

Ranka Perućica, MA 1
Faculty of Medicine Foča
University of East Sarajevo

Original scientific paper
UDK: 37.013.8
DOI: 10.17810/2015.51
[Creative Commons](#)
[Attribution 4.0](#)
[International License](#)

HOW TEACHERS EVALUATE THEIR WORK STYLE DEPENDING ON THE SUBJECT THEY TEACH AND YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE

Summary: In previous works we presented the studies that discussed how students evaluate their teachers and their style of teaching. To what extent their styles affect the students' attitudes to teaching, learning, success, motivation and the like. In this work we have tried to point out how teachers assess their style of work, depending on the subject they teach and years of work experience. In addition, the aim of this study was to examine whether there are differences in teachers' estimation of the teaching styles depending on the subject they teach and years of work experience. The study sample consisted of 120 teachers in the final grades of primary schools in the Sarajevo – Romania region. Teachers responded to questions assessing which of the statements given are related to them. The questionnaire was designed for research purposes with the three styles that are commonly used in the classroom to a democratic, autocratic and laissez-fair style. Reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach - alpha coefficient, and amounted to 0.73 democratic style, the autocratic 0.73, and 0.63 for the indifferent style. In the study, we used two methods: survey method and the method of theoretical analysis. The obtained results show that there is a statistically significant difference in teachers' assessments of democratic and laissez-fair style usage, depending on the subject they teach, while there was no statistically significant difference when it comes to the autocratic style. The second part of our results shows that there is no difference in teachers' assessments of work styles, depending on years of work experience. We hope that these results will contribute to the already existing research dealing with this subject.

Key words: teacher's style, subject, years of work experience.

Introduction

Numerous researchers who are involved in students' education believe that activities and teachers' attitudes towards learning process depend on many factors. According to their opinion these factors can be different: working conditions, acquired pedagogical knowledge, teaching subject, years of work experience, work style and many others (Pajares, 1992). Teachers' behaviour in the classroom can also be the consequence of the environment in which they operate. The school system is important factor which determines in what way teachers do their job. Thus, in one study it was emphasized that 'School systems can exert pressure on teachers which at the same time results in reducing the impact on the teacher's

¹ rankaskrkar78@gmail.com

and student's motivation, as well as the quality of their interactions' (Lalic – Vučetić, Deric & Devic, 2009: 360).

In accordance with the society they live in, teachers are expected to take care not only of their professional but also personal reputation. This is achieved through self-observation, self-evaluation as well as self-examination of personal actions and beliefs. As the students and teachers depend on each other it is very important for them to know what they think about each other, what their virtues and flaws, weaknesses and potentials are. We can say that so far we have noticed two teaching situations in teaching practice. One part of the teaching population consists of those who think they should change their work methods, procedures and beliefs. They also think that they should improve themselves professionally and adapt their work to students. On the other hand, the other part of teaching population considers that they should not change anything, that their methods are quite good and that the students are those who should be adapted to their teaching processes.

In the pedagogical literature researchers agree that there is no universal teachers' work style. The most common division is: democratic, autocratic and laissez-fair work style. Democratic and autocratic teachers' work styles are most commonly present in the teaching process and both styles have certain good and bad sides in different situations (Cowley, 2006; Matijević & Bognar, 2003; Stilin, 2005). A teacher who is democratically oriented involves students in the process of decision making, talks with them about the current problems within the classroom, respects students' opinions, their attitudes, desires, different interests and so on. When teachers in their work use only authoritative style, students have to respect the rules they set; they are also expected to be extremely obedient and to finish their tasks. In their work such teachers use monologue method and expect from students rigorous reproduction of the material. Indifferent or unplanned work style is used by those teachers who do not set any rules or certain boundaries and aims in their work. They care less for their work; show no sense for students and their problems. In such atmosphere students lose interest to be involved in work, they express dissatisfaction, irresponsibility, bad marks etc. The characteristics of the laissez-fair style are that a teacher only 'provides students with the information they need to operate' (Vlaheki & Jurcec, 2009: 604).

The purpose of this research is to obtain current information that reveal the most commonly used style of work of teachers. Research should be directed so as to obtain data which would provide the teachers with more specific information about how they evaluate their style of work with respect to the subject they teach and the years spent in the educational process.

Research methodology

As already outlined in the theoretical part, the problem of teachers' work style was discussed and studied by both the pedagogical and psychological sciences. In this context, the questions that arise are: which of the teachers' work styles are most common in the teaching process, how the students evaluate teachers' work styles and so on. In this study the aim is to find out how teachers evaluate their own work styles (if they are more democratic, authoritative or indifferent) depending on the subject they teach and the years of work experience. The main objectives of this study are related to the testing of teachers' assessments of teachers' styles representation depending on the subject they teach and years spent in the classroom. We started with the assumption that there are certain differences in teachers' assessments of teachers' styles representation depending on the subject they teach and years of service.

In this research we have used two scientific methods:

- Theoretical analysis method and
- Descriptive method.

The method of theoretical analysis has been used for theoretical background of research problems wherein different sources were analysed and other researches that had been conducted in this field. Descriptive method is suitable for testing teachers' attitudes and collection of empirical facts, as well as their analysis, comparison, interpretation and presentation of certain conclusions.

In order to collect necessary materials following research techniques were used:

- Scaling
- Interviewing

The research instruments used in this study were: questionnaire with demographic characteristics of teachers and Scale for testing teachers' evaluations of their own work styles designed for the needs of this research. The scale consists of three subscales which determine three teachers' work styles: democratic, autocratic and indifferent style. Teachers were asked to estimate to what degree a given statement applies to them (from 5 – always, to 1 – never). The scale consists of 34 questions. Reliability was tested using Cronbach – alpha coefficient and it was 0.73 for democratic style, 0.73 for autocratic style and 0.63 for indifferent style.

In the study, we used quantitative analysis of available data. We applied the analysis of variances and Kruskal-Wallis H test.

The sample consists of seventh, eighth and ninth grade pupils from the Sarajevo – Romanija region. Randomly selected schools are: Elementary school "Petar Petrović Njegoš" East Ilidža, Elementary school "Sveti Sava" East New Sarajevo, Elementary school "Pale" Pale, Elementary school "Srbija" Pale, and Elementary school "Sveti Sava" Rogatica. The total number of respondents was 120 teachers. The survey was conducted in May 2014.

Research results and discussion

The main objectives of this study were to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in teachers' assessments of styles of work, depending on the subject they teach and years of their service.

When testing differences in teachers' assessments of their own work styles in the teaching process depending on the subject they teach we used Kruskal-Wallis H test of differences because Leven's statistics did not show homogeneity of variances. Table No. 1 shows the results of Kruskal-Wallis H test of differences in teachers' assessments of democratic work style depending on the subject they teach.

Table 1. Differences in teachers' assessments of democratic work style depending on the subject they teach

Subject		N	The average rank	χ^2	p
				33,042	0,005
Democratic style	Serbian language	8	27,44		
	Mathematics	12	56,33		
	History	8	41,00		
	Geography	8	77,56		
	English language	9	51,78		
	Physics	8	76,44		
	Technical Education	9	71,61		
	Computer science	8	53,25		
	Biology	8	65,44		
	Chemistry	8	65,06		
	Music	6	56,17		
	Art	6	28,67		
	Physical Education	5	70,10		
	Religious Teaching	7	98,79		
	French language	5	48,80		
German language	5	85,80			
Total		120			

At the basis of hi-square and its importance ($\chi^2= 33, 042, p = 0,005$), we can tell that there is a statistically important difference in teachers' assessments of democratic work style depending on the subject they teach. Religious Teaching teachers estimated that they were the most democratic in their work compared to the other teachers and the subjects they taught. They are followed by the German language teachers, Geography teachers, Technical Education as well as Physical Education teachers.

From the Table 1. we can also notice that the Serbian language teachers, Art and History teachers estimated the least degree of democratic approach in their work. Table No. 2 shows the results of Kruskal-Wallis test of differences in teachers' assessments of autocratic work style depending on the subject they teach.

Table 2. Differences in teachers' assessments of autocratic work style depending on the subject they teach

Subject		N	The average rank	χ^2	p
				20,439	0,156
Autocratic style	Serbian language	8	59,31		
	Mathematics	12	61,71		
	History	8	60,69		
	Geography	8	95,38		
	English language	9	56,78		
	Physics	8	43,81		
	Technical Education	9	71,17		
	Computer science	8	77,50		
	Biology	8	66,81		
	Chemistry	8	56,81		

Music	6	70,17
Art	6	33,67
Physical Education	5	57,70
Religious Teaching	7	44,93
French language	5	47,70
German language	5	44,20
Total	120	

Obtained hi-square and degree of its significance ($X^2= 20.439$, $p =0.156$), shows that there is no statistically important differences in teachers' assessments of autocratic work style depending on the subject they teach. Table No. 3 shows the results of Kruskal-Wallis test of differences in teachers' assessments of indifferent work style depending on the subject they teach.

Table 3. Differences in teachers' assessments of indifferent work style depending on the subject they teach

Subject	N	The average rank	X^2	p
			27.847	0.023
Laissez-fair style				
Serbian language	8	75,06		
Mathematics	12	51,54		
History	8	49,63		
Geography	8	98,94		
English language	9	67,28		
Physics	8	59,56		
Technical Education	9	68,67		
Computer science	8	75,63		
Biology	8	55,75		
Chemistry	8	60,19		
Music	6	47,33		
Art	6	54,42		
Physical Education	5	80,60		
Religious Teaching	7	34,29		
French language	5	48,10		
German language	5	25,20		
Total	120			

Obtained hi-square and degree of its significance ($X^2= 27,847$, $p=0,023$), shows that there is a statistically important difference in teachers' assessments of indifferent work style depending on the subject they teach. Not only Geography teachers but also Physical education teachers, Computer science teachers, Technical education as well as the Serbian language teachers estimate that anarchic style is the most present style in they work. Given that our hypothesis was that there is a statistically significant difference in teachers' assessments of work styles depending on the subject they teach, we can say that for the most part this hypothesis was confirmed.

The question that appears after these results is: Why Geography teachers, Technical education teachers and Physical education teachers evaluate their work both as more

democratic and more anarchic at the same time? One of the possible answers could be provided depending on what teachers meant by democratic and what by anarchic work style. It is possible that they think that students are more democratically oriented to them if they give them complete freedom to work and study which is absolutely incorrect because in the practice and former theoretical analysis it was very hard to find something that identifies democratic work style with students' complete freedom to work and study. Also, this question remains open for some future studies treating similar problems.

The second part of our paper deals with teachers' assessments of work styles in the teaching process depending on the years of work spent in teaching practice. Examined differences were performed by the analysis of variances. Applying Leven'svariance homogeneity test, it was discovered that variances of variables were homogeneous and the requirement for use of analysis of variances was achieved. The worth of Leven'stest was (2,353, p= 0,076). Table No. 4 shows the results of analysis of variables scores achieved by the teachers depending on the years of work experience at the scale established for assessment of the democratic work style in teaching process.

Table No. 4. Analysis of variances scores achieved by the teachers depending on the years of work experience at the scale established for assessment of the democratic work style in the teaching process

Variability selection	Squares sums	df	s ²	F	p
Inter-groups	121,421	4	40,474	0,982	0,404
Inside-groups	4780,546	116	41,212		
Total	4901,967	120			

Table No. 4 shows that there is no statistically important difference in teachers' assessments of democratic work style depending on the years of work experience in teaching process. Table No.5 shows the results of analysis of variances scores achieved by the teachers depending on the years of work experience at the scale established for assessment of the autocratic work style in the teaching process.

Table No. 5. Analysis of variances scores achieved by the teachers depending on the years of work experience at the scale established for assessment of the autocratic work style in the teaching process

Variability selection	Squares sums	df	s ²	F	p
Inter-groups	275,045	4	91,682	1,854	0,141
Inside-groups	5735,880	116	49,447		
Total	6010,925	120			

Table No. 5 shows that there is no statistically important difference in teachers' assessments of autocratic work style depending on the years of work experience spent in teaching process. Table No. 6 shows the results of analysis of variances scores achieved by the teachers depending on the years of work experience at the scale established for assessment of the anarchic work style in the teaching process.

Table No. 6. Analysis of variances scores achieved by the teachers depending on the years of work experience at the scale established for assessment of the anarchic work style in the teaching process

Variability selection	Square sums	df	s ²	F	p
Inter-groups	109,588	4	36,529	1,006	0,393
Inside-groups	4213,212	116	36,321		
Total	4322,800	120			

As we can see from the Table No. 6 there is no statistically important difference in teachers' evaluations of anarchic work style in teaching process depending on the years spent in teaching process. Therefore, our hypothesis that there is a statistically significant difference in teachers' assessments of styles of work depending on years of service in the teaching has not been confirmed.

At the end, on the basis of the obtained results we can conclude that the teachers' years spent in the teaching process do not affect they work styles regardless of which of them is used. This implies that teachers perform their teachers' activities as they are used to, actually they do not change their work style no matter how long they work in education. Teachers, regardless of the large number of professional training courses and seminar papers, do not change their work styles and methods. Instead, they operate as they always do regardless of whether their work methods suit their students. One of the reasons for such results can be that older teachers often justify themselves by temperament and self-confidence, while the younger ones express stubbornness, lack of organization, haste, indecisiveness etc. In order to improve teachers' work style, the following terms must be achieved: the development of public opinion among teachers, coordination of activities of all members of the teaching staff (if teachers want to change some of the techniques and methods), new problems and methods of learning.

Conclusion

Distinguishing democratic, autocratic and indifferent teachers' style has served as a starting point to many authors who have been studying teachers' work styles. From the teachers' point of view work style is a key concept of this research. The hypothesis that there are differences in teachers' assessments of work styles representation depending on the subject they teach and years of service is partially confirmed. It has been concluded that teachers of different subjects differently assess the presence of democratic and anarchic style in their work. On the other hand, we did not confirm the existence of differences in teachers' assessments of work styles representation depending on the subject they teach and years of service.

Methodological solutions in our research, together with the studied variables and instruments used, can be useful for some further research in this area that would allow the empirical verification of the results and lead to new insights about what teaching styles are used by teachers in their work. In this sense, it would be significant to realize the survey by using other appropriate research techniques, particularly systematic observation and interviewing. We believe that in this way we could overcome the possible disadvantages of the use of scales for

examining the attitudes of teachers. As an important topic for some further research, we see opportunities and strategies for recognizing and changing controlling contextual and interpersonal factors of teachers' work styles.

Teachers have to collaborate with their students, not only in regard to the subjects they teach but also in regard to working methods they use, in order to provide them with the knowledge needed for living in the 21st century. Therefore, it is very important for them to plan, to program, to organize and to appreciate their work (Guide for the introduction to work and subject teachers of elementary and secondary schools, 2006: 13). Different teaching activities also require different managerial skills (Woolfolk et al., 2014). The research results obtained in this study can help teachers to control their behaviour in the future teaching processes. They can also help them to find the best ways for problem solving and the change of personal attitudes towards students.

References

- Cowley, S. (2006). *The secrets of successful work in classrooms: skills, techniques and ideas*. Zagreb: School book.
- Lalic-Vucetic, N., Deric, I & Devic, R. (2009). Students' autonomy and teachers' interpersonal style in self-determination theory. *Anthology of the Institute for pedagogical research*, Vol. 41, Br. 2, 349-366.
- Matijevic, M. & Bognar, L. (2003). *Didactics*. Zagreb: School book.
- Pajares, M.F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research. Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, 62, 307-332.
- Stilin, E. (2005). Work styles and teachers' competence in dormitories. Rijeka: Adamic.
- Vlaxek, I. & Jurcec, L. (2009). Teachers' directing styles. In: Bouillet, D. & Matijevic, M. (Eds.). *The curricula of early and compulsory education*. Zagreb: Faculty of Education, University of Zagreb. Pp. 601-612.
- Guide for the introduction to work and subject teachers of elementary and secondary schools* (2006). Belgrade: Institute for the advancement of educational system.

Biographical notes:

Ranka Perućica was born in Sarajevo in 1985. She finished her primary and secondary school studies in Kalinovik. In 2008 she graduated from the Department of Education, Faculty of Philosophy University of East Sarajevo. She finished her postgraduate studies at the same faculty in 2013 and gained a MA in Pedagogical sciences. In the period from 2014 to 2015 she worked in High school "Kalinovik" in Kalinovik, and in the Centre for social work. From November 2015 she was appointed as a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Medicine Foča, University of East Sarajevo, and she also works as an assistant at the Department of Education, Faculty of Philosophy Pale. At the same faculty Ranka Perućica enrolled in the PhD programme in the field of General pedagogy. Until now, she has published a number of papers and attended several scientific conferences. She is a member of the project team within Erasmus + project named *Trans2Work*.