The teachers’ impact on policy making for the improvement of the school performance (the case of Kosovo)

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Abstract: Teachers’ contribution in the process of improving the contemporary school performance is manifold and permanent. This study elaborates the contribution of the Kosovan teachers towards the improvement of the quality of work in primary and lower secondary school. Data were collected from 1080 teachers working in schools located in different areas in Kosovo. The data processing was done through the descriptive statistics method with the aim of extracting the characteristics of the data (average standard deviation) and the inferential statistics method in the function of the validity scale of assumptions that result from the data. The research results indicate that today, the Kosovan teachers enjoy more opportunities to influence the policies for the functionalisation and improvement of the work at school, whereas teachers with a higher level of education are more sceptical concerning the issues of influencing the policies of functionalisation and improvement of the work at school.

Keywords: reform; Kosovo; teacher commitment; school performance; school improvement; decision-making.

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1 Introduction

Educational reforms are an integral part of the school policies even in the most advanced systems of education. The pace and nature of the reforms should be preliminarily determined by a research and an analysis, taking into account the models of reformation of the educational systems as well as through the realisation of national surveys and the diagnostication of the situation in the field. There are a number of important factors that can affect the process of school improvement, which is estimated to be out of school, at school and at the individual level, so in the process of school improvement, support is needed both for the individual and also for the system (Berry and Eckert, 2012; Oterkiil and Ertesvåg, 2012). School change and improvement is a complex process, it can be seen to have evolved through a number of phases (Hopkins et al., 2014) and in which teachers, administrators, policymakers, students, parents and community leaders, are united by the same goals (Domrase, 2013, p.4). Teachers have a crucial role in improving school work they are the main actors in their classrooms, and in meantime, their impact is reflecting collaboratively at the school level. Berkovich (2011, p.18) argues that, in the process of reforming, the reform leaders, based on the image they convey, are seen as cold and in the service of their ‘ivory tower’, whereas teachers are seen as emotional and passionate about the ‘trenches’ of the education system. Teachers should not be “as the subject of consultation from above”, in terms of school policies but also to “set the agenda and to both create and validate solutions to educational problems” (Bangs and Frost, 2015, p.3). Lefstein and Perath (2014, p.34) in their study about efforts to empower teachers’ involvement in education policy deliberations and to create a space for teachers’ voices, regarding the agenda of reform, have raised the issue for discussion “what happens when teachers don’t say what reformers want to hear”. The empirical research (Zimmerman, 2006; Terhart, 2013) proves that the way in which teachers, as the people in charge of the changes at school, react differs from the reaction of the compilers of the reforming policies, furthermore, not even all the teachers themselves see their workplace in the same way. According to Pajares (1992), exploration of the teachers’ beliefs continues to be a field of interest in the process of the school improvement, and the current findings in this field of research convincingly confirm the connection between the teachers’ beliefs and their dedication in their work with their class at school.

The reforming policies, according to McLaughlin (1984, p.1), usually reflect the viewpoints of individuals “outside the classroom”, instead of the teachers’ viewpoints, and this is precisely the genesis of the problems that accompany the school reform. Hopkins et al. (2014, p.274) found that school improvement can be seen as a process which has a number of phases, in which are involved “a constant striving to achieve the delicate balance between individual initiative and school/system change, between internal and external resources and ideas, between pressure for accountability and support for change, and between independence and collaboration”. The reforming process should be of a ‘mixed’ nature – ‘push’ and ‘pull’, as the push reforms are those reforming initiatives that instigate the implementation of innovations, ensure the support, and “generate the will for change”, whereas the pull reforms, the ones that pull towards the implementation of innovations, are characterised by the hurry for change and the setting of the standards to be achieved by the teachers (Jensen et al., 2012, p.17). The reforming process cannot be accomplished without teachers who are the constant starting point of each process, and the qualitative improvement of the work with students.
Therefore, teachers are the main factor that determines the success or the failure of the school reforming initiatives. A common point nowadays is that “teachers should shape their own professional lives in schools, and that their professional voice should be heard both individually and collectively” (Bangs and Frost, 2015, p.8) making that increase teachers’ involvement in decisions concerning their duties and opportunities for development and also provide for more sharing on issues concerning the school management. Numerous research studies (Page and Page, 1988; Bryk and Sebring, 1991; Easton, 1991; Pajares, 1992; Sebring and Camburn, 1992; Hogueisson, 1996; Milliman, 2000; Hinde, 2003; Zimmerman, 2006; Coggshall and Ott, 2010; Berkovich, 2011; Faubert, 2012; Terhart, 2013; Mincu, 2015) indicate the importance of the teachers’ attitudes and commitment in the implementation and sustainability of the reforming initiatives. According to McLaughlin (1984), it is precisely the teachers who, with their work in their classes, determine the final outcome of the school reform. No reforms can be accomplished if there is no will on the part of the teachers (Terhart, 2013), thus, the design of the reforming policies is progressively accomplished in partnership with the teachers.

Therefore, designing reform policies nowadays is done in partnership with the teachers. From the study of Mons et al. (2007, p.15), it appears that although the teachers, and the unions (Brezicha et al., 2015) that represent them should be an ‘influential force’ in decision-making process at school, in these processes their contribution is limited, and only in some countries, such as the Nordic countries and in Estonia, Bulgaria, Italy, teachers are consulted about the reform initiatives being planned or undertaken. In general, research in this field (Schlechty, 1997; Hargreaves, 2003; Fertig and Wallace, 2004; Kaniuka, 2012; Hopkins et al., 2014; Hajisoteriou et al., 2017), underscores the need for policymakers to work on school improvement, to focus on reform issues if the model takes into account the education context-school system, thus avoiding imposition from the centre level authorities. Of the same impact is also the historic context, whether on the individual or organisational – school level (Spillane et al., 2002), thus the real change occurs only when the habits and traditions, practices and procedures, and rules and roles change. Hajisoteriou et al. (2017, p.4) suggest that it is necessary to be given the opportunity to all key school actors to explore improvement efforts by taking teacher perceptions “what they believe, perceive, and think about different areas which could eventually assist in the improvement of the school setting”. When talking about the minimal compliance scale for the extension of change in regard with the systems of values of those who are in charge of the changes, the findings indicate that “leaders and the school policymakers cannot directly ‘reculturute’, or change the people’s beliefs and values, but that there is the possibility ‘to work on the basis of some scales of minimal compliance’, and thus highlight the feeling of ‘orchestration’ in this process of change (Fertig and Wallace, 2004, p.5). A study from Fairman and Mackenzie (2015, p.75) about teachers’ ability to see their efforts as leadership, show us the many ways that teachers lead work with colleagues to improve teaching and learning, but their understanding of their work as leadership seemed to be linked to formal and hierarchical roles. Although they recognise their informal and collaborative work as having greater impact on school improvement and did not hesitate to see themselves as leaders, but seldom referred to themselves or to others such as ‘leaders’, even if the various strategies that they used was to improve the school performance, they have seen a formal role that was given to them only by a narrow field of authority.
Teacher leadership has been defined in many ways over the past three decades (Dumay and Galand, 2012; Poekert, 2012; Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis, 2013; Hopkins et al., 2014; Sun and Leithwood, 2015; Angelle and DeHart, 2016) and was seen in different roles according to the teachers’ influence on school, including commitment to teaching, to students, to the school organisation, and to change. Nowadays, teachers’ roles in defining and implementing school change have become more and more recognised (Poekert, 2012; Mincu, 2015) and from the literary review (Sun and Leithwood, 2015) it turns out that the concept of teacher leadership has received a good international attention. School directors have a key role in creating conditions that enable teachers to be heard and to offer their contribution to policy development to improve school work (Dumay and Galand, 2012; Marsh and Farrell, 2015; Bangs and Frost, 2015; Brezicha et al., 2015; Sun and Leithwood, 2015; Angelle and DeHart, 2016). Even by Angelle and DeHart (2016, p.88) in their intended to explore the concept of teacher leadership have shown a reciprocal relationship existing between the principal and the teachers in school, as a principal’s attitude toward offering opportunities for teachers to engage in leadership practices, and teachers’ inclination to take on leadership responsibilities. According to the findings of Lin (2014, p.52), from the process of decision making of school, teachers were just informed of the results of the decisions made, they rarely had access to these important issues, so “their isolation within the classroom could result in alienation or misunderstanding between them and the school. With the arrival of teachers’ empowerment, teachers are expected to have the authority to have access to decision-making on important school issues”. Brezicha et al. (2015, p.98) found that reform outcomes are depended by “school leaders’ understanding of individual teachers’ views and philosophy and the delivery of information around the new reform as well as the intentional and differentiated support given to teachers”. From the view of Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis (2013, p.172) teacher involvement in school decision making, is a multidimensional construct pertaining to decisions classified into three different categories: student issues, managerial issues and teacher issues and “teachers did not participate to the same extent in the different decisional domains, nor were they willing to participate equally in all types of decisions”. According to OECD (2013, p.50), a chronological overview of the developments in the school life, from 1980 onwards, reveals the tendencies for an increased school autonomy in the field of curriculum as well as the management of financial resources, emphasising the fact that schools are the segment that knows its necessities better than any other segment. This process has also highlighted the tendency for a redefinition of the school principal’s role in the teachers’ participation in the school decision-making processes. Since 1990, schools have been considered “self-improvement institutions” (Mincu, 2013, p.8), highlighting the teachers’ significant role, namely their professional development and instigation for self-reflection in the process of the school improvement. Today, teachers are presented with new requests and responsibilities on a daily basis, so they must “learn to wear new caps” in harmony with their roles. Today, we see the teachers ‘outside’ the classroom as project coordinators, leaders of professional activities, and participants of the school board (Tardif and Borges, 2014, p.6).
2 Kosovo education context

Kosovo is located in the central part of the Balkan, as presented in Figure 1. It is bordered to the southwest from Albania, to the northwest from Montenegro, from Serbia to the north and from Macedonia to the southeast. Kosovo has an area of 10,887 km² and is divided into 38 administrative units or 38 municipalities. On 17 February 2008, Kosovo declared independence and since then, over 110 countries have recognised Kosovo as a state. Until now Kosovo has joined numerous international organisations (The World Fact Book, 2017).

Figure 1 Kosovo (the blue coloured country) (see online version for colours)
are in elementary schools. The work order in Kosovo schools, the selection of governing bodies in schools, professional bodies and other staff in the school, is provided by the Law on Pre-University Education in Kosovo (Law Nr. 04/L-032, 2011). The primary and secondary school community in Kosovo consists of the leading staff, secretary or administrator, teaching staff, board of directors, student council, parent council, technical staff and professional consultancy. Based on the Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo (Law Nr. 04/L-032, 2011), the School Board is the highest governing body of the school with advisory and decision-making function at the school (Administrative Instruction Nos. 03/2016). In its efforts towards the establishment of an appropriate system of education, in line with global developments, the Kosovo education system continues to face many challenges. The process of implementing the school reform revealed several factors of organisational and institutional context (Desimone, 2002) that decelerated the pace of reforming the Kosovo school. There are numerous factors and conditions that should be considered when interpreting the data in the Kosovo case, such as the political context, particularly the process of association with EU (European Union), the cultural context, particularly the linguistic context as well as wars and previous conflicts. The change of the Kosovo education system was not only necessary, but it was imperative in the new social and political circumstances created in post-war Kosovo. The recovery process of the Kosovo education system was accompanied by many challenges that required planning, commitment and financial support (Sommers and Buckland, 2004).

In the last two decades, the Kosovo education system has not ceased the efforts to improve the quality of education in the country. Initially, the efforts were oriented towards the rehabilitation of the Kosovo war consequences, in 1999, when the international peacekeeping North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces intervened with the purpose of establishing peace and order in the country. In 1999, the UN administration (UNMIK), established by the Security Council of the United Nations, being vested the authority over the territory and the people of Kosovo, took the responsibility of establishing institutional and political order in the post-conflict country. This period of time is considered a period of great developments in the field of education. At that time, Kosovo, as a post-war country, enjoyed many opportunities, benefiting from different projects, international donations, provided by reputable international organisations. Investments were not lacking in any of the fields of life, including the field of education in which numerous steps were undertaken with the purpose of improving the situation at that time. Implementation of the reforming policies in the political and socio-cultural environment of Kosovo was another challenge. Political instability (the undefined status of Kosovo for a certain period of time), financial crises, and other barriers only hampered the implementation of the school reform (OECD, 2003). Implementation of innovative reforms, the students’ performance at school, and successes and failures in the process, have raised controversy as well as a tendency to open a public debate on the effectiveness of implementing the reform of the Kosovo education system. The tendency to open a public debate about this issue has been initiated by the students’ parents and teachers themselves. The absence of such debates, so far, and the fact that they have been initiated by the students’ parents and the teachers, indicate the lack of a good practice in designing the school reform policies in Kosovo. Furthermore, Kosovo daily newspapers are often used for publication of papers in which the teachers and parents express their dissatisfaction with the teaching and learning process overall, and the students’ poor performance at school. Apparently in the vortex of
all these changes, an open public debate about the evaluation of the reformed structure of the education system, the course of the implementation processes, and the results from the planned innovations implementation up to the school level, should have been initiated. Nevertheless, in spite of the work done, the barriers in the recovery of the education system in the post-war period were numerous, and consequently, there was also room for discontent and frustration. The process of initiating, implementing, and institutionalising the changes in the education system, requires the coordination of power of all stakeholders in this process. Schlechty (1997, p.69) argues that “schools are for the children and their needs, but also for the society and its future”, in this case, “parents, community, teachers and society in general, are the indirect beneficiaries”. The school reform project needs a broad-based discussion of the stakeholders, the main actors of the changing process. The Kosovan teachers, but also the students’ parents complain that they have not been consulted about the plan of reforming the education system (Wenderoth and Sang, 2004). In this regard, the tendency of the education policymakers to make ‘quick adjustments’ by not taking into account the local culture and circumstances bring contradictions and false clarity concerning the significance of the changes in the education system (Fullan, 2001). In his assessment of the reforming course of the education systems in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Radó (2001) states that when the reforming policies are drafted, the conditions in which they are implemented are almost never taken into account, and that these reforming policies are adjusted to the immediate needs that arise because of the change of political priorities, namely after the change of political parties at the ministry level, a new reorganisation launches again, thus highlighting the lack of investment and the long-term planning in the design and implementation of the educational policies. This is precisely what has been happening to the school reform process in Kosovo. The time when the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) undertakes the necessary steps to improve the course of reforms in education is marked as critical because of the numerous technical, conceptual and political challenges. The initiation and implementation of changes in the education system seem easier from a technical and organisational aspect, rather than from a social perspective (Fullan, 2001). The sudden and immediate change that imposed the age eligibility for allowing children to enter school from 7 to 6 years (announced only two weeks before the commencement of the school year) was greeted with criticism. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the parents’ complaint known as “The crisis of the fifth grade”, initiated through a letter addressed to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, which stated: “We have the impression that all this is being done in a hurry to justify something that we are notable to understand, but in our opinion, it will cause long-term problems that will have far-reaching consequences for our children” (Kosovo Parents’ Council, 2014). In the academic year 2006–2007, the MEST begins the efforts to implement the decision for implementing the fifth grade, what marks the conclusion of the reform in the pre-university education in Kosovo. According to the MEST, in the new structure of pre-university education, the fifth grade is the continuation of the fourth grade, but parents, on the other hand, see it as a ‘failing school year’, and their children as “students who failed class” (Kosovo Parents’ Council, 2014). In fact, this discussion also set in motion teachers and education experts, who were suspicious of the success of this decision, since they considered that MEST, municipal institutions and schools were not prepared to implement such a serious change in the education system. The implementation process of the education system reform in Kosovo is accompanied by the lack of communication between those who develop
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...the reforming policies and their implementers, and by the lack of monitoring of this process with the aim of collecting the data to assess the effectiveness of the implemented innovations. Likewise, Desimone (2002) indicates the impact of the teachers’ characteristics, the economic, social, and ethnic context as well as the school policies on the implementation of the school reform. According to Oterkiil and Ertesvåg (2012, p.88), “characteristics of the school context should be carefully considered when developing and adapting a program in a new country”, and in Kosovo, there are notably different approaches of international donors who provide their support that do not always correspond to the urgent needs and the school context in Kosovo. The establishment of a basic qualitative and inclusive education system was the main purpose after the war in Kosovo (Mula, 2006). In that transitional phase, the experiences from the most advanced education systems of the western countries were transferred. In the midst of this transition, there was discontent, criticism, and dilemma among the relevant stakeholders. Successful implementation of the reforming initiatives was seen with skepticism, mainly because of the lack of traditions and the experience in projecting the changes. Despite all the efforts undertaken in terms of reforming the education system with the aim of advancing the quality, in the post-war Kosovo, like in many other transitional systems, the transition phase is identified as “a reform without vision” (Crighton et al., 2001, p.28), and it clearly identifies the absence of “clear strategies at the operational level”. Embracing of the western values, philosophies, different teaching strategies, and the teaching methodologies neglecting the local context, and the specific circumstances of the Kosovo society, and also ignoring of the education tradition in the country (Koliqi, 2004), were the reasons that raised doubts on the successful implementation of the education reform. Therefore, the education reform project should have been discussed before initiating implementation activities. Furthermore, this should have been done by involving all stakeholders in this process such as: the heads of educational institutions, teachers, students, parents, and the community. Thus, the project of the school reform should have been discussed before the efforts of implementation are put in motion, including all the relevant stakeholders in the process, such as: the heads of the educational institutions, teachers, parents, community.

3 The commitment of the Kosovo teachers in improving the school performance

Research results (McLaughlin, 1984; Fullan, 2001; Desimone, 2002), indicate the need for analysis, initially, of the teachers’ context, their professional competence, potential factors that determine the teachers’ effectiveness within the school context, the existing opportunities for professional development, and then, the research of the reforming practices in similar work contexts. Lin (2014, p.55) reported that the cultural diversity it seems to have a great impact on teacher empowerment, so commitment of teachers is dependent from their responsibility for their participation as decision makers in which case it is possible that teachers had to change their beliefs and attitudes toward their roles outside the classroom or to take retraining (in-service activities) to implement the new style of decision-making. According to the findings of Mincu (2013) there is a need to build collective capacities in schools, focusing on teacher professional development
and their commitment beyond class, in decision-making processes to improve school performance. Research results regarding teacher empowerment (Poekert, 2012; Lin, 2014; Mincu, 2015) indicate that the development of teacher leaders is also a such a form of professional development which has a great influence upon many an aspect of schools like student learning outcome and the school will have the opportunity to adapt to dynamic circumstances. Fullan (2011, p.3) assesses the teachers’ energy, their inner motivation, as “the central driving force” in the process of a successful reform of the education system.

Even though the Kosovan teachers acted responsibly and responded positively to the efforts for the reforming of the education system, at one time, they also recalled on their rights and responsibilities. It was a difficult period for the Kosovan teachers, filled with confusion, disagreements, and disappointments. Overload with innovations that were far from the Kosovo education system reality, the imposed reforming initiatives that caused a kind of inertia among the teachers, low salaries, and the poor economic conditions, were only some of the reasons that brought the continuation of implementation of the school reform to a critical point, and led to a much more proactive and committed Teachers’ Union, a powerful organisation which defends the status of the Kosovan teachers and their rights. In this regard, the year 2010 marked a critical period when the teaching process throughout the country was seriously jeopardised. The researchers, Fullan (2001) and Berkovich (2011), offer numerous arguments that show how the success of the implementation of the education reform depends to a large extent on the teachers’ attitude in this process. Berkovich (2011, p.2), argues that the teachers who are resistant to the changes in education use the media, and especially the Internet, as “the main arena for seeking legitimacy and support for their discontent”. In Kosovo, the teachers did not sufficiently use other opportunities of organising the debates about the school reform, except through the Union. In the case of our country, in order to successfully implement the reform objectives, the Kosovan teachers’ potential should have been assessed first – their position, their role, and the opportunities for their proper preparation. They should have been informed about their role and responsibilities during the implementation phase, and the barriers that they should overcome in the initial phase. Working conditions, uncertainties related to the reform project, the teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about the reform, their professional training as well as their low salaries, were the obstacles that should not have been underestimated (Miftari-Ferizi, 2014).

We also claim that, in Kosovo, the same strategies of improvement were not applicable to all Kosovo schools, since they followed the western standard models for the school improvement, neglecting the conditions of the Kosovo schools, whether in terms of infrastructure or in terms of their capacities to implement those strategies. It was these uncertainties about the education reform project in Kosovo that brought the resistance and less commitment by the Kosovan teachers. The decision-making without information from the field, i.e., the school, remains a real challenge in the process of the policymaking in education. In this regard, precisely as the consequence of the uncertainties in priorities, and the refusal to acknowledge these uncertainties (Crighton et al., 2001, p.42), it has come to “the fragmentation and overload of the education reform” and the need “to set clear the priorities accepted by all parties involved, to determine what needs to be reformed, and how to make the reforms”. It is known that “individual and collective experiences of teachers have the potential to increase or hinder the success of reforms” (Noack, 2011, p.39). Efforts to understand
how leadership can influence the capacity building of teachers to have effective leadership, speaks of the importance of successful experiences in the school reform process and how important it is for teachers to be equipped with such mastery experiences “how to make reforms” (Kaniuka, 2012, p.344). Obviously, each process is evaluated in terms of improvements in regard to our expectations. In the Kosovo context, when considering the implementation process of the education reform, and the steps that were undertaken at each stage, it appears that the initiation of changes in the education system began “without the presence” of the Kosovan teachers in the decision-making process concerning the school reforming policies. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that there were no efforts to collect and draw suggestions from all relevant parties in the process of change, thus neglecting the context in which the Kosovo schools function. Schools and teachers in Kosovo, were not in the position to react to these changes, but only to adapt to the new duties and responsibilities and “enter the battle with multiple innovations” (Fullan, 2001). No roundtables were organised with the teachers, so that their voice could be heard. Obviously, in the vortex of all these changes, a public debate with the aim of assessing the school reform, the course of the implementation processes, and the results from the implemented innovations was very much needed. The possibilities for a broader spectrum of consultations in the education community, and the feedback collection from the field, are seen as necessary in the process of improving the work at school. The Kosovan teachers were not sufficiently involved in the decision-making processes and the drafting of the school policies, thus the efforts to present the teachers’ views concerning the education reform were very poor. There has been no previous research on this issue, in the context of understanding the relationship of beliefs, attitudes and positions of the Kosovan teachers, while indirectly deriving information about the teachers’ professional and organisational commitment in the primary and lower secondary school in Kosovo in improving the school performance. According to Botha (2010, p.558), we see teachers “put their efforts primarily within their class, independently from the needs of the school as a whole”. The objective of this study is the commitment of the Kosovan teachers in the process of drafting and implementing the policies to improve the school performance. According to Radó (2001, p.25), “the education reform is not a linear and continuous process, as it follows the logics “two steps forward, one step backward”. Education systems with a good performance analyse the situation and their needs first, then they see what is functional and what is not, show dedication in attracting the best candidates who want to become teachers, provide professional support through mentoring, classroom observation, and create a cooperative environment (Jensen et al., 2012). Lack of mechanisms for evaluating the Kosovan teachers’ performance and their certification was a weak point in the course of improving the school performance. Even nowadays, there are continuous efforts to strengthen the capacity for internal and external evaluation of the school performance at the Kosovo schools with the purpose of increasing the quality of work at schools. The strengthening of these capacities would provide a clear picture of the effects of implemented innovations in the Kosovo schools, achievements and difficulties faced as well as the further steps that need to be taken in this process. Firestone and Bader (1992, p.247) argue that implementation of the education reform naturally raises a few questions, such as: “What are the results of the undertaken reform? Have we achieved the desired effects? Has the way of thinking and the way things are done changed? Is the staff involved in this process and are they motivated enough to work?”
Therefore, in our research we have focused on the following points:

- **Research question 1**: Is there a correlation between the teachers’ level of professional capacities and their belief that today teachers have more opportunities to influence the policies for the functionalisation and improvement of the work at school?

- **Research question 2**: Is there a correlation between the teachers’ level of professional capacities and their belief that the adequate functioning of the School Board, the Teachers’ Council, or the Professional Committees will increase the teachers’ participation in the decision-making and the school-policymaking processes?

- **Research question 3**: Are there any differences in terms of the opportunities offered to the teachers so that they could influence the functionalisation policies and the improvement of the work at the school based on the demographic characteristics?

4 Research methodology

This study used the questionnaire for the purpose of collecting the quantitative data, including a wide population for a short period of time. This study has a descriptive correlational nature, and it analyses the relationship between the variables. The quantitative data have been analysed through the SPSS program (version 22). In this study, the result processing was done through the descriptive statistics method in the function of extracting the data characteristics (average standard deviation), and the inferential statistics method in the function of the validity scale of assumptions that result from the data. Collection of the research data was done in accordance with the ethical principles widely accepted by the scientific community such as confidentiality, anonymity, and the students’ willingness to be participants of the study (Punch, 1994; Mathews and Ross, 2010; Bhattacherjee, 2012). The participants were informed that their anonymity would be preserved, and they were pleaded to answer the questions truthfully.

4.1 The instrument for the study data collection – the questionnaire

The questionnaire used in the research: “Charting Reform: The Teachers’ Turn” (Easton, 1991), which aimed to extract data concerning the teachers’ enthusiasm related to the school reform, their commitment to this process, their inclusion in the school policies drafting, the time they spent working in professional councils, school committees, or other activities in the function of successfully implementing the school reform, was also used in this study, of course, modified and adjusted to the local context. It was partially used for this study, modified and adapted to the local context, in which case only the first part of the questionnaire was used as it corresponded to the issue that was treated. The instrument used for this study was previously tested on 60 respondents who did not participate in the research in the data collecting stage. The research instruments piloting enabled their improvement and modification with the aim of gathering valuable and reliable data. The questionnaire contained questions designed on the Likert scale. In general, the majority of the variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 – “don’t agree at all” to 5 – “completely agree”.
4.2 Population and sampling of respondents in the study

The population in this study consists of the teachers in primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo. The analysis unit of our research is the group of teachers from the primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo, who were in charge of the changes in education. Data were collected from 1080 teachers working in primary schools located in different areas in Kosovo. According to the Kosovo Statistics Agency (2016), the total number of teachers for the academic year 2013–2014 was 17,851. Concerning the sample sufficiency of this study, the margin of error of this sample at the national level is about 2.2%. A random sample was selected among all target population individuals. The first stratification of the sample was made based on the municipalities. Nine municipalities were selected in different regions of Kosovo. The second stratification was done at the urban/rural level, where at each city were selected three schools in urban areas and two schools in rural areas. Although the samples represent different municipalities, they are the same in size. In each municipality, the sample consists of three schools in the city, and two schools in the village. The research was conducted in nine municipalities of the country: Prishtina, Podujeva, Mitrovica, Vushtrri, Prizren, Gjakova, Peja, Gjilan and Ferizaj.

4.3 General characteristics of study participants

In our research study, 1080 respondents participated in this research, among them, 574 females (53.1%), and 506 males (46.9%), as presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2  The distribution of respondents based on gender (see online version for colours)

In terms of age, 210 (19.4%) respondents declared their age at the alternative 23–30 years old, 326 (30.2%) respondents declared their age at the alternative 31–39 years old, 235 (21.8%) respondents declared their age at the alternative 40–45 years old, whereas 309 (28.6%) respondents declared their age at the alternative 46+ years old, as presented in Figure 3.
From the distribution of respondents based on education level, as presented in Figure 4, the results show that 63 (5.8%) respondents had an associate degree, 403 (37.3%) completed higher pedagogical school, 540 (50%) had a university degree, and 74 (6.9%) completed their master studies.

The distribution of respondents based on the level of school they teach at – 446 respondents in the study were teachers in primary schools and 634 were teachers in lower secondary schools, Figure 5.

In terms of the school situation, 810 respondents were teaching at schools situated in urban areas, and 270 were teaching at schools situated in rural areas as presented in Figure 6.
Findings and discussion

The empirical study of the teachers’ attitudes concerning their professional and organisational commitment in terms of participation in the work of the School Board/ The Teachers Council/Professional Committees, shows that the majority of the study participants (78.5%) stated that they either ‘agree’ or ‘completely agree’ that the abovementioned take into consideration the teachers’ opinions and attitudes (Table 1). In the context of reforming the Kosovo education system, the increased influence of the School Board is viewed as “a positive change, but at the same time, a challenge, as the School Board was traditionally seen as a formal body of an advisory level and not one of the decision-making level” (BEP, 2012, p.17). Concerning the issue of cooperation among the abovementioned bodies, 81.1% of the respondents claimed that there is a good cooperation environment. According to Sebring and Camburn (1992),
a collegial atmosphere influences the teachers’ attitude toward the School Board, thus the teachers tend to assess positively the work of this body if it is also supported by the community. Looking at it from the perspective of the study participants, whether such bodies represent the teachers’ opinions, 61.7% of the teachers stated that they ‘agree’ that the said bodies represent the teachers’ opinions, thus indicating that these bodies make sure that the teachers’ opinions are heard. In this regard, the study findings show that teachers in urban schools believe more than those in rural schools that the said bodies represent the teachers’ opinions ($p = 0.000$). There are also significant differences between the male and female respondents, as the female teachers believe more than the male teachers that the abovementioned bodies represent the teachers’ opinions ($p = 0.000$). Meanwhile, teachers with a higher level of education tend to believe less that bodies like School Board/The Teachers Council/Professional Committees, represent the teachers’ voice ($p = 0.006$). Moreover, teachers with a higher level of education were more reluctant to believe that the functioning of the said bodies represent the teachers’ opinions ($p = 0.006$). Furthermore, they gave the same answer to the question whether the functioning of the said bodies has increased the teacher participation level in the decision-making and drafting of the school policies processes ($p = 0.000$). The theme report on the national education policies in Kosovo (Crighton et al., 2001, p.13) of the Center for Cooperation among the OECD non-member countries emphasises the influence of the party politics and the ethnic politics, namely the political rivalry as an obstacle in effective communication in the field of governance and management as well as the lack of professional principals with experience in the field of education. Moreover, there is a recent report on the educational system and the teachers’ training in Kosovo drafted by Anastoska-Jankulovska and Skikos (2013, p.10), which highlights the irregularity and lack of the rule of law in the process of recruiting the school staff and the principals, assessing this process as politicised and controlled by the Municipal Directorate of Education (MDE). The study findings show that 62.4% out of 1080 respondents declared that they agree that the functioning of the bodies such as the School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees, has increased the teachers’ participation in the decision-making and the school policies drafting processes. However, 50.7% of respondents declared that in this context, teachers are not valued as a key factor by these bodies. Results of the research survey conducted by Leithwood et al. (1999) showed that the school principals have a large impact on these organs within the school. In this regard, a factor that influences this process is also the lack of awareness on the part of the teachers and other members of the school community, concerning the new responsibilities of the school heads in the Kosovo schools. The influence of the school principal is of great importance, not only in the formal contexts, but also with his or her personal position in the School Board, his or her relationship with the school staff and the students, his or her reaction in different daily situations (the informal context), his or her personal attitude as well as his or her problem-solving skills (Bäckman and Trafford, 2007). According to Coghlan and Desurmont (2007), in many European countries, the decision-making process of hiring and dismissing the staff is the school principal’s responsibility, whereas the school staff cannot choose their own principal. The Kosovovan teachers’ responsibilities do not encompass the areas of financial management or decisions about the human resources, except those of the educational content. However, in the new circumstances created in the Kosovo education system in the recent years,
The teachers’ impact on policy making

The planning practice in education has changed in favour of planning through participation, thus increasing the possibility of schools for self-improvement (Sylhasi, 2010). According to Mincu (2013), the school self-improvement depends on its existing capacities and the level of cooperation among the school members, as these are the positive incentives that influence the teachers’ commitment in implementing the changes. Based on the results of a study on what makes a school successful, OECD (2013) concluded that the culture of cooperation at school between the teachers and the school principal in the process of leading the school, strongly influences the performance of that school, namely the teachers’ participation in managing the school will also influence the students’ performance, as in the schools where a high level of the teachers’ participation in the school managing process was reported, students were more successful. In regard to if teachers are familiarised with the majority of strategic objectives and measures that are foreseen in the development plan of the school, from 1080 respondents \( (n = 1080) \), 67.7% of them stated they ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that teachers are familiarised with the majority of strategic objectives and measures that are foreseen in the development plan of the school, compared to 10.5% of respondents who did not agree. (st.dev = 0.916; mean = 3.8).

Looking at the data in Table 1, it can be seen that 73.1% of the study participants stated that they ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that teachers give their help in implementing the school’s development plan, whereas 9.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. (st.dev = 0.926; mean = 3.91).

Table 1  The teacher’s impact on policy making for the improvement of the school performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional and organisational commitment of teachers in terms of participation in the work of School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>% of ‘Don’t agree at all’ ‘don’t agree’</th>
<th>% of ‘Completely agree’ ‘agree’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My opinions and stances are taken into consideration from bodies like School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a good cooperation climate within bodies like School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.746</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>81.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodies like School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees represent the voice of teachers</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.070</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the functionalisation of bodies like School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees, there is an increase of teachers’ participation in decision-making and drafting of school policies</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>62.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1  The teacher’s impact on policy making for the improvement of the school performance (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional and organisational commitment of teachers in terms of participation in the work of School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>% of ‘Don’t agree at all’</th>
<th>% of ‘Completely agree’ + ‘agree’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is not valued as an important factor in decision-making and drafting of school policies from bodies like School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.812</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have given my help and contribution in the drafting of development plan in the school that I work</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.100</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am familiarised with the majority of strategic objectives and measures planned within the school’s development plan</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.916</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers have more opportunities to affect the policies on functionalisation and improvement of the school’s work. In this domain, findings from revealed were that the more qualified the teachers, the less they believe that teachers today have more opportunities to affect the policies on functionalisation and improvement of the school’s work \((p = 0.000)\). Concerning the issue whether the teachers are familiarised with the majority of strategic objectives and measures that are foreseen in the school development plan, from 1080 respondents \((N = 1080)\), 67.7\% of them declared that they agree that the teachers are familiarised with the majority of strategic objectives and measures that are foreseen in the school development plan, compared to 10.5\% of respondents who disagree. Based on the central tendency and data distribution, we have – st.dev. = 0.916; mean = 3.8.

The data in Table 1 also show that 64.8\% of respondents out of 1080 declared that they agree that teachers give their help in drafting the school development plan, whereas 9.8\% declared that they disagree. In this case, the data distribution is -st.dev. = 1100; mean = 3.72. Research results of the data processing through the inferential statistics method in the function of finding answers to the question whether there is a correlation between the level of the teachers’ professional preparation and the teachers’ belief that today teachers have more opportunities to influence the functionalisation policies and the improvement of the work at school, show that there is such a correlation, because the more qualified the teachers, the less they believe that they can influence the functionalisation policies and the improvement of the work at school \((p = 0.000)\). Teachers with a higher level of education are also prone to agree less that bodies such as the School Board, the Teachers’ Council, Professional Committees, represent the teachers’ opinions \((p = 0.006)\). Concerning the opportunities that are offered to the teachers to influence the functionalisation policies and the improvement of the work at school, it results that there are differences that also regard the demographic characteristics. The t-test analysis indicates that teachers of urban schools believe more than teachers in rural schools that teachers have more opportunity to influence the functionalisation policies and the improvement of the work at school \((p = 0.000)\). The
second research question was made to understand whether the functionalisation of the bodies such as the School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees has increased the teachers’ participation in the decision-making and the school policies drafting processes. The statistical analysis, as presented in Table 2, indicate the teachers with a higher level of education have shown a lower level of belief that the functionalisation of bodies such as the School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees, has increased the teachers’ participation in the decision-making and the school policies drafting processes \( (p = 0.000) \). In this regard, it results that teachers in urban schools believe more than those in rural schools that bodies such as the School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees represent the teachers’ opinions \( (p = 0.000) \). Furthermore, there are differences between female and male teachers as well, because female teachers are more prone to believe that bodies such as the School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees can represent the teachers’ opinions \( (p = 0.000) \).

Drafting of the school development plan is seen as an important step for a school that aims at the quality. The study results show that 64.8% of respondents declared that they agree that they give their help in drafting the school development plan, stating that they are familiarised with the majority of the strategic objectives and measures that are foreseen in the school development plan (67.7%), whereas the majority of them (73.1%) declared that they give their help towards the implementation of the school development plan. The perception that the school development plan is just a formal document, which does not have any real weight for the work at school, remains a challenge of our education system. In many schools in Kosovo, these plans are almost the same every year, with only slight changes that lack a detailed analysis of the situation within the school. This is a real challenge as “there is a need for that format to change and adjust to the external factors” as “improvement is a continuous process” (GIZ, 2013, p.22).

Findings from literature review reveal that in the Kosovo schools, the drafting of the school development plans does not follow a unified format either in structure or the content. The school development plan usually contains a short history of the school, followed by visions, aims and development priorities, the action plan, the financial sources, and as an addendum, a copy of the decision that the School Board approved the plan (Sythasi, 2010, p.20). Conclusions similar to this study were drawn from a study on the teachers’ commitment to the school reform conducted by Sebring and Camburn (1992, p.4), which shows that teachers who worked in bigger schools reported having worked less in drafting and implementing the school development plan. Concerning the inclusion of the school staff in the process of planning and implementing the school plan, it results that there are differences among the teachers that relate to the demographic characteristics (research question 3) and show that unlike the teachers in rural schools, those of urban schools showed a higher level of familiarisation with the majority of the strategic objectives and measures foreseen in the school development plan \( (p = 0.000) \). Moreover, teachers in urban schools believe more that they have given their help towards the drafting of the school development plan \( (p = 0.000) \). Female teachers are more familiarised with the majority of the strategic objectives and measures foreseen in the school development plan than the male teachers.

As seen in Table 3, 46.5% of the Kosovan teachers spend more than 3 hours per week working in the school committees, 26.7% of them spend 2 to 3 hours, whereas 1.2% of them spend one hour per week working in the school committees. The study results also show (see Table 3) that 46.7% of the Kosovan teachers spend around 4 hours per week
working towards a successful implementation of the education reform, 39.1% of the teachers spend more than 3 hours per week, 12.8% of them spend around 5 hours, and only 1.5% spend around 2–3 hours per week working towards a successful implementation of school reform.

Table 2  
Variance analysis (ANOVA), as a statistical test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My opinions and stances are taken under consideration from bodies School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>9051</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.017</td>
<td>6.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>519,459</td>
<td>1076</td>
<td>0.483</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>528,510</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a good cooperation climate within bodies like School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>6959</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.320</td>
<td>4.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>593,662</td>
<td>1076</td>
<td>0.552</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>600,621</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodies like School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees represent the voice of teachers</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>21,558</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.186</td>
<td>6.373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>1213,242</td>
<td>1076</td>
<td>1.128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1234,800</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionalisation of bodies like School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees, there is an increase of teachers’ participation in decision-making and drafting of school policies</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>22,624</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.541</td>
<td>9.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>858,501</td>
<td>1076</td>
<td>0.798</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>881,125</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is not valued as an important factor in decision-making and drafting of school policies from bodies School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>3519</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.173</td>
<td>1.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>708,032</td>
<td>1076</td>
<td>0.658</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>711,552</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am familiarised with the majority of strategic objectives and measures, planned within the school’s development plan</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>5626</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.875</td>
<td>2.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>899,970</td>
<td>1076</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>905,596</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have given my help and contribution in the drafting of the development plan in the school that I work.</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>6852</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.284</td>
<td>2.678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>917,792</td>
<td>1076</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>924,644</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study data also show that 41.3% of the teachers stated that they meet 3–5 times per year as members of the school councils to give their contribution towards the improvement of the work at school, 29.9% of the teachers said that they do the same 4–5 times per year, whereas 24.4% of them declared that they meet 5 or more times per year to hold similar meetings.

The meetings of these bodies are formal meetings, where decisions are approved through voting, hence Bäckman and Trafford (2007) suggest an increased teachers’
participation in the decision-making processes at school by giving them an opportunity to reach compromises and consensuses upon a free discussion of the issues. They claim that inviting teachers to too many meetings with the purpose of promoting democracy has a contra-productive effect as it can make teachers demotivated and unproductive, but this can be avoided by forming workgroups, where teachers can be self-proposed, others can simply express their willingness for participation urged by their own interest for results concerning the drafting and implementing of the school policies.

Table 3  Kosovar teachers’ professional commitment towards the improvement of work in school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many weekly hours have you spent out of regular classes working in school committees?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3 hours</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 hours</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many weekly hours have you spent out of regular classes working successful implementation of school reform?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3 hours</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 hours</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>87.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many times within a year do you participate in School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees, giving your contribution towards the improvement of work in your school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–3 times</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–5 times</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than five times</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Conclusion

The results derived from this study create space for a more optimistic approach in regard to the Kosovan teachers’ organisational and professional commitment towards the improvement of the school performance. Concerning the teachers’ influence on the functionalisation policies and the improvement of the work at school, the majority of respondents assessed that, today, the Kosovan teachers have more opportunities to
influence the functionalisation policies and the improvement of the work at school. The Kosovan teachers with a higher level of education showed a lower level of belief that, today they can influence the functionalisation policies and the improvement of the work at school. They also expressed a lower level of belief that the functionalisation of the School Board, the Teachers’ Council, and Professional Committees has increased the teachers’ participation in the decision-making and drafting of the school policies processes. A similar conclusion was reached in a study carried out by Guskey (2002), whose research report indicates that teachers had hesitated to challenge the higher bodies, and did not take upon an active role towards the drafting of the school policies, staying passive instead. There are significant differences based on the demographic characteristics among the Kosovan teachers related to their organisational and professional commitment towards the process of drafting the school development plan since the research results indicate that teachers from rural schools as well as the male teachers were less involved in this process. Most of the Kosovan teachers have met 3 to 5 times per year to give their contribution towards the improvement of the work at school within the formal school bodies.

At the final part of this study, in the form of recommendations, we suggest that schools, particularly those in rural areas, should generate more opportunities to find the ways and create opportunity for the young teachers and those with a higher level of education so that they can become leaders in implementing the reforming initiatives, to feel motivated towards the increase of the quality of work at school, and become participants in the decision-making processes at school.

Moreover, we suggest that teachers with a high level of education should also be involved in the advisory mechanism within the schools. In this regard, model schools with examples of good practices in managing with participation, in which a general consensus of all the parties involved in the process of improving the work at school, is achieved, and initiatives which strengthen more the teachers’ commitment in the process of the school self-improvement is instigated, should be offered. This would necessarily urge the creation of the successful schools networking based on the managing with participation as its selected index.

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The teachers’ impact on policy making


J. Ferizi-Miftari and B. Rexha


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Note

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