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A STUDY OF IMPACT OF SCHOOL CULTURE ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS IN SERBIA BASED ON SCHOOL EVALUATION

Abstract *Legislation generally does not define the concept of school culture, rather it occurs as a term in scientific theory, but the term 'good school' is not related exclusively to scientific research. It is a generally accepted term for a school with a good organizational culture. This paper presents the results of research into the effects of school culture on the teaching and learning process in primary schools. Among the seven areas that are subject to self-evaluation and assessment, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia defined the indicators of quality of teaching and learning process. These indicators are, in addition to indicators of school culture, a starting point for this study. The research was carried out in Serbian primary schools. The results shown that the culture of the school has a strong and positive impact on teaching and learning in primary schools in Serbia. Multiple regression analysis determines the predictive effect of school culture on the dimensions of the teaching process and learning as well as the elements of the teaching process.*

Keywords: school culture, quality of teaching and learning process, Serbia.

ИСТРАЖИВАЊЕ УТИЦАЈА ШКОЛСКЕ КУЛТУРЕ НА ПРОЦЕС НАСТАВЕ И УЧЕЊА ЗАСНОВАНО НА САМОВРЕДНОВАЊУ ШКОЛЕ

Анстракт *Иако се у законским документима не користи и не дефинише појам културе школе који се често користи у научним и истраживачким радовима, израз добра школа се не јавља само у контексту научних истраживања. То је опште прихваћен термин за школу са добром организационом културом. У*

раду су приказани резултати истраживања о утицају школске културе на процес наставе и учења у основним школама. Министарство просвете Републике Србије је дефинисало индикаторе квалитета процеса наставе и учења процеса, као једне од седам области које су предмет самовредновање школе. Ти показатељи су, поред индикатора школске културе, полазна тачка за ову студију. Истраживање је спроведено у основним школама у Србији. Резултати су показали да школска култура има јак и позитиван утицај на наставу и учење у основним школама у Србији. Вишеструком регресионом анализом утврђен је предиктивни ефекат школске културе на димензије наставе и учења као и на елементе наставног процеса.

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ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ВЛИЯНИЯ КУЛЬТУРЫ ШКОЛЫ НА ПРОЦЕСС ОБУЧЕНИЯ НА ОСНОВЕ САМООЦЕНКИ ШКОЛЫ

Резюме Хотя в правовых документах не используется и не определяется понятие культура школы которое часто встречается в научных и научно-исследовательских работах, словосочетание хорошая школа встречается не только в контексте научных исследований. Термин хорошая школа широко применяется для школ с хорошей организационной культурой. В статье приводятся результаты исследований о влиянии культуры школы на процесс преподавания и обучения в начальных школах. Министерство образования Республики Сербии определило показатели качества процесса обучения, как одну из семи областей, которые подлежат самооценке школы. Эти показатели наряду с показателями хорошей организационной школьной культуры являются отправной точкой для данного исследования. Исследование было проведено в восьмилетних школах в Сербии. Результаты показывают, что культура школы оказывает сильное и положительное влияние на преподавание и обучение в восьмилетних школах в Сербии. Множественный регрессионный анализ обнаружил эффект влияния культуры школы на преподавание и обучение в целом, а также на отдельные элементы учебного процесса.

Ключевые слова: культура школы, качество преподавания и обучения, Сербия.

School Culture

Motivation for this study lay primarily in the desire to highlight the importance and influence of school culture, especially on the success of the teaching and learning processes, as well as those smaller processes contained within it. The aim was is to verify

the existence of a link between school culture and indicators regarding teaching and learning. This knowledge could provide a crucial foundation for determining teacher higher-education curriculum elements, based on the school experience. In the wider world, measurements regarding performance indicators for teaching and learning have, over the last 20 years, been actively conducted by means of a process of assessment and the self-evaluation of schools. A school that knows, reliably, how to determine and evaluate the effects of its work and its existence as a whole, or its individual segments, and that on the basis of self-assessment, can progress and enhance its own development, and is on track to build its own system of quality assurance (*Priručnik za samovrednovanje i vrednovanje rada škole, 2005*).

School culture is a subject that is receiving more and more attention in the debate concerning effective schools and school improvement. Experts started to research different topics in the second half of the twentieth century, when research on organizational culture began. Everyone in a community, especially parents, wish for and work on providing a 'good school' for their children. The term 'good school' is not related to scientific research. It is a generally accepted term for a school with a good organizational culture. These schools are the ones that result in obvious indicators of success and trust in the quality of pupil achievement. Pupils from these schools are successful in competitions. They stand out in terms of projects that indicate innovation and dynamism in development. The effects of education in these schools are evident in terms of continued education. All of this comprises a total school culture. School culture is not tied to the state, region or strategy at a high level. It is a seal of the school climate specific to one school. Everyone who visits a school can sense its culture at every given step: through the behaviour of its employees, the appearance of the walls in the corridors, or the presence or absence of shouting from pupils (Pavlović i Oljača, 2011).

However, the term 'school culture' is gaining a wider significance in research at the beginning of the XXI century. Van Houtte called for clarification of the terms 'school culture' and 'school climate' and the role of each in school effectiveness research (Van Houtte, 2005). The terms 'school climate' and 'school culture' deserve attention, as useful terms for the intangibles that can affect learning. As such, they deserve serious attention in the effort to improve performance. Comprehensive models that have been developed for school reform have invariably included changes of to school culture and school climate. A positive impact on the climate of the school stimulates the staff and pupils to improve, and district-level school culture must also change if school reforms are to be sustained towards long-term improvement. Jerald concludes that a healthy school climate is formed over time, and that it stems from an organisation's vision, beliefs, values, and mission: stating your mission is significant, but only a small part of your efforts. A culture develops and grows through an accumulation of actions, traditions, symbols, ceremonies, and rituals that are closely aligned with that vision (Jerald, 2006). According to Stoll, school culture is one of the most complex, basic essence and important concepts in education: "the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organisation's view of itself and

its environment...These are the heart of school culture, and what makes it so hard to grasp and change" (Stoll, 1998, 9).

School culture arises, according to Pavlović and Oljača from a subculture: the subculture of teachers, pupils, school principals, secretaries, and even a group of teachers for certain subjects, sports clubs and similar. The developers of school culture are all the employees in the school, as well as the pupils, though the influence of the wider and immediate community or the social, demographic characteristics of the environment, and other influences cannot be excluded either, all of which as a whole can be divided into external and internal factors (Pavlović i Oljača, 2011). Often, the success of a school period refers to the period of a school principal's work. Internal factors certainly begin with the attitude of the management of the school on this subject. According to Renchler, school management leaders have a number of channels through which they can shape a school's culture or climate (Renchler, 1992). Good communication is, of course, central to achieving goals successfully. However, actions must demonstrate what the words convey.

As it has already been said, school culture is a complex web of values and beliefs, norms, social and power relationships and emotions (Stoll, 1998). Understanding a school's culture is an essential prerequisite for any internal or external change. A current focus is on the idea that schools should be communities rather than only educational institutions (Higgins D'Alessandro & Sath, 1998).

The literature review in the last quarter of the twentieth century shows that there is a focus on exploring the connection between the management of the school as a source of school culture and pupil achievement, as the most important effects of the quality of the teaching process. An exhaustive review of the literature indicates significant relationships between management and culture (Sashkin & Walberg, 1993) or between the culture and the efficiency of the teaching process (Cheng, 1993; Levine & Lezotte, 1990). In addition, this review also noted the importance of having leadership, culture and efficiency of existence for veryday life and development of organizations such as schools. As a result, the relations between leadership, culture and efficiency, as well as the culture as a mechanism mediating between leadership and pupil achievement, are important. One very extensive piece of research, covering a period of 15 years, was conducted by Hallinger and Heck, in schools in the USA. The general pattern of results drawn from this review supports the belief that principals exercise a measurable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and pupil achievement. While this indirect effect is relatively slight, it is statistically significant and supports a general belief among educators that principals contribute to school effectiveness and improvement. Moreover, the review suggests that previously described discrepancies in research results may be explained by the conceptual and methodological tools employed by researchers (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

The relationship between school culture and the teaching and learning process

Many studies are attempting to define the complexity of the teaching process and complexity of learning: bringing about conceptual change, exploring ways to

understand, developing the capacity to be expert, developing concepts and principles and their interrelation, illustrating the application of theory to practice, transmitting information and presenting information. Biggs, for example, identified three dimensions in terms of which teaching theories might be described: qualitative, organisational and quantitative (Biggs, 1989).

The complexity of teaching practice is in many details, including preparing and organizing classes, use of different teaching methods, evaluation of pupils' knowledge, the development of pedagogical skills in the interactive aspects of teaching, pedagogical communication, and many others.

A question is raised, what is the actual and overall importance of the relationship between school culture and the teaching and learning process? The question is whether elements of the school culture influence elements of the teaching process, and it is asked with the aim of understanding the importance of school culture, and realising incentives for principals to develop the culture in their schools. There exists a wide range of mutual influence between school culture and the quality of education, and a more or less indirect but relevant impact on both the close and wider community. The fact is that in the course of education a strong affective interconnection between pupils and teachers is created, as well as with the school principal, which is in turn transmitted to relationships between members of the community, and this relationship is important for several reasons. First of all, this relationship influences the creation of awareness of the collective life, motivating pupils towards a positive and expected developmental route. Ultimately, it affects the motivation of pupils when it comes to contributing to the community in which they live. School culture may have been crucial for the development of local and national communities in a broad and deep sense and covering the establishment of public awareness (Lieberman et al., 1988).

The theoretical aim of this study was to investigate the influence of school culture on teaching and learning, as well as testing the moderating effect of leader-member exchange effects on the observed relationship. The subjects of this study were primary schools in Serbia. It is very important to understand the relationships that exist between aspects of the school culture and the teaching process, because school culture can be altered and improved if all school members recognize the necessity for change and work together in order to achieve improvements in the school's culture.

Saphier and King argue that the teachers are culture shapers. They have developed a questionnaire for examining school culture, based on 12 norms: collegiality; experimentation; high expectations; trust and confidence; tangible support; reaching out to the knowledge bases; appreciation and recognition; caring, celebration and humor; involvement in decision making; protection of what's important; traditions and honest; open communication. The questionnaire, School Culture Survey, by authors Saphier and King (1985), as modified by Edwards, Green and Lyons (1996) integrates these norms in three dimensions: teacher professionalism and goal setting; professional treatment by administration; teacher collaboration. In this paper school culture will be observed from those three aspects.

On the other hand, formal methods of self-evaluation and evaluation of the overall work of schools, and therefore the area of teaching and learning in Serbia, were started in 2005. The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, which began the process, found that the main task was to determine, establish and ensure the quality of educational institutions (*Priručnik za samovrednovanje i vrednovanje rada škole, 2005*). This implies the responsibility of all stakeholders in the education system who generally accepted and agreed upon standards regarding the quality of schools, the application of standards in practice, mutual trust, and school autonomy.

Among the seven areas that are subject to self-evaluation and assessment, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia defined the teaching and learning process as one of the key areas. Through the self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the following indicators are monitored:

- planning and lesson planning and preparation for classes;
- the teaching process (communication and cooperation, rationality, organization, encouraging pupils, correlation and application of knowledge);
- learning (pupils accountability, ways of learning).
- monitoring pupils' progress (monitoring and evaluation, reporting).

These indicators are, in addition to indicators of school culture, a starting point for this study. The aim of these measures is to introduce a system of quality assurance procedures, based on school self-evaluation and school development planning, to promote a culture of continuous improvement for the educational experiences of young people and children. In this way, the educational system of Serbia would come closer to the policy of quality assurance in the EU, which has self-evaluation as its basis. For this purpose, the schools were sent instructions for self-evaluation and school assessment modelled on an Evaluation of Schools provided for Compulsory Education in Europe (Ansdell, 2001). The purpose is for this manual to become a major national source of reference and a practical guide for school administrators and schools in the implementation of self-evaluation and school development planning. In Europe and other countries, the process of self-evaluation with external assessment is accepted as the most effective mechanism for improving the quality of a school (*Priručnik za samovrednovanje i vrednovanje rada škole, 2005*).

Method

Hypothesis. The previous can be summarized as follows: the culture of the school and the teaching and learning process are two very important areas in scientific terms. The degree of development where culture in schools is concerned affects many aspects of the institution. The quality of teaching and learning represents an essential task, and the impact of the school is under the influence of various factors.

Based on the above considerations, the following hypotheses were set up in this paper:

H1: School culture dimensions have a statistically significant correlation with the quality of teaching dimensions in primary schools in Serbia.

H2: School culture dimensions have a statistically significant predictive effect on the quality of teaching dimensions in primary schools in Serbia.

Survey instruments (measures). The School Culture Survey (SCS) (Edwards et al., 1996; Saphier & King, 1985) was used as an instrument for measuring school culture. The survey comprises three dimensions, containing 24 items, using a five point Likert scale (1 - almost never; 2 - less often than not; 3 - about half the time; 4 - more often than not; and 5 - almost always). The dimensions are: teacher professionalism and goal setting (10 items), professional treatment by administration (8 items) and teacher collaboration (6 items). This instrument was used by many researchers (Meyer et al., 2009; Schermuly et al., 2011; Shank & Cotten, 2014)

The measuring instrument for the teaching process was the questionnaire manual for the evaluation and self-evaluation of school activities, from the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia in cooperation with the British Council in Serbia and Montenegro (*Priručnik za samovrednovanje i vrednovanje rada škole, 2005*). The names of the teaching dimensions can be seen in Table 1: lesson planning, preparation for classes, communication and cooperation, encouraging pupils, correlation and application of knowledge, responsibilities of pupils, method of learning, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, personal development of pupils, ethical development of pupils.

Participants and data collection. The research was carried out in Serbian primary schools. The survey was conducted using questionnaires. A total of 383 teachers from 57 schools answered the questions. After an initial analysis, and because of significant dispersion in the results shown on some pages, 21 questionnaires were rejected. Thus, the final number of respondents was 362. The survey included schools in the northern part of Serbia. This area was chosen because of its geographical proximity to the authors.

In the sample of 362 respondents, 250 were women and 112 men. This small number of men in the sample is a consequence of the structure of employment in education in Serbia (according to gender). According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2011, 67% of those employed in education are women and 33% men. Looking at primary schools, the percentage of women is even higher than in secondary schools or higher education. According to age, respondents were divided into three groups: younger teachers up to 35 years of age, middle-aged teachers (35 to 50 years old) and older teachers (over 50 years of age). The age of the respondents was as follows: 93 younger teachers, 197 middle-aged teachers and 72 older teachers.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics for the dimensions of school culture, the dimensions of teaching is shown in Table 1. In this the table, among others the names of the dimensions, the short name for each dimension (which is used below), mean size, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha for each dimension are given. Cronbach's alpha values range in the interval from $\alpha = 0.887$ to $\alpha = 0.949$.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	Index	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's alpha
Teacher Professionalism and Goal Settings	SC1	1.10	5.00	3.9390	.81384	.949
Professional Treatment by Administration	SC2	1.00	5.00	3.7510	.83444	.919
Teacher Collaboration	SC3	1.00	5.00	3.8310	.83305	.892
Lesson Planning	TP1	1.00	4.00	3.5104	.44618	.815
Preparation for Classes	TP2	1.57	4.00	3.6022	.39925	.889
Communication and Cooperation	TP3	2.13	4.00	3.8612	.28568	.875
Rationality and Organization	TP4	2.25	4.00	3.6878	.35395	.856
Encouraging Pupils	TP5	2.00	4.00	3.7667	.32740	.879
Correlation and Application of Knowledge	TP6	2.20	4.00	3.6376	.41565	.741
Responsibilities of Pupils	TP7	2.00	4.00	3.6309	.41753	.794
Method of Learning	TP8	2.29	4.00	3.7384	.35512	.854
Monitoring and Evaluation	TP9	2.36	4.00	3.7717	.32084	.884
Reporting	TP10	1.60	4.00	3.6365	.47566	.861
Personal Development of Pupils	SPD	2.13	4.00	3.7195	.33116	.884
Ethical Development of Pupils	SED	2.33	4.00	3.6398	.37574	.887
Valid N (listwise)	362					

Correlation Analysis

Table 2 shows the results of the correlation analysis of: correlation between the school culture dimension and the educational process dimensions. These results relate to the entire sample of 362 respondents. Pearson correlation was used. In Table 2 statistically significant correlations are indicated as follows: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$. It may be noted that all of correlations are the statistically significant ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2. Pearson coefficients of correlation between school culture and the quality of teaching

	TP1	TP2	TP3	TP4	TP5	TP6	TP7	TP8	TP9	TP10	SPD	SED
SC_1	.483**	.423**	.280**	.384**	.373**	.276**	.326**	.309**	.380**	.396**	.397**	.537**
SC_2	.462**	.413**	.246**	.361**	.341**	.273**	.298**	.282**	.342**	.365**	.386**	.517**
SC_3	.419**	.383**	.209**	.306**	.279**	.262**	.294**	.270**	.317**	.325**	.334**	.457**

Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression analysis was used to determine the predictive effect of school culture dimensions (independent variables) on the teaching process (dependent variable). Results from the regression analyses are presented in Table 3. In Table 3 the bold values point to statistically significant coefficients.

Table 3. Regression analysis (Dependent Variable: TP dimensions; Predictors: SC dimensions)

Dependent	Independent	B	T	Sig.	R ²	F	F Sig.
TP1	SC_1	.343	2.924	.004	.238	37.173	.000
	SC_2	.099	.835	.404			
	SC_3	.063	.765	.445			
TP2	SC_1	.236	1.945	.053	.186	27.316	.000
	SC_2	.123	1.008	.314			
	SC_3	.093	1.100	.272			
TP3	SC_1	.348	2.704	.007	.079	10.305	.000
	SC_2	-.040	-.306	.760			
	SC_3	-.040	-.439	.661			
TP4	SC_1	.338	2.727	.007	.148	20.785	.000
	SC_2	.076	.605	.545			
	SC_3	-.028	-.324	.746			
TP5	SC_1	.399	3.209	.001	.141	19.557	.000
	SC_2	.034	.275	.784			
	SC_3	-.071	-.816	.415			
TP6	SC_1	.123	.957	.339	.082	10.606	.000
	SC_2	.086	.660	.510			
	SC_3	.093	1.030	.304			
TP7	SC_1	.282	2.227	.027	.109	14.599	.000
	SC_2	-.038	-.299	.765			
	SC_3	.097	1.091	.276			
TP8	SC_1	.279	2.187	.029	.097	12.762	.000
	SC_2	-.023	-.179	.858			
	SC_3	.063	.703	.482			
TP9	SC_1	.388	3.125	.002	.145	20.202	.000
	SC_2	-.044	-.350	.727			
	SC_3	.039	.451	.653			
TP10	SC_1	.368	2.982	.003	.157	22.187	.000
	SC_2	.022	.174	.862			
	SC_3	.011	.123	.902			
SPD	SC_1	.267	2.169	.031	.161	22.945	.000
	SC_2	.136	1.096	.274			
	SC_3	.009	.102	.919			
SED	SC_1	.372	3.300	.001	.293	49.471	.000
	SC_2	.147	1.296	.196			
	SC_3	.037	.469	.639			

Discussion

Table 2 shows that there are statistically significant correlations between the dimensions of school culture and the dimensions of teaching and learning in primary schools in Serbia. All correlations are strong and positive. This confirms the hypothesis

H1 - that school culture has a statistically significant correlation with the quality of teaching in primary schools in Serbia. Among the dimensions of the educational process, the strongest correlation was obtained for the dimension P1 – Lesson Planning. This can be explained by the fact that the basic and adequate preparation of teachers for teaching and learning implies the existence of a high degree of awareness and teacher responsibility, and of the global and operational level of teaching. The actions that the teacher has to perform at the operational level are: analysis of the initial situation, defining objectives, selecting content, stages, planning, selection of methodological approaches, the selection of the work, selection and preparation of teaching aids. In addition, didactic planning involves the selection of motivational mechanisms, maintaining the attention of pupils, checking pupil recollection, and care over the achievement of educational and functional goals and outcomes. A strong correlation is expected, given that planning for teaching is based on how highly developed the teacher's sense of cultural awareness and enlightenment is. So, it follows that for teachers employed in a school, which is in itself at a high level in cultural terms, it is likely that preparation by teachers for teaching and learning will be better. Clearly defined responsibilities for teachers, and evaluation of the extent to which these have been fulfilled, periodic exchange of experiences between principals and teachers, which is the result of the culture of the school, are motivating impulses that direct teachers towards achieving set aims and objectives.

In contrast, among the dimensions of the educational process, the lowest correlation dimension was TP3 - Communication and Cooperation. It can be assumed that weak correlation between school culture and successful cooperation with a pupil in the area is due to the fact that there were professional and personal competences among teachers, who acted independently and were not subject to the qualitative impact of higher or lower levels of school culture. Teachers are trained during their studies to express themselves clearly and properly, to encourage pupils and to seek their observations. The Law on the Foundations of Education of the Republic of Serbia is strictly defines required levels of teacher education and their psychological, pedagogical, didactic and methodical competences acquired during formal education. The teacher must have (and usually has) received education that creates his or her own individual attitudes towards work, teaching and pupils, and so it follows that teacher education forms a personal attitude and approach to communication and collaboration with pupils. Therefore, the weak correlation of this dimension with the dimensions of school culture should be understood as a consequence of the presence and influence of personal and professional qualities of teachers, so that they, as a result, are under a weaker influence from the culture of the school .

A very strong correlation with the dimensions of school culture was seen for SED – the Ethical Development of Pupils. This is logical given that ethical components such as tolerance, mutual respect, respect, cooperation, caring, behaviour, and the promotion of pupil achievement, come under the direct influence of school culture. It should also be noted that from the dimensions of school culture, the strongest correlation with the dimensions for teaching quality was seen for the dimension SC1 - Teacher Professionalism

and Goal Setting. This is because, from the three dimensions of school culture, only SC1 - Teacher Professionalism and Goal Setting has a direct impact on teaching and learning, and personal and ethical development of pupils.

Table 3 presents the results of multiple regression analysis for determining the predictive effect of school culture dimensions (independent variables) in the teaching process (dependent variables). There are relatively high values of the corrected determination indexes R^2 , which range from 0.079 to 0.238. According to the values of R^2 , the next dimensions of teaching and learning are under the greatest influence of school culture: TP1 - Lesson Planning ($R^2 = 0.238$) and TP2 - Preparation for Classes ($R^2 = 0.186$). This result is consistent with the results of the correlation analysis (Table 2). In Table 3 it can be seen that among the dimensions of the culture of the school, the strongest predictive effect on teaching and learning is seen for the dimension SC1 - Teacher Professionalism and Goal Setting (also in line with the results of the correlation analysis). Teachers are essentially doing individual work and have no direct joint operations with other teachers (a teacher of biology and another of history do not have to collaborate directly, anyone can realize the educational process in their own way, and acknowledge that every way of realizing it is good). Situations in which teachers are instructed to cooperate directly (in terms of teaching) are relatively rare, and because of that, the dimension SC3 - Teacher Collaboration has no predictive effect on the direct teaching process. Given that one of the three dimensions of school culture has a predictive effect on the learning process, it can be concluded that hypothesis H2 is partly confirmed.

Conclusion

The research proved that school culture dimensions had a statistically significant correlation with dimensions related to the quality of teaching in primary schools in Serbia. The hypothesis that school culture dimensions have a statistically significant predictive effect on the quality of teaching dimensions was partially proven. Dimension SC1 - Teacher Professionalism and Goal Setting have the strongest predictive effect on the dimensions of the teaching process.

The limitation of this study is that the results are relevant for primary schools in Serbia. However, the results are important for understanding and improving observed relationships and processes, and may also be useful for comparison with other countries and reaching analogous conclusions.

It has been shown that the culture of the school has a wide-ranging impact on the learning process, and this is an issue that has perhaps been crucial for the development of local and state communities, because it seems that it has a broad and significant impact on the formation of public awareness. A significant finding is that the external impacts of the indirect participants in education have a significant effect on the quality of teaching and learning, but that the quality of teaching is mostly a consequence of the quality of teacher education, acquired competencies and the selection of teachers. It is important to note that dimensions and relations, which are under the increasing

influence of personal attitudes and approaches from teachers, fall more strongly under the influence of the culture of the school, and the quality of the relationship with the principal. This does not mean that this situation should not and cannot be changed, of course, if this is aimed at raising the standard of teaching. The study showed that indirect participants in the process of teaching and learning had a significant impact on its quality. Changing schools requires understanding of and respect for the different meanings and interpretations people bring to educational initiatives and work to develop shared meanings underpinned by norms that will promote sustainable school improvement.

The practical significance of this research is reflected in our recognising the current situation, and the possibilities for improving teaching in primary schools in Serbia. This can be effectively achieved through the organization of courses and seminars for primary school principals in Serbia. In this way, it would be possible to create and develop awareness among principals regarding their impact upon teachers, school culture and the quality of teaching.

Principals should be trained to establish high-quality and equitable relationships with teachers, as well as effective communication and a positive climate in the school through the decisions they make and the support they give to teachers. This conclusion is consistent with the reference (Berry, 1997), which states that it is important for principals to know about the theoretical bases of current approaches to quality management in education. According to Kaplan and Owings, the real methods to sustain student achievement and school improvement is the combination of school culture, professional learning community, and teacher/community leadership which provides a compelling and unique exploration (Kaplan & Owings, 2013).

In an effort to contribute to this theoretical understanding, we consider the paradigm of total quality management as a broad philosophy for the development of culture quality in schools. In this way a positive influence on teachers is seen, as stated by Shepard (Marks & Printy, 2003), and so when the teacher perceives the behaviour exhibited by the principal in the course of providing instruction and leadership to be appropriate, their level of commitment grows, as does professional involvement, and the willingness to innovate. Principals should indicate the importance of teachers and the tremendous influence of individual approaches and attitudes from teachers in all areas and aspects of teaching and pupil development. In operational terms, the organization of courses and seminars for school principals is a simple, effective and relatively inexpensive way to achieve significant results in their efforts to improve the quality of teaching. This is consistent with the findings of Ingvarson, Meiers and Beavis which showed high level of impact of professional community in the school on teacher skills, knowledge and practice (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Professional development program increases opportunities for teachers to talk about the specifics of their teaching practice and student learning, share ideas and support each other as they attempt to implement ideas from the professional development program.

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