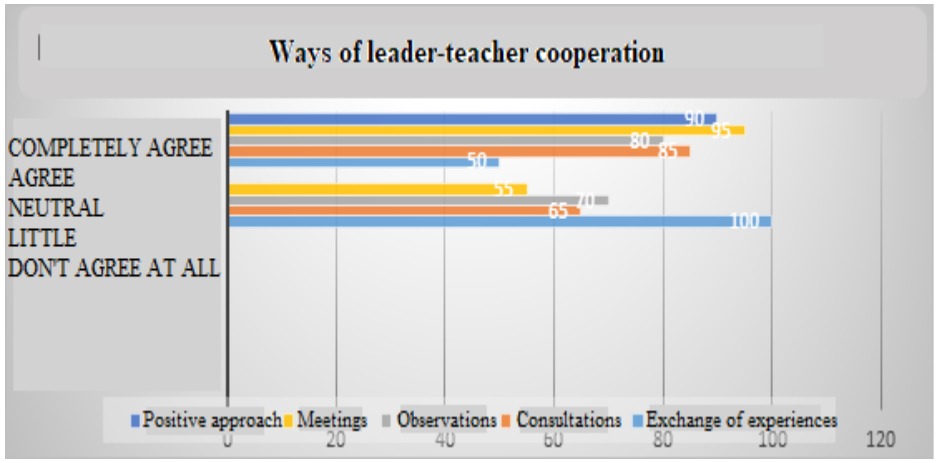

Fig. 7

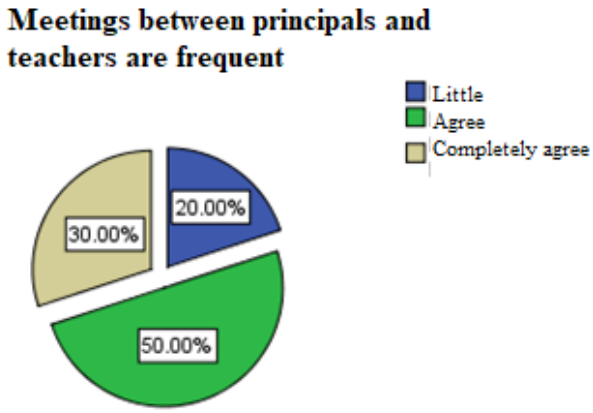

Fig 8.

Meetings between the principal and the teachers are very important due to the very fact that they eliminate any ambiguity and help overcome challenges. In the question that the meetings between the principal and the teachers are frequent, 50% of the teachers stated that they agree, 30% stated that they fully agree, and 20% stated that they slightly agree.

One of the main findings of the research on the role of the principal in collegial cooperation, which answers this question, is that the principal in this case has a multiple role. The principals of the schools affirm that the

relations between them and the teachers are good. This statement is also confirmed by the surveyed teachers themselves who said that collegial cooperation is necessary for the successful implementation of the KCF.

Does the level of professionalization of the position of the school principal affect collegial cooperation?

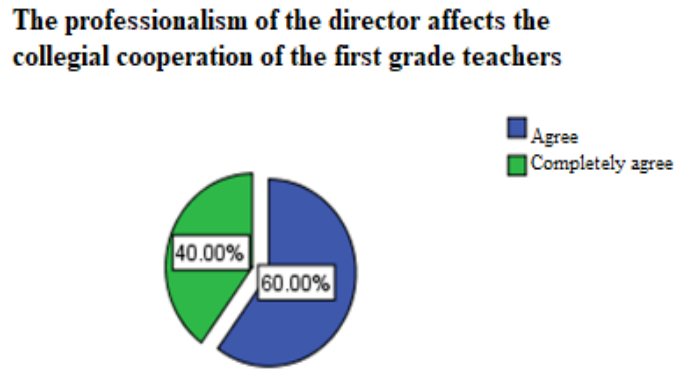

Fig. 9

The professionalism of the principal in collegial cooperation among first and second level teachers is of particular importance. The principal must meet the academic and professional criteria to lead the school. In the question of whether the principal's professionalism affects the successful implementation of the curriculum, 40% of the teachers expressed "Completely agree" and 60% "Agree".

One of the main findings of the research on the level of professionalism of the position of the school principal answers the collegial cooperation. The principals of the schools affirm that the relations between them and the teachers are good. This statement appreciates the cooperation between them, because the surveyed teachers also express the same thing.

These findings show that there is collegial cooperation in schools and that the research hypothesis is confirmed, which was: The collegial cooperation of the school leader with teachers facilitates the implementation of the KCF in the first grade?

How do principals motivate staff for collegial cooperation?

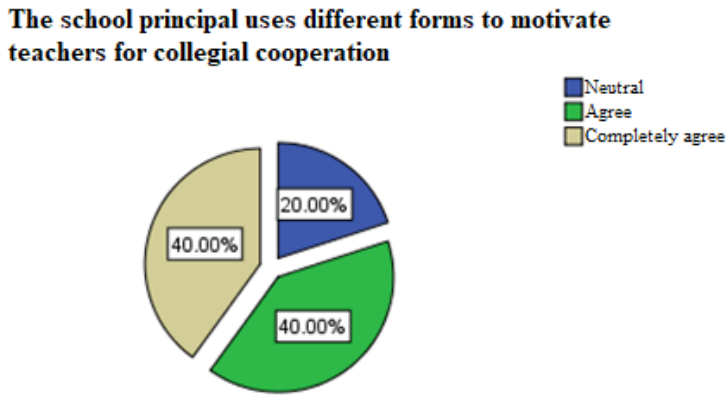

Fig. 10

Teachers' opinions that the principal uses different forms to motivate teachers for collegial cooperation come to the conclusion that 40% "fully agree", 40% agree, 20% are neutral. From the findings, the answer to this question is: communication, the right approach of the principal, proximity to teachers, frequent meetings, observations, and consultations, exchange of experiences, support and engagement in numerous school activities.

Correlations

		Cooperation with the principal gives better results in the implementation of the curriculum at the first level	The professionalism of the principal affects the successful implementation of the curriculum at the first level
Cooperation with the principal gives better results in the implementation of the curriculum at the first level	Pearson Correlation	1	.408**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
The professionalism of the principal affects the successful implementation of the curriculum at the first level	Pearson Correlation	.408**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Tab. 1

This table shows us that we have a positive correlation between these two variables and we understand that the professionalism of the principal affects the collegial leader-teacher cooperation at the first level in the implementation of the KCF. So, from the findings we say that the more professional the principal is, the greater the collegial cooperation will be.

Tab. 2

The role of the principal in collegial cooperation is extremely important. The professionalism of the principal affects the successful implementation of the curriculum at the first level.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The role of the principal in collegial cooperation is extremely important	4.4000	.66667	100
The professionalism of the principal affects the successful implementation of the curriculum at the first level	4.5000	.50252	100

Tab. 2

The table above shows the statistics about the questions:

The role of the principal in collegial cooperation is extremely important/ /The professionalism of the principal affects the successful implementation of the curriculum at the first and second level".

Correlations

		The role of the principal in collegial cooperation is extremely important	The professionalism of the principal affects the successful implementation of the curriculum at the first level
The role of the principal in collegial cooperation is extremely important	Pearson Correlation	1	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		1.000
	N	100	100
The professionalism of the principal affects the successful implementation of the curriculum at the first level	Pearson Correlation	.000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	
	N	100	100

Tab.2.1

From the analysis of the data, we see that the professionalism of the principal in the successful implementation of the curriculum at the first level affects the collegial cooperation and it is seen that it has an extremely important role. In this case, the second hypothesis is also confirmed.

Reliability test

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.842	.895	18

Tab.3

From the data we received it can be seen that the meter used is very reliable because the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is ".895" and from the statistics of the questions we see a high correlation between the questions and that the reliability does not change even if we remove any question from the meter.

The collected data give us an answer that the professionalism of the principal has an impact on the implementation of the curriculum because the benefit of knowledge helps in finding the right ways for the organization and smooth running of the educational process, and especially in the organization of the implementation of the KCF. In the same way, a high percentage of teachers declared, because with professional work everything is achieved and every challenge is eliminated.

We hope that these data of this research will contribute not only to the schools in the municipality of Kaçanik, but also to all the schools in the Republic of Kosovo.

3. Recommendations

The recommendations that emerge from this study can be applied to all primary schools in the first and second grade, to see the role of the principal in implementing the KCF at these two grades. From the above conclusions, I find that teachers and principals of primary schools believe that collegial cooperation is a fundamental principle for implementing the curriculum. Taking this into consideration, the recommendations will be addressed to all interest groups, at the central, regional and school level. These recommendations are important to take into consideration, because they are applicable and help to raise the responsibilities for the realization of tasks in implementation of the KCF.

Based on the research done and the results obtained from this research, we give some recommendations:

MEST and the Municipal Directorates of Education to organize extensive professional development programs for school principals and coordinators in implementation of the KCF. We recommend that they be sent for advancement in postgraduate studies, in the Teaching and Curricula program, in the Faculty of Education;

MEST and the Municipal Directorates of Education should plan for the implementation of the curricula and determine the principals and coordinators of the schools from the first phase of the training engagement, because in many countries this has been done too late;

MEST and the Municipal Directorates of Education, led by the quality coordinators, help the schools with implementation tools, because the implementation of the curriculum also requires a sufficient budget;

MEST in cooperation with the Pedagogical Institute of Kosovo to deal with the publication of magazines, professional materials, through which they would help the principals and teachers to implement the curriculum;

All school principals should use, to a large extent, different forms for collegial cooperation at the first and second level. On this occasion, involve the community to contribute to various activities for the implementation of the curriculum;

Given that the principal's role is multiple, as a school leader it directly affects collegial cooperation, the positive climate in the school, the professional development of teachers and always being in step with new changes in education. All school principals must attend continuous training to be in step with the educational innovations that are happening in the world, in order that the innovations serve them to implement the curriculum and achieve excellent results of the grades.

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The administrative burden of teachers

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Paper review:
Hajrije Devetaku Gojani

Introduction

The education system in Kosovo in the last 20 years has undergone continuous changes, which have been discussed many times by teaching actors, especially teachers, who are the main factors to implement these reforms.

In addition to the main work that teachers have in front of students, their administrative load is expected to be an additional job, which the teacher performs inside and outside the school. The concept "Teachers' administrative work" includes the work of teachers, which is not directly related to their work with students, but is related to the presentation of their work with students, to the realization of teaching in the classroom and outside it, which presented on paper or anywhere else. The administrative work of the teacher includes: work in the diary, annual plans, two months plans, weekly plans, lesson plans, consultations with parents, filling in monthly reports from meetings with professional assets, filling out reports in each teaching period, filling out the E - school, completing the booklets for each teaching period, completing the registry book, etc.

Through this research, we aim to highlight the administrative work of teachers and analyse what we can call administrative burden, which can be removed or lightened, as well as analyse what we can call administrative work, which can and should to be carried out by teachers.

Of course, keeping records of student work is an indicator of the excellent work that any teacher does. But, along with some other aspects, it is worth

noting that the less administrative work a teacher has, the more productive and qualitative his work with students will be. Therefore, we intend to reflect that administrative work necessary for every teacher, work which will be easily performed by them and will not hinder or reduce the productivity of teachers in their daily work

Administrative work of teachers

Education is an important human activity, a conscious effort to create a good learning atmosphere, so that students develop the potential and necessary skills. Therefore, the role of the teacher is very influential for the development of students, apart from imparting knowledge. In addition to working with students, a difficult task that must be performed by teachers is adapting to government policies. Nowadays, the task of the teacher is also to compile many reports, doing a lot of administrative work. In order to improve the national quality of education, it is expected to provide adequate educational facilities and infrastructure, development of strong school buildings, classrooms that are comfortable for students, provision of support, books, library spaces, laboratories etc.

Improving the quality of teachers is also an effort in realizing the quality of national education. Teachers are required to be professional in their work with students. Teachers must meet the qualifications and competencies set by the current government. The teacher must be able to guide and guide students to be active in teaching and learning activities. Teachers are required to work and deliver different materials, create a good interaction between teachers and students, as well as student-student interaction. The teacher is a professional educator, with the main task of educating, teaching, leading, guiding, training and evaluating students. In recent years, teachers are busy, among other things, with many administrative issues, additional tasks, which are required by schools and MDEs.

The administrative work of teachers includes:

1. Annual, two-months, weekly plans and lesson plans;
2. Daily lesson agenda;

3. The physical diary;
4. Reports on monthly meetings within professional assets;
5. Sending special reports for the visits carried out;
6. Reports at the end of the teaching periods;
7. Completion of booklets and the Registry Book;
8. Completion of the E-school electronic journal.

One of the main administrations of a teacher is the design of lesson plans. The lesson plan is developed from the plan and the program, to direct the learning activities of the students in an effort to achieve the results of the basic competencies, defined in the Core Curriculum. Precisely the new plans, according to the curriculum, have increased teachers' burden and "time expenditure", reducing the teachers' motivation for preparing additional materials and creative activities for students.

Administrative burden of teachers based on researchers from different countries

According to one study, "The administrative demands currently placed on schools are debilitating, limiting teachers' space to focus on teaching and learning and have serious implications for the sustainability of the teaching profession" (Sokal, L., Eblie, L . and Jeff Babb, T., 2020).

With the advancements in technology, teachers are required to adapt with the times. Through technology, various work materials for students are created today, as well as its use in the classroom, with the aim of ensuring the highest quality teaching. Thus, the presence of technology helps teachers in performing their tasks, but in our schools there are also teachers who have difficulties in using technological tools.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought additional challenges to the education system, requiring a sudden shift to distance learning, and teachers have been called upon to support the academic development and well-being of students throughout this shift, while also navigating new technologies, an additional job in their daily operations.

This shift to distance learning has accelerated the proliferation of learning apps in schools, involving teachers, students and their families. They are often presented as "easier", "cheaper" and more innovative, but, unfortunately, they require a lot of time and resources to train teachers in the new technology (TEQSA, 2020).

We have implemented the E-school electronic diary, in which teachers must set the plans for each subject, the evaluation instruments for each subject and the evaluation of students in each of these instruments. This platform has only increased the administrative burden for teachers. According to Kristin Slack, the time we have available to devote to the art of teaching is being choked by layers of bureaucratic demands that affect almost every aspect of teachers' work. Preparing the content of the material, making the lesson interesting and engaging, "sifting" the amount of information and the specific skills we want to achieve in students today are done based on competencies and integrating them with the learning outcomes we want to achieve. we reach them. The frequent reports that must be made, the various calculations and percentages that must be prepared, have legitimate purposes, and the mechanisms put in place to ensure accountability are well-intentioned. But, officially, there are too many for one teacher (Slack, 2016).

"Our children must be the focus of everything we do in New Mexico schools, and teachers and administrators did not choose these professions to spend their days filling out paperwork," said New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, who directed Department of Public Education to reduce the "administrative burden" for teachers and school administrators by 25%.

This country's Secretary of Public Education, Kurt Steinhaus, claimed that reducing paperwork would "improve the efficiency and quality of information so that school leaders can make better decisions, such as how to improve math lessons." or how best to help children learn to read" (Education, 2022).

According to a research conducted in Indonesia, there are many cases of teachers temporarily leaving the classroom due to the administrative work that is piling up. Many of the teachers participating in the research expressed complaints about administrative tasks that are excessive, because, according

to them, it is very difficult to divide the work time and the time that they should be face to face with the students.

According to them, administrative duties were a burden on the main duties of the teacher. The teachers claim that the administrative jobs given to the teachers should be reduced so that the teacher can fulfill the task of teaching and shaping the character of the students in the classroom.

All participants said that they feel burdened with lesson plans, assessments, worksheets that are divided into several aspects for a student, etc. (Ghulamudin, 2020).

Purpose of study

The study aims:

- To analyzes the administrative work of the teacher;
- To define the necessary administrative work and the administrative burden, which can be reduced or eliminated;
- Contribute to giving recommendations, which facilitate the administrative work of the teacher.

We based our research on the following research questions:

1. What are the administrative jobs that each teacher performs?
2. What can be considered necessary administrative work and what administrative burden?
3. How can we reduce the administrative burden, in order to facilitate the work of teachers??

Methodology

- This research is mixed in nature, qualitative and quantitative.
- To answer our research questions, official documents, which are used by teachers during their work, were analysed.

- The study was carried out relying on the data collected through the designed instrument, the questionnaire for teachers. Statistical methods were used to perform the analyses. The processing of the data collected through the questionnaire was done with the statistical program for social sciences SPSS.

Study population and sample

The population of the study is the pre-university teachers of Kosovo, grades 1-12, while the instrument includes 100 participants in the research.

Analysis of school documents

Class diary

One of the pedagogical documents of the educational system is the "Class Diary", which each teacher/guardian uses for his class. Many aspects are included in the class diary, which provide accurate data for the students of the class, for the teacher's work and for the plan and program implemented during the school year. We emphasize, among other things, that most of the sections of the diary are completed outside the teaching hours, that is, outside the 5-hour teaching that the teacher has per day. Next, we will analyse some aspects, which we consider to be a burden for the teacher, how much time it takes for a teacher to complete each column.

Some of the important aspects that the class diary includes are:

a) Factual data for each student (name, surname, name of parents, date of birth, place of birth, contact number for parents, profession of parents and residence of the student.) These factual data must be recorded at the beginning of the school year for each student that class. If we take an average class of 25 students, then filling in this column by the class teacher takes about 1 hour and a half, taking into account that filling in the data for only one student takes 3-4 minutes.

b) Teaching subjects spread over 5 days of the week..

c) Teaching subjects and books with which to work, including publishing houses and their authors. If we take the number 13, as the number of books for a school year, then we consider that filling in this column takes at least 40 minutes, since each book takes 3 minutes to record relevant and detailed data.

d) Lessons held throughout the weekdays.

e) Absences of students during the days of the week.

f) Planning of lessons for each subject/learning period, which takes at least 30-40 minutes. But planning 5 lessons in one day takes more than two hours.

g) Realization of extracurricular activities.

h) Planning and filling additional and supplementary hours.

i) The final assessment of students for each teaching period, therefore the final assessment of the school year. It is worth noting that the evaluation of the students in the first and second grades is marked with "Full achievement of RNL". Completing the assessment of only one student for 11 subjects, for only one teaching period, namely writing "Full achievement of RNL" 11 times, takes 5-6 minutes. While completing the assessment of 25 students takes more than 2 hours. So, just completing the students' assessment in the journal, for a period, takes more than 2 hours.

j) Student success statistics presented in each subject, which takes about 2 hours to complete.

k) Reports on meetings held with parents and with the Class Council. In the diary there are 3 reports for the meeting of parents and 3 reports for the Council of classes. Considering that writing a report takes 15-20 minutes, then writing 6 reports takes about 2 hours.

For many of these points, which includes the class diary, separate electronic reports must also be sent, therefore the same work, performed more than once, is considered a load by teachers.

Based on the above analysis, then we can give some general conclusions, which show that every teacher:

- *At the beginning of each school year, he spends more than 4 hours;*
- *At the end of each period, you spend about 10 working hours, because in addition to the 4 hours noted above, the rest of the hours go to completing the master book, completing reports, sheets that must be submitted to the directorate;*
- *For each day, apart from the 5 hours held in the learning process, he spends more than two hours.*

E-school platform

Eshkollori.com is an authentic local platform, developed for the digitization of the educational system for schooling levels from the first grade to the 12th grade. The E-school platform enables the virtual governance of schools by the responsible bodies, such as the Municipal Directorate of Education and the Ministry of Education. It also digitizes school administration, the teaching and learning system, the reporting and evaluation system of students, the communication system between parents, students and school institutions, management of school personnel, etc. This platform has been used for almost 2 years now in several pilot schools. What does the E-school contain? We can freely say that E-school is a digitized diary. So parents have access to our class diary through the E-school platform. Each student has his own account, which can be accessed by the parent with a specific code and password. In this platform, the parent can only see the data about his child, data which mainly have to do with his assessment and absences. Some of the pages, which are accessible in E-school and must also be completed by the teacher, are:

a) List of students with all their data;

b) List of teaching subjects for that school year;

c) Weekly reports for each subject;

d) Weekly and lesson plans;

e) Teacher absences;

f) Absences of the student;

g) Evaluation of students for each subject and for each teaching period

When we compare this platform and the physical diary, we notice that these two "documents" contain approximate data. So the teacher performs the same administrative work physically and on the digital platform E-school. For teachers, it is considered a burden to do the same work twice, therefore it is suggested that this work be reduced or removed altogether..

Annual plans

Annual plans are teaching pedagogical documents, which are made by the teachers of the respective class/subject.

Annual plans are realized every school year. Topics are taken from subject plans and programs and spread throughout the year through months/periods, facilitating further realization of two months, weekly plans, up to lesson planning. In this plan, the learning outcomes per degree (which are valid for the whole year and must be in accordance with the program of the relevant subject), as well as the number of hours for each subject, are set. The annual plan is part of the teachers' administration, which is necessary, and its literal realization facilitates the teacher's work throughout the year.

Two month plans

According to the curriculum, teachers must complete 4 month, respectively quarterly plans for the entire school year. These plans are made for the months of September-October, November-December, January-February-March (the second teaching period) and April-May-June (the third period).

Planning for teaching periods is a plan, in which:

- The teacher decides the teaching topics, which are now taken from the annual plan;

- Learning outcomes for the main competencies of the degree that are intended to be achieved through the elaboration of the topic/s;
- Learning outcomes of the curricular field, which are taken from the Core Curriculum;
- Carefully set learning outcomes for learning topics (taken from the subject's Curriculum), which will be achieved by students through the development of learning topics and units during the corresponding learning period;
- Breaks down learning outcomes for learning topics into learning units;
- Determines the teaching time/hours within the teaching period;
- Establish methodological approaches to teaching and cross-curricular issues;
- Establishes the methodological approaches of assessing student achievements, as well as establishes the resources that will be used to achieve the learning results.

This plan itself contains many specific aspects and work that requires time and detailed analysis, as the results and each aspect must be interrelated..

Weekly plan

Weekly learning planning is a product that comes out of the plan for learning periods. In this plan, the teaching units, which will be realized during the week, for each teaching subject (curriculum field), in the assigned class, are set.

In each weekly plan, a topic is selected by the teacher and through it the connection of the teaching units of different subjects is aimed at in the context of the understanding of situations, problems, phenomena and events from life, as interconnected and not separate issues.

The weekly correlation depends on the good planning of the annual and weekly schedule. This plan is practical and important for planning activities with students, at the same time it facilitates the work of teachers in completing the physical diary.

However, it is additional work for teachers to find different topics and to describe specific aspects of how the connection will be made.

Lesson plan

The lesson plan presents in detail the elaboration of the lesson. This plan contains requirements that must be fulfilled carefully, presenting the activities that will be carried out within the lesson and their connection with the results for the degree, with the results of the field, the subject and the lesson, the connection with other subjects and with the life situation etc.

This plan is considered one of the biggest burdens, because it contains many requests, which take time.

Reports at the end of the teaching periods, respectively of the school year

At the end of each term and school year, teachers must report on their classes, including student absences and success.

For each student, the number of absences and the average grade, in each subject, are taken out, thus arriving at his overall success.

Then, the grades are analysed for each subject, extracting the average grade of each subject in particular, and on their basis the average grade of the class in general.

The teacher first carries out this work in the diary, then the same is transferred to the relevant tables required by the school and these reports are the same in the E-school electronic diary, for those schools that use it. So we have the same work presented in three different places.

The teacher puts the student's grade in the physical diary, in the E-school electronic diary, in the student's notebook at the end of each teaching period and in the Parent Book at the end of the school year. So, a load that consumes a teacher's energy and time doing the same job several times.

Also, filling out the receipts at the end of the fifth and ninth grade is a job that requires a lot of care and can, since the nature of this document is specific and its role is very large. In this document, teachers must put in writing the grades of each student for a learning cycle, namely for grades 1-5 and grades 6-9. In many aspects, but also for the completion of this document, it would be ideal if the schools were digitized, because the teachers' burden would be eased.

Meeting reports

Throughout the school year, teachers hold:

- Four meetings with parents and consultations every week, according to the set schedule;
- Four meetings with the Council of classes;
- Regular monthly meetings with the professional asset they belong to;
- The teachers, who are the leaders of the professional activities, have four more meetings planned with the school coordinator for teaching quality and report on specific aspects, depending on the agenda.

For each of these meetings, teachers must report and send as documented the issues discussed in the meeting and the conclusions from them.

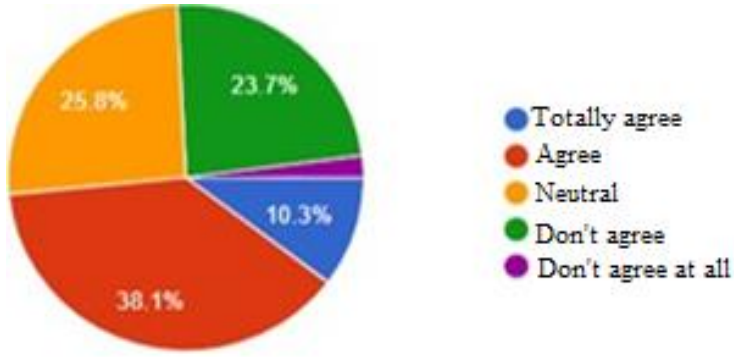
In addition, teachers must submit reports for recording extracurricular activities, which are planned at the beginning of the year and are carried out throughout the school year.

Analysis of data from the questionnaire

The discussion of the results reflects all the results obtained from the data analysis and is related to the purpose of the research and the research questions.

The data from the research provided answers to the research questions,

In the questions where the teacher is required to know about the drafting of the annual plan at the active level, required by the school, in the planning of extracurricular activities at the beginning of the school year and in keeping regular reports on the meetings held at the active and school level, about 80% of the teachers have declared strongly in the implementation of these administrative aspects. However, below we see the result of their answers when they are asked if they consider these administrative jobs as so-called administrative burden.



Graph 1. Analysis of the question You think that the above requirements are a burden for a teacher?

From the graph, we see that about half of the teachers think that the above-mentioned work is an administrative burden, leaving the rest of the teachers to be neutral and another part considering it as administrative work, which does not represent a burden for them.

In the question of whether teachers implement lesson plans based on the curriculum, more than half of them stated that they always implement these plans, close to 30% stated that they often implement them, while a small percentage stated that they rarely implement plans of lessons, while there is

no answer that shows that there are teachers who never implement such plans. In the question of whether teachers do worksheets/exercises for their students, over 50% have declared that they always make such worksheets, over 40% have declared often, while a very small part of the teachers have declared that they rarely make such worksheets. However, according to these results, there is no teacher who never completes such worksheets.

Also, within the many research questions of this research, of course our interest was also to know how much time a teacher spends outside of his teaching schedule to prepare for holding lessons the following day.

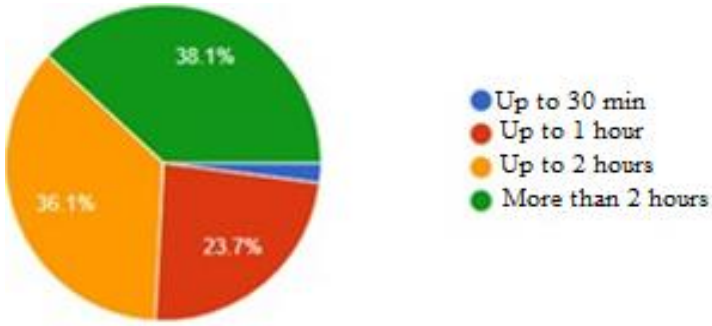


Chart 2. Analysis of the question The time you need outside of school to prepare for the next day of school is

From the graph given, we see that the time spent by the teacher to prepare reaches 2 hours or more. On the other hand, there are few teachers who spend only 30 minutes in preparation. This makes us understand that over 70% of teachers spend about 2 hours preparing for the following lessons after the end of the lesson. From these data, we can conclude that these 2 hours are hours related to the daily implementation of lesson plans and the implementation of exercise sheets for students. Consequently, almost every teacher, in addition to the regular full rate of knowledge that varies from 20-24 hours per week, he needs to use another 10 hours in his preparation, these hours which are already included in the 8-hour daily each teacher, which 8-hours is divided between work in school and outside it.

As for the time that teachers need to plan a lesson, according to the curriculum, it turns out that over 30% of teachers this plan takes up to 30

minutes, over 50% of them up to 1 hour, while over 13 % stated that they need up to two or more

hours for a single lesson plan. This shows that a single plan turns out to be a load, added here is the fact that the teachers of cycle 1-5 have to have up to 5 plans every day and all this time goes only to the theoretical aspect of the description of the lesson, while the part other preparation activities have extra time.

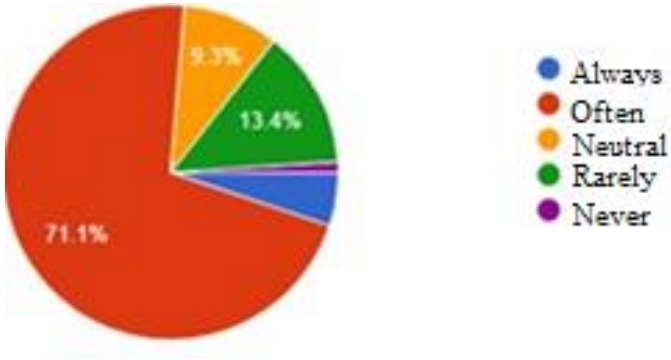
In the questions about whether annual, two month, weekly and lesson plans are work that must be done by teachers, about 63% of teachers stated that these are administrative issues that belong to them, 17.5% stated that these planning should not be done by teachers, while 18.6% were neutral.

However, despite the fact that over 60% of teachers have declared that planning is a matter that belongs to them, over 80% have declared that if ready-made plans were served to them, their administrative work would be facilitated, while only 5% would not have agreed that their administrative burden would be eased.

Graph 3. Analysis of the question The numerous documentation that must be completed at the end of the teaching periods and at the end of the school year is a stressful load for teachers.

Based on the question and the graph above, it turns out that one of the biggest burdens of teachers are the many reports and documents that need to be completed in the work of the periods, namely of the school year. This is how 87% of the respondents declared, 8% were neutral, while 5% did not see these issues as a burden. Related to the documentation, we have the question of whether the year divided into three periods has increased the administrative load of the teachers, and about 93% of the respondents

affirmed this, since they are obliged to fill in the physical diary at the end of each period, that electronic, notebooks, reports, etc., while at the end of the school year, the total for the year is also completed, adding here, among others, the Registry Book.



Graph 4. Analysis of the question It happens that because of the administrative work I don't have enough energy to give my best in class

When asked if all this load affects the work of teachers in the classroom, it turns out that about 76% stated that it affects their energy while working with students, while 13% stated that it rarely affects their class and, consequently, 32% stated that they often thought of leaving their profession, 17.5% were neutral, while about 47% stated that, despite the burden, they did not think of leaving the teaching profession.

Besides the above questions, which gave us a very satisfactory and reliable information, of course our interest has been to know exactly what the teachers consider administrative load, which should be avoided or reduced. In order to obtain these results, we carried out the open research question, which is as follows:

What do you consider administrative burden for a teacher's work?

In the aforementioned question, we received 90 open answers, which we analysed and divided into types of answers. So, almost every teacher who filled in the open question gave more than one option about what they consider burden.

Since their answers have been focused on a certain number of aspects, then we, to be as clear and detailed as possible, have presented them in the following chart.

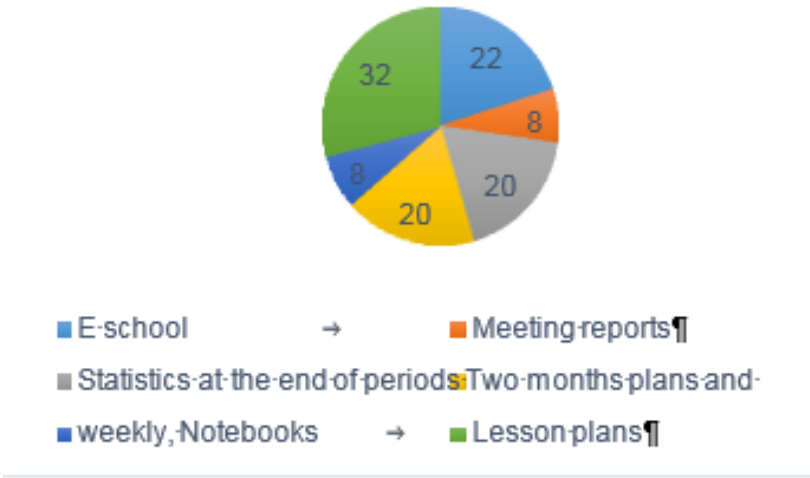


Chart 5. Analysis of the open question for the administrative burden presented in percentage

If we analyse the graph above, we see that teachers see the implementation of lesson plans as their main burden. If we take an average, then a teacher has 5 teaching hours per day. A lesson plan carefully and in detail, according to the curriculum, takes 30-40 minutes to an hour, based on the teachers' answers. If a teacher carries out 5 lesson plans a day, it falls to him to spend 175 minutes, which translates as 2 hours and 55 minutes. And, of course, in addition to the other administrative work that a teacher has to perform for the realization of lessons, this time dedicated only to lesson plans is more than excessive.

Furthermore, as another burden, the teachers have emphasized the completion of the E-school and this rightly so, since almost all the sections that must be completed in the diary must also be completed in the E-school, which is unnecessary to complete twice the same process.

As an obvious burden, the teachers have considered that it is also the completion of statistics in each period, and considering that a school year has 3 periods, then this burden increases even more.

The teachers have also considered the two month and weekly plans as an administrative burden, which, as much as they may be the key to further planning during the days, still emphasize that there may be some way to ease and reduce them.

Meanwhile, from the graph we see that a smaller percentage considered as an administrative burden received the completion of notebooks and meeting reports, emphasizing that rightly teachers think so, since these last two are almost necessary and not as burdened as the other aspects. It is worth noting that some teachers, in addition to their opinion about the notebook as a load, have stated that the load of the notebook and the diary is the writing of the word "Full achievement of RNL" for each subject, for each period, for each student.

While, from the other open question, how would the administrative burden of teachers be eased?, we received a large number of answers, which were sometimes about the same aspects, therefore they are summarized in these definitions, but they are suggestions of the teachers themselves:

- Remove/simplify lesson plans;
- To facilitate/simplify the statistics at the end of the periods, namely of the school year;
- To draw up unique plans for professional activities by experts;
- The tests are designed by experts outside the school, as in countries around the world. "Courses in our country are not only not designed by experts, but also not controlled by experts or school coordinators";
- Do not require the realization of the same statistics, in different forms, that is, do not repeat the same work more than once;
- Digitize the educational system, which would facilitate the teaching work in many aspects;

- To remove the online E-school platform from use, as it is only an additional task and has not affected the removal of aspects/works with physical documents;
- Fill only the electronic diary, not the physical one;
- Let the administration deal with administrative issues;
- To make the return of three periods in two half-years;
- The practical work of teachers with students should be the focus of the assessment, not that of documentation;
- Assess classroom activities, not the written plan;
- To minimize the requests coming from the directorate.

From all these conclusions, the largest percentage of teachers have expressed that the requirements within the lesson plan should be simplified. According to them, this plan should be done "roughly", since the planned activities will affect the achievement of the results anyway, and their detailed description is just a burden.

Also, the teachers have expressed dissatisfaction regarding the same reports that must be completed several times, as well as the obligation to complete the E-school electronic diary, despite the fact that it is not functional, as it should be.

Recommendations

The teaching process is more of a missionary process than a professional one, so it should be taken as a basis that the teacher must appear in front of the students, leaving outside the classroom door fatigue, worries, and anything that can affect the teaching process on his part . We recommend that:

1. Preparations for the lesson should be made by noting the main aspects of the realization of the lesson and not in detail, as the curriculum requires;

2. To simplify the requirements within the lesson plan template;
3. The two months and weekly plan should be merged with each other and at the same time the same plan should be used as a bi-monthly but also a weekly plan, thus dividing the topics along the weeks, days, etc.;
4. Based on the attitudes of teachers in favour of annual, two months and weekly plans, we recommend that such plans be offered by experts, but with the autonomy of selection or intervention by the teacher;
5. The e-school and the physical diary are also merged into one. We recommend that either the E-school or the diary be used to fill in the data for the students and class statistics, and not both, because we consider that it is the same work done, described once physically, and once in electronically;
6. Make it easier to complete the statistics reports at the end of the teaching periods, namely the school year, which are repeated several times;
7. Administrative issues to be completed by the administration;
8. Higher institutions should work on the digitalization of the education system, because in this way the burden of teachers would be significantly eased.

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Lesson Planning by High School Teachers

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Paper review:
Prof. asoc. dr. Hatixhe Ismajli

Abstract

Lesson planning is an important part of the teaching process, through which the teacher determines the goal, the learning outcomes and the learning activities that will be carried out with students during the lesson or during a teaching unit. New demands and expectations of the curriculum, requests for change to the approach to lesson planning and to teaching are seen as challenges in the lesson planning process. This research examines teachers' lesson planning in light of the implementation of a competency-based curriculum The purpose of this research is to analyze the content aspects of curriculum requirements and activities with students, in the lesson plans used by high school teachers in Kosovo, as well as to examine the opinions of teachers and quality coordinators regarding the challenges that teachers face during lesson planning. The research used qualitative and quantitative data, collected through content analysis of lesson plan templates, semistructured interviews and questionnaires with teachers and quality coordinators. The population consists of teachers and quality coordinators in high schools in Kosovo (gymnasium), from which a research sample of 58 teachers of different subjects and fields and 6 quality coordinators at school level was randomly selected. The sample was selected in six gymnasiums in different municipalities. 25 The results of the research show that the challenges faced by teachers during lesson planning are many, such as: planning learning outcomes for each lesson, setting success criteria, curricular connection, student assessment, tasks and work independent, selfesteem, etc. As a result, some teachers are reluctant to prepare the lesson plan according to the requirements of the planning form and there is also a tendency to provide them readymade or to repeat the lesson plans. To overcome the challenges, we recommend providing teachers with ongoing support in lesson planning, based on findings from plan analysis and monitoring, as well as simplifying the lesson planning form or designing a template that exceeds technical aspects and puts in the foreground the elements of creative engagement of teachers in the planning and realization of teaching processes. The findings of the research will be of help to teachers and educational institutions in their institutional commitment to improve future lesson planning practices.

Key words: *curriculum, learning planning, planning model, lesson, teaching*.

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