EDUCATION AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ACCORDING TO TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF LOW SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of the new century, Kosovo has paid special attention to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. Preservation and promotion of cultural heritage poses a serious challenge to our society and it can not be overcome without educating young people in this respect.

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze and to present teachers' perceptions of lower secondary schools, regarding education and its impact for students awareness regarding preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. The survey was conducted in six lower secondary schools in Kosovo. The total number of respondents (teachers) was 105, out of these 57 respondents were males and 48 were females. Respondents were of different age and different work experiences.

In the research were used mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative ones. The instruments used for the purpose of research were questionnaires and interviews. Respondents answered anonymously. Adequate literature was also used as well as documents and written regulations dealing with education and cultural heritage.

Results of research are particularly important to sensitize the professionals who deal with the development of cultural policies, as well as teachers who are regarded as key agents in the management of change in society.

Key words: Cultural Heritage, Education, Kosovo, Teachers, Teaching Materials


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1. INTRODUCTION

Today, Kosovo is facing profound changes in all aspects of life. These changes are becoming causes of transformation made in the field of culture. This is happening not only in our country but also abroad. “Clearly globalization is increasingly influential in all aspects of life” [1].

“Such historical cultural changes contribute to the ways of thinking and living in which current generation’s life. Culture change is quite noticeable in today’s world; perhaps it always has been” [2]. The current transformations make cultural change processes readily apparent to observers. They also make
culture change and contact among communities an important aspect of most children’s development. Recent transformations have had a direct impact in the field of Albanian cultural today. Albanian culture can not be held, conceived and treated as a closed culture. It is an area where people of different nations can converse and share their experiences. In our view, culture is something much more important than the policies of the day because the culture has a long term character and national memory structures. Our civil society converting into a society of value creation, preservation of values, the respect of values, it would build values which would be the only way of making a history, because only values build a history. Culture should be thought of as a mirror that reflects the thought and philosophy of a nation. The concept of “culture” encompasses all of the life ways, customs, traditions, and institutions that a people develop as they create and experience their history and identity as a people [3]. Also, it represents the totality of values, and habits of any country. All of these together are an integral part of our cultural heritage. In this context we can say that all of these cultural segments presents special topics for research.

In many countries, scientific research has been done and is written much about cultural heritage issues. While in Kosovo, in this respect little has been done. Due to lack of scientific research, heritage is not appreciated as much as it deserves. This is why we decided to focus our research on the field of cultural heritage. Cultural heritage is a theme which provides the opportunity to be treated from different angles. In our case, the topic to be discussed is the teachers’ perceptions about the impact of education in preparing students regarding the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage.

This paper is written primarily based on findings from the research field and secondly, based on documents and relevant literature that has to do with education and cultural heritage. The purpose of this paper is to shed light on some crucial issues related to the cultural heritage and education, in our social context, for example, educational content in the textbooks concerning the Albanian cultural heritage, organization of visits to museums, historic and cultural centers, etc.

Students have to learn from the different sources about the role of preservation of cultural heritage and development of society all along with preservation of national identity. In this context, there are positive developments on an acting plan not only to teachers, but also to all other stakeholders who in any way represent cultural heritage. Even, the scientific researches in this field play a major role.

Questions that will be discussed in this paper are: Are organized visits to museums and other cultural facilities for students? Which textbooks contain more cultural heritage material? How much do the textbooks contain cultural monuments? How much have contributed international institutions to the reconstruction of historical monuments? Is there sufficient learning educational material in Albanian? Does the content of textbooks have impact in students’ awareness about the preservation of cultural heritage? How much does cultural heritage have impact on people’s welfare? Etc.

We should say that, only through serious studies dealing with the cultural heritage of different periods can become an unbreakable bond of our historical and culture of the past, present and future. Also, these studies will help in aligning our educational policies with European policies to educate students about the assessment, preservation, management and promotion of cultural heritage. According to the National Cultural Heritage Strategy 2015-2025, a systematic building of professional capacities of cultural heritage staff shall be supported, which constitute the source of formal communication and participatory action with general public [4]. So, this situation requires the formulation of policies, strategies and establishing mechanisms for educating young people about the cultural heritage and the opportunities it offers for the social welfare. In this context, Taylor et. al. have concluded that, “businesses must change to be successful in this ever-changing world that we have discussed the secret is in building team support and agreement, giving everyone a chance to participate. Often, this the missing link when changes are made in the education system”[5].

To be prepared in this regard, an important role plays teachers training for the management change in the field of culture, and implementation of national and international standards just for the sake of improving students’ education. They should know that the past and present of people is not known only by the political and economic history, but to a considerable extent through the traditional culture known as material and
spiritual culture that leads us to the ancient times of human specific communities [6]. According to Schultz, educators of all racial and cultural groups need to develop new competencies and pedagogies to successfully engage our changing populations.

Finally, based on Rogoff opinion, we should conclude that “to understand human development, it is essential to understand the development of the cultural institutions and practices in which people participate”.

2. THE USE OF EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AWARENESS REGARDING PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Kosovo’s heritage was created by ancient civilizations and continuous until today [7]. The Kosovo’s cultural heritage is an expression and creativity of life realities developed of over eight thousand years, since the prehistory continuing up to today. This inherited treasure of unique artistic, aesthetic, historical and traditional characteristics values, is illustrated by the rich diversity of architectural, archaeological, movable and spiritual heritage, as well as with rich cultural landscape. This legacy represents great potential for tourism development. The tourism industry is important for the workforce, businesses and improves social welfare in general. Tourism serves as a catalyst for economic growth and is closely related to the geographical position of Kosovo. This place is surrounded by rich mountains, artificial lakes, rivers and natural lakes. Widespread production of rare artisanal crafts in Kosovo, such as filigrees, which represent an attraction to foreign tourists. In addition, Kosovo has its potential to develop cultural tourism through the extraordinary cultural and historical monuments [8]. In this context, we should note that it is not enough to have just the cultural potential. But, for the development of cultural tourism policies must be better developed management of this asset. To be successful in this regard, there has to be prepared a required staff which would be dealing with the development of tourism and cultural heritage. Preparation of staff helps develop new lesson plans, in conformity to the requirements of the 21st century, just for the sake of meeting the demands of the new century, associated with the preparation of citizens in the spirit of democracy.

Since Kosovo has great potential for tourism and cultural heritage, awareness of students about the role that cultural heritage plays in the development of the country, is considered as a matter of priority. Their awareness can be achieved through education. Dewey believed that education is a norm of process that reaches participate in social consciousness, and that the regulation of the activity of the individual under this social consciousness is the only true method of social reconstruction [9].

Education system in Kosovo has to be in capacity of applying new learning and studying plans and programs. Kosovo curricula development requires foreign experts to set up and apply them. Also starting from this period there have been published continually textbooks. In addition, in September 2000 there were drafted regulations for primary and secondary education”. Then, in 2001 was drafted and approved the constitutional framework [10]. Constitutional framework, one of the strategic educational issues defines the rights of communities to establish educational institutions, particularly in education, language, alphabet, culture, and history of their community. In this context, participants of strategic development have identified seven strategic objectives to be achieved in the period 2007-2017. The sixth objective confirms: Education link sustainable to global economic and social development”. Except this there are a significant number of documents that require focus on educating students in the field of preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. In this context we should mention the National Cultural Heritage Strategy 2015-2025. According to the one of the objectives of this Strategy: Education, promotion and citizen awareness - with the aim of promoting the sense of cultural identity and as a source of inspiration and innovation. Education, training and active participation, in this context, will be supported aimed at positive development of contemporary debate in the field of cultural heritage in Kosovo”.

While progress is being made towards the goal of Education for All, renewed efforts are needed to ensure that the education provided is of high quality and relevant to social needs. This is essential if the young are to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to lead active and productive lives in the knowledge-based societies of the future [11]. This goal can be attainable through education, respectively through an academic form and content. “In the short term, students could take advantage from the
specialization of their academic curriculum, however in the long run they may have not the theoretical categories which are necessary to develop new skills” [12]. However, we should say that since education is considered as a possibility to overcome the challenges presented within the cultural heritage, teachers and the curricula are key factors to students’ education. The curricula have a direct impact on student education and awareness regarding the importance of the cultural heritage of a country to preserve national identity and social welfare. “The curriculum formally has community orientation as one of its main approaches to learning”[13].

Regarding the role of schools in terms of transmission cultural heritage, wrote the researchers like, Sadker & Sadker. According to them, schools preserve and transmit cultural traditions. An important aim of the school in all societies is to store and transmit cultural heritage from generation to generation. Schools educate younger generation about the beliefs, customs and values of the previous generation. If schools do not have this feature, each successful generation would be failing to re-transmit lessons of previous generation. "Schools unite our society through exchange of knowledge of a common culture”[14].

According to the Council of Europe, Rec (2003) the cultural heritage is, in itself, a unique and irreplaceable asset and that its conservation is part of the process of sustainable development. Also, according to the same document, “the cultural heritage possesses an intrinsic value greater than its tourist value, that cultural tourism is but one of the uses of this heritage and that its conservation, in its authenticity to be handed down to future generations, is an absolute priority” [15].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
In order to examine the teachers’ perceptions of lower secondary schools, regarding education and its impact for students awareness regarding preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, primary data was analyzed. So, to realize this paper we have used data derived from our research conducted in lower secondary schools in Kosovo, in rural and urban areas. The number of respondents (teachers) included in the survey was in total 105, out of which 57 males and 48 females. Age and experience of their work was different. To carry out this research there were selected the teachers of social sciences. (See, Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work experience over 20 years</th>
<th>29 respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work experience over 10 years</td>
<td>59 respondents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work experience less than 5 years</td>
<td>17 respondents</td>
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In the research were used mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative ones. The survey was conducted with mixed methods because in education is preferable to use a mixed methods. Firstly, we were focused in obtaining data from the research field, and secondly, through research in academic literature. Hence, there is used the strategy of grounded theory in this paper. Through statistical method there are extracted relevant data on researched issues. The used instrumentet to carry out the research were questionnaires and interviews. The research lasted 30-40minuta. Respondents answered anonymously.

After completing the research, the data from the questionnaires were entered into the computer and then they were analyzed. The results of this research and analysis create a clear picture of teachers' perceptions on several issues related to education and its role in cultural heritage.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
After realizing the research, which was meant to investigate teachers’ perceptions about the role of education for cultural heritage, we have analyzed the results derived from questionnaires, which results reflect the perceptions of teachers on specific issues, for example, organizing student visits to museums and other cultural opportunities, students’ education through textbooks for cultural heritage, support of international institutions for the preservation of cultural heritage, etc. The presented data in this section reflects the teachers’ beliefs on the above recorded issues. So, to realize this work, it has been exploited only a few questions from the questionnaire prepared for research.
The question (Q1): Are organized visits to museums and other cultural events for students? Respondents’ answers to the questionnaires are as follows: 38.10% of respondents said "yes", 61.90% of them responded “no”. (See, Chart 1)

**Chart 1** Teachers’ responses on the Q1.

According to Lindsey et.al. (2007) “The museum works with people to respect one another’s culture and eventually, learn to value difference” [16].

The question (Q2): Which classes’ textbooks contain more material on cultural heritage? The answers are as following: 15.24% of respondents replied from the “2 up to the 5th “grade and 84.76% replied stating that “6th and 9th” grades textbooks provide more learning material. (See chart, 2).

**Chart 2** Teachers’ responses on the Q2.

The question Q3): How much are presented cultural monuments in the textbooks? Responses are as the following: 11.43% of respondents replied “much”, and 87.62%, replied “little” and 0.95% replied “not at all” (See the chart, 3).
The question (Q4): How much have contributed international institutions in rebuilding historical monuments in our country? The responses are as the following: 21.90% of respondents replied “much”, and 61.90% of them replied “little” whereas 16.19% replied “not at all”. (See, Chart 4).

The question (Q5): How much does cultural heritage (CH) have impact on the welfare of a people? The resulting answers are as follows: 81.90% of respondents said "many" 13:33% answered "a little", while 4.76% of the respondents think that cultural heritage does not affect "no" to the welfare of a nation. (See Chart 5).
The question (Q6): Is there sufficient material in Albanian on cultural heritage? The respondents' answers are as follows: 16.19% of respondents said "yes", 20.95% of them said "do not know", while the majority of respondents 62.86% responded saying "no", i.e. Learning content does not have sufficient material to provide knowledge to the the Albanians in terms of cultural heritage.

Another searching question in the questionnaire (Q7) was dealing with teachers perceptions in relation to the impact of teaching-learning material and students’ awareness on preservation of cultural heritage. The respondent answers are as the following: 61.90% of them replied “yes” and, 29.52% replied “I do not know”, while 8.57% of the respondents replied “no”.

The question (Q8) if students know when it is the international day of cultural heritage? 60.00% of students’ respondents replied “yes”. And 8.57% of them replied “I do not know”, while 31.43% of respondents said “no”. (See Chart 6).

National Cultural Heritage Day is 29 September. On the occasion of the celebration, various cultural institutions organize cultural events and get free access to any heritage institution. Normally there are prepare calendars and other flyers to raise awareness, promotion and awareness of citizens on preservation of national cultural monuments.
In the end, we must say that the findings from this research show that the impact of education is important in sensitizing students to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. In this context, teachers and schools have been and continue to be crucial factors on achieving this goal. As Zmuda, Kuklis and Kline have concluded that, “meaningful growth can come only by focusing on change from the "inside out" [17].

5. CONCLUSION
Kosovo is making serious efforts to approximate its cultural policies with those of the European Union, because the intention of our country is to become part of the big European family. If we want to develop cultural policies, firstly, to bear in mind that these policies can be built on the foundation principles based on democracy. The National Cultural Heritage Strategy 2015-2025, calls for an improvement of "access for all" to the cultural heritage as a right of all citizens of Kosovo and as a contribution of all parties for ensuring unhindered access, that guarantees improvement of Kosovo’s image in the eyes of Kosovar population and to other countries in the world. The development of cultural policies should be put at the service of European integration processes. To achieve this goal, major influence has our students’ education on cultural heritage. Although the role of education evaluation, preservation, management and promotion of cultural heritage is enormous, the link between education and cultural heritage requires greater strengthening. Although the academic literature and pedagogical documentation aim to provide a strong connection between the binomial education-culture, this relationship has not been established sufficiently.

This research has proved useful, results as it provides a methodology on which to base further research on education and heritage culture. Future studies should consider issues explored and explained by our side. Their role would be deeper research associated with each segment that reflects the role of education in cultural heritage. Our study represents a cultural heritage relation to education in general way closely related to our research context.

The results of our research presented in this paper can be used for comparative studies in the field of education and cultural heritage. The findings imply policymakers to redesign programs oriented to youth education for preservation and promotion of cultural heritage in Kosovo. Finally, we must say that the new curriculum should focus on providing knowledge related to cultural heritage. Also, schools, teachers, new textbooks, new methods and ways of teaching, etc, should be directed to student motivation and awareness for the preservation of cultural heritage, which represents a distinct segments of national identity.

REFERENCES


[18] Council of Europe, Committee of Minister, Rec (2003)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member state on the promotion of tourism to foster the cultural heritage as a factor for sustainable development.
